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# 2021 Annual Report

A report to the Legislature as requested by Minn. Stat. § 15.0145, subd. 8



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# Welcome Letter from the 2021 Chair



Dear Community,

We hoped that 2021 would be a year of respite, celebration, and recovery after the trauma of 2020. For some of us, it was. For others, it was anything but.

The pages in this report tell the story of a community at the forefront of the future—for better and for worse. As we saw progress made in battling the COVID-19 pandemic with vaccines and policies, we also saw terrible losses in our communities. As we saw justice served for public safety transgressions, we experienced yet more transgressions. While many of our businesses, schools, and hospitals turned a corner

and achieved some predictability, they are still too often just getting by day to day.

As we have every year since 1985, the Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans (the Council) rode the waves of these successes and setbacks along with our communities. When you celebrated, we celebrated. When you mourned, we mourned. Together in 2021, we lived the fear and anxiety of hate crimes and incidents against Asian Americans that took place in Atlanta, Indianapolis, and even close to home. Together we rode the wave of recognition as St. Paul's Sunisa Lee took home Olympic gold and catapulted Minnesota's Hmong American community to worldwide awareness.

Though many of us dream of a day when a pandemic no longer rules the way we live, learn, and do business, we all witnessed as COVID-19 remained unsettlingly relevant throughout the year. As concerning as this reality is, it is a tragedy that unites us as Minnesotans—and as Americans. Despite the ideological fissures that have cut across our populace, we've seen first-hand that COVID isn't picking us based on race, ethnicity, class, or political party. And America, as a country of immigrants and refugees, cannot afford to be divided. Our enemy is an external thing. Together, we can and must find unity and a path forward.

I close my introduction to this report with regret that it will be my last. In accordance with Minn. Stat. § 15.0145, subd. 3(c), I have reached my term limit as a member of the Council's Board. In my eight years with the Council—and my fourth year as Chair—I have seen the Council grow in outstanding ways to meet the needs of Minnesota's communities, and have witnessed a heavy moral responsibility enacted by the Council. It is telling that the communities this council serves are so diverse in their representations and needs that even belonging to the Asian Pacific Minnesotan (APM) community does not guarantee one the gift of understanding. It is this complexity, this nuance, that has driven me to grow alongside the Council for eight years. And it is this complexity and nuance that awaits the future leadership of the Council.

Respectfully,

David Maeda





# LEGISLATIVE ACHIEVEMENTS

2021 was this biennium’s budgeting year, and one unlike any other. After a crash course in changing benchmarks and a move to virtual meetings in 2020, the 2021 legislative session held fewer surprises. However, continued use of virtual and hybrid technology by policymakers limited the Council’s and the public’s ability to observe, meet, strategize, and testify in person.

While Minnesotans continue to adjust to a new normal, ongoing developments require constant adaptation. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Legislature met every month—in session or special sessions—from February 2020 through the end of the Governor’s emergency order on July 1, 2021. Furthermore, this year’s session came on the heels of the 2020 election which shaped the Legislature and continued Minnesota’s legacy as the only state in the nation with a divided legislature.

Despite the unknowns, uncertainty, and occasional chaos, the Council worked night and day to track, communicate, and inform state policy as it came out of the 2021 session.

## **Omnibus Employment and Economic Development (“Jobs”) Bill – H.F. 1 (Rep. Noor)/S.F. 9 (Sen. Pratt)**

This collection of legislation touched on—and funded— many arenas of state civic life, from assisting businesses in post-COVID-19 recovery to subsidizing childcare to funding broadband internet in greater Minnesota.

Its purview included ongoing direct appropriations for Hmong American Partnership and the Hmong Chamber of Commerce to provide trainings and workshops on best business practices to Asian business owners and entrepreneurs. These direct appropriations were supported by the Council as the Legislature largely shifted to a competitive grant process, as they supplement known and trusted community organizations through dedicated funding.

The bill further provided additional funding for the Southeast Asian Equity Grants Program, to be allotted through competitive grants. The Council continues to believe that targeted

funding such as this is one of the best ways to ensure that vulnerable communities receive the needed support to overcome barriers as they seek to achieve economic stability.

Finally, the funding provided to support businesses as the economy recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic included improved measures to ensure that funds are distributed equitably. These measures included specific funds for cultural malls and their tenants, dedicated funds for the smallest businesses and businesses owned by minorities, women, veterans, or other targeted groups, and a lottery selection process, which has helped make relief funds accessible despite technical challenges.

The Council tracked these key initiatives that eventually became provisions within the omnibus bill through every step of the process, including submitting letters, testifying, working directly with legislators, and providing advocacy on behalf of our APM communities.



**Increase Teachers of Color Act – E-12: H.F. 217 (Rep. Hassan)/S.F. 447 (Sen. Abeler) & Higher Education: H.F. 1041 (Rep. Keeler)/S.F. 797 (Sen. Abeler)**

After several years of efforts, the state passed significant new funding as proposed in the Increase Teachers of Color Act (ITCA). The Council, in tandem with the other state ethnic councils and the Coalition to Increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers, has been a major sponsor and proponent of this bill since 2017. The Council provided extensive testimony in support of lowering barriers that may prevent students of color and indigenous students from pursuing careers as educators in Minnesota. We believe this approach will improve educational outcomes for students in several ways, including increasing the number of teachers across the state as well as increasing the number of teachers within this pool who resemble our increasingly diverse student body. Including the new funding for ITCA, Minnesota increased its E-12 budget by \$554 million, the largest increase in educational funding in 15 years.

**India Day Designation – H.F. 2535 (Rep. Klevorn)/S.F. 2511 (Sen. Pratt)**

After a successful advocacy effort by community leaders and Council staff, including individual meetings with legislators and public testimonies before committees, this bill, designating August 15 as India Day, was incorporated into the Omnibus State Government Finance and Policy bill during the special session (H.F. 12,

Rep. Nelson/S.F. 2, Sen. Kiffmeyer) and was signed into law by Governor Walz. The bill commemorates and celebrates the diverse cultures, heritages, traditions, and contributions of Minnesotans of Indian ancestry and directs the Governor to issue a proclamation honoring the observance of India Day each year.

**Anti-Asian Hate Crimes**

After a year of disconcertingly unabashed hate crimes leveraged at Asian American communities across the state and nation, concerns over anti-Asian hate reached a tipping point across our state. As local and national incidents increased, the Council convened multiple meetings with community members and leaders to give voice to their growing concerns. The Council supported H.F. 1691, a bill that would have expanded the range of crimes identified as bias to include acts of property vandalism and held multiple meetings with passionate community members to provide updates and to empower them to utilize resources and tools against anti-Asian hate and bias. Legislators, including Minnesota Asian Pacific (MAP) Caucus Chair Representative Tou Xiong, Senator Fong Hawj, and the Council's own legislative Board member Senator Eric Pratt also took to the floors of the House and Senate to speak to this issue.

**Looking Ahead**

The 2021 fiscal year, wrapping up at the same time as the year's sole special session, resulted in

state revenue that was higher than expected by means of a strong tax revenue as well as federal financial support from the American Rescue Plan. This windfall may allow for some unfinished business to be taken up in 2022. In particular, the Council is hopeful this may include building on the results of the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention pilot program at the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) — an initiative the Council spearheaded in 2019.

After the session, the Council took a new approach to communicating the results of legislative work to the community, compiling attractive and easy-to-understand infographics breaking results down into several categories based on the Council's 2021 legislative priorities, and sharing these via GovDelivery emails. These infographics served as a timely reminder of the remaining work at the Legislature during the run-up to the 2022 session.

Looking ahead, the 2022 session, a bonding year, has the potential to hold fewer surprises and less trauma than the past two sessions. We've seen firsthand how exhausting constant vigilance is to policymakers and residents alike. The Council is prepared once again to meet its statutory charge and ensure that our communities have an active, enthusiastic advocate monitoring developments and acting on their behalf in ways that may influence their lives, businesses, families, safety, and educations.



## Research Achievements

When all hands are devoted to keeping a ship afloat in stormy seas, they cannot also be mending the sails. Throughout 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic, combined with community public safety concerns, forced the Council to pivot and focus resources on actively assisting state government and affected communities in order to keep as many Minnesotans healthy as possible. For that reason, our community and legislative involvement took a front seat while some research goals took a necessary backseat.

That said, in 2021 we saw many of our prior research initiatives help guide policy and safety measures. In particular, the work of the **API Complete Count Committee (API CCC)**, begun in 2019 and sunsetted in 2020 following the conclusion of the U.S. Census, has assisted legislators as they prepare for a year of political redistricting. The Council brought the work of the API CCC before the House Legislative Redistricting Committee and the Judicial Panel and activated members of the CCC to participate through public testimony and in identifying communities of interest. Advocating for the recognition of our historically marginalized constituencies in the redistricting process specifically speaks to the Council's statutory charge.

The **Legislative Priorities Survey** conducted in early 2020 helped identify the APM community's top priorities and allowed the Council to uplift targeted legislative efforts during the past year. In particular, the Council was able to prioritize mobilization, testimony, and advocacy surrounding the top five issues participants identified as their highest priorities: access to healthcare, equity and social justice, the achievement gap, immigration rights, and affordable housing.

Finally, the ongoing **Emerging Communities Report** has helped inform decision-makers at crucial times during the pandemic. When vaccine distribution was new to the state, the Council was able to draw upon this existing research to guide development of online resources and data-keeping practices. The Council will continue to partner with and advocate for the communities identified in the report as new findings from this ongoing research project become available.

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



The Council invested heavily in community this year as we adjusted to the ever-changing landscape of health, policy, and safety developments. From hosting community forums on education and small businesses, to addressing anti-Asian hate, to facilitating vaccine clinics, the Council worked both alone and in partnership with policymakers and community organizations to ensure our constituents had the greatest chance to survive and thrive.

**Coffee with the Council**—These bi-weekly virtual open-house sessions took place throughout the legislative session and brought together community members and subject matter experts to discuss relevant legislative topics as well as any issues concerning attendees.

**Conversation with the MAP Caucus**—The Council facilitated a virtual discussion between members of the community and the MAP Caucus. The MAP Caucus, the first of its kind in the nation, is comprised entirely of legislators of Asian Pacific heritage. It was established to provide a voice within the Legislature that directly reflects our APM communities and to increase these communities' representation in state government. This conversation touched on APM experiences during COVID, Caucus members' individual and collective legislative priorities, and a high-level overview of key decisions the Legislature planned to take up during the legislative session.

**Business support amidst civil unrest**—This April, the Council called an emergency virtual meeting with APM restaurant and business owners to ensure understanding of municipal curfews and public safety measures after the death of Daunte Wright in Brooklyn Center. Following feedback





from business owners, a few months later the Council also facilitated a meeting between these business owners and Sen. Dibble and Reps. Hornstein and Long regarding how businesses have been impacted by recent periods of civil unrest.

**Department of Justice investigation**—In April, U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland announced the opening of a “pattern or practice” investigation into the City of Minneapolis and the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD). An important piece of this investigation involves engagement with community members and groups to learn about their experiences with MPD. The Council was asked by the Department of Justice (DOJ) to connect the investigating team with APMs whose work or community experience may equip them with information relevant to the investigation. The Council supported the DOJ’s community outreach efforts within the context of recent instances of crimes against Asian Americans which have either affected APMs or caused them to change their practices or behaviors.

**Vaccine clinics**—Beginning in the spring, the Council supported efforts to bring vaccination opportunities to communities with high rates of APM individuals, low-income families, and communities disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 virus. In doing so, the Council facilitated relationships between community-based organizations, MDH, and county public health departments in order to organize vaccine clinics within community spaces. The presence of Council staff and community leaders helped reinforce the importance of vaccination among members of many vulnerable communities.

**Community roundtables on Afghan resettlement**—The federal Operation Allies Welcome program opened the door to resettlement of Afghans who fled the country following the final withdrawal of U.S. troops. The evacuated Afghan families, many of whom supported the U.S. during its 20-year war in Afghanistan, were shepherded through a multistage vetting and relocation process before reaching their final destinations. In response to the unique circumstances of the arrival of Afghan families to Minnesota and the growing need for community support in the resettlement response, the Council organized weekly community roundtables. The roundtables bring together stakeholders to share community assets and best practices for the newest members of our Asian Pacific Minnesotan community. The partnerships forged between community members, resettlement agencies, community organizations and leaders, and state government during the community roundtables have procured a great number of resources for these resettled individuals.

**Community events**—One year into the pandemic, and with the dramatic increase in Asian hate crimes and incidents across the country, community events have taken on a heightened sense of importance in building community and solidarity. In addition to the above initiatives, and in addition to ongoing hurdles presented by the pandemic and public safety concerns, the Council supported more than two dozen community events in roles ranging from outreach to financial and logistical support. Some of this year’s events included:

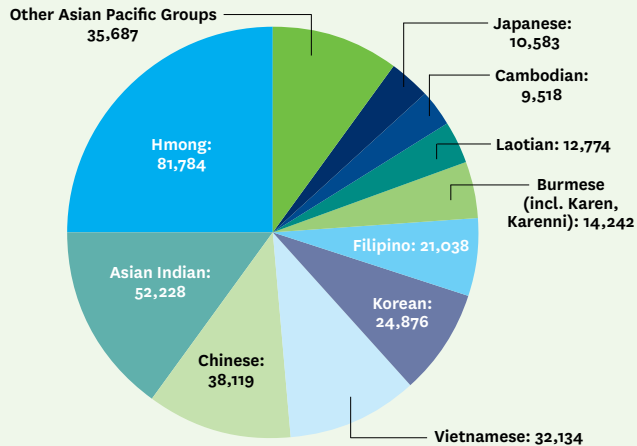
- **Stop Asian Hate Rally**—The Council supported this effort of the Thai Cultural Council of Minnesota and Asian Media Access to

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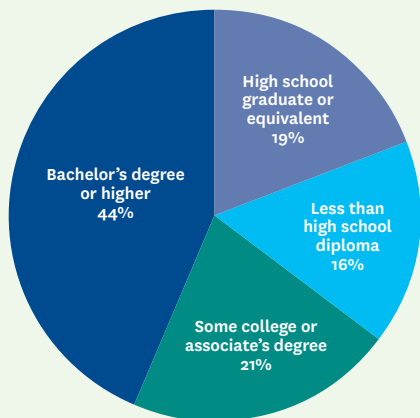


# Total Population of Asian Pacific Minnesotans: 324,984<sup>1\*</sup>

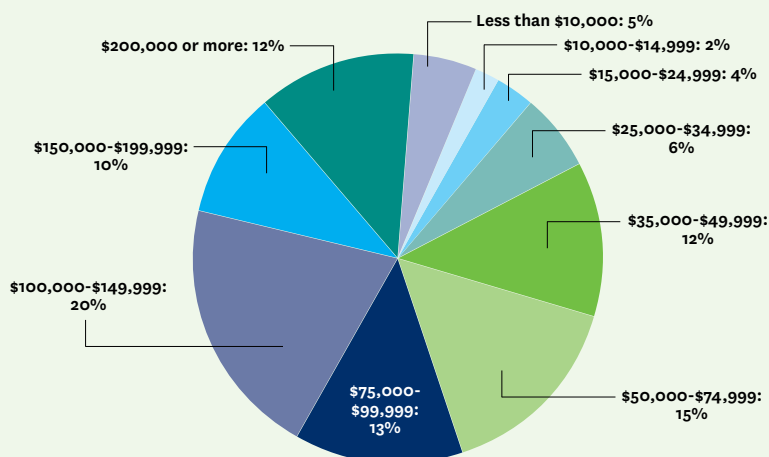
## I. POPULATION, BY COMMUNITY.<sup>1</sup>



## II. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, ADULTS OVER AGE 25.<sup>1</sup>



## III. HOUSEHOLD INCOME, IN 2019 DOLLARS.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey  
 \*US Census Bureau has delayed their data release to March 2022

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

call attention to crimes against Asians such as the shootings that transpired in Atlanta and Indianapolis.

• **Legislative visits with Hmong Village**—Following several instances of violence targeting Asians both locally and nationwide, and the struggles of small businesses amidst the pandemic, the Council facilitated a tour of the Hmong Village shopping center by Senate Majority Leader Gazelka and Sen. Pratt, Jobs and Economic Development Chair. Following this tour, the Council also facilitated a meeting between Hmong Village business owners and Rep. Nash, a member of the Council's legislative Board.

• **Royal Thai Consulate of Chicago**—At the request of the mayor of St. Louis Park and the Minnesota Thai Cultural Council, the Council attended several meetings with local elected officials and Thai Minnesotans to help welcome the Consul General of the Royal Thai Consulate and to inform attendees of the status and needs of Minnesota's Thai community. The Council also sponsored the Thai new year celebration with Deputy Consul General Khun Siripon Tantipanyatthep.

• **His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama's 86th Birthday**—Council staff attended this esteemed event in Isanti, home of the new Tibetan American Foundation of Minnesotan (TAFM) Center, along with Sen. Pratt and Sen. Koran of Isanti. Council staff facilitated communication between these legislators and TAFM leadership and assisted legislators with understanding and engaging with community members during the event.

• **Celebrating Sunisa Lee**—Following the conclusion of the delayed 2020 Olympics, the Council assisted with elements of a welcome party in honor of gold medalist Sunisa Lee. The Council worked with state legislators, members of Minnesota's congressional delegation, and other government officials at this event. Council legislative Board members Rep. Nash and Sen. Pratt were chief authors of House and Senate resolutions honoring Ms. Lee.

• **33rd Anniversary Celebration of Wat Munisotaram/Temple Minnesota**—The Council helped celebrate the anniversary of the founding of the largest Cambodian Buddhist temple in North America located in Hampton, Minnesota. Council staff worked with U.S. Sen. Klobuchar's office and helped coordinate the presence of other government officials on the grounds of the Temple during this celebration.

• **Launch of the National Lao-Hmong Memorial**—At the invitation of the National Lao-Hmong Foundation, the Council's executive director delivered the keynote address at this Westminster, CO event. Hundreds of community leaders, including Hmong Secret Guerilla Unit veterans and local and state elected officials, gathered to celebrate the inauguration of the national memorial honoring the lives of the 35,000 Hmong Secret Guerilla Unit members, the Royal Lao Army, and the 727 American service men who made the ultimate sacrifice during the Secret War in Laos. This memorial will be the only one of its kind in the nation.





November 1, 2012

**Dear Community Members and Friends,**

*This is my last communication with you all in my formal capacity as the executive director of the Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans. It has been my pleasure to have worked with and get to know you all.*

*When I started more than 10 years ago in this position, I was a wide-eyed dreamer with little work and or life experience. The good or bad thing about this job is that it allows learning and growth at a fast pace. It's either you learn and grow or are pushed out of the way. Laws and policies get made with or without you. I had to learn right away that dreams are good, but dreams need action to become real. They need support and nourishment. They need encouragement. They even need challenges and adversaries. And sometimes, they need to fail and be reborn, reshaped, and or sharpened. Above all I learned dreams need people.*

**-Kao Ly Ilean Her**

**Executive director of the Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans—1997 to 2012**



As anyone who has led a movement knows, it's impossible to serve the greater good without making significant sacrifices in one's personal life. It's also impossible to serve without pursuing what may feel like an insurmountable dream of achieving a legacy of improvement; of bettering our communities for the next generations who follow us.

Kao Ly Ilean Her (Ilean) embodied this reality of sacrifice. She dreamed of a community that better served its people—people like her.

Born in Longcheng, Laos, Ilean's father was involved with the allied U.S. forces in the Secret War—a war that took place away from the video cameras and newspaper journalists, away from the knowledge of average Americans for several years, but which fundamentally shaped and irrevocably changed the lives of those living in the mountains of Laos.

Ilean and her family fled Southeast Asia and landed in Clinton, Iowa in 1976 through the sponsorship of Zion Lutheran Church. In 1985, Ilean and her family moved to St. Paul. She graduated from Hamline

University with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, and in 1994 received her Juris Doctor from the University of Minnesota Law School. She was the first Hmong woman admitted to the Minnesota Bar Association.

Ilean stepped into the role of director of the Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans in 1997—a position she would hold for 15 years. She served during tumultuous times when the Hmong were relatively new to American and Minnesotan awareness, and the actions of a few were being made into examples of an entire populace. Before, during, and after her time serving the Council, she fought for gender equity—especially where it concerned the marriage of young girls. This passion inspired her to co-found Hnub Tsiab, or Hmong Women Achieving Together.

Not one to sit idle—or tolerate deferred dreams—Ilean encapsulated her time on Earth with movement. She co-founded the community organization Allies for Mentoring Asian Youth and the now-renowned Dragon Festival held at Phalen Lake in St. Paul. In 2006, she received the Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights Award.



# Remembering Kao Ly Ilean Her

March 13, 1969

~

May 13, 2021







In 2012, Ilean made the difficult decision to step down from her role at the Council. For the next several years, she served as program director at the Hmong Elders Center. She also launched the theatrical “Letters to our Grandchildren” to help tell and preserve the stories of these revered members of the community.

Then, in 2019, Ilean became the first Hmong American appointed to the University of Minnesota Board of Regents. She brought with her a mission to pursue affordability, accessibility, and an equitable, quality education.

In May of 2021, Ilean succumbed to the sinister and unfair virus that has taken more than 800,000 Americans as of the printing of this report—the same virus that turned lives and routines upside down, that upended the hard work of business owners, educators, and healthcare workers. It was the same virus that the Council had spent the prior year trying to navigate on behalf of today’s APM communities. Due to a chronic lung disease,

Ilean was not able to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

At the time of her death, Ilean was barreling full-force through life. She was a board member of the Citizens League, Harriet Tubman Women’s Center, Asian Women of Tomorrow, United Hospital, YWCA of Minneapolis, Hmong American Partnership, and Mu Performing Arts. Simultaneously, she served as trustee for the Minneapolis Foundation, the Asian Pacific Endowment of the St. Paul Foundation, and the Women’s Foundation of Minnesota.

But a curriculum vitae can only speak to so much about a person. Beyond her material accomplishments and groundbreaking achievements, Ilean also cared—really, truly cared about her community, colleagues, and family. The depth and breadth of her passion is evidenced by the waves her passing made across the state.

Ilean’s death was so sudden it left us reeling. As this insidious virus does, it took her with no chance to say goodbye—or thank you—

“Throughout her life, Ilean embraced the unknown and seemed to thrive on adversity. When anyone said ‘no,’ she found a way to make allies and a path forward. She knew the strength of partnership and always gave everyone an opportunity to help.



**MESSAGE FROM ILEAN’S FUNERAL PROGRAM**

in the fashion she deserves. For those who knew her personally, life will never be the same without her.

However, we are the ones still here. We are the ones who have an opportunity to catapult her words, her life, and her legacy into the future so they live on well past her short years. The torch is therefore passed to our hands so we may carry it in her honor—and so we may carry on her legacy.

The Council we inherited from Ilean fought for the community we have today and made many strides toward weaving the Asian Pacific diaspora into the fabric of our state. Today, there are many more people standing up for the Council and for APIs across the country. But when she first started, Ilean was one of only a few.

Ilean fought for Minnesotans. In devoting our time and love toward her, we hope to contribute toward a continuum in which her legacy lives long past the day she left us.

May her generous spirit exist in the lives and livelihoods of our hearts and our communities.







1969  
Born in  
Longcheng,  
Laos

1970



Ilean's  
immigration  
photo, 1976



Ilean with Dragon Festival volunteers and  
co-founding board member Brenda Fong



Ilean (center)  
in traditional  
Hmong clothes  
with cousins  
Carolyn Yang  
and Xong Yang

1976  
Arrived in Clinton,  
Iowa sponsored  
by Bill and  
Dorothy Rathje,  
Zion Lutheran  
Church host  
family and Ilean's  
godparents

1980

1983  
Confirmed in the  
Lutheran faith as  
top student of her  
Catechism class

1987  
Graduated Johnson  
Senior High School  
with honors

1985  
Moved to  
St. Paul, MN



Hamline graduation, Ilean (center)  
with grandmother Dia Vue and  
mother Bee Yang Her



University of  
Minnesota  
law school  
graduation,  
L to R: sisters  
Sharon Her,  
Kristen  
Mouanoutoua,  
Ilean Her;  
sister-in-law  
Sye Chang;  
brothers Roger  
Her, James Her







Ilean with nephew Ethan Her on his first day of kindergarten



**1994**  
Graduated University of Minnesota Law School

**1992**  
Graduated Hamline University

**1990**

**1996**  
Became first Hmong woman inducted into the Minnesota State Bar Association  
Clerked at the Minnesota Supreme Court for Justice Esther Tomljanovich and Justice Sandra Gardebring Ogren

**1997**  
Became executive director of the Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans

**1998**  
Co-founded Allies for Mentoring Asian Youth

**2000**

**2003**  
Co-founded Dragon Festival at Phalen Lake in St. Paul, MN

**2003-05**  
Appointed as delegate for Congresswoman Betty McCollum's office for Mayor Kelly's envoy to Laos and co-chaired the Wat Resettlement Group

**2006**  
Received MN Advocates for Human Rights Award  
Founding board member of Hnub Tsaib—Hmong Women Achieving Together

**2010**

**2012**  
Stepped down as executive director of the Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans

**2014**  
As executive director of the Hmong Elders Center, opened the North End location

**2016**  
Co-Founded MaivPAC



The Council's Asian Pacific Youth Council (APYC) retreat dinner with youth staff Souvan, Sandie, Tina, and Elizabeth



Ilean with friends David Muller, Celine Pham, Out George, Ilean, Yis Leng Vang







Ilean fought for Minnesotans. In devoting our time and love toward her, we hope to contribute toward a continuum in which her legacy lives long past the day she left us.

**2019**  
Became first Hmong American appointed to the University of Minnesota Board of Regents

**2021**  
Passed away in St. Paul, MN

**2020**

## Letter from the Executive Director



Dear Community,

When the stories of the people we serve merge with the stories of America and American government, the stars align.

We would not be where we are today without the advocacy and trust of our Board, the Legislature, and the Governor. Their decision to approve a 2.8% operating increase for the Council, even in these difficult times, speaks to their trust in our work and the necessity of this work in guaranteeing a better future for all Minnesotans. It's clear that this work is needed now more than ever.

We also wouldn't be where we are today without the dedicated guidance of our outgoing Board Chair David Maeda. As he mentioned in his welcome letter, he has met the term limits established for state ethnic council Board members. This longevity speaks volumes to Chair Maeda's character, for he served during some of the most difficult years of my tenure as executive director. He understood that at any moment, he could be called to service; he understood that showing weakness was not an option. We are all better because Chair Maeda served. His commitment to justice, judiciousness, and the common good helped guide the Council to its current iteration. For that, we can't thank him enough.

Looking forward, we stand ready to recommit ourselves to building a better, brighter future. In 2022, the Council will continue pursuing the biennial priorities set by the most recent community-led Legislative Priorities Survey. Additionally, the Council will continue our history—and Ilean Her's legacy—of increasing our understanding of violence against APM women and children. We will also carry on our tradition of welcoming those escaping persecution and chaos through our support of newly arrived refugees from Afghanistan.

In this and coming years, the Council foresees local and statewide policies that will require constant vigilance. In addition to the Council's ongoing statutory charges, our vigilance includes policy priorities that have come to light over the past two years—addressing systemic barriers to equity, crimes of hate and bias, and the ability of our systems to continue to meet community needs in a post-pandemic world.

Finally, in the coming year we also look forward to hosting our first leadership dinner since 2018. Amidst the trials and stress of pursuing the greater good, this will be an opportunity to celebrate how far we've come, and to uplift those who have led us to this moment in time.

There is nothing more powerful than the story of America—the notion that you can rise out of the ashes of war, poverty, or persecution and live to tell another story. It's those of us who come after those heroes who are the living memorials. How we pass on their stories is what will differentiate those who wither away with time and those whose spirits live on.

The American story is the story that never ends. It's a constant struggle of overcoming adversity and maintaining some level of faith no matter how difficult one lifetime—or many—can be. In this lifetime and in all lifetimes, let us continue to forge and strengthen our faith in one another—not as a form of charity to one another—but as a testament to our mutual understanding that our fates as Americans are tied together.

Sincerely,

Sia Her



# COUNCIL BOARD MEMBERS

## Minn. Stat. § 15.0145

### Subd. 2. Membership.

- (a) Each council has 15 voting members. Eleven members of each council are public members appointed by the governor. Four members of each council are legislators.
- (b) The governor shall appoint 11 members of each council as follows:
  - (b)(3) the Council on Asian-Pacific

Minnesotans must include one member from each of the five ancestries with the state's highest percentages of Asian-Pacific populations, as determined by the state demographer. The other six members must be broadly representative of the rest of the Asian-Pacific population, with no more than one council member from any one ancestry.

The council must include at least five women. For purposes of this clause, ancestry refers to heritage that is commonly accepted in Minnesota as a unique population.

- (c) Four legislators are voting members of each council. The speaker of the house and the house minority leader shall each appoint one member to each council. The

Subcommittee on Committees of the senate Committee on Rules and Administration shall appoint one member of the majority caucus and one member of the minority caucus to each council.

- (d) The governor may appoint a commissioner of a state agency or a designee of that commissioner to serve as an ex-officio, nonvoting member of a council.



**DAVID MAEDA**  
Chair  
Term start: 6/2018  
Term expire: 1/2022  
Ancestry representing: Japanese



**DAVE HOANG**  
Vice Chair  
Term start: 5/2020  
Term expire: 1/2024  
Ancestry representing: Vietnamese



**SARASWATI SINGH**  
Treasurer  
Term start: 5/2020  
Term expire: 1/2024  
Ancestry representing: Asian Indian



**CHANG WANG**  
Term start: 1/2021  
Term expire: 1/4/2025  
Ancestry representing: Chinese



**GRACE LEE**  
Term start: 7/2/2019  
Term expire: 1/2/2023  
Ancestry representing: Korean



**BRYAN THAO WORRA**  
Term start: 7/1/2018  
Term expire: 1/3/2022  
Ancestry representing: Lao



**NGAWANG DOLKER**  
Term start: 6/2021  
Term expire: 1/2025  
Ancestry representing: Tibetan



**MA XIONG**  
Term start: 12/2020  
Term expire: 1/2024  
Ancestry representing: Hmong



**HSAKUSHEE DAISY ZAN**  
Term start: 6/2021  
Term expire: 1/2025  
Ancestry representing: Karen



**KHENDUM GYABAK**  
Term start: 6/2021  
Term expire: 1/2025  
Ancestry representing: Bhutanese



**FAAMATI WINEY**  
Term start: 7/2/2019  
Term expire: 1/2/2023  
Ancestry representing: Polynesian/Samoan



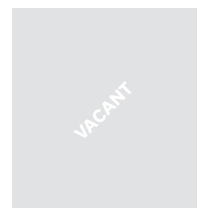
**SENATOR ERIC PRATT (R)**  
Term start: 3/2019  
Term expire: N/A  
Caucus representing: Senate GOP



**SPEAKER MELISSA HORTMAN (D)**  
Term start: 3/2021  
Term expire: N/A  
Caucus representing: House DFL



**REPRESENTATIVE JIM NASH (R)**  
Term start: 2/2021  
Term expire: N/A  
Caucus representing: House GOP



**VACANT**  
Term start:  
Term expire:  
Caucus representing: Senate DFL



# Council Staff Members

## Subd. 7. Duties of council members.

A council member shall:

- (1) attend and participate in scheduled meetings and be prepared by reviewing meeting notes;
- (2) maintain and build communication with the community represented;
- (3) collaborate with the council and executive director in carrying out the council's duties; and
- (4) participate in activities the council or executive director deem appropriate and necessary to facilitate the goals and duties of the council.



### **Sia Her, Executive Director**

Sia has been executive director of the Council since 2013. Before joining the Council, Sia served as campaign manager for the successful Saint Paul Public Schools' "Strong Schools, Strong Communities" levy referendum. She has a master's degree in public policy from the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs and a bachelor's degree in political science from Macalester College. *Sia manages all operations and projects, and develops and implements strategic and well-informed plans to ensure that the Council delivers on its statutory duties. Contact: [sia.her@state.mn.us](mailto:sia.her@state.mn.us)*



### **Anjali Mishra Cameron, Research Director**

Anjali joined the Council in 2016. Prior to her work at the Council, Anjali conducted public health research at the University of Minnesota and the University of Chicago, and worked with community-based organizations in Minnesota on advancing health equity. She has a master's degree in biomedical sciences from Rosalind Franklin University and a bachelor's degree in neuroscience from Carleton College. *Anjali conducts original research, assists the executive director with advancing the Council's major initiatives, and produces research reports to inform the Council's key constituencies about the state of Asian Pacific Minnesotan communities. Contact: [anjali.cameron@state.mn.us](mailto:anjali.cameron@state.mn.us)*



### **Mai Tong Vang, Office Manager/Executive Assistant**

Mai Tong joined the Council in June of 2021. Prior to her work at the Council, Mai Tong's past experiences include working with community-based organizations on a number of critical issues, including providing support to survivors of gender-based violence and producing community-centered artwork and messages. She has been in the professional creative field for over a decade since completing her degree in Visual Communication. *Mai Tong manages the office of the Council, administers and monitors the Council budget, assists with supervision of the Council's staff, and performs and coordinates numerous administrative functions as the assistant to the executive director. Contact: [maitong.vang@state.mn.us](mailto:maitong.vang@state.mn.us)*



### **Andrew Morris, Legislative and Public Affairs Liaison**

Andrew (Andy) Morris joined the Council in December 2019. A native of Minneapolis, Andy has lived and worked in Minneapolis; Washington, DC; and Tokyo, Japan across the non-profit, higher education, government, and private sectors in international exchange, government affairs, and policy analysis roles prior to joining the Council. He has a master's degree in Asian Studies from Georgetown University's Graduate School of Foreign Service and a bachelor's degree in Asian Studies from Saint John's University. *Andrew educates, informs, and engages Asian Pacific Minnesotans on issues of importance to these communities; assists in developing the Council's policy positions and legislative initiatives; and maintains close connection between the Council and its stakeholders. Contact: [andrew.morris@mn.state.us](mailto:andrew.morris@mn.state.us)*



FY21 EXPENDITURES	
<b>General Fund</b>	<b>\$ 469,654.97</b>
<b>Revenue Funds</b>	
(Annual Dinner Registration Fees)	\$ 0.00
	<b>\$ 469,654.97</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>	
Full-Time	\$ 351,359.88
Part-Time	\$ 17,995.03
Over-Time and Premium Pay	\$ 7,950.68
Other Employee Cost	\$ 259.00
Space Rental, Maintenance, and Utility	\$ 21,762.16
Repairs, Alterations, and Maintenance	\$ 646.50
Printing and Advertising	\$ 380.34
Prof/Tech Services Outside Vendor	\$ 24,214.25
Communications	\$ 1,189.73
Travel and Subsistence–In State	\$ 262.39
Travel and Subsistence–Out of State	\$ 0.00
Supplies	\$ 6,441.17
Employee Development	\$ 187.50
Other Operating Costs	\$ 3,719.00
Equipment-Non Capital	\$ 0.00
Equipment	\$ 4,438.55
Centralized IT Services	\$ 17,354.24
Agency-Specific Other Services	\$ 2,302.88
State Agency Other Services	\$ 420.00
Annual Dinner Expenses	\$ 0.00
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 460,883.30</b>
<b>Net Balance</b>	<b>\$ 8,771.67</b>

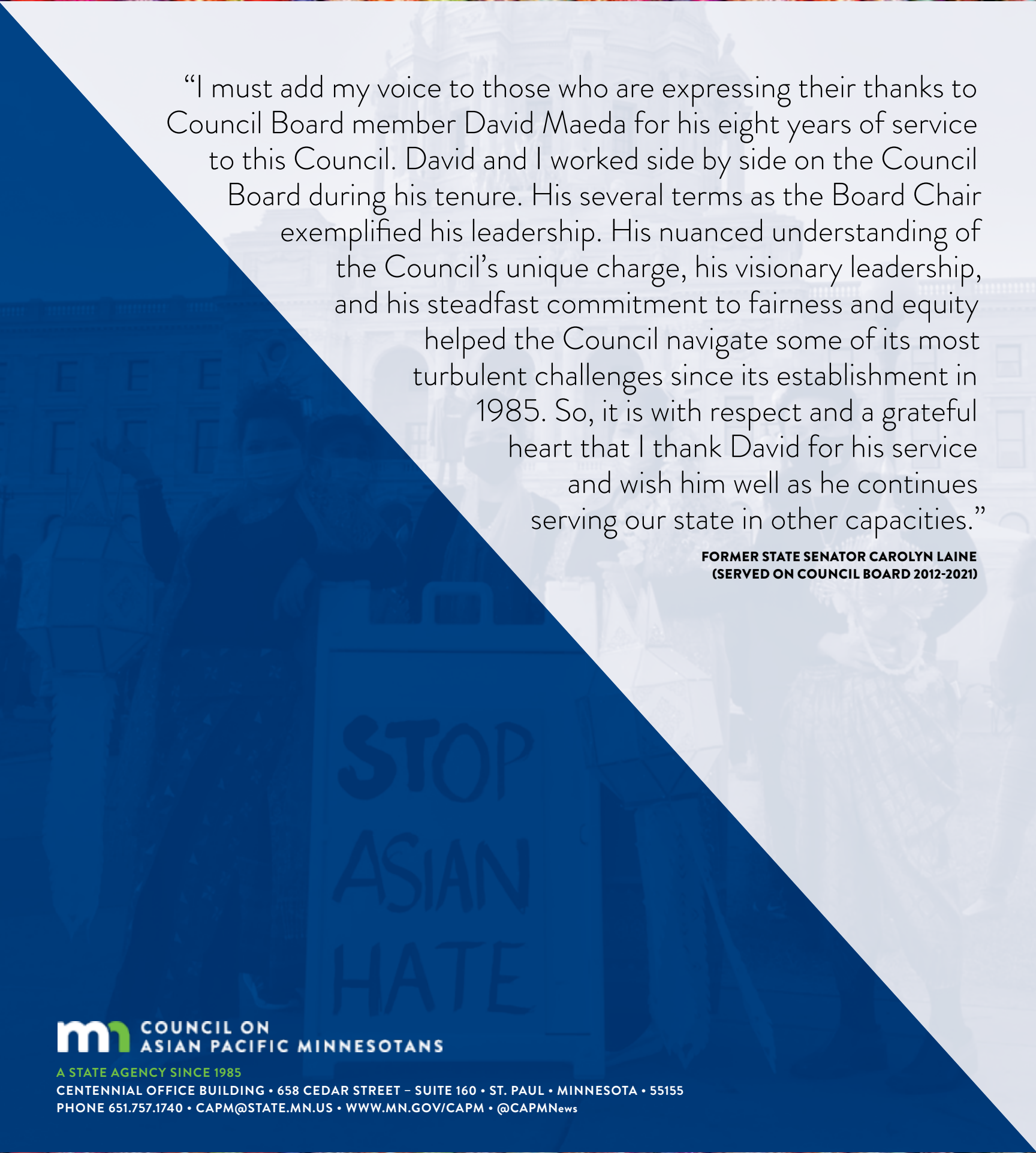





## **STATUTORY PURPOSE**

The Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans was created by the Minnesota State Legislature in 1985 to advise the Governor and the Legislature on issues pertaining to Asian Pacific Minnesotans; to advocate on behalf of this community on these issues; and to act as a broker between the Asian Pacific community and the rest of Minnesota. Minn. Stat. § 15.0145 provides the legal authority for the Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans, a non-cabinet executive branch state agency.





“I must add my voice to those who are expressing their thanks to Council Board member David Maeda for his eight years of service to this Council. David and I worked side by side on the Council Board during his tenure. His several terms as the Board Chair exemplified his leadership. His nuanced understanding of the Council’s unique charge, his visionary leadership, and his steadfast commitment to fairness and equity helped the Council navigate some of its most turbulent challenges since its establishment in 1985. So, it is with respect and a grateful heart that I thank David for his service and wish him well as he continues serving our state in other capacities.”

**FORMER STATE SENATOR CAROLYN LAINE  
(SERVED ON COUNCIL BOARD 2012-2021)**

**mn** COUNCIL ON  
ASIAN PACIFIC MINNESOTANS

A STATE AGENCY SINCE 1985

CENTENNIAL OFFICE BUILDING • 658 CEDAR STREET – SUITE 160 • ST. PAUL • MINNESOTA • 55155  
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STOP  
ASIAN  
HATE