

Highlights of Asian American Coalition's Complaint against Harvard University

A. Submission of the Complaint

On May 15, 2015, on behalf of 64 Asian American organizations, the organizing committee officially submitted the Administrative Complaint to the Civil Rights Division of the US Department of Justice and the Office of Civil Rights in the Department of Education.

B. News Conferences

1. Main News Conference in Washington DC:

At 1:00-2:30 PM, May 15, 2015, the delegation of Asian American Coalition held a successful news conference at the National Press Club with the attendance by many English and Asian-language media. The news conference was hosted by Professor Chunyan Li. On behalf of 64 Asian American organizations, Mr. Yukong Zhao, the Chair of Organizing Committee announced: *"Today is a historical day in Asian Americans' pursuit of equal education rights. After being largely silent for more than 20 years, this morning, more than 60 Chinese, Indian, Korean and Pakistani-American organizations all over the nation have united, and jointly filed an Administrative Complaint with the Civil Rights Division, Department of Justice and the Office for Civil Rights, Department of Education... Today, Asian American communities have spoken!"*



Professor Chunyan Li



Mr. Yukong Zhao



Mr. Michael Wang



House Rep. Dana
Rohrabacher

Following Mr. Zhao's speech, Mr. Michael Wang, who has filed an individual complaint with Department of Education against the discriminatory practice of Ivy League schools, delivered a touching speech on how a youth's dream was dashed by such discrimination, how he stood up against the odds. After that, US House Representative Dana Rohrabacher made a personal appearance and a powerful, supportive speech. He called such discrimination as a "crime" and announced that he would issue a letter to urge the Departments of Education and Justice to launch an immediate investigation.



Dr. Ajay P. Kothari



Dr. Guodong Zhang



Ms. Yingying Sun



Dr. Jack Ouyang

Representing joining organizations (co-complainants), Dr. Ajay P. Kothari, President of the American Society of Engineers of India Origin (ASEI, Washington DC Chapter) told the audience why he and many other Asian Americans think it is wrong to judge college applicants on the basis of their race, not by their character. On behalf of the Asian American Coalition, Dr. Guodong Zhang, President of the Long Island Chinese American Association read our Request for Relief. The news conference reached its high point in the Question and Answer session hosted by Yingying Sun, President of the Houston Chinese Alliance. Journalists and the audience raised many challenging and controversial questions, some of which were related to Affirmative Action. The Asian American Coalition delegation was well prepared. Their responses won much applause from the audience. In response to the Asian American Coalition's complaint, Robert Juliano, Harvard University General Counsel issued a statement claiming its approach to admissions has been found to be "fully compliant with federal law." When addressing a question regarding Harvard's statement, Mr. Yukong Zhao challenged Harvard to open its admission books to prove that Asian Americans were not purposefully being put at a disadvantage.

At the end of the news conference, on behalf of the organizing committee, Dr. Jack Ouyang extended our sincere thanks to all participating organizations, prior researchers on this subject, and those who volunteered time and efforts to support this endeavor, in particular hardworking organizing committee members.



Delegation & DC Supporters



Irvine, CA News Conference Attendees

2. Satellite News Conference in Irvine, CA:

Concurrently, eight participating Chinese and Indian American associations jointly hosted a satellite news conference at the same time at Irvine, California where there is a large Asian American population. Co-hosts of the news conference include The Orange Club (TOC), Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) LA Chapter, National Federation of Indian American Associations (NFIA), Chinese American Equalization Association (HQA), Conejo Chinese Culture Association, Chinese American Organization of Orange County (CAAOC), Tsinghua University Alumni Association of Southern California (QUAASC), and Peking University Alumni Association of Southern California (PUAASC). Among the speakers from co-hosting organizations, Mr. Alex Chen of the Orange Club gave an overview of the Complaint from its ideation to fruition, and explained the Complaint its details. Mr. Kewal Kanda of GOPIO LA Chapter, and Mr. Ashok Madan of NFIA shared their personal experience with unfair college admissions process against Asian American students, and why race should not be a determining factor in such process, respectively.



Mr. Alex Chen



Mr. Kewal Kanda



Mr. Ashok Madan



Ms. Tiffany Yu

Many elected officials and/or their representatives attended the event and spoke to support the Complaint. California State Assemblywoman Young Kim (Korean American) shared with the audience the House Res. 17 bill she co-authored to call upon Harvard to end its focus on a student applicant's race in its admission process. California State Senator Bob Huff talked about the Senate Res. 28 bill he and six other Senators introduced in the California State Senate to calling upon Harvard to consider the overall individual contribution of each applicant in a manner that does not have the practical effect of capping the number of Asian American students enrolled in its institution. California Assemblywoman Ling-Ling Chang (Chinese American), representatives of State Assemblymen David Hadley and Don Wagner and the Mayor of Irvine, Steve Choi, all spoke to support the Complaint. The major Chinese news media in Southern California were present and a number of Indian and Korean news media (e.g. Indian and Korean) requested for information and later reported the event.



*California Senator Bob Huff
& his wife Mei Mei Ho*



*California Assemblywoman
Young Kim*



*California Assemblywoman
Ling-Ling Chang*



Ms. Sharon Xu



Mr. David Loudon
Jiangfeng Wu
& Mr. Bruce Liu
Representing
Assemblyman David Hadley
Assemblyman Don Wagner

Mr. Samuel Han
Representing
Mr. Kevin Ding

Mr.

On May 14 and May 15, three US House Representatives met with the Complaint delegates in Washington DC.

- At 2:00 PM, May 14, 2015, House Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA) met with three delegates in his office and expressed his strong support for the Administrative Complaint against Harvard. He also instructed his aides to help contact other members of Congress for further support;
- At 10:00 AM, May 15, 2015, House Rep., Grace Meng (D-NY) met with delegates in her Washington DC office;
- At 11:30 AM, May 15, 2015, House Rep., Virginia Foxx (R-NC), Chair of the *Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training*, met with delegates in her office; and
- At 3:00 PM, May 15, 2015, on behalf of House Rep. Johan Kline (R-MN), Amy Jones, Director of Education and Human Resources Policy for the Committee on Education & the Workforce, met with the delegates.



Meeting with House Rep. Dana Rohrabacher



Meeting with House Rep. Grace Meng



Briefing House Higher Education Subcommittee Chair, Rep. Virginia Foxx

In the meetings with members of the House of Representatives or their staff, the delegates presented our Complaint document and briefed them concerning the unjustifiable and severe discrimination by Ivy League schools against Asian Americans. They also requested for their support to urge the Department of Education and Department of Justice to immediately launch an investigation into Harvard's admissions process.

Separately California State Senator Bob Huff issued a letter and delivered a speech in support of Asian Americans' Complaint against Harvard University.

D. Media Coverage

About 10 days before the news conference, the organizing committee announced this news conference and started to reach out to news media and work with a few news agencies on the news report. It turned out to be a huge media success. Led by Associated Press and Bloomberg News reporting on May 15, 2015, *NBC*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, *ABC*, *FoxNews*, *CNN*, *MSNBC*, *NPR* reported the event, followed by *The Guardian*, *CNBC Asia*, *Straits Times* and many other international news agencies in Asia, Europe, Oceania and the Middle East. A few days later, *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Post*, *National Review*, *Washington Post*, *Washington Examiner* and *Chicago Tribune* all published compassionate editorials in support of our cause.

E. Significance of the Complaint

The joint complaint against Harvard University's discriminatory admission practices by Asian American community has unprecedented historical significance. With 64 Asian American organizations (Chinese, Indian, Korean and Pakistani Americans), **it is the largest joint endeavor for educational equality by Asian communities in the past 20 years in the United States.** It has generated overwhelming coverage from mainstream media as well as the support of many elected representatives in both federal and state governments. Under such pressure, Harvard University's General Counsel had to respond promptly the same day of the press conference. All this has fully demonstrated that, we, the Asian Americans, have united to voice our concerns and to show our determination to achieve educational equality.