



The Fierce Advocate

August and September 2007 Edition

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Welcome new NAPAWF staff and interns!

NAPAWF is proud to introduce **Dawn Philip**, our new Reproductive Justice Project Director and Women's Law Fellow. Dawn is a recent graduate of City University of New York Law School, and has worked for a number of social justice organizations including Desis Rising Up and Moving (DRUM) and the New York Civil Liberties Union. We're also excited to have **Fatima Capinpin**, who recently graduated from UC San Diego with a major in ethnic studies. As the national office intern, Fatima will be assisting with various membership activities and attending briefings on behalf of NAPAWF. Last but not least, **Mary Nguyen** is working in Seattle as NAPAWF's first anti-trafficking intern! Mary is in her final year of graduate school at the University of Washington in Policy Studies. Mary is tracking federal bills that relate to human trafficking, researching various trafficking studies, and building resources for an upcoming online trafficking library on NAPAWF's website.

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NAPAWF in the News

- **Asian American Amicus Brief in Support of Marriage Equality** On Wednesday, September 27, 2007, a team of attorneys and advocates in Los Angeles and San Francisco announced at a press conference that a broad coalition of Asian American organizations would be filing an [amicus brief](#) in support of equal marriage rights for gay and lesbian couples. The amicus ("friend of the court") brief is being filed in the consolidated *California Marriage Cases* currently pending before the California

Supreme Court in support of of basic fairness for same-sex couples and their families.

NAPAWF signed on to the amicus brief and our own L.A. chapter NAPAWF member, **Cathy Lam Dang**, spoke at the L.A. press conference. Reflecting on the experience, Cathy stated "I'm usually speaking at rallies and shouting chants. But being cool, calm, and collected in front of the media was something new for me; nevertheless, it was an experience I learned from. I really am appreciative and grateful for the leadership guidance that NAPAWF sisters like Angeline Chen, Lisa Fu, and Shari Doi have given me. They were the reason I was able to get in front of that microphone and speak on behalf of NAPAWF." *Thanks for representing NAPAWF so well Cathy!*

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From Capitol Hill

- **DREAM Act stalls in Senate** After weeks of negotiations and rumors of DREAM becoming attached to the Department of Defense authorization bill, the late summer prospect of DREAM being passed in the Senate dwindled by late September. In response, Senate Majority Leader Reid pledged that senators would have a chance to vote on the Act before Congress breaks for the year in mid-November. The DREAM Act would enable a young immigrant who was brought to the U.S. as an undocumented child to earn permanent legal status over a six-year period if s/he completes two years of college or military service. As co-chair of the National Coalition for Immigrant Women's Rights (NCIWR), NAPAWF supports the Act's education option as an important pathway for young people to achieve citizenship. However, NAPAWF finds the Act's military enlistment option unacceptable and therefore cannot support DREAM in its entirety. To learn more, read NCIWR's [statement on DREAM](#).
- **President vetoes State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) reauthorization** On October 3, President Bush [vetoed](#) a bi-partisan bill to reauthorize and expand health care coverage for low-income children. The Senate secured a veto-proof majority, but the [House is scrambling](#) to come up with the last 15-20 votes needed to override the President's veto.

NAPAWF is disappointed by the President's veto, and by Congress' failure to include the [Immigrant Children's Health Improvement Act \(ICHIA\)](#) in the final SCHIP bill. Beginning in 1996, new immigrants have been ineligible to enroll for Medicaid or SCHIP for the first 5 years they are in the U.S. ICHIA would remove this punitive measure and restore to the states the option to receive federal funding for health services to immigrant children and pregnant immigrant women. The House version of the SCHIP bill (known as the CHAMP Act) contained ICHIA, however the Act did not make it into the final bill. Click [here](#) to read NCIWR's sign-on letter urging the Senate finance committee to include ICHIA in the bill.

- **Congress repeals Global Gag Rule** On September 6, the Senate passed the FY 2008 State-Foreign Operations Appropriations bill that included an amendment overturning the Global Gag Rule in its entirety. Under the [Global Gag Rule](#), international organizations that receive U.S. family planning funds are restricted from using their own non-U.S. funds to either provide legal abortion services, including counseling or referrals, or lobby for the legalization of abortion in their country. The Gag Rule is a destructive policy that harms women and international

efforts to provide family planning services and combat the spread of HIV/AIDS. The Senate vote represented the first time since the Gag Rule has been in force that both the House and the Senate have passed legislation to repeal or modify the restriction. The bill is currently in conference committee, however President Bush has vowed to veto the measure. *Adapted from [RH Reality Check](#).*

- **House extends Title V abstinence-only funding** On September 27, the House of Representatives voted to extend funding for Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage programs by three months. The extension is a disappointing display of leadership by Democrats, particularly in light of the [mounting number of studies](#) that have discredited abstinence-only education.
- **Measure to Reduce College Costs and include AAPI Serving Institutions designation signed into law** On September 27, the President signed into law the College Cost Reduction Act, a bill that amends provisions of the Higher Education Act. Importantly, the Act includes a provision that creates an [Asian American and Pacific Islander Higher Education Serving Institution designation](#) to assist low-income API families with the high cost of a college education. Until passage of the bill, APIs were the only racial group that did not have such a designation. The House and Senate approved the conference report for the College Cost Reduction Act on September 7.

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National Office Update: Making Big Plans for NAPAWF's Future

In February and September of this year, NAPAWF staff, board and chapter leaders met to set out a three-year strategic plan and vision for the organization. After four and half years as a staffed organization, NAPAWF is at a critical juncture to forge an exciting plan for future campaigns, projects and activities and build a bigger and stronger movement of API women and girls. We seek to build a strong and diverse API women's and girl's movement by investing in our members and chapters, building diverse and young leadership, promoting and supporting advocacy and organizing among our base, advocating for progressive policies and practices that positively impact API women and girls, and forging strategic collaborations.

With the imminent transition of our Executive Director, the strategic plan provides a vision and roadmap for the future! Our Executive Director application deadline was October 1st. We are excited about the candidates who have applied and will be conducting interviews in October and early November. We will keep you posted on our progress and final selection!

Also, the national office is moving! Keep your address book handy when NAPAWF announces its new location later this month. Stay tuned to The Fierce Advocate for more news, or contact Kiran at kahuja@napawf.org if you have questions.

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California Lobby Day a success!

On August 27, a coalition of 10 NAPAWF members and students with UCLA's Asian Pacific Coalition met with California state senators and staffers in support of two bills currently pending before the California legislature, AB 295 and AB 43. [AB 295](#), authored by Assemblymember Lieu, would require seven state agencies to expand data collection for 10

additional API groups. The bill recently passed both Houses and is waiting to be signed into law by the Governor. Click [here](#) to sign a petition urging Governor Schwarzenegger to sign the bill! [AB 43](#) would allow same-sex partners to obtain marriage licenses and therefore allow same-sex couples in California to achieve marriage equality.

NAPAWF's Western Organizing Director, **Lisa Fu**, facilitated a pre-Lobby Day training for all the participants featuring **Vivian Huang**, Asian Americans for Civil Rights & Equality and NAPAWF board member, and Kendra Harris of Equality California. NAPAWF members **May Lee**, **Jennifer Michael**, and NAPAWF summer intern **Candice Shikai** participated in a total of 13 office visits throughout the Lobby Day! To learn more about the bills and/or NAPAWF's California policy committee, contact Lisa at lfu@napawf.org.

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National Healthy Nail Salon Alliance launches new website

In early 2007, NAPAWF, Women's Voices for the Earth (WVE) and the California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative began discussions around coordinating a national dialogue on the issue of the [health and safety of nail salon workers](#). The idea for this Collaborative developed when advocates from the three convening organizations noticed increasing regional efforts to organize around this issue. Nail salons have more than tripled in size over the last two decades with women making up the 96 percent of the industry workforce. The majority of these women are women of color, and 42% of all nail salon workers nationwide are Asian. Vietnamese women in particular comprise 39% of the entire industry and Korean women comprise 2%. Nail products like nail polish, polish removers and artificial nail products contain a host of toxic chemicals known or suspected to cause cancer, reproductive harm, occupational asthma and other negative health effects. Nail salon workers are particularly at risk for exposure, as they work with these products every day, often in poorly ventilated spaces.

On behalf of the organizations and individuals that are part of this national alliance, NAPAWF, WVE, and the California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative recently launched a website hosted by the Women's Health and Environment Initiative. The website will serve as a "one stop shop" for important information/resources about toxic chemicals in nail products/salons and will provide useful information for citizens, workers, salon owners, regulatory agencies and others interested in protecting worker health and safety. Visit our Alliance webpage www.womenshealthandenvironment.org/nailsalons to find out more!

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Update on the California Young Women's Collaborative

This week, the [California Young Women's Collaborative](#) (CYWC) is kicking off with a new crew of student researchers! Having successfully completed a 1.5-year pilot research and activism project with students at San Francisco State and UC Davis, we are now conducting the project at UC Berkeley with nine stand-out API undergraduate women. Over the next year, the students will work in two teams to research API women's health issues that affect them and their communities, and will actively contribute to the limited but growing body of knowledge around API women's health in the U.S.

CYWC is a project of NAPAWF that seeks to develop the next generation of young advocates, leaders, and researchers for API women's health. For more info, please visit www.myspace.com/cywc.

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News & Announcements from the Progressive API Community

- **New York Governor Spitzer Decides to Broaden Immigrant Access to Driver's Licenses**

After four years of waging a grassroots campaign, immigrants across New York state won a major victory- the right to driver's licenses regardless of immigration status. In 2003 the Pataki administration created a de facto immigration requirement for driver's licenses by changing the list of documents that New Yorkers needed to present in order to receive a driver's license. On September 21st, [Governor Spitzer](#) announced a reversal of the Pataki-era policy. New Yorkers will no longer have to prove their immigration status when applying for a driver's license. Instead, applicants will have to submit secure identity documents, such as valid foreign passports, when applying for a driver's licenses.

Access to a driver's licenses is an important way for people to be able to identify themselves, to drive safely, earn an income, and access many state and local services. "Today's announcement is a huge victory for the immigrant, civil rights and labor movements," said Amy Sugimori, co-chair of the New York Coalition for Immigrants' Rights to Driver's licenses. "We applaud Governor Spitzer for his leadership as he sends a strong message to the country that second-class treatment of immigrants is bad public policy." The victory is the result of a cross-community collaborative effort including more than 60 labor, religious, community and civil rights organizations that have been working together to ensure fair access to driver's licenses for immigrant New Yorkers.

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Have comment, a question or an announcement to share? Contact Priscilla at phuang@napawf.org for more info about The Fierce Advocate.