

Asian and Pacific Islander Coalition 2022 Legislative Priorities

The Asian Pacific Islander Coalition (APIC) is a statewide network of community organizations dedicated to advancing and restoring the civil and human rights of and racial and economic justice for all Asians and Pacific Islanders (A&PI) in solidarity with Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities.

APIC was created after 1996 welfare reform changes significantly impacted and reduced non citizens' federal eligibility for public assistance programs. Recognizing the need for a collective voice advocating for the rights and equity of foreign-born A&PI, APIC formed to lobby the Washington State legislature to address the gap created by federal legislation. Building off this legacy, every year APIC Chapters from King, Pierce, Snohomish, Yakima, and Spokane counties and South Puget Sound bring together A&PIs including immigrants, refugees, and citizens around Washington state to meet with the Governor, State Representatives, and State Senators to advocate for the issues most impactful to our communities.

This year APIC believes that the following policy priorities will be integral to improving the lives of Asian and Pacific Islander communities in Washington State:

Unemployment Benefits for Undocumented Workers (SB 5438): Address the structural exclusions built into the unemployment system by building a permanent, separate unemployment system that provides benefits to undocumented workers, creating a social safety net to help around 150,000 Washington residents and their families.

Health Equity for Immigrants: Fund immigrant healthcare needs by allocating seed funding of \$80 - \$100 million for a state coverage plan that can launch by 2024 and ensure that all people have access to healthcare regardless of immigration status.

\$500 Million investment in Affordable Housing: Appropriate \$500 million in the capital budget toward the Housing Trust Fund. This investment will provide funding for a wide range of affordable housing projects that will specifically support low-income populations in Washington state. We ask that 25% of the \$500 million be set aside for BIPOC community-based organization projects to ensure an investment in communities who are disproportionately impacted by housing insecurity, poverty, and displacement.

\$150,000 allocated to IFJC: Invest \$150,000 in the International Families Justice Coalition from the Office of Civil and Legal Aid to ensure legal representation for vulnerable immigrants in family law and domestic violence cases.

Additional policies we support:

Working Families Tax Credit: Technical (HB 2096) and implementation (HB 1888) fixes to the Working Families Tax Credit, along with \$10 million funding for outreach to high-priority communities through community-based organizations.

Tax on Excessive Wealth (HB 1406/SB 5426): Create a 1% tax on value of stocks, bonds, and other intangible assets over 1 billion

Elimination of Advisory Votes (HB 5182): Remove confusing advisory votes from the ballot making it more accessible to new voters and voters with limited English proficiency, less cumbersome for voters researching votes that have no impact on our lives, and saving the state time money, and administrative resources

WA Secure Automatic Voter Registration Act (SB 5636): Improve the current automatic voter registration system by upgrading to a back-end system where citizens will be registered automatically, with the caveat that residents are only registered if providing documents proving citizenship, protecting noncitizens from accidental registration

Strengthening the WA Voting Rights Act (HB 5597): Strengthen the WVRA by including a preclearance requirement for jurisdictions with a history of voting rights concerns, ensure successful plaintiffs are able to recover legal costs

Language Access in K-12 Schools (HB 1153): Establish effective language access services at public schools to improve meaningful, equitable access for students and their family members who have language access barriers

Language Access on Prescriptions (HB 1852/SB 5840): Require pharmacies to offer prescription medication labels in 15 languages as to be decided on a committee following the passage of the bill

Increasing In-Home Personal Needs Allowance: Washington's current in-home Personal Needs Allowance is inadequate and inequitable, creating a barrier to individuals, specifically Seniors, receiving necessary care in their own homes. Increasing the PNA for in-home clients to 300% of the federal benefit rate promotes client choice and allows seniors and individuals with disabilities to remain in their own home.

Overhaul the Redistricting Process: Pass drastic improvements to the Washington redistricting process, such as changing the composition of the commission to be nonpartisan, improving the timeline, and increasing transparency and accountability in light of the commission's recent failure to meet the constitutional deadline.