

# UNSILENCING THE VOICES OF ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS

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A briefing about national polling of AAPIs  
in the United States

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# ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS

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A look back at AAPI political participation

# Gold Rush & The Railroads



# “Model Minorities” - 1966



# ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS

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Today



# How many of us are there?

- 1 million Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in 1960s

## Today

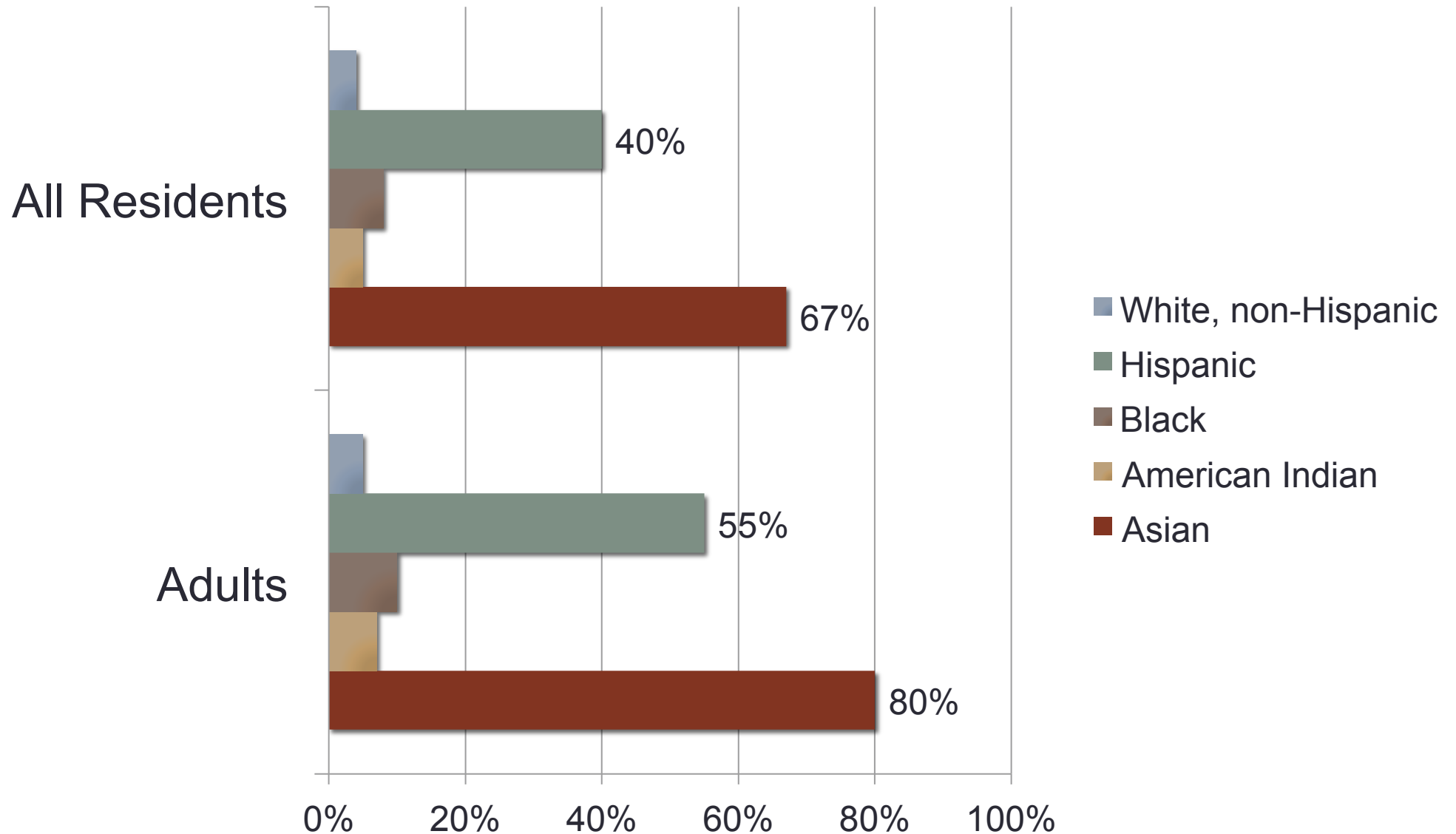
- More than 15.5 million AAPIs
  - ~5.5% of the total U.S. population
- 46% growth or fastest growing racial category
- By comparison
  - 9 million LGBT Americans,  
~3% of the total U.S. population
  - 6.5 million Jewish Americans  
~2% of the total U.S. population

# AAPIs are younger

Sex	US Population	Asian alone	Asian AOIC
Both Sexes	36.8	35.8	34.2
Male	35.5	34.9	33.2
Female	38.1	36.8	35.2

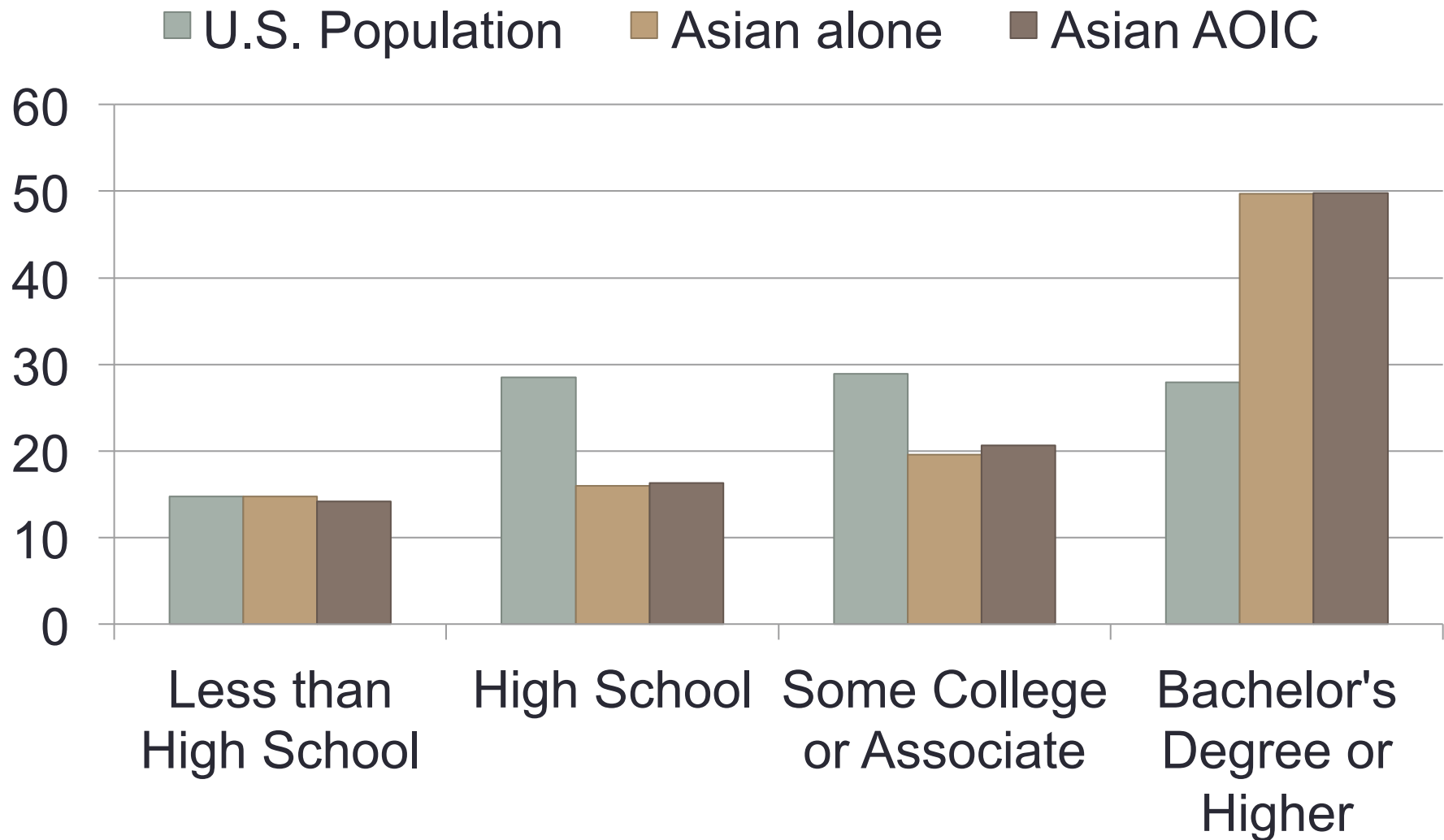
*Source: US Census Bureau, 2008 National Population Estimates July 1*

# AAPIs are Largely Foreign Born





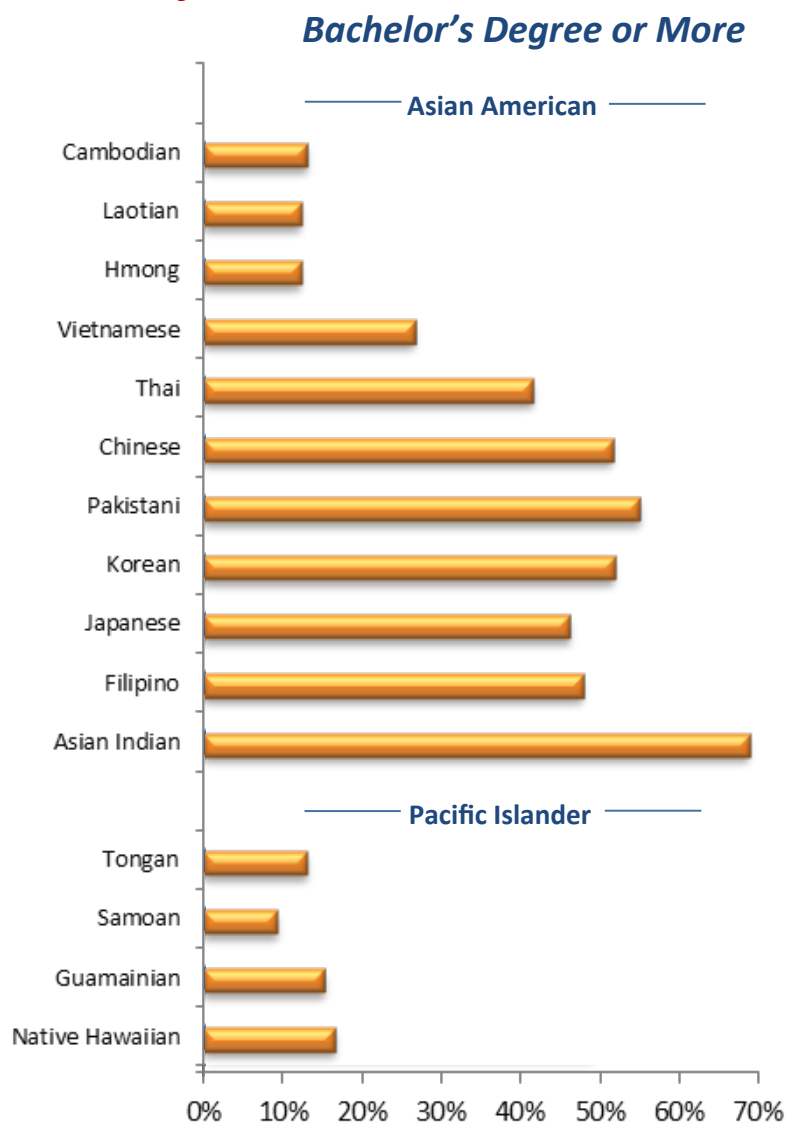
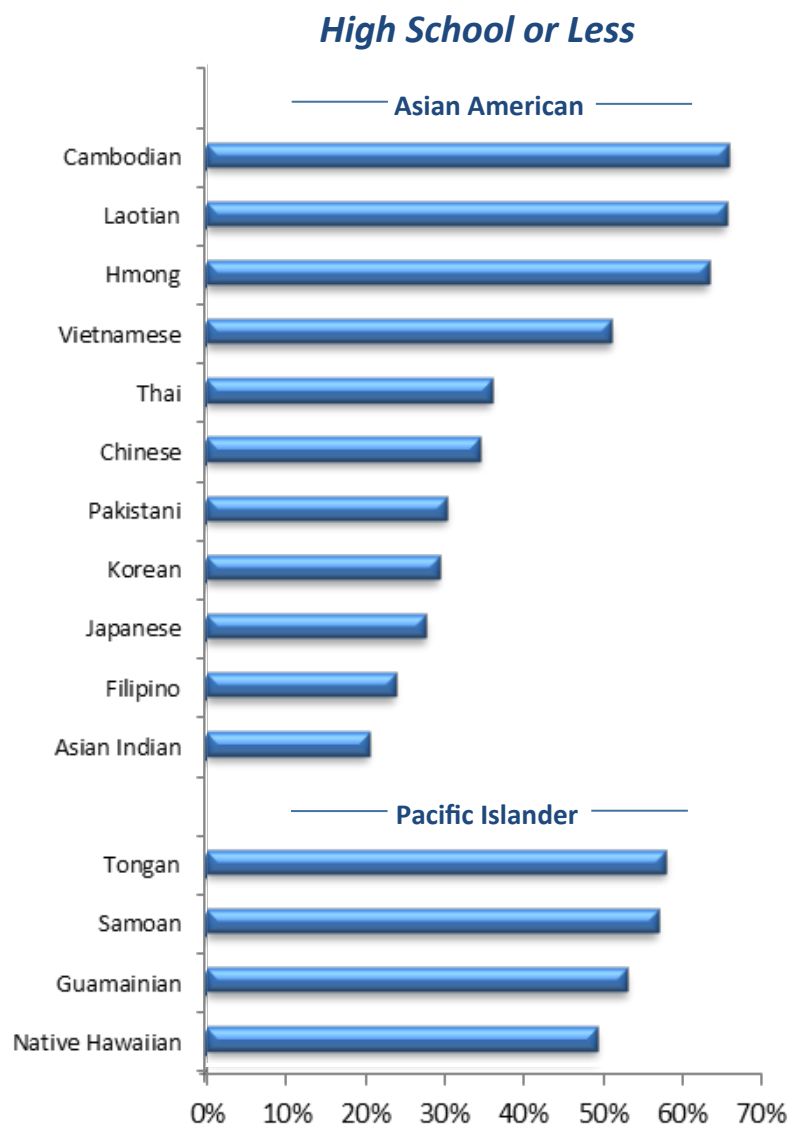
# Asians appear more educated...



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 American Community Survey

But when you disaggregate...

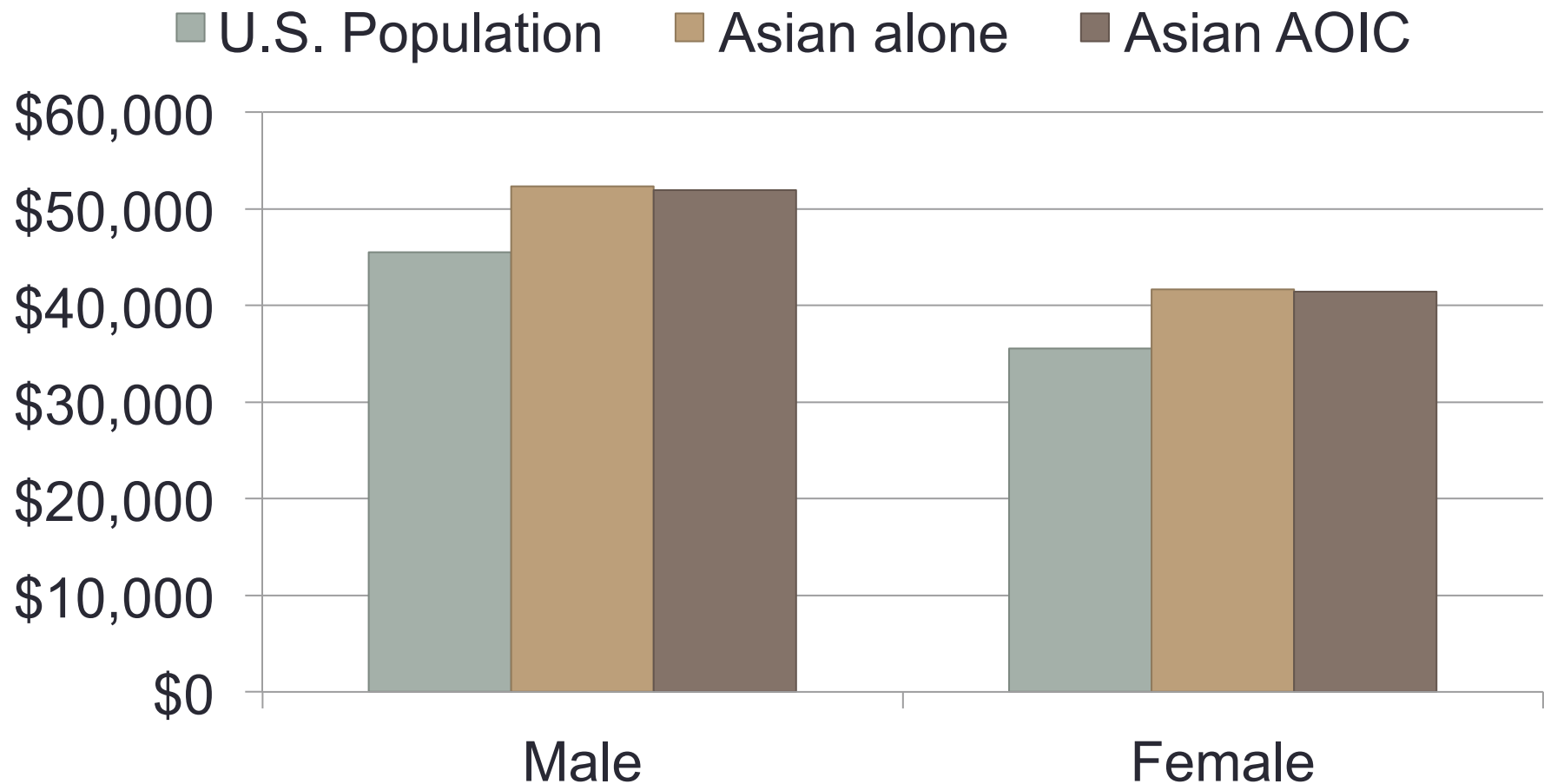
## Educational Attainment for AAPIs by Ethnicity, 2006-2008



Note: 25 years and older.

Source: CARE, *Federal Higher Education Policy and the AAPI Community*, 2010.

# Asians appear of higher SES...



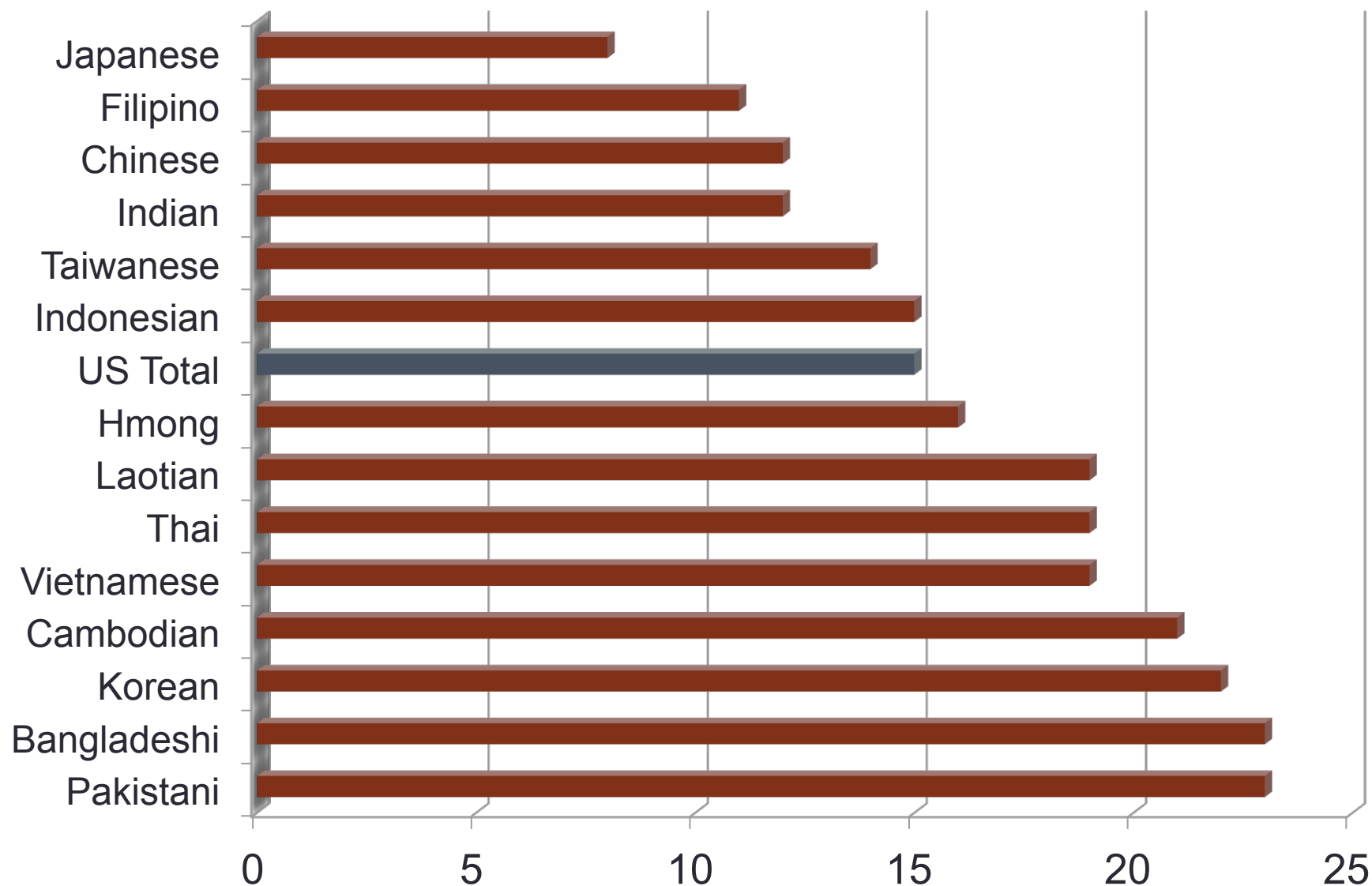
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 American Community Survey

(For employed, full-time, year-round workers 16 and older.  
In 2009 inflation-adjusted dollars)

## But when you disaggregate...

- Asian Americans living below poverty: 12.6% (U.S. average living below poverty: 12.4%).
- Poverty Rates of Hmong: 37.8%; Cambodian: 29.3%; Laotian: 18.5%; Vietnamese: 16.6%.

# And rates of uninsurance...



Source: American Community Survey, as reported in 2011 Advancing Justice report

# What we also know...

- High rates of limited English proficiency compound the obstacles AAPIs face in achieving good health. Many AAPIs in the U.S. cannot communicate effectively with healthcare providers.
- Cancer is the leading cause of death for AAPIs. Cervical cancer incidence rates are among the highest in the U.S. for Laotian, Samoan, Vietnamese and Cambodian women.
- Hepatitis B chronically infects about 1.3-1.5 million people in the U.S., and AAPIs account for over half of the chronic hepatitis B cases and resulting deaths.
- In Hawai'i, Asians, Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders ages 20 years or older are more than two times as likely to have diagnosed diabetes as White residents of Hawai'i of similar age.

# But not easily...

Survey	Disaggregated?	Oversampling?
Survey of Income and Program Participation	No	No
National Survey of Family Growth	No	No
National Immunization Survey	No	No
Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey	No	No
National Household Education Survey	No	No
Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System	No	No
SEER (cancer)	No	No

Source: 2010 Islam, et al. "Methodological Issues in the Collection, Analysis, and Reporting of Granular Data in Asian American Populations: Historical Challenges and Potential Solutions"

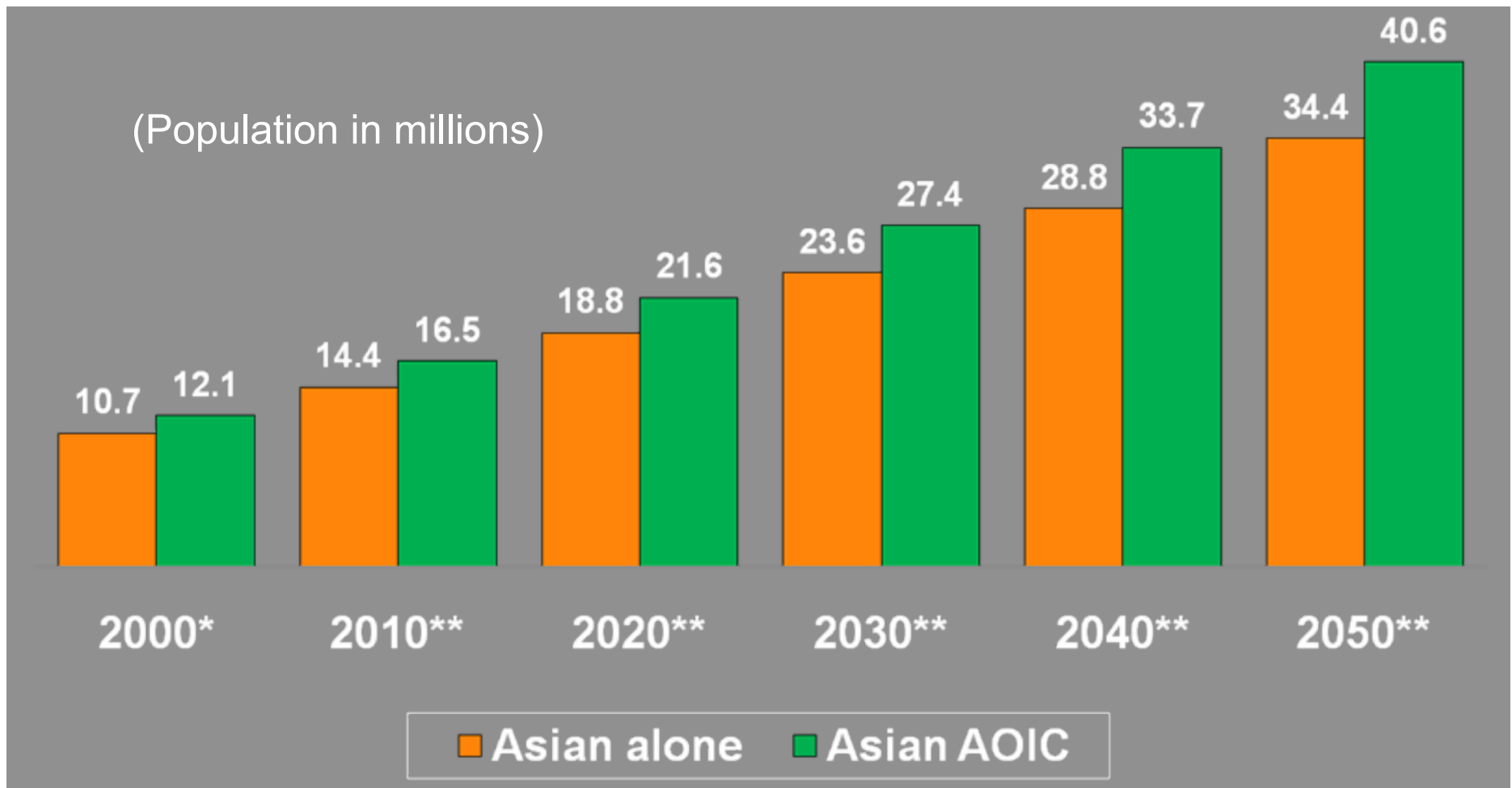


# ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS

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A critical rising American electorate

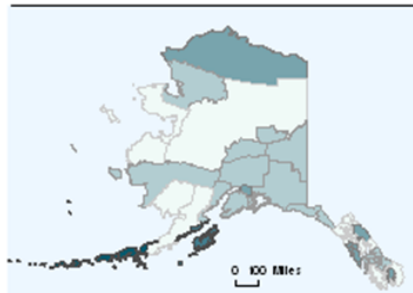
# By 2050, AAPIs will be 10% of US population



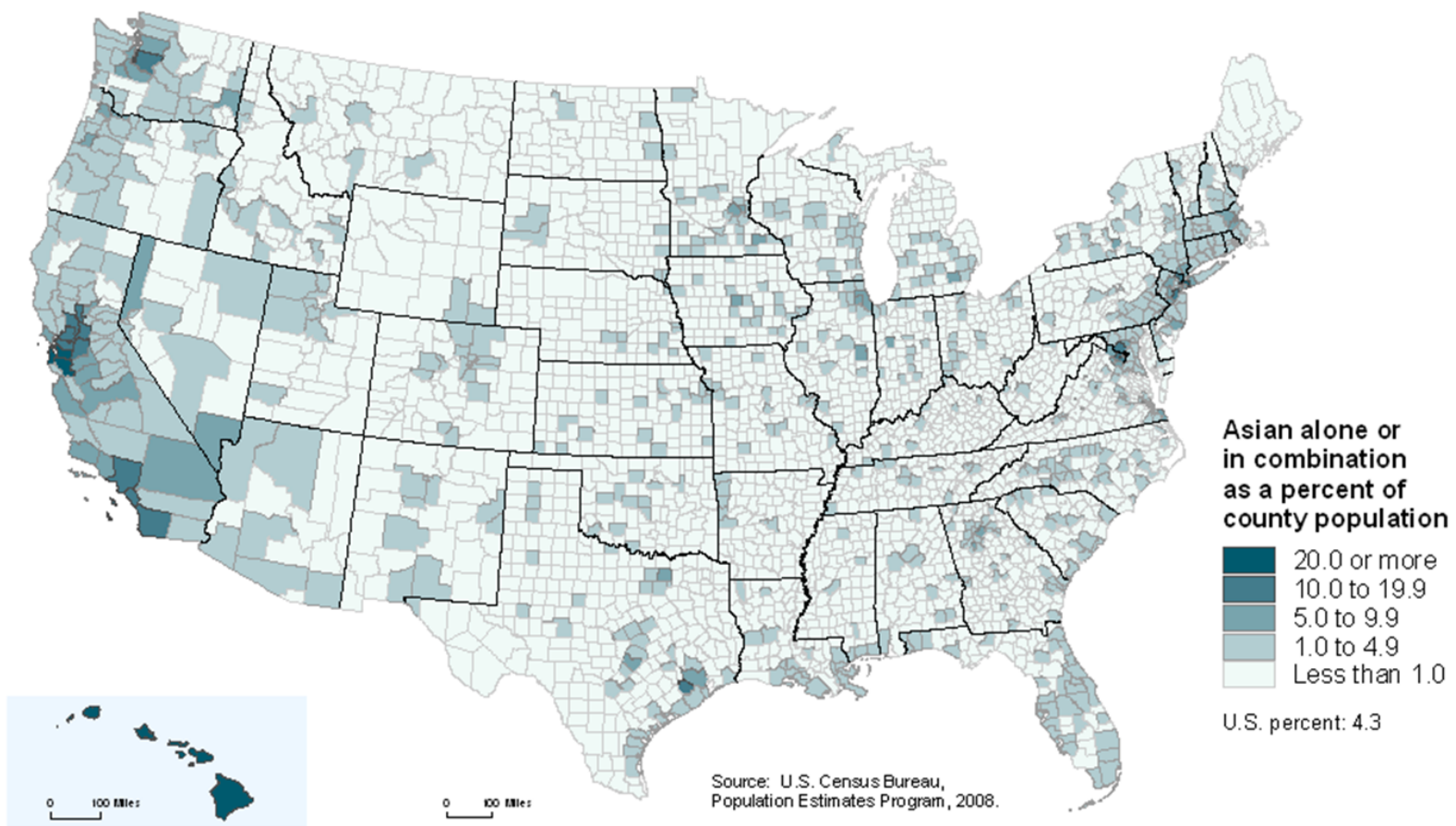
\*Population estimates as of July 1, 2010

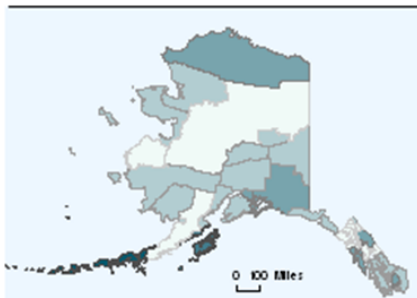
\*\*Projected population as of July 1, 2010

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 National Population Estimates and 2008 National Population Projections

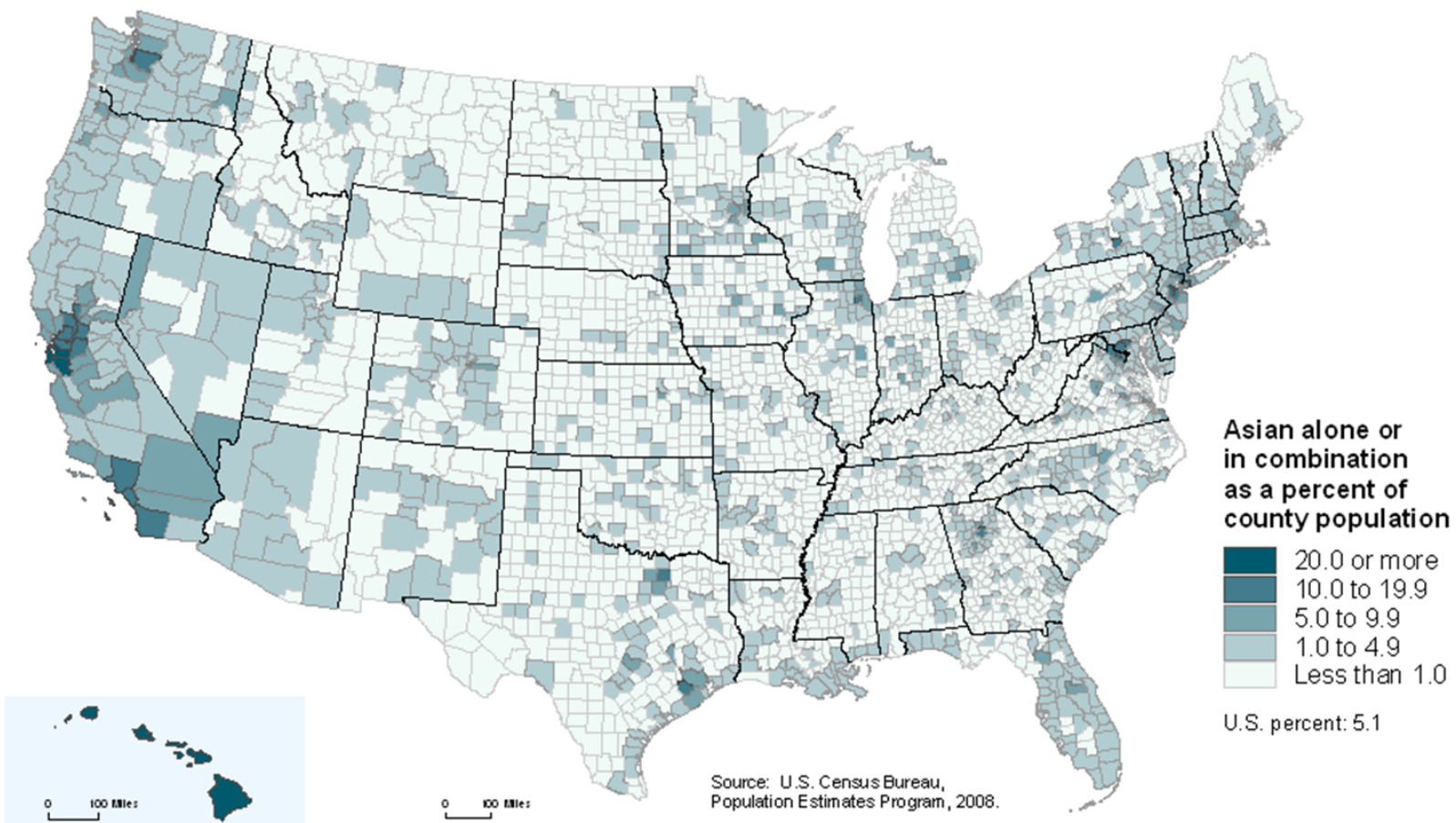


## Percent Asian Alone or in Combination by County: 2000





## Percent Asian Alone or in Combination by County: 2008

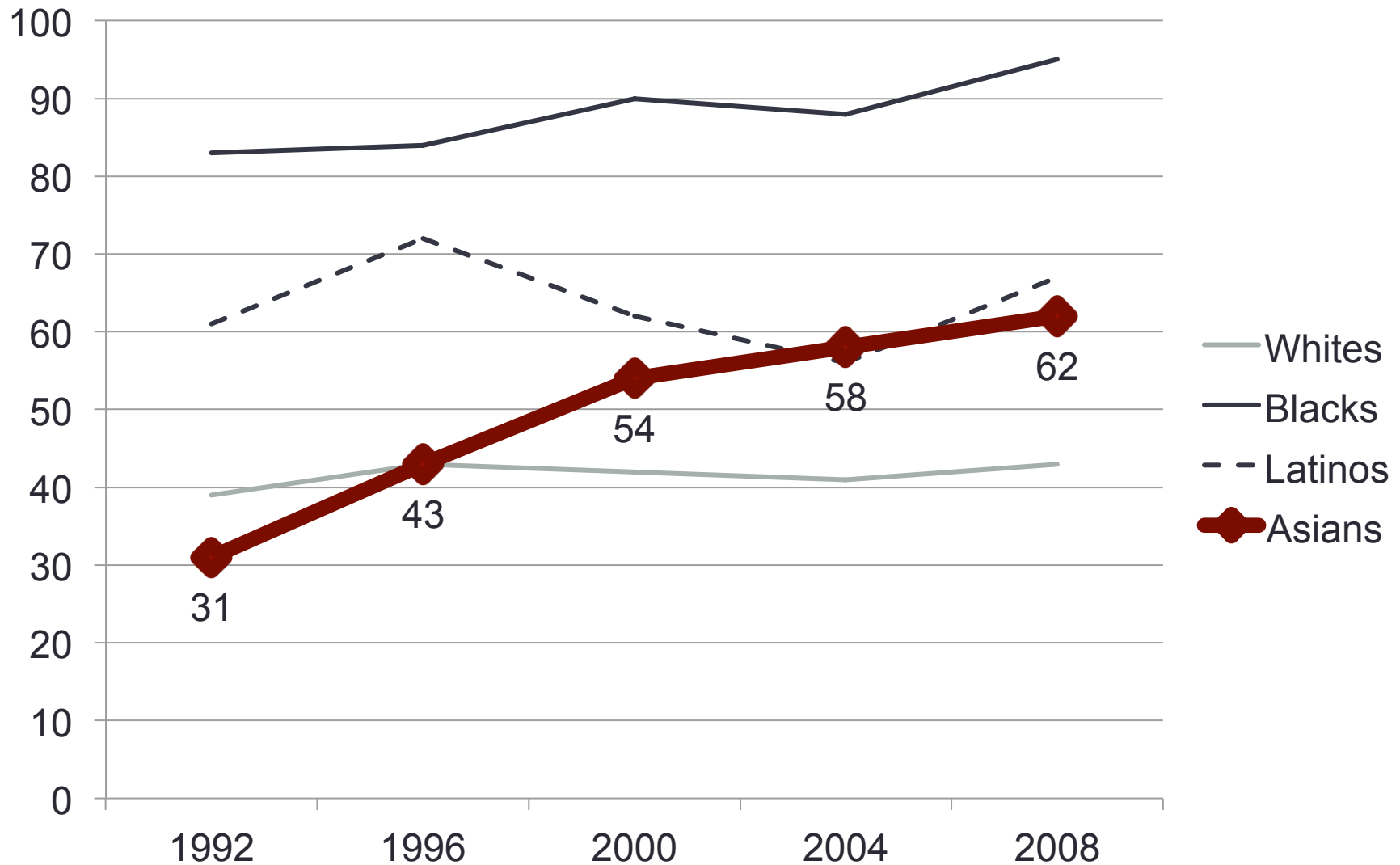


# AAPI voters are making a difference

- 2006 VA Senate race Jim Webb vs George Allen, Jim Webb won by only 7,231 votes.
  - 162,679 Asian American potential voters
  - Webb campaign utilized the “Macaca Incident” to outreach to organize a multi-prong outreach program.
- 2004 NV presidential elections, nearly 22,000 votes decided the state.
  - 82,527 AAPI potential voters which the majority reside in Clark County/ Las Vegas.
- 2004 WI presidential election, 11,384 deciding votes.
  - 44, 611 AAPIs potential voters

*Source: APIAVote*

# Strongest Shift in Voting Democrat



# People of Color in Congress are overwhelmingly Pro-Choice

	Pro-Choice	Mix-Choice	Anti-Choice
Congressional Black Caucus	37	3	1
Congressional Hispanic Caucus	13	5	1
Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus	12	0	0

\*does not include the non-voting caucus members from DC, Virgin Islands, Northern Marina Islands, Samoa, Guam

*Source: NARAL ProChoice America, October 2010*



# 2008 NATIONAL ASIAN AMERICAN SURVEY

[www.naasurvey.com](http://www.naasurvey.com)



# Need for a national pre-election survey of Asian Americans

## Public Attention and News Coverage

- Mostly in the months before election, not afterwards
- Exit polls important in their own right, but no substitute
- 2008: News stories in primaries based on unreliable data
  - CNN (“Asian American Voters”)
  - Time (“Does Obama have an Asian problem?”)
- Also, no nationally representative data on APA views towards immigration reform, health care, abortion, economy

# Public Impact of 2008 Survey



*The Washington Post*



- **Media coverage**

- 76 news stories, mix of mainstream (44) and ethnic (32)

- **Outreach events**

- DC and LA (2008); Bay Area, Chicago, New York (2009); Seattle (2010)

- **Downloads of report**

- Over 8,000 and counting (~ 200 per month)

# Survey Characteristics

- 5,159 telephone interview of adult Asian Americans
  - August 18 – October 29, 2008
- 6 primary ethnic subgroups:
  - 1,350 Chinese, 1150 Asian Indian, 719 Vietnamese, 614 Korean, 603 Filipino, 541 Japanese, and 182 “Other Asian.”
- 8 interview languages:
  - 40% in non-English language (Vietnamese, Korean, Mandarin, Cantonese, Tagalog, Japanese, Hindi)
- National sample and regional targets:
  - Regional targets: California, NJ/NY, “new destinations”

# Survey Questions

## A. Ethnicity and migration history

- Includes city where they first moved in the U.S.

## B. Media consumption and issue salience

- Language of media (TV, radio, print, www); issues affecting country vs. personally

## C. Political participation and 2008 election

- Includes mobilization, primary vote, beyond voting

## D. Party ID and public opinion

- Includes parents' party ID (US born), party stance on most salient issue

# Survey Questions

## E. Racial identity

- Includes linked fate, racial group distance, detailed discrimination battery

## F. Religion and civic engagement

- Denomination, frequency, demographics of civic group

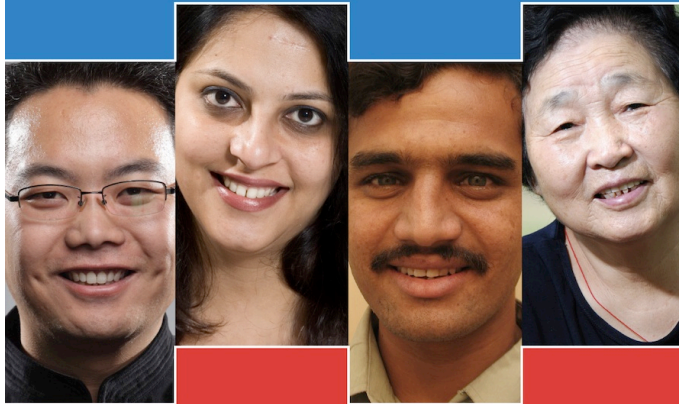
## G. Demographics

- Year of naturalization, education abroad, race of partner

## H. Contextual data

- State, county, new vs. traditional destination

# ASIAN AMERICAN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION



**Emerging Constituents and Their Political Identities**

**Janelle Wong, S. Karthick Ramakrishnan  
Taeku Lee, and Jane Junn**

Published by Russell Sage Foundation Press (2011)

(Discount flyers here, can also send by email)



# Why Focus on Participation?

- **Fastest-growing racial group**
  - Increasing geographic dispersion
- **Low rates of Voting for highly educated groups**
- **Why is voting lower?**
  - Apathy towards politics?
  - Focus on home country?
  - Lack of party identification and outreach?
  - Language barriers?
- **Beyond Voting**
  - What about other types of political participation?

# Types of Participation

- **Voting** (Registered, Primary voter, Intent to Vote)
- **Contact Officials**
- **Contribute Money**
- **Protest**
- **Work to solve community problem**
- Discuss politics with friends and family
- Work for candidate
- Discuss politics online
- 2006 immigration marches



# DIFFERENCES IN PARTICIPATION

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# Comparisons to Other Racial Groups

	Asian Americans	Whites	African Americans	Latinos
Citizen (among adults)	68	98	94	63
Registered (among citizen)	55	74	70	59
Turnout (among registered)	86	90	93	84
Political contributor	13	13	8	5
Contact government official	9	21	11	9
Community work	21	30	27	21

# Group Differences (All Adults)

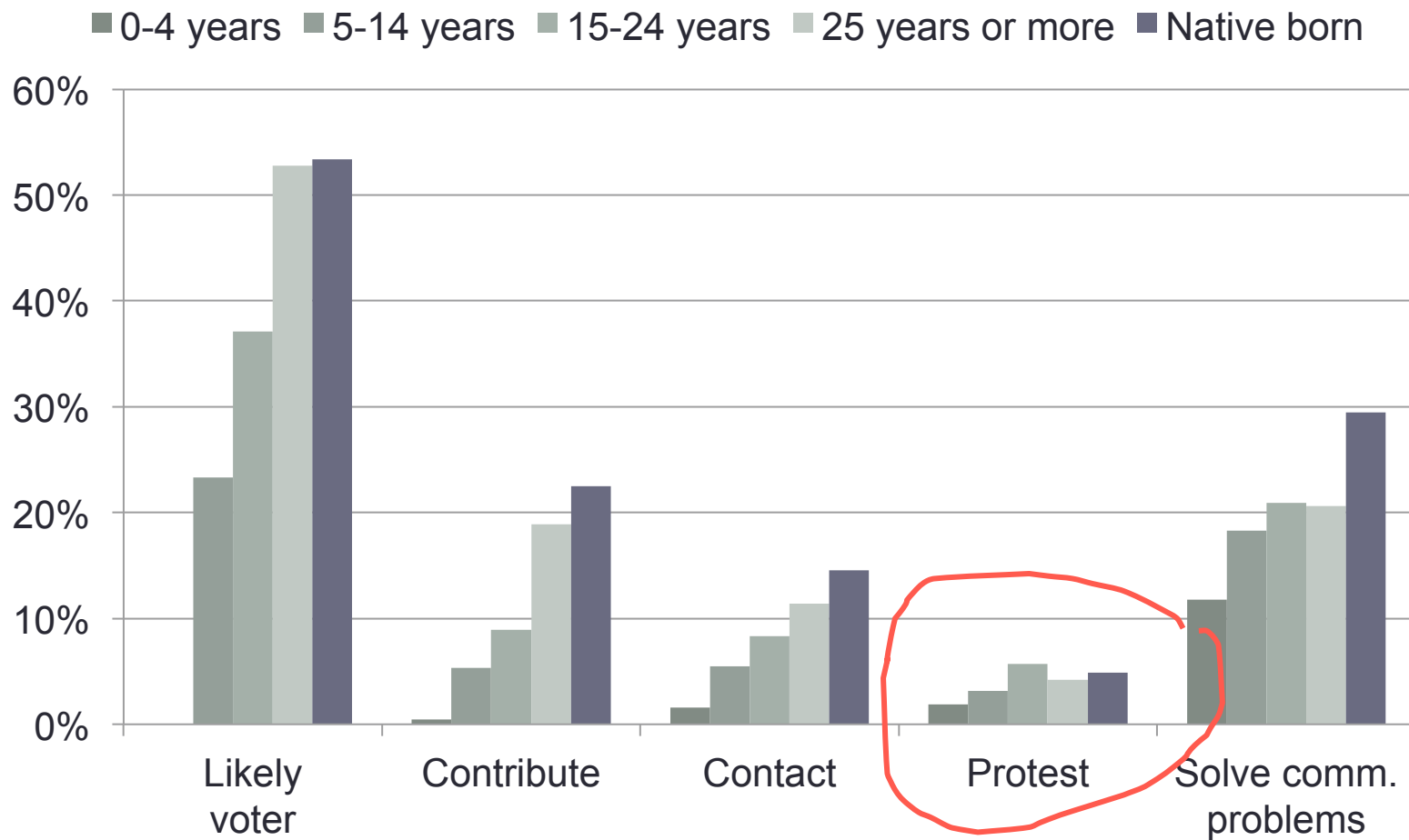
	Likely voter*	Political contributor	Contact government officials	Protester	Community Work
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>21%</b>
Asian Indian	47%	12%	11%	4%	<b>27%</b>
Chinese	39%	11%	9%	4%	19%
Filipino	47%	<b>17%</b>	<b>13%</b>	4%	23%
Japanese	<b>65%</b>	<b>18%</b>	10%	3%	17%
Korean	40%	11%	5%	3%	18%
Vietnamese	48%	7%	5%	<b>8%</b>	21%

\*

Among  
adult  
citizens

# Longer Stay in US, More Participation

So, yes, much of the lower participation rates is because of more recently arrived population



# Homeland Participation

Does attention to the homeland *REDUCE* participation in the United States?

	Likely voter	Contribute	Contact	Protest	Solve comm. problems
Money home (36%)	46%	14%	11%	5%	<b>25%</b>
No money home	44%	12%	8%	4%	19%
Homeland politics (4%)	38%	<b>23%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>21%</b>
No homeland politics	<b>46%</b>	12%	8%	9%	6%



# Too Focused on Work? Answer: No

If you had one extra hour per day, how would you spend it?

	Likely voter	Contribute	Contact	Protest	Solve comm. problems
Family (62%)	43%	11%	10%	4%	23%
Work (7%)	<b>37%</b>	<b>19%</b>	8%	5%	<b>19%</b>
Something else (29%)	51%	14%	9%	5%	20%

# Low Party Identification? Answer: Yes

“Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, Independent, some other party, or do you not think in these terms?”

	ASN IND	CHI N	FILIP	JAP A	KOR	VIET	TOTA L
Republican							
Democrat							
Indep./Other	22%	<b>28%</b>	18%	16%	11%	18%	<b>20%</b>
Do not think in these terms	34%	<b>39%</b>	32%	31%	34%	31%	<b>35%</b>

# Low Party Identification? Answer: Yes

“Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, Independent, some other party, or do you not think in these terms?”

	ASN IND	CHI N	FILIP	JAP A	KOR	VIET	TOTA L
<b>Republican</b>	9%	8%	16%	13%	17%	<b>31%</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>Democrat</b>	35%	25%	34%	40%	38%	<b>20%</b>	<b>31%</b>
<b>Indep./Other</b>	22%	<b>28%</b>	18%	16%	11%	18%	<b>20%</b>
<b>Do not think in these terms</b>	34%	<b>39%</b>	32%	31%	34%	31%	<b>35%</b>

# Major Findings in Book

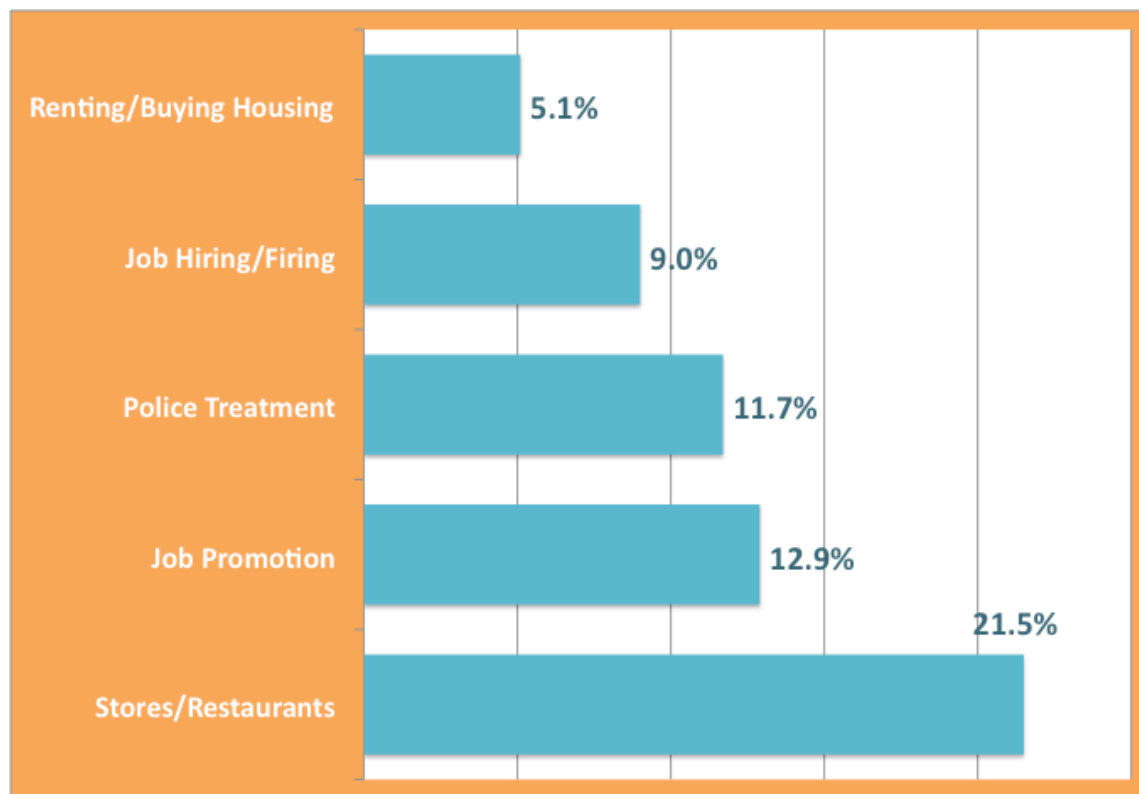
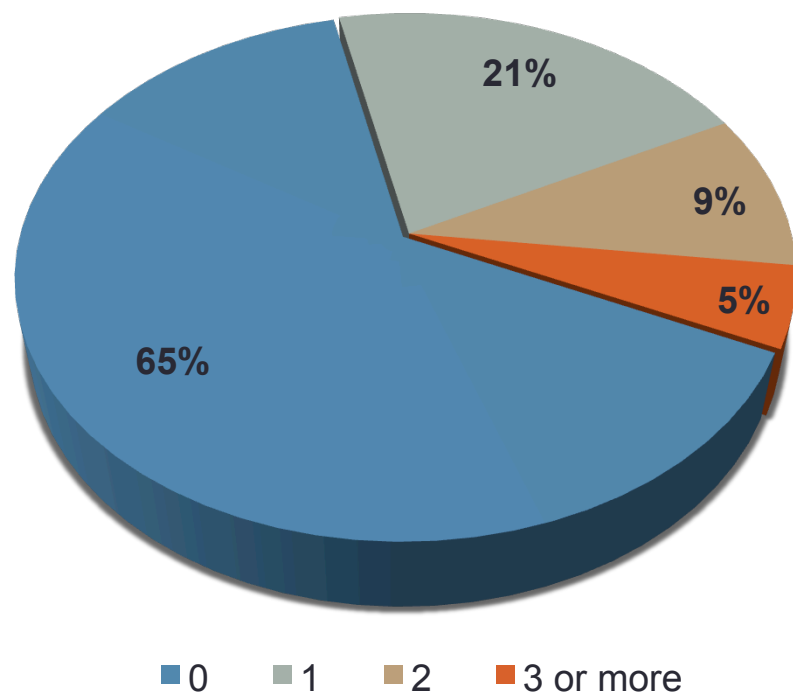
- ① More participation in coming decade as population is more established
  - Evidence of both assimilation AND racialization
- ② Homeland participation not common
  - NOT a drag on U.S. participation
- ③ Most are still undecided on political parties (55%)
  - Not surprising, because parties are not contacting AAPIs
- ④ Ethnic succession in national politics
  - Fewer Japanese Americans, more Chinese, Indian, Filipino
- ⑤ Higher participation, more unified constituency among 2nd and 3rd generation

# EXPERIENCES

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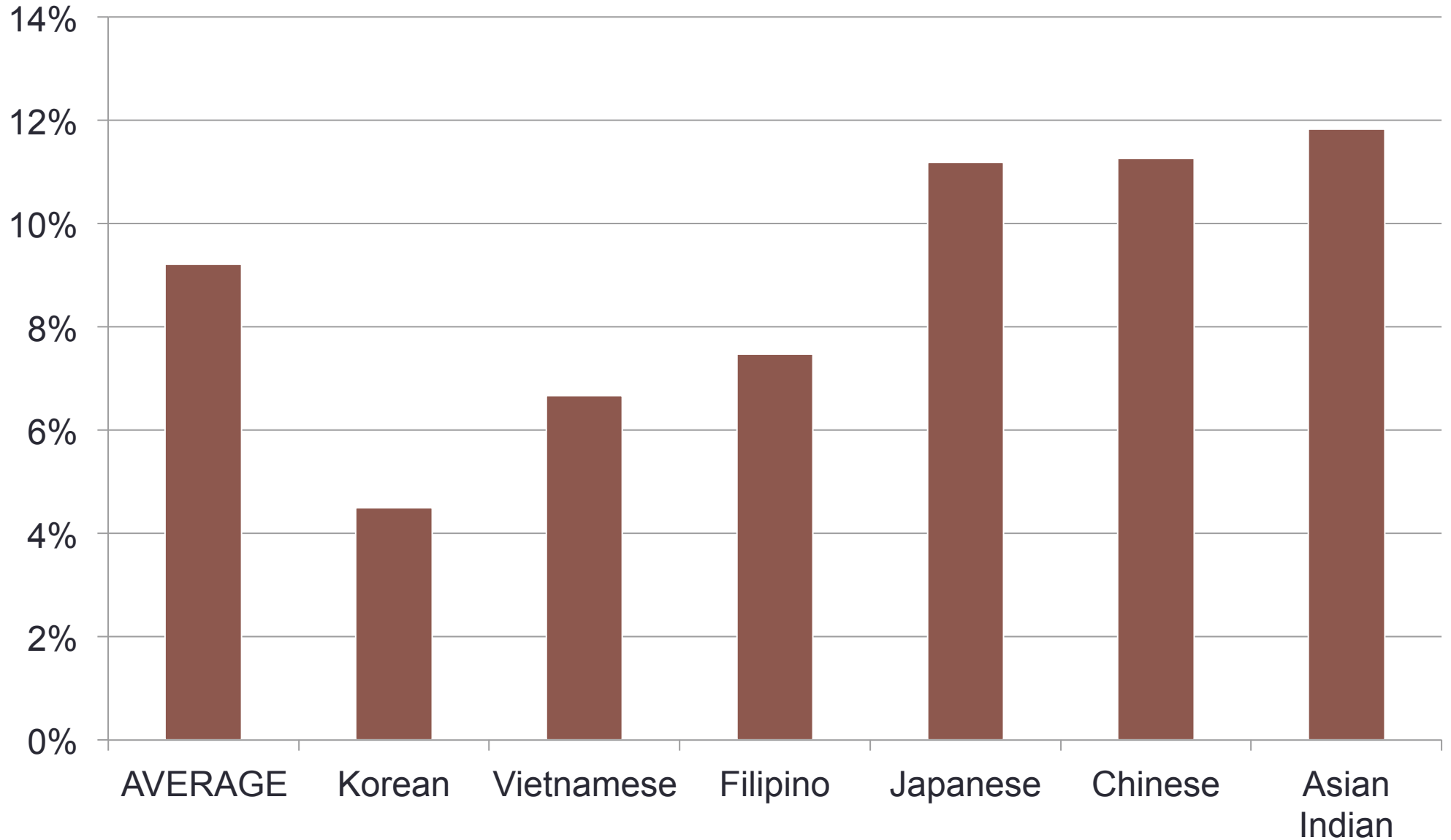
Discrimination & Ethnic Media Use

# Racial Discrimination

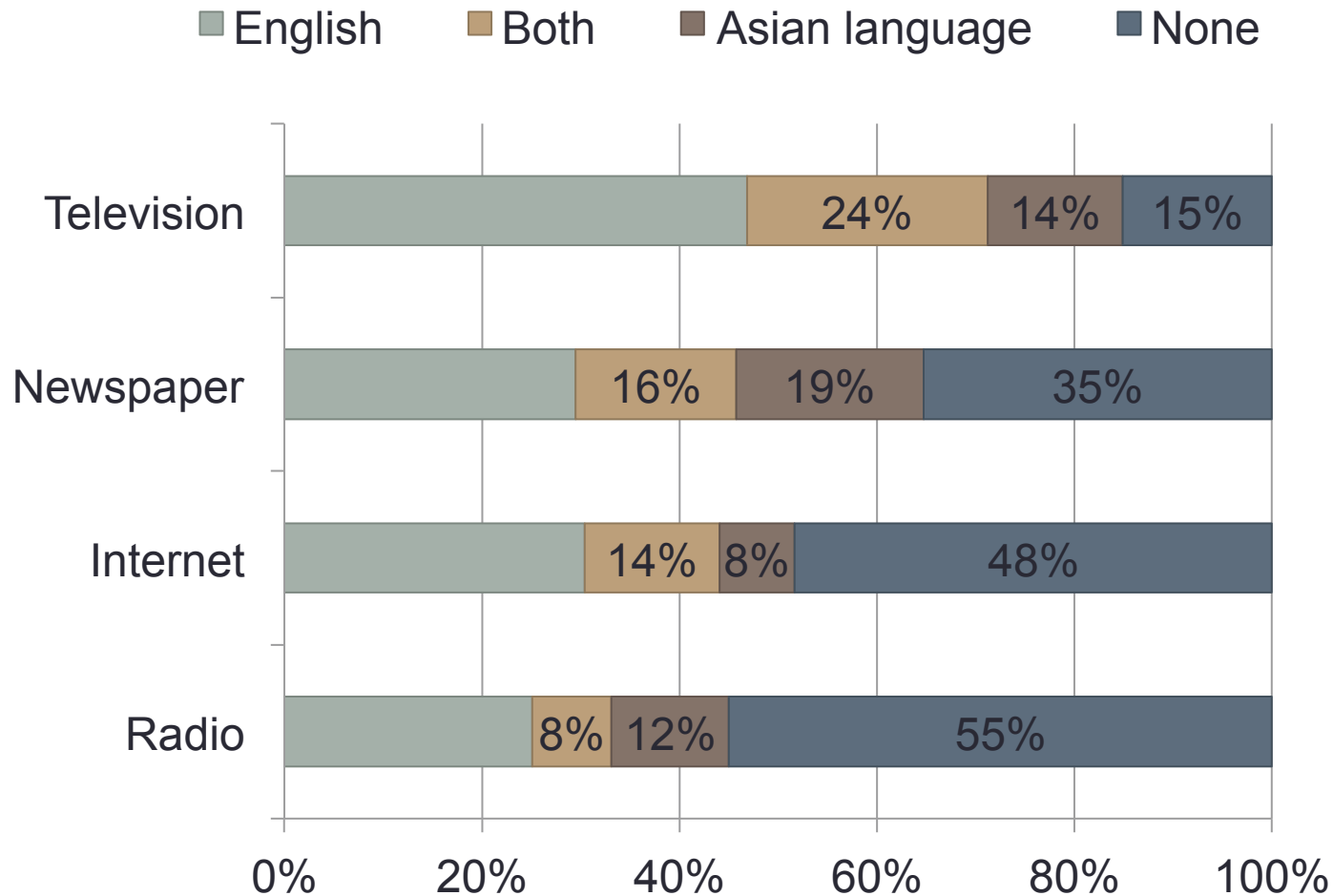


“Have you ever been ... unfairly denied a job or fired? ... unfairly denied a promotion at work? ... unfairly treated by the police? ... unfairly prevented from renting or buying a house or apartment? ... treated unfairly or badly at restaurants or stores?”

# Hate Crimes



# Political News Consumption



Also have this information for each group



# ON THE ISSUES

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# PROPOSITION 8

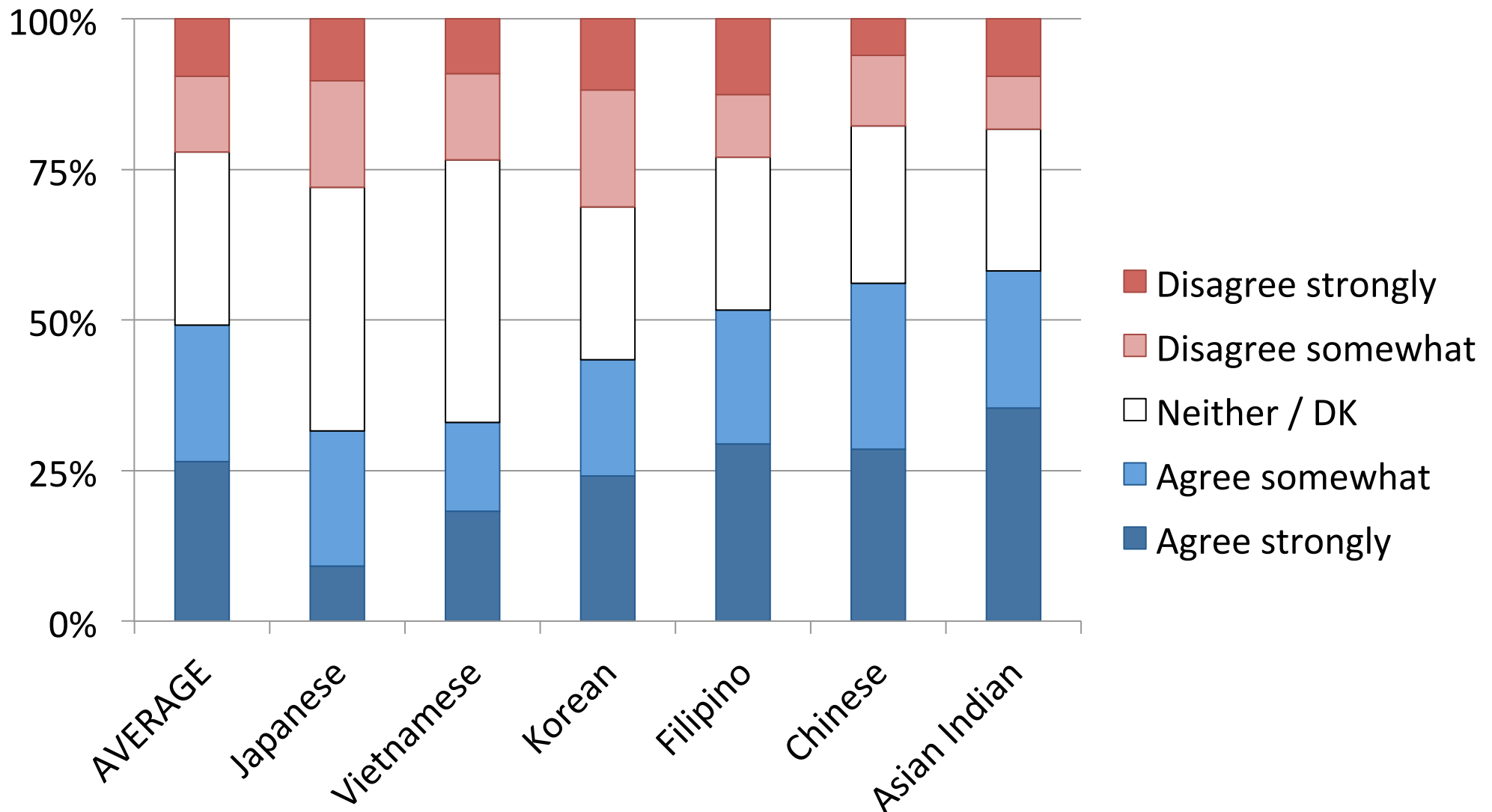
Do you favor or oppose changing the California State Constitution to define marriage as between a man and a woman, thus barring marriage between gay and lesbian couples?

	Noncitizens	Citizens
Oppose changing constitution	50%	55%
Favor changing constitution	26%	31%
Don't Know	20%	12%
Refuse	5%	2%

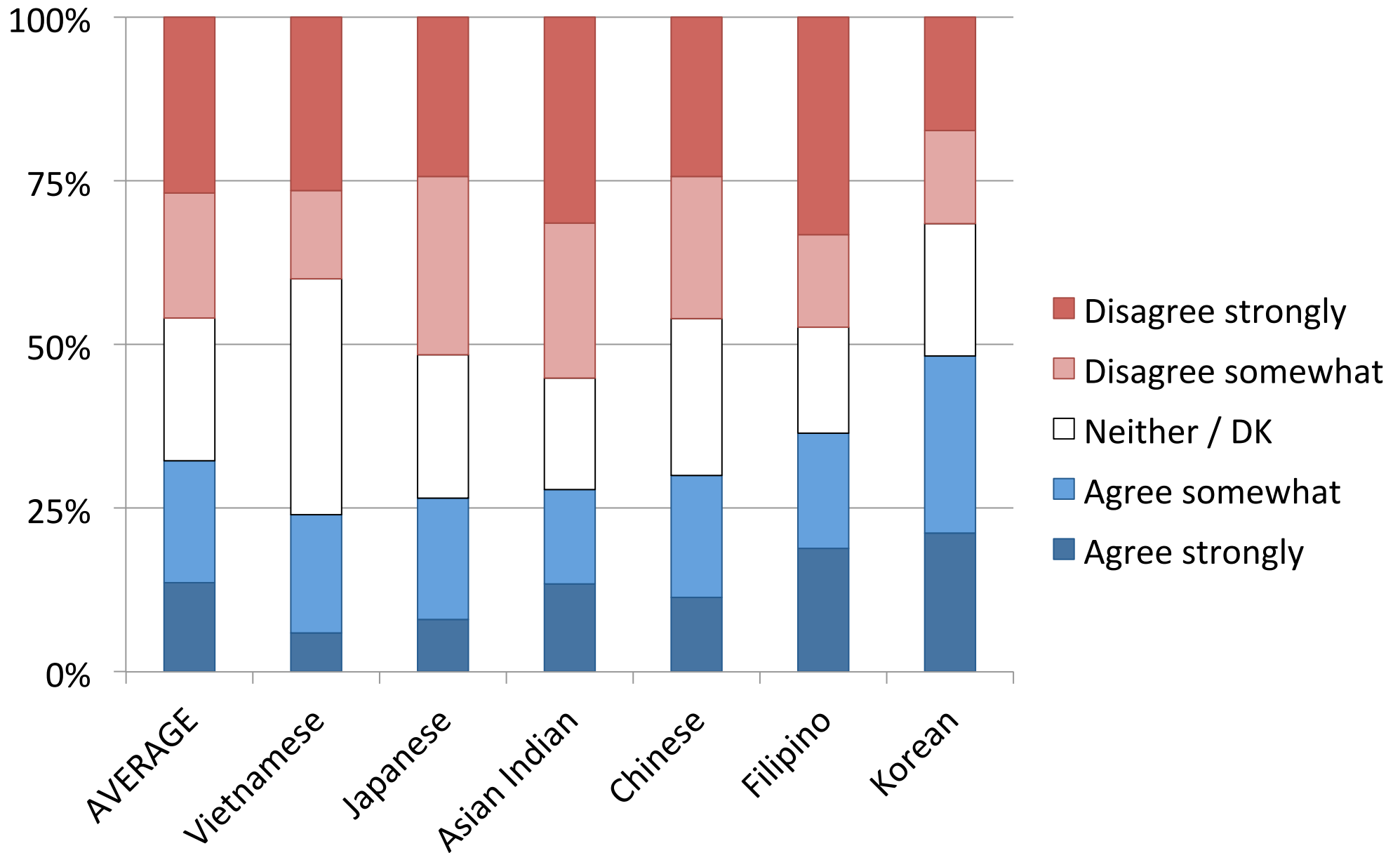
Some confusion likely over question wording  
(High opposition among Korean and Vietnamese)

# Immigration: Professional over Family Visas

U.S. immigration policy should favor people with professional qualifications over those who already have family in the United States

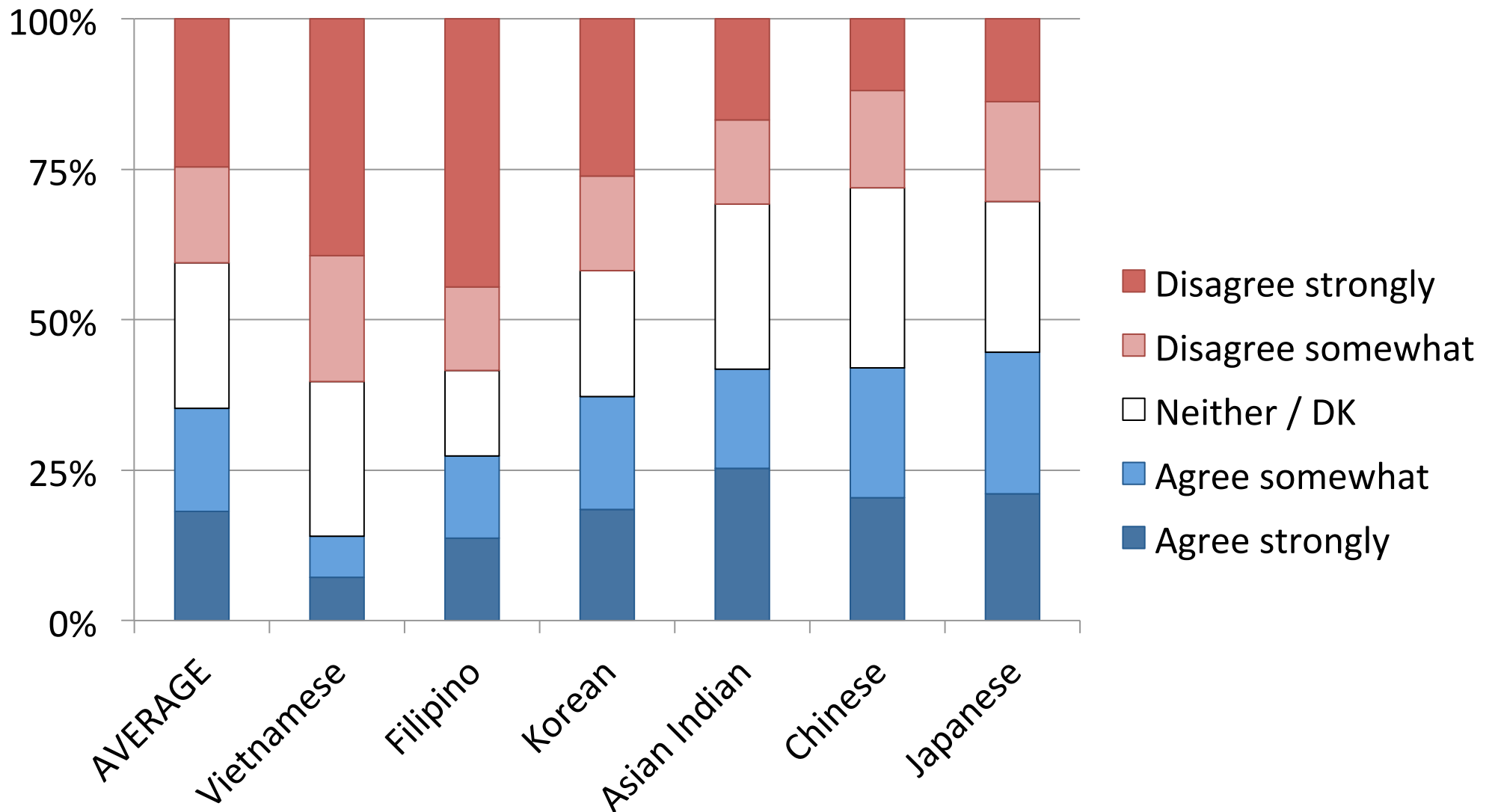


# Immigration: Path to Citizenship



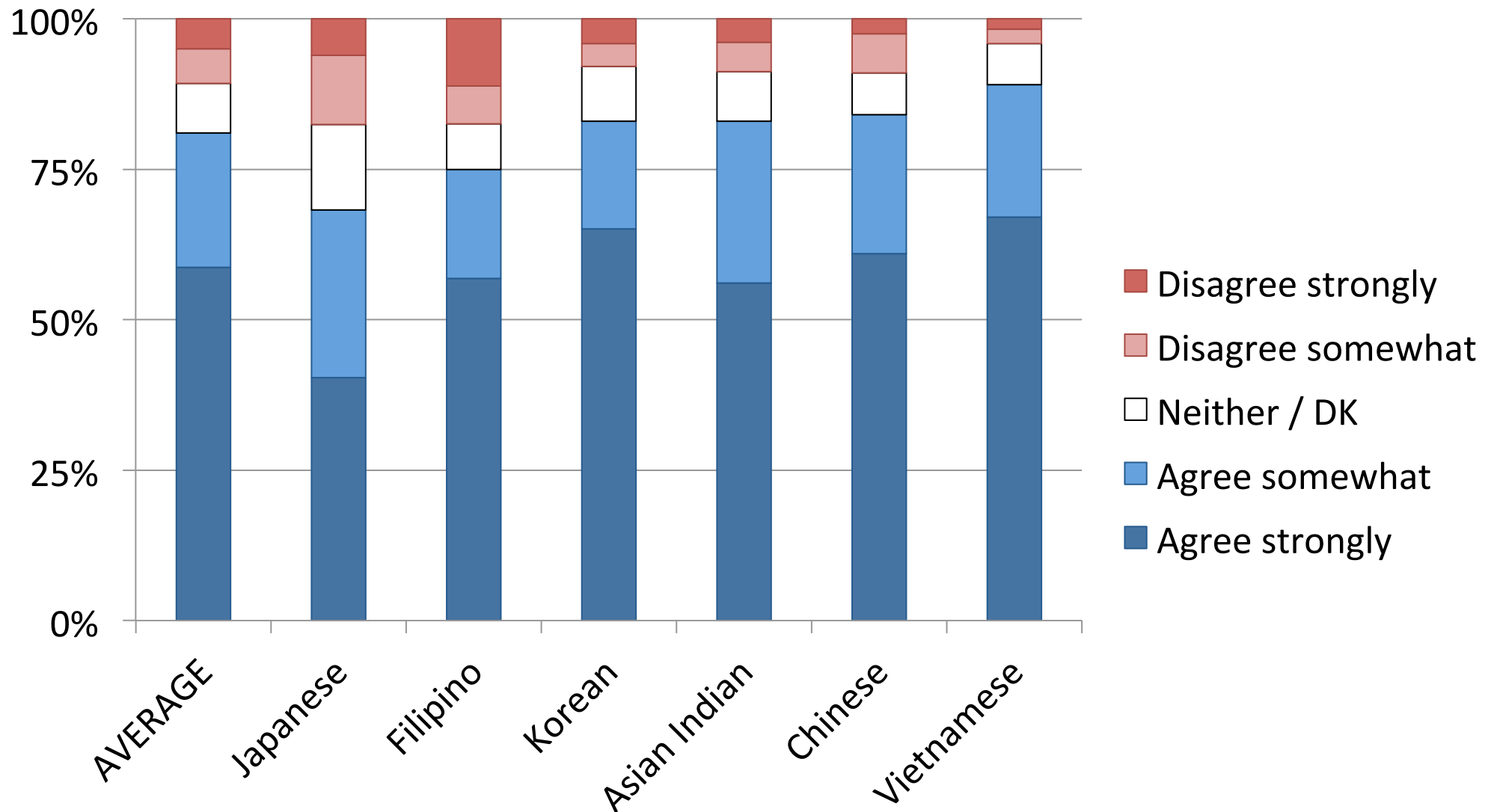
# Abortion

Abortion should be legal in all cases

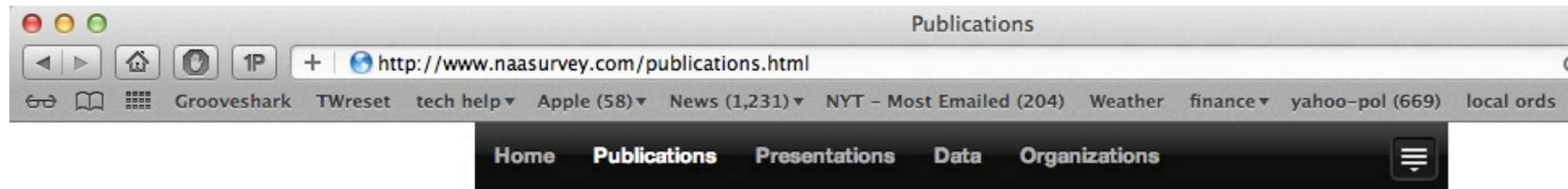


# Health Care

The federal government should guarantee health care for everyone.



# Other Reports: [www.naasurvey.com](http://www.naasurvey.com)



## **Publications from the NAAS**

### **Asian American Political Participation: Emerging Constituents and their Political Identities.**

Janelle Wong, S. Karthick Ramakrishnan, Taeku Lee, and Jane Junn  
(Russell Sage Foundation 2011)

### **Asian American Public Opinion.**

In Robert Shapiro and Lawrence Jacobs, eds., The Oxford Handbook of American Public  
Opinion and the Media, pp. 520-534. (2011)  
Jane Junn, Taeku Lee, S. Karthick Ramakrishnan, and Janelle Wong

### **Why Americans Don't Join the Party: Race, Immigration, and the Failure (of Political Parties) to Engage the Electorate.**

Zoltan Hajnal and Taeku Lee  
(Princeton University Press 2010)

### **Race-Based Considerations and the Obama Vote.**

Du Bois Review 6:1, 219-238. (2009)  
S. Karthick Ramakrishnan, Janelle Wong, Taeku Lee, and Jane Junn

### **Different or Similar? Asian American Public Opinion and Intergroup Relations**

Presentation at the Advancing Justice Conference, Los Angeles, October 29, 2009  
Karthick Ramakrishnan and Janelle Wong

# PLANS FOR 2012

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# Why we need this in 2012

- Presidential elections are the major time in which the AAPI community interests draw national attention, especially in mainstream media
  - Only other regular time is Census reports every 10 years
- Panel design important basis for future surveys
  - Faster, cheaper, and more regular polling in future
- Messaging strategies important for various efforts

# Other benefits

- Better program design
  - Tailored to needs of particular groups
- Need for community education varies by issue, and by group
  - *Example: Path to citizenship*
- Inform journalists, especially in mainstream media
- Counter misconceptions based on immigration, economic standing
  - *Example: Very progressive on health care reform*

## Issues: Deeper Focus and Messaging

- Reproductive Health and Rights
- Access to Health Care
- LGBT Rights
- Immigration Reform
- Economic Justice & Philanthropy
- Civic Engagement
- *Others, based on funder interest*

# THANK YOU

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