



# JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE

Headquarters: 1765 Sutter Street, San Francisco, CA 94115  
1828 L Street NW, Suite 802 • Washington, DC • 20036  
Ph: (202) 223-1240 • E-mail: [natdir@jacl.org](mailto:natdir@jacl.org)

## PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Floyd Mori, JACL National Executive Director

Email: [natdir@jacl.org](mailto:natdir@jacl.org)

**For Immediate Release**

May 2, 2009

### **JACL URGES CONGRESS TO CONTINUE EDUCATIONAL FUNDING TO BENEFIT DISADVANTAGED ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER AMERICANS**

**Washington, D.C.** – The Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), the nation's oldest and largest Asian American civil and human rights organization, joins the National Education Association (NEA) and others in calling upon Congress to continue funding of a program which provides grants to colleges and universities that serve large numbers of low income Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) students.

While Congress permanently established the Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution Program in 2008 to help schools improve their infrastructure to serve low income AAPI and other students, it is important to realize that many within the diverse AAPI community continue to face challenges and need the continued funding. Schools are able to use the money to develop curriculums; create outreach programs to encourage students to pursue post-secondary education; provide tutoring, counseling and other support services; and conduct research and data collection for AAPI groups.

Statistics show low college degree attainment rates in many Southeast Asian and Pacific Islander communities. The national average of those in the group who are 25 and older with a bachelor's degree or higher is around 24 percent. The 2000 Census found that only 7 percent of Hmong and Laotian Americans have advanced degrees and about 14 percent for Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders.

Floyd Mori, National Executive Director of the JACL, stated: "While many within the AAPI community have accomplished great things and have attained high levels of education, there are still many young people within the AAPI community who are held back because of financial concerns. We urge Congress to elevate funding to newly designated serving institutions which would greatly benefit young people within the AAPI community who have a strong desire to attend college but who need help financially."

National JACL President, Larry Oda, said: "Education is a very important piece in the development of a community, and society as a whole. The AAPI youth who need financial help will become needed and effective contributors to this advancement if given the opportunity. We are grateful that Congress established this program to help underserved Asian and Pacific Islander Americans, and we ask that they continue this worthy investment in our young people."

The JACL has worked with other AAPI organizations for over a decade to establish this program for Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander students which already existed for African American and Hispanic students. The JACL thanks Congressman David Wu, who led this effort in Congress with the support of Congressman Mike Honda.

####