



**Joint Legislative Public Hearing on 2019-2020 Executive Budget Proposal
Topic: Local Government Officials / General Government**

**Senate Finance Committee Chair Liz Krueger
Assembly Ways and Means Committee Chair Helene E. Weinstein**

On behalf of the Chinese-American Planning Council (CPC) and the New York Counts 2020 Coalition, thank you for the opportunity to testify.

CPC is the nation's largest social services agency for Asian American Pacific Islanders (APIs), promoting social and economic empowerment for 60,000 low-income, immigrant, and API New Yorkers per year. CPC joined New York Counts 2020 because we understood that communities already underserved across the state would continue to be marginalized by an undercount in the 2020 Census. We believe that to further promote social and economic empowerment, we must first work to make sure our communities are counted, visible, and receive their fair share of resources and influence.

In addition to living in hard-to-count tracts in New York State, Asian American Pacific Islanders face unique and intersecting barriers toward getting counted by the Census. The Census Bureau's own hard-to-count factors include low-income families, renters, foreign born, and limited English Proficiency, and recent arrivals. In New York State, rapid growth has driven the total number of APIs in poverty up by 50% since 2000. This includes upstate counties who have seen unprecedented growth and resettlement like Oneida, Onadaga, Monroe, and Eerie. New York's APIs, like APIs across the nation, have high levels of Limited English Proficiency (70%), with low-income API seniors, who many predict will also be affected by the digital divide on the Census's self-response, having LEP rates of up to 83%. Many of the state's APIs have arrived within the last 10 years, complicating Census literacy and familiarity. Further, we worry that many APIs, especially the many households with mixed status families, come from countries where holdover anxieties of repressive government at home erode trust in the civic processes, tools, and systems like the Census. This is only exacerbated by the rise of anti-immigrant sentiment and rhetoric in federal policy and in hate crimes closer to home.

Linguistic diversity within this demographic, rapid growth, and all of the aforementioned reasons affirm CPC's need to be involved in coalitions like New York Counts 2020. An undercount shouldn't just worry organizations and counties with API communities. As the fastest growing racial group, an undercount will have repercussions for resource distributions and Census-derived data and city planning across the state. We know that if these issues require a unique and tailored approach to engage Asian Americans, each and every community across the state, whether foreign or native born, young or old, rural or urban, or low or high income will require its own tailored method to encourage a complete count. We are alarmed that to date, no money has been committed for community-based Census 2020 outreach. In any other cycle alone, this level of unpreparedness would be worrisome, but given the unprecedented hurdles and lack of federal planning and preparation, we implore the State to

make the investments that not only carry us into 2021, but beyond to 2031. New York cannot risk diminished influence in Washington, we cannot risk a drop in the federal dollars and programs that belong our state, and we certainly cannot risk rendering entire communities invisible from future infrastructure, service, and city planning.

We stand with the New York Counts 2020 Coalition to recommend a \$40 million investment in community-based outreach. Based on a Fiscal Policy Institute model that examined 2010's shortcomings and opportunities to invest for 2020, \$40 million would be the equivalent of just \$2 per New Yorker to conduct basic outreach, focusing the most on the hardest-to-count and hardest-to-reach New Yorkers. A community-based model is a common sense model. Indeed, it follows the same rationale and precedent of every other state service and program that is contracted to community-based organizations across the state. It is our earned trust, linguistic and cultural competency, and relationship with our communities that make us the best positioned to deliver the state's services and it is for the exact same reasons that we are best positioned to encourage a full and accurate count.

CPC appreciates the opportunity to testify on the issues that advance our communities. We look forward to working toward Census 2020 together with you.

For further questions or comment on this testimony, please contact Amy Torres, CPC's Director of Policy and Advocacy, atorres@cpc-nyc.org, (212) 941 - 0920 x 122