

Testimony in support of an AAPI Affairs Commission

Submitted by Yung-Chen Lu, Ph.D.

May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021

This is the 12<sup>th</sup> year of the establishment of Ohio Asian American Pacific Islander Advisory Council under Governor Strickland in March 2010.

We worked very hard to help our community as well as the community at large in Ohio. We are an underserved community and we are struggling to do everything we can in empowering us to help Ohioan a big lift.

While Asians and Pacific Islanders comprise only about 2.4% of Ohio's population, they are the **fastest-growing racial/ethnic group in the U.S. and in Ohio**. Since 2000 the number of Asian Ohioans has increased by 150%. It is my belief that a support of this community in their quest for full participation in Ohio's economic, social/cultural, and civic activities is **a good investment for Ohio**.

Due to the Covid-19, we cancelled Asian Festival 2020, and conduct virtual Asian Festival in 2021, however, we still raised some fund to not only help Asian grassroot community organizations as well as homeless people in Central Ohio through Food of Love project. We do have a big heart to help. Specifically, just to mention some of what we did and are doing in brief, we have the following endeavor since February 2020.

- \* We translated Covid-19 related material in 13 languages and distribute them For various communities for their awareness of the progress in fighting this very dangerous virus attack.
- \* Provide masks, gloves, wipes and sanitizers to many Asian communities.
- \* Provide funding for SE Asian communities to purchase CD and Notebook for them to continue the lectures by the monks, solving their spiritual problem. Purchasing masks etc.
- \* Providing funding for Pakistani, Bangladesh, Indian community to help their student organizations
- \* Contracted with a Filipino caterer to deliver food to the elderly
- \* Delivering Food and pick up grocery and medicine service to the elderly in the Chinese community
- \* Helped several Chinese organizations to purchase more than 12,000 surgical Masks, 32,000 gloves, 52,200 regular masks, 420 N95 masks, and shipped them to Franklin County Emergency Management Unit, OSU Wexner Medical Center, Ohio Health, Mt Carmel Health System etc.
- \* We also launched a project "Food of Love" to support the homeless people with more than 2,250 meals.

My vision about the Mission of the Ohio AAPI Affairs Commission will be:

1. To **advise** the Ohio State Government about issues and opportunities associated with Ohio's AAPI communities:
2. To **build** partnerships that promote civic engagement with governmental-, business-, educational-, and civic-entities:
3. To **Connect** the diverse AAPI communities across Ohio, thereby promoting capacity to better serve Ohio's fastest growing population.

The goals of the AAPI Affairs Commission will be:

1. To promote economic and cultural relationships between Ohio and Asian nations.
2. To support entrepreneurial activities among Ohio's AAPIs that contribute economic vitality to Ohio's economy.
3. To promote the health of AAPI's and all Ohioans by increasing access to programs and basic health and mental health services.
4. To provide language assistance and facilitate connecting AAPI community members to service needed. This will impact Ohio's ability to get an accurate census count for a potential increase in federal funding.
5. To partner with Ohio agencies to ensure equal access of Ohio's AAPIs in order to appropriate programs and services.
6. To encourage the electoral and political engagement of AAPIs and all Ohioans in order to sustain vital democratic processes.
7. To conduct research examining governmental policies that help ensure equal opportunity and social justice for people in all Ohio's diverse communities.
8. To recognize Ohio AAPI individuals and organizations for their substantial social, cultural, economic and/or political contributions.
9. To support inclusion of Asian and AAPI history in public school curriculum.

It is deeply felt that we don't have enough manpower and resource to do what we would like to accomplish. To be promoted into a Commission, we can accomplish a great deal for not only Asian Community in Ohio, but also community at large in Ohio.

The funding request for Ohio AAPI Affairs Commission is modeled from the current allocation to the Ohio Commission on Hispanic and Latino Affairs. The population size is quite similar in between two communities, although the population of AAPI community is slightly smaller. I look forward to a thoughtful legislative process and appreciate your attention to this important issue. I respectfully request your favorable consideration of Senate Bill 98. Thank you and your support is deeply appreciated.