



JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE / JACL

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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

November 16, 2009

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JACL CONGRATULATES KIRAN AHUJA ON HER APPOINTMENT AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVE ON ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS

Washington, D.C. – The Japanese American Citizens League, the largest and oldest civil and human rights organization in the nation, applauds Kiran Ahuja on her appointment by President Barack Obama as Executive Director of the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

Kiran grew up in Savannah, Georgia, where her understanding of race, gender and ethnicity was formed as a young Indian immigrant. She attended Spelman College (historically Black college) and following graduation worked for Georgia's first African American Congresswoman since Reconstruction. She was chosen as one of five Honors Program trial attorneys for the U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, and litigated education-related discrimination cases and filed the Department's first peer-on-peer student racial harassment lawsuit. In addition, she participated in the Division's National Origin Working Group as part of a core group of attorneys who organized response efforts for the Division after the September 11 terrorist attacks.

For almost twenty years, Kiran Ahuja has dedicated herself to improving the lives of minorities in the U.S. She is a well-respected and well-known leader among national and grassroots Asian Pacific Islander (API) and women's rights organizations. At the young age of 31, Kiran was the first Executive Director of National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF). She built the organization from an all-volunteer organization to one with a paid professional staff who worked on successful policy and education initiatives, engaged them in policy and education campaigns, and collaborated with national and grassroots API, women's, immigrants, and reproductive health organizations on numerous issues and initiatives.

The JACL proudly congratulates Kiran and look forward to working closely with her on the issues that confront the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities. Her knowledge and commitment to the community will be a key factor in fostering in a new era of the inclusion of AAPIs in administering the President's policy agenda. Kiran's experience in working with government agencies will be invaluable in coordinating the interagency programs for the AAPI community.

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The Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), established in 1929, is the nation's oldest and largest Asian American civil and human rights organization. To learn more about the JACL or to join the JACL, please visit www.jacl.org.