

March 3, 2017

The Honorable Kamala Harris
United State Senate
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Harris:

Congratulations on your recent election. As a member of the Bay Area Asian and Pacific Islander community, I especially proud to celebrate your historic victory and am eager to see the voices of API members heard in legislative matters.

As an aspiring Human Rights attorney, I greatly admire your work championing the rights of women and minorities in our nation. This was especially apparent during your speech at the Women's March in Washington D.C., an amazing movement that showed me the powerful voice a united community can wield. Yet, while attending similar rallies in my local community, I noticed a distinct lack API political involvement.

Growing up in a Chinese household, I can understand this to some extent. Asian Americans are frequently taught to take pride in being independent problem solvers, seeking assistance from those we trust deeply and are most familiar with. As such, asking others, including our political representatives, for help is seldom emphasized. Even though I can empathize, however, I am still shocked to learn that API political involvement is the lowest among all American demographics.

As a powerful woman and a representative of minorities, I believe that you—Senator Harris—can encourage the API community to be involved in social/political issues by helping to transform our personal drive into an asset for community empowerment. Your involvement in protecting immigrant rights on the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs senatorial committee is instrumental in reassuring the API community that they will have a strong voice in legislation.

As such, I would like to propose a project, Political Activism Through Education (PATHE), with the primary goal of informing young API students about how government leaders can help their communities. PATHE students will spend a summer in a leadership seminar shadowing local and national government leaders. This will cultivate increased discussion around prevalent issues facing the API community. In addition, PATHE will allow these students become familiar and relate to political leaders such as yourself, helping them become comfortable speaking up on behalf of their communities.

Members of PATHE will also be encouraged to volunteer at local political events such as speaking alongside their representatives to increase API involvement. This past year, I took the opportunity to walk door to door to encourage voters to support Linda Hopkins, my local Board of Supervisors representative. It allowed me to demonstrate the initiative of young aspiring public servants like myself and connect with the API members in my community. I strongly believe that PATHE will extend a similarly powerful experience to many more members of the API community. My dream is that PATHE will ultimately empower these students to show their friends, families and communities that their political representatives can be trusted and are dedicated to listening and helping. And, I know that your background, political history and platform would be the perfect example of this.

Thank you again for your service and congratulations on your election. I invite you to continue bringing a powerful voice to the API community through PATHE.

Sincerely,

Catherine Liang