



The Fierce Advocate

December and January 2008 Edition

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National Office Updates

Thank you Lan!

NAPAWF extends our heartfelt thanks to **Lan Nguyen**, our 2008 "Wintern." While Lan was only with us for three short weeks, she made some tremendous contributions. Lan's hard work and commitment helped NAPAWF pull off another successful Chapter Leadership training. Not only was she toiling alongside us throughout the weekend, her assistance preparing for the weekend, and also with the wrap-up, was indispensable. We wish Lan much luck in her final semester at Amherst college and wherever her path takes her next. Look out for her at a chapter meeting near you!

Introducing Michelle and Sang Hee, NAPAWF's New NGB co-chairs

NAPAWF is proud to announce Michelle Abrenilla and Sang Hee Won as the new co-chairs of the National Governing Board (NGB). **Sang Hee Won** is currently pursuing a Masters in Public Health at Columbia University and works for the [Reproductive Health Access, Information and Services in Emergencies Initiative](#). She has served on NAPAWF's National Governing Board for the last two years as Secretary and is thrilled to serve as NAPAWF's co-chair during this upcoming year. **Michelle Abrenilla** is the Director of Finance & Operations at the [Community Network for Youth Development](#), and the Finance Director of [LIKHA](#)

[Pilipino Folk Ensemble](#). She served as co-chair of NAPAWF's DC Chapter prior to joining the SF-Bay Area Chapter, and was the Treasurer of NGB from 2004-2007. She is excited to work with Miriam Yeung and the rest of the NAPAWF staff, the NGB members, chapter leaders and all of the other remarkable women and allies who make up the NAPAWF network.

NAPAWF is entering the blogosphere!

Do you have something to say about the news, your community, or the nation? Share it through our new blog! Next month, NAPAWF will launch its very own blog to serve as a space for staff and members to connect and share information, stories, funny moments, and much more. Once we get this new project going, we want you to participate. Please be on the lookout for more details. In the meantime, we need your help with creating a name for our blog. Contact [Dawn](#) with your ideas or questions.

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NAPAWF in the News

- NAPAWF's Anti-Trafficking Project Director, **Liezl Tomas Rebugio**, was recently interviewed by [India Post](#) in response to the conviction of a South Asian couple in Long Island, NY who were found guilty of trafficking two domestic workers from Indonesia. Check out the story [here](#).
- NAPAWF-Saint Cloud sister, **Hedy Tripp**, received the 2007-2008 Awesome Woman award from [Among Women magazine](#). The magazine, which "celebrates the spirit and potential of Central Minnesota women," chose to recognize Hedy for her work towards ending institutional racism, empowering young women leaders, and providing tools for young people of color, particularly her children, to thrive in a racialized society. An accompanying article highlights Hedy's commitment to social change through her work as coordinator of Create CommUNITY, a community initiative that addresses educational achievement, housing access, healthcare access, and dismantling racism in the St. Cloud Area. Also mentioned is her work with the St. Cloud chapter of NAPAWF and their focus on helping their teen members develop leadership skills, grapple with issues of identity and confront racism.
Congratulations Hedy on this much deserved award!
- As a signatory of the [International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination](#) (CERD), the U.S. government submitted its periodic report last April. In response, dozens of non-profit organizations and academics submitted a CERD "shadow report" to highlight issues that were not included in the government report and to provide more information about issues that were mentioned in the report. The effort was coordinated by US Human Rights Network and the full report can be downloaded [here](#). NAPAWF staff **Priscilla Huang** and **Liezl Rebugio** contributed to the section on immigrant rights by providing a gender and race analysis on the treatment of immigrant women and trafficking survivors in the U.S. This section of the report can be downloaded [here](#).
- Policy and Programs Director, **Priscilla Huang**, recently spoke on-air with [APA Compass](#), an APA community radio station in Portland, Oregon. Listen to a recording of the interview soon on their website.

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From Capitol Hill

- **President's Budget Proposal Short-changes Women**

On February 4, 2008, President Bush submitted his \$3.1 trillion budget proposal for FY 2009 that included drastic cuts and the elimination of funding for a number of important domestic programs, and plans to make the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts permanent. According to the [National Women's Law Center](#), the administration's proposal would cut funding for Justice Department programs designed to combat domestic violence by \$100 million; cut money for Medicaid and Medicare by \$195 billion over five years; and freeze spending on the Child Care and Development Block Grant, which helps low-income people afford child care. The proposal also calls for an increase of \$28 million in funding for ineffective abstinence-only education programs, an end to enhanced federal matching for Medicaid family planning, and the elimination of the Victims of Crime Act Fund. For a summary of the programs important to women and their families that would be affected by the President's proposal, click [here](#).

- **House Fails to Override President's Second Veto of Children's Health coverage**

On January 23, the House fell 15 votes short of overriding President Bush's veto of [H.R. 3963](#), a bill to reauthorize the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). The program, which provides health coverage for low-income children and pregnant women, expired last September but has been extended to March 2009. SCHIP is a critically important health program for API families; since its inception, the rate of uninsured API children fell from 18 to 8 percent in 2004. To learn more, check out the Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum's [fact sheet](#).

- **House Passes the TVPRA**

The House of Representatives passed the [William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2007](#) (hereinafter, "TVPRA") on December 4, 2007. On the Senate side, the bill is currently in the Senate Judiciary Committee. Progressive advocates and activists are taking this opportunity to influence the content of the Senate bill before it is introduced. NAPAWF spearheaded a [sign-on letter](#) that was supported by 11 other ally organizations, and submitted the letter to the Senate Judiciary Committee expressing concerns about the pending bill. In addition, NAPAWF signed on to [another letter](#) with over 50 advocates and allies, such as Global Rights, Legal Momentum, Sex Workers Project, and Break the Chain Campaign, urging the Senate to keep anti-prostitution language out of trafficking legislation.

Liezl hosted an informational call on January 31, 2008 for NAPAWF members and allies to discuss NAPAWF's position on the TVPRA. Please contact [Liezl](#) if you have any questions on the TVPRA or if you are interested in taking action.

- **House passes bill to federalize labor and immigration laws on CNMI**

The [Northern Mariana Islands Immigration, Security and Labor Act](#) (HR 3079/S 2483) passed the House on December 11, 2007 and was wrapped into a larger

[omnibus bill](#) that is pending before the Senate. The bill would apply federal immigration laws to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) and would provide for a Delegate to Congress to represent the CNMI. If enacted, this bill could require their mostly Asian foreign workers to return to their home countries, regardless of their length of residency in the islands, and with no hope of accessing a pathway to citizenship.

NAPAWF co-hosted a historic informational call with [Famoksaian](#) on February 11, 2008, featuring expert speakers from around the country and across the Pacific. Eighteen callers learned about the Pacific Islander perspective on this issue, which included a historical overview of the colonialism, militarization and economic dependency that has impacted the region. If you would like a copy of the powerpoint presentation and/or an audio recording of the call, please contact [Priscilla](#).

- **U.S. Signs Repatriation Agreement with Vietnam**

On January 22, 2008, the Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency [announced](#) that it had signed a repatriation agreement with the government of Vietnam. After almost a decade of negotiations, the agreement now makes it possible for the U.S. to deport Vietnamese nationals with removal orders and who arrived in the United States on or after July 12, 1995, to Vietnam. To learn more, read this [FAQ sheet](#) issued by the Southeast Asia Resource Action Center.

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NAPAWF Hosts 3rd Annual Chapter Leader Training

On January 19-20, 2008, NAPAWF hosted 30 new chapter leaders from across the country for our third annual Chapter Leader Training in Washington, D.C. Held in the Capitol Building, the weekend was a fun and safe space for participants to meet, exchange and build leadership skills with each other. Guest trainers included **Pabitra Benjamin** from APIA Vote and **Priscilla Hung**, NAPAWF NGB member and staffer from the Grassroots Institute for Fundraising Training. For these new chapter leaders, the training also provided an opportunity to learn more about NAPAWF's [issue areas](#) and [programs](#). Participants left with energy and ideas to share with their local chapters to continue building a strong movement for API women and girls.

NAPAWF member **Jinny Choi** from the emerging Smith chapter shared her thoughts about the training:

I attended the NAPAWF leadership training seminar with a lifetime's curiosity over my elusive identity as an Asian American. From my earliest memory, I can recall the struggle of trying to fit into those Norman Rockwell paintings unsuccessfully. Over the years, I met with a large amount of people who either identified themselves as "Asian", who preferably did not speak English, or "American", yearning to wake up blonde. I probably had a mix of both in my life. But I could never quite identify myself with either group. It really took the diversity I saw at NAPAWF for me to understand there was another grouping: Asian American. It took these wonderfully diverse women to help me see how I can value and embrace being Asian American, which did not connotatively express assimilation, ambiguity, compensation, or trade-off. It is itself one embodiment. NAPAWF gave me identity - and a sense of purpose. What struck me the most about the issues surrounding API women was

the complete lack of new data available to support these pressing claims. I wish to do something about this. I am upset that Asian Americans can only be definable by "Other" - and even "Asian" when Asian Americans are so clearly full of diversity within themselves by age and racial background. Categorizing anything can be very difficult, but it is truly comforting to know there is a strong unity of women who wish to fight common causes on behalf of Asian Americans - fight for me and 13 million others.

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NAPAWF Takes Hyde Back to the Hill

In 1976, three years after Roe. v. Wade affirmed a woman's right to have an abortion, Congress passed the Hyde Amendment which forbids federal funding for abortion, except in very limited circumstances. Before the Hyde Amendment, federal Medicaid paid for nearly one-third of all abortions. Since Hyde was enacted, Medicaid has paid for less than one percent. The impact has been devastating for the more than 12 million women - especially those who are young, immigrant and women of color - who are dependent on Medicaid and other federal programs. Access to abortion is critical for API women and the Hyde Amendment creates yet another obstacle for low-income API women to access timely and affordable abortion services.

NAPAWF is part of the [Hyde - 30 Years is Enough! Campaign](#), a national coalition of more than 60 organizations working towards repealing the Hyde Amendment and restoring coverage of abortion for low-income women. The Campaign has been mobilizing grassroots support across the country by gathering more than 12,000 petition signatures calling on Congress to repeal this legislation. On January 24th, 2008, NAPAWF's Reproductive Justice Project Director **Dawn Philip** joined other reproductive justice advocates from around the country to deliver the petitions to targeted state representatives and senators on Capitol Hill. This coordinated action sent a strong message to our legislators that we demand reproductive justice from the people who represent us on Capitol Hill and that 30 years of Hyde is indeed enough!

If you haven't already, please [sign the petition](#). To learn more about the Hyde Amendment and its impact on Asian and Pacific Islander women, please read our recently updated [fact sheet](#).

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NAPAWF at the Kappa Phi Lambda Conference

On January 12, 2008, **Liezl Rebugio** led a workshop on NAPAWF's Anti-Trafficking program for nearly 200 women at Kappa Phi Lambda's semi-annual membership conference in New York City. We are honored that [Kappa Phi Lambda](#) has selected NAPAWF as its [national philanthropic cause](#). API women college students from the Midwest to the East Coast and all the way down to the Southeast attended the presentation. We are excited to continue our partnership with Kappa Phi Lambda through our programmatic work and NAPAWF's network!

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News and announcements from the progressive community

- **Get out the vote with APIA Vote!**

[Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote](#) (APIA Vote) is a national nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that encourages and promotes civic participation of Asian Pacific Islander Americans in the electoral and public policy processes at the national, state and local levels. At our recent chapter leadership training, Pabitra Benjamin from APIA Vote, talked to NAPAWF about raising the visibility and concerns of API women through voting and other forms of political participation. NAPAWF will be working with APIA Vote and local coalitions around the country to encourage members to help get out the vote and volunteer with non-partisan APIA voter mobilization efforts.

- **Montgomery County, MD introduces First Domestic Worker Rights Bill in the Nation**

On January 28, 2008, two councilmembers introduced a [bill](#) that would require domestic workers who work at least 20 hours a week and their employers to sign contracts. The legislation ensures that domestic workers, who are mostly immigrant women and are excluded from federal labor and employment laws, receive fair wages, overtime and other protections from abuse. For the past few years, members of the NAPAWF-DC Chapter have been active with the Coalition to Support Domestic Workers, which spearheaded the effort to pass this historic legislation.

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