



VA AAPI CAUCUS

Virginia Asian American & Pacific Islander Caucus

PRESS ADVISORY

For Immediate Release: Friday, January 21, 2022

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Virginia Asian American and Pacific Islander Caucus Announces Policy Priorities for 2022 General Assembly Session

*Caucus Members participated in “Refugee Advocacy Day” and promoted
Caucus-endorsed legislation that supports refugees in Virginia.*

Richmond, VA - The Virginia Asian American and Pacific Islander Caucus (VAAPIC) released its agenda for the 2022 legislative session.

As a part of Virginia Refugee Advocacy Day, members of VAAPIC also joined numerous nonprofit and faith-based organizations to push for legislation to assist refugees, especially from Afghanistan, who are settling in Virginia.

As the Commonwealth’s fastest growing ethnic minority group, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) make up seven percent of the state’s total population, and are quickly becoming an economic and political force in Virginia. But the voices of over 600,000 members of these communities have not been heard in the state’s capital as much as they should be.

VAAPIC’s mission is to serve as that voice by advocating for their concerns in the legislative process. In this General Assembly session that began last week, VAAPIC members have introduced the following bills and budget items to support the AAPI communities.



2022 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Expanding Language Access

Senator Ghazala Hashmi introduced Senate Bill 156 to increase state funding for instruction of English language learners, including professional development of staff, purchasing resources for students learning English, and offering grants to organizations that offer support services to English language learners in school settings.

Senator Ghazala Hashmi introduced Senate Bill 270 and *Delegate Kathy Tran* introduced House Bill 1049 to establish an Interagency Language Access Working Group and require state agencies to have language access coordinators and plans to maximize state policies, resources, technical assistance, and procurement practices to further language access equity in Virginia and its state government agencies.

Delegate Kathy Tran introduced House Bill 987 which directs the Board of Medical Assistance Services to require that Medicaid program information be made available for free to Virginians with limited English proficiency through the provision of language access services, including oral interpretation and written translations.

Delegate Kathy Tran introduced House Bill 1221 to ensure Virginia's hospitals translate and provide information about charity care to patients who have limited English proficiency.

Addressing Hate and Violence against AAPIs

Delegate Suhas Subramanyam introduced House Joint Resolution 88 to require the Virginia State Crime Commission to study increases in hate crimes and bias-motivated acts directed at AAPIs.

Delegate Kelly Convirs-Fowler introduced House Bill 371 to require school employees to take cultural competency training relating to bullying of AAPI students.

Delegate Irene Shin introduced House Bill 1063 to clarify that religious discrimination being prohibited includes using outward expression of religious faith as a factor.

Promoting Entrepreneurs and Small Businesses

Senator Ghazala Hashmi introduced Senate Bill 261 to direct the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education Advisory Board to revise the STEM+C (Computing) workforce profile to better align K-12 and higher education priorities.

Delegate Suhas Subramanyam introduced House Bill 963 to require the Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity to develop targeted outreach and programming to build business capacity and assist businesses in obtaining appropriate certifications.

Delegate Suhas Subramanyam introduced House Bill 966 to require government agencies to create set-aside programs for small and micro-businesses.

Delegate Kathy Tran introduced House Bill 1027 to require companies offering merchant cash advances to register with the State Corporation Commission, offering new protections for small businesses against these potentially predatory lending practices.

Supporting Immigrants and Refugees

Delegate Kathy Tran introduced House Bill 979 to require the Board of Education to issue provisional teaching licenses to foreign education professionals who hold valid certifications issued by entities outside of the U.S. to address teacher shortages.

Investing in AAPI Communities

As the Senate and House Appropriations Committees draft the state's biennial budget with historic revenues coming in, VAAPIC members have introduced and support numerous budget amendments to address language assistance, help immigrant and refugee nurses take steps towards licensure in Virginia, increase funding of public K-12 and college education, provide more financial aid for low-income students, improve pay for teachers, and make significant investments in health care, including mental health, and other critical public services to support AAPIs.

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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 positive policy outcomes. @VAAPICaucus