

WASHINGTON, DC - Today, the House passed the Conference Report on H.R. 1, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. This economic recovery legislation included many provisions for which the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) advocated, and omitted ones that the Caucus opposed. Members of CAPAC made the following statements following today's important vote:

Rep. Mike Honda (CA-15), CAPAC Chair: "This legislation funds critical economic recovery efforts, creates and saves 3.5 million jobs, and invests in our communities and infrastructure projects across the nation. I am pleased that this legislation also includes many priorities that are important to Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, including funding for jobs related to the decennial census, authorizing compensation to Filipino World War II veterans, and education. I want to thank President Obama and congressional leadership for their tremendous and swift work in addressing one of the worst economic crises to ever face our nation."

Rep. Neil Abercrombie (HI-01), CAPAC Immigration Task Force Chair: "I am glad that the conferees recognized the flaws in the E-Verify system and did not include it in this historic effort to jumpstart our economy. Not only is E-Verify incorrect much of the time, which actually prevents Americans from getting jobs, but it slows the disbursement of the funding, one of the most critical elements of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Today's economic stimulus legislation is not the appropriate vehicle for an immigration debate."

Rep. Madeleine Z. Bordallo (GU), CAPAC Health Task Force Chair: "The passage of this legislation improves the quality of healthcare in our country by making important investments in health information technology. Also by aiding the states and territories through additional funding in the Medicaid program, H.R. 1 protects many of our working families who are challenged in this economy to afford healthcare."

Rep. Al Green (TX-09), CAPAC Housing Task Force Chair: “I am pleased that much needed funding for critical HUD programs that affect vulnerable communities, including communities of color, has been included in the stimulus bill. As our great country continues to struggle with the current economic crisis, it is clear that stabilizing the housing market is of the utmost importance. This funding will assist in stemming the tide of foreclosures and provides support for keeping American families in their homes. While we work to find effective ways to sustain home ownership, we must not lose sight of the vision of responsibly expanding it as well. By putting new families into homes, we will not only help stabilize the housing market, we will also further the American dream of inclusive and accessible home ownership.”

Rep. David Wu (OR-01), CAPAC Education Task Force Chair: “The House today passed crucial education funding that helps meet the needs of today while building a better tomorrow. From Pell Grants for higher education to aid that will keep schools across the country from closing their doors, the economic recovery package invests in our current and future workforce. I wish the funding for education could have been more robust, but we have taken a significant step to employ people today and build our economic capacity for the future.”

CAPAC and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

The following are some of CAPAC’s significant legislative priorities that were included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Census

- \$1 billion for the 2010 Census. This funding will help ensure a fair and accurate count of all communities, including Asian American and Pacific Islander communities that are linguistically and culturally isolated. Funding will be used to hire additional personnel, ensure appropriate training, increase targeted media purchases including to ethnic media, and increase in-language partnership and outreach efforts to minority communities and other hard-to-reach populations.

Immigration

- Stripped E-Verify provision from House bill that conditioned receipt of stimulus funds on participation in the E-verify program. Mandating participation in E-Verify keeps American and other authorized workers from gainful employment due to high database error rates, and undermines the purpose of supporting working families in this economy in a timely fashion.

Education

- \$53.6 billion for a State Fiscal Stabilization Fund. This funding includes \$39.5 billion to public education, to be used primarily for preventing cutbacks and layoffs.
- \$13 billion for Title I grants. This funding will help low-income children reach high academic standards.
- Increase in Pell Grants. The bill includes a \$500 increase in the maximum Pell Grant, for a maximum of \$5,350 in 2009 and \$5,550 in 2010.
- Grants for ensuring adequate attention to English language learners. The bill authorizes of incentive grants to states that have made significant progress in achieving equity in teacher distribution and enhancing assessments for English language learners and students with disabilities.

Housing and Community Development

- \$2.25 billion for the HOME Investment Partnership program. These funds will be used to coordinate with the Low Income Housing Tax Credit to fill financing gaps caused by the collapse of the tax credit market and to jumpstart stalled housing development projects, thereby creating jobs.
- \$100 million for the Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Program. This funding will provide working capital for CDFIs certified by Treasury, which will support community development efforts in underserved communities.
- \$3 billion for the Community Development Block Grant program and the Neighborhood Stabilization Program. These funds will stem the foreclosure crisis, create more affordable housing, and reduce neighborhood blight in struggling communities.

Health

- Funding for community health centers. The bill includes \$1.5 billion for construction, renovation and equipment, and \$500 million over 2 years for operations for community health centers. According to the National Association of Community Health Centers's facilities survey, of its 1,000 community health centers, there are approximately \$4.4 billion in existing facility needs for renovation and repair to adequately serve their 18 million patients.
- Requiring the collection of data on race, ethnicity, primary language, and gender for electronic health records. The collection of data on race, ethnicity, and primary language by health care organizations is critical to monitoring disparities and improving quality of care. The current certification criteria for electronic systems only require collection of name, date of birth, and gender data.

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The Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) is a bicameral and bipartisan caucus 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. Founded in 1994 by then Congressman Norman Mineta, and currently chaired by Congressman Michael Honda, CAPAC has been addressing the needs of the AAPI community in all areas of American life. For more information on CAPAC, please call (202) 225-2631 or visit <http://www.honda.house.gov/capac>.