

Washington, DC – This afternoon, on behalf of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), Reps. Mike Honda and Robert C. “Bobby” Scott hosted census stakeholders for a national census teleconference meeting that focused on outreach to Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. (audio available here: [honda.house.gov/media/2010\\_Census Teleconference.mp3](http://honda.house.gov/media/2010_Census_Teleconference.mp3))

During the call, the Census Bureau, congressional leaders, community stakeholders, and ethnic media reporters engaged in a dialogue on outreach to this growing and diverse population, currently constituting over 15 million people in the United States. Participants hailed from throughout the United States, including California, Ohio, Texas, New York, Washington, Florida, Minnesota, Hawaii, the Pacific Islands, and other areas with significant Asian and Pacific Islander populations.

“We each have a critical role to play to make sure that our communities are counted,” said Honda, chair of CAPAC. Honda, member of the Commerce, Science, Justice Appropriations Subcommittee, which has jurisdiction over the Census Bureau, advocated for the \$1 billion of census funding that was included in the economic recovery legislation, boosting resources for the constitutionally mandated count. “We need trusted opinion leaders and nonprofits in our communities, ethnic media outlets, and congressional district offices to help get the word out.”

Congressman Scott discussed the stakes in an accurate decennial count for Asian and Pacific Islander communities. “It is incredibly important that our communities know about the decennial census, and fill out those forms,” said Scott, chair of CAPAC’s Civil Rights Task Force. “Certain provisions of the Voting Rights Act, including provisions that protect language minorities, are triggered by the decennial count. The decennial count also affects bread and butter issues in our communities. Each person left uncounted costs a local jurisdiction \$24,000 of federal funding over a course of 10 years.”

Community advocates highlighted the need for the Census Bureau to ensure diversity when hiring partnership specialists. Terry M. Ao, director of census and voting programs, at the Asian American Justice Center noted, “An accurate census count is extremely important to the Asian American community because census data are used to determine voting representation and to distribute federal funds for key services like education and housing. But historically, a disproportionate number of Asian Americans have been missed in the census. AAJC is working with community leaders, government officials and the Census Bureau to ensure that Asian Americans are fully counted in the 2010 census.”

Concerns about funding available for census outreach efforts were also raised. Vincent Pan, executive director of Chinese for Affirmative Action, a San Francisco-based advocacy organization noted, "In this economy, I'm extremely concerned that community based organizations most capable of assisting Census efforts do not have access to the local or state resources that they have had in the past."

Finally, during the discussion, the vital role of ethnic media outlets was also highlighted. "There are more than 800 Asian Pacific American media organizations throughout the U.S. and this doesn't even include the vast number of new media," said Bill Imada, chairman and CEO of IW Group, a full-service communications firm that specializes in Asian American markets. "This figure represents more than a 300% growth rate since 1990. The growth of APA media in this country clearly demonstrates the importance these organizations play in providing culturally relevant and accessible news information to our communities around the country. We need the support of community-based organizations throughout the country to get the word out about the importance of the Census."

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*The Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) is comprised of Members of Congress who are committed to promoting the well-being of the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. CAPAC is bipartisan and bicameral and currently has 30 members. It was founded in 1994 by then Congressman Norman Mineta, and is currently chaired by Congressman Michael Honda.*