



July 13, 2026

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
House Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader Schumer and Leader Jeffries:

We write on behalf of the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA), Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC), and the undersigned 51 organizations regarding the visibility of Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) students in our public education systems no matter where they are from or what their zip code might be. Every child deserves to be seen and supported by our education system. Data disaggregated by race and ethnicity are necessary to shed light on how diverse AANHPI students are doing in school and ensure that their educational experiences and needs are addressed by educators, schools, institutions, and policymakers.

The National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA) is a coalition of 45 national nonprofit organizations working together to represent millions of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (AANHPIs) nationwide. Established in 1996, our collective work reflects our commitment and values to advancing racial equity and advocating for civil rights, especially for our communities in vital areas such as education, immigration, health, housing, economic justice, and data equity. SEARAC is a national civil rights organization that builds power with diverse communities from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam to create a socially just and equitable society. As representatives of the largest refugee community ever resettled in the United States, SEARAC stands together with other refugee communities, communities of color, and social justice movements in pursuit of social equity. Together, our organizations have advocated for decades for AANHPI visibility in data policies and systems.

The minimum racial categories of “Asian” and “Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander” in demographic data collapse dozens of distinct ethnic groups, each with unique histories and variation in access to social and economic opportunities. Aggregated data render AANHPI communities invisible in public policy and conceals significant disparities in education, healthcare access, economic security, and more. Additionally, it impedes policymakers’ understanding of how our communities participate in and rely on important federal programs and systems.

For example, there are now over 3 million Southeast Asian Americans in the U.S., who are refugees or the descendants of refugees from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. Southeast Asian Americans escaped

war, persecution, famine, and genocide, and their experiences of violence, family separation, the stressors associated with relocation, and disinvestment of the communities into which they resettled negatively affected their educational outcomes.¹ According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, around a quarter of Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, and Vietnamese adults aged 25 and older do not have a high school diploma, compared to 11% of the total population.²

Additionally, the Pacific Islands have had tumultuous and complex relationships with the U.S., which has affected migration, residency, citizenship, legal status – thus access to educational resources and opportunities – for Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. Many Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander adults have not attained any postsecondary education, including 42% of Guamanian or Chamorro, 49% of Native Hawaiian, 49% of Samoan, and 51% of Tongan adults.³ And though “Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander” is a federally required major race and ethnicity category, data collections routinely combine this distinct and diverse population with Asian Americans, concealing their actual experiences and needs in education.

In 2024, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) took an important step towards improving data collection related to race and ethnicity through the revision of SPD-15. As we expect federal agencies, including the Department of Education, to work towards implementing the updated standards, we urge further action from Congress to ensure that all AANHPI students are seen and supported by school systems. SPD-15 marked significant progress, but the default level of disaggregation set by the rule and the lack of updates communicated by OMB and agencies still fall short of ensuring that demographic data, and the policies, programs, and funding that rely on it, serves the many AANHPI ethnic groups that have historically been left out.

As such, we request that Members of Congress cosponsor the All Students Count Act of 2026, which will help to ensure that diverse Asian American and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander student groups are accounted for and supported by K-12 education systems to succeed. The bill would require the U.S. Department of Education, state education agencies, and school districts to collect and report student performance data that are further disaggregated by ethnic groups under “Asian American” and “Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander.”

Every child deserves to be seen and supported by our education system. Reliable and accurate data on how students are doing in school help make their experiences and needs visible to their families, educators, and policymakers.

Sincerely,

National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA)
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
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¹ Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC). 2026. Rising Up: The Southeast Asian American Educational Journey. Washington, DC: Southeast Asia Resource Action Center.

² Karthick Ramakrishnan, Connie Tan, Akil Vohra, Clarielisa Ocampo, Jamie Noh, and Nadia Almasalkhi. “By the Numbers: Education. AAPI Data Guide on Timely Policy Issues.” Berkeley, CA: AAPI Data, 2025.

³ Ibid.

Alliance of Rhode Island Southeast Asians for Education
American Association of University Women (AAUW)
APIA Scholars
Asian American Resource Workshop (AARW)
Asian Americans Advancing Justice- AAJC
Asian Leaders Alliance
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance-AFL-CIO (APALA)
Asian Pacific American Public Affairs
Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education (APAHE)
Asians In Gaming
Association of Chinese Americans
AYPAL: Building API Community Power
Cambodian Association of Greater Philadelphia
Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association of Greater Lowell, Inc.
Center for Empowering Refugees and Immigrants (CERI)
Coalition of Asian American Leaders
Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC)
Equal Justice Society
FIRM - Fresno Immigrant and Refugee Ministries
Freedom Inc
Hmong American Partnership (HAP)
Hmong Cultural Center of Butte County
Hmong Innovating Politics
Hmong National Development, Inc.
Japanese American Citizens League
Jayhawks House
Khmer Anti-deportation Advocacy Group (KhAAG)
Khmer Girls in Action
Laotian American National Alliance (LANA)
LEAD Filipino
Legacies of War
Mekong NYC
Missouri Asian American Youth Foundation
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Asian/Pacific Islander American Chamber of Commerce and Entrepreneurship (National ACE)
National Chinese American Citizens Alliance (C.A.C.A.)
National Education Association
OCA Asian Pacific American Advocates - Greater Los Angeles
OCA San Mateo
OCA Silicon Valley
OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocates
PIVOT— The Progressive Vietnamese American Organization
Praxis Health Empowerment
The Cambodian Family
The Fresno Center
UPICEC
VietLead
Vietnamese American Initiative for Development (VietAID)
Vietnamese American Roundtable
Voices of Pacific Island Nations