

WASHINGTON, DC – Yesterday, members of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) supported an increase in the federal minimum wage.

“Over the last five years, the number of Asian and Pacific Islander Americans living in poverty has grown by 243,000. In 2005, more than 1.5 million APIAs were living below the poverty line,” said Rep. Michael Honda (CA-15), Chair of CAPAC. “I applaud the House for the passage of this bill and urge the Senate to take a step in a new direction and help improve the quality of life for the estimated 14.9 million workers in the country.”

“Ten years, the longest in history, have passed without an increase in the federal minimum wage. It is immoral that Congress sat idle this long while the value of a hard day's work diminished,” stated Rep. David Wu (OR-01), a member of the House Committee on Education and Labor. “While a job is not the complete answer to poverty, an increase in the minimum wage puts us one step closer to lifting Americans out of poverty and those who struggle to afford such needs as health care and energy bills.”

“A full-time job should be a bridge out of poverty, an opportunity to make a living through work,” said Rep. Al Green (TX-09). “Unfortunately, for minimum wage earners, especially those with families, it is not.”

“Today’s vote is an important first step. It will help millions of hard working Americans earn a decent day’s wages for a decent day’s work,” said Rep. Green. “It is time that Congress followed the lead of 28 States and the District of Columbia and increased the minimum wage.”

Approximately 11.8 percent of Asian and Pacific Islander Americans live below the poverty line, and certain ethnic communities, including Hmong Americans and Cambodian Americans, experience poverty at up to three times that rate. An increase in the minimum wage would improve the quality of life for millions of working Americans.

###

*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> .*