

WASHINGTON DC – U.S. Reps. Mike Honda (CA-15), Immigration Taskforce Chair for the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) and Judy Chu (CA-32), CAPAC Chair introduced and passed an integration and citizenship amendment to the FY2012 Homeland Security Appropriations Bill. The Homeland Security Appropriations Bill originally prohibited direct funding for immigrant integration grants. The amendment passed by Honda and Chu strikes the language that targeted immigrant integration grants and reiterates that immigrant assimilation is a national priority.

“The notion that we, as a nation, shouldn’t fund programs like immigrant integration grants flies in the face of what our country is all about. These new Americans, all of who came here legally, are not looking for an easy ride; they’re simply looking for the chance to learn English, learn about the history of their new home, and integrate into the fabric of America,” said Honda. **“I congratulate my colleagues in the House for recognizing this, for removing language that targets these important grants, and for allowing the Appropriations Committee to consider reprogramming funds to support immigrant integration. As the President’s budget recommends, immigrant integration grants should continue to have a direct appropriations source, and this amendment is one step closer to restoring that practice.”**

“Integrating immigrants into our society makes us a stronger and more united nation – and that is why we must have federal policies in place to quickly integrate new citizens. Republicans and Democrats agree that legal immigrants that want to become part of society and learn our laws and our language should be able to become citizens. And that’s exactly what these funds help to do,” said Chu. “These immigrant integration grants will greatly benefit Asian Pacific Americans – the fastest growing minority group in the United States. Immigrants who integrate into U.S. society go on to become informed voters, active community members, innovators, entrepreneurs and future job-creators – and this amendment will make sure that those who arrive on our shores legally have the means to make the most out of the opportunities in this great country.”

Immigration integration grants help prepare legal permanent residents for citizenship by helping residents navigate through the naturalization process, teach them about our nation’s history and government and learn English.

“We are grateful for the leadership of Reps. Honda and Chu and the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus on fighting to preserve the government’s role in promoting and ensuring the integration of immigrants into the fabric of America. Our democracy is strengthened when eligible immigrants become citizens and participate fully in our society and political system,” said Ali Noorani, Executive Director of the National Immigration Forum.

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The Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) is comprised of Members of Congress of Asian and Pacific Islander descent and members who have a strong dedication to promoting the well-being of the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. Currently Chaired by Congresswoman Judy Chu, CAPAC has been addressing the needs of the AAPI community in all areas of American life since it was founded in 1994.