



## At a Glance: AAPIs in Hawaii

- ✓ **Hawaii is home to 708,074 Asian Americans (alone or in combination) and 296,496 Pacific Islanders, (alone or in combination) making up about 55% and 23% of the state, respectively. About 22% of Hawaiians are multiracial.**
- ✓ **The AAPI vote is important in local and national elections, and Hawaii has a long history of electing AAPI officials since establishing statehood.**
- ✓ **Political participation rates for Asians in Hawaii are comparable statewide but not high compared to other states—about 56% of the Asian VEP<sup>2</sup> registered to vote in 2008. However, many recent Asian American immigrants still face challenges towards engaging in civic life.**

### A Large and Established AAPI Population

- ✓ There are 708,074 Asian Americans in Hawaii, making up 55% of the population.
- ✓ There are 296,496 Pacific Islanders, making up 23% of the state's population.
- ✓ In addition, about 22% of Hawaii is of mixed-race descent. While the above numbers include multiracial AAPIs, there are 495,762 Asians of one race and 113,113 NHPIs of one race in Hawaii.
- ✓ Hawaii is one of the two states in the US where non-Hispanic whites don't form a majority.
- ✓ About 4% of the country's Asian only population resides in Hawaii. In the US, one in four single-race NHPIs lives in Hawaii.
- ✓ Japanese make up the majority of the Asian population in Hawaii, (about 1 in 3) and Native Hawaiians are the majority of the state's Pacific Islander population (over half).

### Hawaii's AAPI Turnout in 2008

- ✓ In 2008, there were 548,000 Asians who were eligible to vote in Hawaii, making up 56% of the state's VEP.
- ✓ Of AAPIs eligible to vote in Hawaii, 58% registered to vote, which is comparable to the statewide number.
- ✓ Approximately 87% of registered AAPIs turned out to vote in 2008, which is comparable to the statewide figure.

### National Elected AAPI Officials in Hawaii

- ✓ Hawaii has a long history of electing Asian American officials to national office.

- ✓ Some notable AAPIs from Hawaii: current Senators Inoye and Akaka, who are of Japanese and Native Hawaiian/Chinese descent, Patsy Mink, the first Asian American woman elected to US Congress in 1964, and Hiram Fong, the first AAPI US Senator, elected in 1959.
- ✓ In 2006, AAPIs had the potential to influence the Senatorial race. The AAPI VEP was 373,347, which exceeded the margin of victory, which was 84,077.
- ✓ In 2006, the AAPI's had the potential to influence the Congressional races in districts 1 and 2, where the AAPI voting eligible population exceeded the margin of victory.

### Challenges to Voter Participation

- ✓ Almost 1 in 5 households in Hawaii with Asian and Pacific Islander languages is linguistically isolated.<sup>3</sup> Those who struggle with English have trouble voting without language assistance.
- ✓ While only 5% of Pacific Islanders, and 25% of Asian Americans in Hawaii are foreign born, Hawaii has large foreign born populations from China, Korea, Japan, the Philippines, and Vietnam.
- ✓ More recent immigrants are likely to be limited in their English proficiency.
- ✓ 18% of Pacific Islanders in Hawaii live below the poverty line, and many South East Asian immigrants also live below the poverty line.

<sup>1</sup>2006-2008 American Community Survey; all other data from *A Community of Contrasts*, Asian American Justice Center, 2006.

<sup>2</sup>"VEP" stands for Voting Eligible Population- Citizens who are 18 years or older.

<sup>3</sup>A linguistically isolated household is one in which all members of the family over 14 years old experience at least some difficulty speaking English.