

## **Data Show API Voting on Prop. 8 Determined by Age, Religiosity**

Tuesday, February 10, 2009

Asian Pacific American Legal Center (APALC), APIEquality-LA, APIEquality, and California Faith for Equality (CAFFE), held a briefing last week to release data showing Asian American voting trends on Proposition 8 during the November 2008 election. The November 2008 Southern California Voter Survey ("2008 Voter Survey"), conducted by APALC, is the largest and most comprehensive exit poll of Asian Americans in California.

Preliminary data from the 2008 Voter Survey shows that, similar to other racial and ethnic groups, age and religiosity are determining factors in voting on Proposition 8, with younger voters and those who "never" attend religious services significantly more likely to oppose Prop 8. In addition, the survey shows that level of English proficiency is also critical, with fluent English speakers much more likely to vote against Prop 8. "Because of the intense and continuing interest in how different communities voted on Proposition 8, we are releasing this data to better inform current organizing, planning and strategizing to achieve marriage equality," said Karin Wang, Vice-President of APALC and member of the APIEquality-LA steering committee. "Other reports and analysis have not included significant samples of Asian American voters, particularly those who do not speak English fluently. APALC surveyed 1,200 Asian American voters in Los Angeles and Orange Counties, including hundreds of voters who identified as limited English speaking."

Although the data is preliminary because it is not yet weighted to account for actual voter turn-out amongst Asian American voters, the data shows several key trends that mirror other nationally-reported trends. Because this is preliminary data, the focus is on trends and patterns, as opposed to specific numbers. (For more details, please see attached graphs or download them from <http://demographics.apalc.org/>)

**BY ETHNIC GROUP** – Overall, Asian Americans in the 2008 Voter Survey narrowly supported Proposition 8 – 54 percent Yes to 46 percent No. By ethnic groups, there were small differences between Yes/No votes for Asian Indian (slight majority of No voters) and Filipino and Vietnamese American voters (small majority of Yes voters). The major difference in pattern is among Korean American voters, with Korean American significantly more likely to support Prop 8 by a wide margin. "Although we know our community will be highly interested in the ethnic-specific data, we believe that the more useful analysis is by age, English proficiency and religiosity, where the correlation to voting on Prop 8 is much stronger," said Dan Ichinose, director of APALC's Voting Rights Project.

**BY AGE** – Overall, Asian Americans between the ages of 18 to 34 voted significantly against Prop 8 (69 percent to 31 percent), with some Asian ethnic groups showing more than three-fourths of its young voters opposing Prop 8. As with other racial and ethnic groups, age is a key factor in influencing how an individual voted on Prop 8 and with age comes support for Prop 8. Across the board, in every Asian ethnic group, older voters (65+) were significantly more likely to support Prop 8, with approximately two-thirds to three-fourths of older Asian Americans voting Yes. "Asian Americans mirror the statewide patterns that have emerged in other surveys, where young people voted overwhelmingly against Prop 8 but their parents or grandparents voted strongly in support of Prop 8. We have experienced this in our grassroots education and

organizing and we are heartened by it as a sign that change and progress is possible in our communities, moving between generations,” said Marshall Wong, Co-Chair of APIEquality-LA.

**BY ENGLISH PROFICIENCY** – Overall, Asian Americans who were fluent in English clearly opposed Prop 8 (58 percent opposed) whereas few of those who were limited English speaking opposed Prop 8 (25 percent opposed). Across all Asian American communities, these patterns held true, with support for Prop 8 rising as English proficiency decreased. “This data underscores what many of us working in the community have known all along, that educating our communities in a language they understand is critical to winning the battle for marriage equality,” said HyunJoo Lee, National Organizing Coordinator at the National Korean American Service & Education Consortium. “This holds particularly true for the Korean community, in helping to explain why so many Korean Americans voted for Prop. 8 – the Yes on Prop 8 campaign flooded Korean media with information while the No on Prop 8 campaign focused mostly on English language media.”

**BY RELIGIOSITY** – Probably the strongest indicator of Proposition 8 support or opposition is religiosity. Across the board, the 2008 Voter Survey found that Asian American voters regardless of ethnic group were overwhelmingly more likely to oppose Prop 8 if they “never” attended a church, temple, or mosque (71 percent) than if they “never” attended (25 percent). For those that “sometimes” attended, a majority (55 percent) opposed Prop 8. This pattern is consistent across Asian ethnic groups, with each group showing a steep decline in opposition to Prop 8 based on whether the voter “never”, “sometimes” or “regularly” attended a church, temple, or mosque. **“Consistent with the recently released analysis from the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, which found that religiosity was one of the most determinative factors in supporting Prop 8, today’s data also shows that more than ethnicity or even age, religion is key to influencing how Asian Americans voted on marriage equality,”** said Jonipher Kwong, Interfaith Organizer for California Faith for Equality. “This underscores the need to work across lines of faith to open up dialogue about the role that churches and other houses of worship have in creating a more equal society for all of our community members.”

“The data released today fills in a picture that other studies and exit polls have begun to paint regarding the how communities of color voted on Prop 8,” said Tawal Panyacosit, Director of APIEquality in San Francisco. “This data is also consistent with what has been previously released, based on surveys of English-speaking Asian Americans, which have shown Asian American voters opposed to Prop 8. We believe that the data in general reflects the successful outreach and education that groups like APIEquality and API Equality–LA have led in the Asian American community, particularly amongst English-speaking and youth cohorts. At the same time, the data underscores the need to expand strategies and resources to focus on limited English speaking and religious members of our communities. We strongly believe that the differences in our community reflect less a fundamental difference of thought so much as an unequal distribution of resources and information.”