API EQUALITY-LA
Asian and Pacific Islanders for Marriage Equality

Factsheet:
Asian American Voters & Marriage Equality

Asian American Voters in Los Angeles, California

Asian Americans are a significant and growing part of the electorate.

- In the 2008 Presidential election, Asian American voters turned out at record levels (293,000 in Los Angeles County).
- In 2008, Asian American voters comprised 9% of voters (10% of registered voters) in Los Angeles County.
- Over the past decade, Asian Americans have comprised a growing percentage of the overall electorate.

Currently the majority of Asian American voters belong to one of three ethnic groups.

- The largest groups of Asian American voters in Los Angeles County are Chinese, Filipino and Korean. In Los Angeles County, they comprised 67% of Asian American voters in 2008.

A sizeable proportion of Asian American voters are limited English speaking and need translated materials.

- Overall, 31% of Asian American voters in Los Angeles County were limited English proficient (LEP).
- However, LEP rates vary significantly amongst ethnic groups. For example, nearly 60% of Korean American and 50% of Vietnamese American voters experience difficulty with English.

Asian Americans and Marriage Equality

Proposition 8 narrowly passed in November 2008, among voters generally and Asian American voters specifically.

- Voters overall voted 52 to 48% in favor of Prop 8, which constitutionally banned marriage between same-sex partners. Asian American voters in Los Angeles County favored Prop 8 by a similar margin (54 to 46%).

All voters have become more accepting of marriage equality over time, but Asian American voters have shifted dramatically on this issue.

- In the March 2000 election, California voters passed Proposition 22, a ballot initiative to statutorily prohibit California from recognizing marriage between same-sex partners. APALC's 2000 exit poll showed that Asian American voters favored Prop 22 by a wide margin (68 to 32%). Voters overall supported Prop 22 by a smaller margin of 59 to 41%.
- In the eight years between Props 22 and 8, the gulf between voters who support and oppose marriage equality shrank significantly, from an 18-point difference (59 vs. 41%) in 2000 to a 4-point margin (52 vs. 48%) in 2008.
- But during the same span of time, the change in Asian American voters was even more remarkable – Asian Americans tumbled from a 36-point margin (68 vs. 32%) in 2000 to an 8-point difference (54 vs. 46%) in 2008.

Key factors influencing how Asian Americans voted on Prop 8 included age, religiosity and fluency in English – ethnicity and race were not determinative.

- Final data from APALC's 2008 exit poll shows that for Asian Americans, like other racial and ethnic groups, age and religiosity are determining factors in voting on Prop 8, with younger voters and those who "never" attend religious services much more likely to oppose Prop 8. In addition, the survey shows that level of English proficiency is also critical, with fluent English speakers much more likely to vote against Prop 8.
- **BY AGE** – Overall, Asian Americans between the ages of 18 to 34 voted significantly against Prop 8 (74 to 26%). Older voters (65+) were much more likely to support Prop 8, with approximately two-thirds to three-fourths of older Asian Americans voting "Yes."
- **BY ENGLISH PROFICIENCY** – Overall, Asian Americans who were fluent in English opposed Prop 8 (57% opposed) whereas few of those who were limited English speaking opposed Prop 8 (23% opposed).
- **BY RELIGIOSITY** – Probably the strongest indicator of Proposition 8 support or opposition is religiosity. APALC's 2008 exit poll found that Asian American voters were overwhelmingly more likely to oppose Prop 8 if they "never" attended a church, temple, or mosque (72%) than if they "regularly" attended (22%). For those that "sometimes" attended, a majority (57%) opposed Prop 8.

Sources: Asian Pacific American Legal Center, *Exit Poll Data for March 2000 California Election* (March 2000); Asian Pacific American Legal Center, *Asian Americans at the Ballot Box: The 2008 General Election in Los Angeles County* (2009).