



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
COMMISSION ON
**ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER
AMERICAN AFFAIRS**



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Golden State Sets The Pace With AB 2374 and SB 1255 Ensuring Student Success



AB 2374 and SB 1255 establish statewide designations for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) and Hispanic Serving Institutions, respectively, recognizing colleges and universities committed to supporting students. These bills build on prior Black-Serving Institutions designations and come at a critical time as federal support faces increasing uncertainty.

Explore the legislation advancing student success in California:

[Read AB 2374](#)

[Read SB 1255](#)

SACRAMENTO, CA —

Today, the California Commission on Asian & Pacific Islander American Affairs (CAPIAA), alongside policymakers, state leaders, higher education institutions, and community advocates, rallied in strong support for AB 2374 (Fong) and SB 1255 (Reyes)—bills that establish a statewide AANHPI and Hispanic Serving Institutions designation to improve student outcomes. These efforts reflect a broader, coordinated commitment to supporting diverse student populations across California's higher education system.

As California continues to lead in equity in higher education, leaders emphasize that this effort builds on the foundation of Minority-Serving Institution (MSI) designations, which have helped expand access, improve retention, and support timely graduation for historically underserved students.

At a time when the majority of federal investments in MSI programs have been dismantled, California is stepping forward to ensure higher education institutions have the tools and recognition needed to serve diverse student populations effectively.

Jason Paguio, Chair, California Commission on Asian & Pacific Islander American Affairs, stated:

“An AANHPI-Serving Institution designation is not symbolic; it creates a framework for visibility, accountability, and investment in student success. It ensures that institutions are not only recognized for their work, but are also equipped to better serve students moving forward.”

Together, these perspectives reflect a growing consensus that AB 2374 and SB 1255 are critical steps toward ensuring California’s higher education system evolves to meet the needs of its diverse and growing student population. This growing consensus is reflected in legislative leadership advancing these bills.



Mike Fong, Chair, Assembly Higher Education Committee, stated:

“California’s diversity is one of our greatest strengths, and our higher education system must continue to support the success of all students, especially those who have been historically underrepresented. AB 2374 takes an important step by recognizing the institutions that serve Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander students through a statewide designation. This is about making our system more inclusive and expanding opportunities so that every student has a clear pathway to succeed.”

CAPIAA leadership also underscored the Commission’s role in advancing this legislation and supporting equitable outcomes across higher education.

Kirin Macapugay, Vice Chair, California Commission on Asian & Pacific Islander American Affairs, stated:

“The California Commission on Asian & Pacific Islander American Affairs is proud to co-sponsor AB 2374 and celebrate its passage through the Assembly Committee on Higher Education. This effort reflects California’s commitment to expanding access to quality higher education, investing in our state’s future, and ensuring opportunity for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander students—and all students.”

Leaders further emphasized the importance of strengthening institutional frameworks and long-term investment in student success.

Diann Kitamura, Commissioner, California Commission on Asian & Pacific Islander American Affairs, added:

“AB 2374 is about ensuring our higher education system truly reflects the full diversity of California’s students. An AANHPI-Serving Institution designation provides campuses with both the recognition and the framework to better support AANHPI students and communities that too often remain overlooked due to data gaps and aggregation. This designation creates a clear pathway for greater visibility, stronger accountability, and more intentional investment in the programs and services that help these students persist and succeed. At its core, this bill ensures AANHPI students are seen, supported, and positioned to reach their full potential, while equipping the institutions that serve them to do the same.”

Building on this, Commissioners further emphasized that addressing data gaps is essential to strengthening student outcomes and ensuring institutions are equipped to meet the diverse needs of AANHPI students.

Rajan Gill, Commissioner, California Commission on Asian & Pacific Islander American Affairs, shared:

“AB 2374 is about strengthening outcomes for students across California’s higher education system. As a community college professor, historian, and graduate of our state’s community college system, I know that AANHPI students have never been a single story or a single statistic. Too often, broad data categories hide the real needs of our students, from transfer and completion to basic needs, language access, and first-generation support.”

System leaders also emphasized how these efforts align with broader statewide goals to improve student outcomes and institutional accountability.

Sonya Christian, Chancellor, California Community Colleges, shared:

“Our students have extraordinary potential, yet too many still face barriers to completion and transfer. We support the leadership advancing both Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) and AANHPI-Serving Institution designations. This effort aligns with Vision 2030 and our commitment to student outcomes. By recognizing and strengthening our institutions, we can help more students achieve their goals and build a stronger future for California.”

Researchers and higher education experts point to long-standing demographic shifts and the need for institutions to evolve accordingly.

Robert Teranishi, Professor, University of California, Los Angeles, explained:

“Higher education in California has undergone a significant demographic shift over the past two to three decades. This designation provides an important opportunity for students to see themselves reflected in the mission and priorities of the colleges and universities they attend, particularly those from communities that are too often overlooked and underserved.”

Advocacy and higher education leaders also emphasized the importance of accountability, measurable outcomes, and culturally responsive support systems.

Dr. Rowena M. Tomaneng, President, Board of Directors, Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education, added:

“This bill recognizes what our students have long needed: visibility, accountability, and culturally responsive support rooted in data and equity. It creates a meaningful framework for improving retention, graduation, and overall student success.”

Scholars and higher education leaders also point to the broader institutional and academic impact of AANAPISI designations.

Lisa Hirai Tsuchitani, Department of Ethnic Studies, University of California, Berkeley; Co-Chair, UC AANAPISI Initiative, stated:

“AB 2374 builds on the important work of AANAPISI-designated institutions, which serve as sites of academic and administrative accountability and innovation. These institutions

strengthen relationships within and across campuses, foster intersegmental collaboration, and encourage new scholarship in service to all students.”

Advocacy leaders further emphasized the importance of sustaining proven strategies and protecting investments that support student success.

Jessie Ryan, President, Campaign for College Opportunity, stated:

“Amid continued efforts at the federal level to roll back decades of support for programs that have been proven to expand college access and success for students historically excluded from higher education, AB 2374 seeks to preserve and advance this critical work. By establishing a statewide AANHPI-Serving Institution designation, California will uplift evidence-based practices that support AANHPI students, strengthen data collection to address equity gaps, and incentivize institutions to sustain their commitment to student success, from enrollment through completion and beyond.”

CAPIAA leadership underscored that AB 2374 and SB 1255 reflect both the urgency of this moment and the opportunity to build a more equitable higher education system for all.

Khydeeja Alam, Executive Director, CAPIAA, emphasized the urgency and broader significance of the bill:

“AB 2374 and SB 1255 represent a critical step forward in ensuring that AANHPI and Hispanic students are fully recognized in California’s higher education system.

We are proud to build on the prior efforts of Minority-Serving Institutions in California, such as SB 1348 (Bradford), which established the Black-Serving Institution designation and has helped advance student success. These bills reflect the power of partnership, standing alongside Latino communities in advancing equity across higher education.

At its core, AB 2374 and SB 1255 are about moving from recognition to action. As two of the fastest-growing populations in California, AANHPI and Latino communities must be intentionally supported, ensuring every student is seen and positioned to reach their full potential.”



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[About CAPIAA](#)

The California Commission on Asian & Pacific Islander American Affairs (CAPIAA), advises the Governor and Legislature on issues impacting Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities. The Commission works to elevate the

political, economic, and social priorities of AANHPI communities across California. It also advances equity through policy, outreach, and cross-sector partnerships.



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