

Pelosi Remarks at 2010 Asian American and Pacific Islander Summit

Washington, D.C. – Speaker Nancy Pelosi delivered remarks at the 2010 annual Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Summit hosted by the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) and the Congressional Democratic Leadership this morning in the Capitol Visitor Center. The theme for this year’s summit is “Strengthening our Economy: Job Creation in AAPI Communities.” Below are the Speaker’s remarks as prepared for delivery:

“We have come together today during Asian Pacific American Heritage Month – an opportunity to honor the extraordinary contributions made by the Asian American and Pacific Islander community to our culture, economy, and history.

“Overcoming decades of prejudice and discrimination, those from Asia and the Pacific Islands have become essential threads in the fabric of American society. And in San Francisco, we see the contributions to our heritage firsthand.

“In medicine, law, and business, the AAPI community demonstrates the value of hard work and responsibility. As soldiers and public servants, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have an unyielding commitment to our country, our diverse heritage, and our common future.

“The AAPI community faces the same challenges as all Americans: finding a steady job, gaining a strong education for our children, and ensuring everyone has the opportunity to realize their American dream.

“In this Congress, our number one priority remains creating good-paying jobs for every American. And for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, fulfilling that promise means focusing on small businesses.

“The success of AAPI business owners exemplify the entrepreneurial spirit at the center of our economic strength: more than 1.1 million AAPI-owned businesses in the U.S., earning more than \$330 billion per year and employing more than 2.2 million workers.

“To empower these business owners and ensure their stability and growth, we passed:

- The Recovery Act, which has:
 - Created up to 2.8 million jobs so far,
 - Jumpstarted lending to small businesses
 - Ensured that minority-and women-owned businesses have the opportunity to win their fair share of contracts funded by the bill



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- The HIRE Act – providing tax cuts for small businesses to hire workers
- Worker, Homeownership, and Business Assistance Act – small business tax relief.

“We must do more. Regardless of background, all Americans deserve a shot at a good job and a decent wage. Democrats will keep promoting an agenda focused on jobs for the middle class and the growth of our small businesses – the engines of our economic prosperity.

“Few achievements will benefit AAPI families and businesses more than comprehensive health insurance reform.

“Without reform, more than 17 percent of Asian Americans would continue to go without health coverage, and more than half would delay or forgo routine care due to high costs.

“With reform in place, all communities will see a difference: improving access to affordable care; helping end health disparities; keeping families healthy; giving small businesses a tax credit up to 35 percent of premiums this year; and ensuring the success of the fight for a country free of such public health concerns as Hepatitis B, which affects the AAPI community at a higher rate than other groups.

“The fight for equality and opportunity will go on – for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and for every American. In Congress, we will continue to work for better schools to train the next generation of workers and leaders; a fairer, more compassionate, more just immigration system; greater diversity in the workplace – starting right here on Capitol Hill, where we were proud to kick off an initiative to increase House diversity and opportunities for diverse candidates at all staff levels.

“As a representative of a district with a large AAPI population, I have always said that the beauty is in the mix, and I salute the work of CAPAC to make progress on behalf of all Americans.”

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