

## In This Issue #172

- Opposition to Alien Land Laws and Related Bills
- *New York Times* Features Erika Moritsugu
- Will China End U.S. Academic Pre-Eminence?
- NYS Senator John Liu and NYPD Officer Baimadajie Angwang
- News and Activities for the Communities

## Opposition to Alien Land Laws and Related Bills



San Francisco Supervisor Connie Chan speaks at the press conference condemning the Texas bill SB 147 in City Hall in San Francisco, Calif. on March 20, 2023. The bill will prohibit citizens of China, Russia, Iran and North Korea from buying properties in Texas. | Han LU/The Standard

Texas elected officials protest a bill that would forbid Chinese nationals from buying properties in the state on Feb. 11, 2023. | Mark Felix/AFP

According to the *San Francisco Standard* on March 20, 2023, a committee of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors (SFBOS) has voted to condemn Texas bill SB 147, which is authored by Texas Republican state Senator **Lois Kolkhorst** and seeks to prohibit citizens and government entities from four countries from buying real estate in Texas over alleged national security concerns.

Because the bill targets certain immigrants based on their countries of origin, it has sparked backlash from Chinese American and other immigrant communities nationwide, renewing a vigorous [debate on anti-Asian racism and xenophobia](#).

At a meeting in San Francisco City Hall on March 20, 2023, the board's Land Use and Transportation Committee voted unanimously to pass [the resolution](#). Leading the effort was Supervisor **Connie Chan**, a Chinese immigrant from Hong Kong.

"This bill is dangerous and racist," Chan said. "We must stand up for our community, not just here where we live, but also all across the nation."

She went on to compare the law with California's own Alien land laws during the early 20th century, which restricted Asian immigrants from property ownership.

Representatives from Chinese for Affirmative Action, Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association and other activist groups spoke at the board meeting in support of the resolution. APA Justice and other organizations submitted [letters of support](#) to the SFBOS.

If passed by the full board, San Francisco will send an official copy of the resolution to leaders in both Texas and California.

After strong criticism, Kolkhorst, the Texas state senator, had already changed her bill by exempting permanent residents (green card holders) from the ban.

Opponents of the Texas resolution still think it's still unacceptable, even with the softened tone.

**Julie Tang**, a retired San Francisco judge and a Chinese immigrant, said the amended bill doesn't change its character.

She said that classifying the group of Chinese, Russians, North Koreans and Iranians from buying properties is barring them from enjoying the equal rights that other Americans have, regardless of their citizenship.

"That itself is discrimination," Tang said. "And that in itself is illegal and unconstitutional."

Read the *San Francisco Standard* report: <http://bit.ly/3Z6hexf>

**Texas House Bill No. 4736.** According to *Yahoo News* on March 15, 2023, a Texas State Republican representative introduced a bill to ban undocumented immigrants, along with citizens from China and North Korea, from being admitted to public colleges and universities in Texas. The bill also seeks to ban undocumented students from Iran and Russia. Read the *Yahoo News* report: <https://yhoo.it/3TtnUnX>

**Texas House Bill 2206.** According to Texas Legislature Online, a Texas State Republican representative introduced a bill to prohibit the use of certain social media platforms developed or provided by China, Iran, North Korea or Russia. The bill was referred to the Texas House State Affairs Committee on March 9 and is scheduled to have a public hearing on March 22. Read the Texas Legislature Online: <https://bit.ly/3n6Msan>

**Texas House Bill 4736.** According to Texas Legislature Online, a Texas State Republican representative introduced a bill to forbid education institutions to admit citizens of China, Iran, North Korea or Russia on March 10, 2023. Read the Texas Legislature Online: <https://bit.ly/42qiqyn>

## ***New York Times* Features Erika Moritsugu**



On March 13, 2023, *New York Times* published a report titled "At White House, Asian American Liaison Juggles Celebrations and Crises," featuring **Erika Moritsugu**, the first White House A.A.P.I. liaison in charge of both promoting the community's representation and responding to its tragedies at a time of rising racism.

Erika Moritsugu was two days in to a visit to Park City, Utah, to celebrate the first community space for Asian Americans at the Sundance Film Festival when she was called away to Monterey Park, Calif., where a mass shooting on the eve of Lunar New Year ultimately left 11 people dead.

Overdressed in the wool layers and puffer coat she had packed for her original trip, Ms. Moritsugu, 51, was forced to switch gears quickly: from cheerleading mode in ski country to caretaker in the suburbs of Los Angeles.

"I can't imagine how excruciating it must be, how painful and how hurtful this must be for those of you who have lost friends and neighbors and aunties and uncles and grandmas," she said at a Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors meeting two days after the shooting in January, pausing to regain her composure. "I share my grief with you as we mourn the tragic death of our brothers and sisters."

"This work is so hard because it's really, really important," Ms. Moritsugu, the child of fourth-generation Japanese and fifth-generation Chinese immigrant parents, said in an interview. "People warned me when I was appointed that I would need to be very attentive and careful because this isn't something that you can analyze with a clinical distance."

Ms. Moritsugu, who reports to the White House chief of staff, previously served in the Obama administration as an assistant secretary at the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

She also served for about six years as a senior Democratic aide on Capitol Hill, including for the late Senator **Daniel K. Akaka** of Hawaii and as legal counsel to Senator **Tammy Duckworth**. Between her time on Capitol Hill and her appointment to the White House, she worked for the Anti-Defamation League and the National Partnership for Women & Families.

These days, she spends her time jetting to speaking engagements in cities across the country, between her office and the East and West Wings, and occasionally to Capitol Hill to chat with lawmakers and attend meetings of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus.

For too long, Asian Americans made up “an invisible story that was just swept under the rug or ignored and erased until someone needed to be scapegoated,” Ms. Moritsugu said. “It’s nearly impossible for us to be invisible anymore.”

Read the *New York Times* report: <https://nyti.ms/3n7IHIS>

## Will China End U.S. Academic Pre-Eminence?

According to an opinion by University of Texas Austin Professor **Steven Mintz** published by Inside Higher Ed on March 19, 2023, if any single theme can be said to dominate foreign affairs commentary in the United States, it’s the many threats to U.S. global pre-eminence: from climate change and extreme weather events. From cybersecurity attacks and disinformation campaigns. From threats to the dollar’s dominance as a global reserve currency. From economic espionage and intellectual property theft. From nuclear proliferation and infrastructure and supply chain attacks.

Add another challenge to the list: China’s threat to American academic primacy.

In 2010, the Columbia sociologist and former provost **Jonathan Cole** published *The Great American University*, a full-throated defense of the United States’ elite research universities. The book described these institutions as national treasures that were indispensable to the nation’s economic dynamism, technological prowess and global position as a great power.

But Cole advanced two other arguments that made his book as cautionary as celebratory. The first was that the elite American research universities’ rise to global pre-eminence was a recent, highly contingent development that was largely a byproduct of the influx of foreign scholars during the 1930s and 1940s and the ravages wrought on European universities by World War II. The academy should be on notice: what can go up can also go down.

His second key contention was that the elite research university—and therefore American pre-eminence—was far more fragile and vulnerable than the public or policy makers assumed.

The list of challenges that he listed no doubt sounds familiar today: foreign competition for talent, restrictive visa policies, ideological constraints on academic inquiry, public disinvestment, endowment volatility and a misguided populist war against academic excellence.

Now, a dozen years later, **William C. Kirby**, a former dean of Harvard’s Faculty of Arts and Sciences and a professor of China studies and business administration, has written a worthy successor to Cole’s admonition. The central question that Kirby asks in *Empires of Ideas: Creating the Modern University from Germany to America to China* is summed up by a chapter title—“Can China Lead the World of Universities?” Spoiler alert: “Perhaps.”

Professor Mintz’s takeaways from Kirby’s book:

1. **Universities can improve rapidly. But they can also decline quickly.** Decline came from without, but also from within: from campus politicization and polarization, from a retreat from high academic standards and from the failure to retain and hire the most promising and productive scholars.
2. **Ambition is important and sustained ambition can make a big difference. But ambition is not enough.** Quality scholars, by themselves, are insufficient. Great universities aren’t just an agglomeration of productive scholars; they are intellectual leaders.
3. **The relationship between elite education and national power and world leadership is dialectical.** No great power is without a great university and, conversely, great powers cultivate great universities. Great powers understand that intellectual and cultural leadership is a key component of power; they understand that great powers are pacesetters in culture and education. Great universities attract talent from around the world and when some of those graduates return home, they carry with them ideas that they learned overseas. But the relationship between elite education and national power takes other forms. Elite universities produce a disproportionate share of leaders, while the research that their faculty undertake informs government policy. In turn, these institutions depend heavily on government funding.

Read the *Inside Higher Ed* opinion: <http://bit.ly/42pIFox>

## NYS Senator John Liu and NYPD Officer Baimadajie Angwang



AAPI History in Curriculum – New York

On March 18, 2023, New York State Senator **John Liu** and New York Police Department (NYPD) Officer **Baimadajie Angwang** joined an AAPI history in K-12 legislation event.

State Senator Liu represents a broad area of northeast Queens. He is chairperson of the New York State Senate's Committee on New York City Education and has sponsored State Senate Bill S6359A that requires public elementary and high schools to provide instruction in Asian American history and civic impact.

According to [a report](#) by *Gothamist* on May 26, 2022, State Senator Liu said in the introducing the bill that the anti-Asian sentiment may be fueled by long-standing “ignorance” of the political and historical contributions of AAPI people. “This anti-Asian hate that we've seen so much of, it didn't just happen the last couple of years. It's been happening ever since the beginning of this country, ever since the first Asian Americans arrived at our shores,” Liu said.

“Asian Americans have been scapegoats for a lot of things in our entire history, whether it be economic recession, international warfare, global pandemic – we get blamed,” Liu said. “And the reason we get blamed, and therefore hated and attacked, is because of ignorance.”

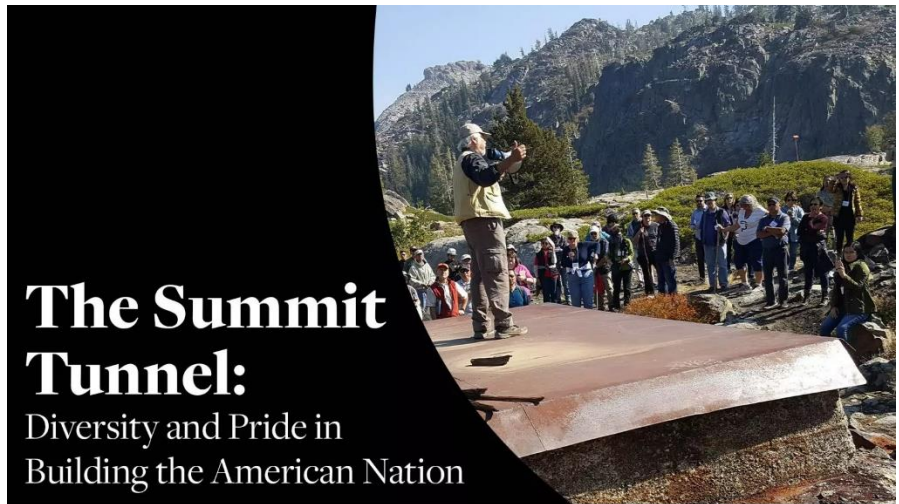
NYPD Officer Angwang is a naturalized U.S. citizen of Tibetan ethnicity who served in Afghanistan as a marine and an Army reservist. However, he still fell victim to the now-defunct "China Initiative" and was accused of spying for China. Although his case was dismissed in January 2023, Angwang's case still appears in the FBI Transnational Repression webpage. His story is told here: <https://bit.ly/3RlqXld>

"Even in this room, there is a lot to write about," State Senator Liu before introducing Officer Angwang in the March 18 event. "When members of the Chinese American community get into certain positions of significance, whether it be Dr. **Wen Ho Lee**, we have a police officer Angwang here, it is easy to blame the Asian guy. This guy after serving in the NYPD for so many years, including the Flushing community, suddenly out of the blue, they accuse him of being a spy for China. He is my friend. This is the kind of things that our communities continue to go through. All this anti-China rhetoric now. I am an American and my loyalty is with the United States of America. But all this talk about China is having an impact on people like you. So we have to pay much more attention to what's happening."

Watch the video of the event: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pu0FyFQc\\_6s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pu0FyFQc_6s) (13:23)

## News and Activities for the Communities

### 1. The Summit Tunnel: Diversity and Pride in Building the American Nation



# The Summit Tunnel:

Diversity and Pride in Building the American Nation

The 1882 Foundation and Culture Caucus will host an event at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC on Tuesday, March 21, starting at 6:00 pm ET. The Pacific Railroad Act was signed into law by President Lincoln in 1862. It set into motion a national effort to construct America's first transcontinental railroad, and to undertake the century's greatest engineering feat to cross the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Through a short film, lecture, and discussion, the program will show the visual magnificence of the crossing and its monumental historical significance. It will discuss the shameful, continuous defacement of the site which has led the National Trust for Historic Preservation to list it as one of the nation's most endangered historic places. Up to 2,000 Chinese workers lost their lives building the railroad. The site is a sacred place for them as it is for native Americans and pioneers who also sacrificed and struggled to build the American nation. Register for the event: <https://bit.ly/3JsEP5r>

## 2. The President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders



WHITEHOUSE.GOV

The President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (AANHPI) held its fifth public meeting at the White House on March 14, 2023. Commissioners deliberated and voted on additional recommendations to promote equity, justice, and opportunity for AANHPI communities for submission to President Biden. A final report is being prepared for expected release in October 2023.

Watch the video of the meeting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3uGaDQVTQXo> (7:16:11)

## Subscribe to The APA Justice Newsletter

Complete this simple form at <https://bit.ly/2FJunJM> to subscribe. Please share it with those who wish to be informed and join the fight. View past newsletters here: [https://bit.ly/APAJ\\_Newsletters](https://bit.ly/APAJ_Newsletters).

*Copyright © 2023 APA Justice, All rights reserved.*

You are receiving this email because you opted in or have expressed interest.

**Our mailing address is:**

APA Justice  
P.O. Box 257  
McLean, VA 22101-0257

[Add us to your address book](#)

We do not share, sell, rent or trade any of your information with third parties unless you provide explicit consent. [Read our Privacy Policy here.](#)