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Rallies in Austin and Dallas to Oppose Texas Senate Bills 147 and 552



On January 29, 2023, hundreds of people from Austin and Dallas rallied to voice their opposition toward two Texas senate bills that unjustly target Chinese Americans.

According to the *Dallas Morning News*, multiple organizations with ties to the Chinese American community have planned rallies in major Texas cities to protest the proposed legislation after Gov. Greg Abbott expressed his support for Senate Bill 147 on Twitter. Democrats in the state held a news conference last week to [denounce Senate Bill 147](#) and described it as racist and unconstitutional.

The Senate bills have elicited outrage from Chinese Americans in North Texas, who have large enclaves in multiple cities, including Plano, Richardson, Irving and Allen. More than 250 people showed up to the January 29 rally, which was held at John F. Kennedy Memorial Plaza.

Hailong Jin, board director of the DFW Chinese Alliance, which hosted the rally, said the bills are a painful reminder for the Chinese American community of the country's past anti-Chinese legislation, such as the Chinese Exclusion Act and California's "Alien Land Law." "You pass this law, other states will follow and anti-Asian hate will increase in this country — definitely," Jin said.

Plano City Council member **Maria Tu**, who spoke to attendees of the rally, called on Austin lawmakers to do right by their Chinese American constituents and to fight against the Senate bills. "I'm here today, not to represent any political position or stance," Tu said. "I am here because I am Chinese, American, and I'm Texan." Tu was joined by other local elected officials, including Democratic state representatives **Carl Sherman**, **DeSoto**, and **Rafael Anchía**, who urged attendees to continue speaking out against the bills and to make their voices heard by lawmakers in Austin.

Read the *Dallas Morning News* report: <http://bit.ly/3DAdcFD>



On January 30, 2023, the *Austin American-Statesman* reported that hundreds gathered at the Texas Capitol to protest Senate Bill 147.

According to the report, for activist **Helen Shih**, hearing about Senate Bill 147 — a proposal to bar citizens of China, Iran, North Korea and Russia from buying property in Texas — was stressful in a week filled with preparations for Lunar New Year events. The week also ended in grief after a mass shooting at a Lunar New Year celebration in Monterey Park, Calif.

"So it's like all of these things were happening simultaneously, and it was extremely stressful," said Shih, a member of the Rise AAPI board and an adviser to the United Chinese Americans board.

Shih said SB 147 discriminates against the very people trying to flee oppression in those countries and find safety in America. Being able to buy a condominium or a small home helps people build a life here, the Houston-area activist said. She helped Austin activists organize a rally at the Capitol after co-organizing protests in the Houston area.

Community organizations including United Chinese Americans, the Austin Chinese Engineers Society and the Asian Americans Leadership Council organized the rally. State Reps. **Gene Wu**, D-Houston, and **Vikki Goodwin**, D-Austin, and Austin City Council Member **Zohaib "Zo" Qadri** spoke at the demonstration.

Austin resident **Sheng Peng** said the rally was not just about protesting SB 147, but about raising alarm against these kinds of proposals, which might further provoke hatred and violence against Asians. Peng said that even if you are an American citizen, you are not safe from discrimination, stoked by SB 147, as long as you look Chinese. "And it's not good for the

country," Peng said. "It's already a divided country. It will deepen the division further. So that's what this is about. It's not about a political game. It's about human rights. It's about the whole society."

Read the *Austin American-Statesman* report: <https://bit.ly/3Rv>

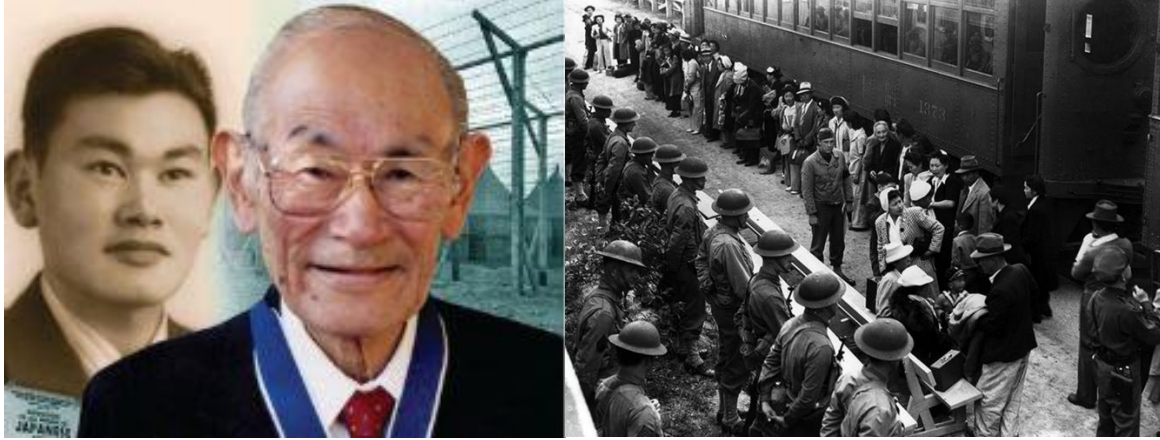
2023/02/06 APA Justice Monthly Meeting

The next APA Justice monthly meeting will be held on Monday, February 6, 2023. Speakers include:

- **Nisha Ramachandran**, Executive Director, Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), to provide updates on the latest developments and activities of CAPAC
- **John Yang 杨重远**, President and Executive Director, Advancing Justice | AAJC review 2022 to provide updates on the Anti-Profilng, Civil Rights & National Security Program and related Activities
- **Gisela Kusakawa**, Executive Director, Asian American Scholar Forum, to provide updates on AASF activities
- **Les Wong**, President Emeritus, San Francisco State University, and **Frank Wu 吴华扬**, President, Queen's College, City University of New York, will report on the latest development of forming a network of Asian American university presidents/chancellors.
- **Michele Young**, Attorney, Michele Young Law; Member of Sherry Chen Legal Team will reflect on Sherry Chen's fight for justice and historic settlement.
- **Gene Wu 吴元之**, Member, Texas House of Representatives, has been a leading voice for Asian Americans and other communities across Texas in opposing Texas Senate Bill 147. As part of the expansion of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, California enacted the Alien Land Law in 1913, barring Asian immigrants from owning land. Other states followed with their discriminatory laws restricting Asians' rights to hold land in America. These laws remained in place until the 1950s, some even longer. What do we know about Texas SB 147 and its implications? Rep. Wu . Please join this important discussion.

The virtual monthly meeting is by invitation only. 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. Read past monthly meeting summaries here: <https://bit.ly/3kxkqxP>.

85 Organizations Signed on to Letter to Honor Fred Korematsu



On January 30, 2023, Demand Progress Action and the Fred T. Korematsu Institute [announced](#) that a coalition of 85 civil society organizations called on Congress to support a new bicameral legislative package introduced by Senators **Hirono** and **Duckworth** and Reps. **Takano** and **Tokuda** to recognize civil rights hero Fred Korematsu for his activism against US incarceration of American citizens and residents of Japanese ancestry in concentration camps during World War II. APA Justice is one of the co-signers of the letter.

Specifically, the broad coalition [sent a letter](#) to Senators Hirono and Duckworth and Reps. Takano and Tokuda endorsing:

1. **Fred Korematsu Congressional Gold Medal Act**, which would prohibit detention or imprisonment based solely on an actual or perceived protected characteristic of an individual.
2. **Recognizing the importance of establishing a national "Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution,"** which will help to ensure that Fred Korematsu's legacy is remembered and honored and that the lessons of the internment are not forgotten.
3. **Korematsu-Takai Civil Liberties Protection Act**, which will honor Fred Korematsu for his decades-long fight for justice, and will serve as a powerful reminder of the importance of protecting civil liberties for all Americans.

Read about the **Fred Korematsu** story

- Fred T. Korematsu Institute: [Fred Korematsu's Story](#)
- 2017/01/30 Smithsonian Magazine: [Fred Korematsu Fought Against Japanese Internment in the Supreme Court... and Lost](#)

America Against America: Anti-Chinese Racism in the Race for Talent



On January 30, 2022, **Alex Liang**, Yale University's 2022-2023 Fox International Fellow at the Australian National University, posted an article titled "America Against America: Anti-Chinese Racism in the Race for Talent."

According to the article, while President **Xi Jinping** [laid out his vision](#) for China at the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in October 2022, sitting quietly behind him was the introverted and discreet professor-turned-politician who crafted 'Xi Jinping Thought': **Wang Huning** 王沪宁. Since the late 1990s, Wang has served three General Secretaries at the highest levels and is China's top ideologue, or political theorist. In his 1991 book [America against America](#), then-Professor Wang focused on contradictions and conflicts in American society and predicted America's fall due to domestic strife. He called out America's [systemic racism](#) writing that racial discrimination, particularly against Black Americans, was potentially 'the biggest social problem' and may 'eventually become a fatal problem'. Today, his government is leveraging America's racial challenges in the race for scientific talent.

In the final days of the Trump Presidency, in January 2021, the US Attorney for Massachusetts charged Professor **Gang Chen** 陈刚 with grant fraud and making false statements, felonies that could have landed Chen twenty years in prison. Chen immigrated to the United States from China over thirty years ago and has been an American citizen for over two decades. Yet, at the press conference announcing the charges against Chen, the US Attorney, **Andrew Lelling**, said they "were not just about greed, but about [Chen's] loyalty to China." A year later, its case fell apart and the government dropped all charges. Chen was vindicated. "We thought we had achieved the American Dream...until this nightmare happened," Massachusetts Institute of Technology Professor Gang Chen said in February 2022.

Questioning Chen's loyalty to his country was not only insulting to him and other Chinese Americans. It may also have long-term strategic consequences for America's race for talent. The US Attorney's 'loyalty' comment fed into a long-standing stereotype that casts Chinese

Americans 'as inherently foreign and therefore not truly "American"' — the perpetual foreigner stereotype.

Chen is not alone. During the September 2021 trial of Professor **Anming Hu** 胡安明 of the University of Tennessee Knoxville, US law enforcement agents admitted to falsely accusing him of spying for China, using false information to surveil him and his teenage son for two years, and trying to convince Hu to become an American spy. Ultimately, a court found Hu innocent. Reflecting on the ordeal, he said, 'It was the darkest time of my life.'

Both Chen and Hu belong to an unfortunate group of ethnically Chinese scientists who became victims of the Department of Justice's (DOJ) "China Initiative."

This outraged both the [Asian American](#) and [scientific](#) communities. **Randy Katz**, Vice Chancellor for Research at the University of California Berkeley [went so far as to say](#) that these investigations were "conducted in a manner that does not adhere to our American values." The "China Initiative" and its consequences threaten America's preeminence in science and technology as it has forced people to ask the question of *who* can attain the American Dream.

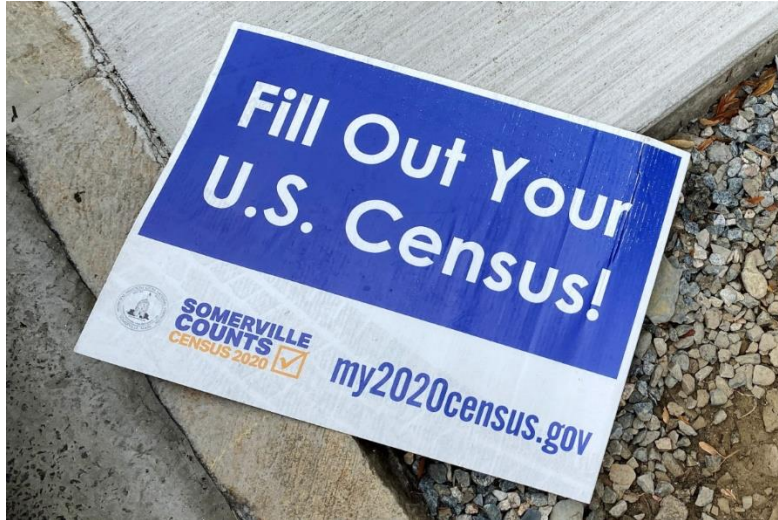
Although the Biden Administration ended the "China Initiative" in February 2022, it had a ["chilling" effect](#) that lingers in American academia.

As Xi Jinping continues to promote his "China Dream" narrative in China, racial discrimination in America imperils the very values that define America. To dispel the "American nightmare" narrative, the American Dream has to be seen as attainable regardless of background or skin color. As with China's rise we enter a new age of great power competition, Western liberal democracies should not shy from, but should instead double down on these values, including respect for civil rights and freedom from racial discrimination. If we do not, Wang may ultimately be proven right.

Read Alex Liang's article: <http://bit.ly/3jozh2P>

Gordon Chang on A Long History of Insecurity, Fear, Vulnerability among Asian American Communities. In an interview conducted by *Stanford News*, **Gordon Chang** 张少书, Olive H. Palmer Professor in Humanities in the School of Humanities and Science, talked about the recent tragedies in Monterey Park and Half Moon Bay as part of a long history of violence inflicted upon Asian Americans. "Asian Americans in American history have often been seen as quiet and unassuming. Some believe this makes them easy targets for assault, insult, and robbery, and that they won't respond," Chang said. "But there is a contrary narrative, which is that Asians can be cruelly violent, irrational, and dangerous – for example, in films such as *Apocalypse Now*, *Kill Bill*, *Chinatown*, and *Gran Torino*. I fear that these recent incidents will stimulate further anti-Asian fears and cycles of further prejudice and violence." It's now up to all of us to think about how to address gun violence and other injustices, he added. Read the *Stanford News* interview: <https://stanford.io/3jqShOh>

Initial Proposals for Revising the Federal Race and Ethnicity Standards



On January 26, 2023, the Office of the Chief Statistician announced that it is taking a key step forward in its formal process to revise OMB's (Office of Management and Budget) statistical standards for collecting and reporting race and ethnicity data across Federal agencies (Directive No. 15) by publishing an initial set of recommended revisions proposed by an Interagency Technical Working Group. Those initial proposals include:

- Collecting race and ethnicity together with a single question;
- Adding a response category for Middle Eastern and North African, separate and distinct from the "White" category; and
- Updating SPD 15's (Statistical Programs and Standards) terminology, definitions, and question wording.

Input from non-governmental stakeholders and the public will help guide the Working Group as it continues to refine and finalize its recommendations. **The White House encourages everyone to provide your personal thoughts and reactions on these proposals, including how you believe they may affect different communities, by April 12, 2023.**

Read the announcement and how you can provide input and participate in the process: <http://bit.ly/3jrDwLa>

Read *NPR's* report for additional background and context: <https://to.pbs.org/3JBE0J7>

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