



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders
(PAC-AAPI) Convenes Third Quarterly Meeting & White House Celebration
of Filipino American History Month**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – On October 15, the President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (PAC-AAPI) convened its third quarterly meeting virtually and celebrated Filipino American History Month with The White House and the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (WHIAAPI). Both U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross and U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao, Co-Chairs of WHIAAPI, presided over the meeting and provided celebratory remarks for the Filipino American community. Also participating in the virtual celebration was Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy, Plans & Capabilities at U.S. Department of Defense, Vic Mercado, and National Chairman of the National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA), Brendan Flores.

“As our country deals with the impact of COVID-19, we are especially grateful for the hundreds of thousands of Filipino-Americans who are on the front lines of this battle, taking personal risks to save lives. For decades, Filipino-Americans have served as critical health care workers, helping to alleviate the shortage of skilled nursing care in this country,” said U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao. “Today, their contribution is more important than ever before, as they serve in our hospitals, nursing homes and other care facilities during this pandemic. In California alone, nearly 20 percent of registered nurses are Filipinos. So, our special thanks go out to these brave men and women.”

“We are especially thankful for the hundreds of thousands of Filipino Americans who are on the front lines of this battle, taking personal risks to save so many lives. They contribute every day to making America a caring, and exceptional nation,” said U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross and he added that “[Their] community’s innovative spirit is a model for what is needed as we continue to emerge from COVID-19’s impact to our economy...I am also looking forward to

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reviewing this Commission’s recommendations on how the federal government can better assist AAPI-owned businesses through the current challenges and the future of business.”

The Commission is tasked by President Trump’s Executive Order to provide advice to the President, through the U.S. Secretary of Commerce and the U.S. Secretary of Transportation, on how to broaden access by Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders employers and communities to economic resources and opportunities.

“We have faced a turbulent year and I value your focused attentions and commitment to the mission priorities of our Commission, as laid out by President Trump’s Executive Order. Our body exists to make recommendations to the President (through the Secretaries) that will economically empower and better the lives of all AAPIs,” said Dr. Paul Hsu, Chair of PAC-AAPI, “Thank you to all of our Commissioners for your time and willingness to serve our AAPI communities. We will continue our efforts to make America a better country for all Americans.”

Also joining with special remarks to recognize Filipino American History Month were Trump Administration’s Filipino American appointees – Commissioner Herman Martir of PAC-AAPI, Kelly Ilagan of the International Trade Administration at the U.S. Department of Commerce, and Ninio Fetalvo of White House Communications and Strategic Communications Director to the CMS Administrator at U.S. Health and Human Services. Tina Wei Smith, Executive Director of WHIAAPI and Alex Flemister, Associate Director of White House Office of Public Liaison, cohosted this special event.

Following inspiring and encouraging remarks in recognizing the Filipino American community, the President’s Advisory Commission on AAPIs resumed its third quarterly meeting. Earlier in the day, subcommittees of the PAC-AAPI met with the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, which was hosted by WHIAAPI. Concerns about the discrimination of Asian Americans in college and high school admissions process was discussed. Commissioners also shared their concerns of anti-AAPI bias and hate crimes due to COVID-19 and heard what the data shows and how the U.S. Department of Justice has proactively responded to this concern.

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October 15, 2020 – President’s Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders third quarterly meeting with Co-Chair Secretary Elaine L. Chao, conducted virtually. Photo Credit: Asian Journal

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Advancing the economic empowerment of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders

About WHIAAPI & PAC-AAPI: Established by President Trump, the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (WHIAAPI) and the President’s Advisory Commission on AAPIs (PAC-AAPI) work to broaden access by Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) employers and communities to economic resources and opportunities, thus empowering AAPIs to improve the quality of their lives, raise the standard of living for their families and communities, and more fully participate in our economy. The President’s Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (PAC-AAPI) is established pursuant to Executive Order 13872 (May 13, 2019) to advise the President, through the Secretary of Commerce and the Secretary of Transportation. The PAC-AAPI and the WHIAAPI Office is located in the US. Department of Commerce and the Minority Business Development Agency provides financial and administrative support for the performance of the Commission’s functions.