

The Smithsonian's Museums on *Main* Street
Voices and Votes Exhibit

Asian and Pacific Islander Voting
in
New Jersey



Governor Murphy Establishes Asian American Pacific Islander Commission

11/8/2021

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today signed A-5737/S-3763 into law establishing the Asian American Pacific Islander Commission within the Department of State. The commission is charged with developing policies to address the social and economic needs of the growing Asian American and Pacific Islander communities in New Jersey. Under this new law, the commission will be required to submit an annual report to the Governor and the Legislature about the commission's activities.

"As the fastest growing ethnic group, our Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community is a key part of the great diversity in our State," **said Governor Murphy**. "While we celebrate the important contributions they make to our society and economy, we also recognize the challenges they encounter to access economic resources and opportunities. With today's bill signing, this newly created commission will represent this diverse population and ensure to advocate on behalf of AAPI throughout New Jersey."

Primary sponsors of A-5737/S-3763 include Senators Vin Gopal and Linda Greenstein, and Assemblymembers Raj Mukherji, Sterley Stanley and Gordon Johnson.

"New Jersey has welcomed immigrants from around the world since its very founding," **said Senator Vin Gopal, a founding member of the Asian American Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus**. "As we move forward in the 21st Century in our multi-cultured state, we need to make sure all our people, including Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, are valued and encouraged, in whatever endeavor they undertake. Our state is home to the third-largest percentage of Asian American and Pacific Islander residents in the nation," **added Senator Vin Gopal**. "I welcome the signing of this legislation to establish the AAPI Commission, which will raise awareness among AAPI individuals of governmental affairs and community and social service resources that may be of benefit to them. Overall, this new law will help raise visibility and improve understanding, as well as to foster more positive dialogue and communication and serve to recognize the many and varied contributions AAPI individuals have made and continue to make in New Jersey."

"In wake of the hate-fueled acts geared towards the AAPI community that we have seen over the last year, it is important now more than ever that we work to increase awareness for AAPI individuals, including their cultural contributions and the issues this community faces," **said Senator Linda Greenstein**. "All cultures and ethnicities deserve to be treated fairly and equitably, and my hope with this commission is that we can better educate our residents about AAPI culture and provide this community with various resources to aid them. Our communities need to be safe for individuals of all races and ethnicities to live comfortably, not fearfully. We will not tolerate hate."

"Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and their diverse culture play a significant role in New Jersey," **said Assemblymembers Raj Mukherji, Sterley Stanley and Gordon Johnson, in a joint statement**. "This Commission will ensure representation and access to resources by raising awareness to several challenges facing the AAPI community and focusing on addressing the needs of these communities. Their work will help the State develop ways to recognize the cultures and tackle the social, economic, and health needs of the AAPI community."

UPCOMING EVENT

APIAVote Leadership Summit

Join our strategy sessions to discuss
the hot button issues facing AAPIs in 2022
and prepare for the midterms.

Friday, June 24, 2022

8:30am – 6:00pm

The Capital Hilton, Washington D.C.

[MORE INFO](#)

WHY AAPI VOTERS ARE IMPORTANT



Fastest Growing Population

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.

While the largest AAPI populations continue to be in states like New York, California, Texas and Hawaii, other states across the country have seen their AAPI populations more than double over the last two decades. Nevada has seen a full 167% increase in the AAPI population since 2000. Arizona grew by 157%, and North Carolina by 154% in that same period.



We Shape Elections

The Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) electorate is a formidable community with the power to shape and influence elections down the ticket throughout the country.

The 2020 presidential election saw historic voter turnout by the AAPI electorate. AAPI voters had the highest growth of any racial group in 2020, with a 47% increase. This milestone happened despite a rise of anti-Asian hate and violence, and a global pandemic that shut down the US economy. However, it did not happen overnight. This was a result of decades of population growth, coordinated organizing, and strategic investments to encourage AAPIs to register and vote at the same levels as other communities.

In the last three presidential cycles, approximately 620,000 new AAPI voters entered the electorate, with eligible AAPI voters in various states making up more than 5% of the state's electorate, including California, Hawaii, Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Nevada, Oregon, Virginia, Texas and Washington. It is increasingly clear that candidates and elected officials must understand our growing political power and address issues important to our communities.



Representation Matters

The decisions made by policymakers and our representatives at all levels of government impacts our day-to-day lives – from how much funding local schools get to policies around crime prevention and gun safety.

AAPI voters are important because our voices in the political and policy discourse must reflect our priorities and needs. However, if AAPIs aren't at the table or in positions where they can influence policy decisions, our needs and voices are ignored or forgotten.

AAPIs are also the most underrepresented in office – making up just 0.9% of elected officials in the US – despite being over 6% of the population. It is important that AAPI voters see more reflective leadership so they understand that our representative democracy includes and works for their best interest, and to ensure that their needs, especially in the most vulnerable populations, are addressed with cultural understanding and in the languages they are proficient in.



Impactful Economic Strength

The growth of AAPI influence and power extends beyond the political sphere, into all aspects of American society. For example, AAPIs are integral to the success of the American economy — Census data shows that in 2019 alone, the AAPI community earned more than \$783.7 billion in income, paid more than \$167.9 billion in federal income taxes and almost \$72.5 billion in state and local taxes. A pre-pandemic Neilson study projected the collective buying power of Asian Americans to reach \$1.3 trillion in 2022.

AAPIs as professionals, business owners, service providers, consumers, and active members of America's economy play an important role in shaping the future of our collective communities. The decisions made by today's leaders must reflect the growing needs and roles of AAPIs in American society, beginning with appreciating the power of our votes.

#AAPisforVotingRights Launches Today!



FEBRUARY 22, 2022 | NEWS UPDATES

Our communities' ability to vote is under attack like we have not seen in over a generation. While the Senate may have failed to pass the *Freedom to Vote: John R. Lewis Act* in January, the fight is far from over and this issue is still unbelievably important. To get the message out about how these attacks on our democracy hurt AAPIs, we are launching a new social media campaign: **#AAPisforVotingRights**.

This campaign will uplift messages from AAPI voters and their experiences with voting: how voting-by-mail has helped them, how they faced voter discrimination at the polls, and more. By sharing these experiences, APIAVote intends to educate our fellow Americans that we are in the fight for voting rights – and our rights are at stake.

Join us by using our social media toolkit: <http://apia.vote/VotingRightsCampaignKit>. Feel free to share your own story with the hashtag!

This campaign will lead up to a virtual community briefing, including members of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, on **March 4**. Stay tuned for details!



EDSITEment!
THE BEST OF THE HUMANITIES ON THE WEB

Lesson Plans

Teacher's Guides

Media Resources



Closer Readings Commentary

Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage and History in the U.S.

August 27, 2019



<https://edsitement.neh.gov/closer-readings/asian-pacific-heritage-month>

A Tribute To Asian-American And Pacific Islander Heritage Month In New Jersey

By Guest Contributor | May 31, 2022, 9:47 pm | in [Edward Edwards](#) continues...

<https://www.insidernj.com/a-tribute-to-asian-american-and-pacific-islander-heritage-month-in-new-jersey/>



LD11 Senator Vin Gopal



Akhter

The State of New Jersey is home to the third largest percentage of Asian-American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) residents, with the AAPI community among the fastest-growing in the state generally, as well as among the state's electorate. In November of last year, the Governor signed legislation establishing the 'Asian American Pacific Islander Commission' in the Department of State, and recently announced the membership of the commission ([read more here](#)).

As Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month comes to a close, the following is a tribute to the AAPI community in New Jersey and highlights some of those community members who are making strides in different spheres of the state: among them, veteran officials, policymakers, advocates and activists, and up-and-comers in the world of government and politics.

Momtahina Afrin: *New Jersey Citizen Action Communications Director*

A rising star in the Bangladeshi Community in Atlantic County, Afrin served as Director of Constituent Services in LD 2 before moving on to becoming the Communications Director for NJ Citizen Action.

Mohammed Akhtaruzzaman: *Former Paterson Councilman*

The former Ward 2 Councilman in Paterson was the first member of the city's large Bengali community to win a council seat in 2021.

Assad Akhter: *University Hospital, Acting Director of Public Affairs*

Assad serves as the Acting Director of Public Affairs for University Hospital. He is a former Passaic Commissioner and former Deputy Chief of Staff to Congressman Bill Pascrell.

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Natasha Alagarasan: *Princeton Communications Group Communications Director*

Leaving her role as Deputy Director of Communications at the New Jersey Department of Human Services, Natasha Alagarasan, a former writer and producer, joined Princeton Strategic Communications (PSC) as a Communications Director effective in 2021.

Mussab Ali: *Ali Leadership Institute/ Jersey City BOE CEO/BOE Member*

Mussab Ali is a Harvard Law student, and a recent Phi Beta Kappa graduate from Rutgers-Newark University. Mussab was elected to the Jersey City Board of Education in 2017 and became the youngest elected official in Jersey City history as well as the youngest Muslim elected official in the country. In 2021, Mussab was elected the youngest BOE president in city history.

Karlito Almeda: *NJBPU Staffer*

A former LD39 Assembly candidate, Almeda, 26, a Mahwah resident and Filipino American, served as Deputy Legislative Director for Senate Majority Leader Loretta Weinberg and Assemblywoman Ellen Park's Chief of Staff, and now works at the NJBPU.

Arvin Amatorio: *Bergenfield Mayor*

Born in the Philippines to two public school teachers, Amatorio moved to the United States with wife in 2002. Amatorio was elected as a Councilman in 2014 and elected Mayor in 2019 and became Bergenfield's second Filipino Mayor in 20 years and only the second Filipino elected to office in New Jersey.

Sivaraman Anbarasan: *Franklin Councilman*

Anbarasan was most recently the Executive Director/CEO of the NJ Community College Consortium for Workforce & Economic Development. He worked in higher education for over 14 years at Camden County College and Sussex County Community College after spending 24 years in the IT industry. He also serves as Commissioner at the Franklin Township Sewerage Authority.

Mishael Azam: *UnitedHealthcare Vice President of External Affairs*

Joining UHG in 2018, Azam has previously served as the Chief Operating Officer and Senior Manager of Legislative Affairs at the Medical Society of New Jersey. Previously, Ms. Azam served as the Director of Policy to the Majority Leader in the New Jersey Assembly Majority Office. Ms. Azam is an elected member of the Camden County Democratic Committee and an appointee to the Haddonfield Environmental Commission.



Amatorio

Rahat Babar: *Governor's Office Special Counsel to Governor*

Babar oversees all high-profile litigation for the Governor's office and previously served as a special assistant to Attorney General Christopher Porrino and as director of Community Engagement under Attorney General Gurbir Grewal. He is the past president of the Asian Pacific American Bar Association of Pennsylvania.

Kinn Badger: *Murphy for Governor Senior Advisor for AAPI and Faith-Based Outreach*

A consultant and campaign aide to Murphy and Gopal, Badger has served as executive director of the Monmouth County Democratic Party. As Senior Advisor for AAPI and Faith-Based Outreach for Governor Murphy's re-election campaign, Badger was critical in getting out the vote of the state's largest growing minority community.

Azra Baig: *Department of Health Project Specialist*

Baig is a former member South Brunswick BOE. She is a registered nurse who works at the New Jersey Department of Health as a Project Specialist. She is the first Muslim and first American-Pakistani to serve on the South Brunswick School Board.

Rajpal Bath: *Governor's Office Aide AAPI Outreach*

Bath serves as the Governor's top lieutenant and liaison between the front office and the state's AAPI community, and has served as an organizer for NJ Citizen Action, a business representative for Main Street Alliance, and currently serves in Governor Murphy's administration. Bath has strong ties to the Burlington County Democrats and founded the Burlington County Young Democrats.

Dinesh Behal: *East Brunswick Councilman*

In February 2021, Behal was appointed to the council seat left vacant by Assemblyman Sterley Stanley. He won re-election in November. He is an insurance agent and real estate investor.



Ravi Bhalla: *Hoboken Mayor*

Prior to becoming mayor, Bhalla served on the city council in Hoboken and in 2017 was elected New Jersey's first Sikh mayor, as well as the first elected mayor in the United States who is a Sikh and wears a turban. Ravi earned national recognition in the New York Times for his legal advocacy after suffering a violation of his own constitutional and civil rights during a jail visit to a client. The incident motivated Ravi to lead a successful campaign to reform the federal government's visitation policies at correctional facilities nationwide.



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Sam Bobila: AAPI Activist and Fundraiser

Bobila is a fundraising and communications executive for a sexual and reproductive health care organization, and chairs an advisory group for an NJ General Assembly Member and actively participates in state and local politics. She also serves on the board of Action Together New Jersey, the board of the Trenton Circus Squad, a circus arts non-profit. Bobila maintains membership in the Association of Fundraising Professionals, Women of Color in Fundraising and Philanthropy, and Professional Filipino American Youth.

Salma Chand: *Governor's Office Senior Counsel*

Chand serves as senior counsel for Governor Murphy. Prior to that, Chand worked in the NJDOE, was an associate counsel for the Governor, and was an attorney at Mason, Griffin & Pierson, PC.

Ayesha Chaudhary: *Monmouth County Democratic State Committeewoman*

A resident of Manalapan, Chaudhary is a doctor who tended to over 300 victims of Hurricane Sandy. She was re-elected as Monmouth County State Committeewoman in March of 2021.

Vijay Chaudhuri: *Hoboken Communications Manager*

Vijay Chaudhuri worked in a number of capacities before serving under Hoboken Mayors Ravi Bhalla and Dawn Zimmer. Previously, he worked for US Representative Joe Crowley (D-NY), including serving as Campaign Manager on one of his re-election campaigns. Chaudhuri has also served as Campaign Manager of Edison Mayor Jun Choi's re-election campaign.

Upendra Chivukula: *Former Assemblyman and NJBPU Commissioner*

Chivukula made history as the first AAPI member of the state Legislature representing LD17 from 2002-2014. An engineer, he ran for Congress in 2012 against then-Rep. Lance, and currently serves as a Commissioner on the NJBPU.

Ehsan F. Chowdhry: *Lawyer*

A criminal defense attorney and former Assistant Prosecutor who is actively involved in many AAPI organizations, served as a Co-Chair of Governor Murphy's Transition Team for the Law & Justice Committee and the Law & Public Safety Working Group. He is a graduate of the New Jersey State Police Citizens Academy, FBI Citizens Academy, Past President of the New Jersey Muslim Lawyers Association and Chair of the Policing Subcommittee for the Commission on Racial Equity in the Law.



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Intashan Chowdhury: *Prospect Park Borough Administrator*

Chowdhury, 25, is believed to be the youngest Business Administrator in the state and first of Bengali descent in the country. A native of Paterson and a first-generation American, he previously interned for U.S. Sen. Cory Booker, Assemblyman Raj Mukherji, and served as a public policy fellow for Montgomery County, MD Department of Technology Services.

Subrata Chowdhury: *Atlantic City BOE Commissioner*

Chowdhury serves on the Atlantic City Board of Education.

Jannie Chung: *Closter Councilwoman*

Chung was elected as the first ever Korean-American official in Closter and currently serves on the Human Resources Committee, Public Safety, and Public Works Committee (as Acting Chair). She also sits on the Zoning Board of Adjustment and Board of Health as council liaison.

Chris Chung: *Palisades Park Mayor*

First elected to the council in 2013, Chung in 2019 became the first Korean-American to become mayor in his borough, where more than 50 percent of the population is of Korean ancestry. He works as director of operations for Global Management, LLC. in Fort Lee.

Buddy Deauna: *Bergenfield Council President*

Deauna serves as Council President of the Bergenfield Council, which serves one of the largest Filipino communities in the state.

Sangeeta Doshi: *Cherry Hill Councilwoman*

Born in Jabalpur, M.P., India and immigrated to the U.S. with her family when she was two years old. She has lived in Cherry Hill, NJ since 1996. Sangeeta is a telecommunications executive and small business owner.

Robert Field: *Governor's Office Senior Aide-IGA*

Adopted from an orphanage in India, rising star Field got his political start working for the Somerset County Democrats, and has worked for prominent elected officials on both the political or government side including Senator Menendez, Rep. Watson Coleman, Jersey City Mayor Fulop, USDOT Secretary Buttigieg and Governor Murphy.

Shala Gagliardi: *CD11 Constituent Services Manager*

A longtime Chatham Township resident, the lawyer and mother of three works for Rep. Sherrill as the manager of constituent relations. She ran for Morris County Clerk in 2018.



Parimal Garg

Parimal Garg: *Governor's Office Chief Counsel*

The Governor's Chief Counsel, Garg previously served as a Senior Policy Advisor during the Murphy gubernatorial campaign. He also clerked for New Jersey Supreme Court Chief Justice Stuart Rabner and as an attorney at Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP in Washington, DC.

Sonia Gawas: *West Windsor Council President*

Gawas currently serves as Council President for West Windsor Township.

Sonia Das: *DasWorks Founder*

Das founded DasWorks in 2016, and previously worked on campaigns and in the offices of Governors Jim McGreevey and Richard Codey. She later served as a Senior Research Associate in the New Jersey Senate Democratic Majority Office, as Chief of Staff for Senator Weinberg, and Vice President of Government Affairs at AMG.

Elizabeth George-Cheniara: *NJEDA Deputy Chief of Staff*

A West Windsor BOE member, Elizabeth serves as the NJEDA's Deputy Chief of Staff at the NJEDA and previously was the vice president of legal and regulatory affairs for the NJ Builders Association for over ten years.

Jash Gill: *Office of Assemblyman Raj Mukherji Chief of Staff*

Assemblyman Mukherji's Chief of Staff since 2021, Gill is an attorney and previously interned for Mukherji and Senator Gopal and has worked with the LD38 legislative office.

Raj Goomer: *Hoagland Longo Moran Dunst Doukas Partner*

As part of his work with the Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund, Goomer has worked with the NJ Department of Justice, US Department of Homeland Security, NYC Board of Education, NJ Police Academy and various local police departments regarding minority community awareness education and hate crime issues.

Vin Gopal: *LD11 Senator*

The most prominent South Asian voice in the Senate, Gopal was the first Indian American to be elected to the Senate in 2017. Gopal attended both Penn State and Rutgers, and previously served as Monmouth County Democratic Chairman.

Gurbir Grewal: *Former NJ Attorney General*

Grewal made history as the first Sikh to serve as an attorney general under Governor Murphy. He now currently serves as the SEC Enforcement Division Director.

Balpreet Grewal-Virk: *Hackensack Meridian Health / Bergen County Dems Vice President of Community Engagement/ Vice Chair of Bergen Dems*

The child of immigrants from Punjab, India, Grewal was born and raised in Bergen County and is active on the political circuit, having been involved in multiple campaigns including those for Senator Booker, Senator Menendez, and Hillary Clinton. She made history when she was confirmed as Commissioner on the Gateway project in 2020 and is currently the co-chair of the commission.

Archana Grover: *South Brunswick Councilwoman*

Grover was appointed to the township council in 2018 following the death of former Mayor Christopher Killmurray. Grover was born in India and came to the United States when she was 21 years old. She has been working since 1999 as a shop steward for local unions in Middlesex County focusing on discrimination in the workplaces.

Peter Guindi: *South River Councilman*

Guindi is a lifelong resident and Councilman of South River, having lived in the borough for 49 years. He owns a small business, Perfection Imaging LLC, in South River, and is the Safety, Fleet and Compliance manager for C3 Technologies LLC in North Brunswick. Guindi won re-election in November.

Mahen Gunaratna: *Governor's Office Communications Director*

Mahen Gunaratna serves as Governor Murphy's Communications Director. He previously served as Deputy Communications Director to NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio. In 2016, he served as Florida Communications Director for Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign. In 2012, he worked as New Mexico and Arizona Communications Director for Obama for America, serving as the President's regional spokesman for the Southwest.



From left to right: Park, Johnson, Haider

Shama Haider: *LD37 Assemblywoman*

Born and raised in Pakistan, where she served as a secretary to Nusrat Bhutto, Haider emigrated to the United States in 1977. She was elected in both 2001 and 2015 to serve on the Tenaflly, New Jersey Borough Council. In the November 2021 general election, she was elected together with her running mates Gordon M. Johnson to the Senate and Ellen Park in the Assembly, making her and Sadaf Jaffer as the first Muslim women to serve in the NJ state legislature.

Lisa Hou: *Department of Military and Veteran Affairs Adjutant General and Commissioner Brigadier*

Brigadier General Hou commands the more than 8,400 Soldiers and Airmen of the New Jersey National Guard. She leads, directs, and manages the NJDMVA in the execution of federal and state missions. Prior to this, Brigadier General Hou served as the Assistant Commissioner for Operations, Deputy Adjutant General (DAG) for New Jersey.

Kent Huang: *Montgomery Committeeman*

A partner at Mount Lucas Management LP, Huang was elected to Montgomery Township committee in 2019. Kent graduated cum laude from Rutgers University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Finance. He is a CFA charterholder and a certified Financial Risk Manager (FRM).

Amirah Hussain: *Office of Assemblyman Herb Conaway Director of Policy*

Hussain serves as the Director of Policy for Assemblyman Herb Conaway. She assists with policy research, responding to bill support and opposition and staffing the Assemblyman in the appropriations committee. She previously served as Director Of Constituent Relations and Outreach and Patient Access Representative at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital. She attended Rutgers University

S. Nadia Hussain: *Bloomington BOE BOE Member*

Hussain currently serves on the Bloomington Board of Education. She is the Senior Campaign Director for MomsRising as well as the ACLU-NJ's representative for the National Board of Directors of the ACLU. She is the co-founder of the Bangladeshi American Women's Development Initiative (BAWDI), a community initiative empowering Bangladeshi women and girls in NJ.

Sadaf Jaffer: *LD16 Assemblywoman*

Prior to being elected to the Assembly in November 2021, Jaffer served two terms as mayor of Montgomery Township, New Jersey. In January of 2019, she became the first South Asian woman to serve as mayor of a municipality in the state, and the first Muslim woman to serve as mayor of a municipality in the country. She and Shama Haider became the first Muslims to serve in the NJ State Legislature after the recent election.

Fozia Janjua: *Mount Laurel Councilwoman*

The first-generation Pakistani-American serves as Mount Laurel Councilwoman and co-founded a non-profit, Community SJP, where they provide meals for those in need.

Winfield Jai: *Office of Paterson Mayor, Intern*

Jai, a resident of Bergen County, previously as an intern to Paterson Mayor Andre Sayegh. His connections to the Chinese community were critical in getting out the vote for Governor Murphy in the 2021 election.



Candidate Jaffer with her daughter.



Sam Joshi: *Edison Mayor (above)*

Born and raised in Edison, Joshi was recently elected the first Indian mayor of Edison, which has one of the largest Indian communities in the state. He was previously Edison's Council Vice President. When he was elected as an at-large Councilmember at 27-years-old, Joshi was the youngest elected official in Edison's history.

AJ Joshi: *Bridgewater-Raritan Board of Education BOE Member*

Joshi serves on the Bridgewater-Raritan Board of Education and is a Environmental Scientist at NJ Department of Environmental Protection. He has over nine years of experience on the Board of Education.

Shahin Khalique: *Paterson Ward 2 Councilman*

Khalique is the current Ward 2 Councilman in Paterson, the second Bengali elected to the city's governing body.

Agha Afzhal Khan: *Former Congressional Candidate*

Khan ran for Congress in CD8 and more recently ran for Senate in LD33.

Annie Khoa: *Office of the Secretary of Higher Education Senior Advisor*

A first-generation, low-income college graduate and the daughter of Cambodian refugees, Khoa is passionate about accelerating socioeconomic mobility and expanding opportunity to students and families who have been historically marginalized. She was previously a Senior Strategist for Blue State, a consultant for Princeton University and Deputy Campaign Manager for Vivek Viswanathan for California Treasurer.

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Andy Kim: *CD3 Congressman (left)*

Elected to the House of Representatives at just 36 years old, Kim, the first Democratic Congressional member of Korean descent, was a Rhodes scholar and previously worked at the U.S. State Department. He served in Afghanistan as a civilian adviser to Generals David Petraeus and John R. Allen before working as a national security adviser under President Barack Obama.

Stephany Kim Chohan: *Highland Park Councilwoman*

Stephany joined Highland Park's Council in March of 2017. A Branch Manager and Business Development Officer for BCB Your Community Bank, she grew up in Newark, New Jersey, the daughter of a Korean immigrant father and African American mother.

Kris Kolluri: *Camden Community Partnership Inc. CEO*

Kolluri, a former NJDOT Commissioner, played an instrumental role in developing New Jersey's ARC project funding strategy while overseeing 17,000 employees, more than \$3.6 billion in capital funds, and over \$2 billion in operating funds. He currently serves as the president and CEO of Camden Community Partnership Inc., an economic and community development nonprofit.

Lauren Lalicon: *Office of the First Lady Policy Director*

A Filipino American within the inner circle of First Lady Tammy Murphy, Lauren has focused on maternal health that shined a light on the state's underserved community. She also served on the Governor's re-election campaign in 2021 as a senior organizer for Asian American and Pacific Islander outreach. She helped in engaging AAPI communities, including Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Filipino communities. She is also the Executive Director of Professional Filipino American Youth (PFAY), Vice Chair for the New Jersey chapter of the National Federation of Filipino American Associations, and an alumni of the Filipino Young Leaders Program (FYLPRO).

Christine Lee: *Kivvit Senior Associate*

A Korean American, Christine served as a Deputy Press Secretary to Governor Phil Murphy until 2021 and currently works at Kivvit as a Senior Associate.

Neela Mahbuba: *County of Passaic Public Information Officer*

Neela Mahbuba, a Bengali American, is a Public Information Officer for the County of Passaic. She also serves as a U.S. Coordinator for Egypt Student Internship Program x S.L.A.



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Hemant Marathe: *West Windsor Mayor*

Marathe first became Mayor in 2017 and was re-elected in November. He was the first Indian American Mayor of West Windsor. He has lived in West Windsor since 1994, and served 12 years on the school board – nine as president – and was elected to the City Council in 2016. He has also served as council liaison to the Affordable Housing Committee, Zoning Board, and the Parking Authority.

Krishna Martes: *Office of Senator Vin Gopal Legislative Aide*

Krishna Martes, an Indian American, has served as a Legislative Aide for Senator Vin Gopal since 2020. Martes is a graduate of NYU.

Sabeen Masih: *Capital Impact Group VP*

A Capital Impact Group Vice President, Masih has been a main player in Trenton politics since 2015. She currently serves as Vice President of Public Affairs. She also founded the growing group Asian American of Trenton Networking Group.

Rik Mehta: *CD6 Primary Congressional Candidate*

Dr. Rik Mehta is a father, husband, biotech entrepreneur and a global healthcare policy expert. A pharmacist and lawyer, Dr. Mehta was the Republican nominee for U.S. Senate in 2020 and set the record for the most votes ever received by a Republican statewide candidate in New Jersey. He is currently running in the GOP primary in CD6.

Rajesh Mehta: *North Brunswick Councilman*

Mehta was sworn in as Councilman in April 2021 after Claribel Cortes became Middlesex County Surrogate. Mehta has been living in North Brunswick since 1999 and is a member of the township's Municipal Alliance and Heritage Day committees. Mehta retired as a manager with the U.S. Postal Service in September 2017.

Venugopal Menon: *Tenaflly Councilman*

Menon serves on the Tenaflly Council.

Anjali Mehrotra: *NOW-NJ President (left)*

Mehrotra serves as President of the National Organization of Women-NJ chapter and previously ran for Assembly in LD21. She is columnist for Insider NJ.

Rianna Moonsammy: *Office of Assemblyman Sterley Stanley Chief of Staff*

Moonsammy started her political career with the Middlesex County Democratic Organization helping to run outreach and campaigns operations under Chairman McCabe. During her time at MCDO, she ran a successful campaign in her home town, Monroe Township, and has been involved in their Black Caucus and LGBT Caucus.



Rik Mehta



Fulop, left, and Mukherji.

Hossain Morshed: *Atlantic City Councilman*

Morshed, of Bengali descent, serves on the Atlantic City Council.

Rupa Motwani: *Westfield Democratic Municipal Chair*

Rupa is the current Westfield Democratic Municipal Chair and served as the Campaign Manager for Westfield Together, the re-election campaign for Mayor Shelley Brindle and her slate.

Raj Mukherji: *LD33 Assemblyman*

A champion of the middle class and working families, Mukherji is a former Deputy Mayor of Jersey City and former Sergeant in the Marine Corps Reserve. In the private sector, he is a lawyer and healthcare investor and was previously an information technology CEO. Mukherji is the first Indian-Bengali state legislator in the United States.

Amber Murad: *Watchung BOE Member*

Murad currently serves as a Watchung Board of Education Member, and ran for Somerset County Commissioner on the GOP ticket in 2021's razor thin contest.

Nuran Nabi: *Plainsboro Town Commiteeman*

Nabi has served on the Plainsboro Township Committee since 2007 and has secured re-election three times. He was a lecturer of Dhaka University in the early 1970's and a member of the Dhaka University Senate, and has more than a hundred patents and publications to his credit.

Shanti Narra: *Middlesex County Commissioner Deputy Director*

Narra was appointed to the Board of County Commissioners in 2016 and elected for a partial term in 2017, and subsequently won election to her first full term in 2018. Narra was named Deputy Director in 2021. Currently, Narra is a practicing attorney with the Legal Aid Society of New York.

Kevin O'Toole: *Port Authority Chairman*

With a long and distinguished career, the former Assemblyman and State Senator from LD40 served three terms as mayor of Cedar Grove, New Jersey before serving in the Legislature. the son of a North Korean war refugee, O'Toole is the name partner at O'Toole, Fernandez, Weiner and Vanlieu, LLC.

Raj Parikh: *Genova Burns Partner (right)*

A highly acclaimed litigator, crisis manager and counselor, Parikh is a Partner and Chair of the India Law, Construction Law & Litigation, and Election Law & Litigation Practices and Co-Chair of the Crisis Management Practice and Hotels & Restaurants Industry Group at Genova Burns LLC. He recently served as part of Governor Murphy's trade delegation to India in September 2019, was transition counsel to the Governor, and is one of only a handful of lawyers in the nation to handle complex election-related litigation as well as advise candidates on strategic matters.





A Tribute To Asian-American And Pacific Islander Heritage Month In New Jersey

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Grace Park: *PSEG Vice President and Deputy General Counsel*

A former Union County Prosecutor, Park was the first Korean American female chief prosecutor in the country, the first Asian American county prosecutor in state history, and the first female and the first minority to serve as prosecutor in Union County's 160-year history.

Ellen Park: *LD37 Assemblywoman*

Park made history in November becoming the first Korean woman to be elected to the New Jersey Legislature. Park previously served on the Englewood Cliffs Council 2016 to 2018. Park emigrated to the United States from South Korea when she was six years old and graduated from NYU.

Mark Park: *Englewood Cliffs Councilman*

Park, a Korean American, serves on the Englewood Cliffs Council and was previously President of the NJ Korean American Chamber of Commerce.

Dan Park: *Tenafly Councilman*

Park, a Korean American, has served on the Tenafly Council since 2014. He also works in the Office of Multicultural Affairs in Bergen County.

Marc Pascual: *Bergenfield Councilman*

Pascual has served as a Councilman on the Bergenfield Council since 2020, becoming the third Filipino-American on the borough council, a first in the history of the borough formed in 1894. Bergenfield has one of the largest Filipino communities in the state.

Minjae Park: *Office of Cory Booker NJ Press Secretary*

A Newark resident, Park recently joined Senator Booker's office to serve as New Jersey Press Secretary. Park was most recently at Audible, where he was strategic advisor to the founder and executive chairman. Before Audible, he was a reporter at The Record (NorthJersey.com).

Barkha Patel: *Jersey City Assistant BA*

Patel serves as the Assistant Business Administrator in Jersey City, and is the city's Director of Infrastructure.

Meet Patel: *Governor's Office Aide IGA*

An IGA aide to Governor Murphy, Patel is responsible for drafting the Governor's daily briefings and coordinates outreach to various stakeholders impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Previously, Patel served as an intern for Intergovernmental affairs and served as a committee member for the New Brunswick Democratic Organization.

Mohin Patel: *Edison Board of Education Member*

Patel currently serves on the Edison Board of Education, and ran for council in 2013.



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Toral Patel: *Johnson & Johnson Communication and Public Affairs Leader*

A second-generation Indian American, Patel co-chairs NJSDC South Asian American Caucus and has served as an advisory member to South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT). She sits on the steering committee for the Rutgers Center for American Women in Politics Ready to Run Program, is a founding member of Inspiring South Asian American Women (ISAAW), serves on the NJ 11th for Change Board, and serves as a Committeewoman on the Verona Democratic Committee.

Nishith Patel: *Edison Councilman*

Patel serves on the Edison council, and is a clinical pharmacist.

Virbhadra Patel: *Woodbridge Councilman*

Patel is the first Indian American to serve on the Woodbridge City Council. He's a former Senior Transportation Specialist at NYC DOT, a former Civil Engineer at Frederic R. Harris Inc. He holds a master's degree in Traffic & Transportation Engineering from the New Jersey Institute of Technology.

Salim Patel: *Passaic City Councilman*

An Indian-American, Patel serves on the Passaic City Council and was a fellow at the University of Southern California's Center for Religion & Civic Culture's American Muslim Civic Leadership Institute in 2010-2011. He is a fiscal analyst for Shearman, as well as being the founder of the nonprofit SMILE. He is chair of the Rutgers University Muslim Alumni Association.

Ajay Patil: *Edison Councilman*

Patil serves on the Edison council, and is a member of numerous South Asian organizations.

Juned Qazi: *Marlboro Council President*

An Indian-American businessman, he was elected to the Marlboro Council in 2021 and became President of Marlboro Township Council in 2022. He has served as president of Indian National Overseas Congress (I) in 2014, and even dabbled in Indian politics.

Eric Salcedo: *DNC AAPI Outreach Director*

Salcedo is currently the AAPI Outreach Director for the DNC and previously served as National Field Director at APIAVote, a national nonpartisan organization that promotes the civic and electoral engagement of Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities.

Shabnam Salih: *Governor's Office Director, Office of Healthcare Affordability and Transparency*

Shabnam Salih serves as the Director of the OHAT and has previously served as Associate Director Policy and Engagement at the Camden Coalition. She also served as a legislative aide in the State Senate and as a Teach for America 2011 Corps member, teaching in Newark, NJ.



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Amman Seehra: *NJDHS*

Seehra works in the NJDHS' Division of Family Development, representing low-income residents in legal matters.

Himanshu Shah: *Old Bridge BA*

Shah serves as the Business Administrator in Old Bridge.

Ishan Shah: *NJLEAD President*

Shah is president of the New Jersey Leadership Program, which seeks to encourage South Asian youth in the state to get involved in public service, government and politics. Shah previously served in the Office of the Governor Christie and as Chief of Staff to Assemblyman Rooney.

Kapil Shah: *Piscataway Councilman*

Shah and his wife came to America in 1983, moving into the same Piscataway home that they live in now and in which they raised their two sons. Kapil immersed himself in local politics, serving on the Piscataway Library Board for 16 years and as a Town Committeeman for the local Democratic Party organization. He also attended the Citizens Police Academy twice to learn about law enforcement from the Township Police Department. With an open at-large Township Council seat in 2016, Kapil was put forward as a candidate and has been serving ever since.

Sapana Shah: *Former Edison Councilwoman*

Shah previously as a councilwoman in Edison and ran for mayor.

Hira Shaikh: *Office of Assemblywoman Sadaf Jaffer Chief of Staff*

Shaikh currently serves as Chief of Staff to Assemblywoman Sadaf Jaffer and served as Deputy Director for AAPI and Faith-Based Outreach on the Murphy campaign, focusing on building the South Asian and Muslim voter turnout. Prior to the campaign, she was a principal at Kivvit.

Afsheen A. Shamsi: *Princeton BOE Former Member*

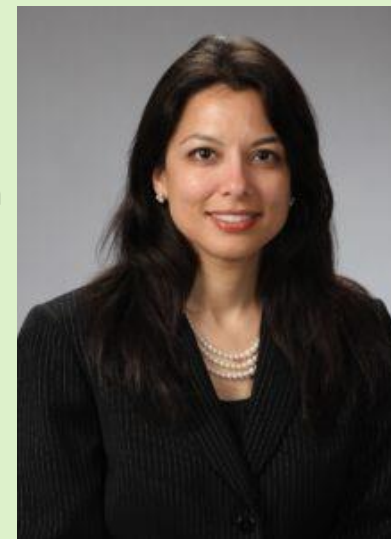
Shamsi was the Co-Chair of Muslims for Murphy, an ACLU-NJ Board Member, and former Princeton Board of Education Member.

Susan Shin Angulo: *Cherry Hill Mayor*

Shin Angulo became the first Korean-American woman to hold the office of mayor in 2020, and in the entire state. She was previously a Camden County Commissioner; at the time of her swearing-in in 2015, she was the first Asian-American commissioner in the entire state.

Amol Sinha: *ACLU-NJ Executive Director*

Sinha serves as the Executive Director of the ACLU-NJ, is active in the South Asian American community, and is a former president of the South Asian Bar Association of New York.



Sapana Shah



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Neena Singh: *Montgomery Committeewoman*

Singh was the first Sikh woman elected to town council in NJ, has an extensive history of service within the Montgomery community with various leadership roles. She has worked in Somerset County for many years as a community organizer and is a passionate advocate of mental wellness.

Balvir Singh: *Burlington County County Commissioner*

Elected to the Burlington County Board in 2017, Singh is the first Asian-American to be elected to a countywide position in Burlington County and the first Sikh American to be elected to a countywide position in the state. He is a full-time public high school teacher and a part-time lecturer at the Rowan College at Burlington County.

Hirsh Singh: *Former GOP gubernatorial primary candidate* (right)

Republican Hirsh Singh has filed to run for Senator Cory Booker's U.S. Senate seat in 2020, reports the Shore News.

An Indian-American, Singh ran in 2017 in the Republican gubernatorial primary.

Verinda Sood: *Office of Assemblyman Sterley Stanley Legislative Director*

Sood serves as the Legislative Director for Assemblyman Sterley Stanley. She also serves as an Assistant Project Manager for the Make Known Well Foundation, Inc.

Sterley Stanley: *LD18 Assemblyman* (below)

Born in India, Stanley was raised in Brooklyn, and later relocated to East Brunswick. Prior to entering politics, he worked as an insurance broker and a financial services representative for Mass Mutual New Jersey and a sales representative for MetLife. Stanley served as a member of the East Brunswick Town Council from 2017 to 2021, and is the first legislator of South Asian descent to represent LD18.



Peter Suh: *Fort Lee Councilman*

The second Korean-American to be elected as council member in Fort Lee, which has one of the largest Korean communities in the state, one of Yoon's objectives as Councilman is to highlight and strengthen the Korean American community.

Richard Sun: *Governor's Office Senior Policy Advisor*

Richard oversees transportation policy in Governor Murphy's office, he previously served on the Summit NJ City Council. He was one of the architects of Jersey Promise's Report on the State of Asian Americans in New Jersey.

Arvind Swamy: *AT&T Government Affairs*

Swamy, of Indian & Filipino background, started out in the office of Senator Lautenberg's office working on constituent casework as well as focusing on AAPI outreach. Arvind's career has seen him work at UMDNJ, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, City Strategy Group and now serves as the Government Affairs lead at AT&T.





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Gabriel A. Tanglao: *NJEA*

A Filipino American, the son of a union-nurse and product of New Jersey Public Schools, Tanglao has been recognized with the 2017 Teaching Champion Award from the Council for Economic Education; 2018 Finalist for the Social Justice Activist Award from the National Education Association; and 2019 Global Learning Fellowship with the NEA Foundation. He was previously Chair of the National Diversity Committee for the New Leaders Council.

Preethy Thangaraj: *Governor's Office Policy Coordinator*

Thangaraj specializes in the environment and energy and previously was a policy coordinator in the office and served as an Energy Informatics Research Specialist at Rutgers University.

Catherine Tung: *Assembly Majority Office Senior Policy Analyst*

Tung works as a Senior Policy Analyst for the Assembly Majority Office. She has served as aide to the Commerce and Economic Development and Science, Innovation and Technology Committees. She also serves as Secretary on the New Jersey Young Democrats Executive Board.

MD Forid Uddin: *Paterson Councilman-elect*

Uddin secured a seat in Paterson's May election this year, making him the first Bengali-American elected to an at-large seat.

Shepa Uddin: *Franklin Councilwoman*

Uddin was appointed in 2021 to fill a vacant council seat, becoming Franklin's first Asian-American woman to sit on the council following her unanimous appointment.

William Wang: *Port Authority of NY and NJ Leadership Fellow*

Wang serves as the Co-Founder, and Executive Editor of The Innovation Herald as well as the Founder and Chair of the EBRG Delegates Council. He was recently elected Chair & Chief Executive Officer of the Young Professionals in Transportation International, an international non-profit organization with chapters in over 23 cities worldwide.

Jonathan Wong: *Mahwah Councilman*

Wong was the youngest Filipino American politician in the country when first elected in 2014.

Paul Yoon: *Fort Lee Councilman*

The second Korean-American to be elected as council member in Fort Lee, Yoon is an active member of numerous organizations, including the Center for Hope and Safety, Korean American Family Service Center, and the Korean American League for Civic Action. He was also the past president of the Asian Pacific American Lawyers Association of New Jersey and the Korean American Association of Fort Lee.

Wei-Han Zhou: *Community Options Vice President*

Zhou began his career as an IGA staffer in Christie Administration and currently serves as Vice President, Department of Strategic Operations for Community Options.



Smithsonian

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN

**The Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center
brings history, art and culture to you through innovative
community-focused experiences.**

The logo for the East Coast Asian American Student Union (eccadsu) features the acronym in a stylized, rounded, blue font. The letters are interconnected, with the 'e' and 'c' forming a continuous shape, and the 'a's and 's' also flowing together. The 'u' is a simple, rounded shape. The color is a deep blue.

east coast asian american student union

Drew University's Asian American & Pacific Islander (AAPI) Organizations

Asian American & Pacific Islander (AAPI) Organizations

[Check out these awesome Asian American & Pacific Islander Organizations](#)

Activism

- [18 Million Rising \(18MR\)](#)
- [Desis Rising Up and Moving \(DRUM\)](#)

Civic Engagement

- [Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies \(APAICS\)](#)
- [Asian & Pacific Islander American Vote \(APIAVote\)](#)

Community Development & Advocacy

- [Asian American Leadership, Empowerment, and Development for Youth and Families \(AALEAD\)](#)
- [Asian Pacific Islander Queer Women & Transgender Community \(APIQWTC\)](#)
- [National Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance \(APALA\)](#)
- [Hmong National Development \(HND\)](#)
- [Hindu American Foundation \(HAF\)](#)
- [Japanese Americans Citizens League \(JACL\)](#)
- [KAYA: Filipino Americans for Progress](#)
- [Laotian American National Alliance \(LANA\)](#)
- [National Association of Korean Americans \(NAKA\)](#)
- [National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development \(National CAPACD\)](#)
- [National Korea American Service & Education Consortium \(NAKASEC\)](#)
- [OCA – Asian Pacific American Advocates](#)
- [South Asian Americans Leading Together \(SAALT\)](#)
- [Southeast Asia Resource Action Center \(SEARAC\)](#)
- [South Asian Youth Action \(SAYA\)](#)

Health

- [Asian Pacific Islander American Health Forum \(APIAHF\)](#)
- [Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations \(AAPCHO\)](#)
- [National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association \(NAAPIMHA\)](#)
- [National Asian Pacific Center on Aging \(NAPCA\)](#)

Leadership/Professional

- [Asian Professional Exchange \(APEX\)](#)
- [Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics \(LEAP\)](#)
- [National Association for Asian American Professionals \(NAAAP\)](#)
- [South Asian Americans Leading Together \(SAALT\)](#)

Legal

- [Asian American Justice Center \(AAJC\)](#)
- [Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund \(ALLDEF\)](#)
- [Connecticut Asian Pacific American Bar Association](#)
- [National Asian Pacific American Bar Association \(NAPABA\)](#)
- [Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund \(SALDEF\)](#)

Other National Organizations

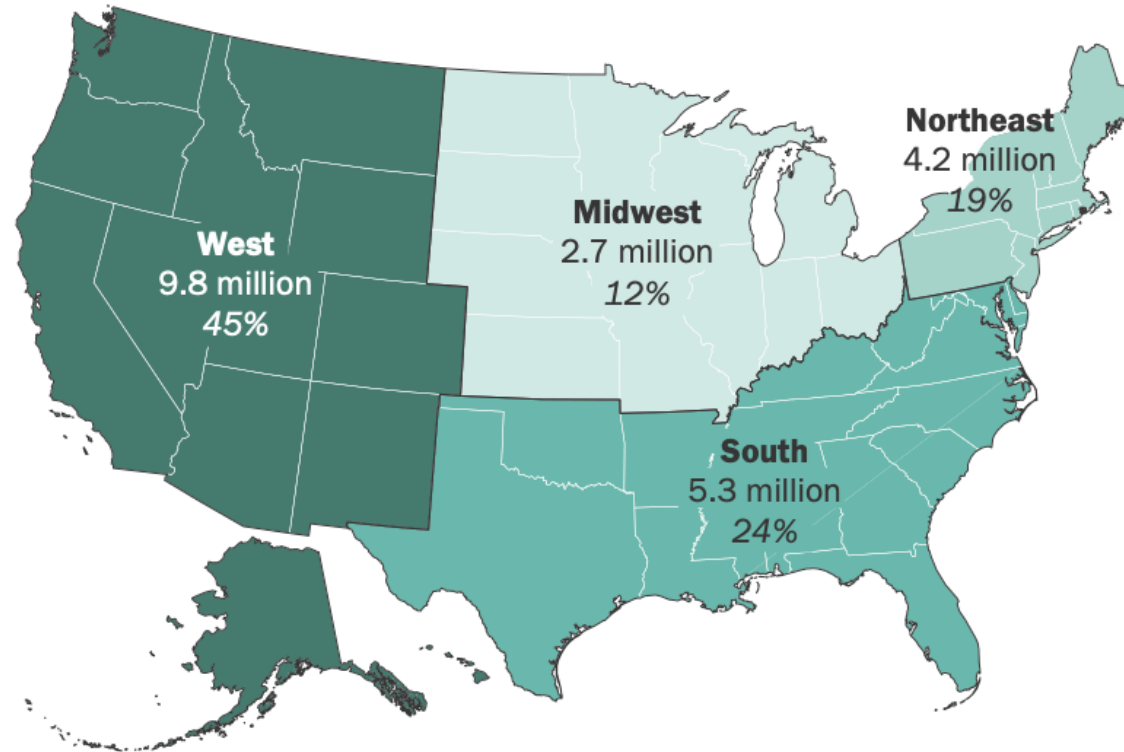
- [Asian American and Pacific Islander Momentum \(AAPI Momentum\)](#)
- [Center for Asian American Media \(CAAM\)](#)
- [China's Children International \(CCI\)](#)
- [Kollaboration](#)
- [National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum \(NAPAWF\)](#)
- [National Coalition of Asian Pacific Americans \(NCAPA\)](#)
- [National Federation of Filipino American Associations \(NaFFAA\)](#)

Student Organizations:

- [Asian Sisters Participating in Reaching Excellence \(ASPIRE\)](#)
- [Boston Asian American Student Intercollegiate Conference \(BAASIC\)](#)
- [Filipino Intercollegiate Network Dialogue \(FIND\)](#)
- [Intercollegiate Taiwanese American Students Association \(ITASA\)](#)
- [Midwest Asian American Student Union \(MAASU\)](#)
- [National Asian American Student Conference \(NAASCon\)](#)
- [New York City Asian American Student Conference \(NYCAASC\)](#)
- [Jakara Movement](#)
- [Korean American Student Conference \(KASCON\)](#)
- [South East Regional Conference of Asian American Leaders \(SERCAAL\)](#)
- [Union of North American Vietnamese Student Associations \(UNAVSA\)](#)
- [Triangle Asian American Student Conference \(TAASCon\)](#)
- [National APIDA Panhellenic Association](#)

Nearly half of all Asian Americans live in the West

% of the Asian population in the U.S., 2019



Note: Figures for all Asians include mixed-race and mixed-group populations, regardless of Hispanic origin.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2017-2019 American Community Survey (IPUMS).

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/04/29/key-facts-about-asian-americans/ft_2021-04-29_asiankeyfacts_04/

N.J. mandates teaching Asian American and Pacific Islander history in schools

New Jersey becomes the second state to sign teaching AAPI history into law, after Illinois last year.



Japanese Americans deal with paperwork at an internment camp in the early 1940s.
Corbis via Getty Images file

By Tat Bellamy-Walker for NBC News 1/28/22

New Jersey now requires Asian American and Pacific Islander history as part of its public school curriculum, the second state in the nation to do so.

Gov. Phil Murphy, a Democrat, signed the law Tuesday mandating school districts to teach students in grades K-12 starting in the 2022-2023 school year about the contributions of AAPIs. The bill's signing comes after it was approved by the New Jersey Legislature in December and follows Illinois, which also signed similar legislation last year.

Murphy said it's critical for students to learn about the contributions of Asian Americans. The curriculum will be part of student learning standards statewide.

"The members of our Asian American/Pacific Islander community have contributed so much to our state and nation," he [said in a statement](#). "By teaching students about the history and heritage of our AAPI community, we can ensure that the diversity of our state is reflected in our curriculum and create a more tolerant and knowledgeable future for New Jersey. I am proud to sign these bills into law."

Last year, Murphy created an Asian American Pacific Islander Commission within the N.J. Department of State, tasked with creating policies to target specific needs of the communities.

Kani Ilangovan, the founder of Make Us Visible NJ, an advocacy group that's been pushing the state to adopt a K-12 curriculum that's more inclusive of AAPIs, said she is grateful the bill has been signed because it shows the voices of the communities matter in education.

"It feels like we are fulfilling our slogan, making ourselves visible," Ilangovan, who is Indian American, told NBC Asian America. "My hope is that people come to learn the history that I only learned in the past year of all the different ways Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have contributed to the building of this country."