

**MINUTES OF THE  
ASIAN-AMERICA PACIFIC ISLANDERS (AAPI) CONSERVATIVE Leadership  
CAUCUS – RNC Panel**

**August 23, 2017**

The meeting began at 2:15 pm, Wednesday, August 23, 2017, in the Presidential B conference room of the Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center in Nashville, TN

The Moderators, Helen Van Etten, Kansas National Committeewoman and Keiko Orrall, Massachusetts National Committeewoman and State Representative introduced themselves. Helen Van Etten then sat as a panelist and Keiko Orrall acted as moderator.

After the pledge and prayer, Keiko Orrall summarized the event, set the meeting's goal as developing ways to influence AAPI voters; and then introduced the panelists:

- Amata Coleman Radewagen, National Committeewoman and US Congressman, American Samoa;
- Shawn Steel, California National Committeeman;
- Jennifer Carnahan, Minnesota Chairwoman;
- Cliff Li, executive director of Asian.GOP.
- (Harmeet Dhillon, California National Committeewoman, has had a FOX Business News appearance scheduled, would join the Panel afterwards).

Amata Coleman Radewagen introduced herself, discussed touring the United States, that there were groups of Pacific Islander voters all over the United States, and gave examples of Samoan voters in various locations in the United States.

Shawn Steel, introduced himself, and described his home of Orange County, California

Jennifer Carnahan introduced herself, noting as party chair she was the face of the party

Cliff Li, introduced himself and ask for ways to influence AAPI communities to influence election results.

Helen Van Etten, introduced herself and stated this was a young organization made up of many cultures with a common conservative ideology. Even though we are not for identity politics, Republican Party should outreach to the AAPI community, show up and develop relationships with the community. We need to identify and promote AAPI Republican candidates in districts with high percentage of AAPI voters.

Keiko Orrall stated that they must emphasize that the GOP is not racist, that there are over 6 million new AAPI voters, and what strategic initiative can be used to make inroads in the AAPI communities.

Amata Coleman Radewagen emphasized fund raising from AAPI groups

Shawn Steele discussed that 14% of California and 15% of Nevada voters are AAPI; that AAPI voters are swing voters, socially conservative, pro-business and that there are generational differences between 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation AAPIs. In key elections AAPI voters can be decisive to the outcome. He used examples from Orange County elections.

Keiko Orrall asked for specific techniques such as using mail cards in different languages.

Jennifer Carnahan said that AAPIs are generally quiet, hard-working, and not always noticed. There are many AAPIs in Minnesota, including Hmong and Laotians, to target. GOP candidates must show up. AAPI are open-minded and not party-aligned. GOP candidates must reach out and develop connectivity with communities. Candidates should speak to groups frequently and meet with business and community leaders. The candidate's message must equate to AAPI values which pre-empt party affiliation

Keiko Orrall stated that she supported a strategy of meeting with AAPI community leaders and paying attention to internal AAPI community communications.

Peter Goldberg, Alaska National Committeeman, suggested candidates call AAPI communities and ask what they want for their future, their hopes, and their dreams.

Amata Coleman Radewagen concurred, saying she had visited Alaska and there are many Samoans in Alaska and that Samoan was the second most spoken language in the Anchorage schools.

Beth Campbell suggested Republicans cultivate friendships and attend citizenship swearing-in ceremonies.

Peter Goldberg, Alaska National Committeeman, suggested Republicans reach out to AAPI groups even before they become citizens.

Shirlene Ostrov, Hawaii Chair, stated that one of the largest voting blocks in Hawaii are Filipinos, but are hard to organize for the GOP. Organized outreach is best, their values align conservative, but they are swing voters and tend to swing Democrat.

Harmeet Dhillon, California National Committeewoman, arrived, joined the panel, and urged inclusion and outreach to AAPI groups.

By Webcam, the political director of the Gillespie for Virginia Governor campaign spoke to the group. The campaign is targeting specific AAPI communities in different areas of

Virginia. Koreans, Sikhs, Chinese, Indian, and Filipino. By radio and newspapers in native languages.

Jill Homan, National Committeewoman for DC explained steps she had to take to get a Sikh to host a political event

The Gillespie political director continued: one way to target AAPI communities is to use local legislators and their knowledge to identify local leaders and factions or subgroups within communities.

By webcam, Mayor Allan Fung mayor of Cranston, Rhode Island, spoke about his campaign and success as a republican mayor and his 2014 Governor campaign. He asked for support, especially from national Chinese groups.

Harmeet Dhillon then spoke listing techniques to approach AAPI communities. Pep rallies and other rah-rah events do not work. Intense engagement, outreach, and inviting people works. Key issues for immigrants include education and jobs. Bring immigrants and AAPI members into the political process. Start at county level and get people involved. Politics is often a low-status profession in these cultures. Get these individuals registered, elected as precinct leaders, then low-level elected positions like city council, encouraging them to the next step of involvement.

Keiko Orrall told an anecdote illustrating how a person who wanted to run needed an education on how the process works. A friendly face to help get involved.

Shawn Steel, California National Committeeman, said that AAPI communities can be reached by messengers who are from the community can inspire others to get involved.

By webcam, Jinyoung Lee Englund, a Washington State senate special election candidate, spoke. This is the most expensive special election ever, the balance of power in Washington is at stake, and an AAPI community involvement could tip the balance.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm.