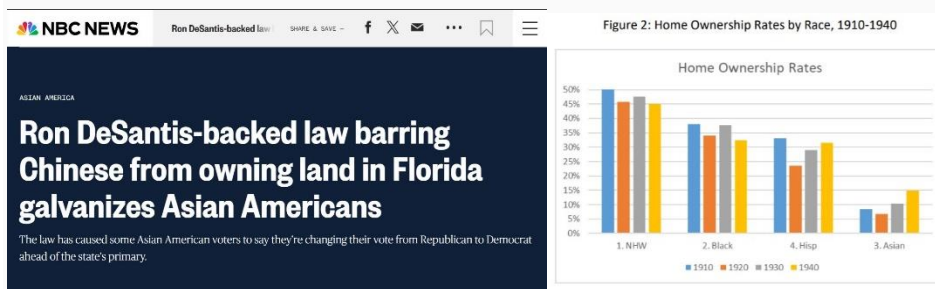


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Present and Historical Impacts of Alien Land laws



According to *NBC News* on August 19, 2024, **Wen Raiti**, a long-time Republican and small business owner in Jacksonville, Florida, switched her party affiliation to Democrat after Governor **Ron DeSantis** signed Senate Bill (SB) 264, which bans Chinese citizens from purchasing property in Florida. For Raiti, the law was the “last straw” after all the hostile rhetoric and scapegoating that Republicans have directed at Asian Americans during the Covid-19 pandemic. “It’s in our Constitution to treat everyone with equality and justice so that everyone can live here without fear,” she said. “The Republican Party has abandoned these principles.”

“This bill alone helped activate a lot of people in the Chinese American community who historically are not engaged with the government, especially the state government,” said state Rep. **Anna Eskamani** (D-Orlando), who has been an outspoken critic of SB 264.

The alien land law, which has angered the Chinese American community, has led to increased political engagement and voter mobilization among Chinese Americans, particularly in the lead-up to Florida’s August 20 primary. The bill has been seen as discriminatory, drawing comparisons to historical anti-Asian land laws, and has pushed some conservatives to defect from the GOP.

The Florida Asian American Justice Alliance (FAAJA) has been actively working to educate and mobilize voters, with many in the community now more involved in the electoral process. “After the law passed, we realized that Asian Americans really have no voice,” said **Echo King**,

president of FAAJA, a nonprofit organization that was established last year to fight anti-Asian discrimination. “We’re contributing to this country, so why are we being targeted?”

Legal experts compared SB 264 to century-old alien land laws that barred Asian Americans from owning land; Florida was one of the last states to repeal its law, in 2018. Chinese American conservatives have also been subjected to rampant anti-communism, or Red Scare tactics. In June, **Bowen Kou**, a Republican candidate in a state Senate race, sued Senate Republicans over attack ads that claimed he accepted contributions from Chinese donors linked to the Communist Party.

In April, a federal appeals court heard a challenge to the law after four Chinese immigrants in Florida, backed by the American Civil Liberties Union and other civil rights groups, sued the state last summer. Advocates say they are hoping for an injunction ruling. The Justice Department supported the Chinese plaintiffs in a filing last June.

Read the *NBC News* report: <https://nbcnews.to/3yO5EzH>

On August 12, 2024, UCLA Professor **Paul Ong** and two co-authors at the UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge published a paper titled "Lessons from California's Historical Alien Land Law: Racial Xenophobia and Homeownership."

According to the paper, Florida enacted a controversial law known as SB 264 to prohibit foreigners from purchasing real estate, ostensibly for national security reasons. However, this legislation disproportionately targets individuals from Asian countries and risks creating a chilling effect on all Asians. Similar laws passed by other states echo this trend, unfortunately mirroring historical patterns of discrimination. The efforts, however, are not the first efforts targeting Asians.

California and other states enacted alien land laws during the first half of the twentieth century. Rooted in deep-seated anti-Asian sentiments and hostilities, particularly directed at Japanese Americans, these laws combined a toxic blend of racism and xenophobia, further marginalizing Asians socially, politically, and economically. While instigated by the anti-Japanese movement, California's law broadly applied to all aliens ineligible for citizenship -- a category exclusively encompassing Asians.

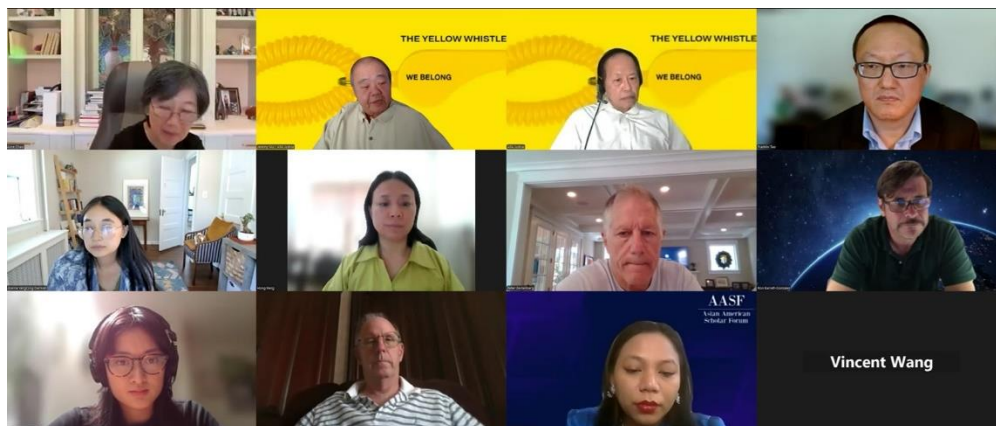
A direct consequence of California's law was an extremely low homeownership rate among Asians, far below that of other major racial and ethnic groups from 1910 to 1940. Ownership increased as some Asians found ways to circumvent the unfair law and as the number of U.S.-born Asians grew; nonetheless the rate remained significantly lower than that of non-Hispanic whites (NHW). Even after controlling for income, nativity and other factors, Asians were still several times less likely to own homes compared to NHW in 1940.

While overt anti-Asian sentiment may be less intense today, Asian Americans continue to face discriminatory treatment, as evidenced by the surge in anti-Asian hate crimes during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. This animus often stems from the perception of Asians as perpetual foreigners, exacerbated by rising global tensions with Asian nations. While the current

wave of alien land laws may not explicitly target Asians, they have the potential to harm Asian Americans by restricting property ownership rights and fueling anti-Asian rhetoric.

Read the report: <https://bit.ly/3AsgDzc>

Summary of August 2024 Monthly Meeting Posted



The August 2024 APA Justice monthly meeting summary has been posted at <https://bit.ly/3AHFSO1>. We thank the following speakers for their reports and updates:

- **Nisha Ramachandran**, Executive Director, Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC). **Casey Lee**, Policy Director for CAPAC, provided an update on recent activities, thanking Professor Franklin Tao and his wife for participating in a press conference celebrating their recent victory. CAPAC remains committed to supporting Professor Franklin Tao's reinstatement at the University of Kansas. Casey also highlighted CAPAC's efforts to remove the China Initiative language from the House Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations bill, which passed out of committee in July but was not considered by the full House before recess. CAPAC will collaborate with lawmakers and advocacy groups to ensure the provision is excluded from the final bill.
- **Joanna YangQing Derman**, Director, Anti-Profilng, Civil Rights & National Security Program, Advancing Justice | AAJC. Joanna voiced strong support for Casey's remarks and highlighted Advancing Justice | AAJC's efforts to oppose the reinstatement of the China Initiative, particularly focusing on language in the House's Commerce and Justice Appropriations report. Fortunately, the Senate version lacks this language, offering hope for a positive outcome in conference discussions. AAJC is closely collaborating with CAPAC and other allies to monitor developments. They are also tracking the Department of Treasury's proposed rulemaking related to CFIUS and may submit

comments to ensure protections against national origin discrimination. Additionally, AAJC is coordinating with coalition partners to align their advocacy efforts and recently held a press briefing celebrating Professor Tao's legal victory.

- **Gisela Perez Kusakawa**, Executive Director, Asian American Scholar Forum (AASF). Gisela reported that AASF has been actively working with allies on policy impacts while fostering community engagement. The inaugural Asian American Pioneer Medal Symposium and Ceremony, held in partnership with Stanford University's Asian American Activity Center, was a resounding success, drawing over 1,300 attendees. The event featured prominent figures in AI, life sciences, and leadership, including Nobel and Turing Award laureates, with participation from industry leaders and academic figures like Stanford University President John Levin. The symposium highlighted the contributions of Asian Americans, aligning with AASF's broader civil rights efforts. AASF's high school competition, which encouraged students to create videos about medal recipients, further promoted understanding of Asian American history. AASF remains committed to supporting Dr. Franklin Tao and continues to collaborate with civil rights partners to ensure Asian American perspectives are represented in federal policymaking. Membership is now open to all scholars who support AASF's mission.
- **Anne S. Chao**, Co-founder, Friends of the National Asian Pacific American Museum; Program Manager, Houston Asian American Archive (HAAA), Rice University. Anne S. Chao co-founded HAAA, recognizing the lack of records documenting Asian American lives in one of the most diverse cities in the U.S. Over the past 15 years, HAAA has grown to include around 500 interviews, various awards, performances, and exhibits, capturing the multifaceted lives of Asian Americans in the Greater Houston area. The archive includes interviews with notable figures such as Judge Theresa Chang, astronaut Leroy Chiao, and renowned physicist Paul Chu, among others. Anne shared the story of the Gee family's contributions to Houston, with plans for a book and curriculum on their legacy. On the national level, Anne highlighted the need for an Asian Pacific American Museum on the National Mall, noting the absence of such a museum despite existing museums for African Americans, Latinos, and women. Although Congress passed H.R. 3525 in 2021 to study the feasibility of creating an Asian Pacific American Museum, the commission cannot start work until all eight commissioner positions are filled. To advance this effort, Anne co-founded the Friends of the National Asian Pacific American Museum, aiming to mobilize support, fundraising, and coordination to fast-track the museum's establishment. The organization is engaging museum experts and academics nationwide to contribute to the museum's development.
- **Franklin Tao 陶丰**, former Professor of Kansas University, Victim of China Initiative; **Hong Peng 彭鸿**, Wife of Professor Tao. Professor Tao shared an emotional account of his five-year ordeal, beginning with his arrest under the China Initiative in 2019, based on false accusations. Despite being acquitted of all charges by the 10th Circuit Court, the experience has devastated his life and career, costing him nearly everything, including his position at Kansas University (KU), which terminated him in breach of an agreement. Tao and his wife, Hong Peng, faced immense financial and

emotional strain, borrowing heavily and nearly going bankrupt, while Hong worked multiple jobs to support their family. Their children also suffered, with trauma from FBI surveillance and the overall impact of the situation. In the past few years while he was fighting his case, Professor Tao published 30 papers and retained the capability of working as a faculty member. Hong Peng echoed her husband's account, detailing the intense hardship they endured, including the toll on their children's mental health. She worked tirelessly to keep the family afloat, all while watching Franklin struggle with depression. The family's suffering was compounded by the immense legal and financial burdens they carried. Despite the challenges, justice was ultimately served with Franklin's acquittal, and they remain hopeful that KU will reinstate him, allowing them to rebuild their lives. Both Franklin and Hong expressed deep gratitude for the support they received from their community, legal team, and various organizations, which played a crucial role in achieving this victory.

- **Ron Barrett-Gonzalez**, Committee A Co-Chair, Kansas Conference of the American Association of University Professors (KCAAUP); and **Rob Catlett**, Committee A C-Chair, KCAAUP. The AAUP is a state-wide body representing over 400 faculty members from various higher education institutions across Kansas. The Conference, led by volunteer officers, addresses issues such as due process denial, governance, and tenure disputes. Recently, Kansas University (KU) Professor Ron Barrett-Gonzalez and Emporia State University Professor Rob Catlett met with a KU administrator to advocate for the reinstatement of Dr. Franklin Tao. Ron and Rob approached the meeting with a strategy focused on persuading the KU administration to reinstate Dr. Tao quietly but effectively, emphasizing the ethical and legal imperative to correct this wrong. They outlined a plan to reinstate Dr. Tao during a time when national attention would be elsewhere, offering KU an opportunity to rectify the situation without significant public backlash. The administrator seemed receptive, taking detailed notes and promising a response by August 19. If KU does not act, the newly formed KU Faculty Union, supported by 87% of voters, could escalate the issue, potentially turning it into a rallying cause, attracting media attention, and strengthening the union's influence. Ron and Rob remain hopeful, given their past successes with the same administrator, that justice will prevail, and Dr. Tao will be reinstated.

Read the August APA Justice monthly meeting summary: <https://bit.ly/3AHFSO1>. Read previous monthly meeting summaries: <https://bit.ly/3kxkqxP>

FT: China-US Tensions Erode Co-operation on Science and Tech



According to the *Financial Times* on August 19, 2024, rising tensions between the US and China threaten to sever a 45-year-old science and technology pact due for renewal later this month, hindering the superpowers' collaboration in critical areas.

The science and technology agreement between the U.S. and China, originally signed in 1979, has been a significant framework for bilateral cooperation in various fields like energy, agriculture, and disaster management. However, renewing this agreement has become increasingly difficult due to escalating geopolitical tensions, including U.S. concerns over China's access to sensitive technologies and issues related to intellectual property and espionage. Although researchers advocate for continued collaboration in areas like climate change and AI safety, the strained political climate, especially in the lead-up to the U.S. presidential election, complicates the prospects of a long-term extension. The potential cancellation of the accord could have a chilling effect on future joint research projects and academic collaborations, underscoring the importance of maintaining ties between researchers to address global challenges.

The agreement expired in August 2023. It has been extended temporarily for six months twice. The current extension expires on August 27, 2024.

Read the *Financial Times* report: <https://on.ft.com/4dR8Tp4>.

Two Unsettling Anti-Asian Hate Incidents in NYC

Two unsettling incidents involving racially motivated attacks against Asian Americans occurred in New York City in recent months, highlighting concerns about racism, bigotry, and anti-Asian hate, as well as the work to fight against them still has a long way to go.

Shiva Rajgopal, an Indian descent and Kester and Byrnes Professor at Columbia Business School, published a post on his LinkedIn account, sharing the disturbing attack that he suffered on August 19, 2024.

“Completely unprovoked, a well toned white male with a red mountain bike slaps me on the face on 112th and Broadway. My glasses go flying. Then he goes on to hurl racial epithets: ‘ you think I am afraid of you lot. You f..ing Indians.’ Another white person comes to my rescue. And I just ran like hell,” wrote Rajgopal.

Rajgopal was rattled by what he had experienced. He said this was the first time that he had suffered explicit racial abuse in his 32 years in the United States. “No wonder so many of my colleagues are leaving the upper west side of New York City for the suburbs,” Rajgopal concluded.

In a separate case, **Ben Chang**, a Columbia University spokesperson and vice president for communications, was assaulted near campus by a man who struck him with a metal water bottle and yelled xenophobic remarks. Despite attempting to avoid the confrontation, Chang was pursued by the attacker until he managed to alert a public safety officer. Chang, who was born and raised in the U.S., found the experience jarring and emphasized the importance of reporting such attacks to prevent them in the future.

These incidents reflect continuing concerns about anti-Asian racial tensions and violence in New York City. Amid the pandemic and its aftermath, a number of high-profile, unsettled, anti-Asian hate crimes and incidents happened in New York City. It is unclear what motivated the attacker to assault Rajgopal. It is worthwhile to note that Indian Americans have risen quickly in the nation’s political arena. Democratic party’s presidential nominee, **Kamala Harris**, has a mother of Indian descent. And Republican vice-presidential nominee **JD Vance**’s wife **Usha Vance** is also an Indian American.

Juan Zhang, editor at US-China Perception Monitor, contributed this report.

News and Activities for the Communities

1. APA Justice Community Calendar



Upcoming Events:

2024/09/01 Rep. Gene Wu's Town Hall Meeting
2024/09/09 APA Justice Monthly Meeting
2024/09/19 1990 Teachers Workshop: Asian American Identity
2024/09/19-20 AANHPI Unity Summit
2024/1002 C100: Asian American Career Ceiling Initiative
2024/10/06 Rep. Gene Wu's Town Hall Meeting
2024/10/07 APA Justice Monthly Meeting

The Community Calendar has moved. Visit <https://bit.ly/3XD61qV> for event details.

2. New Research Prize: Chen Institute and Science Prize for AI Accelerated Research



The Chen Institute and *Science* launched the "Chen Institute and Science Prize for AI Accelerated Research" in August 2024. This initiative aims to drive advancements in artificial intelligence that can expand scientific research. Young scientists from around the world are invited to submit AI-driven projects that demonstrate significant potential to improve research and lives.

The competition will award a Grand Prize of \$30,000, with the winner's essay published in *Science* and an accompanying five-year AAAS membership. Additionally, up to two runners-up will receive \$10,000 each, with their essays published on *Science Online* and the same membership benefits, promoting sustained engagement with scientific progress.

Deadline for application is December 13, 2024. For more information and apply for the prize, visit <https://bit.ly/3WRwDCB>

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