

Statement of Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote (APIAVote)
Hearing on “Weaponizing Federal Resources: Exposing the SBA’s Voter Registration Efforts”
U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Small Business
June 4, 2024

Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote (APIAVote) is the nation’s leading nonpartisan Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) voter engagement organization, committed to educating and empowering our communities, strengthening our voices, and creating change through civic participation. Since 2007, APIAVote has supported AAPI led grassroots organizations to strengthen our American institutions by, 1) building their capacity to integrate nonpartisan civic engagement principles into their core programming while building a pipeline of community leaders, and 2) being the leading national advocate for the AAPI electorate by investing in translated, inclusive voter education material, and being the primary source for insight into AAPI communities.

APIAVote’s focus on nonpartisan civic engagement centers around a belief in building a political voice through trust and meeting people where they are to address the issues important to them in their daily lives. To accomplish this work APIAVote partners with AAPI led grassroots community organizations that have the willingness to take on our call to incorporate civic engagement principles into their core programming. Once APIAVote’s partners have established their community base building processes, APIAVote connects them to the other national and issue based organizations that allow them to effectively mobilize their communities around the issues and policies that energize and motivate their community to vote.

[According to PEW](#), Asian Americans have been the fastest-growing group of eligible voters in the U.S. for the past 20 years. Asian Americans have grown in numbers by some 2 million eligible voters since that last presidential election. In the past two decades, Asian Americans have become one of the fastest growing racial or ethnic groups in the United States. Between 2000 and 2019, the Asian population in the United States grew by 81%, and the population is projected to pass 35 million by 2060. Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders were the third-fastest growing group, growing by 61% from 2000 to 2019. Their population is projected to pass 2 million by 2030.

The 2020 presidential election saw historic voter [turnout](#) by the AAPI electorate. AAPI voters had the highest growth of any racial group from 2016 to 2020 at [nearly 46%](#). This milestone happened despite a rise of anti-Asian hate and violence, and a global pandemic that shut down the US economy. This increase was a result of decades of population growth and community organizing to encourage AAPIs to register and vote at the same levels as other communities.

As an organization dedicated to civic engagement APIAVote knows that the first critical step in getting AAPI’s to vote is making sure that eligible members of the community are registered to vote. APIAVote appreciated President Biden’s issuance of [Executive Order 14019](#) (EO) of March 7, 2021 encouraging federal entities to promote access to voting. Given the countless interactions that the public has with federal government offices, the EO has the potential to realize the promise of the National Voter Registration Act by significantly increasing the number



of registered voters, including AAPI voters, in this country. According to the census, Asian Americans have among the lowest percentage of eligible voters in their racial category at 64% therefore making voter registration more accessible will help the AAPI community become invested and engaged with their civic duties.

The EO states that: “Executive departments and agencies ... should partner with State, local, Tribal, and territorial election officials to protect and promote the exercise of the right to vote, eliminate discrimination and other barriers to voting, and expand access to voter registration and accurate election information.” A key component of EO directs federal agencies to “consider ways to expand citizens’ opportunities to register to vote and to obtain information about, and participate in, the electoral process.” Furthermore, the EO gives federal agencies leeway in determining how to comply with its directives, based on what is possible within their authority and what makes sense in terms of their interactions with the public. This year, APIAVote projects that 5.9 million AAPIs will head to the polls if AAPI turnout matches that in 2020. The first step in meeting this turnout goal is getting our community registered to vote and the federal government can be an important partner in that effort.