



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ASIAN PACIFICS IN POLITICS & PUBLIC AFFAIRS

**2023 NAAPPPA**

**40 UNDER 40**





# 2023 NAAPPPA 40 UNDER 40 LIST

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**The National Association of Asian Pacifics in Politics and Public Affairs (NAAPPPA) is proud to present the 2023 list of the top 40 AAPI political operatives and public affairs professionals under 40 years of age.**

NAAPPPA established this list in 2016 to highlight the growing number of AAPIs who are rising stars in the professional unelected side of politics. These honorees represent trailblazing AAPI campaign strategists and operatives, lobbyists, legislative staff, and corporate public affairs professionals on all sides of the aisle that work behind the scenes to elect and advance AAPI candidates and the AAPI community.

These elite individuals are breaking the meek Asian model minority stereotype by excelling in the rough and tumble, rule-bending, and bare-knuckle world of American politics. NAAPPPA is a non-partisan non-profit national organization dedicated to promote and develop Asian American and Pacific Islander career advancement and excellence in political consulting, public affairs, and legislative advocacy through networking, innovative training, and professional development. **Congratulations Class of 2023!**



**Hera Abbasi** | Vice President, Global Public Policy, Mastercard. Hera is the international trade and economic lead in the company's Washington, DC office. Previously, she was a government and regulatory affairs executive at IBM. Prior to IBM, she was the Hill strategist and lobbyist for the Coalition of Services Industries. She was also a White House Appointee in the State Department's Bureau of Legislative Affairs. She was a board member of Women in International Trade and a co-chair for the Africa and Middle East section. She is also a member of the U.S.-Asia Institute's Congressional Circle and a 2017 Fellow for the Center for a New American Security's Next Generation National Security Leaders Program. Ms. Abbasi received her bachelor's degree from Harvard College and her master's degree from the Naval War College.



**Kathrina (Kat) Abrot** | Kat Abrot Consulting. Kat provides fundraising and strategic campaign services to federal, state, and local political candidates, PAC's, and nonprofits. Kat has run successful campaigns to elect political candidates, managed independent expenditures throughout California, most notably with the Los Angeles Labor Federation, California Labor Federation, UNITE HERE in Arizona, and helped pass sweeping legislation through issue advocacy work at Airbnb. Kat has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars working to flip U.S. Senate Seats with Flip The West (now known as Activate America), and nonprofits - engaging and mobilizing marginalized voters in the AAPI community to the polls in competitive swing districts, such as California, Texas, and New Jersey. Kat's work experience includes down-ballot fundraising, campaign manager, direct mail, and digital content creator and distributor.



**Maryam Ahmed** | Press Secretary, Office of Congressman Adam Schiff and Adam Schiff for Senate. Maryam is a Democratic communications professional who currently serves as press secretary for California Congressman Adam Schiff. She previously was national press secretary at Senate Majority PAC, helping secure a historic victory for Senate Democrats in 2022, and at just 23 years old was communications director for John King’s gubernatorial campaign in Maryland. Before the King campaign, she worked at Wildfire Contact, on the Hill for Congressman Don Beyer, and on Pete Buttigieg’s 2020 presidential campaign. She also did strategic communications and media relations at Climate Power and Precision Strategies. Maryam is passionate about elevating the voices of underrepresented communities in politics. When she’s not working, she enjoys traveling and reading. She graduated with a B.A. in government from UT Austin, and currently resides in Los Angeles.



**Khydeeja Alam Javid** | Director of External and Legislative Affairs, California Volunteers Office of Governor Gavin Newsom. Khydeeja is a high impact strategist, government and public relations expert with over fifteen years of experience in public policy, political strategy, building partnerships, legislative and budget advocacy. As Governor Gavin Newsom’s appointee, Khydeeja currently serves as the Director of External and Legislative Affairs at California Volunteers, Office of the Governor. In her capacity she leads statewide initiatives, oversees #CaliforniansforAll Youth Jobs Corps Program, works closely with the state legislature, local elected officials including big city mayors, higher education institutional leaders, and other external partners. Formerly, Khydeeja served as the Senior Director of Policy and Advocacy for Catalyst California. She also currently serves on the statewide Early Childhood Policy Council as California State Assembly Speaker’s appointee. She is the current Board President of Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) Sacramento Valley/Central California and also sits on the Advisory Council for Muslimahs in Public Policy. Khydeeja graduated from the University of California, Berkeley.



**Ash Alvandi** | District Director, California State Senator Dave Min. While working for the Senator, Ash led the opening of the Senator Min’s office in Orange County amidst a historic pandemic. Under Alvandi’s management, the office successfully brought back millions of taxpayer dollars to Orange County families by helping constituents with various issues, including unemployment, and COVID-19 business relief. Alvandi’s dedication to coalition building has enabled Senator Min’s office to cultivate strong relationships with elected officials and stakeholders throughout Southern California to tackle some of the region’s most difficult problems. Alvandi has helped develop complex policy and legislation in the areas of gun violence prevention, climate change action and more. In addition to his work in the public sector, Ash has lead high-profile campaigns including Senator Min’s historic run to become the first ever Asian American Democrat elected above the municipal level in Orange County. A product of California public schools, Alvandi holds Master’s and Bachelor’s degrees from California State University at Fullerton.

**“The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why.”**

**-Mark Twain**



**Raj Aryal** | Deputy Press Secretary, Rep. Juan Ciscomani (AZ-06). Originally from Grand Rapids, Michigan, Raj attended the University of Michigan where he received his bachelor's degree in Economics. Throughout his degree, he worked in Michigan GOP politics including the John James for Senate 2020 Campaign. Following graduation, he interned for Senator Marco Rubio of Florida and Senator Tim Scott of South Carolina before returning to work in the Michigan delegation under Congressman John Moolenaar. Raj is a firm believer in the American Dream and is passionate about communicating a message of opportunity within the conservative movement. He's grateful for the decades of sacrifice by his parents, who taught him the value of hard work and faith.



**Geoff Burgan** | Communications Director, Democratic Attorneys General Association. Geoff Burgan is a national communications leader with presidential, statewide and congressional experience in some of our nation's most closely-watched campaigns and high-pressure moments. He currently advising the Democratic Attorneys General Association, Attorneys General, and candidates on a wide range of issues. In 2020 he served as Arizona Communications Director for the Biden-Harris campaign, helping flip Arizona for the first time in more than two decades. He has worked on both sides of Capitol Hill, including for U.S. Senator Edward J. Markey and U.S. Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz. In 2018 he led communications for one of the nation's most historic gubernatorial races, helping lead what the New York Times called "one of the most significant upsets" of the election cycle. He's been quoted in national media outlets, including MSNBC, Fox News, the New York Times, the Washington Post, Rolling Stone, and Politico Magazine. He is a proud graduate of the Merrill College of Journalism at the University of Maryland.



**Kenneth Chen** | Director of External Affairs, San Francisco City Attorney David Chiu's Office. Kenneth is a first generation immigrant from Hong Kong. He and his family moved to San Francisco in 2005 when he was 13 years old. Kenneth received his bachelor's degree in Political Science and Government from University of California, Davis (UC Davis). He was the first in his family to receive a 4-year college degree. At UC Davis, he founded the Hong Kong and Macau Student Association, aiming to promote cultural understanding and increase student engagement on campus. Currently, he works at San Francisco City Attorney David Chiu's Office as Director of External Affairs. Previously, he served as Asian Pacific Islander Liaison and Executive Assistant to San Francisco Assessor-Recorder Joaquín Torres and Field Representative for then California Assemblymember David Chiu. Besides his day job, Kenneth is also serving as Vice President for OCA-San Francisco Chapter, an AAPI advocacy organization.



**Solomon Chen** | Policy Advisor, House Committee on Education & the Workforce. Solomon Chen is a Policy Advisor at the House Committee on Education & the Workforce for Chairwoman Dr. Virginia Foxx (NC-5). He was previously with the Cato Institute's Center for Educational Freedom, and has also held positions with the civic education program at the Philanthropy Roundtable as well as Weave: The Social Fabric Project at the Aspen Institute. Solomon was a 2022-2023 Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies (APAICS) Fellow and is also an alumnus of the Falls Church Fellows program. Solomon holds a degree in political science from Biola University and was a member of Biola's Torrey Honors Institute.



**Catherine Chestnut Linkul** | Vice President, P2 Public Affairs. Catherine Linkul is an experienced public affairs and political consultant, having held senior roles on national multi-million dollar issue advocacy organizations, ballot initiatives, super PACs, and statewide campaigns. Previous experience includes serving as Deputy Campaign Manager on a successful 2016 gubernatorial campaign in Missouri. Catherine has since acted as executive director to multiple independent political organizations, including the Coalition to Protect American Workers, a \$12 million effort to oppose the Biden Administration's proposed tax hikes. She most recently served as a senior aide on Florida Governor Ron DeSantis' reelection campaign in 2022. She graduated from the University of Washington and resides in Miami, FL with her husband and dog.



**Grace Choi** | CEO and Founder, Karis Consulting Group. Karis Consulting Group is a national consulting firm that provides organizing, strategy, and coalition building support for AANHPI organizations. Grace is a strategist and political leader with over 15 years of experience. She founded the New York Coalition of Asian American and Pacific Islander Churches. Grace is the former Director of Policy in the New York City Mayor's Office, where she led the policy and legislative priorities on mental health, gender equity, and racial inclusion and equity throughout the height of the pandemic. Previously, she served as the Constituency Director for AAPI Outreach for Stacey Abrams for Governor. She was the Associate Director for Global Gender Policy and Advocacy at Save the Children. She served in President Obama's Administration as Policy Advisor in the Secretary of State's Office on Global Women's Issues. Previously, Grace worked for the Council of Korean Americans, the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, the 2013 Presidential Inauguration Committee, President Obama's 2012 Presidential Campaign, the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Refugee Affairs Division.



**Nicole Fernandez** | District Director, California State Senator Josh Becker. Nicole Fernandez is proud child of Pakistani immigrants, born and raised in San Mateo County. Currently Senator Josh Becker's district director, Nicole has a decades-long career in state and local government. She previously served as the first API & 4th female chair of the San Mateo County Democratic Party, and in her spare time, enjoys Fleetwood Mac karaoke and serving on the Board of Directors of Samaritan House. She resides in San Mateo, California and has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from San Jose State University.



**Tiffany Ge** | Legislative Director, U.S. Senator Mitch McConnell. Tiffany Ge currently serves as the Legislative Director and Counsel for Senator McConnell. As Legislative Director, Tiffany oversees all legislative matters for Senator McConnell and manages the policy staff. Tiffany is from Louisville, Kentucky, and earned her undergraduate degree from the University of Kentucky and graduated from The George Washington University Law School.



**Stephanie Hu** | Deputy Chief of Staff, U.S. Representative Michelle Steel (CA-45). Stephanie is the Deputy Chief of Staff for U.S. Representative Michelle Steel (CA-45), one of the first Korean-American women to ever serve in Congress. Stephanie has a decade of experience in state and federal government, strategic communications, and public affairs. Most recently she served as account manager for a government relations firm, public affairs officer for a district attorney, and communications director for a California state senator. A Southern California native and proud Taiwanese-American, Stephanie earned her Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degree from Boston College.



**Alyssa Khamma** | Associate, Targeted Victory. Alyssa is a leading digital strategist. She began her career as a high school sophomore working for her local state representative. In college, she was the first female chair of her state's chapter of one of the nation's largest, longest-running, and most active youth political organizations, where she served two terms. Alyssa is currently an associate at Targeted Victory, where she services clients in strategic digital fundraising and marketing programs. In her free time, she volunteers as a Domestic Violence Liaison with her local police department. She is a proud first-generation American and first-generation college graduate.



**Abigail Kim** | Senior Director of Public Policy, Association for Behavioral Healthcare. Abigail is currently the senior director of public policy at the Association for Behavioral Healthcare (ABH), and is responsible for the development and implementation of a legislative, budgetary, and regulatory agenda for 81 community-based and publicly funded mental health and substance use treatment providers in Massachusetts. Prior to coming to ABH, Abigail was the Legislative Director in State Senator John F. Keenan's office and a clinical researcher in addiction medicine. She is a former Rappaport Public Policy Fellow and New Leaders Council Fellow and has a Master's in Public Health in Health Policy and Law from Boston University School of Public Health. She was recognized for her grassroots advocacy work with a 2020 Mitch Snyder Award and a 2018 Excellence in Practice Award from Boston University's Activist Lab. Abigail is committed to leveraging public policy to provide compassionate and evidence-based care to individuals with a substance use disorder.



**Ronny Lau** | Manager of Government Relations, National Education Association (NEA). Ronny Lau is a political professional with over a decade of experience in American politics. At NEA, the nation's largest labor union and professional organization, he is the lead strategist on several federal legislative issues including higher education, student debt, school infrastructure, and educator pipeline. In 2021, his efforts led to the U.S. Department of Education's creation of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Limited Waiver, correcting years of mismanagement, and moving forward the federal government's promise to public service workers by forgiving their student debt after ten or more years of service. To date, the Waiver has forgiven the student debt of more than 453,000 public service workers, equating in nearly \$31 billion in forgiveness. Prior to joining NEA, Ronny was the Assistant Director of Public Policy at the National Association for Music Education, and served as a Health Policy Fellow for Congressman Ron Kind (WI-03). A Virginia native, Ronny graduated cum laude from James Madison University, receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science.



**Doug Lee** | Senior Director, Mindset. Mindset is a bipartisan public policy consultancy based in Washington, DC. In this capacity, he provides thoughtful research and analysis, strategic advisory services, and sophisticated advocacy for clients ranging from Fortune 500 companies to non-profits, start-ups, and investors across the country. Prior to joining Mindset, Doug served as Vice President of U.S. Public Policy at a leading multinational bank, where he assisted in the development and execution of the firm's advocacy strategy on issues ranging from prudential regulation to sustainable finance. Doug also served for nearly eight years on Capitol Hill, most recently as Deputy Chief of Staff and Legislative Director to Congressman Mike Quigley (D-IL), and as an Associate Staff Member to the House Appropriations Committee. Doug began his career in Washington working for Senator Chris Coons (D-DE) as a legislative aide on economic policy. A New York native, Doug holds a Bachelor of Science in Finance from the University of Delaware.



**Sarah Lin** | Deputy Organizing Director and Pennsylvania State Director, Indian American Impact. Sarah Lin holds a bachelor's degree with highest honors from Rutgers University and a master's degree from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, where she studied democracy and politics as a Gleitsman Fellow and served as Editor-in-Chief of the Asian American Policy Review. Most recently, Sarah staffed the Shapiro-Davis gubernatorial transition in Pennsylvania and led grassroots outreach and political engagement as the Pennsylvania Democratic Party's statewide AAPI Coalitions Director for the 2022 election cycle. As the AAPI Director, Sarah directed PA's first-ever AAPI Week of Action and spearheaded a language access program with voter education resources in 21 AAPI languages. Sarah has previously worked as a campus minister and affiliate chaplain at New York University; volunteered on mayoral, gubernatorial, and presidential campaigns; and currently serves on the Taiwanese American Citizens League's National Board. Sarah was raised in Asian immigrant communities in New Jersey and currently lives in Philadelphia where she works as the Deputy Organizing Director and Pennsylvania State Director for IA Impact.



**Cory Liu** | Attorney, Butler Snow LLC. Cory Liu is an attorney at the Austin office of Butler Snow LLP. His public service includes serving as assistant general counsel to Texas Governor Greg Abbott and clerking for Judge Andrew Oldham on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit and Judge Danny Boggs on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. Cory has provided pro bono services in numerous cases involving religious freedom and racial discrimination in courts across the country, including at the U.S. Supreme Court. He is a graduate of the University of Chicago and Harvard Law School, where he served as Editor-in-Chief of the Harvard Journal of Law & Public Policy.



**Chris Mateo** | Senior Consultant and Project Coordinator for the Democratic Office of Communications and Outreach under the Office of California Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon. In 2021, he co-founded the Sacramento Filipino PAC to develop and elect future Filipino American political candidates. In 2020, Chris was the Western Region Chair and Digital Outreach Chair for the Filipino Americans for Biden-Harris national campaign. He served as the Central Valley Vice Chair for the Filipino American Democratic Caucus of the California Democratic Party, as the Board President of the Philippine National Day Association, and has managed local projects such as the Filipino Count effort for Census 2020, the Filipino WWII Veterans Congressional Gold Medal celebration, and the Filipino American Voters Forum. Chris has a Bachelor of Arts in English from St. Mary's College of California and a Master of Arts in Organizational Behavior from Alliant International University.



**Narah Neri** | Director of Constituent Services, Rep. Michelle Steel [CA-45]. Narah currently serves as Director of Constituent Services for Congresswoman Michelle Steel [CA-45]. Prior to joining the Congresswoman's team, she assisted with district operations for Congressman Ed Royce and California State Senator Ling Ling Chang. She also served the county of Orange as the Executive Assistant for District Attorney Todd Spitzer. Narah has almost a decade of experience in government service specializing in community outreach, nonprofit partnerships and event management. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and American Studies from California State University at Fullerton.





**Lauri Ng** | Director, Mindset. Lauri provides clients with strategic counsel and analysis on important policy issues, while playing a key role in the firm's financial services vertical. Lauri was previously Senior Counsel for the House Committee on Financial Services, where she was instrumental in drafting and managing all legislation for the Subcommittee on Diversity and Inclusion in the 116th Congress. She also helped oversee the subcommittee's congressional hearings and diversity and inclusion initiatives, including a review of inclusion policies for large financial institutions and recommendations on best practices. Prior to joining the Financial Services Committee, Lauri served as a Senior Policy Advisor for the National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development, where she helped manage advocacy with members of Congress and federal agencies. She also handled financial services, trade, tax, energy, and environment issues for House Appropriator Congresswoman Grace Meng (D-NY). Lauri received her law degree from American University, Washington College of Law, and worked as a legal intern for both the U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission and the New York State Office of the Attorney General, Investor Protection Bureau.



**Hoang Nguyen** | Director of External Affairs, AAPI Equity Alliance, Stop AAPI Hate. Hoang Nguyen is the Director of External Affairs at AAPI Equity Alliance, a co-founding partner of the national organization Stop AAPI Hate. He currently leads the organization's external and government relations along with policy advocacy to benefit the 1.7 million AAPIs in Los Angeles County. Previously, Hoang served as a policy deputy and political advisor to Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis, who has governing jurisdiction over more than 2 million residents within 20 cities and 23 unincorporated communities in LA County and 25 neighborhoods in LA City. While there, he oversaw a variety of policy and community issues such as immigration, AAPI affairs, older adults, redistricting, Census, and board operations. In 2023, Hoang was appointed by Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass to serve on the City of Los Angeles Civil and Human Rights Commission. He also serves on the Executive Boards of Asian Democrats of Los Angeles County, and California Young Democrats API Caucus. Hoang graduated cum laude from UCLA and was honored as the university's Commencement Speaker.



**Stephanie Penn** | Press Secretary for U.S. Senator Mitch McConnell. Stephanie Penn is the Press Secretary for Kentucky's senior Senator Mitch McConnell, who is the United States Senate Republican Leader. In this role, she briefs the Senator daily on news in Kentucky and serves as a spokesperson and liaison between the Senator's leadership and state press operations. Prior to her current role, Stephanie served in both the Senator's Personal and Leadership Offices. She is a member of the Senate Press Secretaries Association, a bipartisan forum and the largest of Capitol Hill's professional organizations comprised of current and former Senate communicators. Her volunteer commitments span from non-profits, to advocacy and election campaigns, to the Republican National Conventions. Stephanie is a Louisville, Kentucky native and graduated from the University of Louisville's College of Business earning her degree in Marketing and Business Administration.



**Godfrey Plata** | Deputy Director, LA Forward. Godfrey Santos Plata is a queer Filipino immigrant whose north star is racial justice, and whose tools of choice are political education and building people power. He unapologetically works toward a world in which Black Lives Matter. Plata was born in Marikina, Philippines, and is a teacher-turned-organizer currently living in LA's Koreatown. In Los Angeles, Plata serves as the Deputy Director at LA Forward that supports Angelenos to organize and mobilize toward progressive policy-change at the city level. He also leads civic engagement work at AAPI Equity Alliance, a coalition of 40+ local community organizations interested in deepening and advancing AAPI civic engagement in LA County. In his civic life, Plata sits on the board of API RISE which organizes formerly incarcerated and detained members of the API community, and volunteers with the Check the Sheriff coalition, which uplifts the voices of families surviving the violence of LA's sheriff department. In 2020, his political activism got him elected to represent half a million LA residents as a member of LA County Democratic Party's Central Committee, and take on leadership with Pilipino American LA Democrats and the Filipino-American Democratic Caucus of California.



**Angelica Ramos** | Vice President of External Affairs, National Women's Political Caucus of California. Angelica is a political and public policy professional with more than a decade of experience in campaign/field management, coalition building, strategic planning, and policy development. Since 2010, she has run a myriad of winning campaigns across California for labor unions, revenue measures, and political candidates including her current boss, Santa Clara County Supervisor Susan Ellenberg where she serves as lead policy staff for Children, Families, and Special Projects. In addition to her role at NWPC CA, she serves as President of her local chapter, NWPC Silicon Valley. NWPC recruits, trains, and elects pro-choice women to public office. Angelica is also a Library and Education Commissioner for the City of San José and an Executive Board member for both the California Democratic Party and Santa Clara County Democratic Central Committee where she has served as the treasurer for the past several years raising hundreds of thousands of dollars to support locally endorsed Democratic candidates. Angelica has a bachelor's degree from American University in Washington, D.C. and a J.D. with a specialization in Children's Rights from Whittier Law School. Angelica has been a fellow with CORO Women in Leadership, the California Center for Research on Women and Families, and the Children's Defense Fund of California.



**Melissa Ramoso** | District Director, Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi. Melissa Ramoso is a national Filipino American leader. For 20 years, Melissa served and advised legislators such as Rep. Ted Lieu and Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi. She has aided trafficked Philippine nationals, helped veterans and reunite families. In November 2018, Melissa was elected as the first Asian Pacific Islander female to the City of Artesia. In December 2021, Melissa was elected by her peers to serve as Mayor. Melissa has served in the CA Democratic Party (CDP) leadership since 2009. She has run a multitude of political campaigns throughout the last two decades. She served as CDP State Chair to the Filipino American Democratic Caucus and State Chair to the Asian Pacific Islander Caucus. She is the only person in CDP history to serve as State Chair to two caucuses. Melissa was also a delegate to the Democratic National Convention for 2012, 2016 and 2020. She served as the National Co-Chair for Filipino Americans for Biden-Harris. Melissa has been featured on CNN Philippines, ABC7 News and Eat Bulaga! In 2014, Melissa received the Filipina Women's Network's "100 Most Influential Filipina Women in the World Award." In July 2022, the Los Angeles Dodgers honored her during Filipino Heritage Night as their Community Hero. Melissa is a UC Irvine graduate.



**Maha Rizvi** | District Director, Assembly Majority Leader Eloise Gómez Reyes. Maha Rizvi began her organizing career at the age of 16 when she joined her mother in volunteering for Barack Obama's presidential campaign. Now, Maha is an active political leader in the Inland Empire. She served as the first Chairwoman for the Riverside County Young Democrats. She was elected as the first Muslim and South Asian woman to serve as a Regional Director for the California Democratic Party in 2019. She has successfully managed several local campaigns. Currently, Maha serves as the District Director for Assemblymember Eloise Gómez Reyes in San Bernardino. She established the Young Legislator program for high school students to gain leadership skills and to become civically engaged in their community. Since the inception of the program, over 150 students have participated and graduated. Also, she spearheaded the pop-up pumpkin patches for 1000 preschool students across the district. Her leadership with the Sidewalk for Safety Coalition led to securing funds for safe routes to school in the unincorporated area of Muscoy. Maha recently graduated with a Master's in Public Administration degree with a Certificate in County/City Management from the University of Southern California.



**Deepa Sharma** | State Chair, California Democratic Party API Caucus. Deepa Sharma is the State Chair of the California Democratic Party's API Caucus and served on the Caucus's Executive board since 2011. In this role, Deepa has worked to organize the AAPI community to participate in elections and grow the community's collective power. Deepa is a public law attorney and represents local government agencies on constitutional law, land use issues, and affordable housing. In the 2020 election cycle, Deepa served as the communications director for South Asians for Biden, which was dedicated to mobilizing the South Asian community in swing states to vote for the Biden-Harris ticket. Deepa presently serves as a national board member of South Asians for America. In addition to her organizing and legal work, Deepa has managed political campaigns and worked for the California State Legislature, where she helped pass bills into law.



**Lisa Song Sutton** | Owner - Engel & Volkers Las Vegas. Lisa Song Sutton is a real estate investor, entrepreneur, and former Republican congressional candidate for Nevada's 4th district. She is a frequent contributor to industry publications such as Forbes and Business Insider, sharing her knowledge and insights on the real estate market and investing strategies. In addition to her work in real estate, Lisa is a sought-after speaker, sharing her message of leadership, empowerment, and action with audiences from the TEDx stage to local schools, encouraging the private sector to become more involved in their communities. As a military family member, Lisa is a strong advocate for the veteran community. She is currently a General Partner of The Veteran Fund, a \$20M pre-seed venture capital fund that invests in veteran-led and military-spouse-led companies. Lisa was the first Miss Nevada of Asian descent and remains actively involved in her community, serving on the boards of StartUpNV, Nevada's largest statewide business incubator, and the Young President's Organization (YPO) Las Vegas chapter. She was recognized as Vegas Inc.'s 40 Under 40 and named a Top Ten Social Entrepreneur to Watch by Inc. Magazine.

**“If you suffer without succeeding, it is so others will succeed after you. If you succeed without suffering, it is because others have suffered before you”**

- Unknown



**Albert Suh** | Political Strategist, Vice-President, Trip Yang Strategies. Albert Suh is a passionate public servant and political strategist dedicated to advancing equity and justice, with more than a decade of experience in the public sphere. He is currently Vice-President at Trip Yang Strategies, an AAPHed electoral consulting firm that has helped bring dozens of candidates to victory, especially AAPI and POC candidates, including Public Advocate Jumaane Williams, DA Eric Gonzalez, Congressman Dan Goldman, Assemblymember Grace Lee, Assemblymember Steven Raga, and NYC City Councilmember Shekar Krishnan, among others. Albert and TYS were recognized as top 2022 political consultants by City and State Magazine and as 2022 Power Players in Politics by AMNY & Politics NY. Prior to politics, Albert served as a prosecutor in the Brooklyn and Richmond County DA offices, working in the Law Enforcement Accountability, Civil Rights & Hate Crimes, and Special Victims bureaus. He is particularly passionate about criminal justice reform, economic inequality, and inspiring people to fight for positive change. Albert continues to serve his community through mentorships and volunteerism, especially through his alma maters, Fordham Law and NYU.



**Mark Torres** | Senior Director, DSPolitical. Mark Torres is the Senior Director at DSPolitical and leads the firm's Mountain West practice. He is based in the San Francisco Bay Area, focusing on partnerships, growth strategy, and serves as the trusted advisor on digital advertising best practices and strategy with the firm's political, labor, and advocacy clients. During the 2022 electoral cycle, Mark served as the lead digital consultant on Cisco Aguilar's historic Secretary of State race in Nevada and also served as a digital adviser to various independent expenditure programs. Mark's firm has been nationally recognized for their work helping Democrats win up and down the ticket since the firm's founding in 2011. He is also a regular speaker at political and non-profit conferences. Prior to joining DSPolitical, Mark has served in various roles with Obama for America, the U.S. House of Representatives, the University of California, Merced, and successful Silicon Valley start-ups before returning to politics. A son of the Central Valley of California, he is a graduate of Fresno State and the University of Pennsylvania.



**Lisa Tran** | Consultant, Gozzo Strategy & Campaigns. Lisa Tran is a consultant at Gozzo Strategy & Campaigns, a firm that provides strategic campaign, media, and public affairs management to elected officials and organizations. Prior to her current position, Lisa worked as an Outreach Associate at ActBlue, the home of small dollar donors uplifting grassroots campaigns, committees, and PAC's in California. Lisa has experience working with the California Senate Democrats serving as the Volunteer Coordinator for over four election cycles overseeing 200+ volunteers, managing volunteer databases and trainings. In addition to her campaign and organizing experience, Lisa also served in the California Legislature as a legislative staffer working with state and local agencies assisting constituents, managing legislation in collaboration with key stakeholders, and state budget. Lisa is passionate about developing the new generation of Asian and Pacific Islander American political leadership in California. She has served on the California Young Democrats Asian Pacific Islander Caucus Executive Board for over 5 years and currently serves as the Chair. Lisa graduated from the California State University of Long Beach and obtained a B.A. in Communication Studies and a minor in Political Science.



**Julie Vo** | Policy Director, Orange County Asian & Pacific Islander Community Alliance. Julie Vo currently serves as Policy Director at the Orange County Asian & Pacific Islander Community Alliance (OCAPICA). In her role, she leads and supports policy and civic engagement efforts which include nonpartisan voter mobilization and GOTV, community and legislative advocacy, community education, and the integration of policy advocacy and civic engagement across the agency's direct service departments. She currently serves on the boards of the Vietnamese American Arts & Letters Association (VAALA), Orange County Environmental Justice, the Steering Committee of the California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative and organizes within a national network of Vietnamese community builders. As a second generation, Vietnamese-American who grew up in her mother's nail salon, Julie is committed to developing powerful youth, promoting artistic expression and centering stories as a way to both heal and build power within communities of color. Julie holds a B.A. in Sociology and Asian American Studies and a minor in Education from UCLA.



**Hari Vutukuru** | Chief of Staff, United States Climate Alliance. The U.S. Climate Alliance is a bipartisan coalition of governors committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions consistent with the goals of the Paris Agreement. As Chief of Staff, Vutukuru advises the Executive Director on strategy execution, operations, and impact. Prior to this role, Vutukuru served as the Director of Operations at the Food Bank For New York City, one of the nation's largest hunger-relief organizations with a network of approximately 1,200 emergency and community food providers, including soup kitchens, food pantries, shelters, day care centers, as well as senior, youth, and rehabilitation centers. There, he was responsible for supporting the organization's food acquisition and distribution activities, administrative services and business operations, grant management, and technology innovation functions. Vutukuru has also previously held positions at Success Academy Charter Schools and Everytown For Gun Safety and Moms Demand Action. In addition to his full-time role at the Alliance, Vutukuru serves as a commissioned officer in the United States Army Reserves. He earned his B.A. from the University of Michigan, his M.A. from New York University, and is currently a part-time evening J.D. candidate at Georgetown University Law Center.



**Jackie Wu** | Founder & President, J Wu Consulting. A daughter of Chinese-Vietnamese refugees, Jackie Wu is an experienced consultant who specializes in nonprofit advocacy, civic engagement, and political strategy. Prior to starting J Wu Consulting, Jackie worked as the Community Outreach Manager for the Orange County Registrar of Voters where she oversaw the translation of election materials in 9 languages, election worker training, pop-up voting, social media, media, legislation, and outreach to approximately 2 million voters in the fifth largest voting jurisdiction in the U.S. Jackie was deeply impacted by the false accusations of voting and election fraud that sought to undermine voting rights in the controversial 2020 General Election and felt called to play a more direct role in empowering historically excluded communities to realize their political power and potential. Jackie's past work experiences include working for the Orange County Asian & Pacific Islander Community Alliance, the City of Palos Verdes Estates, and the California State Senate. Her diverse background is conducive to developing innovative and resourceful solutions with multiple perspectives in mind. Jackie is a graduate of UC Irvine with a bachelor's degree in Political Science and holds a certificate in Advanced Public Engagement for Local Government from Pepperdine University and Applied Compassion from Stanford University.



**Annie Wu Henry** | Creative Director/Digital Strategist, AAPI Victory Fund and Working Families Party. Annie Wu Henry is a proud AAPI and adoptee who is a digital communications strategist and social media expert for progressive campaigns and organizations. Her unique approach to driving societal progress combines on-the-ground organizing, electoral work, and online media. Annie was recently the social media producer for John Fetterman's successful U.S. Senate campaign in Pennsylvania, for which she was profiled by The New York Times. As a strategist, creator, and political operative, Annie has contributed to some of the largest online advocacy platforms like @feminist, @impact, @so.informed, @more, @shityoushouldcareabout, and @intersectionalenvironmentalist. Through her personal platform, Annie engages, informs, and activates her following about the world and how they can get involved to push for change. She is passionate about progressive politics, press notifications, pop culture, pressed coffee, and people who do the right thing.



**Christopher Zhen** | Legislative Correspondent, Office of Congresswoman Young Kim (R-CA). Christopher Zhen currently serves as a Legislative Correspondent for Congresswoman Young Kim (R-CA) and handles Representative Kim's healthcare, labor and workforce development, animal welfare and postal services issues. Prior to his current role, Christopher was an Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies (APAICS) Fellow in Rep. Kim's office, and he previously worked at PLUS Communications helping support a variety of client accounts. Christopher is a second-generation Chinese-American raised in Omaha, Nebraska, and received his bachelor's degree from New York University.



**Kathy Zhu** | Director of Operations - US House Representatives Ronny Jackson, (TX-13). Kathy graduated from the University of Michigan with a BA in Political Science, and is now pursuing her Master of Arts degree in Government at Johns Hopkins. Prior to her current position as the Director of Operations for Rep. Ronny Jackson, former White House Physician for Presidents Donald Trump, Barack Obama, and George W. Bush, she began her professional career as a Political Analyst at Targeted Victory. She was selected as Miss. Michigan in 2019, and currently runs her own non-profit, Kappa Zeta Inc. by providing young women from across the nation with the ability to have a sisterhood no matter their college ties or political affiliation. She developed her grassroots campaign experience working with the Republican Party of Florida and gathered Asian American volunteers to travel to multiple states to canvass for GOP candidates.

**“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”**

- African Proverb

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