

**PRESS RELEASE****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****CONTACT:**

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**HEADLINE: Asian Pacific American Bar Association Urges Supreme Court to Postpone  
Vote on Racial Privacy Initiative, Citing Need for an Informed Electorate.**

**BODY:**

The Asian Pacific American Bar Association of Los Angeles County ("APABA-LA") filed today an amicus letter brief with the California Supreme Court, urging it to postpone the vote on the highly controversial "Classification By Race, Ethnicity, Color, or National Origin, Initiative Constitutional Amendment," commonly known as the "Racial Privacy Initiative" ("RPI"). The initiative is currently scheduled for a vote on the October 7, 2003 ballot in conjunction with the recall election.

"This vote has wrongly been scheduled at least 56 days earlier than the time allowed under the California Constitution," said APABA-LA president-elect Teri Pham, principal author of the brief. "The California Constitution expressly requires *at least* 131 days from the time an initiative qualifies, to the day of the vote. Cutting this time in half will significantly impede the ability to educate and inform voters in the Asian American communities, and other similar multilingual communities about the RPI. We therefore felt it imperative to raise this constitutional challenge on behalf of the Asian American community."

APABA-LA is also opposed to the Racial Privacy Initiative in its substance. The initiative prohibits data collection on race, ethnicity and national origin in the guise of information privacy, but in practice it would be devastating to health and safety programs, educational programs, and civil rights enforcement. APABA believes the voters of California will reject this misguided initiative, and they need to be given sufficient opportunity to understand the profound harm it will really cause.

According to the US Census Bureau, the Asian Pacific Islander population in the State of California is approximately 11.3%, and an even higher 12.2% in Los Angeles County. The percentage of voting-age Californians whose primary language in the home is an Asian/Pacific Islander language, is approximately 10.0% (11.4% in Los Angeles County). "Given this empirical data, it is imperative that Californians be allowed sufficient time, as required by the California Constitution, to translate and prepare materials for its multilingual voters in order to have an informed electorate and a meaningful election," said Pham. Los Angeles County provides voter registration information, election materials and oral assistance in six languages other than English (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, Tagalog and Vietnamese).

APABA-LA is a nonprofit association of legal professionals, including lawyers and judges. APABA-LA is the only pan-Asian group of legal professionals in Los Angeles County, and its membership reflects the ethnic and cultural diversity of the APIA community in the greater Los Angeles area.

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