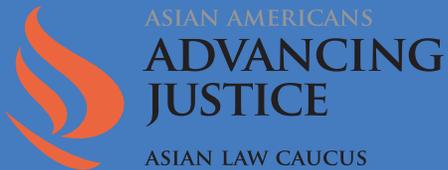




# Forty-year Retrospective

Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Asian Law Caucus



## 1972 to 2012



In Defense of Civil Rights



ASIAN AMERICANS  
**ADVANCING  
JUSTICE**

ASIAN LAW CAUCUS

The mission of Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Asian Law Caucus is to promote, advance, and represent the legal and civil rights of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities. Advancing Justice – ALC is committed to the pursuit of equality and justice for all sectors of our society, with a specific focus directed toward addressing the needs of low income, immigrant, and underserved AAPIs.

## Acknowledgments

This retrospective of Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Asian Law Caucus’s legacy of advocacy and activism was compiled with references from *In Defense of Civil Rights: the 40-Year History of the Asian Law Caucus*, by Sam Cacas, and Advancing Justice – ALC’s archive of annual reports, annual event program booklets, and photographs.

The team that produced this retrospective includes Audee Kochiyama-Holman, Paul Ocampo, and Christopher Punongbayan, coordinators and editors; Melanie Chan and Maya Wong, research assistants; Gen Fujioka for review of the draft manuscript; Wilfred Lim for photo research; and Elaine Joe, researcher, writer, and graphic designer.

*Cover photos: (top, l-r) Day of Protest, 1979; ALC staff, 1982; ALC staff and supporter, 1995; welfare reform rally, 1996; (bottom, l-r) 55 Columbus groundbreaking, 2003; outreach at Gurdwara, 2008; ASPIRE and National Day of Action for Immigration Reform, 2012 (Karen Ng). All photos ALC files except where noted.*

# Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Asian Law Caucus and the Philosophy of Community Lawyering

**T**he vision of a nonprofit legal organization to serve low income Asian American communities was the fervent topic of discussion among a group of progressive Bay Area attorneys and activists during the early 1970s. The notion took its inspiration from the impassioned sociopolitical urgency of the period. Racial discrimination, economic disparities, anti-immigrant fury, workplace bias, and inequities in the housing market dominated impoverished communities of color, with few resources to counter the injustices.

When Asian Law Caucus (ALC) quietly set up practice in 1972 in a small storefront in Oakland, California, staffing consisted of one attorney fresh out of Boalt Hall School of Law at the University of California, Berkeley, and a handful of volunteers made up of law clerks and community activists. Premising their legal work on a belief in individual and community empowerment, they had little idea at the time that their brand of lawyering would

become a national model for upholding the civil rights of disenfranchised communities.

More than forty years later, ALC ranks as the oldest and one of the most formidable legal and civil rights organizations representing Asian American communities. Through the years, the organization has never wavered from its model of integrating legal representation with grassroots organizing and education, legislative advocacy, and media strategy. The ideals that led to ALC's formation in 1972 remain the same today: the vision of a more just society; economic, social, and political equity for all; and thriving communities where Asian Americans are full and equal participants in civil society.

This retrospective offers a snapshot of forty years of advocacy and activism. The list begins with *Chan v. Scott* in 1972, when Asian Law Caucus successfully ended the unconstitutional arrests of youth in San Francisco Chinatown. In 1983, staff joined the *coram nobis* team to reverse

the wartime conviction of Fred Korematsu, setting the stage for the Civil Rights Act of 1988. Following a decade of immense growth, 1992 segued to another ten years of campaigns seeking greater equity for communities of color. By 2002, on the heels of 9/11, ALC continued to defend American democratic values under attack in the name of national security.

In 2013, we joined with three other Asian American organizations in name to launch Asian Americans Advancing Justice—or Advancing Justice, for short. Along with Advancing Justice – Chicago (formerly Asian American Institute), Advancing Justice – Los Angeles (formerly Asian Pacific American Legal Center), and Advancing Justice – AAJC (formerly Asian American Justice Center), Advancing Justice – Asian Law Caucus seeks to build a stronger civil rights advocacy voice for Asian American communities on a national level.

# Forty-year Retrospective of Advocacy and Activism



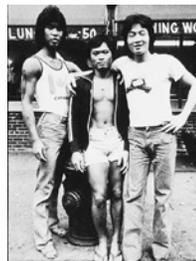
Staff in the Oakland office, 1973



I-Hotel struggle, 1977

**T**he cases and initiatives championed by Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Asian Law Caucus from 1972 to 2012 underscore a commitment to the protection of individual rights, as well as the extension of those same civil and constitutional rights to the community as a whole. In all its initiatives, Advancing Justice – ALC has teamed up with equally dedicated partners—community organizations, civil rights advocates, nonprofit legal groups, and private attorneys—who share the common goals of justice, empowerment, and equality for society’s most vulnerable members. For the purpose of this retrospective, we use our former name Asian Law Caucus to refer to our advocacy and activism from 1972 to 2012.

## 1972 *Chann v. Scott* [ Civil Rights ]



During the early 1970s, the San Francisco Police Department targeted Chinese youth with routine police sweeps through Chinatown. In an effort to end these racially discriminatory dragnets, Chinatown activists turned to

legal means. *Chann v. Scott* was one of Asian Law Caucus’s earliest cases. The class action lawsuit against the SFPD successfully ended the unconstitutional arrests. The issue was the impetus for community activists and lawyers to form ALC as a nonprofit legal organization.

## 1973 *Wong v. Younger* [ Civil Rights ]

ALC brought suit against state attorney general Evelle Younger for his publication of a bulletin titled “Triad Mafia of the Far East” for law enforcement agencies. The bulletin characterized Chinese as brigands, law-breakers, smugglers, and opium

smokers. The plaintiff withdrew the lawsuit when Younger issued an apology in the face of massive community protest.

## 1974 *Salazar v. Blue Shield of California* [ Workers’ Rights ]

This case began in the fall of 1972 when Asian Law Caucus filed the first class action employment discrimination suit on behalf of Asian Americans. The lawsuit alleged racial discrimination in hiring and promotional practices. As with *Wong v. Younger*, ALC learned the value of community organizing and media strategy to influence the legal outcome of the case.

## 1975 *International Hotel* [ Housing Rights ]

In this historic struggle, residents of the International Hotel in San Francisco had been battling developers for years. ALC joined the legal defense in 1975, but in 1977, the developer evicted the 60 elderly Chinese and Filipino residents and demol-

**1972**

First Asian American legal civil rights office opens in Oakland

**1975**

Outreach office in San Francisco Chinatown

**1975**

Community Education Program

**1976**

Employment/Labor Project

**1976**

Law Student Clinical Program

**1978**

Course for community members on immigration law history and practices

**1980**

Latino-Asian Immigration Project

**1981**

Bay Area Attorneys for Redress

**1982**

Committee to Reverse Japanese American Wartime Cases



ished the building the following year. The block on the border between Chinatown and the Financial District remained a blighted hole for years until the hotel was reconstructed in 2005. The International Hotel now provides 104 permanently affordable residential units and is the site for the Manilatown Center.

### 1976 *Fujita v. Sumitomo* [ Workers' Rights ]

With co-counsel, ALC attorneys filed the first class action sex discrimination lawsuit against a Japanese bank. The suit sought promotional opportunities and salary equity for female employees. The case went to trial in 1976. Despite the evidence presented, however, the judge ruled in favor of the defendant.

### 1977 *The Chinese Times* [ Workers' Rights ]

Asian Law Caucus played an instrumental role in unionizing the largest Chinese language daily newspaper in San Francisco. The organizing drive was a breakthrough in Chinatown's labor struggle, resulting in a contract that more than doubled the workers' salaries and provided benefits that included "no layoff" guarantees.

### 1978 *Ping Yuen Tenants Association v. San Francisco Housing Authority* [ Housing Rights ]

Attorneys from ALC joined other community and legal organizations to represent more than 200 public housing tenants in Chinatown's Ping Yuen housing project, demanding improved building

security and basic repairs. The campaign emanated from the rape and murder of a young Chinese girl in the building.



The ensuing eight-month rent strike by tenants raised the issue of unsafe and unsanitary conditions in San Francisco Housing Authority properties. The case was settled in the tenants' favor and improvements to security and property repairs were made.

### 1979 *Suehiro Restaurant* [ Workers' Rights ]

When a major Japanese restaurant shut down in 1979, the owners made no provisions to give severance pay to the displaced workers. ALC staff intervened, seeking severance pay owed to the former restaurant workers. The successful action was unprecedented in the history of the restaurant workers' union in San Francisco.



### 1980 *Filipino Foreign Nurses* [ Immigrant Rights ]

Joining the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund and other advocacy organizations, ALC challenged the deportation of foreign nurse graduates, most of whom were Filipino. The action successfully intervened in a case that highlighted the discriminatory nature of the licensing exam. While the revision of the exam was pending, the California Nursing Board issued interim permits to allow the foreign nurses to continue practicing.



Staff, 1978



Chinatown housing rally at city hall, 1980s



Advocacy for senior housing, 1983

#### 1984

Pro bono assistance to immigrants through SF Bar Association Lawyer Referral

#### 1984

Tenants' Coalition for Seismic Safety, San Francisco Chinatown

#### 1986

Statewide Coalition Against Proposition 63 (English-only initiative)

#### 1986

Break the Silence Coalition Against Anti-Asian Violence

#### 1986

Chinatown Coalition for Development, Oakland

#### 1986

Residential Hotel Task Force, Oakland

#### 1986

Bay Area Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights and Services



Staff, 1984 (Monica Lee)



Garment factory, 1984 (Chris Stewart/SF Chronicle)

### 1981 *Yu, et al. v. Bank of Canton* [ Housing Rights ]

In the first case to prevent the loss of San Francisco Chinatown's affordable housing due to commercial development, Asian Law Caucus filed a complaint against the Bank of Canton for violation of a city ordinance prohibiting the demolition of housing to make way for commercial use. In the settlement, the bank agreed to build affordable housing to be managed by a nonprofit corporation. The settlement's value was over \$1 million.

### 1982 *International Molders & Allied Workers Union Local 164 v. Nelson* [ Immigrant Rights ]

ALC teamed up with other organizations to sue the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service for civil rights violations that had taken place during workplace factory raids in 1982, dubbed "Operation Jobs." The successful action—supported by legislative lobbying and community outreach—resulted in a settlement that included the prohibition of warrantless raids. This was one of Asian Law Caucus's first major immigrant rights cases.

### 1983 *Ha, et al. v. T&W Fashions* [ Workers' Rights ]

This case involved a major garment manufacturer and contractor that had unfairly dismissed 19



workers and bilked them of their rightful overtime pay. The suit charged the shop with state and

federal minimum wage and overtime violations, as well as wrongful termination. The settlement in the workers' favor was a significant victory, laying the groundwork for ALC's involvement in labor protections in the exploitative garment industry.

### 1983 *Coram Nobis Cases: Japanese American Redress and Reparations* [ Civil Rights ]

In early 1983, Asian Law Caucus pursued one of its most crucial civil rights challenges. With newly discovered evidence pointing to egregious government misconduct during World War II, ALC and pro bono attorneys petitioned the federal courts to overturn the wartime conviction



of Fred Korematsu. Two separate legal teams in Seattle and Portland executed similar actions on behalf of Gordon Hirabayashi and Min Yasui. The eventual success of Mr. Korematsu's action and the reversal of his conviction paved the way for the enactment of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, calling for redress and reparations for 120,000 Japanese Americans incarcerated during World War II.

### 1984 *Rhi, Py, & Seo v. Express Maintenance* [ Workers' Rights ]

In 1983, Korean immigrant janitors working at the San Francisco International Airport organized against substandard wages and lack of benefits. It was the first organizing effort among Korean

1986

National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights

1987

Statewide Coalition for a Fair Minimum Wage

1989

Offices moved to 468 Bush in San Francisco

1989

San Francisco City and County Refuge Ordinance (Sanctuary Ordinance)

1989

Coalition for Garment Industry Reform

1989

Labor studies class at Peralta Community College Labor

1989

Hate Violence Project and National Network Against Anti-Asian Violence

1989

Fred Korematsu Civil Rights Fund

Americans initiated by the workers themselves. After four janitors were fired for joining the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 87, ALC and SEIU filed complaints with the National Labor Relations Board. The board upheld the workers' claims, affirming the right of workers to organize and form a union.

### 1985 San Fran Hotel [ Housing Rights ]



ALC and the San Francisco Neighborhood Legal Assistance Foundation became involved in assisting tenants facing eviction and substandard housing conditions in the San Fran Hotel. The owners had proposed demolition of this and a

neighboring residential hotel to build a tourist hotel but were ultimately prevented by the San Francisco Chinatown-North Beach Residential Hotel Moratorium. The case championed the ability of low income tenants to organize for their right to affordable housing.

### 1986 Davis v. City & County of San Francisco [ Affirmative Action ]

Representing Chinese for Affirmative Action, Asian Law Caucus attorneys intervened in federal district court cases brought by African Americans and women against the San Francisco Fire Department for discriminatory hiring and promotion practices. The U.S. Department of Justice refused to seek affirmative action goals, despite years of discrimi-

natory practices by the city. The Fire Department ultimately agreed to a race- and gender-conscious hiring and promotion policy, with goals designed to remedy past discrimination.

### 1987 Associated General Contractors, Inc. v. City & County of San Francisco [ Affirmative Action ]

Attorneys at ALC served as co-counsel for minority and women contractors defending San Francisco's affirmative action set-aside program. White contractors challenged the ordinance supporting minority-owned, women-owned, and locally-owned business enterprises, charging that the practice resulted in reverse discrimination. The district court upheld the ordinance, rejecting claims that it violated the city's charter, federal civil rights laws, and the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment.

### 1988 Buena Vista Housing [ Housing Rights ]

Along with Legal Aid Society of Alameda County, ALC assisted in organizing public housing tenants faced with exorbitant rent increases. The case highlighted the emerging problem with subsidized housing built in the 1960s, in which owners were paying off their federal financing and reverting to private ownership with market rate rents. The team of attorneys explored both legal and political solutions to the private buy-out that threatened the stock of affordable units and caused the displacement of low income tenants.



Board of directors, 1985 (Monica Lee)



Simpson-Mazzoli immigration, 1986



Minimum wage, 1987

1990

National Coalition for the Accurate Count of Asian Pacific Americans

1990

Coalition of Asian Pacific Americans for Fair Reapportionment

1990

Voting Rights Task Force

1990

Chinatown Garment Workers Center (ILGWU)

1991

Founding member of National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium with Asian Pacific American Legal Center and Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund

1993

Circle of 100 Campaign



Staff, 1992



Immigration rally, 1995 (Jean Gonzales)

### 1988 *Equal Employment Opportunity Commission v. Tortilleria La Mejor* [ Civil Rights ]

ALC attorneys and co-counsel represented Alicia Castrejon in this far-reaching case involving the protection of undocumented workers from employment discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Ms. Castrejon filed a sex discrimination claim when she was denied reinstatement after a pregnancy leave. The employer maintained that undocumented workers lacked protection because federal laws barred their hiring. A federal court affirmed that such workers are protected and need not state their immigration status to seek Title VII's protections.

### 1989 *Anna Chan, et al. v. Ocean Garment Manufacturing Limited, et al.* [ Workers' Rights ]

The action by Anna Chan and other seamstresses against Ocean Garment Manufacturing was a voice for the economic rights of all garment workers. This case represented the first judgment from a California court holding a garment manufacturer responsible for the wages of its subcontractor's employees. On behalf of 14 Chinese seamstresses, Asian Law Caucus filed a wage and overtime suit alleging that the company asked workers to forego three months of wages because of cash flow problems and then laid them off without payment.

### 1990 *Vietnamese Fishermen's Association of America v. Admiral Paul Yost, et al.* [ Civil Rights ]

The Vietnamese Fishermen's Association of America and six fishermen filed a suit challenging



the U.S. Coast Guard's enforcement of the 200-year-old Jones Act, which prohibits non-

citizens from piloting fishing vessels in U.S. coastal waters. Represented by ALC and co-counsel attorneys, the plaintiffs asserted that the statute violated their rights to due process and equal protection under the law. Although the parties settled, Congressman Norman Mineta (D-San Jose) sponsored the Federal Maritime Commission Authorization Act, which passed in 1990, giving permanent residents the right to fish commercially off the California coast.

### 1991 *Redistricting and Reapportionment* [ Voting Rights ]

As part of the Coalition for Asian Pacific Americans for Fair Reapportionment, Asian Law Caucus staff crusaded for the participation of Asian Americans in the California redistricting process. ALC also joined other civil rights organizations to challenge the undercount of people from communities of color in the 1990 Census and ensure the re-authorization and expansion of the bilingual ballots provision of the Voting Rights Act.

### 1992 *Estrada, et al. v. American Mutual Protective Bureau and General Services Administration* [ Civil Rights ]

With co-counsel, ALC represented five Filipino security guards whose employer removed them from their jobs in a federal building in San Francisco at the request of the General Services

#### 1993

Partner with Asian Women's Shelter to counsel battered immigrant women

#### 1994

Violence Against Women Act

#### 1994

Asian Pacific American Civic Participation and Naturalization Project

#### 1995

Sweatshop Watch for garment workers

#### 1996

Senior Rights Project and Senior Hotline

#### 1996

Campaign Against Federal Welfare Reform Legislation

#### 1996

Asian Pacific Americans for Affirmative Action (Proposition 209)

Administration. The GSA claimed that their limited English language skills and their accents were a hindrance on the job. This case became known as one of the first accent discrimination cases ever filed. The settlement represented advancement for the language rights of limited English-speaking workers.

**1993 *Nguyen, et al. v. San Francisco Housing Authority* [ Housing Rights ]**

ALC attorneys sued the San Francisco Housing Authority in federal court for its failure to address a pattern of racial violence against Asian American families living in seven public housing projects plagued with racial tension. The action resulted in findings of widespread interracial hostility in San Francisco's public housing and a history of racially motivated violence.

**1994 *Gregorio T. v. Wilson* [ Immigrant Rights ]**

Joining the legal team that filed suit to prohibit Proposition 187 from going into effect, ALC staff fought the unconstitutionality of this referendum passed by voters in 1994. Proposition 187 would deny undocumented immigrants access to public education, health, and social services. It was the first time that a state had passed legislation related to immigration, counter to federal policies. The federal court found the law to be unconstitutional.

**1995 *United States v. Alameda County, et al.* [ Voting Rights ]**

As a result of Asian Law Caucus's monitoring of Alameda County's election practices in the November 1994 elections, the U.S. Department of

Justice brought action against the county to comply with the bilingual provisions of the Voting Rights Act. Alameda County ultimately entered into a voluntary agreement with DOJ to translate all election-related materials into Chinese.

**1996 *Buereerong v. Uvawas (El Monte case)* [ Workers' Rights ]**



Asian Law Caucus served as co-counsel along with Asian Pacific American Legal Center in this successfully settled case for Thai

and Latina garment workers who had been employed in slave-like conditions in El Monte, California. The workers sought to recover wages from the garment manufacturing companies. ALC partnered with the U.S. Department of Labor to obtain back wages and punitive damages for the 72 workers who had been held for up to 17 years, laboring 14-18 hour days. Korean Immigrant Workers Association and Sweatshop Watch waged a two-year campaign to keep the case alive in the media, which for the first time was reporting on garment worker issues.



**1997 *Kao v. Rohnert Park* [ Civil Rights ]**

With co-counsel, ALC attorneys filed on behalf of the family of Kuan Chung Kao in this civil rights action. In 1997, two police officers killed Mr. Kao in front of his



Board of directors, 1994



Senior hotline, 1997 (Bob Hsiang)



Save our homes, 1999 (Bob Hsiang)

**1997**  
Office moves to 720 Market in San Francisco

**1997**  
Vietnamese Coalition for Civil Rights

**1998**  
Hmong Advocacy Project

**1998**  
Sweatshop Accountability Act

**1998**  
Senior Rights Clinic in San Francisco with Self-Help for the Elderly

**1999**  
Challenges Ellis Act and eviction of low income tenants

**2000**  
Legal Immigration Family Equity Act, advocated by Association for Residency and Citizenship in America



Staff, 2000 (Bob Hsiang)



Wen Ho Lee and Fred Korematsu, 2001  
(Bob Hsiang)



Housing advocacy, 2003 (Robert Gumpert)

home in Rohnert Park. Neither officer was reprimanded or prosecuted for his use of excessive force against Mr. Kao, who at the time of the shooting was making martial arts poses. The case ended in a settlement of the family's civil claim.

### 1998 *Lo v. Raymond Garment Cutting Services, et al.* [ Workers' Rights ]

In a major victory for one immigrant garment worker that ultimately benefited hundreds more, Asian Law Caucus and co-counsel attorneys won a settlement in a suit for unpaid wages and wrongful termination. The plaintiff's action prompted the U.S. Department of Labor to investigate Raymond Garment factories, resulting in the recovery of \$192,000 in back wages for more than 100 workers.

### 1999 *Sweatshop Accountability Legislation (AB 633)* [ Workers' Rights ]

After more than ten years of work, ALC and a coalition of labor and community groups witnessed the signing of AB 633, creating the nation's strongest anti-sweatshop law. The landmark legislation holds the garment industry accountable for compliance with labor laws, including allowing garment workers to collect their wages in full and in a timely manner.



### 2000 *U.S. v. Wen Ho Lee* [ Civil Rights ]

ALC became involved in this case in late 1999 after the government accused Dr. Wen Ho

Lee, a mechanical engineer at Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico, of espionage. Dr. Lee's treatment by the American legal system included 59 treasonous criminal charges, three separate rulings denying him bail, and nearly ten months of solitary confinement. A coalition of civil rights organizations decried the injustices of Dr. Lee's prosecution and the larger issue of racial profiling, filing an *amicus curiae* brief arguing that he had been unfairly targeted for prosecution on the basis of his race and ethnicity.

### 2001 *Wins of California* [ Workers' Rights ]



In July 2001, nearly 240 garment workers employed at Wins of California were abruptly terminated after working for months without pay. ALC joined other community groups to press federal and state officials to collect back wages and

prosecute Wins owners for their labor law violations. In 2002, almost all the 240 former Wins garment workers, mostly Chinese immigrant women, received close to \$1 million in back wages from the state's Garment Fund.

### 2002 *Airport Screeners Case* [ Workers' Rights ]

The hysteria surrounding national security following 9/11 resulted in a U.S. citizenship requirement for airport security workers. Lawful permanent residents of all nationalities who were employed as

#### 2000

Sweatshop Watch expands to include high-tech workers and health clinic

#### 2000

Bay Area Hate Crimes Investigators Association and Hate Violence Prevention Network

#### 2001

Office moves to 939 Market in San Francisco

#### 2001

Chinese Workers' Rights Center in San Francisco

#### 2001

Southeast Asian Task Force

#### 2001

Senior legal clinics set up in Sacramento and Oakland

#### 2002

Language Access Coalition

#### 2002

Community Occupational Health Project



airport screeners, many of Filipino descent, would have been summarily fired from their jobs and barred

from reapplying as screeners, presumptively treated as security risks by virtue of their lawful non-citizenship status. ALC filed complaints with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the U.S. Department of Transportation charging employment discrimination against Bay Area Filipino screeners who had lost their jobs. The settlement terms are confidential because EEOC's conciliation process arbitrated the claims.

### 2003 Taraval Hate Crimes [ Hate Crimes ]



In June 2003, three white high school males hurled racial epithets at five Asian American teens outside a restaurant in San Francisco's Sunset District. The insults escalated into brutal physical attacks by 20 more white males. Only one attacker was identified and charged in the first anti-Asian hate crime to go to trial in San Francisco in several years. The year-long mobilization effort led by ALC galvanized the community's stance against anti-Asian violence. In July 2004, a judge determined that a hate crime had taken place, resulting in the prosecution of one of the accused teens.

### 2004 Justice for Anand Family Coalition [ Hate Crimes ]

Asian Law Caucus joined the Justice for Anand Family Coalition when the home of the Anands, a Sikh American family residing in Concord, was robbed and burned down in a confirmed act of arson. Contra Costa County law enforcement officials refused to charge a white male with arson even though the evidence pointed to hate as a motivation for the crimes.

### 2005 Strengthening Laws Against Hate Violence [ Hate Crimes ]

Working with Assemblymember Judy Chu, ALC successfully sponsored state legislation expanding access to remedies for victims of hate violence. Passed in 2005, AB 378 increased the time limit from one year to three years for victims of hate crimes to bring a civil lawsuit. The bill makes it easier for victims to recover damages from their attackers. This was the first legislation ALC sponsored as a member of Asian Americans for Civil Rights and Equality, in partnership with Chinese for Affirmative Action and the Asian Pacific American Legal Center.



income and elderly residents of 53 Columbus in San Francisco Chinatown in 1998 to fight dis-

### 2006 Fong Building at 53 Columbus Street [ Housing Rights ]

Attorneys at Asian Law Caucus began representing the low



Staff and board of directors, 2006



Rallying for workers' rights, 2005



Nail Salon Project, 2006

2002

Coalition for Southeast Asian Community Action

2003

Consumer telephone helpline for limited English-speaking immigrants

2003

Asian Pacific Americans for an Informed California

2004

Asian Americans for Civil Rights and Equality

2004

Nail Salon Project

2005

On-line, multilingual, self-help tool for immigration issues

2006

Juvenile Justice and Immigration Project

2006

Oakland Workers Center Consortium in the East Bay



Staff, 2009



Outreach at Stockton Gurdwara, 2007



Taxi driver rally, 2008

placement from the neighborhood. In 2006, ALC negotiated an agreement with the landlord, City College of San Francisco, to convert the building into Chinatown's first limited equity housing cooperative. By 2007, ALC had successfully closed over \$7 million in financing for the upgrading of the aging building and to fund the creation of the cooperative. The plan included ALC's permanent office space on the ground floor.

**2007 Safe Place to Learn Act**  
[ Criminal Justice Reform ]



One of the first major accomplishments of ALC's Juvenile Justice and Education Project was the passage of the Safe Place to Learn Act (AB 394) to reduce

the rising incidents of hate crimes committed against youth in California's public schools. Signed into law in 2007 by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, the policy requires the California Department of Education to ensure full and proper implementation of school anti-discrimination laws. The following year, ALC revised and improved the San Francisco Unified School District's anti-discrimination and harassment policy and launched an anonymous complaint line, the Safe School Line, as a resource for youth and their parents.

**2008 Asian Law Caucus & Electronic Frontier Foundation v. Department of Homeland Security**

[ National Security and Civil Rights ]

This suit brought under the Freedom of Information Act alleged that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security denied travelers access to public records on the questioning and searches they were undergoing at U.S. borders. The action responded to growing complaints by U.S. citizens and immigrants of excessive or repeated screenings by U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents. The agents subjected residents returning home from overseas to intrusive questioning about their families, religious practices, and political beliefs as well as examined travelers' books, personal photos, laptop computer files, and cell phone directories. The interrogations often lasted five or six hours without any stated justification.

**2009 Berkeley Thai Buddhist Temple**  
[ Civil Rights ]

Save the Thai Temple Collective organized to protect the First Amendment freedoms of the Wat Mongkolratanaram Berkeley Thai Temple when



neighbors raised concerns to the Berkeley Zoning Adjustment Board about traffic, noise, and odors from the temple's Sunday food offering. Joining the campaign, Asian Law Caucus staff advocated for the temple's right as a religious institution to practice its

**2007**  
National Security and Civil Rights Project

**2008**  
Taxi Workers Project

**2008**  
Asian Students Promoting Immigrant Rights Through Education (ASPIRE)

**2009**  
Census and Redistricting Program

**2009**  
53 Columbus: housing coop for low to moderate income tenants

**2009**  
Office moves to 55 Columbus in San Francisco

**2009**  
Civil Rights Outreach Project

**2009**  
Fred T. Korematsu Institute for Civil Rights and Education

Buddhist traditions. The temple won a unanimous vote of support by Berkeley's mayor and members of the city council.

## 2010 "Steve" Li DREAM Act Case [ Immigrant Rights ]



The case of Shing Ma "Steve" Li, a DREAM Act student enrolled at City College of San Francisco, garnered national attention when

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrested and detained him for being in the country illegally. Represented by Asian Law Caucus attorneys, the community mobilized for a private immigration bill from Senator Dianne Feinstein that stopped his deportation and urged Congress to pass the DREAM Act for all undocumented youth.

## 2011 *Tran, et al. v. Natalie Salon, Inc., et al.* [ Workers' Rights ]

In September 2011, ALC and co-counsel attorneys filed the first class action lawsuit brought on behalf of current and former nail salon workers. Natalie Salon, a San Mateo County nail salon chain, was charged with various state wage and overtime violations. The action represented an important step in reforming unlawful practices in an under-regulated and often overlooked industry. In June 2013, the court granted final approval of a \$750,000 class settlement for plaintiffs and the

class, including injunctive relief which protects employees' right to speak Vietnamese at work and requires the posting of information about workers' rights under federal and state employment laws.

## 2011 Challenging the Secure Communities Program [ Criminal Justice Reform ]

With a coalition of civil rights activists, Asian Law Caucus fought the so-called Secure Communities Program, a collaboration between U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and local law enforcement. In particular, "S-Comm" deportations cast a dangerously wide dragnet that ensnares innocent domestic violence survivors and other victims of crime, instilling fear in immigrants to come forward to report crimes to the police.

## 2012 Safe SF Civil Rights Ordinance [ National Security and Civil Rights ]

Mayor Edwin Lee signed the Safe San Francisco Civil Rights Ordinance in a major step to protect the Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian communities from racial and religious profiling. The ordinance addresses the San Francisco Police Department's relationship with the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Joint Terrorism Task Force to ensure that state and local standards are protected. The San Francisco Board of Supervisors unanimously passed the ordinance in May 2012.



Staff, 2012 (Philip Van)



Fred Korematsu Day, 2011



Coalition for a Safe San Francisco, 2012

### 2010

Coalition for a Safe San Francisco (South Asian, Arab, and Muslim communities)

### 2010

Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution signed into law

### 2011

First Fred Korematsu Day, January 30

### 2011

Housing Needs Research Project

### 2011

Criminal Justice Reform Program

### 2012

Safe San Francisco Civil Rights Ordinance

### 2012

Asian Law Caucus joins national umbrella Asian Americans Advancing Justice

# Forty Years in Pictures

## In Recognition of Our Founders

We honor the founders of Advancing Justice – Asian Law Caucus for their vision and their contributions in establishing the first and inimitable legal and civil rights organization representing Asian and Pacific Islander communities. Starting in 1972, they created a model of community lawyering while advancing a progressive civil rights agenda from a storefront office in Oakland to a national organization. That vision continues to inspire us today.

**Judge Ken Kawaichi,  
Judge Gene Lam,  
Michael G.W. Lee,  
Garrick Lew, Dale  
Minami, the late Joseph  
Morozumi, Edwin Oshika,  
Susan Tamura, Teresa  
Tan, and Eugene Tomine**



*Dale Minami, 1972*



*Rally at UC Berkeley, 1975*



*Hop Lok Fair, San Francisco, 1970s*



*Ping Yuen tenants strike, 1978*



*Staff in San Francisco Chinatown, 1982*



*Fred Korematsu and coram nobis team, 1983*



*Fight for minimum wage, 1987*



*Founding meeting for NAPALC, 1991*



Welfare reform rally, 1996



Tenants' rights, 1997



Workers' rights and minimum wage, 2000

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Community outreach on workers' rights, 2006



Immigration reform rally, 2009



Passage of youth policy in San Francisco, 2009



Civil rights for LGBT community, 2010



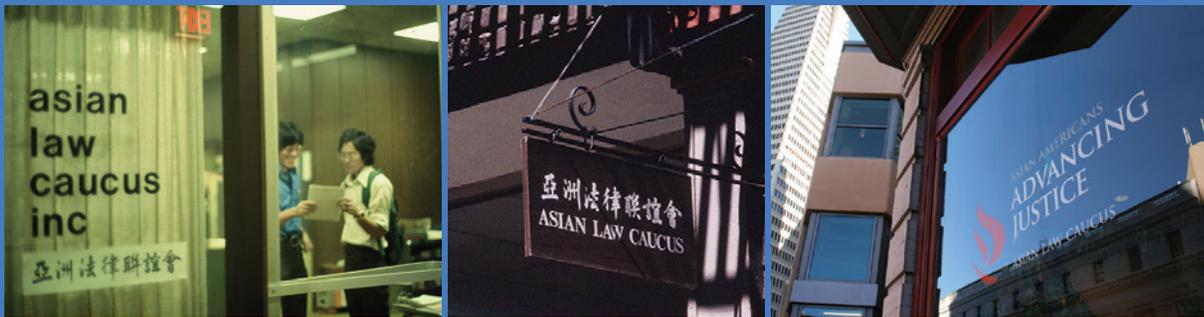
National Security, 2011 (Ramsey El-Qare)



"S-Comm" press conference, 2012 (Lorena Melgarejo)



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