

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, Rep. Mike Honda, chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) issued the statement below regarding the selection of Kiran Ahuja as the executive director of the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (Initiative).

On October 15, President Obama signed an executive order reestablishing the Initiative with the broad mission of ensuring that all federal agencies are addressing the needs of underserved Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. This year marks the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Initiative, which was created by President Clinton to improve the quality of life in underserved AAPI communities through increased participation in federal programs. Education Secretary Arne Duncan and Commerce Secretary Gary Locke are the co-chairs of the Initiative, and Education Under Secretary Martha Kanter will oversee its work.

“I applaud President Obama’s commitment to a strong White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, as evidenced by his selection of Ms. Ahuja as its executive director,” said Rep. Mike Honda, chair of CAPAC. “President Obama once again displays his leadership and his commitment to giving voice to our community in his administration. Ms. Ahuja is an excellent choice, and a committed advocate on behalf of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Our caucus has worked closely with her when she served exceptionally as the executive director of the National Asian Pacific American Women’s Forum. I am confident that she will do an outstanding job in her new post. CAPAC members look forward to our collaborations with the Obama Administration under her leadership at the Initiative.”

For almost two decades, Kiran Ahuja has advocated for women, immigrants and minorities. She served as an honor trial attorney at the U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, where she litigated school desegregation cases and participated in the National Origin Working Group, which was formed to combat national origin discrimination and respond to post 9/11 hate crimes. Ms. Ahuja led the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF), a multi-issue advocacy organization for Asian American and Pacific Islander women and girls in the U.S. As executive director, she promoted a range of issues that impact these women: health/reproductive health and rights, immigration reform, immigrant and civil rights, anti-trafficking efforts, and domestic violence. Ms. Ahuja currently consults non-profits and foundations, and teaches women's studies courses at the University of South Florida.

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The Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) is a bicameral and bipartisan caucus of Members of Congress of Asian and Pacific Islander descent and Members who have a strong dedication to promoting the well-being of the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. Founded in 1994 by then Congressman Norman Mineta, and currently chaired by Congressman Michael Honda, CAPAC has been addressing the needs of the AAPI community in all areas of American life. For more information on CAPAC, please call (202) 225-2631 or visit <http://www.honda.house.gov/capac> .