Representative Pramila Jayapal

Elected in 2016, Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal is now serving her second term in Congress representing Washington’s 7th District, which encompasses most of Seattle and its surrounding areas. She is the first South Asian American woman elected to the U.S. House of Representatives and one of only 14 naturalized citizens currently serving in the United States Congress.

Congresswoman Jayapal is a member of the House Judiciary Committee, where she serves as Vice Chair of the Immigration Subcommittee, and on the House Education & Labor and Budget Committees. She is also the elected Co-Chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, which represents approximately 40% of the entire Democratic caucus; the Immigration Subcommittee Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific Asian Caucus; and a Vice Chair of the Congressional LGBTQ Equality Caucus.

In Congress, Representative Jayapal has been a leader on immigration, including fighting the Trump Administration’s inhumane policies of separating children from their parents and crafting legislation to help expand legal immigration to America. She has also championed legislation to address income inequality, such as the $15 minimum wage and expanded collective bargaining rights for workers. She has worked extensively on healthcare issues as the lead sponsor of the Medicare for All bill in the House, and she is the author of the College for All Act, which would ensure every American has access to higher education. She has authored other landmark pieces of progressive legislation including the Dignity for Detained Immigrants Act and the National Domestic Workers Bill of Rights. She has also prioritized legislation to transition our economy to 100% clean energy and address the crisis of climate justice.

Representative Jayapal was born in India, grew up in India, Indonesia and Singapore, and came to the United States by herself at the age of 16 to attend college at Georgetown University. She later received her MBA from Northwestern University, worked in a number of industries in both the public and private sector, and published her first book in 2000, Pilgrimage to India: A Woman Revisits Her Homeland.
Becky Belcore

Joining NAKASEC’s staff in late 2016, Becky Belcore is now the Executive Director. Prior to NAKASEC, Becky worked as an independent consultant for community-based organizations and foundations in the greater Chicago area.

She also worked as Lead Program Officer for Woods Fund Chicago, the Executive Director of the Korean American Resource & Cultural Center (KRCC), a nurse and a union organizer. She is a board member of Adoptees for Justice, HANA Center, and the Ella Baker Organizing Fund. Becky enjoys spending time with her daughter and identifies as a Korean adoptee.
Kham S. Moua

Kham S. Moua spearheads SEARAC’s immigration policy portfolio through policy analysis, community engagement, and legislative and regulatory advocacy. He also serves as co-chair of the National Council of Asian Pacific American’s Immigration Committee on behalf of SEARAC. Kham has spent over a decade community building, organizing, and advocating on a wide range of issues, ranging from immigration to military justice.

His primary areas of expertise are in immigration and internet/technology policy. Prior to SEARAC, Kham was the Associate Director of Policy and Advocacy at OCA – Asian Pacific American Advocates. While there, he directed the organization’s policy, advocacy, and campaign efforts. Together with Asian Americans Advancing Justice – AAJC, he helped to establish the infrastructure for the AAPI Technology and Telecommunications Table, the only national coalition focused on those issues from an AAPI framework. Before OCA, he worked on state and local advocacy at Hmong National Development and Hmong American Partnership. Kham is also involved with AAPI LGBTQ organizations and issues.

He currently serves as a board member for the National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance (NQAPIA) and was previously the chair of Shades of Yellow, an organization based in Minnesota focused on Southeast Asian LGBTQ equity. Kham hails from Minnesota and holds a political science degree with a minor in Chinese from Winona State University, where he was part of Pi Sigma Alpha. In his free time, Kham enjoys catching up on politics; playing and analyzing video games; writing short stories and poetry; and repeating Ariana Grande and Fifth Harmony (RIP) on Spotify. You can follow his sparse Twitter account @KhamMoua.
MEET OUR SPEAKERS

Megan Essaheb

As Director of Immigration Advocacy at Advancing Justice | AAJC, Megan Horn Essaheb advocates in Congress and federal agencies on issues affecting immigrants, including immigration reform, guest worker programs, family reunification, and more.

Before joining Advancing Justice AAJC, Megan worked at Farmworker Justice where she engaged in policy advocacy on immigration and labor issues affecting farmworkers. Megan also advocated on behalf of Mexican guest workers at Centro de los Derechos del Migrante. Prior to attending law school, Megan was an immigrants’ rights activist and a member of Teach For America in Miami, where she taught for four years. Megan holds a law degree from Fordham University School of Law where she was a Stein Scholar in Public Interest Law and Ethics. Megan received her B.A. from Wesleyan University.
Seongwon Kim

Seongwon Kim (she/her) is a 1.5 generation undocumented Asian American community organizer. She graduated from William Paterson University with a double major in Global Business and Economics. She believes in the united power of love, care and organizing in communities to fight for justice and #Citizenship4All!
Otolose Fahina Tavake-Pasi

Fahina is the Executive Director of the National Tongan American Society since 2003. Her leadership and skills have helped to develop programs and provide access to thousands of Pacific Islanders in Utah to healthier lifestyles, increased civic engagement, voter registration, citizenship, access to higher education, social justice efforts and cultural preservation.

Before joining NTAS, Fahina worked for 10 years for the University of Utah as an Academic Advisor where she developed programs that helped to recruit and increase Pacific Islander students to the UofU, and to successfully navigate their higher education efforts.

Degrees include AA in Aeronautics, BA in Sociology, MS in Health Promotion and Education. Awards include Woman of the Year Award from Utah’s Governor, Leadership Award from Salt Lake Community Action, Organizational Leadership from Organization of Chinese Association–Utah, a national Leadership Award from the Leadership Education Asian Pacific Organization among others. Fahina has served on many national, state and local board of directors and advisory committees.

She was born in Tatakamotonga, Tonga. Grew up in San Mateo, California, and now resides in Holladay, Utah with her family.