



## ***The Fierce Advocate***

June and July 2008 Edition

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### **National office updates**

#### **Staff and Intern Farewells**

With mixed emotions, NAPAWF will soon be saying farewell to its Membership and Operations Director (and all-around office guru) **Tracy Ng**. After dedicating three years of hard work, passion and creative problem-solving, Tracy will begin graduate school at Columbia University this fall. As NAPAWF's first Membership and Operations Director, Tracy broke new ground and helped build our administrative infrastructure, paving the way for new staff and members alike to join the NAPAWF family. **Thank you, Tracy, for your resilience, passion and commitment to social justice.** We wish you all the best as you begin this new chapter in your life.

Fresh from graduating from UCLA, **Candice Shikai** recently completed her second summer interning with the NAPAWF-Los Angeles office. Among other things, Candice developed factsheets for No on Propositions 4 and Proposition 8 for the upcoming California elections this fall 2008. She also developed a successful training on Youth Organizing and Advocacy for Young Leading Women (YLW) of the [Orange County Asian Pacific Islander Community](#)

[Alliance](#) (OCAPICA). Candice is moving to Hawaii to participate in a year-long taiko fellowship at the [Taiko Center of the Pacific](#).

The NAPAWF-DC office also said goodbye to law clerks **Dinah Chung** and **Grace Lee**. Dinah spent the summer providing valuable research and writing on various immigrant women's rights issues, including VAWA and sexual abuse in detention centers, and spearheaded NAPAWF's Night of A Thousand Conversations. She will return to the University of Houston to complete her final year of law school. Grace developed an issue brief on the intersection of reproductive justice and anti-trafficking, and also utilized her research and writing skills to update our issue brief on HPV. Grace will head back to Brooklyn Law School to begin her second year. **Thanks, Candice, Dinah and Grace, for your amazing work and spirits!**

### **NCIWR Convening**

On June 12, the National Coalition for Immigrant Women's Rights (NCIWR)--convened by NAPAWF, National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health and the National Organization for Women--hosted its first membership convening. Thirty immigrant women's rights advocates from around the country gathered in Washington, DC for the full-day meeting to discuss current federal immigration issues and its impact on immigrant women and their families. The meeting was a groundbreaking cross-movement discussion among representatives from the human rights, reproductive rights, faith-based, immigrant rights, LGBTQ, and racial justice movements. Through these efforts, NCIWR partners were able to identify policy priorities for the new Congress, and enjoyed an evening networking reception with Congressional staff. To learn more about NCIWR, contact [Priscilla](#).

### **Warrior Prose**

Over the last few weeks, NAPAWF had the honor of interviewing some of the greatest women activists in the API community. These women have rocked the boat, made their voices heard, and paved the way for the younger generations to follow. The interviews provide some insight into their lives and document their revolutionary contributions to the political movement. NAPAWF strives to inspire young girls and women in our community, so we are very excited to share their incredible stories with you. Please stay tuned to our blog [Warrior Prose](#) for our interview series with:

- Helen Zia
- Grace Lee Boggs
- Lora Jo Foo
- Mallika Dutt
- Cindy Domingo

And don't miss this summer's thought-provoking posts from NAPAWF members and interns about [Vegetarians of Color](#), [Wall-e](#) and [bodilyharm](#)!

### **Quarterly Chapter Leader Call**

On July 30th, NAPAWF hosted our Chapter Leader Call. Along with updates from the national office and chapters, this call featured guest speaker **Glenn Magpantay** from the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund in New York City, who talked about the API women's vote in 2004 and ways for NAPAWF chapters and members to get involved in voter engagement activities for this fall's election. For notes from this call or more information, please contact our Organizing Director [Lisa Fu](#).

### **Gearing Up For the Elections**

Unfortunately, API women have the lowest rate of voter participation in the country. This means we are not getting seen or heard, and our concerns don't get addressed. Although we are the least likely to register to vote, API women are also the most likely to get to the

polls once registered. Thus, API women have a huge potential to be a visible voting bloc. NAPAWF sisters in particular are model voters; our last membership survey from 2007 revealed that *95% of NAPAWF sisters are registered to vote* which shows that we know how important it is to vote!

We need to take that message to the street and register more sisters, so NAPAWF is partnering with [Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund](#), the [Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance](#), and other organizations across the country in voter engagement activities for the historic November 2008 elections! NAPAWF is working with chapters and coalitions on voter registration, ballot initiatives, and various voter education issue forums across the country. ***Get involved! Watch out for opportunities for you and your chapter to get involved in a voter registration day of action!*** For more information, contact [Lisa Fu](#).

### **2009 NAPAWF National Conference**

Can you feel the excitement? Can you feel the anticipation? Will you be a part of it? Stay tuned for news about NAPAWF's 2009 National Conference! We will announce the place and date for the largest gathering of progressive API women in the U.S. very shortly.

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### **In the News**

#### **"In our Voices"**

On Friday, June 6th, Reproductive Justice Project Director **Dawn Philip** and NAPAWF D.C. chapter board member **Joan Javier** were interviewed for a radio show called "In Our Voices." The program aired on [WPFW](#), 89.3, a local D.C. community radio station. The interview covered many aspects of NAPAWF including NAPAWF's different program areas, NAPAWF's early beginnings and formation, and current activities of different chapters across the country.

#### **Letters to Editor Published in Seattle Times**

As reported in the last edition of The Fierce Advocate, the Senate introduced its version of the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA), which includes more protections for domestic workers employed in diplomatic home, and does reflect the House version's inclusion of Mann Act language which NAPAWF feels would draw resources away from survivors of non-sex trafficking situations.

In response to recent articles criticizing the Senate version of the bill, **Liezl Rebugio** submitted [two letters to the editor](#) which were both published in the Seattle Post Intelligencer. The letters helped lead to a longer news story covering the TVPRA two weeks later.

#### **"Leadership, Not Scapegoats"**

**Priscilla Huang** and **Laurie Mazur** co-wrote an [article](#) for the Center for American Progress in response to a series of ads that ran earlier this summer in the New York Times and The Nation on the so-called population-immigration-environment connection.

#### **NAPAWF in the Seattle PI**

The Seattle Post Intelligencer recently published a front-page [article](#) about Washington state's anti-trafficking law, which included a quote from our own **Liezl Rebugio**.

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## From Capitol Hill

### **Reaching a New Low: HHS Issues Harmful Regulations on Women's Health**

A few weeks ago, draft regulations under consideration by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) surfaced in various media outlets and immediately caused outrage among women's advocacy and reproductive rights and justice organizations. Among other things, the proposed regulations would [incorrectly redefine abortion](#), confusing it with contraception. According to the [New York Times](#), the proposal defines abortion as "any of the various procedures - including the prescription, dispensing and administration of any drug or the performance of any procedure or any other action - that results in the termination of the life of a human being in utero between conception and natural birth, *whether before or after implantation*." Advocates such as Mary Jane Gallagher, president of the National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association believe "[t]he proposed definition of abortion is so broad that it would cover many types of birth control, including oral contraceptives and emergency contraception."

Another [alarming provision](#) would alter existing federal "refusal clauses" to require all health programs that receive federal aid to certify that they will not refuse to hire nurses and other providers who object to abortion. Under the draft regulations, hospitals, clinics, and health providers would have to sign "written certifications" before they receive federal money from HHS. In short, it would allow institutions, rather than individuals, to deny women access to family planning services and information. As an organization that believes women and girls should exercise self-determination in all aspects of their lives and have access to a full range of reproductive health services, NAPA WF signed-on to a letter expressing deep opposition to the proposed regulations.

### **NAPA WF Submits Joint Testimony on WOC Reproductive Health Disparities**

In June, the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Health held an important hearing on racial/ethnic health disparities. NAPA WF submitted [joint written testimony](#) on the reproductive and sexual health disparities of women of color, along with the Center for Reproductive Rights and the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health. A similar sign-on statement was submitted to members of the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health when they held a similar hearing for the first time in eight years.

### **Congress Holds Groundbreaking Hearing on Transgender Issues**

On June 26th, 2008, NAPA WF staff attended the first-ever [congressional hearing](#) on transgender issues held in Washington, D.C. The hearing on discrimination against transgender people in the workplace was held by the House Education and Labor Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions. This historic hearing was a long time coming according to Rea Carey, Executive Director of the [National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund](#): "For far too long, transgender people have lived with the fear of losing their job simply because of who they are...Today's hearing marks a critical step in addressing this travesty once and for all," she said. Based on the testimony of several witnesses at the hearing, advocacy groups hope Congress will pass legislation protecting transgender individuals from discrimination on the workplace.

### **Congress Reauthorizes PEPFAR**

On July 30, 2008, President Bush signed into law [The Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008](#). The bipartisan bill reauthorizes U.S. global AIDS programs at \$48 billion over the

next five years. While there are aspects of the bill that continue to be problematic such as funding for ineffective abstinence-only programs and retaining a requirement that organizations pledge opposition to prostitution in order to receive funding, the bill includes at least one positive provision. As a result of the tireless and coordinated efforts of many local and national advocacy groups, a provision in the bill [lifts the travel ban](#) on non-U.S. citizens living with HIV and AIDS. This is a significant victory!

### **Supreme Court: Guantánamo Detainees Have Constitutional Right to Habeas Corpus**

In a significant victory for human rights in the U.S., the Supreme Court held in [Boumediene v. Bush](#) that the men imprisoned at Guantánamo Bay have a constitutional right to habeas corpus. One of the oldest and most basic legal protections, habeas corpus affords incarcerated persons the right to stand before a judge and confront the charges presented against him or her. The important ruling marks the third time the Court has rebuked the Bush administration's practice of indefinitely detaining individuals in Guantanamo without allowing them to challenge the grounds of their detention.

The [Center for Constitutional Rights](#) has been sending legal counsel to represent the prisoners at the base since winning the first Guantánamo case, *Rasul v. Bush*, in 2004. With the increasing anti-immigrant raids and increasing deportations affecting many immigrant communities, this ruling sends an important message that all people, regardless of citizenship status, are deserving of basic human rights.

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### **In the States**

#### **California's Propositions 4 and 8**

This November, California voters will decide on two ballot measures that could have a huge impact API women and girls: Proposition 4, which would institute a mandatory waiting period and require parental notification of young women seeking abortions, and Proposition 8, which would impose a ban on same-sex marriages.

Prop 4 will be the third time Californians will vote on an abortion waiting period initiative; two previous versions were defeated in 2005 ([Prop 73](#)) and 2006 ([Prop 85](#)). As with Props 73 and 85 before it, the initiative would require physicians to notify a minor's parents or legal guardian at least 48 hours before performing an abortion for that minor. But unlike its previous versions, Prop 4 would require that a physician, upon learning that from a minor that she fears abuse from a parent/guardian, notify a different adult family member and submit a written report to the appropriate law enforcement or public child protection agency. Prop 4 poses a significant threat to girls' safety, and imposes a nonsensical law enforcement and reporting process that promises more danger than good.

If passed, Prop 8 would amend the state constitution to include the sentence "Only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California," thereby nullifying the same-sex marriages that have taken place since May 15, the day that the California Supreme Court [overturned a state ban](#) on same-sex marriage by a 4-3 vote. For more information about Props 4 and 8, please visit the California Secretary of State's [website](#) on ballot information.

#### **NAPAWF helps organize response to CA budget cuts**

NAPAWF, along with Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice, Black Women for Wellness, California Black Women's Health Project, and California Latinas for Reproductive

Justice, helped organize a letter sign-on campaign entitled, [Health and Justice Now! Women and Communities United to Save the Safety Net](#). In response to the [CA budget deficit](#), Governor Schwarzenegger proposed a 2008-09 budget that cut vital programs serving the most vulnerable Californians, the majority of whom are low-income women and families of color. As advocates working to advance the reproductive health and justice of low-income women, this coalition of women of color groups have been closely following the developments in Sacramento with regards to the proposed Budget. With over 100 individuals and organizations in California signing-on, the coalition sent the letter to CA's political leadership on Friday, August 1st. We hope they listen!

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## On The Ground

### Night of 1000 Conversations

On June 19, 2008, thousands of people from across the country gathered in small groups to have a conversation on specific issues regarding immigration and detention. Spearheaded by the [Rights Working Group](#), NAPAWF and [SAALT](#) (South Asian American Leaders of Tomorrow) hosted their own [Conversation](#) in Takoma Park, MD, a sanctuary city, with about thirteen people in attendance. Participants engaged in a provocative discussion on the poor conditions of detention centers across the nation and the unwarranted raids conducted by DHS, all within the overarching theme of "What kind of America do we want to live in?" We shared thoughts, asked questions, and gained new insights from the conversation. In the end, we signed postcards asking DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff to end his agency's violative policies and provide the most basic rights due to all humans. Special thanks to our immigrant rights law clerk Dinah for organizing and facilitating the Conversation!

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## Staff Sightings

- **Causes in Common**

**Dawn Philip** attended the second annual Causes in Common National Coalition Meeting in New Orleans in June. [Causes in Common](#) is an organizing initiative of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community Center in New York City, bringing together activists in the LGBT Liberation and Reproductive Justice movements to work toward shared goals. The gathering focused on how to better incorporate an international human rights framework in domestic social justice work. Workshop and panel topics included the intersection of disability and queer rights, reproductive justice issues in the criminal justice system, and reproductive health disparities in New Orleans.

- **ACLU Membership Conference**

Policy and Programs Director, **Priscilla Huang**, spoke as a panelist at the [ACLU's Stand Up For Freedom Conference](#). The panel was entitled Abortion - Keeping It Safe and Legal - 2008 and Beyond.

- **Choice USA Awards**

On July 17th, **Dawn Philip** attended the [Choice USA Generation Awards](#) to promote youth leadership and highlight the work of student pro-choice organizers and mentors. Choice USA is a national pro-choice organization for students and young people. Among the awardees were students of law and medicine, sex educators,

student organizers, and non-profit program directors. Their issues range from the reproductive rights of women of color and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, to comprehensive sex education and reproductive rights organizing in communities of faith. NAPAWF's own Priscilla Huang was a 2007 Awardee.

- **CA Reproductive Justice Action Summit**

On June 20th, NAPAWF participated in the California Reproductive Action Summit hosted by [California Latinas for Reproductive Justice](#). **Lisa Fu** was a part of a workshop panel on Violence, the State and Reproductive Justice, where she spoke about U.S. militarization in the Pacific Islands as a form of reproductive oppression, racism, and gender oppression.

- **OCA National Conference**

**Priscilla Huang** attended [Voices for Progress](#), the Organization of Chinese American's 2008 National Convention and spoke on a panel entitled "My Mother's Home." Held in Washington, DC, the Convention celebrated OCA's 35th year as an API civil rights organization and featured photographs from an [online exhibit](#) about the history of Chinese women in the U.S., a collaborative project between OCA and the [National Women's History Museum](#).

- **Campus Progress National Student Conference**

**Miriam Yeung** spoke on panel entitled "Multiple Choice: Filling in the blanks of the reproductive justice movement" to an audience progressive college students. The [conference](#) also featured keynote speeches by Senator John Edwards, actor Ryan Gosling, and three rousing performances by the awesome fierce sister duo [Yellow Rage](#).

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## Chapter Updates

- **Chicago Chapter**

The Chicago chapter has been working with Liezl Tomas Rebugio, NAPAWF's anti-trafficking director, to host an anti-trafficking briefing on October 8.

- **Las Vegas Chapter**

The Las Vegas chapter recently received chapter approval! Last month, Lisa Fu, NAPAWF's Organizing Director, met with the new chapter, and this month, members are going to discuss chapter structure and direction. The chapter has decided to do reading circles and will probably host them in member homes. **Welcome to the NAPAWF family, Las Vegas!**

- **Los Angeles Chapter**

The Los Angeles Chapter is gearing up for local GOTV work for ballot initiatives Proposition 8 and Proposition 4 in November elections, as well as state policy work around the California DREAM Act. Proposition 8 is the ban on same-sex marriage, and Proposition 4 is an anti-abortion initiative that would require teens to notify their parents before having an abortion. On August 1st, the chapter participated in a statewide training on this proposition, and this will lead into a large educational forum co-programmed with statewide organizations. A larger-scale GOTV calendar is

also in progress, with the help of local organizations including API- Equality, APALC, OCAPICA and KGA.

- **St. Cloud Chapter**

As reported in the April/May edition of The Fierce Advocate, the St. Cloud chapter held a teen retreat called "Where's My-Space?" May 24-25, 2008 at the Arrowwood Resort & Conference Center in Alexandria, MN. The teen retreat brought together 22 teen Asian girls ranging in age from 14 to 19 years old. A \$10,000 grant from [AAPIP](#) for community engagement enabled the NAPAWF St. Cloud chapter to offer a small stipend for part-time staff-a Coordinator and a Teen Coordinator-to plan and organize the teen retreat. The community engagement grant was critical in providing a safe space (My-Space) to deal with issues of racism and discrimination and develop the St. Cloud chapter's context for social change.

- **Washington, DC Chapter**

The DC chapter continues to host our monthly Afternoon Teas. Afternoon teas are an opportunity for us to get together and discuss issues pertinent to Asian American women and girls in a casual setting. Recent article discussions have included: professional networking strategies for minority women, the effect of media-defined ideals of beauty on Asian American girls and women, effective methods of time and stress management, educating ourselves about the practice of Naked Sushi (Art or Objectification?), and the controversy over Asian Massage Parlors in America.

NAPAWF-DC has also been involved in a coalition with [CASA de Maryland](#) and other immigrant and workers' rights advocacy groups to pass a domestic workers bill of rights legislation in Montgomery, MD. After a two year battle, countless meetings with Montgomery County Council Members and negotiations with stakeholders, the bill passed by *unanimous* vote on July 15 and was signed into law on July 22nd! This was a HUGE victory for domestic workers everywhere, but more work is definitely to come. Now the coalition must ensure that the legislation is respected and enforced. This is one of the first types of legislation of its kind in the country, and will hopefully set an example for other areas around the country.

***For more info about chapter activities, contact [Lisa Fu](#).***

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## **Other News from the Progressive API Community**

### **"Earth Passages: Journeys Through Childhood" by Lora Jo Foo**

NAPAWF founding sister Lora Jo Foo has written a new, self-published book, "Earth Passages: Journeys Through Childhood." It is a bit of a departure from her earlier book, "Asian American Women: Issues, Concerns, and Responsive Human and Civil Rights Advocacy," as this book is autobiographical. It features 28 personal vignettes and 53 color nature photographs taken by Lora Jo herself. The vignettes give accounts of growing up in a family of eight in San Francisco's Chinatown ghetto with an abusive father and a mother who worked six 12-hour days a week in a garment sweatshop. In contrast to the vignettes about life in the ghetto that they are paired with, the nature photographs take the viewer through warm and lively landscapes that Lora Jo has visited. The photographs capture

nurturing and embracing environments unlike Lora Jo's childhood in the ghetto. The book may be purchased online for \$32.95 from [www.asiabookscenter.com](http://www.asiabookscenter.com).

### **English Only Please!**

NAPAWF, along with many other national education, civil rights, and advocacy organizations sent a strong letter to the Terrebonne Parish School Board in New Orleans, LA after learning that the Board may be considering an [English only policy](#)

for all commencement speeches. The need for this policy came from two Vietnamese-American students who briefly addressed their parents in Vietnamese in a graduation speech. The letter expressed strong opposition for an English only policy that is not only blatantly discriminatory, but also excludes certain groups of students and families, primarily those from immigrant and language minority communities, from fully participating in schools.

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