

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 16, 2012

Contact: Shivana Jorawar, sjorawar@napawf.org

NAPAWF Opposes Abortion Ban Targeting Asian American Women

The National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF) strongly opposes H.R. 3541, the "Prenatal Nondiscrimination Act" (PRENDA). The House Judiciary Committee today reported the bill favorably, with 20 Republicans voting for and 13 Democrats voting against it. If enacted, PRENDA would ban abortion based on race or sex.

Originally named the "Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass Prenatal Nondiscrimination Act," PRENDA was introduced by Rep. Trent Franks (R-AZ).

Race-based abortion is largely a made-up concept. A higher abortion rate in the African American community is the direct result of limited access to contraception. Yet, sponsors of this bill have consistently voted against measures to fund contraceptive access.

NAPAWF Executive Director Miriam Yeung stated, "This bill is a wolf in sheep's clothing that pretends to address inequality while actually making it worse. If sponsors really wanted to address the issue of sex selection, they would work to raise the status of women by eliminating gender inequity. We know some people, including some in our community, would prefer to have sons because of gender inequity that continues to exist in this country. Banning abortion is not the solution."

Sponsors and supporters revealed during the hearing and mark-up process that they believe Asian American women are more likely than others to choose sex selective abortions. The bill thus essentially demands racial profiling by doctors. Any doctor who performs a sex-selective or race-selective abortion can be incarcerated for up to five years, a fate that may scare abortion providers into rejecting Asian American and African American patients altogether.

Yeung also stated, "Asian American organizations like NAPAWF are working hard in culturally competent ways, like building women's leadership and closing the wage gap, to truly address the gender inequity that causes son preference." In contrast, she stated, "this bill does nothing to lift the status of women. Instead, it discriminates against women of color, limits our right to choose, and puts our health at risk."

Reiterating the hypocrisy of the bill, Yeung stated, "NAPAWF opposes PRENDA because it demonizes our culture and discriminates against the very people it purports to protect."