

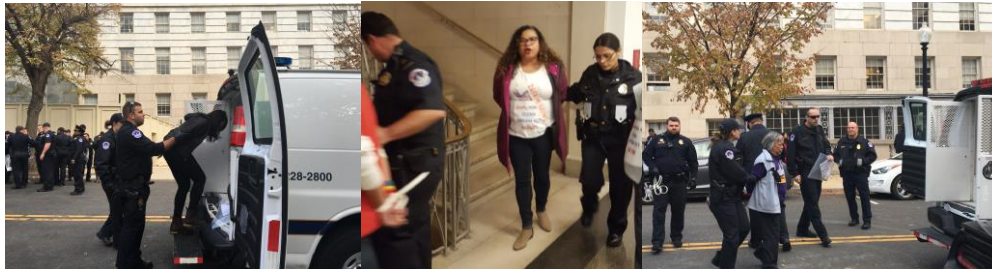
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
November 15, 2017



[WWW.APALANET.ORG](http://WWW.APALANET.ORG)

Contact: Marian Manapsal  
[mmanapsal@apalanet.org](mailto:mmanapsal@apalanet.org)  
(202) 508-3733

## Highest Ranking Asian American Labor Leaders Arrested in Peaceful Protest



Washington, DC - Today, 19 Asian American peaceful protesters, including two of the highest-ranking Asian American leaders in the labor movement, were arrested in an action to demand Congress pass a clean DREAM Act before December 8. Protesters blocked the entrance of House Speaker Paul Ryan's office in Washington, DC and chanted that he move the DREAM Act to a vote. Those arrested include past and present leadership and staff of the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO (APALA).

Luisa Blue, SEIU Executive Vice President, founding APALA member, and APALA National Executive Board Member, said: "I stood with my sisters and brothers to be arrested today because the AAPI community can no longer stand idly by while Congress and the Trump administration criminalize immigrants and people of color. More than 17,000 hard-working, law-abiding AAPI DACA recipients work and pay taxes in this country, and they now face being separated from their families and returned to the countries they left as children. Congress needs to pass a no-strings attached DREAM Act to protect 800,000 Dreamers, and act on behalf of our 300,000 sisters and brothers whose lives will be placed in limbo if Congress does not pass legislation extending Temporary Protected Status."

Johanna Puno Hester, AFSCME International Vice President, Assistant Executive Director of the United Domestic Workers of America, and immediate past president of APALA, added: "Our labor movement is ready to resist, organize, and fight back against hate. Today, I was proud to join eighteen other sisters and brothers on the front lines to say that the labor movement is not turning our backs on our undocumented community. The time to act is now, and we urge other organizers and leaders within the movement to join us in this fight for our freedom."

Current APALA President Monica Thammarath of the National Education Association (NEA) concluded: "We thank all the undocumented youth for standing up and speaking out and also NEA President Lily Eskelsen Garcia and AFSCME Secretary Treasurer Elissa McBride for showing up for our communities. We are ready to put our bodies on the line -- that's what this action was all about. Millions of undocumented working families live in fear of detention and deportation every single day. The Trump administration continues to stoke fear into our immigrant and refugee communities, and today and every day until white supremacists are out of office, we will protect and defend our family, friends, and communities from hate violence, racism, and xenophobia."

The action was held in coordination with the AAPI Immigrant Rights Organizing Table's Days of Mobilization to demand a clean DREAM Act. For more information, please visit: [aapidream.org](http://aapidream.org).

###