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AP Report on The Firing of NYPD Officer Angwang



On March 20, 2024, *AP* reported that in a decision made public recently, New York Police Commissioner **Edward Caban** ordered the immediate firing of New York Police Department Officer **Baimadajie Angwang** 昂旺 on January 29, saying he disobeyed an order to submit to questioning by internal affairs investigators about the spying case against Angwang under the now-defunct "China Initiative." Federal prosecutors dropped all criminal charges alleging Angwang spied for China a year earlier.

Angwang, 37, said he declined to appear before the investigators last year on the advice of his lawyers, because the NYPD refused to give them department documents ahead of the questioning that would have allowed them to prepare. Now he is considering taking the commissioner to court over his firing.

"It's extremely disappointing," Angwang told *AP* in a phone interview. "I have to continue to fight, not just for me, for anyone who were wrongfully accused in the past who's getting the wrongful treatment I just got at this moment, or any potential discrimination victims in the future. I will not give up until I find the justice."

Angwang, who also served in the U.S. Marines and was deployed to Afghanistan, said he believes he got caught up in the Trump administration's effort to root out Chinese espionage across U.S. institutions, and alleges there were shades of racism targeting people with Chinese links.

In firing Angwang, Caban chose a harsher penalty than what was recommended in November by an NYPD disciplinary judge who held a hearing on the firing and listened to testimony and arguments from both sides. The administrative judge, **Vanessa Facio-Lince**, found that Angwang violated department rules by disobeying the order to submit to internal affairs questioning.

Facio-Lince said, however, that he should not be terminated, after citing his good record as a police officer and praise by his superiors. Instead, she recommended an alternate manner of Angwang leaving the department that would allow him to negotiate some terms of his departure, including partial retirement benefits.

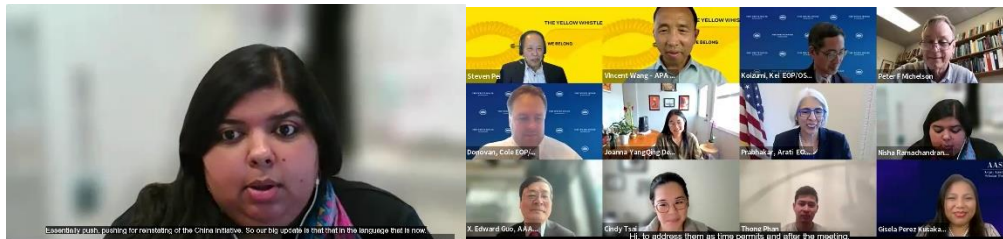
Angwang's lawyer, **Michael Bloch**, said even the judge's proposal was out of line with department disciplinary guidelines. Bloch said the maximum penalty Angwang should have faced was a 20-day suspension. Bloch said there have been many other officers who committed more serious misconduct and were allowed to keep their jobs, despite administrative judges recommending their firing.

Angwang said it was ironic that the NYPD was firing an officer who immigrated to the U.S. and was supported by the immigrant community, when the department is struggling to make the force more diverse.

"I just want people to be aware as an immigrant I served in the Marines. I went to combat. I went to Afghanistan," he said. "I was able to become a police officer. I was able to become a community affairs officer. I was able to build a bridge between the underserved community and the NYPD, which never happened in the past. I gained a lot of support. And now, unfortunately, NYPD terminated that opportunity between the NYPD and the community."

Read the AP report: <https://bit.ly/4ci2sv4>

CAPAC Updates from March APA Justice Monthly Meeting



During the APA Justice monthly meeting on March 4, 2024, **Nisha Ramachandran**, Executive Director, Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), reported that CAPAC Chair **Judy Chu**, First Vice Chair **Grace Meng**, and Senator **Mazie Hirono** wrote a letter

opposing language in the Commerce Justice Science Appropriations Bill that would essentially reinstate the China Initiative. Nisha is pleased that language is no longer included. There is some language about directing the Department of Justice to provide a broader, more general report, such as outlining all the efforts that would be undertaken to identify areas of potential PRC espionage efforts. Congresswoman Meng and her team are credited for holding the line on this issue. This has been a major priority for CAPAC.

There have also been ongoing activities with Professor **Anming Hu**. A letter was sent to USCIS to get clarity on the way they work on prosecutions and individuals who have issues coming out of the China initiative.

CAPAC will also have its own appropriations process in terms of pushing forward its priorities. Research and security are certainly still top priorities in this process.

A summary for the meeting is being prepared at this time. The virtual monthly meeting is by invitation only. It is closed to the press. If you wish to join, either one time or for future meetings, please contact one of the co-organizers of APA Justice - **Steven Pei** 白先慎, **Vincent Wang** 王文奎, and **Jeremy Wu** 胡善庆 - or send a message to contact@apajustice.org.

Update on Alien Land Laws in Georgia



During the APA Justice monthly meeting on March 4, 2024, **Thông Phan**, Senior Policy Associate, Advancing Justice - Atlanta, provided updates on the alien land bills that are coming out of Georgia. [HB 1093](#) did not get a vote on Crossover Day. [SB 420](#) passed the Senate. Since the APA Justice meeting was held, SB 132 was quietly revived and passed out of the House Committee on Agriculture and Consumer Affairs. This was possible because Georgia has a 2-year legislative session, and SB 132 had already been passed by the Georgia Senate last year.

Thông explains that they are very similar bills. Originally, SB 420 had a 25-mile radius outside of military installations, however, the most recent substitute bill for SB 420 changed its radius to 10 miles. SB 132 changed to mirror the language in HB 1093, which held its restrictions at 10 miles outside of a military installation. Both have restrictions on the purchase of agricultural land and

some exemptions for residential property. Both target individuals as well as companies from China, Hong Kong, Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Russia, and Venezuela. Something new in this year's bills is that violations of these bills carry penalties of possible felony convictions and monetary penalties of up to \$15,000 and/or one or two years in prison.

SB 420 passed the Senate on a 41 to 11 vote. It is now assigned to the House Judiciary Committee in Georgia. [which has a committee hearing on March 19, 2024.

During the past year, Thông wrote a report, held a webinar, and convened community members and lawmakers to bring awareness to the bills. Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Atlanta has an action network letter that was signed by at least 1,400 people. It has been distributed in various forms to reflect changes in the bills as they moved through the legislative process. A coalition of groups in Georgia is working on this issue. Their focus is to continue lobbying, testifying against the bill, and getting community members involved.

On March 12, 2024, *AP* reported on the passing of SB420. State Senator **Nabilah Islam Parkes**, a Democrat from Duluth, slammed the bill during debate on the Senate floor, comparing it to historical attempts by lawmakers in the U.S. to limit immigration from China and land ownership by Asian Americans. “This bill provides no real national security benefit, but does threaten the safety and security of Asian Americans, immigrants from Asia and other immigrants,” she said. “Questioning people’s loyalty, trustworthiness and dangerousness based on their country of origin is offensive and xenophobic.”

Advocate **Megan Gordon** cited the litigation around Florida’s law to urge members of the Florida House Agriculture and Consumer Affairs committee not to push forward with similar legislation. “It doesn’t really make sense for us to wade into pending litigation in this way,” said Gordon, policy manager with the Georgia chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations.

Thông Phan, with Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Atlanta, said the Georgia Senate bill wrongly treats citizens of China and the other targeted countries as their agents.

“It targets individuals and families more so than it targets foreign governments,” he said in a phone interview with *AP*. “How is it effective in achieving national security?”

Read the March 12 *AP* report: <https://bit.ly/3VisbO1>

On March 21, 2024, multiple media including *AP*, [Georgia Recorder](#), [State Affairs](#), and [Georgia Public Broadcasting](#) reported the Georgia House of Representatives voted 97 to 67 in favor of SB420.

Democratic Rep. **Michelle Au**, whose parents came to the U.S. from China, said regardless of intent, the bill would be perceived as racist and xenophobic by the people it could affect most. “This bill does not target intent, it restricts rights based on national origin, which is illegal,” she said. “Legality aside, put that aside for a moment, this bill, whether it’s supposed to be or

not, paints a picture that residents from certain parts of this world cannot be trusted. They are essentially suspect and potentially traitors simply by dint of their nationality. Think about the message this sends to the international community. Think about the message this sends to business partners who've been proud to welcome and cultivate in the state, bringing vehicle and battery plants, manufacturing, huge technology, and export industries, and thousands of jobs that come with them."

Minority Whip **Sam Park**, a Lawrenceville Democrat whose grandparents were refugees from the Korean War, criticized the exemption for companies doing agricultural research. He said the bill could cast "a shadow of suspicion" on any Asian-American looking to buy farmland and echoes past examples of anti-Asian racism. "From the Chinese Exclusion Act that banned immigration from Asia and prevented all Americans of Asian descent from becoming citizens, to the forced relocation and internment of more than 120,000 Japanese Americans, to the rise in hate crimes and discrimination against Asian-Americans fueled by racist rhetoric and disinformation amidst the COVID -19 pandemic, it seems we have not come as far as we thought with respect to living up to our highest American principles and values of ensuring freedom, equality, and justice for all," he said.

Park and other Democrats referenced a Florida law (SB 264) similar to Georgia's bill that was put on hold by a federal judge as a case moves forward into its constitutionality.

What is Texas SB 4?



LAW

What to know about SB 4, the Texas immigration law in the courts now

Multiple media have reported on the recent legal whiplash on a Texas state law known as SB 4. A whirlwind of court orders briefly allowed, then blocked again, a highly questionable new immigration law in Texas that would allow state and local law enforcement to arrest and deport people who are in the state illegally.

According to *NPR*, Texas SB 4 was originally set to go into effect on March 5. But the U.S. government and the [ACLU](#) both filed lawsuits against it, and a district judge issued a preliminary injunction to block the law from enforcement while the case was being heard. Texas appealed the injunction to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. The appeals court turned to the Supreme Court, which ultimately allowed the law to go into effect before the appeals court blocked it.

The Biden administration has argued that Texas overstepped its constitutional limits in passing SB 4, and they maintain that immigration policy and law enforcement are exclusive functions of the federal government.

Federal attorneys have repeatedly pointed to a 2012 Supreme Court decision known as *Arizona vs. United States*, a case about a state law in Arizona that sought to create state-level crimes for immigration offenses and empower local law enforcement to check citizenship status and arrest people suspected of being in the country illegally. In a 5-3 decision, the court sided with the federal government and struck down most of Arizona's law.

Groups that advocate for civil rights and immigrants' rights have criticized the law over concerns that it could lead to racial profiling. SB 4 would allow law enforcement officers to question someone's immigration status for any reason.

"We know that this law is going to increase racial profiling. We know that this law is going to strip people of their constitutional rights. We know that this law is also going to lead to the mass criminalization of our communities," said **Alan Lizarraga**, a spokesperson for the Border Network for Human Rights.

Opponents also worry that migrants with legitimate claims to asylum could have their federal cases asylum complicated by the Texas law if they come to face state criminal charges.

Mexico also opposes the law. Its foreign affairs ministry said in a statement that the country will not accept migrants who have been deported under the Texas law. And it expressed concern for Mexican nationals living in Texas, who it said could now be subject to "expressions of hate, discrimination and racial profiling." With the case back at the Fifth Circuit, Mexico said it plans to file a legal brief in opposition to SB 4 that lays out how the law could affect the relationship between the two countries, the statement said.

Read the *NPR* report: <https://n.pr/3TqN07f>.

News and Activities for the Communities

1. APA Justice Community Calendar

Upcoming Events:

- 2024/03/24 Committee of Concerned Scientists Annual Meeting
- 2024/03/25 Committee of 100: Asian American Career Ceiling Challenges in Broadcast News
- 2024/04/07 Rep. Gene Wu's Town Hall Meeting
- 2024/04/08 APA Justice Monthly Meeting
- 2024/04/19 Committee of 100 Annual Conference and Gala
- 2024/05/02 AAGEN 2024 Executive Leadership Workshop
- 2024/05/05 Rep. Gene Wu's Town Hall Meeting

Visit <https://bit.ly/45KGyga> for event details.

2. Citizenship Question in Census Stopped

On March 21, 2024, U.S. Rep. **Grace Meng** (D-NY) and U.S. Senator **Mazie Hirono** (D-HI) announced that they stopped House Republicans from adding a citizenship question to the next United States Census.

In 2018, then-President Trump pushed to add a question on the 2020 U.S. Census which would have asked respondents about their citizenship status. Meng and Hirono fought against the plan, and after the Supreme Court blocked it from moving forward, the Trump administration abandoned its crusade. But this past January, House Republicans revisited the effort, attaching a measure to a key funding bill that would have required the question to be on the 2030 census.

Meng and Hirono led a letter to congressional leaders urging them to remove it, and the legislation was passed and signed into law without the citizenship question being included. Meng and Hirono had argued that a citizenship question would have caused an undercount of immigrant communities out of fear that the information they provide will be used against them.

As a result, it would have jeopardized the Census Bureau's ability to accurately count every person in the U.S.

The lawmakers' letter, which was signed by 48 other Senators and House members, was sent to House Speaker **Mike Johnson**, House Minority Leader **Hakeem Jeffries**, Senate Majority Leader **Chuck Schumer** and Senate Minority Leader **Mitch McConnell**.

Read the announcement: <https://bit.ly/4co81rZ>.

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