



**Voter Representation and the  
Rise of Civic Engagement in  
Asian-American  
Communities Within the  
Context of Festering Racial  
Tensions**



Why Asian-American constituents  
are generalized as apolitical




## Statistics

- ~65% are citizens
  - ~54% are registered to vote (5.9 million)
    - ~43% are likely to vote
- Voter turnout has been historical low (%)
  - 47% turn out during the 2016 Election
- Nonparticipants are 95% foreign born



## The Majority of Asian-Americans are foreign born

- ~70% of Asian-Americans are foreign born
- Large influx of Asian-Americans began after the 1965 reforms to the Immigration and Naturalization Act.
- Immigrants coming from countries where civic duties were not commonplace
- English as a second or third or fourth language
- More focused on survival
- Lack of awareness and understanding of American politics



## Lack of civic outreach from DNC and GOP

- ▶ Language barriers on campaign ads
- ▶ Lack of volunteer recruitment efforts because
  - ▶ Asian-Americans are relative small, almost 5% of all registered voters
  - ▶ As an immigrant dominant population, there are a number of noncitizens and recent immigrants who cannot vote
  - ▶ Nonpartisan and weak voting record



## Difficulty in unified mobilization



- Asian-Americans include a variety of ethnicities that are culturally different
  - Group solidarity is more difficult to achieve because differing cultural values and language barriers.
  - Finding issues that affect all of the ethnicities the same way and to have them support one platform is difficult
  - Asian-Americans typically identify themselves first as their ethnic-national origin.
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Table 5.5 Ethnic and Self-Identified Categories by Political Participation

	Likely Voter	Political Contributor	Contact Government Officials	Protester	Community Activist
Asian American	49	15	10	4	24
Ethnic American	48	15	11	5	21
Ethnic group	42	9	6	4	17
Asian	44	9	7	4	16

*Source:* Authors' compilation of data from the 2008 National Asian American Survey (Ramakrishnan et al. 2011).

*Note:* Rates are in percentages.



# Political Participation tends to increase with each generation

- Newer generations are more likely to be politically involved
  - Higher citizenship rates
  - Stronger party identification
  - Greater convergence with other Asian ethnicities
    - From societal experiences felt by all Asian-Americans
- By 2040, there will be 12.2 million Asian-American registered voters
- Campaigns are beginning to incorporate diverse campaign tactics





# ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN LEADERS

2016 General Election Cycle

## FEDERAL

House & Senate

18 elected officials in Congress total

**Highest ranked AAP\* in federal government**

**Newly-elected Senators**

**Incumbents (Representatives)**

Mazie Hirono D-HI-Senate  
Kamala Harris D-CA-Senate  
Tammy Duckworth D-IL-Senate  
Bobby Scott D-VA-03  
Doris Matsui D-CA-06  
Judy Chu D-CA-27

Colleen Hanabusa D-HI-01  
Ami Bera D-CA-07  
Tulsi Gabbard D-HI-02  
Grace Meng D-NY-06  
Mark Takano D-CA-41  
Ted Lieu D-CA-03

**Newly-elected Representatives**

**Gender + Party (ALL)**

61% FEMALE  
39% MALE

94% DEMOCRAT  
6% REPUBLICAN

Ro Khanna D-CA-07  
S. Raja D-IL-06  
Stephanie Murphy D-FL-07  
Pramila Jayapal D-WA-07

**Delegates**

Gregorio Sablan D-MP  
Aumua Amata Coleman Radewagen D-AS

**Ethnicity**

Chamorro	1
Chinese	1
Filipino	2
Indian	5
Japanese	2
Seneca	4
Taiwanese	1
Thai	1
Vietnamese	1

**11 incumbents  
3 challengers  
4 open seats**

\*= not up for re-election in 2016 election cycle

## STATE

99 newly & re-elected officials

House/Assembly & Senate

**House**

80% DEMOCRAT  
19% REPUBLICAN  
1% LIBERTARIAN

**Senate**

78% DEMOCRAT  
22% REPUBLICAN

**Ethnicity**

HOUSE/ASSEMBLY & SENATE

Chamorro	1
Chinese	15
Filipino	8
Hawaiian	15
Hmong	2
Indian	6
Japanese	30
Korean	9
Multiracial	5
Other	1
Samoan	1
Taiwanese	6

**33% FEMALE  
67% MALE**

**78% FEMALE  
22% MALE**

**99** state legislators in **19** states

## LOCAL

Mayor, City Council & Board Members

28 newly & re-elected officials

**Mayors**

50% FEMALE  
50% MALE

**3 challengers  
1 incumbent**

**City Council**

50% FEMALE  
50% MALE

**3 challengers  
3 incumbents**

**Board Members**

50% FEMALE  
50% MALE

**15 challengers  
3 incumbents**

**Parties (all)**

3% LIBERTARIAN  
11% REPUBLICAN  
32% NONPARTISAN  
54% DEMOCRAT

145 total

AAP newly or re-elected leaders in the 2016 election



For a complete list of APAs in office, visit [apalcs.org](http://apalcs.org)

Prepared by the Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies (APAICS)

28 local representatives in 10 states

4 local mayors  
6 city council members  
18 board members



08820 NJ 08820



Current Resident  
  
 EDISON, NJ 08820

**Stop the overcrowding !**

**Stop taking over our sports fields !**

**Stop the McMansions !**

**Stop the multiple families living in the same house !**

**Stop wasting school holidays !**

**Stop the outsiders !**

**Let's take back our Edison & our Schools**



MAKE  
EDISON  
GREAT  
AGAIN





**Stop Jerry Shi & Falguni Patel  
From taking over our School Board**

**The Chinese and Indians are taking over our town!  
Chinese school! Indian school! Cricket fields!  
Enough is Enough!!**






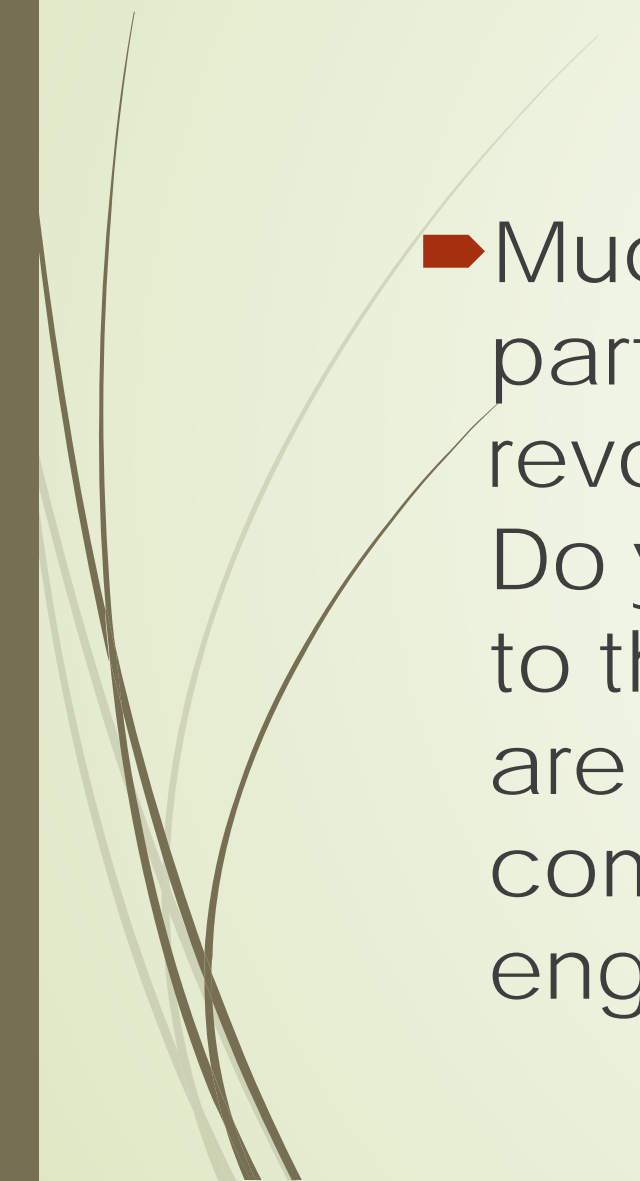
## Discussion

- ▶ Do you think that the recent racial tensions will positively or negatively impact the progress in civic engagement by the Asian-American community?



■ How can the Asian-American community combat the racism?

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- What should the Asian-Americans do to keep the momentum of political fervor?
  - How could they take it even further?

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- Much of the focus in increasing voter participation in the Asian-American community revolves around waiting for newer generations. Do you feel that this approach is discriminatory to the immigrants and earlier generations that are politically uninvolved? Should the community invest into increasing civic engagement with the older generation?