



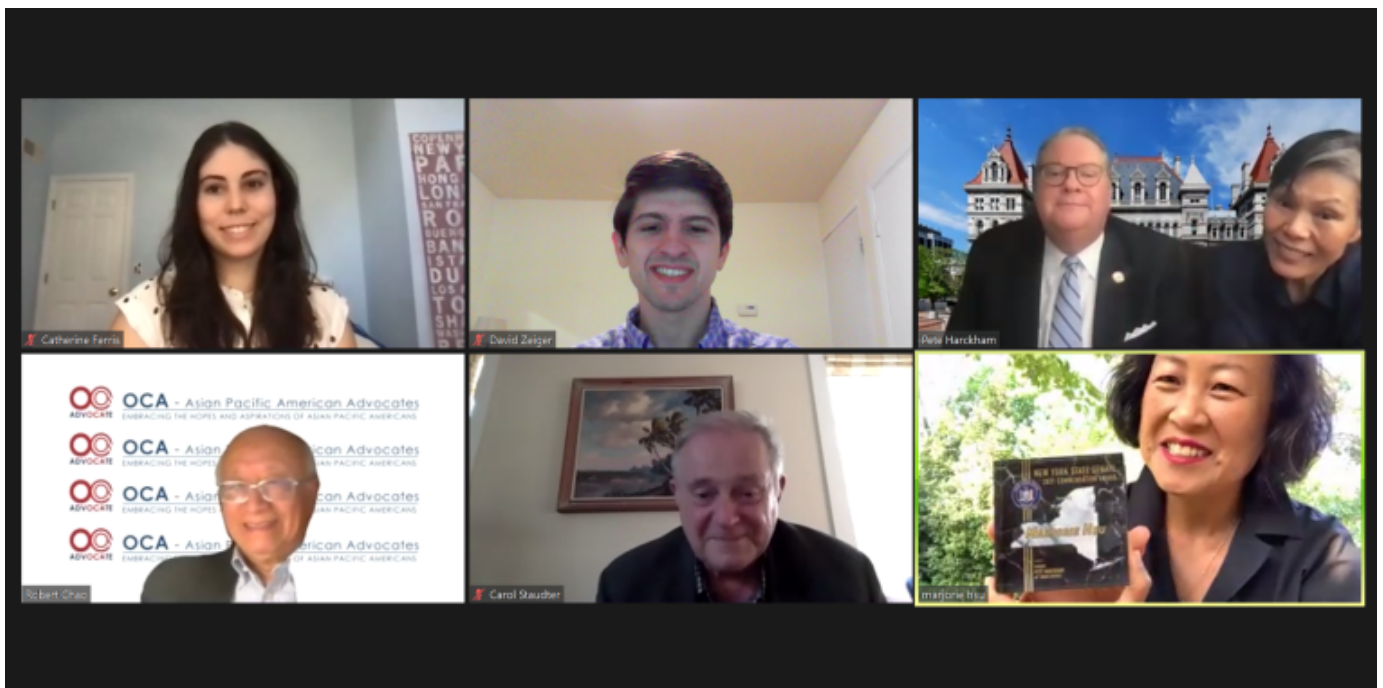
NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

## Harckham Honors Marjorie Hsu, Robert Chao During Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month Commemoration

PETE HARCKHAM May 24, 2021

| ISSUE: **ASIAN-AMERICAN AND PACIFIC-ISLANDER (AAPI), ASIAN PACIFIC HERITAGE CELEBRATION, CULTURAL DIVERSITY**



*Peekskill, NY* – New York State Senator Pete Harckham commemorated Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month 2021 on Friday, May 21, by honoring Sleepy Hollow resident Marjorie Hsu and Chappaqua resident Robert Chao for their substantial contributions to local, state and national organizations, along with their commitment to preserving cultural traditions.

“Our diversity is what makes the Hudson Valley such a great place,” said Harckham.

“Diversity makes our communities richer and stronger, and we need to cherish and nourish it, as well as celebrate it every chance we get.”

Harckham presented Hsu and Chao with Senate Commendation Awards during a virtual ceremony aired live on Facebook.

In honoring Hsu and Chao as part of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month, Harckham called them “two great residents of the Hudson Valley” who have worked tirelessly to help make their communities a better place in which to live.

Harckham added that the awards were being presented during an increase of anti-Asian American and Pacific Islander bias and hate attacks in the U.S. and here in Hudson Valley. “It is disgusting and despicable, and it has to stop,” he said.

Marjorie Hsu has been board chair of the Asian American Federation (AAF) since 2015. The AAF, along with its 70 member organizations, supports the pan-Asian community of New York through research, advocacy and direct relief. It focuses on immigration, mental health and economic development. Over the past year, AAF has provided relief payments to struggling community members, coordinated thousands of mental counseling sessions and led census drives, in addition to providing grants and helping small businesses access PPE loans.

Hsu is also co-chair of the Westchester County Asian American Advisory Board, and has been active over the years with voter education programs and political advocacy. She will be a panelist in an online forum entitled “Hate in the Age of Multiculturalism” on Tuesday, May 25, 2021, that Harckham is hosting.

In thanking Harckham for the Senate Commendation, Hsu said, "It is the hard work of the American Asian Federation's staff over 30 years on behalf of the underserved and voiceless Asian Americans in the New York metropolitan area that has really made a difference. It is a beautiful thing that our community is continuing to support all of its newest, and often most vulnerable, members."

Robert Chao is past Hudson Valley chapter president and past national board member of the Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA), which in 2013 was renamed OCA – Asian Pacific American Advocates. The Hudson Valley chapter of the organization works to advance the social, political and economic status of Asian Pacific Americans, and advocates for the interests of the AAPI community. It also strives to eliminate hate speech and racism, lobbies for criminal justice reform and supports national legislation regarding immigration reform and anti-hazing in the military.

Chao has overseen efforts in the local chapter of OCA – Asian Pacific American Advocates to provide outreach to seniors and immigrants. Additionally, its youth program recognizes gifted student leaders and assists talented youth facing hardship or need.

Remarked Chao, who is also a board member and past chair of the Chinese American Academic and Professional Society, "I thank Senator Harckham for this award, which belongs more to an organization rather than an individual, for what we are doing to help for the betterment of our communities. Last year because of the pandemic there was a lot of need, especially with food insecurity, and we did what we could to help. Today, we are continuing our efforts."