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## **Virginia Asian American and Pacific Islander Caucus Reflects on the Impact of Former Delegate Mark Keam**

Richmond, VA — The Virginia Asian American and Pacific Islander Caucus (VAAPIC) reflects on the recent resignation of Delegate Mark Keam, co-founder and Chair of VAAPIC, from the Virginia House of Delegates.

Mark Keam has taken a job in the International Trade Administration of the United States Department of Commerce, where he will serve as deputy assistant secretary for the National Travel and Tourism Office. and lead efforts to help the country's travel and tourism industries recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

During his 13 years of service, Delegate Keam had a long-standing reputation for achieving effective and bipartisan results. Mark Keam has used his platform as a state representative to focus on strengthening education and healthcare, growing the economy, taking climate action, and protecting civil and voting rights.

**Delegate Kathy Tran, First Vice Chair of VAAPIC**, said, "When he was first elected 13 years ago, Delegate Keam carried with him the optimism of the AAPI community - optimistic that we now have representation, someone who understands our community's experience in the General Assembly. Delegate Keam made history as the first but he worked hard to make sure he was not the last — He generously mentored and supported AAPI community members, and today, we see a record number of AAPI elected leaders throughout all levels of government in Virginia. Delegate Keam's vision and leadership helped establish VAAPIC and his dedication to lifting up the priorities of the community is a cornerstone of his legacy. I will miss Delegate Keam's friendship, leadership, and good humor and I am excited to hear about all he will accomplish for our country as a member of the Biden Administration."

**Senator Ghazala Hashmi, Second Vice Chair**, said, "Delegate Mark Keam has been a trailblazer, maverick, and an inspiring leader for decades. His breadth of institutional knowledge and collaborative efforts across party lines and Chambers have helped to chart the way for transformational policies. I have especially appreciated the opportunity to work with Delegate Keam on key legislation such as the Environmental Justice Act. VAAPIC is truly indebted to his leadership of our Caucus and for his many contributions to our scope and efforts. The Virginia General Assembly will miss Delegate Keam and his powerful voice, but I know that we will all continue to benefit from his contributions to the Biden Administration and to our country."

**Delegate Suhas Subramanyam, VAAPIC Secretary,** said, “Delegate Mark Keam has been a dedicated public servant for the people of Virginia for the past 13 years, and has always led by example. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work with him, and I look forward to seeing the work he will continue to do with the Biden Administration.”

**Delegate Irene Shin, VAAPIC Member,** said, “From his historic election as the first Korean American legislator in the Commonwealth, to his commitment to mentoring up-and-coming talent, to his tireless work on behalf of his constituents, to his vision and dedication to establishing the Virginia Asian American and Pacific Islander Caucus, Delegate Keam’s contributions are immeasurable. I am personally grateful to Delegate Keam for his leadership, many years of stellar public service, and paving a path for me and other AAPI leaders.”

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*The Virginia Asian American and Pacific Islander Caucus (VAAPIC) is a legislative organization recognized by the General Assembly to serve as a collaborative voice for Virginia's Asian American and Pacific Islander communities by identifying public issues of interest and to develop formal positions, facilitate discussions, and advocate for policy outcomes.*