

Summer 2012 U.S. Immigration Alert!

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Dream Come True: Obama Administration Announces Relief for DREAMers! BUT SB 1070 Continue, DREAM Still Long Ways to Go !

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Dreams can Come True, Still Long Ways to Go !

Border Angels

The President just announced that he's going to stop deporting us DREAMers. We've heard promises like this before. Now, we need to make this promise real. Tell President Obama and the world that you will be watching to make sure to not one more DREAMer gets deported.

Through the Right to Dream campaign, through actions in Obama campaign offices, through the cover of TIME magazine, we've demanded action from the President, and we've finally built enough power, in part through the growing Latino vote, to get it.

It would be easy to stop here and celebrate the President's words, but we're 1.2 million deportations past words at this point. We have to send the country a message that while we appreciate the President's announcement today, we won't stop fighting for change until we see it.

That's why I need you to tell the President, Congress and other leaders in this nation that you stand with me, and millions of undocumented people who have become Americans, even if we don't have papers that recognize us as such. If you tell them that you stand with us, you'll be sending a message, and that you'll continue to fight against every deportation. Tell them, now, and tell all your friends to do the same, Presente <http://act.presente.org/sign/withdreamers>

Dream Come True: Obama Administration Announces Relief for DREAMers

Wendy Sefsaf - American Immigration Council

June 15, 2012

Washington.D.C. - The American Immigration Council applauds today's announcement by the Obama Administration that it will grant deferred action to undocumented youth who were brought to the United States as small children and who have been raised and educated in communities around the country. Today's announcement builds on the prosecutorial discretion initiatives already undertaken by the White House and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and was done to ensure that eligible young people do not fall through the cracks, that resources are used wisely, and that humanitarian factors are considered when enforcing our immigration laws.

Deferred action is not permanent legal status or citizenship but rather a way to allow those young people, who have been in this country since they were young, to complete their education, continue their military service or begin their careers. The grant of deferred action will be issued on a case-by-case basis and is renewable every two years.

Deferred action has long been available on an individual basis, but in certain compelling circumstances, past administrations have found it more efficient, predictable, and practical to designate a broader group of individuals who share common characteristics as presumptively eligible for deferred action.

Today's announcement will create the necessary space to allow Congress to craft a more permanent solution that will extend legal status to these young people who are American in all but their country of birth.

According to DHS, deferred action will be offered to young people between the ages of 15-30 who came to the U.S. before the age of 16 and have been in the country for at least five years, have no criminal history, and are in the country as of today.

The following is a statement from Benjamin Johnson, Executive Director of the American Immigration Council:

"The Administration has acted responsibly and compassionately to a growing humanitarian crisis - thousands of undocumented young people, whose talents and energy are incredibly valuable to this country, languish while Congress refuses to act on the DREAM Act. The memo issued by Secretary Napolitano lays out in clear and compelling language the need for our immigration laws to be enforced in a way that recognizes the impact on the lives of these young people. The Administration has recognized that bipartisan support exists in Congress for addressing this issue and is giving Congress the time to reach a consensus by taking the immediate threat of deportation off the table. Everyone benefits from this plan: the young people whose futures will no longer be on hold, the Members of Congress from both parties who are interested in developing real solutions, and the public who deserve a more meaningful conversation on immigration. To be clear, a permanent solution must be found that allows these young people to become full citizens. But until Congress acts, the deferred action program offers the breathing room needed to ensure that no more young lives are jeopardized through senseless deportations."

Civil Rights Coalition's Case Against SB 1070 and Other Racial Profiling Laws Will Continue

**Adela de la Torre - National Immigration Law Center
Monday, June 25, 2012**

WASHINGTON – The Supreme Court today issued a decision regarding Arizona's racial profiling law, SB 1070. In *Arizona v. United States*, the Court determined that three of the four provisions currently blocked by the courts are preempted by federal law. The Court reinstated the law's "show me your papers" provision for the time being, but left open the possibility that the provision could still be found unconstitutional on preemption or other grounds in the future.

The decision will not immediately go into effect in Arizona. A separate case filed by a civil rights coalition, *Friendly House v. Whiting*, will continue. That case includes additional legal claims that were not addressed by the Supreme Court, including arguments that the law will result in unreasonable search and seizure in violation of the Fourth Amendment, and that it discriminates on the basis of race, ethnicity, and national origin in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment.

"The Supreme Court rightly affirmed that these anti-immigrant laws violate the constitution and our fundamental values. However, upholding the racial profiling provision is a grave error that will undoubtedly lead to civil rights violations, and places the Supreme Court on the wrong side of justice," said Marielena Hincapié, executive director of the National Immigration Law Center, co-lead counsel for the plaintiffs in *Friendly House v. Whiting*. "This decision should serve as a call to mobilize, organize, and advocate against divisive legislation like SB 1070 in Arizona and in any state."

"Today's decision should not have reinstated Arizona's 'show me your papers' requirement, which invites illegal detentions and racial profiling," said Omar Jadwat, a senior attorney with the ACLU Immigrants' Rights Project and co-lead counsel on the case. "But the Supreme Court properly rejected Arizona's claim to broad authority in the immigration area and made clear that the 'show me your papers' provision may still be enjoined on other grounds in the future. The tide has already turned against laws like Arizona's, because states recognize that the laws are incompatible with basic American values, are bad for the economy, and undermine and distract our police officers, and this decision will add to that momentum."

"Today's decision shreds the foundation of SB 1070 and its copycats around the county by affirming the federal authority in immigration regulation," stated Victor Viramontes, MALDEF National Senior Counsel. He added, "The majority identified serious ambiguities and potential constitutional flaws in the 'show me your papers' provision, which will result in further legal proceedings, but erred in not concluding that the law should be blocked immediately. As a result, we must prevent any racial profiling and unconstitutional arrests from Arizona's misguided law."

"It will be impossible to enforce this law without engaging in racial profiling," said ACLU of Arizona Executive Director Alessandra Soler. "Every police department in the state will now be forced to divert limited resources to stopping and

questioning people about whether their papers are in order. This will not only threaten all Arizonans' public safety, but it will inevitably leave communities highly exposed to lawsuits brought on by victims of these discriminatory practices."

"We are pleased that the U.S. Supreme Court reaffirmed the longstanding view that the federal government has the ultimate authority on immigration," said Jessica Chia, staff attorney at the Asian American Justice Center (AAJC) and counsel in the Friendly House litigation. "However, the Court's decision to uphold racial profiling is deeply troubling, and we have grave concerns about how this provision will be implemented, what constitutes 'reasonable suspicion' and how officers will be able to enforce this provision without discriminating individuals based on appearance or speech."

"Our client Jim Shee's experiences show that Arizona's law can harm citizens and noncitizens alike, and allows local law enforcement to unfairly target individuals from communities of color. It is now more important than ever that we stand in solidarity to fully dismantle this fundamentally discriminatory legislation," said Laboni Hoq, litigation director at the Asian Pacific American Legal Center (APALC).

In 2011, five states — Alabama, Georgia, Indiana, South Carolina and Utah — enacted similar state immigration enforcement laws. Federal courts have blocked most of the key provisions of these laws, and those injunctions will not immediately be affected by today's decision. No state passed a copycat law in 2012, and a growing number of states have realized these laws lead to civil rights abuses for immigrants and citizens, harm businesses, and conflict with fundamental American values of fairness and equality.

"Today's unfortunate Supreme Court decision on the Department of Justice's narrow challenge does not alter our view that SB 1070 violates cherished civil rights and should be struck down in its entirety. It is worth noting the sections targeting day laborers, not challenged by the Dept. of Justice, remain blocked by federal court order because they violate bedrock First Amendment rights," said Chris Newman, general counsel for the National Day Laborer Organizing Network. "Arizona's war of attrition against the immigrant community is a war of attrition against basic Constitutional values, and we remain confident the Constitution will ultimately prevail in court and in the court of public opinion."

The civil rights coalition includes the ACLU, NILC, MALDEF, NDLON, and the ACLU of Arizona, as well as APALC and AAJC, both members of the Asian American Center for Advancing Justice.

6/28: NY court upholds lawyer (Lynn Stewart)'s 10-year prison sentence

Associated Press

NEW YORK - A federal appeals court has upheld a harsher sentence for a civil rights lawyer convicted in a terrorism case.

The court says it was fair to boost Lynne Stewart's sentence to 10 years in prison from the just over two years she had faced before.

The 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Manhattan said Thursday that it disagreed with Stewart's claim that her sentence was "shockingly high." It is accusing the now-disbarred lawyer of exhibiting a "stark inability to understand the seriousness of her crimes."

The appeals court says Stewart placed lives in danger when she allowed a blind Egyptian sheik serving a life sentence for terrorism crimes to communicate with followers. She was convicted in 2005 of conspiracy and providing material support to terrorists.

USA's Prison Industrial Complex Moves South of the Border

Nasim Chatha Alliance For Global Justice

The United States today uses an extensive and unprecedented form of imprisonment and policing as social control of its most marginalized communities. It is a unique culture of incarceration: no other country locks up their population to the same degree that we do, nor has so perfected imprisonment as a tool of innocuously perpetuating racial division. (Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*)

Led in large part by William R. Brownfield, the Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, the US is aiding Latin American countries to build "a new penitentiary culture"; a complete package to becoming more completely "American", involving new prisons, new imprisonment style, and new community policing strategies. The US has long been heavy-handed in its involvement with Latin America, where for decades it has backed right-wing militaries to

protect its financial interests and fight alleged threats of communism, and also created “development” programs for exactly the same reasons. This militarized relationship was maintained until the present through military bases, partnerships and free trade agreements. In the past several years, US military influence is seeping anew into Mexico and Central America, this time nominally in order to combat drug violence and reduce drug trade.

Within the past five years, the U.S. has been implementing programs directed at building or reshaping prisons and increasing community policing in Mexico, Honduras and the rest of Central America. The Merida initiative, which began programs in 2007, is the main agreement that funnels billions of U.S. dollars into Mexican President Felipe Calderón’s drug war. The plan mostly sends Mexican police military equipment bought from private U.S. contractors, but also has an important imprisonment aspect: the plan, as William R. Brownfield notes, is “multi-pronged”.

“In one of our more innovative and successful programs,” he says, “the State Department is working with the State Corrections Training Academies in Colorado and New Mexico, and the U.S. Federal Bureau of Prisons, to provide training and technical assistance for all levels of corrections staff” in Mexico, says Brownfield. This accompanies an increase in the number of Mexico’s federal prisons from six to twenty two, which Brownfield likes: these “will greatly relieve the state facilities of severe overcrowding”, although he says nothing of the massive increase in police activity, domestic militarization and warfare that will increase convictions. His gratuitous approval in an article actually about the programs of Plan Mérida suggests that the U.S. exerted heavy sway in the creation of these new prisons. In a very similar plan enacted in Colombia ten years earlier, where the U.S. did explicitly build new prisons, the increased capacity lead up to an exponential increase in arrests and incarceration.

Another of Plan Mérida’s successful programs in Mexico, William Brownfield states, is a massive criminal database that the U.S. has helped build called Plataforma Mexico, a component of which is supervision of emergency hotlines and centers for victims of crimes. According to La Jornada, the Mexican government awarded 29 sweetheart deals to private contractors to build the database. The paper also calls the database “failed and onerous.” The Mexican government organization ASF (Senior Auditor of the Federation) says that Plataforma Mexico does not provide follow up information on any of the emergency calls or police station visits, which makes it useless for protecting citizens.

Plan Mérida has also helped Mexico develop a voice and fingerprint tracking system, which in combination with Plataforma Mexico suggests that the U.S.’s “security” style of branding certain people as permanent criminals is moving south of the border. Another component of Plan Mérida is sending investigation equipment and training police officers to use it, especially around Mexico’s southern border. These largely illegal road and highway checkpoints are operated by a confusion of the military, police or both. They nominally seize drugs but also serve to track the movements of autonomous or indigenous groups and suppress political dissent.

The prison projects do not stop at Mexico, but continue south into the entirety of Central America under the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI). CARSI is “a new security initiative sponsored by the United States, which is pressuring the weak states of Central American to assign their local armed forces to the fight against drug trafficking and organized crime,” notes André Maltais, a Canadian journalist. Training prison guards is a central component of the program’s security management in all the countries involved. Central America is an important region geographically for the U.S., especially for its rich natural resources. “While the [leftist guerrillas of the ‘80s] have disappeared, drug trafficking and violence, in addition to being profitable businesses for the U.S. banks and security industry, are now excellent pretexts for a permanent Pentagon military presence in the region.”

William R. Brownfield visited Honduras in March this year, where he committed U.S. money to another “multi-pronged” program. The U.S. has been increasing military and police financing for the illegal government of President Porfirio Lobo since the military coup in 2009. This support has funded Honduras’s ongoing state repression against democracy activists. As the U.S. embassy report illuminates in bullet points, the new prison program will operate through CARSI. The plan includes anti-gang programs, a model precinct program which will be launched at a police precinct in Tegucigalpa, and a model prison program. The most “innovative” parts in this plan are the ones which involve previously civilian institutions: the U.S. ambassador Lisa Kubiske said “He’s going to show that... we have good relations as much with the people who apply the law as with the military side.” Brownfield aims to follow the program of either Mano Dura or Super Mano Dura, both of which are anti-gang initiatives which failed in El Salvador, according to La Prensa. Says Sonja Wolf writing for Sustainable Security, Mano Dura resulted in massive gang incarceration, and “confinement in special prisons allowed gang members to strengthen group cohesion and structure”. (<http://hondurasculturepolitics.blogspot.mx/2012/03/mano-dura-again.html>)

CARSI is very similar to Plan Colombia, enacted more than a decade earlier, in that it increases US military presence in the plan’s respective region; so similar that the Colombian Armed Forces provide training to Central American police and military officers through CARSI. Colombia has been in a state of turmoil for most of the past century due to an intense ongoing political, social and armed conflict, culminating in the 47 year old conflict between the Colombian government and paramilitaries with the Marxist-Leninist insurgent group, FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia). The

broader armed conflict also includes insurgent groups such as the ELN (Ejército de Liberación Nacional), as well as private armies of narco-traffickers.

In 2000 their Minister of Justice signed “The Program for the Improvement of the Colombian Prison System” together with the US Ambassador to Colombia, Anne Patterson. The agreement and ensuing “improvements” went largely unnoticed and unreported. However, USAID and the US Federal Bureau of Prisons funded and advised a project to construct and/or redesign as many as 16 medium and maximum security prisons, leading to a 40% increase in prisoner capacity.

The U.S.’s overall involvement in Colombia was justified as part of the international War on Drugs. Nominally, the new prisons (an initial 4.5 million US dollars were spent) that resulted from this program were built to lessen overcrowded conditions at the previous maximum and medium security institutions. However, more prisons have not apparently improved conditions but instead have been filled; arrests have outpaced the newly built holding space. The prison program may have motivated a surge of arrests, or at the very least were positioned to receive the resulting prisoners. In addition, the new prisons are more militarized; greater blurring the lines between the civilian police forces and the military.

According to the Colombian Coalition Against Torture, “It is of serious concern that Colombia’s prisons are increasingly militarized. Indeed, the majority of prisons visited ...are under the command of high-ranking members of the military and police forces, either retired or active, and lack the skills necessary to manage a prison.” At least five of the sixteen prisons were run by graduates of the notorious School of the Americas. The program in the end was no improvement, but instead an expansion of the role of the prison in social control.

Colombia’s notorious new prison, La Tramacua, with its filthy and violent conditions, has held scores of Colombia’s thousands of political prisoners and is known for using torture: currently, the Colombian prison system holds 9,500 political prisoners, the great majority being held for nonviolent resistance and political opposition. The prison population has grown by over 57% since 2000 while the population has grown only by 14%. In addition, the strange phrase “New Penitentiary Culture” used by the Colombia prison program, so captivating when it leads one to reflect on the nature of the culture we send abroad, was also used by the Dominican Republic’s attorney general Radhames Jimenez Peña in an announcement that six new prisons were being built: “We are beginning a new penitentiary culture in the Dominican Republic,” he said. Likely there is U.S. or Brownfield influence there as well, seeping quietly into the phrases that make it into press releases.

The pattern set in Colombia twelve years ago is significant to understanding how the newer security and prison agreements will develop in Mexico and Central America. The most obvious reason to expect similar results is William Brownfield, who has been central to the development of all of these country’s prison programs; while the Colombia program was initiated, he was ambassador to next-door neighbor Venezuela, and then inherited the prison program when he became ambassador to Colombia in 2007. We can expect more arrests and less true security in communities after the new prison programs are implemented. Moreover, the prison program in Colombia also accompanied the U.S.’s international War on Drugs, a clumsy practice when decreasing drug flow is concerned, but excellent for maintaining military presence in an area and for niche US business interests like military suppliers. In Colombia the militarized and expanded prison system was an important tool for stifling dissent; the newer prison plans in Mexico and Central America will likely serve this purpose as well. We can expect many more arrests in the affected countries.

Yet we can look beyond even Colombia into the origins of these new prison programs: the original model for all is of course of the United States. Our home-grown Prison Industrial Complex has its roots in right-wing political campaigns of being “tough on crime” and warring against drugs. Drug sales persist freely, but ghettoized black and brown communities, victims of the decline of industry, are under constant police surveillance. In every city exists a population of men with felony records who have no redemption in the eyes of society and much less access to employment. This is the nature of our “penitentiary culture” which we have now begun to export. Our prison industrial complex perpetuates the spirit of Jim Crow legislation, the system created to psychologically privilege poor whites in order to kill interracial class-based political alliances against the rich business class (Alexander). It thus suppresses broad political dissent, and also holds very explicit political prisoners, notably many Black Panthers, Indigenous activists, and Puerto Ricans. The “War on Drugs” declared by the Reagan administration which led to current incarceration practices has never been contained within the US’s borders; all the internal violence is mirrored, and in some ways amplified and distorted, in much of the rest of the Americas.

What will happen in Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean as a result of the new prison programs is uncertain. The native imprisonment cultures in these countries are currently no match to the divisiveness, scope and intensity of U.S.A., but are likely heading in that direction. U.S. prisons are part of the “multi-pronged” policing weapon against communities wherever they are. The building of new prisons, and the implementation of our noxious penitentiary culture, should be opposed both at home and south of the border.

PEW Research: The Rise of Asian Americans

pewsocialtrends.org Asian Americans are the highest-income, best-educated and fastest-growing racial group in the United States. They are more satisfied than the general public with their lives, finances and the direction of the country, and they place more value than other Americans do on marriage, parenthood, hard work and career success, according to a comprehensive new nationwide survey by the Pew Research Center.

A century ago, most Asian Americans were low-skilled, low-wage laborers crowded into ethnic enclaves and targets of official discrimination. Today they are the most likely of any major racial or ethnic group in America to live in mixed neighborhoods and to marry across racial lines. When newly minted medical school graduate Priscilla Chan married Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg last month, she joined the 37% of all recent Asian-American brides who wed a non-Asian groom.¹

These milestones of economic success and social assimilation have come to a group that is still majority immigrant. Nearly three-quarters (74%) of Asian-American adults were born abroad; of these, about half say they speak English very well and half say they don't.

Asians recently passed Hispanics as the largest group of new immigrants to the United States. The educational credentials of these recent arrivals are striking. More than six-in-ten (61%) adults ages 25 to 64 who have come from Asia in recent years have at least a bachelor's degree. This is double the share among recent non-Asian arrivals, and almost surely makes the recent Asian arrivals the most highly educated cohort of immigrants in U.S. history.

Compared with the educational attainment of the population in their country of origin, recent Asian immigrants also stand out as a select group. For example, about 27% of adults ages 25 to 64 in South Korea and 25% in Japan have a bachelor's degree or more.² In contrast, nearly 70% of comparably aged recent immigrants from these two countries have at least a bachelor's degree.

Recent Asian immigrants are also about three times as likely as recent immigrants from other parts of the world to receive their green cards—or permanent resident status—on the basis of employer rather than family sponsorship (though family reunification remains the most common legal gateway to the U.S. for Asian immigrants, as it is for all immigrants).

The modern immigration wave from Asia is nearly a half century old and has pushed the total population of Asian Americans—foreign born and U.S. born, adults and children—to a record 18.2 million in 2011, or 5.8% of the total U.S. population, up from less than 1% in 1965.³ By comparison, non-Hispanic whites are 197.5 million and 63.3%, Hispanics 52.0 million and 16.7% and non-Hispanic blacks 38.3 million and 12.3%.

Asian Americans trace their roots to any of dozens of countries in the Far East, Southeast Asia and the Indian subcontinent. Each country of origin subgroup has its own unique history, culture, language, religious beliefs, economic and demographic traits, social and political values, and pathways into America.

But despite often sizable subgroup differences, Asian Americans are distinctive as a whole, especially when compared with all U.S. adults, whom they exceed not just in the share with a college degree (49% vs. 28%), but also in median annual household income (\$66,000 versus \$49,800) and median household wealth (\$83,500 vs. \$68,529).⁴

They are noteworthy in other ways, too. According to the Pew Research Center survey of a nationally representative sample of 3,511 Asian Americans, conducted by telephone from Jan. 3 to March 27, 2012, in English and seven Asian languages, they are more satisfied than the general public with their lives overall (82% vs. 75%), their personal finances (51% vs. 35%) and the general direction of the country (43% vs. 21%).

They also stand out for their strong emphasis on family. More than half (54%) say that having a successful marriage is one of the most important things in life; just 34% of all American adults agree. Two-thirds of Asian-American adults (67%) say that being a good parent is one of the most important things in life; just 50% of all adults agree.

Their living arrangements align with these values. They are more likely than all American adults to be married (59% vs. 51%); their newborns are less likely than all U.S. newborns to have an unmarried mother (16% vs. 41%); and their children are more likely than all U.S. children to be raised in a household with two married parents (80% vs. 63%).

They are more likely than the general public to live in multi-generational family households. Some 28% live with at least two adult generations under the same roof, twice the share of whites and slightly more than the share of blacks and Hispanics who live in such households. U.S. Asians also have a strong sense of filial respect; about two-thirds say parents should have a lot or some influence in choosing one's profession (66%) and spouse (61%).

Asian Americans have a pervasive belief in the rewards of hard work. Nearly seven-in-ten (69%) say people can get ahead if they are willing to work hard, a view shared by a somewhat smaller share of the American public as a whole (58%). And fully 93% of Asian Americans describe members of their country of origin group as “very hardworking”; just 57% say the same about Americans as a whole.

By their own lights, Asian Americans sometimes go overboard in stressing hard work. Nearly four-in-ten (39%) say that Asian-American parents from their country of origin subgroup put too much pressure on their children to do well in school. Just 9% say the same about all American parents. On the flip-side of the same coin, about six-in-ten Asian Americans say American parents put too little pressure on their children to succeed in school, while just 9% say the same about Asian-American parents. (The publication last year of “Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother,” a comic memoir about strict parenting by Yale Law Professor Amy Chua, the daughter of immigrants, triggered a spirited debate about cultural differences in parenting norms.)

The immigration wave from Asia has occurred at a time when the largest sending countries have experienced dramatic gains in their standards of living. But few Asian immigrants are looking over their shoulders with regret. Just 12% say that if they had to do it all over again, they would remain in their country of origin. And by lopsided margins, Asian Americans say the U.S. is preferable to their country of origin in such realms as providing economic opportunity, political and religious freedoms, and good conditions for raising children. Respondents rated their country of origin as being superior on just one of seven measures tested in the survey—strength of family ties.

Asians in the U.S. and in Asia: When findings from this survey are compared with recent surveys conducted by the Pew Research Center’s Global Attitudes Project among Asians in major Asian countries, a mixed picture emerges. For example, adults living in China are more satisfied with the way things are going in their country than Chinese Americans are with the way things are going in the United States. By contrast, the publics of India and Japan have a more downbeat view of the way things are going in their countries than their counterpart groups do about the U.S.

Across the board, however, U.S. Asians are more likely than Asians in Asia to say their standard of living is better than that of their parents at a similar stage of life. U.S. Asians also exceed Asians in their belief that hard work leads to success in life. And while many U.S. Asians say that Asian-American parents place too much pressure on their children to do well in school, even more Chinese and Japanese say this about parents in their countries.

Differences among Asian-American Subgroups: The Pew Research Center survey was designed to contain a nationally representative sample of each of the six largest Asian-American groups by country of origin—Chinese Americans, Filipino Americans, Indian Americans, Vietnamese Americans, Korean Americans and Japanese Americans. Together these groups comprise at least 83% of the total Asian population in the U.S.⁵

The basic demographics of these groups are different on many measures. For example, Indian Americans lead all other groups by a significant margin in their levels of income and education. Seven-in-ten Indian-American adults ages 25 and older have a college degree, compared with about half of Americans of Korean, Chinese, Filipino and Japanese ancestry, and about a quarter of Vietnamese Americans.

On the other side of the socio-economic ledger, Americans with Korean, Vietnamese, Chinese and “other U.S. Asian”⁶ origins have a higher poverty rate than does the U.S. general public, while those with Indian, Japanese and Filipino origins have lower rates.

Their geographic settlement patterns also differ. More than seven-in-ten Japanese and two-thirds of Filipinos live in the West, compared with fewer than half of Chinese, Vietnamese and Koreans, and only about a quarter of Indians.

The religious identities of Asian Americans are quite varied. According to the Pew Research survey, about half of Chinese are unaffiliated, most Filipinos are Catholic, about half of Indians are Hindu, most Koreans are Protestant and a plurality of Vietnamese are Buddhist. Among Japanese Americans, no one group is dominant: 38% are Christian, 32% are unaffiliated and 25% are Buddhist. In total, 26% of Asian Americans are unaffiliated, 22% are Protestant (13% evangelical; 9% mainline), 19% are Catholic, 14% are Buddhist, 10% are Hindu, 4% are Muslim and 1% are Sikh. Overall, 39% of Asian Americans say religion is very important in their lives, compared with 58% of the U.S. general public.

There are subgroup differences in social and cultural realms as well. Japanese and Filipino Americans are the most accepting of interracial and intergroup marriage; Koreans, Vietnamese and Indians are less comfortable. Koreans are the most likely to say discrimination against their group is a major problem, and they are the least likely to say that their group gets along very well with other racial and ethnic groups in the U.S. In contrast, Filipinos have the most upbeat view of intergroup relations in the U.S.

The Japanese are the only group that is majority U.S. born (73% of the total population and 68% of adults); all other subgroups are majority foreign born.

Their pathways into the U.S. are different. About half of all Korean and Indian immigrants who received green cards in 2011 got them on the basis of employer sponsorship, compared with about a third of Japanese, a fifth of Chinese, one-in-eight Filipinos and just 1% of Vietnamese. The Vietnamese are the only major subgroup to have come to the U.S. in large numbers as political refugees; the others say they have come mostly for economic, educational and family reasons.

Asian Americans have varying degrees of attachment to relatives in their home countries—likely reflecting differences in the timing and circumstances of their immigration. For example, though they are among the least well-off financially, Vietnamese Americans are among the most likely (58%) to say they have sent money to someone in Vietnam in the past year. About half of Filipinos (52%) also say they sent remittances home in the past year. By contrast, Japanese (12%) and Koreans (16%) are much less likely to have done this.

They have different naturalization rates. Fully three-quarters of the foreign-born Vietnamese are naturalized U.S. citizens, compared with two-thirds of Filipinos, about six-in-ten Chinese and Koreans, half of Indians and only a third of Japanese.

History

Asian immigrants first came to the U.S. in significant numbers more than a century and a half ago—mainly as low-skilled male laborers who mined, farmed and built the railroads. They endured generations of officially sanctioned racial prejudice—including regulations that prohibited the immigration of Asian women; the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which barred all new immigration from China; the Immigration Act of 1917 and the National Origins Act of 1924, which extended the immigration ban to include virtually all of Asia; and the forced relocation and internment of about 120,000 Japanese Americans after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941.

Large-scale immigration from Asia did not take off until the passage of the landmark Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965. Over the decades, this modern wave of immigrants from Asia has increasingly become more skilled and educated. Today, recent arrivals from Asia are nearly twice as likely as those who came three decades ago to have a college degree, and many go into high-paying fields such as science, engineering, medicine and finance. This evolution has been spurred by changes in U.S. immigration policies and labor markets; by political liberalization and economic growth in the sending countries; and by the forces of globalization in an ever-more digitally interconnected world.

These trends have raised the education levels of immigrants of all races in recent years, but Asian immigrants exceed other race and ethnic groups in the share who are either college students or college graduates.

Native Born and Foreign Born

Throughout the long history of immigration waves to the U.S., the typical pattern has been that over time the second generation (i.e., the children of immigrants) surpasses the immigrant generation in key measures of socio-economic well-being and assimilation, such as household income, educational attainment and English fluency.

It is not yet possible to make any full intergenerational accounting of the modern Asian-American immigration wave; the immigrants themselves are still by far the dominant group and the second generation has only recently begun to come into adulthood in significant numbers. (Among all second-generation Asians, the median age is just 17; in other words, about half are still children.)

But on the basis of the evidence so far, this immigrant generation has set a bar of success that will be a challenge for the next generation to surpass. As of now, there is no difference in the share of native- and foreign-born Asian Americans ages 25 and older who have a college degree (49% for each group), and there is only a modest difference in the median annual earnings of full-time workers in each group (\$50,000 for the native born; \$47,000 for the foreign born). The two groups also have similar poverty rates and homeownership rates.

Not surprisingly, when it comes to language fluency, there are significant differences between the native- and foreign-born adults. Only about half (53%) of the foreign born say they speak English very well, compared with 95% of the U.S. born. Family formation patterns are also quite different. The U.S. born are much less likely than the foreign born to be married (35% vs. 67%), a difference largely driven by the fact that they are a much younger group. (Among adults, the median age is 30, versus 44 for the foreign born.)

There are also differences between the native born and foreign born in the share of recent mothers who are unmarried. About three-in-ten (31%) U.S.-born Asian women who had children recently are unmarried, compared with just 10% of all recent foreign-born Asian-American mothers. Among the U.S. population as a whole, about four-in-ten recent American mothers are unmarried. Even as births to single mothers have become more widespread in recent decades, Pew Research surveys find that a sizable majority of Americans believe this growing phenomenon has been bad for society. So in the eyes

of the public, this appears to be a case of “downward assimilation” by second generation and later generations of Asian Americans to an increasingly prevalent—but still frowned upon—U.S. pattern of behavior.⁷

On a more positive note, U.S.-born Asians are more upbeat than the foreign born about their relations with other racial and ethnic groups, and they are more receptive to the growing practice of racial and ethnic intermarriage.

Perceptions of Discrimination

For the most part, today’s Asian Americans do not feel the sting of racial discrimination or the burden of culturally imposed “otherness” that was so much a part of the experience of their predecessors who came in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

About one-in-five Asian Americans say they have personally been treated unfairly in the past year because they are Asian, and one-in-ten say they have been called an offensive name. Older adults are less likely than young and middle-aged adults to report negative personal experience with bias.

Compared with the nation’s two largest minority groups—Hispanics and blacks—Asian Americans appear to be less inclined to view discrimination against their group as a major problem. Just 13% of Asian Americans say it is, while about half (48%) say it is a minor problem, and a third (35%) say it is not a problem.⁸

About six-in-ten say that being Asian American makes no difference when it comes to getting a job or gaining admission to college. Of those who do say it makes a difference, a slightly higher share say that members of their group are helped rather than hurt by their race. Those with less education are more prone than those with more education to say that being an Asian American is an advantage.

Group Relations: Overall, more than eight-in-ten Asian Americans say their group gets along either very or pretty well with whites; roughly seven-in-ten say the same about relations with Hispanics and just over six-in-ten say that about their relations with blacks. Korean Americans stand out for their negative views on their group’s relations with blacks. Fully half say these two groups don’t get along well; while 39% say they get along pretty well and just 4% say they get along very well. In several cities across the country, there has been a history of tension between Koreans and blacks, often arising from friction between Korean shopkeepers and black customers in predominantly black neighborhoods.

About four-in-ten Asian Americans say their circle of friends is dominated by Asians from the same country of origin, while 58% say it is not. Among U.S.-born Asians, however, just 17% say that all or most of their friends are from their same country of origin group.

Asian-American newlyweds are more likely than any other major racial or ethnic group to be intermarried. From 2008 to 2010, 29% of all Asian newlyweds married someone of a different race, compared with 26% of Hispanics, 17% of blacks and 9% of whites. There are notable gender differences. Asian women are twice as likely as Asian men to marry out. Among blacks, the gender pattern runs the other way—men are more than twice as likely as women to marry out. Among whites and Hispanics, there are no differences by gender.

Among Asian-American newlyweds, Japanese have the highest rate of intermarriage and Indians have the lowest. More than half of recent Japanese newlyweds married a non-Asian; among recent Indian newlyweds, just one-in-eight did.

Asian Americans were once highly concentrated into residential enclaves, exemplified by the establishment of “Chinatowns” and other Asian communities in cities across the country. Today, however, Asian Americans are much more likely than any other racial group to live in a racially mixed neighborhood. Just 11% currently live in a census tract in which Asian Americans are a majority.⁹ The comparable figures are 41% for blacks, 43% for Hispanics and 90% for whites. (This comparison should be treated with caution: Each of the other groups is more numerous than Asians, thereby creating larger potential pools for racial enclaves.)

Identity: Despite high levels of residential integration and out-marriage, many Asian Americans continue to feel a degree of cultural separation from other Americans. Not surprisingly, these feelings are highly correlated with nativity and duration of time in the U.S.

Among U.S.-born Asian Americans, about two-thirds (65%) say they feel like “a typical American.” Among immigrants, just 30% say the same, and this figure falls to 22% among immigrants who have arrived since 2000.

The Asian-American label itself doesn’t hold much sway with Asian Americans. Only about one-in-five (19%) say they most often describe themselves as Asian American or Asian. A majority (62%) say they most often describe themselves by their country of origin (e.g., Chinese or Chinese American; Vietnamese or Vietnamese American, and so on), while just 14% say they most often simply call themselves American. Among U.S.-born Asians, the share who most often call themselves American rises to 28%.

In these identity preferences, Asian Americans are similar to Hispanics, the other group that has been driving the modern immigration wave. Hispanics are more likely to identify themselves using their country of origin than to identify as a Hispanic or as an American.¹⁰

Perceptions of Success

About four-in-ten Asian Americans (43%) say Asian Americans are more successful than other racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S. A similar share of Asian Americans (45%) say they are about as successful, and just 5% say they are less successful.

Native-born and foreign-born Asian Americans have similar views about their groups' success relative to other minorities. Recent immigrants, however, tend to be somewhat less upbeat in these assessments than are immigrants who came before 2000: 36% of the former versus 48% of the latter say their group has been more successful than other minority groups in the U.S.

Members of the nation's other large immigrant group—Hispanics—are less than half as likely as Asian Americans to say their group is more successful than other racial and ethnic minorities, and they are four times as likely to say they are less successful.¹¹

On a personal level, Asian Americans are more satisfied than the general public with their financial situations and their standard of living. When measured against how well their parents were doing at the same stage of life, about half (49%) say they are doing much better, and a quarter say they are doing somewhat better. By contrast, only about a third of all Americans say they are doing much better than their parents at a similar stage of life.

There are only minor differences between Asian Americans and the general public in their expectations about the upward mobility of their children. Some 31% of Asian Americans believe that when their children are the age they are now, their children will have a much better standard of living, 22% say somewhat better, 19% say about the same, and 19% say somewhat or much worse.

On this measure, there are sizable differences among U.S. Asian subgroups. Nearly half of Vietnamese Americans (48%) say they expect their children eventually to have a much better standard of living than they themselves have now. About a third of Koreans and Indians feel this way, as do one-in-four Chinese and Filipinos, and just one-in-five Japanese. Overall, the foreign born are more optimistic than the native born about their children's future standard of living relative to their own at the present.

Political and Social Attitudes: Compared with the general public, Asian Americans are more likely to support an activist government and less likely to identify as Republicans. Half are Democrats or lean Democratic, while only 28% identify with or lean toward the GOP. Among all American adults, 49% fall in the Democratic camp and 39% identify with or lean toward the Republican Party. Indian Americans are the most heavily Democratic Asian subgroup (65%), while Filipino Americans and Vietnamese Americans are the most evenly split between the two parties.

President Obama gets higher ratings from Asian Americans than from the general public —54% approve of the way he is handling his job as president, compared with 44% of the general public. In 2008, Asian-American voters supported Obama over Republican John McCain by 62% to 35%, according to Election Day exit polls.¹²

On balance, Asian Americans prefer a big government that provides more services (55%) over a smaller government than provides fewer services (36%). In contrast, the general public prefers a smaller government over a bigger government, by 52% to 39%.

While they differ on the role of government, Asian Americans are close to the public in their opinions about two key social issues. By a ratio of 53% to 35%, Asian Americans say homosexuality should be accepted by society rather than discouraged. And on the issue of abortion, 54% of Asian Americans say it should be legal in all or most cases, while 37% say it should be illegal.

Vincent Chin: Murder shows dangers of ethnic scapegoating in hard times

Fu Qiang Global Times (China) June 27, 2012

This year is the 30th anniversary of Vincent Chin's murder case. My 2009 documentary *Vincent Who?* details the 1982 murder of Chin, a 27-year-old Chinese American beaten to death in a racist killing by two white auto workers because they thought he was Japanese and blamed him for the loss of their jobs.

This week we have organized a couple of events in memory of Chin all through the US. On the anniversary of his death, videos, movie-screenings, art-making projects and panels are presented to the US public in different cities and remind them of the tragedy of Chin. This year, we also got many cities, including Los Angeles, San Francisco and Detroit, to join in the campaign and we call it Vincent's Remembrance Day.

We also got a resolution in the US Congress and in front of the White House, to issue a statement which appeals the whole nation to protect the civil rights of ethnic minorities in the US. We hope the memory of this tragedy can be used to unify Asian-Americans, as well as to help reconcile white groups with the idea that ethnic minorities have nothing to do with hard economic times against a backdrop of globalization.

The people getting involved in these activities are quite diverse. Many of them are Asian Americans including Indian-Americans, Korean-Americans, Japanese-Americans and Chinese-Americans. But there are white people as well.

Many white people are aware that the murder of Vincent Chin is not only important for the ethnic minority groups in the US, but also works as a reminder for the white groups. This reminder is especially precious for them under the circumstances of the global economic depression.

The time when Chin was murdered was quite unusual in US history. Many Japanese car makers and their products entered the US domestic market in the early 1980s. Lots of US auto workers lost their jobs because of the decline of domestic auto manufacturing. In part this was because of competition from the Japanese auto industry, which was why Japanese became scapegoats.

In the US, when the economic environment deteriorates and employment and benefits decline, racial conflicts rise. Ethnic minority groups are more likely to become victims of the wretched economic environment.

Generally, white Americans are sensitive to globalization and economic competition from other nations. They tend to feel that other groups in the US seize their working opportunities. At the moment, they feel that cheap products from other nations have stolen their jobs, houses and pensions. Asian-Americans are less sensitive to globalization and we even welcome it. We have seen opportunities in this historic trend.

It is important for the white groups to gradually accept competition from the global market. The US played a leading role in the global market. But the white groups need to adjust their psychology to a more diversified global market.

As time goes by, the US may be faced with more and more challenges from other nations. Perhaps it is time for the white groups to put aside their elitist poses and accept these changes.

And for Asian-Americans, although we have different histories, different cultural patterns and different backgrounds, it is necessary for us to form a unified community.

This notion is what Vincent Chin's case has brought to us. To accept and adjust to difference and variety in society is an American social tradition and should be valued by the white groups, especially in the context of globalization.

New York: AALDEF Announces Free Legal Clinics for Undocumented Youth on Obama's New Immigration Policy

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On June 15, 2012, the Obama administration announced that it would grant "deferred action" status to undocumented youth who qualify for administrative relief. The Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF) will hold a series of legal clinics to provide free legal advice and representation to young people who qualify under this directive. These clinics will help to support the work of AALDEF's undocumented Asian American youth group.

The first legal clinic will be at AALDEF's office on Thursday, July 12, 2012 from 3pm – 7pm. Additional clinics will be scheduled in upcoming weeks.

"This new directive is a good first step," said Bethany Li, staff attorney at AALDEF. "But for this policy to make any difference, undocumented Asian American youth need to understand its effect and continue to be at the forefront in asserting their rights. These legal clinics combined with the youth group will help to push the discussion around our immigration policy forward."

AALDEF is also providing resources for undocumented youth on its website, including an in-depth set of FAQs on deferred action eligibility, which explains who qualifies for deferred action, and how this policy affects removal proceedings and encounters with Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The legal clinics are only open to youth who potentially qualify for deferred action status and are seeking legal advice. They are not open to the press.

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