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May is Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Heritage Month



Asian Pacific American Heritage Month originated in June 1977 when Representatives **Frank Horton** (New York) and **Norman Y. Mineta** (California) called for the establishment of Asian/Pacific Heritage Week. Hawaii senators **Daniel Inouye** and **Spark Matsunaga** introduced a similar bill in the Senate. Both bills passed, and in 1978 President **Jimmy Carter** signed the resolution. In 1990, President **George H. W. Bush** expanded the celebration from a week to a month. It became the AANHPI Heritage Month under President **Joe Biden**.

May was selected as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month to commemorate the arrival in May 1843 of the first Japanese immigrants to the United States and the role of Chinese laborers in the completion of the first transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869.

2023/04/28 White House: [A Proclamation on Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, 2023](#)

2023/05/01 Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus: [CAPAC Members and House Democratic Leader Celebrate Asian American, Native Hawaiian, & Pacific Islander Heritage Month](#)

2023/05/01 National Academy of Public Administration: [AANHPI Heritage Month Spotlight - Pursuing a More Perfect Union and an Equitable Society by Jeremy Wu](#)

On May 1, 2023, *CNN* updated a story about the terms such as Asian American. APA. APIDA. AAPI. and AANHPI to describe this population of more than 24 million people with roots in East

Asia, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, Hawaii, Samoa, Guam, Fiji, Tonga, Marshall Islands, the Northern Mariana Islands and other Pacific islands. It comprises scores of ethnic groups with distinct histories, cuisines, languages and cultures. It includes recent immigrants, those who have been in the US for generations and those who have endured centuries of colonization.

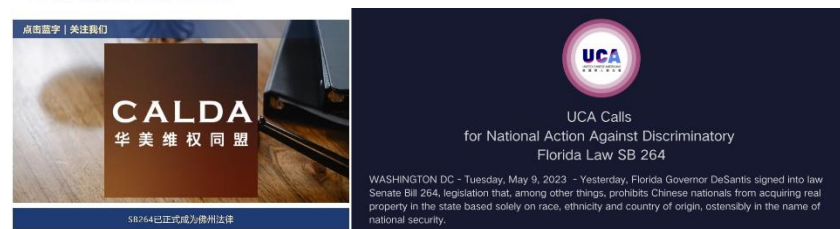
The US government currently defines Asian Americans as those “having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent.” It uses the separate category of “Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander” to describe those “having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.”

Read the *CNN* report: <https://cnn.it/3NX7eo6>

Latest Developments on Discriminatory Alien Land Bills in Florida and Texas

我们法院见：CALDA将立即起诉推翻佛州歧视性法案

来源：CALDA/NA CALDA 2023-03-08 22:31 Posted on 美国



According to [an opinion by the Los Angeles Times](#) on May 3, 2023, while our country celebrates Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, Governor **Ron DeSantis** and the Florida legislature are busy resurrecting a long-dead form of anti-Asian discrimination. The Florida Senate unanimously passed Senate Bill 264 in April, and on May 3, the Florida House rushed to pass its twin, House Bill 1355, purportedly to prohibit the Chinese government from buying real estate in Florida. By targeting “any member of the People’s Republic of China,” the bill could also wreak havoc on the lives of ordinary people.

On May 9, 2023, multiple media including [Axios](#) reported that Gov. DeSantis signed legislation that prevents certain foreign nationals from China and six other countries from purchasing what the state deems sensitive American land. It becomes effective on July 1, 2023. DeSantis also signed off on two other bills: one restricting government desktops or servers from downloading TikTok, an app owned by a Chinese company; and another prohibiting Florida colleges and universities from engaging in a partnership with schools overseas without governmental approval.

Also on May 9, 2023, United Chinese Americans (UCA) issued [a statement](#) calling for national action against the discriminatory law that “among other things, prohibits Chinese nationals from acquiring real property in the state based solely on race, ethnicity and country of origin, ostensibly in the name of national security.” According to the statement, UCA will work with Chinese American Legal Defense Alliance (CALDA), Florida Asian American Justice Alliance

(FAAJA) and others to challenge this misguided Florida law and see to it that it is struck down by the Federal court or repealed by the people of Florida. UCA calls on Americans in all walks of life, corporations, civic organizations and faith-based groups, to condemn this act of blatant discrimination. A video titled "[A Dark Day in America](#)" (4:09) including statements by **Haipei Shue**, UCA President, and **Anders Fung**, Member of Millbrae City Council, was posted by Ding Ding TV.

Also on the same day, CALDA issued [a statement](#) that the [Florida bill](#) may seem to be limited to real estate transactions, but in fact it regards the Chinese people as a threat to the national security of the United States and a target for isolation by the whole society. Despite some last minute changes, the bill still contains undisguised racial discrimination. These provisions mainly target ordinary people and various companies in several countries, prohibiting or restricting their basic rights to directly or indirectly purchase real estate. These provisions violate the US Constitution's prohibition of racial discrimination, and also conflict with the basic values of American society such as equality, tolerance and diversity.

Once this discriminatory law is established, it will undoubtedly set off a wave of hatred against Chinese and even all Asians, and no one can be alone. States such as Texas, South Carolina, and Georgia are actively promoting bills similar to those in Florida.

CALDA announced immediate legal action to overturn this discriminatory bill. It expects to file a lawsuit in Florida court in about a week, and a court injunction preventing the law from taking effect before the end of this month. CALDA has already begun assembling a team of attorneys and contacting potential plaintiff representatives. It will also work with all like-minded groups, including FAAJA and UCA, to stem this latest anti-Chinese wave.

Texas Multicultural Advocacy Coalition (TMAC) and Civil Rights Town Hall on 2023/05/13

According to *Houston Style Magazine* on May 9, 2023, the Texas Multicultural Advocacy Coalition, with the support of Congressman **Al Green**, is organizing a Civil Rights Town Hall on May 13th, 2023, at 1 pm at FountainLife Center, located at 14083 S. Main St. Houston, TX 77035. The event will bring together a diverse group of community leaders and organizations, including Congressman Al Green, Rep. **Gene Wu**, Rep. **Ron Reynolds**, Bishop **James**

Dixon (NAACP, Houston Branch), **Wea Lee** (International Trade Center), **Judson Robinson** (Houston Area Urban League), Dr. **Steven Pei** (United Chinese Americans), **Nabila Mansoor** (Rise AAPI), **Niloufar Hafizi** (Emgage Texas), **Dawn Lin** (Asian Real Estate Association of America), **Gary Nakamura** (Japanese American Citizens League, Houston), **Claude Cummings, Jr.** (Communications Workers of America), **Kenneth Li** (Asian American Business Council), **Eileen Huang** (United Association of Chinese Alumni), Dr. **Sergio Lira** (Greater Houston LULAC 4967), Dr. **Pretta VanDible Stallworth**, **Hua Gu** (Sino Professionals Association), **Guowei Gu** (Shandong Fellowship Association of Southern USA), **Baohua Yang** (Henan Fellowship Association of Southern USA), **Liang Han** (Southern Jiangsu Association USA), **Yizhu Liao** (Hunan Club of Houston), **Kathy Xu** (Texas Northeast Chinese Association), **Casey Kang** (Korean American Chamber of Commerce), **Terrance Koontz** (Texas Organizing Project), **Ruth Kravetz** (Community Voices for Public Education), **Lani Cabral Pasao** (People Caring for the Community), **Stephen Yoe** (Myanmar Chamber of Commerce), **Harry Sun** (Chinese Chamber of Commerce), **H.C. Chang** (OCA Greater Houston), **William White** (CAIR Houston) and many others. The participation of these organizations highlights the broad support for the event and the urgent need to stand against the harmful actions that threaten the rights and opportunities of communities of color.

The primary objective of the town hall is to unite multicultural organizations and individuals against the racist and xenophobic Senate Bill 147 and the state takeover of the HISD school board. These actions are detrimental to communities of color: SB 147 threatens the right to property ownership, and the HISD takeover imperils access to quality education and equal opportunities.

Read the *Houston Style Magazine* report: <https://bit.ly/3nLxkzV>

Committee of 100 Annual Conference



On May 5, 2023, **Jeremy Wu**, Founder of APA Justice and Member of the Committee of 100, delivered opening remarks to set the context on Turbulent Times for Chinese Americans. The presentations with and without script are posted at <https://bit.ly/3NSmYZx>. Eight categories of challenges are identified to be of top concerns to the Chinese American and scientific communities.

- Legalizing discrimination at the state and federal levels
- Return of the Red Scare and McCarthyism
- Warrantless surveillance

- Mini "China Initiative" conducted by the National Institutes of Health
- Cross-border profiling, interrogation, harassment, and denial of entry
- Continuing fallout from the now-defunct "China Initiative"
- Collateral damage from the deteriorating U.S.-China relations
- Anti-Asian hate and violence

2023/05/07 Los Angeles Post: [Focusing on Challenges Faced by Chinese Americans in Turbulent Times, Committee of 100's 2023 Annual Meeting Concludes in Silicon Valley](#)

2023/05/07 South China Morning Post: [Asian-Americans should prepare for more hate, committee warns](#)

2023/05/06 South China Morning Post: [Asian-Americans face numerous hurdles to win greater acceptance and influence, experts say](#)

Who is Monica Bertagnolli, Biden's pick to lead NIH?



According to *Science* on April 27, 2023, **Monica Bertagnolli** never had the luxury of easing into her new job as head of the U.S. National Cancer Institute (NCI).

Several weeks after taking over the largest component of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in October 2022, the then–63-year-old surgical oncologist was diagnosed with early-stage breast cancer and underwent surgery followed by chemotherapy and radiation treatment. Early in April, she unveiled a plan to implement President **Joe Biden's** signature Cancer Moonshot initiative. And Biden is expected to cap Bertagnolli's whirlwind first 7 months in Washington, D.C., by nominating her to become the 17th director of NIH, the federal government's crown jewel of biomedical research.

The previous NIH Director, **Francis Collins**, stepped down in December 2021. If confirmed by the Senate, Bertagnolli would be only the second woman to lead NIH, following **Bernadine Healy**, who stepped down in 1993.

Once nominated, her first hurdle will be a hearing before the [Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions \(HELP\) Committee](#). Bertagnolli has never testified before Congress (and leading NCI doesn't require Senate confirmation). The HELP panel is chaired by Senator **Bernie Sanders** (I-VT).

On March 23, 2023, *Science* published an investigative report titled [PALL OF SUSPICION - The National Institutes of Health's "China initiative" has upended hundreds of lives and destroyed](#)

[scores of academic careers](#) and an editorial titled [Eroding Trust and Collaboration](#). "Given the information available in the public domain, the scientific community could easily conclude that this is a xenophobic program to harm Chinese scientists and cut off international scientific cooperation. The federal government needs to figure out a way to let the NIH and the institutions reassure the community that this is all worth it," the editorial concluded.

Read the *Science* report at <https://bit.ly/3oWH1eY> and its editorial at <https://bit.ly/3z24z40>

Want to Improve US-China Relations? Bring back Fulbright Program, Advocates Say



According to the *South China Morning Post* on April 28, 2023, as tensions between Washington and Beijing keep rising, a loose alliance of former officials, politicians and ordinary US citizens are pushing to restore one of America's oldest and most prestigious connections to China that observers hail as unmatched in its potential to put the relationship back on track.

The Fulbright China program, which for over four decades sent American scholars to the country and brought their Chinese counterparts to the US, was cancelled in 2020 by an executive order from then-president **Donald Trump** over Beijing's imposition of the national security law in Hong Kong. President **Joe Biden** has extended the order twice.

Opposition came thick and fast from within and outside the Fulbright community. Seton Hall University professor **Margaret Lewis**, for example, likened the decision to "shooting ourselves in the foot", and an alumni-led petition to restore the program garnered more than 700 signatures in two days.

"Appalled" by the cancellation, **Colleen O'Connor** and fellow alumni formed a group of 100 volunteers called the Protect Fulbright China Coalition to push for its restoration. On March 29, 2023 Representatives **Rick Larsen** of Washington, **Don Beyer** of Virginia and **Judy Chu** of California reintroduced the [Restoring Fulbright Exchanges bill](#).

Under the Nationalist government in 1947, China was the first country to sign a Fulbright agreement with the US, though the program was paused after the Communist Party came into power in 1949. Since restoring operations after the two countries normalized relations in 1979, the US sent more than 3,500 Americans to China under the program and received more than 1,500 Chinese in the US.

Proponents describe its impact as profound.

The Fulbright China program counts among its alumni **Kevin Nealer**, a former member of president Barack Obama’s Intelligence Advisory Board; **Scott Kennedy**, senior adviser in Chinese business and economics at the Center for Strategic and International Studies; **John Pomfret**, The Washington Post’s former Beijing bureau chief; and legions of academics.

As of last October, there were fewer than 400 American students in the country – a sharp contrast from 2018, when China was hosting more than 11,000.

There are organizations in the Biden administration, particularly in intelligence and law enforcement, “who are opposing restoring the Fulbright on national security grounds”, said **Dennis Wilder**, a research fellow at the Initiative for US-China Dialogue on Global Issues at Georgetown University, while noting these concerns were not necessarily shared by the White House. Neither the Trump nor Biden administration spelled out what the concerns with the program were.

Read the *South China Morning Post* report: <https://bit.ly/3ngzvLI>

News and Activities for the Communities

1. Victims of Mass Shooting in Allen, Texas



According to multiple media reports, eight people including four Asian Americans were killed, and at least seven others were injured in a mass shooting at the Allen Premium Outlets in Texas on May 6, 2023.

Three of the victims killed in Saturday’s shooting belonged to one family. **Cindy Cho**, 35, and **Kyu Cho**, 37, and their 3-year-old son, **James Cho**, were among the victims. Their 6-year-old son, **William**, was also shot and has been released from the ICU. He is now with his extended family. The Korean American family was visiting the Allen Premium Outlets to exchange clothes William had gotten for his birthday four days prior to the shooting.

Aishwarya Thatikonda, an engineer from India who lived in the Dallas suburb, was among those killed. She was less than a week away from celebrating her 28th birthday. Thatikonda was at the Allen mall with a friend when the shooting took place. Her friend was wounded in the shooting. Her family is now planning to repatriate her remains to India with the help of the Telugu Association of North America. She received a master's degree in construction management from Eastern Michigan University in the US in 2020. For the last two years, she was working for a Dallas-based contracting firm on a US work visa.

On May 9, 2023, the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus issued [a statement](#) about the mass shooting. “While investigations into specific motive are ongoing, Allen, Texas, and the surrounding areas have among the highest percentage of Asian Americans outside of the coasts and half of the victims are also of Asian descent. With the shooter’s likely social media presence demonstrating an ugly promotion of neo-Nazism and violent white supremacist ideology, it remains clear Congress and elected officials around the country have a lot more to do to fight extremism here at home and create a safe, welcoming multiracial democracy for us all.

“This is the second largest mass shooting in this country this year, but every single day Americans die from gun violence. From going to the mall, going to school, to celebrating Lunar New Year, knocking on the wrong door or driving down the wrong driveway, it is clear that the problem is the guns. We must ban assault weapons now. Letting these weapons of war remain on our streets comes at the cost of American lives.”

2. Turbulence Ahead: Racial & Religious Profiling at the Border and Ports



Turbulence Ahead: Racial & Religious Profiling at the Border and Ports



According to Advancing Justice | AAJC on April 20, 2023, 22 years after 9/11, racial and religious profiling is still the harsh reality for many Americans. Last March, three Muslim-American travelers from Minnesota, Texas, and Arizona sued the Department of Homeland Security after they were stopped multiple times by U.S. officials over several years at the border and in international airports. They were interrogated to determine if they were Muslims, if they attended a mosque, and how often they prayed. The distress of these experiences has led one man to stop wearing a kufi and to stop carrying religious texts when he travels internationally to avoid scrutiny. In recent months, there

have also been reports of academics and scientists of Chinese descent being stopped, questioned, and harassed by law enforcement upon re-entry into the U.S., creating a chilling effect for many in the community.

Profiling people at the border due to their race, ethnicity, or religion is illegal under the U.S. Constitution's guarantee of equal protection under the law. The U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is required to base its enforcement activities solely on credible intelligence and legitimate law enforcement purposes.

In recent years, several racial and religious profiling cases have been widely reported and further highlight the problem at the border. Racial and religious profiling has created an environment of fear for communities of color across the country, but there are steps you can take to stand up for yourself.

Read the Advancing Justice | AAJC blog at <https://bit.ly/3ndt0ZJ>

3. 'Anti-Asian Racism' names the sin of white supremacy in Catholic Church



According to the *National Catholic Reporter* on April 29, 2023, Servite Fr. **Joseph Cheah** is hopeful that telling Asian American-centered stories will help communities and individuals begin to understand the ways in which racism and white supremacy have shaped history. In his latest book, [Anti-Asian Racism: Myths, Stereotypes, and Catholic Social Teaching](#), Cheah takes a wide and integral view on how Catholic social teaching can inform the way Catholics engage in the work of anti-racism in the context of Asian American communities. Read the *National Catholic Reporter* interview at <https://bit.ly/3ALaV8F>

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