

APALA

Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO



Organizing
Civil Rights
Economic Justice

Every Vote Counts!!!

The Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA) is dedicated to empowering Asian Pacific Islander Americans (APIA) by promoting their participation in the democratic process and governing institutions of the United States. To meet this goal, APALA is continuing our national program directed at strengthening voter registration, education, mobilization and protection efforts of APIAs.



Voter Registration

Voter registration is the first step towards political engagement and empowerment. APIAs, due to high immigration rates and unfamiliarity with the political system, have some of the lowest voter registration rates among all racial groups. However, research has proven that once Asian Americans are registered, they turn out to vote at rates that mirror their white counterparts. This is not going to change unless we change it. This means that if we register APIAs to vote, we gain power at the polls and also increase the voice of APIAs to be able to hold our elected officials accountable to the needs of our community.

Voter Education

APIAs have displayed a tendency to vote by issue, as opposed to voting by strict party-affiliation. The exit poll conducted by AALDEF for the 2006 election highlights the high proportion of Asian American independents, as well as the willingness of Asian Americans that are registered to a particular party to “cross-over” and vote for a candidate from a different party, depending on the candidate’s positions on issues that are important to APIA voters. This provides APALA with the opportunity to increase awareness of the collective APIA electorate through voter education activities. Many local APALA chapters have organized non-partisan issue-based and candidate forums to help APALA members understand ballot initiatives and candidates and the impact on our community.



Voter Mobilization

In collaboration with the AFL-CIO and APIAVote, APALA has identified battleground states where APIA votes will make the difference in the outcome of the 2008 election. Unfortunately, APIAs have the lowest voter turnout rates amongst all racial groups. Furthermore, many argue that established political parties fail to dedicate the necessary resources to mobilize APIAs. As a result, the overwhelming responsibility of turning out the APIA vote falls onto the shoulders of APALA and our community-based partners. The good news is that we succeeded in increasing the voter turnout of APIAs by 45 percent from 2000 to 2004. We need to continue this trend by working to turn out the APIA vote in 2008! APALA needs your help to phone bank, precinct walk, distribute flyers and increase the visibility of the APIA electorate.

Voter Protection

Unfortunately, instances of institutional and individual discrimination against APIAs, as well as many other ethnic and racial minorities, have been well documented. APIAs have reported instances of inaccurate ballot translations in Asian languages, rude and hostile treatment at the polls, and poll workers requesting identification from APIAs unnecessarily. As a result, APALA initiated efforts in 2006 to ensure that every APIA vote is counted and protected!



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