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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**The Hutchison-Pence Immigration Plan Will Harm the Asian American Community**

**Washington, DC** – The Asian American Justice Center (AAJC) condemns the immigration proposal recently announced by Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX) and Rep. Mike Pence (R-IN). “The Hutchison-Pence plan represents the worst of all possible worlds for the Asian American community,” observed Karen K. Narasaki, President and Executive Director of AAJC.

First, the Hutchison-Pence plan would limit participation in its guest worker program to citizens of NAFTA and CAFTA-DR countries, thereby excluding workers from Asia and other parts of the world the opportunity to participate in what would be the primary way to come work in the U.S. In particular, it would leave the 1.5 million undocumented immigrants from Asia unable to regularize their status in the U.S., unlike their Latino counterparts.

“The Hutchison-Pence plan would take the country back to the days of the Chinese Exclusion Act and National Origins Quota, when the U.S. excluded immigrants from Asia and other parts of the world purely based on their national origin,” stated J. Traci Hong, Director of AAJC’s Immigration Program.

Second, the Hutchison-Pence plan does nothing to reduce tremendous backlogs in the family immigration system. This is particularly problematic for the Asian American community because Asian countries suffer from some of the longest family immigration backlogs in the world. For example, a U.S. citizen parent who is petitioning for his or her son or daughter from the Philippines must wait approximately 14 years before he or she can legally immigrate to the U.S.

“The Hutchison-Pence plan ignores the plight of hundreds of thousands of U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents who have been waiting for years, sometimes even decades, in order to be reunited with their close family members who are waiting to immigrate to the U.S. legally,” Narasaki observed.

Finally, Hutchison-Pence proposal appears to incorporate much of H.R. 4437 - the harsh, anti-immigrant bill passed by the House of Representatives in December 2005 - into their plan. An unprecedented number of [local and national Asian American groups united to oppose H.R. 4437](#) because of the adverse impact that this bill would have on all segments of our community, including U.S. citizens and legal immigrants. The passage of this bill galvanized Asian, Latino, and other immigrant communities and brought millions of people around the country to protest.

“We urge the Asian American community to reach out to Sen. Hutchison and Rep. Pence, as well as their members of Congress, to explain the impact that this plan would have on our community,” stated Hong.

The following is the contact information for Sen. Hutchison and Rep. Pence.

Sen. Kay Baily Hutchison  
284 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-4304  
202-224-5922 (Office)  
202-224-0776 (FAX)  
<http://hutchison.senate.gov/e-mail.htm>

Rep. Mike Pence  
426 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
(202) 225-3021 office  
(202) 225-3382 fax  
<http://www.house.gov/formpence/IMA/contact.htm>

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*The Asian American Justice Center ([www.advancingequality.org](http://www.advancingequality.org)), formerly known as NAPALC, is a national organization dedicated to defending and advancing the civil and human rights of Asian Americans. It works closely with three affiliates – the Asian American Institute of Chicago ([www.aaichicago.org](http://www.aaichicago.org)), the Asian Law Caucus ([www.asianlawcaucus.org](http://www.asianlawcaucus.org)) in San Francisco, and the Asian Pacific American Legal Center ([www.apalc.org](http://www.apalc.org)) in Los Angeles – and 102 community partners in 47 cities and 24 states in the country.*