



2020 NAAPPPA
40 UNDER 40 LIST

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The National Association of Asian Pacifics in Politics and Public Affairs (NAAPPPA) is proud to present the 2020 list of the top 40 AAPI political operatives and public affairs professionals under 40.

NAAPPPA established this list in 2016 to highlight the growing number of AAPIs who are rising stars in the professional unelected side of politics. These honorees represent groundbreaking AAPI campaign strategists and operatives, lobbyists, legislative staff, and corporate public affairs professionals on all sides of the aisle that work behind the scenes to elect and advance AAPI candidates and the AAPI community. These elite individuals are breaking the meek Asian model minority stereotype by excelling in the rough and tumble, rule-bending, and bare-knuckle world of American politics.

NAAPPPA is a non-partisan non-profit national organization dedicated to promote and develop Asian American and Pacific Islander career advancement and excellence in political consulting, public affairs, and legislative advocacy through networking, innovative training, and professional development programs.



Nadia Nisha Belkin (D) | National Deputy Field Director, America Votes. Her role involves the coordination and alignment of strategic planning efforts amongst 300+ state and national partners. Nadia is a member of the DEI team at America Votes and is committed not only to diversify table partners both nationally and at the state level. Prior to this role, Nadia served as the Communications Director at the Interfaith Alliance of Colorado. Her exposure to grassroots organizing includes her work in the battle ground state of Colorado during the 2016 election cycle. Nadia is a graduate of Smith College, where she earned her B.A. in Government and International Relations. She is currently pursuing her Master's in Global Community Engagement at the University of Denver.



Shawn Bhatia (R) | Senior Associate, Member Services, The Heritage Foundation. Shawn Bhatia is the Senior Associate for Member Services at The Heritage Foundation. He's part of the foundation's membership team that is responsible for bringing in tens of millions of donation dollars on an annual basis and keeping in touch with 500,000+ members. Bhatia previously worked in various roles at Stand Together, a philanthropic community led by Charles Koch and is an alumnus of the Koch Associate Program, Koch Fellow Program, and Koch Internship Program. Additionally, he completed internships at The Leadership Institute, Congressman Ted Poe's office, and Sikh American Legal Defense Education Fund. Bhatia graduated from The University of Houston with a Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance.



Kelly Boyer (D) | Chief of Staff, US Senator Maggie Hassan (D-NH). Kelly Boyer is currently the Acting Chief of Staff for US Senator Maggie Hassan (D-NH). Prior to joining Senator Hassan's Office, Kelly was the Director of Operations for US Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) where she held a number of positions during her twelve years with the Office. Kelly was born outside of Seoul and grew up in Minnesota. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from the University of North Dakota.



Michael Burkhard (D) | Vice President, K Bowler Group. Michael has over a decade of experience with Democratic and left-leaning campaigns and currently serves as Vice President of the K Bowler Group. In this role, he provides campaign strategy expertise to the California Assembly Democrats, Democratic candidates for statewide office, and left-leaning statewide ballot initiatives. His specialty is strategy around defending vulnerable seats, flipping swing districts, and helping campaigns connect with Democratic leaders and left-leaning movements. Prior to working with the K Bowler Group, he served as Special Projects Associate with the California Democratic Party. Michael is also passionate about active transportation and currently serves as Vice President of the Folsom Area Bicycle Advocates.



Brady Calma (D) | Director of API Civic Engagement and Leadership Development, SEIU International. Brady Calma works for the over 2.1 million-strong Service Employees International Union as the Director of API Civic Engagement and Leadership Development and Special Assistant to Executive Vice President Luisa Blue, the labor movement's highest ranking API elected officer. With over 15 years of service to the labor movement, Brady has staffed and led organizing and political campaigns, negotiated contracts, led strikes, and built leadership and organizational development programs for local unions. His current portfolio includes strategizing and leading SEIU's efforts around API engagement for the 2020 Presidential election and the 2020 census.



Kellie Chong (R) | Legislative Correspondent, US Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK). Kellie Chong is a second-generation Korean-American born and raised in the state of Alaska. She attended George Mason University to receive a B.A. in Government and International Politics. She started her career on Capitol Hill upon the completion of her bachelors in 2018. She currently serves as a Legislative Correspondent for Senator Lisa Murkowski and the first Senate President of the Congressional Korean American Staff Association (CKASA) since its official establishment at the start of the 116th Congress. With a Korean American Award of 2020 honoring CKASA to start the year, she is humbled to continue to be a part of the growth, development and support of the pursuit strengthening AAPI representation in public service.



Catherine Del Rosario (D) | District Director, California Assemblymember Chris Holden. With a decade of legislative experience, Catherine brings to the California Legislature a unique, international perspective having studied and worked in England, Switzerland, France, Australia and the Philippines. As a graduate of the UC Davis, she started her career working for California Assemblymember Wilmer Amina Carter. Currently, Catherine serves as the district director for California Assemblymember Chris Holden where she bridges the gap between policy and constituent concerns after numerous years of staffing him on various issue areas at the Capitol. Catherine's Christian faith is also of equal importance and she believes that being a public servant is not limited by one's title, but by having faith and trust in God while serving others. Mentorship, generosity and empowering others remain as Catherine's core values.



Kush S. Desai (R) | Director of Vetting, Republican National Committee (RNC). Kush Desai currently serves as the Director of Vetting for the Republican National Committee, having first joined the RNC's research and communications shop during the 2018 midterm cycle. Prior to the RNC, Desai worked as a reporter for the Daily Caller in Washington, D.C. Born and raised in New Jersey, Desai is an alumnus of Dartmouth College where he studied history and wrote for *The Dartmouth Review*. Desai's parents are immigrants from India. Kush is fluent in Gujarati and was the recipient of the James O. Freedman Presidential Research Scholarship.



Brendan Flores (I) | President and National Chairman, National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA). Brendan is responsible for leading America's largest national affiliation of Filipino American institutions, organizations and individuals to unite and amplify the voices of the four million Filipinos and Filipino Americans living in the United States. He made history when he was elected as the first millennial and youngest ever President and National Chairman of the Federation. He leads a team nationally that focuses on promoting leadership development, national advocacy and non-partisan civic engagement programs to unite, build, and increase political empowerment through voter registration, voter education, voter protection, and Get Out The Vote (GOTV).



Joshua Goodwin (R) | Strategy Consultant, Goodwin & Co., LLC. Goodwin is a corporate and political strategist for public relations, crisis management, and business infrastructure. His business and political acumen provides a proven track record from running nine political campaigns and winning eight of them, managing public policy and business development departments for a multi-billion dollar investment firm, investing and building growth strategies for start-up companies, and serving as a Director of Communications and a Senior Advisor to a member of Congress. He is a graduate of Bob Jones University and has certifications from the Charles Koch Institute. Goodwin has also assisted in raising over \$2 million for charities and political candidates and is a recipient of multiple charity awards.



Alia Griffing (D) | Legislative Advocate, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). Alia has worked on behalf of AFSCME members for over 10 years; recently joining AFSCME California's Political Action department, she continues to advocate on behalf of both public and private-sector workers. Previously, Alia worked in California as Council 57's Political and Legislative Director and in Washington State as Council 28's Research & Public Policy Director and lobbyist. Alia earned a Juris Doctorate from Gonzaga University School of Law and a Bachelor of Arts in political science from the University of Washington.



Omar Hossino (R) | Professional Staff, U.S. House Republican Study Committee. Omar is a professional policy staffers for the House Republican Study Committee, where he manages the RSC's Foreign Affairs and National Security Task Force. Before this, Omar worked as a policy analyst for the House Foreign Affairs Committee last Congress where he was the lead Republican staffer covering Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan for former Chairman Ed Royce. On the committee, Omar was instrumental in drafting and passing legislation sanctioning Iranian backed militias in Iraq. He was a 2018-2019 Penn-Kemble Fellow at the National Endowment for Democracy, and is currently a Marshall Fellow at the Heritage Foundation. Omar has a J.D. in law from Catholic University's Columbus School of Law, a M.A. in International Affairs: U.S. Foreign Policy from American University, and a B.S. from Radford University in Political Science.



Cheryl Hori (D) | Founder and Chief Strategist, Pacific Campaign House. Cheryl is the first woman-of-color founder of a full-service political digital agency. Over the past two cycles, Pacific Campaign House has pioneered digital data-driven initiatives to increase AAPI, LatinX, and African American cultural competency for Democrats. Cheryl has trained hundreds of AAPI activists, community leaders, and candidates across the country. Previously, Cheryl was the Deputy Digital Director for Priorities USA Action, the pro-Hillary Clinton Super PAC. At the time, with a budget of \$42 million spread across 4,800 pieces of digital creative, Cheryl managed creative teams for the largest political digital program in electoral history. Cheryl is also a regular speaker at political and non-profit conferences and a frequent writer for *Campaigns and Elections*, the preeminent publication of the political consulting profession.



Alex Huang (D) | Director of Programs and Community Engagement, Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies. Alex leads the development and implementation of programming to advance the leadership and representation of AAPIs in the political process. Prior to APAICS, he worked on Capitol Hill for Congresswoman Brenda Lawrence and Congressman Ami Bera. Alex started his career as an elementary school teacher in Detroit. He is passionate about educational equity and increasing AAPI representation in public service serving as a Board Member of the Grassroots Education Project, APAICS Alumni Association, and previously the Congressional Asian Pacific American Staff Association. He earned a Bachelors and Masters degree from the University of Michigan and is a native of Kalamazoo, Michigan.



Charli Huddleston (R) | Associate Director of Media Affairs, Donald J. Trump for President, Inc. Charli currently serves as the Associate Director of Media Affairs, Donald J. Trump for President, Inc. Prior to this position, she served as Press Secretary for the 115th Congress House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Chairman Rep. Trey Gowdy (SC-04) and the 116th Congress House Committee on Oversight and Reform Ranking Member Rep. Jim Jordan (OH-04). She started as a Congressional intern for Rep. Thomas Massie (KY-04) and served as a staff assistant and press assistant to Rep. James Comer (KY-01).



Eric Kim (R) | Senior Analyst, Forbes Tate Partners. Eric Kim works in the Research and Policy Analysis Department to conduct policy analysis, legislative tracking, and qualitative research to support FTP's broad range of clients. Prior to joining FTP, Eric was the Deputy Policy Director at the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC), the main campaign arm for House Republicans. For the last three election cycles, he advised over 90 House campaigns with strategic political messaging, debate prep, and policy briefings as well as providing in-depth policy analysis for candidate research books and political advertisements. A native from Orange County, California, Eric graduated from UC Berkeley and currently resides in Washington D.C.



Sery Kim (R) | Corporate Litigation Attorney and Republican Strategist. Before re-entering the private sector, Sery spent more than a decade working in politics and public policy. Sery initially moved to D.C. to work for President George W. Bush at The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. She also worked for the 2012 Romney Presidential Campaign and spent four years as a Congressional staffer, including time as Counsel for Chairman Darrell Issa at the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. Sery has a law degree from The University of Texas at Austin School of Law, where she graduated at age 23, the youngest in her class. Sery regularly provides on-air commentary for television shows airing on ABC, CBS and FOX while also writing online pieces for MSN, Huffington Post, MONEY Inc, and U.S. News and World Report.



Michelle Koepp (R) | Communications Director, US Representative Kay Granger. Michelle Koepp serves as the Communications Director and spokesperson for Representative Kay Granger, a leader in national defense and the top Republican on the House Committee on Appropriations. Michelle previously served in the Defense Department, managing public affairs at the Near East South Asia Center, the Defense Department's preeminent institution for growing relations with Middle Eastern and South Asian governments and their militaries. Prior to the Defense Department, Michelle worked at the Department of State, with roles in public affairs and China-focused policy analysis, including a stint at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing. Michelle is Taiwanese-American and grew up in Asia, speaking Mandarin as her first language. She holds a B.A. in Political Science from UCLA and a Masters in International Relations from Georgetown University.



Soo Kyung Koo (R) | Communications Director, Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan Office of Community Initiatives. Soo serves as the Communications Director of Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan's Office of Community Initiatives that serves as a coordinating office for the governor that connects Marylanders to economic, volunteer, and human service opportunities through government, business, and nonprofit partners. Prior to this position, Soo served as the Executive Director of the International Leadership Forum. She is also a member of the Montgomery County Community Development Advisory Committee. She holds a Master's degree from Georgetown University and attended the Harvard Kennedy School Executive Education program for emerging leaders.



Faith Lee (D) | Chair, California Young Democrats API Caucus. Faith leads the Caucus in organizing successful efforts with other young democrats to support API candidates running for offices. She was previously the Asian Pacific Islander Outreach Director for Mike Eng for Senate and has been working in the California State Legislature for the past three years. She is currently a Legislative Aide for California State Senator Richard Pan and served as a field representative for California Assemblymember Chris Holden. Prior to her political involvement, she was a reporter and lead anchor at a Los Angeles based Chinese TV Station Skylink TV. She is fluent in English, Cantonese and Mandarin.



Vivian Ling Willinger (R) | Counsel, US House of Representatives Committee on Small Business. Vivian's portfolio in her service as counsel to the House of Representatives Committee on Small Business focuses on small business federal contracting matters. Prior to her joining the Committee, she worked as a consultant assisting Department of Commerce and Small Business Administration leaders in operating the BusinessUSA initiative. Her advocacy for small businesses stems from watching her parents, both naturalized citizens, struggle to eventually achieve the American dream through their own self-employment. An attorney by education, Vivian graduated from the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law and became a member of the Maryland State Bar Association in 2013. A proud alum of the University of Maryland, College Park, she holds a degree in Psychology and Criminal Justice.



Anang Mittal (R) | Strategic Partnerships Manager for Civics, Youtube (Google). Anang Mittal is a Strategic Partnerships Manager for Civics at Youtube. He was previously the creative director for Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, and at the Senate Republican Conference where his innovative videos received national attention and praise. He's very passionate about content creation, storytelling, and helping people communicate through digital media. He has a Bachelors in Business Administration from American Public University. In his spare time he enjoys cooking, traveling, and photography. He's a first generation immigrant from New Delhi, India and now calls Washington DC his home.



Nathan Naidu (R) | White House Advance Lead, Executive Office of the President of the United States. Over the past 12 years, Nathan has served major advance roles in a wide field of GOP candidates. He started in 2009 on Capitol Hill for Congressman John Linder (GA-7) and then on the first Senate campaign of businessman Ron Johnson. A victory for Senator Johnson led Nathan to Presidential campaigns where he served as personal aide to Herman Cain, lead press representative for Newt Gingrich, and national advance representative for Mitt Romney. In 2016, Nathan was an advance representative for the Kasich, Rubio, Walker, and Trump campaigns and since the election serves as an advance lead for the White House. He is a native of Marietta, Georgia, and attended the University of Alabama, where he received his BA in Communications and History.



Roshni Nedungadi (D) | Pollster, Partner at HIT Strategies. As a woman, as an Asian-American, as a millennial, America is starting to look more like her and tapping into the insights of these various communities have kept her constantly striving to improve outcomes for marginalized groups in this country. Prior to starting HIT Strategies, Roshni spent a half decade at Brilliant Corners Research & Strategies, where she conducted research for candidates in international, national, state, and local elections, helped manage national research for groups like Moms Demand Action and BISC, crafted impactful narrative messaging with Demos' Race-Class Narrative project, and aided inventive, forward-thinking companies such as Google and AT&T. Previously, Roshni worked as a Data Analyst at Pivot, in the Wisconsin State Legislature as a Legislative Aide for a Milwaukee-area Representative, and through several years of campaign work – working as a campaign manager, communications staffer, and field organizer in a number of races – has developed a strong background in domestic politics.



Catherina Nou (D) | Chief Consultant, California Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus. Catherina 'Cat' Nou has been a public policy trailblazer for over a decade. Cat is the Chief Consultant for the California Asian Pacific Islander (API) Legislative Caucus, providing primary staff support for API democratic members of the legislature. Cat first joined the Legislature as an aide to Assemblymember Mariko Yamada and was ultimately promoted to serve as the first Cambodian American Chief of Staff in the Capitol. After Assemblymember Yamada's term expired, Cat established the policy arm of Everyday Impact Consulting, a firm creating systemic change for social good. While at EIC, Cat helped to build and lead a campaign to successfully advance legislation to disaggregate API data in California. Born and raised in Modesto, Cat is the daughter and sister of Cambodian refugees.



Howard Ou (D) | Policy Advisor, US Representative Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr. Howard manages the Congressman's energy, environment, immigration, small business, and veterans legislative portfolio along with the Congressman's work on the U.S. House Veterans' Affairs Committee and the Congressional Military Transition Assistance Pathway Caucus. Howard was a Policy and Press Advisor for the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus and APAICS Legislative Fellow for Congresswoman Judy Chu managing her civil rights portfolio. He also previously worked as a defense and AAPI staffer for Congressman Scott Peters based in San Diego working on the nexus between defense, clean energy, and innovation. Howard is a Truman National Security Project Political Partner, New Leaders Council 2020 DC Fellow, LGBT Congressional Staff Association Service & Community Engagement Director, and former CADEM API Caucus Executive Board Member.



Karthik Raja (R) | Legislative Correspondent, US Senator John Cornyn. A West Texas native and first-generation American, Karthik serves as Senator John Cornyn's legislative correspondent for national security and foreign affairs issues. Through Senator Cornyn's role as co-chair of the Senate India Caucus and Caucus on International Narcotics Control, Karthik was engaged in preparations for Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Houston, Texas and coordinating hearings on the U.S. global counter-narcotics strategy. He has a Bachelor's Degree in Biology from the University of Texas at Austin and is a graduate of the Woodrow Wilson Center's Foreign Policy Fellowship Program.



Ben Rajadurai (R) | Executive Director, College Republican National Committee. A native of Massachusetts and a first-generation Indian-American, Ben currently serves as Executive Director of the College Republican National Committee, one of the nation's largest and most prominent conservative organizations in the youth space. Previously, Ben served in several roles for Massachusetts Republicans, including communications and budget director for State Senator Dean Tran and campaign manager of the Helen Brady campaign for State Auditor. He is a proud alum of Stonehill College in Easton, Mass. He remains committed to growing Asian involvement and representation in politics.



Kavya Ramagiri (R) | National Coordinator for Coalitions, Donald J. Trump for President, Inc. Kavya is a first-generation Indian American currently serving on the President's re-election campaign. Within the past year, this Texas-native moved to Washington, D.C., completed the Heritage Foundation's Young Leaders Program, and joined the Trump campaign— all while completing her undergraduate degree in International Studies from Baylor University.



PaaWee Rivera (D) | Western Political Director, Warren Democrats. Prior to his current role, he served on Sen. Elizabeth Warren's Presidential Exploratory Committee and later her Presidential campaign as Western States Desk and Colorado State Director. In 2018, he worked as Special Advisor to US Senator Warren's Democratic Outreach Team that facilitated campaign support and over \$11 million dollars to Democrats across the country. Prior to joining Sen. Warren's team, PaaWee worked at the Democratic National Committee in a number of roles including Director of Native American and Rural Engagement and AAPI Finance Director where he oversaw the DNC's national AAPI finance program. PaaWee has a BA in Government from Dartmouth College.



Nirav Sanghani (D) | Deputy State Director, America Votes Pennsylvania. Nirav Sanghani currently serves as Deputy State Director for America Votes Pennsylvania, supporting and coordinating 501(c)4 organizing work statewide. Formerly, Nirav served as Executive Director of Texas New Era Center/ Jobs With Justice, building coalitions between local labor unions and issue-based, community organizations in Dallas. Prior to joining Texas New Era Center in 2016, he served as Special Projects Director with Action Now, a nonprofit organization in Chicago focused on building power in low-income black communities. Additionally, Nirav has served on various municipal and non-profit boards, most recently Civil Service Board for the City of Dallas and is in the process of helping build the first AAPI 501(c)4 political organization in Pennsylvania.



Brandon Seto (D) | Senior Floor Consultant, California Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon. Brandon Seto serves as the Senior Floor Consultant to Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon. Previously, he was Legislative Director, and then Capitol Director for Assemblymember Wendy Carrillo. Prior to coming over to the Assembly, Brandon worked as a Consultant for the Senate Labor and Industrial Relations Committee. Before the Legislature, he was a Clinical Assistant Professor at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. Brandon earned a Bachelor's degree in History at Loyola Marymount University and his Masters and Ph.D. in U.S. History at the University of California Santa Barbara.



Ethan Shim (R) | Municipal & School Technology Analyst, Executive Office of Technology Services & Security (EOTSS), Office of Governor Charlie Baker. Ethan is currently working at the Executive Office of Technology Services and Security (EOTSS) under Governor Charlie Baker's Administration, assisting municipalities and school districts with IT-related best practices, strategic planning, and municipal grant programs. Previously, Ethan was actively involved in multiple political campaigns in Virginia. Before moving to Massachusetts, Ethan also served as a legislative aide to Former Delegate Tim Hugo [R], assisting with legislative research and constituent requests. Ethan holds bachelor's degree in history from James Madison University.



Paco Torres (D) | Legislative Director, California Assemblymember Sabrina Cervantes. Paco Torres currently serves as Legislative Director for California State Assemblymember Sabrina Cervantes [D-Corona]. Previously, he worked for former Assemblymember Luis Alejo and former State Senator Loni Hancock. He also worked on the Jose Solorio for State Senate campaign in 2014, and Sabrina Cervantes's campaigns for Assembly in 2016 and 2018. Paco is a past president of the API Capitol Association (APICA), which represents API staff and advocates in California's capitol community, and is currently president of the Young API American Sacramento Democrats (YAAS). He is a graduate of Stanford University and Stanford Law School. In his spare time, he is a fan of the Los Angeles Angels, Los Angeles Lakers, and Los Angeles Rams. Paco lives in Sacramento, CA with his wife Linda.



Tina Wei Smith (R) | Executive Director, White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, U.S. Department of Commerce. In 2019, Tina was appointed as the eighth Executive Director of the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. In this capacity, Ms. Smith is responsible for directing the efforts of the Initiative and of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, including overseeing an Interagency Working Group. Prior to joining the Initiative, Ms. Smith served at Asbury University as the founding director of the Global Engagement Office. Ms. Smith previously worked at The Heritage Foundation in the Office of Distinguished Fellow, Elaine L. Chao. Prior to that she was at the U.S. Department of Labor in the Office of the Secretary and the Office of Public Liaison. She also staffed Congressman Rodney P. Frelinghuysen [NJ-11].



Catherine Elaine Whiteford (R) | State Chairwoman, North Carolina Federation of Young Republicans. Catherine Elaine Whiteford is the Chair of the North Carolina Federation of Young Republicans, the Chair of the Club Development Committee for the Young Republican National Federation, and a former candidate for the North Carolina House of Representatives. Catherine is the daughter of an Orthodox Priest Father John Whiteford and Chinese immigrant Wendy Whiteford who immigrated to the United States at the age of 16. Catherine has led the Young Republicans in her state to 300% growth in membership over the last 18 months and had increased club chapters in her state also by over 300%. As a candidate in 2018, she was one of only two Republican House candidates in North Carolina to increase their share of the vote over the previous election.



Aaron Wong (R) | Managing Director, Targeted Victory. As a Managing Director at Targeted Victory, Aaron oversees the data and technology infrastructure for the company, enabling clients to optimize digital fundraising results and targeting. Previously, he served as the Director of Digital Technology at the RNC, where he designed and implemented a new digital technology stack to help fuel President Trump's and the party's record breaking fundraising apparatus. A native of New Zealand, and of Chinese descent, Aaron became a proud citizen of America in 2013. Aaron holds a Bachelor of Political Science from the University of Southern California. It was in college where his love for the intersection of politics and technology was birthed.



Shery Yang (D) | Chief of Staff, California State Senator Melissa Hurtado. As a first generation American, Shery Yang was named the State Capitol's first Hmong Chief of Staff in the California State Senate. Yang started in the political campaign sector where she spent 10 years on advocacy issues across California. Yang covered issues such as agriculture, transportation, air quality, clean water and economic development. Since then, Yang has worked in Washington D.C. where she ran a multi-national campaign on clean water issues in the Mid-Atlantic region which included Maryland, Washington D.C., West Virginia, Virginia, Delaware, New Jersey and New York. More recently, Yang worked in the private-sector managing public affairs for AvidXchange, one of the top financial technology company in the world. Her work contributed to the company's \$35 million expansion in Salt Lake City, Utah.



Mike Young (D) | Political & Organizing Director, California League of Conservation Voters. Mike Young is the Political & Organizing Director of the California League of Conservation Voters. His early leadership development was thanks in large part to the Asian Pacific Islander Council's Youth Leadership Training Program. He has over a decade of experience organizing with key political and grassroots community partners to build strategic relationships that have helped both identify and elect environmental leaders, as well as hold legislators accountable to their community's concerns. Mike is a graduate of Pepperdine University, and he earned B.A.s in Political Science and Philosophy, as well as an Undergraduate Certificate in Dispute Resolution.



Joe Zhu (R) | Co-Chairman, Leaders Forum. Tianyi Joe Zhu serves as the National Co-Chair of Leaders Forum, a bi-partisan Asian American network of business executives and influential thought leaders launched in the White House in 2014. He is also one of fifteen business leaders selected from across the United States to serve on the Millennial Debt Commission tasked to examine the national debt and its long-term consequences. Professionally, he is the Managing Partner of Playground Capital, and was named one of the "Top 50 Outstanding Asian-Americans in Business" by the Asian American Business Development Corporation and honored as a "Business Leader of Color" By Chicago United. Joe is also a competitive boxer and was a former World Amateur Thai Boxing Champion.

