



OCA-GREATER LOS ANGELES

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EMBRACING THE HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS OF ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICANS

March 17, 2014

The Honorable Ed Hernandez
State Capitol, Room 2080
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: SCA 5 (HERNANDEZ) - PUBLIC EDUCATION: STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Dear Senator Hernandez:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of OCA-Greater Los Angeles (OCA-GLA), we would like to express our grave concern over the lack of engagement of the Asian Pacific American community regarding Senate Constitutional Amendment No. 5 (SCA 5) prior to it being considered for a vote and subsequently passed out of the California State Senate.

Founded in 1973, OCA is a national organization dedicated to advancing the social, political, and economic well-being of Asian Pacific Americans in the United States. Since its inception in 1991, the Greater Los Angeles Chapter of OCA has worked with community partners to assist Los Angeles residents of all backgrounds by advancing civic participation and promoting civil rights.

Democratic societies are based on the principle of a free and open discussion of public policies and good governance rests on the opportunity for citizens to engage in enlightened debate. Asian Pacific Americans make up 16% of the state's population and are the fastest growing ethnic group in California and the United States. In fact, California has the nation's largest Asian Pacific American population with nearly a third of the 17.3 million Asian Pacific Americans calling the Golden State their home. It is therefore alarming that during the legislative process, no attempt was made to solicit input and discuss this important legislation that will have a profound impact to future generations with Asian Pacific American constituents and the Asian Pacific American community throughout California.

OCA has consistently supported affirmative action in education, a holistic approach in higher education admissions and strongly opposed caps and quotas. There was a time in our nation's history when Asian Pacific Americans were denied citizenship, educational opportunities and other civil liberties, and it was affirmative action that largely opened the doors of opportunity for Asian Pacific Americans. We are supportive of expanding education opportunities for all Californians but feel that we must not lose sight on the considerable need to expand educational resources in the state, especially to the underserved population, including those among the ethnically diverse Asian Pacific American community such as the Vietnamese, Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian and Pacific Islanders.



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While we recognize that meetings have taken place in recent weeks with a number of Asian Pacific American organizations as a result of the uproar and controversy surrounding the Senate passage of SCA 5, we ask that you seek to:

- Proactively engage the Asian Pacific American community, including community organizations in support and against SCA 5
- Host a forum or field hearing to educate constituents on SCA 5 and address valid concerns of the Asian Pacific American community on the issue
- Include new language clarifying that the legislation will not create caps or quotas for admissions
- Improve dialogue and collaboration with the Asian Pacific American community in formulating legislation moving forward

For these reasons, OCA-GLA cannot support SCA 5 in its current form. We are confident that you and the legislators in the California State Assembly will be able to develop a proposal that is responsive to the Asian Pacific American community and promotes equal opportunity for all Californians. Thank you for your consideration of our position on this matter and we look forward to continuing to work with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Lisa Thong
President

Ricky Choi
Director of Public Affairs

cc: Members, Asian & Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus