

## **KAMALA D. HARRIS**

Seeking Position for: California Attorney General

[www.kamalaharris.org](http://www.kamalaharris.org)

***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.***

I am running for California Attorney General to bring new ideas and a career prosecutor's perspective to strengthen California's justice system. I've spent decades in the trenches as a courtroom prosecutor, and I can tell you from the frontlines, we need tough new ideas to fundamentally reform our prison system and shut the revolving door that recycles criminal in and out of our neighborhoods. We need an Attorney General who will be a champion for distressed homeowners, families whose neighborhoods are under siege, and for those yearning for a cleaner environment. We need to bring predatory lenders, polluters, and people who perpetrate financial frauds to justice. And we need to vigorously enforce California's civil rights laws to ensure that all Californians have a meaningful opportunity to live, work and worship freely and without fear of discrimination. To meet these challenges, we need innovation and new ideas. I have worked my entire career for this kind of change, and I believe that the winds of change are blowing right here in California.

***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?***

Since my election as the first South Asian District Attorney in San Francisco's history in 2003, my office has forged a strong relationship with the Asian Pacific American community. The office has made a concerted effort to reach monolingual victims of crimes by increasing the number of employees who are fluent in Asian languages in the District Attorney's office. These new hires have assisted me in establishing regular office hours in neighborhoods throughout San Francisco, including Chinatown/North Beach and the Sunset District. In addition, to maintain regular discussion with all San Francisco neighborhoods, assistant district attorneys have been assigned to each district. These liaisons attend regular meetings in their neighborhoods, reporting on our cases and programs and addressing community safety concerns.

The APA community, both in California and nationwide, is already playing an invaluable role in my campaign for Attorney General. Our APA for Kamala committee, which includes Secretary Norman Mineta and Lisa Ling, among many others, is actively leading both grassroots organizing and community outreach as well as fundraising/event planning throughout the state. I hope that my campaign's continued partnership with the community both statewide and across the country, will pay great dividends in terms of spreading the word about my candidacy and bringing more Asian Americans into this campaign as a community effort.

While I hope to share with the APA community my vision, I know that it must be a two-way

conversation; I will listen to Asian Pacific Americans across the state and country and create an open dialogue about how best the California Attorney General can improve and protect the lives of the community. A long-lasting relationship based on this mutual support will be critical through the course of this campaign and beyond.

***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) to education, health care, civil rights, and/or business.***

As District Attorney, I've placed a particular emphasis on the problem of elder abuse in the Chinese community. Elder abuse is one of the fastest growing crimes in our community. Nearly 20% of San Francisco's population is elderly, and many are dependent adults. Financial elder abuse is also rising fast, as elderly and dependent adult San Franciscans are considered prime targets for schemes. Our Victim Services Division assisted more than 400 APA domestic violence victims in 2004 and 2005 and presented numerous trainings to first-responders, including the Asian Women's Shelter, Golden Mountain Temple, Noburokai, The Filipino Community Center, and Community United Against Violence.

I have been organizing a continuing series of immigrant resource fairs in neighborhoods throughout the city. We have held three immigrant resource fairs over the last three years at Portsmouth Square. The latest fair in April of 2007 was attended by over 500 newcomers who received services and advice on immigration, legal, health, and financial issues. Informational booths staffed by both the District Attorney's office and community service providers dispensed information and services to residents, including information about landlord tenant issues, elder abuse, fair housing, immigration, substance abuse treatment, and consumer fraud.

I created an APA advisory committee that represents a broad spectrum of the APA community, which has already helped to create the District Attorney's Youth Anti-Hate Crime Program. We have trained high school students who now serve as peer educators to address interracial crimes. Having taken workshops on cross-cultural communication and anti-discrimination law, these ambassadors are now empowered to return to their high schools and educate others.

All of these programs have one common theme – to reach out to the Asian Pacific American community in a manner that fosters understanding and cooperation. My office has brought services to the community in their native languages by increasing language capacity, hiring additional Asian language speakers, and visiting victims in the comfort and safety of their homes. I look forward to continuing this relationship with leaders in the Asian Pacific American community to bring increasing interaction with the District Attorney's office and as California's next Attorney General.