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Bridging the Language Divide

Electoral Glossary Available in Asian Languages

WASHINGTON - In order to fulfill their duty under the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) has issued glossaries of election terms in five Asian languages: Chinese, Korean, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Japanese-the most widely spoken Asian languages in the United States.

In support of HAVA, APIAVote, along with local and national organizations worked with EAC on the glossary project. **Vida Benavides**, the interim Executive Director of APIAVote states, "Organizations like ours do not have the resources to publish a comprehensive translation of election terminology; it was a wonderful opportunity to aid the EAC on this endeavor."

According to the 2006 Census, 26% of Asian Americans and 14.2% of Pacific Islanders speak English less than "very well." While the percentage of those with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) varies for each ethnic group, from 9.8% of Native Hawaiians to 52.8% of Vietnamese speakers, a significant portion of the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) population are in need of language aides. Many persons with LEP experience difficulty understanding the terminology used by media sources or election officials when registering to vote.

"The goal of APIAVote is to encourage political participation within the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community," says **Benavides**, "and this project will undoubtedly benefit our voter outreach and education efforts." Language is a key to understanding the democratic process, and these guides will improve the accessibility for political participation to AAPI voters.

In addition to APIAVote, other organizations such as the Asian Pacific American Legal Center, the Filipino American Service Group (FASGI), Korean American Resource and Cultural Center, Korean Resource Center (Los Angeles), Little Tokyo Service Center (Los Angeles), National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC), and the Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA) were also active partners in the glossary project.

The EAC has made electronic copies available through a free download at www.eac.gov, or a toll-free call to **Edgardo Cortes** or **Laiza Ortero** at (866) 747-1471 for a physical copy. The EAC website also features content on their website in Spanish and five Asian languages, and is working to expand their support to voters who speak Native Alaskan and American Indian languages.

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