

# NAPAWF

National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum

---

## PLATFORM PAPERS

---

1. Civil Rights | 2. [Economic Justice](#) | 3. [Educational Access](#)
4. [Ending Violence against Women](#) | 5. [Health](#)
6. [Immigrant and Refugee Rights](#)

This collection of Platform Papers describe the six issue areas that form the basis for NAPAWF's work. The Platform Papers are not meant to provide a complete list of issues and concerns in these areas. Nor does the format of this collection assume that the issues discussed can be neatly separated into six areas. Rather, the Platform Papers are intended to be works-in-progress that serve as companions to the organization's grassroots work.

---

## PLATFORM PAPER ON

### CIVIL RIGHTS

**Platform Paper Working Group:** Kathy Imahara, Aileen Almeria, Kathay Feng, Doreena Wong, Bonnie Tang

**Civil Rights Committee:** Cindy Choi, Kathay Feng (Contact person), Alice Y. Hom, Kathy Imahara, Karen Kimura, Elaine Kwei, Nguyet Lam, Donna Maeda, Masami Suga, Doreena Wong, Jenny Yang, Nou Yongvang

## PHILOSOPHICAL STATEMENT

Through the use of a variety of creative strategies, our civil rights struggle includes advancing the expression of our identities, access to basic human resources and necessities, and justice for Asian Pacific Islander American women and girls. Beyond the U.S. context, NAPAWF asserts the importance of linking our issues with international human rights movements, recognizing that domestic and global struggles shape and inform each other.

## ISSUE AREAS

- Political empowerment
- Enforcing and expanding civil rights
- Bias and discrimination based on gender, racial and/or sexual identity
- Same-sex marriage
- Bilingual education
- Affirmative action
- Hate speech and hate crimes
- Other issues that do not fit neatly into other Platform Areas

## PROBLEM STATEMENTS

API women and girls are systematically marginalized from the decision-making processes and structures that impact their daily lives. As a result, API women and girls are left vulnerable to misinformed, misguided or misanthropic legislation and

policies that not only violate their civil and human rights, but also perpetuate their inability to fully participate in effecting meaningful social, economic and political change. This is illustrated by the blatant targeting of immigrant communities in recent "reform" policies (e. g., immigration reform, welfare reform, English-only) which disproportionately disaffect women and by the failure of current employment discrimination laws to include sexual orientation or to address the intersection of race and gender in the categories of protected classes.

Gender, race, class, age, and sexual biases within as well as beyond the API community play a prominent role in undermining the rights and limiting the opportunities of API women and girls. This is complicated by biases in the dominant American culture about immigration status and English-speaking ability. Stereotypes about API women and girls (e. g., "exotic and erotic dragon women" and "dutiful daughters and wives") lead to accepted and institutionalized forms of oppression, exploitation, and/or victimization. A lack of understanding and dialogue about the intersecting gender, racial and sexual identities of API women and girls exacerbates and reinforces discrimination against them in their families, communities, and society at large. This is exemplified by the ongoing invisibility of API issues in mainstream feminist organizations and of lesbian/bisexual/transgendered issues in API organizations.

## **PLATFORM GOALS**

- To promote the leadership and visibility of API women and girls in the political process and legal system.
- To enforce and expand civil rights laws and protections for API women and girls.
- To provide a safe and supportive forum space for open discourse and political support for all API women and girls.
- To be the leading organization representing the issues of importance to API women and girls.

## **ISSUE AREA OBJECTIVES**

- Expand civil rights protections for all API women and girls to include unprotected classes of people (e. g., sexual minorities) and additional categories of prohibited activities (e. g, hate crimes).
- Address bias and discrimination that limit the rights and opportunities of API women and girls.
- Serve as the primary resource on issues pertaining to API women and girls.
- Involve API women in redefining "civil rights" and in reframing a progressive civil rights agenda.

## **ISSUE AREA STRATEGIES**

- Develop a Political Empowerment program to promote voter education and participation; to groom progressive API women candidates and community leaders; and to educate, lobby and hold policymakers accountable to the issues affecting API women and girls.
- Develop a national resource and information network to promote a progressive civil rights agenda that benefits API women and girls [protect affirmative action, restore welfare benefits to immigrants, expand protected classes (sexual minorities) and prohibited activities (hate crimes), protect immigrant labor rights, legalize same-sex marriage].
- Provide political leadership on specific legislation or policies that protect,

enforce and expand civil rights for API women and girls by testifying before legislative and policy-making bodies, engaging in letter-writing campaigns, and developing position papers.

- Work with Identity Forum Committee to develop and implement programs that address the intersecting gender, race, and sexual identities of API women and girls to continually inform and refresh NAPAWF's Platform.

## **CURRENT ACTIVITIES**

- Seattle/Northwest Chapter is an active member of Washington State APACE (Asian Pacific American Coalition for Equality), which aims to defeat an anti-affirmative action initiative that will be placed on a statewide ballot in the general election.
- Support California in fight to restore welfare benefits to immigrants.
- Recruit underrepresented groups of API women and girls (lesbian/bisexual/transgendered and immigrant) for NAPAWF membership and leadership; integrate their issues into Platform positions.

## **NATIONAL CAMPAIGN PROPOSAL**

### **Objective**

Protect affirmative action.

### Strategies

- Join existing affirmative action preservation efforts.
- Proactively begin dialogues within API communities to ensure that APIs are not used as the "wedge" group between African-American and white communities.

### **Objective**

Train API women to become more politicized.

### Strategies

- Provide Leadership Development opportunities.
- Teach API women and girls how to write an opinion letter (either to the editor of a paper or to an elected official).
- Teach API women and girls how to identify issues of concern.
- Share strategies on how to involve other people in an issue of concern.