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AAPIs Show Solidarity at 60th Anniversary of March on Washington



According to *AsAmNews*, supporters, volunteers, and staff from fifteen national AAPI organizations gathered at the 60th anniversary of the historic March on Washington on August 26, 2023.

The original March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom took place on August 28, 1963, in which over 200,000 people gathered for Black equality and civil rights– and during which **Martin Luther King** delivered his historic “I Have a Dream” speech.

The AAPI contingent was an intergenerational gathering – with American-born second generation and first-generation naturalized citizens, and Asians — representing multiple organizations and races.

John C. Yang, president and executive director of Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Asian American Justice Center (AAAJ-AAJC) gave a rallying speech at the march.

Multiple organizations made reference to the long history of AAPIs in civil rights work.

“While JAACL was the only Asian American organization to formally join the 1963 march, this year we look forward to being joined by hundreds more of our partner Asian American organizations,” the Japanese American Citizens League shared in a statement.



“Chinese Americans had our long history of civil rights movement, e.g. Yick Wo v. Hopkins in 1886, **Steven Pei**, co-organizer of APA Justice and founding chair of the United Chinese Americans, told *AsAmNews* via email.

[Thanks to donation of the Committee of 100 and the Yellow Whistle Project], United Chinese Americans, and other organizations, passed out yellow whistles as part of an anti-Asian hate project. The pamphlet describes the whistle as a “symbol of self-protection and solidarity in our common fight against historical discrimination and anti-Asian violence,” reclaiming the color yellow which “has been weaponized against Asians as the color of xenophobia.”



According to Pei, half a million whistles have been distributed nationwide since April 2021, and another 300,000 have been ordered.

Participants joined from across the country, including Texas, California, Massachusetts, and more. Tibetan American **Baimadajie Angwang**, who was accused of being a Chinese spy in 2020 under the "China Initiative" targeting AAPIs (all charges were dropped earlier this year), traveled from New York to attend the march.

“We are here to be united. We are all the same. When they push the American dream to immigrants, they say if you work hard, follow the rules, you will be treated fairly. I did everything an immigrant is instructed to do but because of anti-Asian rhetoric, I got accused of being a spy who works for China,” Angwang told *AsAmNews*.

Most importantly, AAPIs stated their commitment to anti-racism.



“There are politicians and racists who want to exploit Asian Americans and use our community as a wedge in the fight for justice and civil rights, but we must refuse to be complicit in the oppression of Black Americans. We must do our part and march in racial unity alongside our Black community members – not only today but every day because our fight for equity is one and the same,” stated **Louise Liu**, Anti-Hate Communications Coordinator, AAAJ-AAJC.

Read the AsAmNews report: <https://bit.ly/45Jigag>

APA Justice has created an online photo album of the event and will add photos and content at <https://bit.ly/3OVoixs>.

Did You Know Who Designed the MLK Statue?



Sculptor Lei Yixin, known for his sculptures of Chairman Mao, showed off a model of a new Martin Luther King Jr. statue at his studio in China in 2007. The three-story full size sculpture is stranded in China because of the Greek debt crisis.

Artist Lei Yixin stands in front of his statue in honor of Martin Luther King Jr., titled "MLK Memorial: Stone of Hope." (Wikimedia Commons / Wikipedia Commons)

According to [Wikipedia](#), **Lei Yixin 雷宜铤**, a prominent Chinese sculptor born in Changsha, Hunan, China, designed the Stone of Hope, the statue of Martin Luther King Jr. at the King Memorial near the United States National Mall. **Did You Know Who Designed the MLK Statue?**

Asian Americans Rise as a Powerful Voting Bloc



— Voters wait to hand in their ballots to election officials in Boston on Sept. 1, 2020. Asian American and Pacific Islander voters have become the group to court, by both parties, in 2024. Journal: ProPublica / APF via Getty Images / TLB

A major message from the 60th Anniversary of March on Washington is voter registration and turnout. The 1963 March on Washington was a catalyst for landmark voting rights action, leading to the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Advocates are sounding alarms about voter suppression and the rollback of voting rights protections, particularly those affecting Black and minority voters.

Echo King, President of Florida Asian American Justice Alliance who joined the March on Washington event, commented that "if we are not at the table, we are part of the menu." **Gisela Perez Kusakawa**, Executive Director of the Asian American Scholar Forum, also participated in the event. So did **Adrienne Poon**, President of OCA-DC.

According to *NBC News* on August 21, 2023, Asian Americans have emerged as a coveted voting bloc in the 2024 election, with both parties recognizing their power to decide the presidency and other competitive races.

Asian American voter turnout spiked in 2020, surprising many political observers, and proved crucial to President **Joe Biden's** Electoral College victory. In battleground Georgia, Asian American turnout jumped by a startling 84% from the previous presidential election. Two years later, Sen. **Raphael Warnock**, D-Ga., sought to capitalize with an unusual move in his ultra-competitive contest: He produced ads in Mandarin, Korean and Vietnamese to mobilize Asian American voters. He carried 78% of that vote in the runoff and won.

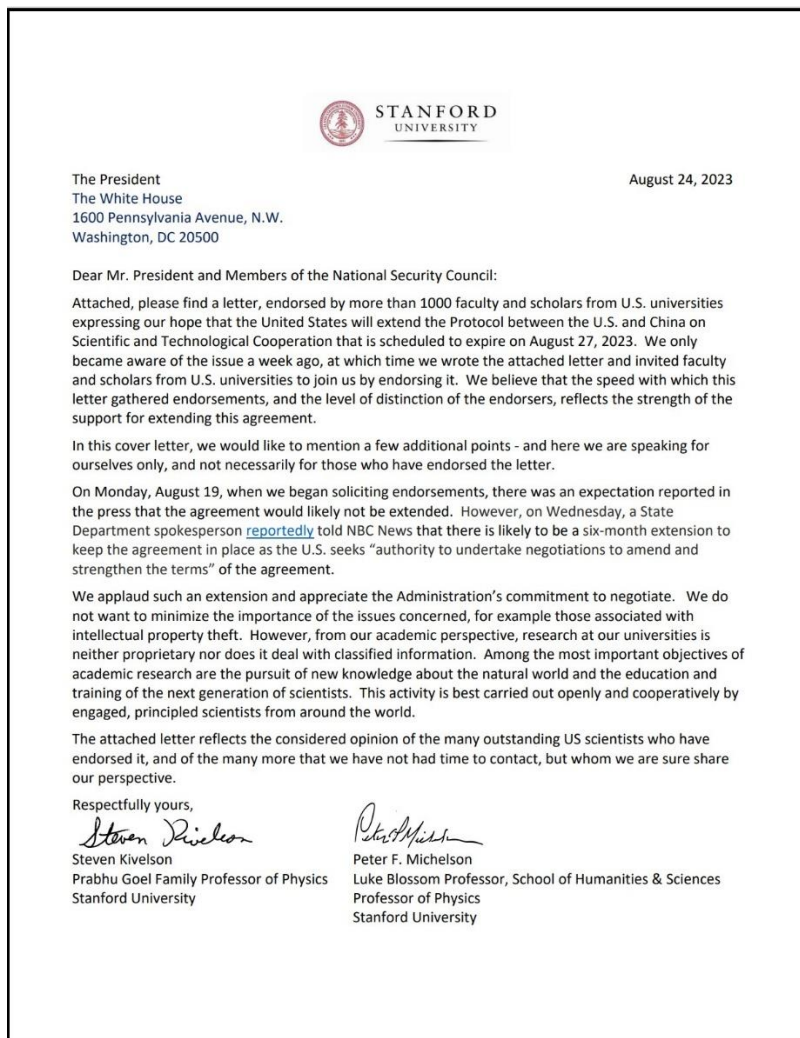
Now, with the next campaign underway, the political power of this voting bloc has sunk in. The national committees for Democrats and Republicans say they are launching unprecedented investments to court Asian American and Pacific Islander voters.

Read the NBC News report: <https://nbcnews.to/3Ece9DM>

Christine Chen, Co-Founder and Executive Director of Asian Pacific Islander American Vote (APIAVote), and **Bob Sakinawa**, Director of Policy and Advocacy, were also at the March on Washington event.

During the August 7 monthly meeting, Christine reported on "The Growing AAPI Electorate and What is at Stake." APIAVote's work revolves around collaborating with national, regional, and local partners in order to equip advocates with the training, tools, resources, and best practices they need to do their best work as "trusted messengers" in their communities. APIAVote's Alliance for Civic Empowerment (ACE) is missing partners in some states in the Mid-West, South, and Northeast. Christine's presentation included the trend and historic AAPI turnout in 2020, a presidential election year, with 64% registered and 60% turnout. Christine also gave an outline of activities and training in 2023 and 2024. State and local communities are urged to connect with APIAVote to build and strengthen their network to register and turn out voters from the Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities. Christine's 18-slide presentation is here: <https://bit.ly/3DZBK4>

Over 1,000 Faculty/Scientists Urge President Biden to Renew U.S.-China Science and Technology Agreement



On August 24, 2023, Stanford University Professors **Steven Kivelson** and **Peter Michelson** sent a letter to President **Joe Biden** and members of the National Security Council, expressing their strong support for renewing the US-China Protocol on Scientific and Technological Cooperation.

Their call for endorsement of the letter started on August 19. APA Justice amplified their call in its newsletter on August 22. A State Department spokesperson reportedly told *NBC News* on August 23 that there is likely to be a six-month extension. The current authority expires today, August 27, 2023.

The letter to the President was endorsed by over 1,000 faculty and scholars from many US universities including multiple Nobel Laureates, members of the National Academies, and of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Their names and institutional affiliations are included in the letter.

Read the cover letter and the original letter with endorsers at <https://bit.ly/44xTNPX>

Chinese Academics Are Becoming a Force for Good Governance in China

According to *Issues in Science and Technology*, a quarterly journal published by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine and Arizona State University, Chinese bioethicists, legal scholars, and scientists released a consensus statement on March 5, 2023, condemning **He Jiankui**, the infamous scientist who used the CRISPR gene editing tool to edit the genomes of three babies born in 2018 and 2019. Released from prison in 2022, He quickly began advertising a new—and risky—gene therapy to patients. The March statement denounced He's actions and urged Chinese authorities to be more accountable in their oversight. The statement also protested the censorship and secrecy shrouding He's sentencing and called for more open, public discussion of scientific controversies in China.

Global scientists and regulators welcomed the statement, which was released the day before the Third International Summit on Human Genome Editing. It was one of the few times since He's imprisonment in 2019 that the world heard directly from Chinese academics about how controversies involving human genome editing research should (or should not) be handled.

And in China, the statement's timing was particularly remarkable: it was released the very morning of the opening session of China's annual National People's Congress, a moment when the government is especially intolerant of dissent. This bold timing demonstrated that, contrary to common belief, Chinese academics are not passive followers of the Chinese Communist Party. Instead, China's scientific community is making concerted efforts to actively shape science governance.

The consensus statement reflects important changes in the domestic dynamics of Chinese science—particularly the increasingly prominent role of academics. Chinese academics have become a proactive, effective force demanding science governance in China, but international counterparts too often fail to recognize their role and so undermine their efforts. China still has much work to do to develop a trusted and accountable regulatory system worthy of its scientific advancement and ambition, but meaningful, sustainable reforms must come from within the

country.

Read the *Issues in Science and Technology* report at: <https://bit.ly/45OdEf5>

U.S.-China joint research papers drop for first time in 28 years

According to *Nikkei Asia* on August 25, 2023, research papers jointly authored by scientists in the U.S. and China have declined for the first time in nearly three decades, underscoring the impact of decoupling in the face of heightened political tensions between the two countries.

The tally fell 5% on the year to 51,630 papers in 2021, according to a report from Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. The last drop was a slight decrease in 1993.

Although the pandemic slowed international exchanges between researchers in 2021, papers typically take years to write. COVID-19 is believed to have had only a minimal impact on joint papers published in 2021.

In addition, the overall number of research papers jointly authored across international borders grew 7% to 577,166 in 2021. Factors other than the pandemic likely contributed to the decrease in Sino-American papers.

"I suspect there are moves in the U.S. to avoid co-authoring with China due to the bilateral political tensions," said **Tohru Yoshioka-Kobayashi**, an assistant professor at Hitotsubashi University's Institute of Innovation Research.

The U.S. took a hard line on China after **Donald Trump** became president in 2017. The souring relations deteriorated into a trade war in 2018, when the Trump administration raised tariffs on Chinese imports and Beijing responded with retaliatory duties.

The U.S.'s China Initiative anti-spying program ran from 2018 to 2022, with spillover effects on academia. The Trump administration tightened restrictions on Chinese student visas, taking such steps as shortening expiration dates for graduate students in high-tech fields.

Current President **Joe Biden** has imposed controls on semiconductor exports to China, keeping bilateral tensions smoldering.

A Japanese researcher working in China reports hearing a colleague say they returned from the U.S. because they no longer felt comfortable there.

"As the result of Chinese-born researchers returning to China from the U.S., joint research projects with them are being completed inside of China," the Japanese researcher said.

China produced more scientific papers than the U.S. in 2017, taking the global crown. China later bested the U.S. in research paper quality, based on the number of citations.

Sino-American joint papers have increased roughly 20 times over two decades. Even with the drop-off in 2021, the U.S. remains China's biggest partner in collaboration, accounting for 36% of all of China's jointly written papers.

If the decoupling intensifies, China may end up building a research infrastructure no longer reliant on the U.S. The number of Sino-American papers in chemistry dropped nearly 20% in 2021, while those in materials science declined more than 10%.

China could also create a sphere of cooperation separate from the one dominated by American and European research. Pakistan rose to China's seventh-biggest research collaborator in 2021 from 10th place in 2020, with its share of joint papers with China growing to 4.6% from 3.6%.

India and Saudi Arabia climbed to 13th and 14th place. Collaboration with emerging and Middle Eastern countries "may spark innovation due to the greater diversity," Yoshioka-Kobayashi said.

Read the Nikkei Asia report at <https://s.nikkei.com/47Ot17A>

News and Activities for The Communities

1. Asian American Studies Minor Launches at Fordham University



According to *Fordham News* on August 23, 2023, Fordham University students will be able to minor in Asian American studies beginning this fall. The new minor will provide an interdisciplinary understanding of Asian American people and other members of the Asian diaspora, as well as a focus on Asian culture and history. The minor is part of Fordham's new Asian American studies program, which faculty members hope to continue to expand. "The student population is really diverse," said **Stephen Hong Sohn**, Ph.D., English professor and Thomas F.X. and Theresa Mullarkey Chair in Literature. "Not only do we want Asian American students and Asian students to have a place to explore their backgrounds and identities, but it's really important for all students to take these types of classes because they need to learn about

other cultures, other identities.”

Read the *Fordham News* report: <https://bit.ly/3QZTyKv>

2. 2023 National Unity Summit

The image is a composite of three parts. On the left is a promotional poster for the 2023 National Unity Summit, held from September 25-27 in Washington DC. It lists supporting organizations such as AAUC, CLUSA, and NAA. The middle part is a schedule for the summit: September 25 (Pre-conference dinner cruise on the Potomac), September 26 (Full-day meeting in the congressional Rayburn Building at the Capitol), and September 27 (Half-day White House briefing). The right part is a screenshot of the 'Community Calendar' for September 2023, showing the event on September 26. The calendar interface includes navigation options like 'Today', 'September 2023', and 'Print Week', and shows the event 'AAUC National Unity Summit' on the 26th.

The Asian American Unity Coalition (AAUC) will convene 2023 National Unity Summit in Washington DC from September 25 to 27, 2023.

Main theme: Collaborating to Achieve Diversity, Unity and Equality

Purpose: To create a community platform for all AAPI organizations and leaders to interact and collaborate on vital community issues.

Concept: The 2023 National Unity Summit is an in-person event that showcases our [diversity] and unity while affording community leaders the opportunity to advocate on select issues.

Read about the event and register at: <https://bit.ly/3QXCVPM>

APA Justice has also posted the AAUC event at its newly created Community Calendar at: <https://bit.ly/45KGyga>

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