

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Announces Appointments to New Jersey Asian American and Pacific Islander Commission

05/18/2022

TRENTON- Governor Phil Murphy today announced the appointments of 28 public members to the New Jersey Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Commission. The announcement comes during AAPI Heritage Month, which is an annual celebration that recognizes the cultural and historical contributions of individuals and groups of Asian and Pacific Islanders in the United States.

"In New Jersey, we wear our diversity as a badge of honor," **said Governor Murphy**. "As our state is home to the third-largest percentage of AAPI residents in the nation, our AAPI community is a key part of the great diversity in our state. I am proud to appoint these outstanding members to the New Jersey Asian American and Pacific Islander Commission and look forward to working with them to address the social and economic needs of the AAPI community."

In November, Governor Murphy signed legislation 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.

"This commission will give greater voice to an Asian American and Pacific Islander community that is making increasingly important contributions to New Jersey's social and economic vitality," **said Senate President Scutari**. "They also face adverse challenges that we all have a responsibility to overcome. The active engagement of the AAPI community reinforces our shared recognition that New Jersey's diversity is a source of strength."

"New Jersey's greatest asset is our diversity and with the formation of the Asian American Pacific Islander Commission we're taking a crucial step to elevate their important social and economic contributions," **said Assembly Speaker Craig J. Coughlin**. "With meaningful experience in grassroots engagement of members of the AAPI community, I am proud to make Saketa Chadalavada my appointment to the Commission and confident in his capacity to deepen the strong cross-cultural relationships that fortify our state's unique and inclusive identity."

"The AAPI Commission will be integral in developing ways to uncover and address the social and economic needs of New Jersey's burgeoning Asian American and Pacific Islander communities and ensure they feel welcome against the backdrop of pandemic-related violence and hate incidents targeting Asian Americans," **said Assemblyman Raj Mukherji, who serves as Chairman of the Legislature's seven-member Joint Asian Pacific American Caucus**. "This esteemed list of nominees is the beginning of the great work we can accomplish together. Congratulations to all of the nominees, and I look forward to working with the Commission on their agenda."

"I would like to commend Governor Murphy on this strong slate of nominations to the AAPI Commission. Collectively, these individuals represent the wide diversity and the varied and rich contributions that the Asian American Pacific Islander community makes to our multi-cultural state," **said Senator Vin Gopal, Vice-Chair of the Asian American Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus and sponsor of legislation establishing the AAPI Commission**. "As we move forward in the 21st Century, we need to make sure all our people, including Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, are valued, encouraged and represented in helping to make New Jersey the best it can be."

Among the new members of the commission are individuals who reflect diverse perspectives of the AAPI community and demonstrate commitment to expanding equity and inclusion in New Jersey.

"I would like to express my profound thanks to Governor Murphy and our state legislators for making this crucial long-term commitment to the social and economic welfare of New Jersey's 1+ million Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders," **said Amber Reed, Co-Founder and President of AAPI Montclair**. "I am honored to bring professional experience advancing equity in public education through research, policy, and data analysis to the commission's work, and am grateful to the Governor for ensuring grassroots voices such as AAPI Montclair will be centered and heard as we seek to advance policies that plant the seeds of generational change for all of New Jersey's wonderfully diverse AAPI communities."

"As a civil rights lawyer and South Asian New Jerseyan, I am proud to be appointed to New Jersey's AAPI Commission," **said Amol Sinha, Executive Director of ACLU New Jersey**. "Our communities' voices deserve amplification, representation, and political power. I am grateful to Gov. Murphy for the opportunity to advocate for AAPI communities, to promote solidarity across identities, and to work towards racial justice, civil rights, and liberty for us all."

"I'm excited and honored to accept this appointment to the AAPI Commission," **said Peter Ahn, Lead Pastor at Metro Community Church**. "I will do my very best to help and support this administration move forward the causes and concerns of the AAPI community, and build bridges with other communities. I have the dubious honor of serving as one of the leaders of a monthly gathering of Asian and Black pastors in Bergen County. We not only have good fellowship, but we talk about the difficult challenges between our communities, ways in how we can build bridges amongst our congregations, and birth innovative ways in bringing greater racial justice to Bergen County. I look forward to bringing my experience to the AAPI Commission."

"It is an honor to be selected for participation on Governor Murphy's AAPI Commission," **said Rippi Karda, Associate General Counsel at Verizon, Inc.** "I commend the Governor's Office for recognizing the urgent need for this focus on AAPI issues and identification of potential solutions at this crucial time. This appointment will be taken seriously and I look forward to working effectively with others for the betterment of our overall community. To this end, I plan to utilize my more than two decades of legal experience and training as well as service on various Boards to bring a unique voice to this Commission to provide meaningful input to effectuate necessary change."

The Governor appointed the following members to the commission:

- Peter Ahn
- Cecilia Aranzamendez
- Angela Bae
- Saima Bhutta
- Samantha Bobila
- Saketa Chadalavada
- Dr. Ronald Chen
- Gulshan Chhabra
- Kin Gee
- Smita Nadia Hussain
- Sharmila Jaipersaud
- Vinita Jethwani
- Dr. Khyati Joshi
- Sabeen Kalyan-Masih
- Rippi Karda
- Dr. Naveen Mehrotra
- Anjali Mehrotra
- Rupande Mehta
- Mary Pan
- Falguni Pandya
- Dr. Bishnu Maya Pariyar
- Amber Reed
- Dr. Nimisha Shukla
- Amol Sinha
- Gabriel Tanglao
- Jasmine Ueng-McHale
- Yoginder Virk
- Yan Mei Wang

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