

**Written Statement of Lisa Sasaki, Director, Smithsonian Institution Asian Pacific
American Center
Committee on House Administration
U.S. House of Representatives
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Chairperson Lofgren, Ranking Member Davis, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

I am Lisa Sasaki and I have had the honor of serving as the director of the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center since 2016. Prior to joining the Smithsonian Institution, I spent over 20 years working in the museum field, specifically in community-based museums like the Oakland Museum of California and the Japanese American National Museum. It is my great privilege to work with a talented team of curators, programmers, and professionals to highlight the stories of what is currently the fastest growing racial group in America, an estimated 20 million Asian Pacific Americans and their communities located across the mainland United States and the Pacific.

The Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center was established in 1997 as a mission critical, pan-Institutional initiative to further the inclusion and representation of Asian Pacific Americans across Smithsonian exhibitions, collections, programs, and research. In its early years, the Center produced numerous temporary and traveling exhibitions and hosted notable Asian Pacific American speakers, artists and performers here in Washington, DC. Today, the Center has expanded to also present digital projects, community-based public programs, and educational resources that bring Asian Pacific American art, history, and culture to a global audience. The Center acts as a respected convener and cultural laboratory working in close partnership with community organizations, scholars, artists, nationally recognized institutions – such as the Library of Congress and the Kennedy Center – and other Smithsonian units.

The Center also administers the Smithsonian's Asian Pacific American Initiatives Pool, federally appropriated funds that support projects from across the Smithsonian's 19 museums and 9 research centers that focus on the contributions and experiences of Asian Pacific Americans through research, acquisitions, programs, exhibitions, new media, publications, and educational activities. Since its creation four years ago, the Pool has helped to support 49 projects in 16 units, including the creation of the first Curator of Asian Pacific American History position at the National Museum of American History.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you today on HR 4132, a bill to establish a commission to study the potential creation of a National Museum of Asian Pacific American History and Culture. If Congress deems it in the public interest to move forward with the creation of a commission, the Smithsonian and I stand ready to serve as content experts should the bill pass into public law.

In the meanwhile, the Center will continue to advance its mandate to increase Asian Pacific American content and focus at the Smithsonian Institution and around the country. Specifically, we have recently launched a comprehensive campaign designed to do the following: 1) Create a series of national collecting initiatives with Smithsonian museums to preserve Asian Pacific American stories digitally and through the collection of objects, art, and archives; 2) Increase opportunities for Asian Pacific American students and museum professionals within the Smithsonian, helping to create the next generation of scholars, curators and leaders; and 3) create the first dedicated Asian Pacific American exhibition gallery in Washington, DC within the Smithsonian.

I would like to thank the Committee for giving me this opportunity to testify and for your support and interest in the work of the Smithsonian. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.