

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Mike Honda (D-CA), Chairman of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), today joined his allies on the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and Congressional Black Caucus – collectively, the “Tri-Caucus” – to rally against the Republican budget proposal now moving through the U.S. House of Representatives.

Tri-Caucus leaders stood with members of the Hispanic and Asian and Pacific Islander American (APIA) communities to denounce the budget offered recently by the Republican Party. Minorities will be disproportionately affected if this budget passes, according to the TriCaucus members, as many are in lower- and middle-income economic brackets and rely on the social programs that face the most dramatic cuts.

“The Republicans say they need to make cuts from the budget to help pay for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, but the \$54 billion they are taking from important social programs WON’T go to hurricane victims – it will only pay for tax cuts for the rich,” said Congressman Mike Honda (D-CA), Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC). “The federal budget should embody our nation’s values, not undermine them as this budget amendment does. As an advocate for fiscal responsibility, I cannot support a proposal that worsens the federal budget, while harming working Americans, including millions of APIAs.”

“Our Tri-Caucus is working together to ensure that our most vulnerable -- our children, our seniors, the poor and disadvantaged, many of them minorities -- do not go hungry or become seriously ill because basic assistance will not be available to them,” said Congresswoman Grace F. Napolitano, CHC chair. “It is absolutely immoral for this Republican-led government to try to cover its irresponsible spending on the backs of hard-working people. America has always taken care of its people. This budget proposal does not.”

“Congress is within forty-eight hours of saying to the most vulnerable people in our country ‘You don’t matter as much,’” said Congressman Artur Davis of the CBC. “What is about to happen on the floor of Congress is cold-blooded but it will be played off as courageous by the ideologues of the Republican Party. There is nothing courageous about denying food stamps to vulnerable children or student loans to working class college kids.”

At a time when the number of individuals with no health insurance is growing, the Republican budget is cutting Medicaid, the largest health insurance program in the country, by \$10 billion. These cuts would severely impact children, seniors and minorities. APIAs alone make up 1.2 million of Medicaid beneficiaries. For many APIAs, Medicaid is their only form of health care, and cuts in this program will force many to rely on the emergency room for routine care.

At a time when the Census Bureau and the USDA are reporting that hunger in America has grown for five years in a row, the budget before the House cuts \$844 million in the food stamp program. That means that 40,000 children may lose their school lunch and breakfast and 225,000 families will lose their food stamp eligibility. Under the budget being considered, the five year ban for lawful permanent residents to receive benefits will increase to seven years.

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The Congressional Tri-Caucus includes the Congressional Black Caucus, Congressional Hispanic Caucus and Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus. The objectives of the Congressional Tri-Caucus are to promote the public health and well-being through legislative action, social outreach, and political engagement. To this end, the Tri-Caucus seeks to preserve our Nation's commitment to fair and equitable treatment to all Americans. The Tri-Caucus has worked together for over a decade to ensure that the Congressional legislative agenda reflects the health challenges of all Americans.