

# P R E S S            R E L E A S E

## ***A Second Gathering of the Commonwealth's Asian & Pacific American Groups in Richmond to Meet Legislators and State Officials.***

The Coalition of Asian Pacific Americans of Virginia (CAPAVA) today announced an historic gathering of the Commonwealth's Asian & Pacific American (APA) communities in Richmond on February 2<sup>nd</sup>.

CAPAVA, a non-profit, pan-Asian advocacy group hails February 2<sup>nd</sup> as an APA legislative and State government day.

Asian & Pacific Americans from all regions of the commonwealth will gather in Richmond for two major events: a Legislative and State Briefing Forum and an evening reception honoring State legislative and executive officials.

The Legislative and State Briefing forum will be held from 2:00-5:00 p.m. at the Bank of America Building (18<sup>th</sup> floor conference room), 1111 East Main Street. Officials from the Clerk's Office, Republican Caucus, Democratic Caucus, and State programs offices will brief the APA community on how to access state services and how legislation affects them.

The evening reception will be held at the Peking Restaurant, 1302 East Carey Street, from 5:30-8:00 p.m. The Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General and House and Senate elected officials will be attending.

"This is an important opportunity for elected officials to meet all the communities in the Commonwealth," said Rob Colorina, Interim Chairman of the Virginia Asian Advisory Board.

"More importantly, this is truly a pan-Asian coalition effort" Eric Liang Jensen, Chairman of the Coalition of Asian Pacific Americans of Virginia (CAPAVA) added. "Over 20 Asian and Pacific community groups and businesses collaborated on today's activities in Richmond."

"We hope the APA communities leave here today with an understanding of how they can participate in the legislative process and how their communities can get access to critical State Services," Rummy Mohta, President of the Asian American Society of Central Virginia said.

"There are 310,000 Asian Americans living in Virginia, comprising 4.2 percent of the Commonwealth population. Our 22,500 businesses generate over \$4.4 billion of revenue and we employ over 47,000 employees. Yet we have no political representation," said Hung Nguyen, President of the National Congress of Vietnamese Americans.

Angela Chiang, Vice President of the Organization of Chinese Americans Eastern Virginia Chapter said, “Our communities are little understood but need state assistance that they are not getting”.

Rose Chu, Board member of CAPAVA and OCA member said: “What many don’t know is 14 percent of APA families live in poverty, compared to 8 percent of the general population. And 33 percent of foreign-born residents do not have health coverage.”

Silvia Patton, the President of the Organization of Korean American Women said “our communities hope that state legislators will help our communities get access to services by extending State outreach to the APA communities.”

Delegate Spruill and Senator Ticer have introduced amendments to provide an Asian and Pacific American outreach office at the state.

“If the State creates an Asian Pacific American outreach office, our communities will get the help they need and APAs will be even stronger contributors to the Commonwealth’s economy” CAPAVA President Ting-Yi Oei said.

Eric Jensen concluded, “Thursday’s historic gathering is just the beginning of the political participation by a vital community that has remained silent for too long.”

*For more information on the Coalition of Asian Pacific Americans of Virginia, contact Eric Jensen, (703) 868-8325, [eljensen@comcast.net](mailto:eljensen@comcast.net); or go to [www.capava.org](http://www.capava.org) for additional information.*