

## A New Chapter in Asian Americans' Pursuit of Equal Education Rights

Dear participating organizations:

Thank you for joining in our Complaint against Harvard University regarding its discrimination against Asian American applicants. Today, the organizing committee is very pleased to report to you: With your help, we have jointly written a new chapter in Asian Americans' pursuit of equal education rights! On May 15, 2015, we officially filed the Complaint with the Department of Justice and the Department of Education, successfully held a news conference at the National Press Club, and received support from three US House representatives. Our Complaint has received unprecedented news coverage from most major media outlets in the United States, as well as those from Asia, Europe, Oceania and Middle East. Compassionate and supportive editorials are coming almost every day.

**Here are the highlights:**

### 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 support speech. He called such discrimination as a “crime” and announced that he would issue a letter to urge Department of Education and Department of Justice to launch an immediate investigation.



*Dr. Ajay P. Kotha*



*Dr. Guodong Zhang*



*Ms. Yingying Sun*



*Dr. Jack Ouyang*

Representing joining organizations (co-complainants), Dr. Ajay P. Kothari, President of 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 by race, not by their character. On behalf of Asian American Coalition, Dr. Guodong Zhang, President of Long Island Chinese American Association read our Request for Relief. The news conference reached its high point in the Question and Answer section hosted by Yingying Sun, President of Houston Chinese Alliance. Journalists and audiences raised many challenging and controversial questions, some of which were related to Affirmative Action. The delegation of Asian American Coalition was well prepared. Their responses won much applause from the audience. In response to Asian American Coalition’s complaint, Robert Iuliano, 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), 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 about the Complaint from its ideation to fruition, and what the Complaint is about. 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 6 other Senators introduced in the California Senate to call 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 South California was present and a number of Indian and Korean news media reported the event.



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



*California Assemblywoman  
Young Ki*



*California Assemblywoman  
Ling-Ling Chang*



*Ms. Sharon Xu*



*Mr. David Loudon,  
Representing Assemblyman  
David Hadley*



*Mr. Kevin Ding*



*Mr. Jiangfeng Wu &  
Mr. Bruce Liu*



*Mr. Samuel Han,  
Representing California  
Assemblyman Don Wagner*

### **C. Meeting House Representatives**

Between May 14 and May 15, three US House Representatives met with the Coalition 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 Congress members 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 Sub-  
committee Chair, Rep. Virginia Foxx*

In the meetings with House Representatives or their representatives, the delegates presented our Complaint document and briefed them the 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 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 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 equal education rights by Asian communities over the past 20 years in the United States.** It has generated overwhelming coverage from mainstream media as well as the support by many elected representatives from both the 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 for equal education rights!

#### **F. Next Steps**

Now, we have successfully filed our joint-Complaint and generated unprecedented public awareness and support for our cause. We have created momentum. We are very encouraged and hope you are too. However, this is only the first step. In order to achieve our objective to eliminate the racial discrimination in college admissions, we have to do more:

1. We plan to launch personal petitions to urge the Department of Education and Department of Justice to launch investigation. This will allow many more concerned individuals to join our endeavor.
2. House Representative Dana Rohrabacher and Ed Joyce are drafting a joint congressional letter in support of our complaint. We need each of our joining organizations to call their representatives to sign this letter, to urge the Department of Education and Department of Justice to immediately launch an investigation.
3. We will continue to accept more Asian American organizations to join in this Complaint in next three months. We will submit their signatures as amendment to the official Complaint we have filed.
4. We are considering formally establish a non-profit organization that can represent all co-complainants and other Asian American organizations in our pursuit of equal education rights.

Our initial achievement has proven: if we unite, we have the chance to bring equal education rights to our children! We count on your continuous support to jointly achieve above objectives.

Please visit <http://asianamericancoalition.org/> to access more details about our progress. You can see the Complaint document, news coverage, video clips and many more.

For any suggestions and comments, please do not hesitate to write directly to Chair of our Organizing Committee, Mr. Yukong Zhao at yukong.zhao@outlook.com

Thanks again for your support!

*Organizing Committee  
Asian American Coalition*

May 27, 2015