



## APAPA

Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs Association

www.apapa.org

### 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Voters Forum 2017



*Planning committee and volunteers*

Inspire! Engage! Empower! This was the resounding theme of the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual APAPA Voters Forum. With American flags and ribbons waving in the air, candidates received thunderous applause and appreciation in the ballroom at California State University Sacramento. The venue was filled with legislators, candidates, community leaders from diverse backgrounds, and over 30 organizations - all coming together to hear and rally for candidates running for election. This signature event engages the general public and highlights the true impact every vote – and voter – has in California and nationwide. Jacqui Nguyen, President of the Greater Sacramento APAPA Chapter, shared, “This is a very unique event where everyone is invited to personally meet the candidates and learn about the current issues.” The best ideals of democracy were reflected throughout the afternoon.



*Mayor Darrell Steinberg with community leaders*

The Forum Chair, Amy Tong, reflected on the spirit of unity and diversity at the beginning of the program. “We have representatives from the Hispanic, African-American, Asian, Indian, Pacific Islander ethnicities and more

here today. So proud to be here with all of you!”

Mayor Darrell Steinberg rallied the packed venue with inspiring opening remarks. He talked about the great value of bringing more people into the fold. He also praised the Forum, “I want to thank APAPA for continuing this vital tradition to give people the opportunity to hear reasoned discussion and debate about all the issues.” Joining him on stage was this year’s Keynote Speaker, Congressman Ted Lieu provided an insightful address stating that, “Public sentiment is everything. With it nothing can fail, without it, nothing can succeed.” Assemblymember Ken Cooley added, “To govern is to choose and we need to know our choices. APAPA’s event is the best of the campaign season.” The true essence of democracy can only be achieved with everyone from all segments of our population at the table.

The informative and engaging panels were the highlight of the Voters Forum. A wide range of candidates were present to participate in panel discussions for the position of: California State Governor, Lieutenant Governor, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Attorney General.



*Candidates for California Governor Panel*

One of the the most engaging panels was the Gubernatorial Panel with seven candidates attending: Stasyi Barth, Michael Bracamontes, John Chiang, Delaine Eastin, Z Harmesh Kumar, Zoltan Istvan, and Klement Tinaj. The candidates shared their unique – and sometimes starkly different – positions on issues ranging from guidelines for cannabis use and immigration to hate crimes, discrimination, and health care.

In the race for California Attorney General, current California Attorney General Xavier Becerra and Insurance Commissioner Dave Jones were focused on current issues as they addressed the audience. Both candidates supported the basic principals espoused by DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals). Speaking about the immigration issue, California Attorney General Xavier Becerra told the audience, “I believe that if you work hard, like my parents, that we should keep you together and not separate you.” Other current issues were addressed by the candidates as well. Commissioner Jones reasoned that, “We need to pull back from the war against drugs with marijuana. This has stigmatized too many people who have a legal and legitimate reason for its use.”



*US Representative (CA) Ted Lieu*

All of the panel discussions were well-organized with many relevant and current questions of the day prepared by Patrick Le, Vice President of the APAPA Greater Sacramento Chapter who was recently appointed to the Department of Consumer Affairs. The panels were moderated in a professional manner by the Mistress of Ceremonies, Pamela Wu, former KCRA 3 Anchor and Director of Media Relations at UC Davis School of Law.



*Voters Forum Corporate Sponsors*

Two legislators were honored with awards for outstanding service and commitment to our communities this year. California State Controller, Betty Yee, was recognized with the Public Service Award and presented powerful remarks about the importance of getting out the vote and being counted. State Controller Yee has distinguished herself as the state’s chief fiscal officer who manages a multi-billion dollar portfolio. Assemblymember and APILC Chair Rob Bonta, was awarded the Legislator of the Year Award, and thanked APAPA for being instrumental in developing so many future leaders. Assemblymember Bonta’s journey started from humble beginnings growing up in a trailer with parents who organized minority farm workers. Both awardees were passionate about justice and equality, and

their commitment to empowering the most vulnerable communities.

We want to thank all of the sponsors, including representatives who attended from AT & T, Comcast, Bank of the West, PG & E, Verizon, and Bama Pies. We also appreciate the partnership from our media partners: KCRA 3, Crossings TV, World Journal, Russian American Media, Latino Journal, Pakistan Times, and The Sacramento Observer.



APAPA Founder C.C. Yin

Mayor Steinberg provided insightful comments about working together to make sure every vote counts. “Civic engagement is a year-round endeavor . . . we don’t compromise on civil rights here in the great state of California. We should never take peace, diversity or inclusion for granted.”

Together, with our outstanding team of community volunteers, and your support and participation, we can achieve the ideals of our democracy. CC Yin, the Founder of APAPA, is building on the momentum for 2018, “Make sure you get ready to elect the folks who serve you. This is our government, for the people.”

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