



ANNUAL FILAM POLICY SYMPOSIUM

Program

April 4, 2025 | 11AM-3:30PM [PST] | 1029 J Street, Suite 500, Sacramento

10AM	Registration & Networking
11AM	Symposium Welcome Address & Overview Dr. Robyn Rodriguez, Executive Director, Amado Khaya Initiative and Angelica Cabande, Executive Director, South of Market Community Action Network (SOMCAN)
11:15AM	Sacramento Insights and California's Political Landscape Dean R. Grafilo, Partner, Capitol Advocacy
11:45AM	2025 FIERCE Coalition Policy Priorities <i>Dr. Angelica Cortez, Executive Director, LEAD Filipino & Gabriel Young, President, NaFFAA NorCal</i> • <i>Past Campaigns, Legislative Wins and the Future</i>
12:05PM	Keynote Speaker <i>Mona Pasquil-Rogers, 47th Acting Lieutenant Governor and Head of Public Policy at Meta</i>
12:35PM	State & Federal Budget Overview: Impacts to K-12, Higher Education and Health and Human Services <i>Scott Graves, Budget Director, California Budget & Policy Center</i>
1:05PM	Break
1:25PM	Briefing on California Immigrant and Sanctuary Policies <i>Catherina "Cat" Nou, Director, Office of CARE, California Department of Justice</i>
2PM	Policy Breakouts
2:35PM	Strategy Session Report Back
3PM	Fireside Chat with California Commission on APIA Affairs <i>Khydeeja Alam, Executive Director, California Commission on Asian Pacific Islander American Affairs (CAPIAA)</i>
3:25PM	Closing Keynote Dr. Rowena Tomaneng, Deputy Chancellor, CA Community Colleges
3:35PM	Announcements, Call to Action & Group Photo
3:45PM	End



ANNUAL FILAM POLICY SYMPOSIUM



About Us

Established in 2018, LEAD Filipino and the Bulosan Center for Filipino Studies convened the “Filipino Policy Steering Committee” to organize and bring our communities into state advocacy. The “Steering Committee” hosted the first Filipino Policy Symposium in 2018, followed by the first Filipino Advocacy Day at the State Capitol in 2019 to push for ethnic studies, worker rights and tenant protections.

In 2020, our Steering Committee stood with the Movement for Black Lives and hosted a statewide town hall to combat anti-blackness in Filipino communities; the event drew nearly 650 attendees. As nonprofit providers and community-based organizations across the state, we understood the importance of providing spaces for resiliency, connection and empowerment for students, adults, families and seniors at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. These factors influenced the formal reorganization into the Filipinx Igniting Engagement for Reimagining Collective Empowerment [FIERCE] Coalition.

We continue to operate as FIERCE, a coalition of 12-15 progressive Filipino nonprofit and community-based organizations from across California. We collaborate to advance Filipino concerns at the state level by driving educational campaigns, supporting Filipino voter turnout and producing the Annual Filipino Symposium and Advocacy Day in Sacramento.

Through our shared mission to build Filipino American civic power, we engage in state advocacy to educate policymakers about our experiences, concerns and needs ranging from healthcare, housing, education, economic justice, immigrant and worker rights. FIERCE was instrumental in the passage of Assembly Bill (AB) 490, The Justice for Angelo Quinto Act of 2021, which banned the use of positional asphyxia by law enforcement officials in the wake of Angelo Quinto’s death. In August 2024, FIERCE championed House Resolution (H.R.) 112 with Assemblymember Alex Lee to observe October as Filipino American History Month in the California State Assembly.



ANNUAL FILAM POLICY SYMPOSIUM

Past FIERCE Legislative Platforms [Abridged]

2025 Legislative Platform will be announced soon

2021 FIERCE Legislative Platform

Bill No.	Name	Description	Outcome
AB-490	The Justice for Angelo Quinto Act	Assembly Bill 490 bans knee-to-neck holds in California and removes knee-to-neck holds from all law enforcement agencies' use of force policies and practices.	Passed; signed into law
AB-118	The C.R.I.S.E.S Act	Assembly Bill 118 would fund a pilot program to alternative approaches to emergency response to incidents of mental health crises. AB 118 would support the inclusion of mental health specialists and social workers in responding to emergency calls to offer de-escalation and non-violent solutions.	Passed; signed into law
SB-2	Police Accountability: Decertification	Senate Bill 2 establishes a statewide system that allows for a process to decertify police officers convicted of misconduct.	Passed; signed into law
Local Initiative	Save Philippines Studies at City College of San Francisco	The Philippines Studies Department at City College of San Francisco is the only program in the country. Due to ongoing budget cuts at the community college level, The Philippines Studies Department is facing closure, as the faculty of the program have received pink slips. Help save Philippine Studies at CCSF and grow programming at all California community colleges.	Passed; department saved



ANNUAL FILAM POLICY SYMPOSIUM

2022 FIERCE Legislative Platform

Bill No.	Name	Description	Outcome
AB-1608	County officers; consolidation of officers	Assembly Bill 1608 seeks to revoke the authority of county boards of supervisors in California to consolidate the duties of the sheriff with those of the coroner and mandates the separation of these offices if they were consolidated before January 1, 2023.	Died; did not pass Senate
AB-1400	California Guaranteed Health Care for All Act	Assembly Bill 1400, known as the California Guaranteed Health Care for All Act, aims to establish the CalCare program, which provides comprehensive universal single-payer health care coverage and a health care cost control system for all California residents.	Died; did not pass committee
AB-1630	Competence to stand trial: statewide application	Assembly Bill 1630 safeguards the rights of individuals with disabilities and addresses a cycle where financially disadvantaged individuals with mental health issues end up in the criminal legal system instead of receiving appropriate treatment.	Died; did not pass committee
AB 2235	Teacher credentialing: supplementary authorization: ethnic studies	Assembly Bill 2235 requires the Commission on Teacher Credentialing to establish an extra qualification in ethnic studies for educators meeting the specified requirements.	Died; did not pass committee
AB 2596	Establishing Lunar New Year as a state holiday	Assembly Bill 2596 establishes the "Lunar New Year" as a state holiday, granting state employees the option to receive holiday credit or use leave on this day, and excludes it from designation as a judicial holiday.	Passed; signed into law
SB- 830	Education finance: additional education funding	Senate Bill 830 introduces an equitable way to determine education funding using average daily membership, offering extra funding to local educational agencies that sustain their efforts to combat chronic absenteeism, with a stipulation that a minimum of 30% of this additional funding should be allocated to this cause.	Died; did not pass committee



ANNUAL FILAM POLICY SYMPOSIUM

2023 FIERCE Legislative Platform

Bill No.	Name	Description	Outcome
AB-1255	Teacher Credentialing: Ethnic Studies Task Force	Assembly Bill 1255 establishes a statewide task force to provide recommendations for criteria required to obtain a single-subject credential in ethnic studies, aiming to prepare teachers for effective instruction in this subject.	Died; did not pass committee
AB-449	Hate Crimes: Law Enforcement Policies	Assembly Bill 449 mandates state and local law enforcement agencies to adopt comprehensive hate crimes policies, including training, by July 1, 2024, with provisions for review and compliance monitoring by the Department of Justice.	Passed; signed into law
AB-1382	State Designated Cultural Districts	Assembly Bill 1382 enhances state-designated cultural districts by appointing a dedicated staff member for program development and funding allocation and establishing an interdepartmental advisory group to support these cultural districts in collaboration with other agencies and promote them as tourism destinations.	Died; did not pass committee
H.R. 1433	Philippine Human Rights Act (PHRA)	The Philippine Human Rights Act proposes the suspension of U.S. security assistance to the Philippines until the Philippine government undertakes significant human rights and institutional reforms within its military and police forces.	Re-introduced



ANNUAL FILAM POLICY SYMPOSIUM

Speaker Biographies



Dean R. Grafilo
Partner
Capitol Advocacy

Dean R. Grafilo is a partner at Capitol Advocacy, where he brings over twenty years of political and policy experience. His relational advocacy approach, deep-rooted knowledge on a wide range of issues, and ability to deliver results is an invaluable asset to the firm. His experience ranges from local politics, public administration, government relations and policy advocacy. He previously served as the Director of the California Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA), Chief of Staff to former State Assemblymember and current Attorney General Rob Bonta and directed government relations for the California Medical Association. He holds his Master of Public Administration from the University of Washington and Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from San Francisco State University. He lives in West Sacramento with his wife Marisa and two daughters.



Mona Pasquil Rogers
47th Acting Lieutenant Governor
Head of Public Policy at Meta

Mona Pasquil Rogers serves as Director of California Public Policy for Meta, where she is responsible for managing relationships with policymakers and stakeholders throughout the state. She is also President of The California Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus Institute. Prior to that, Pasquil Rogers served as Appointments Secretary in the Office of Governors Gavin Newsom and Edmund G. Brown Jr. where she was responsible for helping the Governor build his administration by recruiting top candidates to serve the state. In 2009, Pasquil Rogers served as Chief of Staff to California Lieutenant Governor John Garamendi and Acting Lieutenant Governor, after Garamendi was elected to Congress. This marked the first time a woman, Asian Pacific Islander or Filipina American served in this role.



Dr. Rowena M. Tomaneng
Deputy Chancellor
California Community Colleges

Dr. Rowena M. Tomaneng is the current Deputy Chancellor for the California Community College system. She is the immediate past President of San José City College in the San Jose-Evergreen Community College District. The first Pinay to hold both positions. From 2016-2020, she served as the President of Berkeley City College in the Peralta Community College District. There, she launched The Berkeley Promise—a City of Berkeley, Berkeley Unified School District, Berkeley City College, and Berkeley Community Fund partnership to close the racial opportunity gap for low-income African American, Asian American, and Latino students. She also expanded the Undocumented Community Resource Center, a Define American chapter. Prior to her presidencies, Dr. Tomaneng served in multiple leadership roles at De Anza College in the Foothill-De Anza Community College District. She was also the founding co-Director of De Anza's then Institute of Community and Civic Engagement (ICCE). Dr. Tomaneng received her EdD in International/Multicultural Education with a concentration in Human Rights Education from University of San Francisco, an MA in English from University of California, Santa Barbara, and a BA in English from University of California, Irvine.



ANNUAL FILAM POLICY SYMPOSIUM



Scott Graves
Budget Director
California Budget & Policy Center

Scott leads the organization's work on state and local budget processes and analyzes justice system policies. He has been with the organization since 2002. He holds a BA in Political Science from CSU Sacramento and PhD in Political Science and Government from the University of Texas, Austin.



Catherina "Cat" Nou
Director of CARE
California Department of Justice

Catherina serves as the Director of the Office of Community Awareness, Response, and Engagement (CARE). Catherina joins the Attorney General's Office with over 15 years of diverse experience in management specializing in policy advocacy and program development for governmental and nonprofit organizations. Previously, Catherina served as the Chief of Staff for Sacramento City Councilmember Mai Vang, Senior Policy Consultant for Assemblymember David Chiu, and Chief of Staff for Assemblymember Mariko Yamada. Prior to those roles, she served as Chief Consultant for the California Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus and established the policy arm for Everyday Impact Consulting. Catherina earned a Master of Arts degree in educational leadership and policy studies from California State University, Sacramento and a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology from the University of California, Davis. Catherina is a Central Valley native and sister and daughter of Cambodian refugees.



Khydeeja Alam
Executive Director
California Commission on Asian Pacific Islander American Affairs

Khydeeja Alam is the first South Asian woman to serve as Executive Director of the California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs (CAPIAA). Named the 2024 AAPI Change Maker of the Year by the Sacramento Bee, Khydeeja is proud to serve her community in this capacity. She was also recognized as the top 40 Under 40 AAPI political professionals by NAAPPPA. With over 18 years in California public policy and public relations, Khydeeja has driven transformative change, advancing legislation and securing historic levels of state budget investments. Her work has advanced equity and opportunity across the state. Khydeeja currently serves on the University of California Center Sacramento (UCCS) Advisory Board, and the Muslimahs in Policy (MIPS) Advisory Council. Previously, she held leadership roles at CAIR CA as Board President of CAIR Sacramento Valley/Central CA. On the Governor's Statewide Childhood Policy and at Educare California Silicon Valley, she championed equity and access in the early education space. A proud graduate of UC Berkeley, she is dedicated to building a more inclusive and equitable California while inspiring others to lead with purpose and passion.



ANNUAL FILAM POLICY SYMPOSIUM



Dr. Angelica Cortez
Founder & Executive Director
LEAD Filipino

Dr. Angelica Cortez is an advocate, strategist, and executive with a background in public policy, JEDI, and health and human services. She is the Founder and Executive Director of LEAD Filipino, a nonprofit organization that grew out of San José and now operates across the country. She also currently serves as the Senior Vice President of Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) at Pacific Clinics.

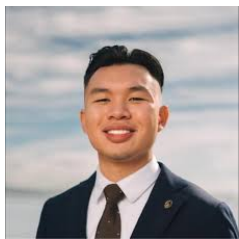
Voted as a Silicon Valley 40 Under 40 and Woman of Influence, she continues to develop and implement critical political and power building infrastructure for Filipinos and Asian American Pacific Islander communities nationwide, having recently overseen a Silicon Valley Voter Hub for Santa Clara County. She serves on the Campaign Board for the LGBTQ+ Victory Fund, Board of Directors for Sacred Heart Community Service and as a National Trustee for the Filipino American National Historical Society. She holds her Master of Public Administration from the University of San Francisco and Doctorate in Education from the University of Southern California.



Dr. Robyn Magalit Rodriguez
Founder & Executive Director, Amado Khaya Initiative
President, Filipino American Educators Association of California

Dr. Robyn Magalit Rodriguez is an educator, community organizer, small farmer, and mother. She is best known for her role as Professor Emeritus of Asian American Studies at UC Davis. While at Davis, she founded the Bulosan Center for Filipinx Studies. Rodriguez left the professoriate to continue the Bulosan Center's work through the non-profit, Amado Khaya Initiative, named after her late son.

She is also president of the Filipino American Educators Association of California. This marked the first time a woman, Asian Pacific Islander, or Filipina American served in this role.



Cameron Sasai
Public Policy & Advocacy Coordinator
LEAD Filipino

Cameron Sasai serves as the Public Policy Coordinator for LEAD Filipino, where he is responsible for designing and implementing their public policy and advocacy program, collaborating with their coalition partners, and fostering relationships with policymakers throughout the state. Raised by a proud Filipina immigrant mother and a Japanese-American father, Cameron's mission has been shaped by

values of advocacy, resiliency, equity, and social justice. He transferred from a California Community College to UC Davis, where he graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Political Science—Public Service. Cameron Sasai also serves as the 53rd Mayor of Pinole, California, proudly representing the city with a strong dedication to his hometown. In 2022, he was elected to the Pinole City Council, making history as the first Filipino American and youngest person to represent the city in its 120+ year history. Sasai broke new ground again in 2024 when he became Pinole's youngest mayor and first of Filipino descent.



ANNUAL FILAM POLICY SYMPOSIUM



Daisy Maxion
Organizing Director
Filipino Advocates for Justice

Daisy is the Organizing Director at Filipino Advocates for Justice and Commissioner for the City of Hayward. Daisy is a daughter of Filipino immigrants and is a native to the Bay Area in California. She started organizing in her early years as a student leader in college. She served as the only Filipinx student body President across all 23 California State Universities at CSU East Bay from 2019-2020. She advocated on behalf of approximately 15,000 predominantly working class BIPOC and POC students. Daisy has led Census 2020 collaborative efforts with Alameda County Complete Count Committee and AAPI organizations and communities. She coordinated volunteer recruitment during the 2020 election cycle, resulting in 175+ volunteer shifts and 50+ leaders developed during the SCF campaign. She had also worked as the Community Organizer for various civic engagement campaigns in which she participated in leading efforts for GOTV digital organizing, making it accessible for the Filipinx community. Maxion continues to lead outreach, legislative, and organizing efforts that advocate for housing justice, voting, and domestic worker rights within the Filipinx community.



Angelica Cabande
Executive Director
SOMCAN (South of Market Community Action Network)

Angelica has 21 years of experience in community organizing, policy and campaign work plus guiding and growing non-profit infrastructure. She was born in the Philippines and immigrated to the US at the age of 8 years old, she has organized on tenant, environmental justice, language, and workers rights issues, led coalition work around community planning including getting the resolution passed for SOMA Pilipinas, the Filipino Cultural Heritage District in SF and built the leadership and civic engagement of parents, tenants and workers.



Gabriel Young
Regional President
National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA)
NorCal

Gabriel Young is the President of NaFFAA NorCal, civic engagement organizer with LEAD Filipino, and staff assistant with the California Commission on Asian Pacific Islander American Affairs. He recently graduated from The George Washington University with a BA in Political Science and focus in Public Policy and International Affairs. His professional background blends public policy, advocacy and local and federal government, having previously interned for the White House Initiative on Asian Americans Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (WHIAANHPI), where he helped the Biden-Administration advance Equity, Justice and Opportunity for AA and NHPI communities and serving in the offices of former San José Mayor Sam Liccardo and California State Assemblymember Alex Lee. He is currently a graduate student at UC Berkeley's Goldman School of Public Policy, pursuing his Master in Public Policy. Gabriel is a Star Wars fanatic who loves to chat, eat, watch movies, read, and play video games.



ANNUAL FILAM POLICY SYMPOSIUM

FIERCE Coalition Members

Amado Khaya Initiative (AKI)

Asian Pacific Islander Community Actions (APICA)

Empowering Marginalized Asian Communities (EMAC)

LEAD Filipino

Filipino Advocates for Justice

Filipino American Educators Association of California (FAEAC)

Pilipino Workers Center (PWC)

National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA) NorCal

SacFil

South of Market Community Action Network (SOMCAN)

For more information:

Alyssa Mamacalay

Coordinator

FIERCE Coalition

fiercecoordinator@somcan.org