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OAPIA Bi-Weekly Newsletter

News Updates from the DC Mayor's Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs

A Message from the Mayor



VINCENT C. GRAY
MAYOR

Dear Community Members,

My administration's top priority has always been to grow and diversify the District's economy in order to create new high-paying jobs. Recently, I vetoed the Large Retailer Accountability Act of 2013 (LRAA), which the D.C. Council passed earlier this summer. Many people who had urged me to sign this bill seemed to rely on a number of fundamental misunderstandings about what the LRAA actually contained, and what it would actually mean for District residents if it were to become law.

First of all, the LRAA was not a true living-wage bill, because it would raise the minimum wage only for a very small fraction of our city's workers. It would affect only a handful of retailers whose stores are supermarket-sized or larger and whose workforces are not unionized – at best, a very small portion of the District's retailers. Secondly, this bill was also a job-killer, because nearly every large retailer now considering opening a store in the District has already indicated they will not come here or expand here if this bill were to become law, resulting in a projected loss of 4,000 jobs in the first few years alone. In this economy, we simply can't afford to forfeit that many jobs.

One of the most damaging flaws of the LRAA would be its effects on major development projects in the parts of our city that are the most in need of jobs and amenities. If the LRAA were to become law, it would kill economic development in these communities for a generation or longer.

Finally, I am committed to assisting small businesses – including businesses owned by members of the District's Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community – as they grow, develop, and make the District stronger. My Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs is partnering with the District's Department of Small and Local Business Development to promote the upcoming 2013 Business Opportunity Forum for all small businesses.

At the moment, I look forward to working with the Council to pass a reasonable increase in the District's minimum wage for *all* workers and to ensure that we make the right decisions that will allow us to continue creating jobs, attracting retailers, and growing and diversifying our economy for everybody.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vincent C. Gray".

Vincent C. Gray

OAPIA in the Community

OAPIA Meets with the Shanghai Chinese Overseas Friendship Association



OAPIA Director Soohyun "Julie" Koo (center) with the Shanghai Chinese Overseas Friendship Association.

On September 11, 2013, OAPIA Director Soohyun "Julie" Koo met with Chinese officials from the Shanghai Chinese Overseas Friendship Association to present an overview of OAPIA services and programs that support the diversity of culture within the District of Columbia.

OAPIA Attends the Inaugural Celebration of Sikh Gurdwara, DC



Inside the Sikh Gurdwara, DC.

OAPIA Director Koo attended the inaugural celebration of Sikh Gurdwara DC on September 14, 2013. Sikh Gurdwara, DC is a place of worship, reflection and community gathering. It is open seven days a week to people of all faiths, race or ethnicity. The Sikh Gurdwara, DC had been closed since 2011, yet was re-established in May of 2013.

For more information about Sikh Gurdwara, DC, please visit [here](#).

OAPIA and the DC Health Benefit Exchange Authority (HBX) Host the AAPI Leadership Summit on DC Health Link



Attendees at the AAPI leadership summit on DC Health Link.

On September 18, 2013, OAPIA, in partnership with the DC Health Benefit Exchange Authority (HBX), hosted an AAPI Leadership Summit on DC Health Link, DC's new health insurance marketplace. Twenty-five community leaders from community organizations and business associations attended the event.

The event aimed to provide facts on: 1) the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and the benefits it brings, as well as the individual's responsibility within the act; and 2) quality, affordable health insurance plans for individuals, families and small businesses offered through DC Health Link. Individuals can start signing up for insurance beginning on October 1, 2013. Changes to Medicaid were also presented. The event was also an opportunity for AAPI community leaders to learn about DC Health Link and the changes being made regarding health insurance, so that they in turn can help distribute the information to their networks. Speakers from the DC Health Benefit Exchange Authority, the DC Department of Healthcare Finance, and the DC Department of Human Services were in attendance.

OAPIA Attends Grand Opening of Pro Nails Salon & Spa



OAPIA staff (far left and second from the right) with the owner of Pro Nails Salon & Spa (far right).

OAPIA attended the grand opening event of Pro Nails Salon & Spa on September 20, 2013. Pro Nails Salon & Spa is a Vietnamese American owned business located in the Columbia Heights neighborhood.

OAPIA Hosts Fourth Brown Bag Cultural Lunch Dialogue on the Indian American Community



The brown bag cultural lunch dialogue session on the Indian American community.

On September 24, 2013, the Mayor's Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (OAPIA) hosted the fourth and final Brown Bag Cultural Lunch Dialogue for District of Columbia government employees. The final session covered the Indian American community, and was held at the Old Council Chambers in the Judiciary Square building. The purpose of these dialogues is to increase the awareness of District employees of various ethnic communities within the broader Asian American and Pacific Islander community. The speakers for the Indian American dialogue were Masum Momaya, Museum Curator, HomeSpun: Smithsonian Indian American Heritage Project, and Ankur Desai, owner of a DC small business.

Spotlight: Cultural Tourism DC



Cultural Tourism DC is an independent coalition of more than 250 culture, heritage, and community-based member organizations. Cultural Tourism DC and its members develop, deliver, and celebrate experiences that are authentic to Washington.

Cultural Tourism DC shows both visitors and residents real experiences that reveal the soul of the city and that enhance Washington's numerous historic, cultural, and natural assets. It strives to increase awareness of local cultural institutions among residents and visitors, such as DC's [Chinatown](#), which dates back to the 1880s. Cultural Tourism DC brings together cultural institutions throughout the city and promotes pride and appreciation for the city's arts and vibrant heritage.

For more information about Cultural Tourism DC, please visit [here](#).

September is National Preparedness Month



September 2013 marks the tenth annual National Preparedness Month, sponsored by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in the US Department of Homeland Security. National Preparedness Month is an annual campaign to encourage Americans to take steps to prepare for emergencies in their homes, schools, organizations, businesses and communities. Emergencies may include natural disasters, mass casualties, biological and chemical threats, radiation emergencies, and terrorist attacks.

During September, emergency preparedness will focus on:

- Home and family preparedness, including pets, older Americans, and individuals with disabilities and special needs
- Back-to-school
- Business preparedness
- Preparación en Español

For more information about emergency preparedness, please visit:

- [DC Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency](#)
- [72 Hours DC](#)
- [Serve DC's Community Emergency Response Team \(CERT\) Training](#)
- [Ready.gov](#)

DC Mayor's Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs

The DC Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs usually convenes monthly meetings to discuss current issues affecting the DC AAPI community.

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday, September 25, 2013 at 6:30pm in Conference Room 1114 at One Judiciary Square, 441 4th Street NW, Washington, DC 20001.

All commission meetings are open to the public. If you have any questions about the commission or its meetings, please contact oapia@dc.gov.

oapia@dc.gov | www.apia.dc.gov | Phone: (202) 727-3120 | Fax: (202) 727-9655



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