



NATIONAL ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

Asian Pacific Americans in the Judiciary Fact Sheet

The National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA) is committed to increasing diversity on the federal bench. NAPABA established its Judiciary Committee in 1994, and since then, has worked with the Senate Judiciary Committee, White House Counsel, the American Bar Association, and other bar associations of color to ensure that the federal judiciary is strengthened by and reflects the diversity of this nation.

The Numbers

Asian Pacific Americans (APAs) are 4.9% of the U.S. population, numbering 14.5 million in 2005. APAs in the legal profession number over 40,000, comprising slightly under 4% of legal professionals in the U.S. In addition, the APA legal community is the fastest growing nationwide:

- 5.3% of lawyers at the nation's largest law firms are APA.
- 6.3% of law students are APA.

However, out of a total 876 authorized seats in the federal judiciary nationwide, there are currently six active judges of Asian American or Pacific Islander descent. In the history of the United States, a total of 14 APA judges have served on the federal bench.

NAPABA Judiciary Committee – A Record of Success

NAPABA issued its first endorsement when President Clinton nominated Judge A. Wallace Tashima to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit in 1995; he was confirmed and appointed to the bench nine months later.

Since then, three APA attorneys have been appointed to the federal bench, all of them with the NAPABA's endorsement – U.S. District Judges Anthony W. Ishii (E.D. Cal. 1997), Susan Oki Mollway (D. Haw. 1998), and Dana M. Sabraw (S.D. Cal. 2003).

The Work Ahead

NAPABA has compiled a record of success, but much work remains to strengthen the judiciary with the diversity of the United States.

Members of Congress have the ability to support potential nominees. Congressional endorsements can move a candidate forward, whether it is at the federal level or at the municipal or state levels. It is invaluable to potential judicial nominees and candidates to meet with their Members of Congress. NAPABA will continue working with Congress to help more APAs and other candidates of color in seeking those opportunities.