

DAVE JONES

Seeking Position for: California Insurance Commissioner

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1. If elected, what are your top priorities during your term? What would you like to accomplish and how would you go about doing so? Please be specific.

As Insurance Commissioner, I want to protect consumers and businesses from unfair and abusive practices of the insurance industry. These abusive practices include “medical rescissions”, and the use of discretionary clauses in insurance contracts that vest sole discretion in the insurer to deny disability insurance, regardless of the disability of the policyholder. I have been a strong consumer advocate throughout my career and I am the only candidate with a 100% voting record with the Consumer Federation of California. I want to use the office to implement and improve health insurance reform and to advocate for and build a coalition for single payer healthcare reform. I have authored legislation to directly regulate the rates of health insurers. In 2009, I authored and obtained passage of legislation banning price discrimination against women in the individual health insurance market. I will continue to fight to reform health insurance, including the elimination of junk insurance and establishing out of pocket caps on health insurance. I also intend to use the office, as I have my prior offices, to support working families to organize collectively for economic and social justice.

2. How have you in the past and how will you in the future use your position to expand the presence and influence of Asian Pacific Americans in public policy and politics?

I have consistently used my office to expand the presence and influence of Asian Pacific Americans.

As a City Councilmember, I developed strong and supportive working relationships with each of the Asian Pacific American communities in the City of Sacramento, with their leadership and with the community based organizations serving each of these communities. I listened and learned about each community and worked with them to attain their identified goals and objectives. For example, I assisted the Chinese of Indochina Friendship Association with permitting and code issues related to their religious temple and I assisted grocery store and market owners in this community with various issues that they faced in interacting with city officials. I wrote grants, provided office space, lobbied for additional public resources, and otherwise assisted the Mien and Hmong communities. At the request of the Vietnamese community I introduced and obtained passage of a resolution identifying the yellow flag with three red strips as the flag recognized by the City of Sacramento as the official flag of the Vietnamese community. I also worked with leaders on their effort to identify a location for a community center for the Vietnamese community. I worked closely with the Chinese American community on the restoration of the Ping Yuen public housing project in downtown Sacramento and made sure that former occupants displaced during renovations had a right of return. I supported and worked with the Chinese American community on the effort to restore the historic town of Locke and to make sure that displaced Chinese and Chinese Americans had a right to re-purchase properties that they were deprived of or prevented from owning due to state laws preventing Chinese Americans from property ownership. I have supported the Japanese American communities efforts to educate and inform about the internment of Japanese Americans from Sacramento during World War II. I have supported the work of the Asian Pacific Resource Center in Sacramento, Lao Family Services,

and My Sisters House, which is a domestic shelter for APA women and children. I attended and sent representatives to CAPITOL, which is the umbrella group of APA organizations in the County of Sacramento and worked with its leadership on innumerable projects. I have also worked closely with the leadership of APAPA. I was successful in getting the city to appropriate substantial infrastructure funding to improve the streets, sidewalks, landscaping and other elements of the major APA business corridor in Sacramento.

As an Assemblymember, I have not only continued this close working relationship with the APA communities in my district, but have also continued to sponsor legislation that supports the community. For example, I have authored legislation and am again authoring legislation that would provide interpreters in our civil courts. Over 7 million Californians do not speak English as their first language. They are not entitled to an interpreter in our civil courts and often are denied justice because they cannot fully understand the court and the court does not fully understand them. I authored resolutions to bring attention to the plight of the Hmong in Laos and Thailand. I worked with the Hmong community to assist them in organizing rallies at the Capital and lobbying efforts to educate legislators about the history of the Hmong and their continued mistreatment in Laos and forced return from Thailand to Laos. When Vietnamese democracy protesters were imprisoned in Vietnam, I authored resolutions and a letter from Legislators to the Government of Vietnam demanding their release and I lobbied the White House and Department of State to intervene. I have supported the efforts of JACL to fight for civil rights.

In each of these offices, I have hired members of the APA community, I have appointed members of the APA community to positions of responsibility on boards and commissions, I have supported their appointment by other appointing officials, and I have supported APA candidates running for office at the local, state and federal levels. I have also built coalitions to accomplish policy objectives and have routinely included APA organizations and communities.

There are far more examples of my support for the APA community than time permit me to discuss.

As Insurance Commissioner, I will continue my close relationship with APA communities and will use the office to work with them to advance their goals and objectives. I will continue to hire and appoint members of the APA community to leadership and other positions. I will continue to support APA members as they seek elected and appointed office. I will push insurance companies to hire members of the community and to serve the community.

3. What have you done that demonstrates your commitment to and effectiveness in promoting Asian Pacific American interests in the following areas (and if you have not contributed in these areas, please discuss any area(s) in which you have made a contribution):

• Education

There is no question that good schools require adequate funding and the fact that California now ranks near the bottom in the nation for per pupil funding tells us that we are nowhere near a level that is acceptable.

I am strong supporter of Proposition 98 to fully fund our public schools. I am also a strong supporter of funding our colleges and institutions of higher education, and ensuring that student fees and tuition are not subject to huge increases as we have seen this year.

Access to a college is also critically important. Since my election to the California State Assembly in 2004, I have led the effort in the Sacramento region to educate and encourage young people and their parents to apply for financial aid for college and vocational education. I have recruited high school students in local high schools to be peer leaders in this effort, and have assisted them in organizing financial aid workshops in their schools.

I have organized over 40 financial aid workshops in my district in and outside of schools. I recruited and trained volunteers and financial aid officers to help students and their parents fill out financial aid application forms. Over 2,500 students in the Sacramento area have been served at my financial aid workshops. We have undertaken targeted outreach to the APA communities, and have had interpreters and APA community volunteers assist APA student and their families at these workshops.

• ***Health Care***

I strongly support single payer health care and am a co-author of SB 810 (Leno) and prior bills on this issue. I plan to use the Insurance Commissioner's Office to help build the coalition and movement for single payer. The reason for my position is simple. Single payer has been demonstrated to work in all other industrialized nations in the world and it best provides universal, affordable and accessible health care.

I have also led the effort to regulate health insurance rates, the way we do auto, property and casualty insurance under Proposition 103, which has saved Californians tens of billions of dollars. I introduced AB 2578 to do just that. As Chair of the Assembly Health Committee, I also held a hearing to investigate the rate increases announced by Anthem Blue Cross on individual policyholders of up to 39%. Until we regulate health insurance rates, we will continue to see skyrocketing premiums as insurers put profits over patients.

As the Chair of the Health Committee, I worked to draw attention to health disparities faced by the APA communities. I authored a resolution directing the state health departments to address these disparities.

• ***Civil Rights***

I have consistently supported APA organizations and communities work in the area of civil rights. For example, I have supported the efforts of the Japanese American community to educate and make sure that we never forget the injustice of the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. When the home of a Chinese American City Councilmember was firebombed, I worked with community leaders to condemn hate violence and prejudice. As I discussed above, I am continuing efforts to require that interpreters be made available in our civil courts. I have consistently voted on legislation designed to protect the civil rights of all communities, including the APA community. I have supported the hiring and appointment of APA community members.

- ***Business***

As noted above, as a City Councilmember and State Assemblymember, I have assisted businesses owned by members of the APA community and APA business districts. For example, I brought millions of dollars in street, curb, gutter, sidewalk, landscaping and other improvements to the major APA business district. When a Chinese-American grocery store was rumored to be the source of a SARs outbreak in Sacramento, I went to the store and purchased and ate produce there and held a press conference with public health officials to deny these rumors and to reassure the public that it was safe to shop there, which saved the owners business. I have worked closely with APA business owners in assisting them with their interactions with public officials on a host of issues.

As Insurance Commissioner, I will work to protect businesses from unfair and abusive practices of the insurance industry. In order for California to prosper, we must ensure that businesses can succeed without having to pay astronomical insurance rates.