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**THE POLICY PRIORITIES AND ISSUE PREFERENCES
OF ASIAN AMERICANS IN CALIFORNIA**



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) are one of the fastest growing populations in the United States. Between 2000 and 2010, the Asian American population grew faster than any other racial group, at a rate of 46% in the United States, and by nearly a third in California. In California, Asian Americans comprise 13% of state's population when considering those that mention only one race (Asian alone) and 15% of the total population when considering those who identify with Asian and some other race.

Notably, Asian Americans are an important and growing constituency, as 600,000 new Asian American voters entered the national electorate in 2008 and a similar number is expected to do so in 2012. More generally, as of 2010, AAPI residents exceeded the 5% threshold in roughly one in four Congressional Districts and in nearly 600 cities. In 2012, there are also a record number of Asian Americans running for Congress in 2012, and AAPIs occupy key positions in Washington, D.C. and in various state capitols. Their growing influence in California is already apparent in the key electoral offices held by large-city mayors Ed Lee and Jean Quan, and U.S. Representatives Judy Chu and Mike Honda, among others.

The National Asian American Survey (NAAS) conducted the first nationally representative survey of the policy priorities and issue preferences of Asian Americans in 2008. In 2012, we are conducting a tracking survey with the addition of even more Asian ethnic groups than in 2008 (Hmong and Cambodian, in addition to Chinese, Indian, Filipino, Vietnamese, Korean, and Japanese) and with the addition of Pacific Islander groups such as Native Hawaiians and Samoans.

This report presents the results of interviews conducted through September 19, 2012 with a focus on those Asian Americans residing in California (1,154 respondents).¹ We disaggregate our data to the 8 ethnic groups in our sample when discussing adults and adult citizens in California (Chinese, Filipino, Vietnamese, Indian, Korean, Japanese, Cambodian, and Hmong). Given reductions in sample size for registered voters and likely voters, we break out data only for those groups whose numbers are greater than 70 respondents (Chinese, Filipino, Vietnamese, and Japanese), although the overall Asian American figures include all 8 groups. Our national reports (available at <http://www.naasurvey.com>) are not subject to these sample size limitations.

¹ The national sample contained 3,376 respondents, with 1,233 interviews of Californians (1,154 Asian Americans and 79 Pacific Islanders). There were an insufficient number of Native Hawaiian and Samoans from California at this point of the data collection to provide reliable estimates of political behavior and public opinion. Additional interviews are ongoing through October 2012, and a total of roughly 5,000 interviews nationwide will complete the data collection.

The data on public opinion among Asian Americans in California reveal that:

- The economy and jobs are by far the most important issues facing Asian Americans, followed by health care and education.
- More Asian Americans say that they are worse off financially than a year ago (24%) than better off (15%). This gap is much greater for Asian Americans in California than for those living outside California.
- The cost of affording college and paying off student loans is a much greater concern for Asian Americans in California than those living in other states (*see p12*).
- On the issue of health care reform, which has divided support among the general population, Asian Americans in California are largely supportive, with about a 3-to-1 ratio in favor. These levels are comparable to those found among Asian Americans living outside of California (*see pp13-15*).
- Support for health care reform is high regardless of whether the law is referred to as the Affordable Care Act or Obamacare (*see p13*).
- On affirmative action, which is an issue that the Supreme Court will consider this term, Asian Americans in California are overwhelmingly supportive, with about more than 75% of Asian American adults supporting “affirmative action programs designed to help blacks, women, and other minorities get better jobs and education” (*see pp17-18*).
- Asian Americans indicate levels of support for the environment that are far stronger than the rest of the population (*see pp21-23*).
- On the issue of undocumented immigration, Asian Americans are generally supportive of a variety of policies to help them integrate into the United States, including a path to citizenship, in-state tuition and driver licenses. Support is strongest for a path to citizenship, and most divided on driver licenses (*see pp19-20*).
- On strategies to reduce the federal budget deficit, Asian Americans in California are very supportive of tax increases on high earners (69%). This proposal receives majority support (52%) even among those households earning more than \$250,000 a year (*see p25*).
- When compared to their opinions on tax increases, Asian Americans in California are much less supportive of reducing the federal deficit by relying exclusively on cutting existing programs (36%, *see p26*).

BACKGROUND: ASIAN AMERICANS IN CALIFORNIA

Demographics

Asian Americans are a sizable and rapidly growing population in California. Out of a total population in California of 37.3 million in 2010, Asian Americans accounted for 4.9 million residents, or 13 percent of the state's population. In comparison, African Americans accounted for 6% of the state's population, Latinos accounted for 38% of the population, and non-Hispanic whites accounted for 40% of the state's population.

Other key demographic facts about the Asian American population in California include:

- While the “Asian alone” figure totaled 4.8 million residents in 2010, taking a more expansive measure of “Asian alone or in combination with 1 or more other races” shows a population that exceeded 5.5 million in 2010, or 15% of California residents.
- Between 2000 and 2010, the Asian American population in California grew faster than any other racial group, at a rate of 31.5%. By comparison, the Latino population grew by 27.8%, and the non-Hispanic white population in California reduced in number.
- In 2008, according to the Current Population Survey, Asian Americans were 10% of the registered voter population in California. This compares to 7% for African Americans, 22% for Latinos, and 59% for whites.
- In 2008, according to the Current Population Survey, Asian Americans were 9.2% of those who cast ballots in the November election in California. By comparison, African Americans were 7.6% of those who cast ballots, Latinos were 21.4%, and whites were 59.7%.
- Chinese Americans are the largest ethnic group of Asian Americans in the state, accounting for about a quarter of the Asian American population (1.25 million out of 4.9 million), followed by Filipinos (1.2 million), Vietnamese (0.58 million), Indian (0.53 million), Korean (0.45 million), Japanese Americans (0.27 million), Cambodian (96,000) and Hmong (93,000).
- There were 11 counties in California where the Asian American population exceeded 100,000 residents in 2010: Los Angeles, Santa Clara, Orange, Alameda, San Diego, San Francisco, Sacramento, San Mateo, Contra Costa County, Riverside, and San Bernardino.
 - Of these 11 counties, Riverside and San Bernardino had the fastest growth rates in the Asian American population between 2000 and 2010, (119% and 54%, respectively).

- Of these 11 counties, Orange and Santa Clara had more than 500,000 Asian American residents and Los Angeles County had 1.3 million Asian American residents.
- As a share of the county population, Asian Americans accounted for more than 20% of the resident population in four Bay Area counties in 2010: San Mateo (24%), Alameda (26%), Santa Clara (32%), and San Francisco (33%).
- Asian Americans have household sizes and rates of overcrowding that are higher than the statewide average²
- Asians are more likely than whites to have graduated from college, but also less likely than whites to have completed a high school education³
- Rates of educational attainment are highest among Indians, Japanese, Koreans, and Filipinos in the state, and are lowest among Hmong, Laotian, Cambodian, and Vietnamese Americans⁴
- These various groups also have different rates of civic and political participation, and patterns of public opinion, as we outline in this report.

² Asian Pacific American Legal Center, *The Diverse Face of Asian and Pacific Islanders in California*, 2005.

³ *Ibid.*

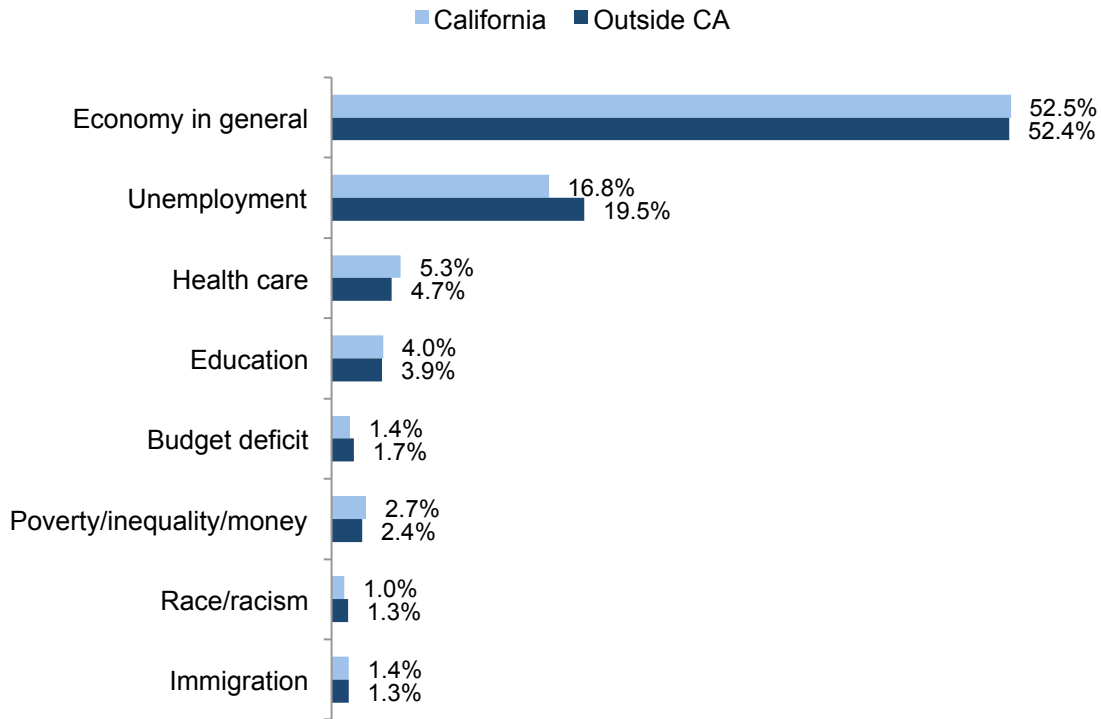
⁴ *Ibid.*

ISSUE PRIORITIES OF ASIAN AMERICANS IN CALIFORNIA

Respondents were asked what they felt was “the most important problem facing the United States today.” The survey allowed people to name up to two issues.

Figure 1 below compares the proportion of Asian American adults living in California and the rest of the country. The economy is, unsurprisingly, the most commonly cited problem. Following a distant second is the related issue of unemployment and jobs, with health care and education running third and fourth. Very few respondents mentioned issues like the budget deficit, poverty and inequality, race and racism, or immigration as a most important national problem. While there are few differences between Asian American adults living California and the rest of the country, Californians are less likely to mention unemployment as a critical problem, and slightly more likely to mention health care as the most important problem facing the United States.

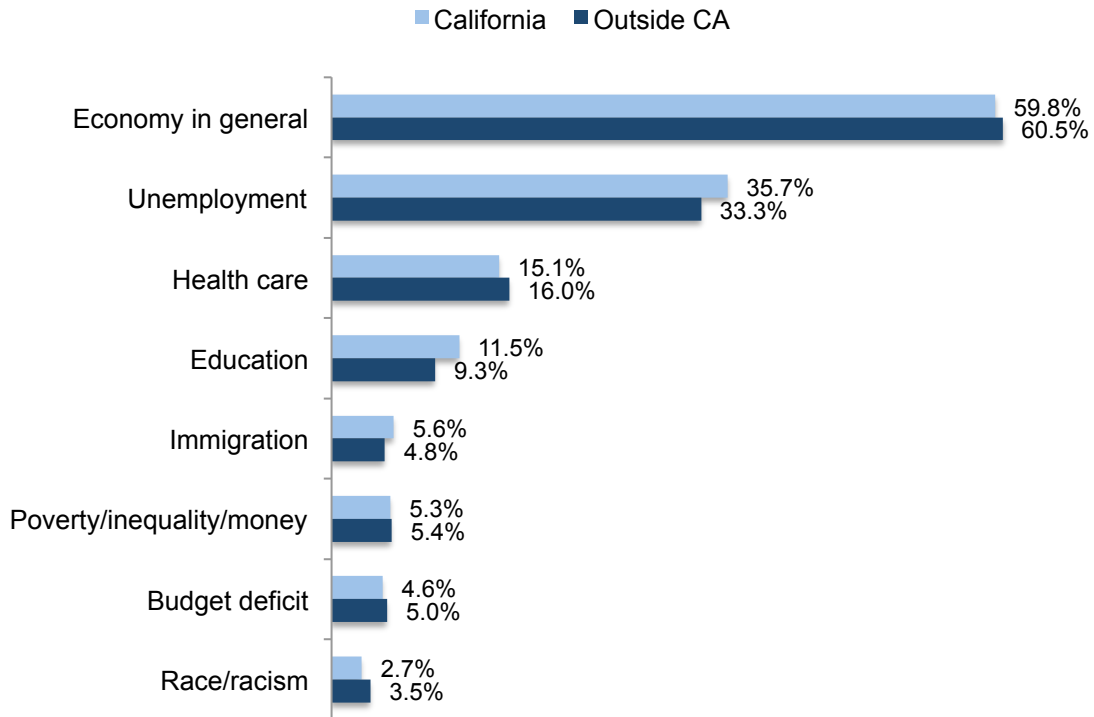
Figure 1: Most Important Problem, 1st Mention (Adult Residents)



While most surveys of the “most important problem” only record the first mention made by respondents, the 2012 NAAS allowed respondents to name another issue that ranked very high in their minds. In our survey, 81 percent mentioned two issues as “most important.” The basic rank order of issue priorities remains mostly unchanged in this expanded measure of issue priorities, but the number of mentions of issues other than

general economic concerns increased noticeably (Figure 2). Roughly one in three mention unemployment and jobs as a critical issue, with this concern slightly higher among Asian Americans living in California. We also find that nearly one in six likely voters cite health care as a key issue, with education running closely behind.

Figure 2: Most Important Problem, Any Mention (Adult Residents)



The Asian American Policy Agenda

The 2012 NAAS also asked its respondents to name the *one* issue that was most important to them *personally* (that is, compared to “the most important problem facing the United States”). As in 2008, we use this measure to gain some sense of what an Asian American agenda might be, through the process of aggregating the most important problems mentioned by Asian American adults.

By this personalized measure of issue priorities, general concerns about the economy were still prominent, but noticeably less so than when defined as a national problem (36% among California residents). Unemployment and jobs remains unchanged in its position as the second most commonly identified personal priority. The discernible shifts in the policy agenda for Asian Americans is seen with a greater attention to health care (13% among Californians) and, to a very modest extent, education (6%).

**Table 3: Most Important Problem Facing Asian Americans in California
(Adult Residents)**

	California	Outside CA
Economy in general	36%	40%
Unemployment	16%	20%
Health care	13%	10%
Education	6%	7%
Poverty/inequality/money	2%	1%
Budget deficit	4%	2%
Race/racism	1%	1%
Immigration	1%	1%

POLICY OPINION ON KEY ISSUES

Personal Financial Situation And Effects Of Great Recession

As we noted earlier in this report, at the very top of the list of issue priorities for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders is the economy in general and unemployment and jobs more specifically. There are good reasons for concern about the differential effects of the Great Recession on minority populations. A recent study from the Economic Policy Institute, for instance, found higher rates of change in unemployment among Asian Americans with advanced degrees compared to their white counterparts.⁵ The 2012 NAAS asked its respondents a standard way of gauging personal economic wellbeing in surveys: “We are interested in how people are getting along financially these days. Would you say that you (and your family) are better off, worse off, or about the same as you were a year ago?”

Table 4. Personal Financial Situation Compared to One Year Ago (Adult Residents)⁶

	Better	Worse	Same
Asian Americans	15%	24%	59%
Chinese	15%	31%	54%
Indian	15%	14%	71%
Filipino	17%	21%	61%
Vietnamese	17%	27%	54%
Korean	10%	25%	64%
Japanese	15%	15%	68%
Cambodian	15%	20%	57%
Hmong	11%	39%	48%

Table 4 shows that most Asian Americans held their ground financially between 2011 and this year (59%). Still, a higher proportion reported being worse off than better off (24% vs. 15%). This gap is greater for California residents than those living outside California (19.5% vs. 20%). There are some noticeable differences between ethnic groups in how well Asian Americans are surviving through the Great Recession: Hmong, Chinese, and Vietnamese Americans in California are most likely to report worsening

⁵ Algernon Austin, “Hidden Disadvantage: Asian American Unemployment and the Great Recession,” Economic Policy Institute Issue Brief #277 (May 28, 2010). Accessed online in September 2012 at http://www.epi.org/publication/hidden_disadvantage/

⁶ Don’t Know and Refused responses excluded

financial times, with 39, 31, and 27 percent, respectively, reporting that they were worse off than a year ago.

To delve more fully into the impact of the Great Recession on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, the 2012 NAAS also asked respondents if they had experienced a home foreclosure or been laid off or lost a job “since the economic crash in 2008.” Table 5 shows that one out of every 20 Asian Americans in our survey reported a home foreclosure and one in seven reported a job loss or lay-off. When the two measures are combined, 17 percent of Asian Americans either lost their house or their job since 2008, with about 2 percent losing both.

Some groups here are clearly hit harder: about 9 percent of Filipino Americans and 16 percent of Hmong reported home foreclosures since 2008; job losses weigh most heavily among the Hmong (24 percent) and Filipinos (22 percent). These figures are comparable to national figures for these groups. The proportion of Cambodians in California reporting home foreclosures is lower than the national average for Cambodians (5% versus 11%, respectively), but these differences are within the margin of error for this relatively smaller group in our California survey (+/- 12%).

Table 5. Experiences with Foreclosure and Job Loss since 2008 in California (Adult Residents)

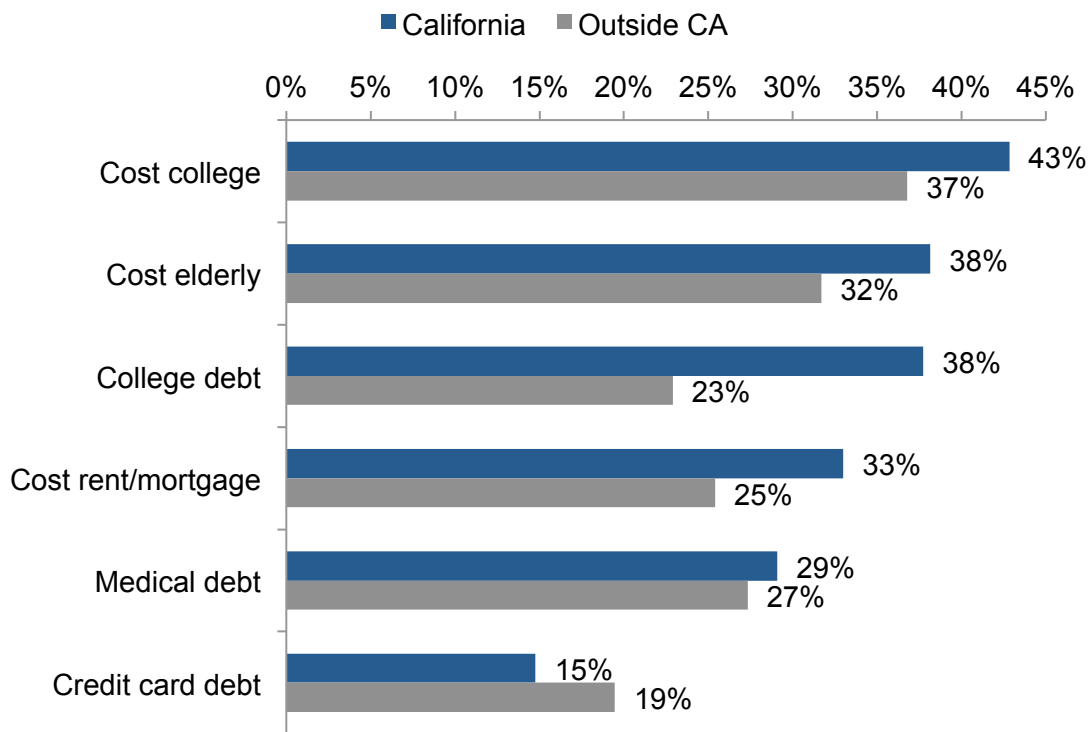
	Foreclosure	Job Loss
Asian American	5%	16%
Chinese	4%	17%
Indian	2%	9%
Filipino	9%	22%
Vietnamese	2%	13%
Korean	3%	15%
Japanese	1%	7%
Cambodian	5%	18%
Hmong	16%	23%

The post-2008 effects are also keenly felt in specific financial challenges and risks faced by Asian Americans. 2012 NAAS respondents were given a list of issues “people have mentioned as challenges they face” and then asked to assess “how serious of a problem each is for you and your family.” The list included the following sources of economic uncertainty -- the affordability of college, student loans or college debt, the cost of taking care of the elderly, medical bills, credit card debt, and the cost of rent or mortgage.

Worries about these various sources of financial stress are widespread. Asian American adults in California were more likely to say that the cost of college was a “very serious”

problem (43%), about 6 points higher than those living outside of California. Concerns about the cost of elderly care (38%) were also similarly higher among California residents than those living elsewhere, and the cost of college debt was 15 percentage points higher: 38% among residents of the Golden State vs. 23% elsewhere. About a third of Asian American adults in California said that the cost of their rent or mortgage was a very serious problem, while those mentioning medical debt (29%) and credit card debt (15%) were significantly lower. The problem of credit card debt was the only measure of self-reported financial stress where California residents ranked lower than Asian Americans living in other parts of the United States.

Figure 3: Challenges Facing Self and Family (Adult Residents)



Health Care

Respondents cited health care as one of the most important problems facing the nation. A key aspect to the issue of health care is public opinion on the Affordable Care Act (ACA), sometimes referred to as Obamacare. Surveys of the general population show that about 38% to 40% of Americans have a favorable impression of the law, and a greater proportion (43% to 44%) have an unfavorable impression.⁷

The 2012 NAAS asked “As you may know, Congress passed a sweeping health care law, [the Affordable Care Act / which some refer to as Obamacare], in 2010. It was then mostly upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court. Given what you know about the law, do you have a generally favorable or generally unfavorable opinion of it?”

As the results indicate (Table 9), Asian Americans are much more favorably inclined towards the law than opposed to it. Nearly half of Asian Americans in California had a favorable impression of the health care law (46%), about three times the proportion of those who had an unfavorable opinion of it (15%). Importantly, calling the law Obamacare instead of the Affordable Care Act meant even greater support for the law (52% in favor vs. 17% opposed). These patterns in support for health care reform are generally in line with Asian American opinion outside of California.

**Table 9. Opinion on Health Care Reform Among Asian Americans
(Adult Residents)**

	CALIFORNIA		REST OF U.S.	
	Affordable Care Act	Obamacare	Affordable Care Act	Obamacare
Favorable	46%	52%	50%	50%
Unfavorable	15%	17%	15%	18%
Neither	20%	14%	20%	19%
Don't Know	16%	15%	14%	12%
Refused	3%	2%	1%	1%

Among the various ethnic groups, support was highest among Vietnamese and Korean Americans for the Affordable Care Act (66% and 57%, respectively). This is in line with our findings in 2008, where support for universal health care was highest among Vietnamese Americans and Korean Americans. Among Hmong and Cambodian, large portions of the population did not know what opinion to express with respect to the law (33% and 19%, respectively).

⁷ Kaiser Family Foundation Health Tracking Poll: <http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/upload/8342-C.pdf>

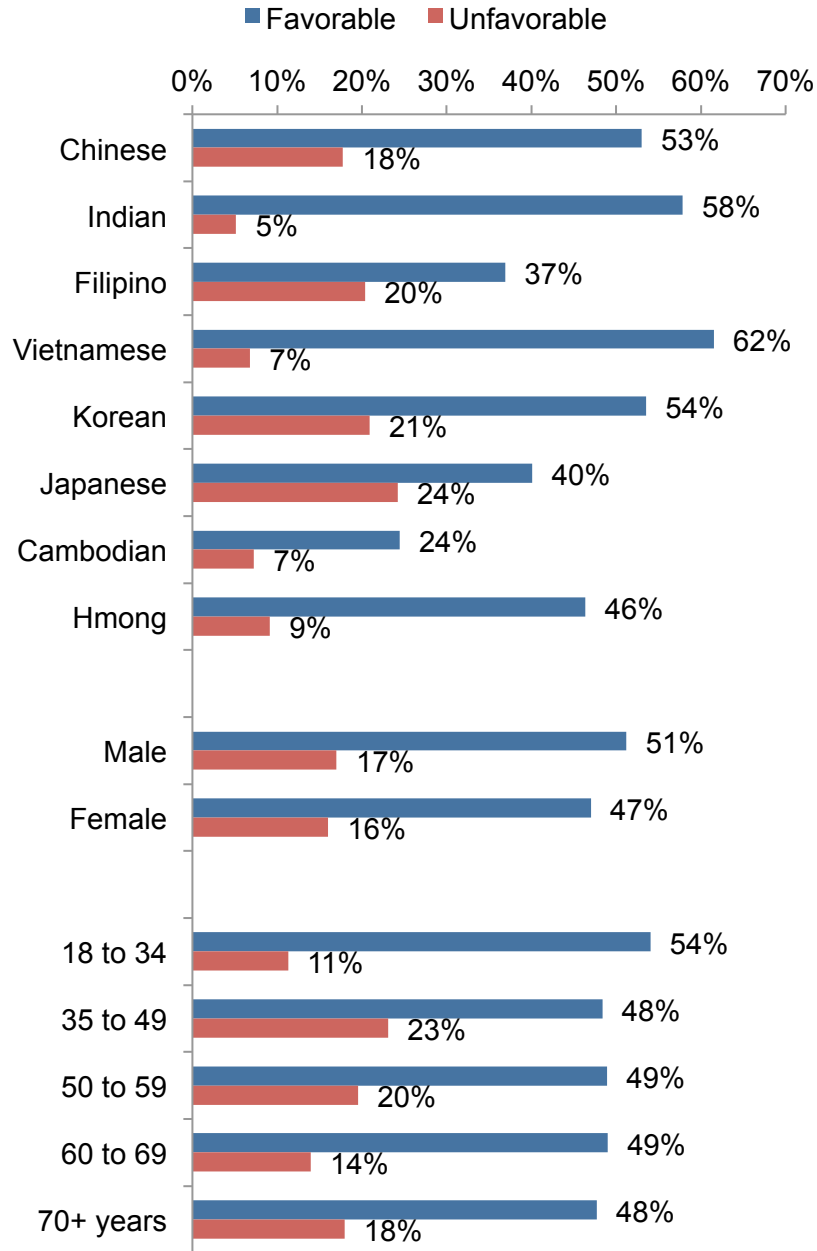
Among the rest of the Asian American population in California, support for the Affordable Care Act was lowest among Filipinos (27%), although it was still higher than the proportion of Filipinos in California opposed to the law (19%). Interestingly, when the law is referred to as Obamacare, support drops among Vietnamese (from 66% to 56%), but rises among Indian Americans (from 50% to 67%). These patterns are similar to those found for Vietnamese and Indians in the rest of the country.

In Figure 4, we present overall support for the health care law (using either version) for various subgroups in the population. Support is high for most groups, except for Filipinos where many express opposition to the law, and for Cambodians where many have not yet formed their opinion. There are no significant differences in support for the law by gender. And, in a pattern that is different from Asian Americans elsewhere in the country, young adults were more supportive of the law than those in higher age groups (in the rest of the country, only 44% of young Asian American adults had a favorable opinion, compared to 58% among those ages 60 to 69).

In addition to asking our respondents how favorably they viewed the law, we also asked if they believed that they and their family would be better off, or worse off, under law. We also asked the same question about whether they believed that the United States would be better off or worse off under the law (See Figure 5).

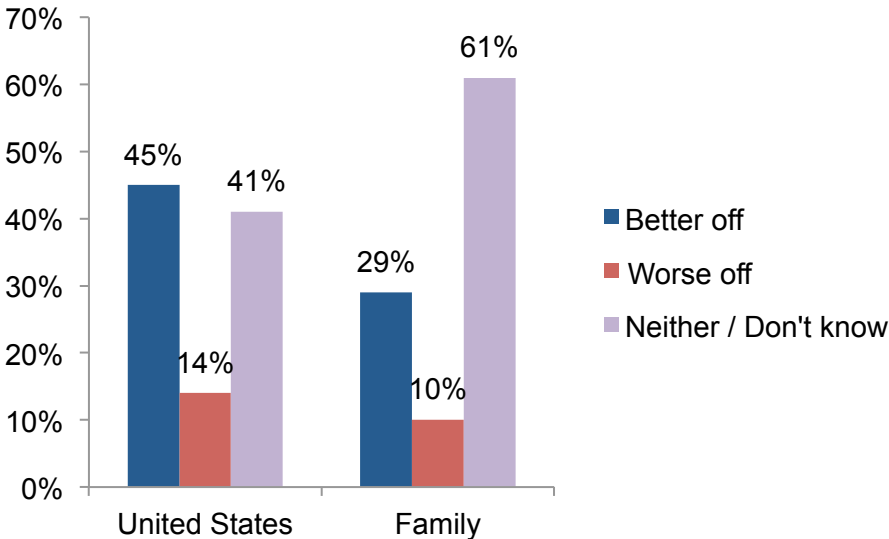
Among Asian Americans, more respondents saw their family as better off than worse off, and many more respondents saw the country as being better off than worse off because of the law.

Figure 4. Opinion on Health Care Reform,⁸ by Subgroup (Adult Residents in CA)



⁸ Using results for both versions (Affordable Care Act and Obamacare). Results total 100% when “neither,” “don’t know” and refusals are added.

**Figure 5. Evaluations of Effects of Health Care Reform for Country and Family
(Adult Residents in California)**



Affirmative Action

On October 10, 2012, the U.S. Supreme Court hears oral arguments in the case of *Fisher v. Texas*, which is a challenge to attempts by the University of Texas to consider racial diversity in its admissions policies. In amici curiae briefs filed with the Supreme Court, several organizations referred to the issue of Asian American opinion on affirmative action. One, filed by the Louis Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law, cites an online, convenience-sample survey of the membership of an Asian American organization, *80-20 National Asian American Educational Foundation*, which found a 52-to-1 opposition to affirmative action programs.⁹ By contrast, Members of the Asian American Center for Advancing Justice et al. filed a brief noting exit poll and other scientific survey evidence from the 1990s through 2005 indicating that Asian Americans support affirmative action programs.¹⁰

Our 2012 survey offers us the most recent data on Asian American and Pacific Islander public opinion on affirmative action. We model our question on one asked by the Pew Research Center in July 2002, which asked “In order to overcome past discrimination, do you favor or oppose affirmative action programs designed to help blacks, women, and other minorities get better jobs and education?”¹¹ Most rationales for upholding affirmative action today do not refer to legacies of past discrimination, but rather to promote the goal of diversity in institutions. Accordingly, we offer a different rationale in our 2012 survey “In order to promote diversity...,” but we also offer a version of the question that does not provide any such rationale. We provide results for both versions of the question below (See Figure 6).

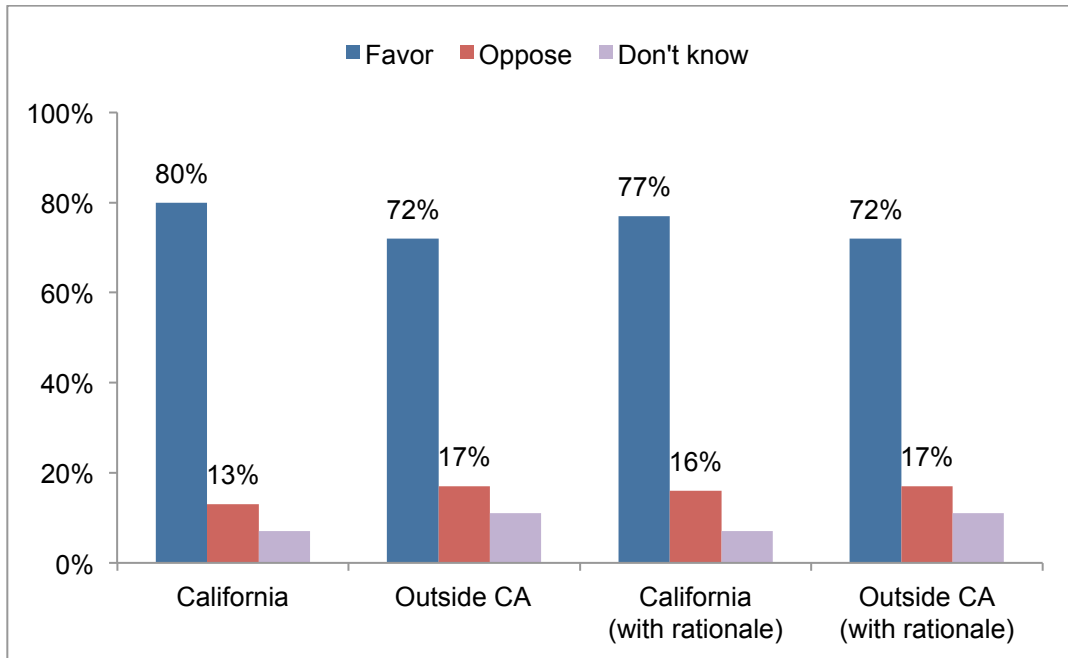
As the results indicate, Asian Americans overwhelmingly support affirmative action programs, both among residents of California and those living outside California (by a margin of 80-13 and 72-17, respectively). And these high levels of support are not dependent on the introduction of rationales for improving diversity. Indeed, our results indicate a slight decline in support for affirmative action when the rationale of diversity is mentioned.

⁹ Brief amici curiae of Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law, et al. filed. http://sblog.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/12-05-29_Gura_Final_Fisher_Brief.pdf

¹⁰ <http://www.utexas.edu/vp/irla/Documents/ACR%20Asian%20American%20Center%20for%20Advancing%20Ju.pdf>

¹¹ “Conflicted Views of Affirmative Action,” *Pew Research Center for the People and the Press*, n.d., <http://www.people-press.org/2003/05/14/conflicted-views-of-affirmative-action/>.

**Figure 6: Asian American Opinion on Affirmative Action
(Adult Residents in California)¹²**



¹² Question wording: [In order to promote diversity,] do you favor or oppose affirmative action programs designed to help blacks, women, and other minorities get better jobs and education?

Policies On Undocumented Immigrants

While political discussions about undocumented immigrants often centers on Latinos, it is estimated that 1 million undocumented Asian American immigrants are currently living in the United States. We asked respondents the extent to which they agree or disagree with three policies relating to undocumented immigrants living in the country.

As Figure 7 indicates, a majority of Asian Americans in California support a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants (56% agree, with 27 percent strongly so). A majority of Asian Americans in California also support the opportunity for undocumented immigrants to pay in-state tuition at public universities (51%), and a greater portion of Asian Americans support the opportunity to obtain state driver licenses than those who oppose them (49% versus 39%, respectively).

The Field Poll in California recently asked questions about driver licenses and in-state tuition for undocumented immigrants among registered voters, including Asian Americans.¹³ In Figure 8, we provide comparable results from our survey, this time only looking at registered voters. Just as with the adult Asian American population, we find majority support for in-state tuition among registered voters and plurality support for driver licenses.

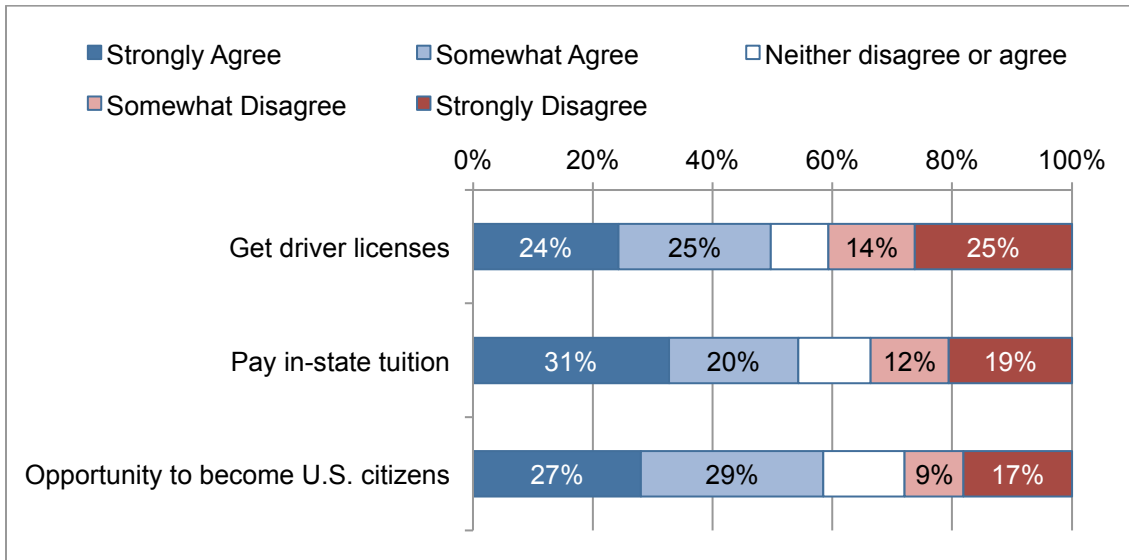
By contrast, the Field Poll found that Asian American registered voters were opposed to both policies. There are important differences to note between the two surveys. On question wording, the Field Poll used the term “discount on tuition” rather than the more prevalent term, “in-state tuition.”¹⁴ Our survey was also conducted in six more Asian languages than the Field Poll, and our sample sizes are likely larger, leading to greater precision in our estimates of Asian American opinion.¹⁵

¹³ The Field Poll, “Release # 2430: CALIFORNIA VOTERS SOMEWHAT AMBIVALENT ABOUT GOVERNMENT POLICIES TOWARD ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS LIVING HERE,” September 28, 2012. <http://www.field.com/fieldpollonline/subscribers/RIs2430.pdf>

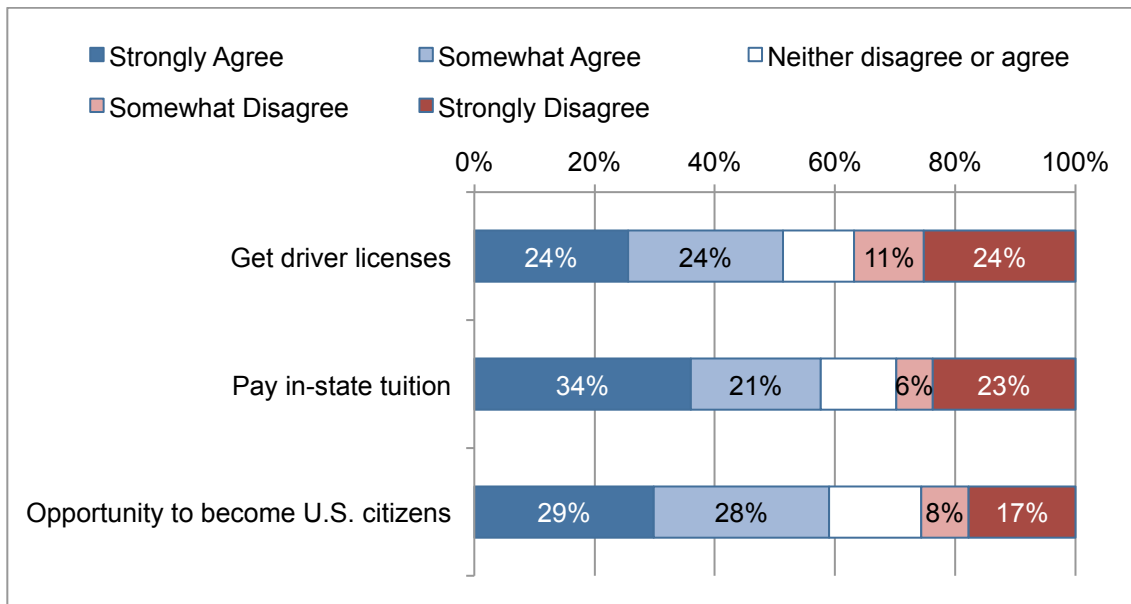
¹⁴ The Field Poll asked “Do you agree or disagree that illegal immigrants should receive the same discount on tuition at California’s public universities that the state’s legal residents are eligible for?”

¹⁵ This question was asked of half of our survey respondents, and we have valid responses for 369 registered voters. The Field Poll had a sample of 1,183 registered voters aimed to be representative of California’s electorate, with an unknown number of Asian American registered voters as part of an oversample.

**Figure 7: Opinion on Policies Towards Undocumented Immigrants
(Adult Residents in California)¹⁶**



**Figure 8: Asian American Opinion on Policies Towards Undocumented Immigrants
(Registered Voters in California)**



¹⁶ Question wording: there has been a lot of recent attention on illegal or undocumented immigrants. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. Undocumented or illegal immigrants should be allowed to: 1) Get driver's licenses, 2) Pay in-state tuition at public universities, 3) Have the opportunity to eventually become U.S. citizens.

Environmental Protection

Starting in 1989, the Gallup polling organization asked Americans the following simple question with respect to their identification with the goals of the environmentalist movement: “Do you consider yourself an environmentalist?” In the early 1990s, over 70% of Americans said they did, but this proportion declined throughout the decade and, by 2000, fewer than one-half of Americans (47%) considered themselves environmentalists.¹⁷ In July 2008, the ABC News organization repeated this question and, by then, only about two in five indicated that they identify as environmentalist (41%).

Another way to ascertain the public commitment to environmentalism has been to ask about its priority in relation to economic growth. Gallup has phrased the tradeoff in priorities in the following manner:

Which one of these statements about the environment and the economy do you most agree:

Protection of the environment should be given priority, even at the risk of curbing economic growth, OR

Economic growth should be given priority, even if the environment suffers to some extent

Even by this measure, the proportion of Americans giving priority to the environment has declined over the past 10 years, from 47% in 2003 to just 41% in 2012.¹⁸

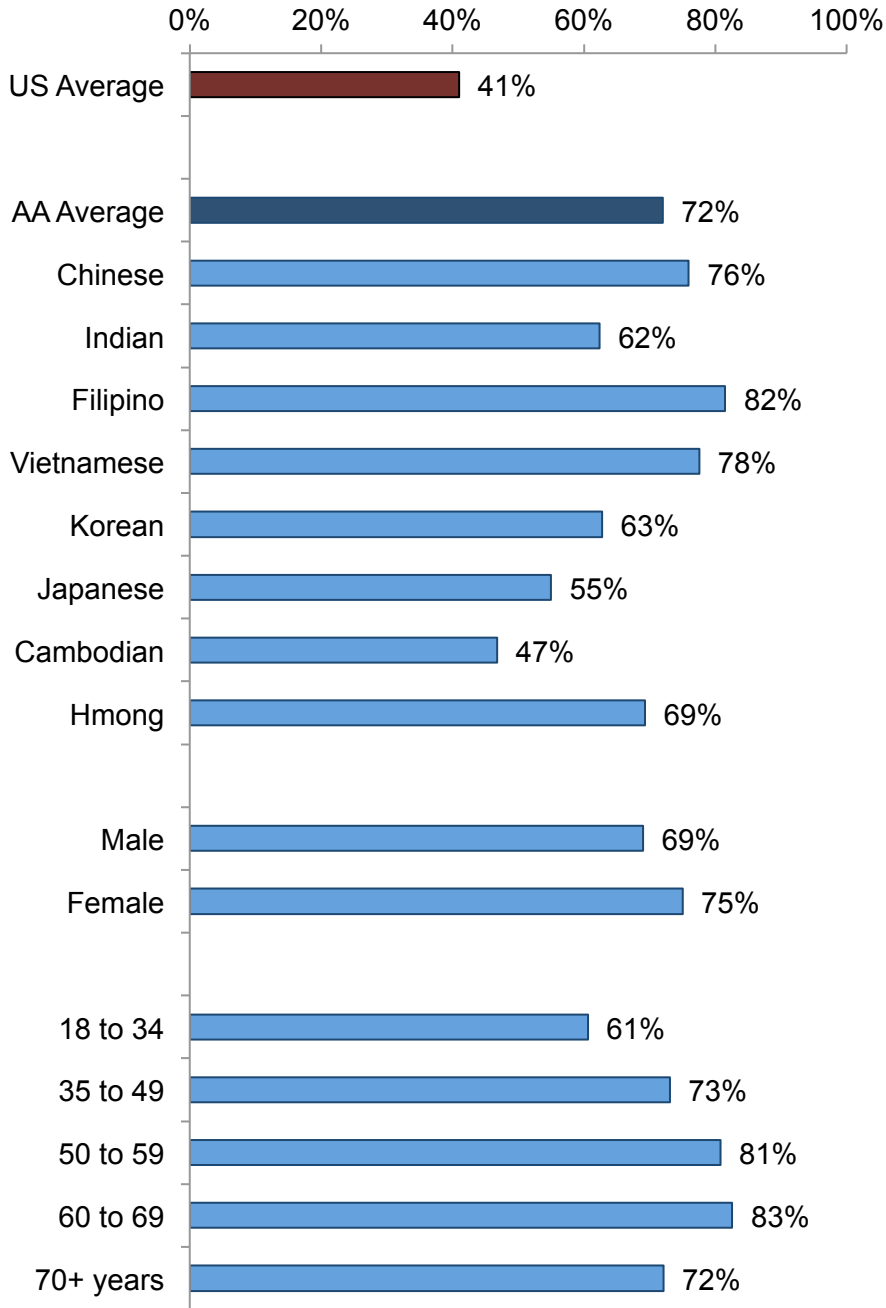
We replicated both questions in our survey, and find that Asian Americans rank much higher on their commitment and identification with environmentalism than the rest of the U.S. population. We present the results for California residents in Figures 9 and 10, which are comparable to Asian Americans nationally.¹⁹ As the results indicate, 72% of Asian Americans consider themselves environmentalist, more than about 30 points higher than the national average. Support for environmental protection varies across groups, depending on the measure we use. Interestingly, young Asian American adults are the least likely to self-identify as environmentalist, although their commitment to prioritize environmental protection over economic growth is the strongest (Figure 11).

¹⁷ Karlyn Bowman and Andrew Rugg, *Polls on the Environment, Energy, Global Warming, and Nuclear Power*, AEI Public Opinion Studies (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, April 2012).

¹⁸ Dennis Jacobs, *Americans Still Prioritize Economic Growth Over Environment* (Princeton, NJ: Gallup, March 29, 2012).

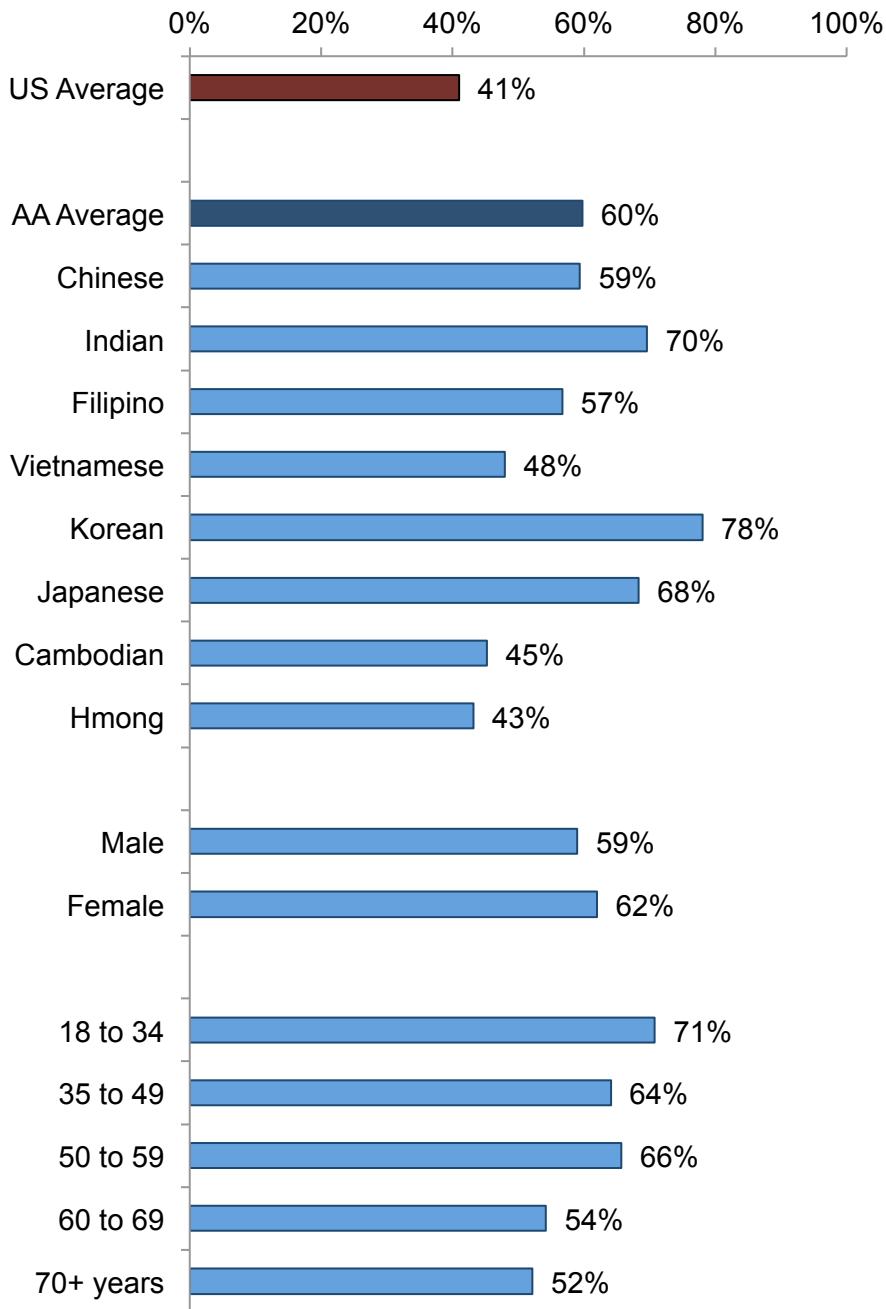
¹⁹ For our national report, visit <http://www.naasurvey.com/>

Figure 9: Proportion of Asian Americans in California Who Consider Themselves Environmentalist²⁰ (Adult Residents)



²⁰ Question wording: Do you consider yourself an environmentalist?

Figure 10: Proportion of Asian Americans in California Who Prioritize Environmental Protection Over Economic Growth (Adult Residents)



Deficit Reduction

In our reports on the voting decisions of Asian Americans in 2012, both at the national level and for California, very few respondents indicated that the U.S. federal budget deficit is “the most important problem” facing the country (7% among likely voters nationwide, and 6% among likely voters in California).²¹ At the same time, over two-thirds of likely voters, nationally and in California, indicated that the deficit would be a key issue in their voting decision for President.

This is also an issue that is central to non-partisan protest movements, whether by Tea Party Movement activists from the right or Occupy Wall Street activists from the left, and much of the partisan debate is defined by a clash of view over whether deficit reduction ought to be achieved through revenue-generating policies, through cuts in existing programs, or some combination of both. What are Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders' views on this issue? The 2012 NAAS asked two questions relevant to this debate. Respondents were asked, “In order to reduce the national deficit” whether the federal government should “raise taxes on those earning more than \$250,000 a year” and a separate question on whether the federal government should “rely only on cutting existing programs” in order to reduce the deficit.

Mirroring a general national sentiment, two-thirds of NAAS respondents (69 percent) “somewhat” or “strongly” agreed with raising taxes on the rich (See Figure 11).²² This is higher than the 64% of Asian Americans living outside of California who agreed to the same. By contrast, only about one-third (36 percent) “somewhat” or “strongly” favored an approach that relied exclusively on cutting programs, either in California or in the rest of the United States (See Figure 12).²³

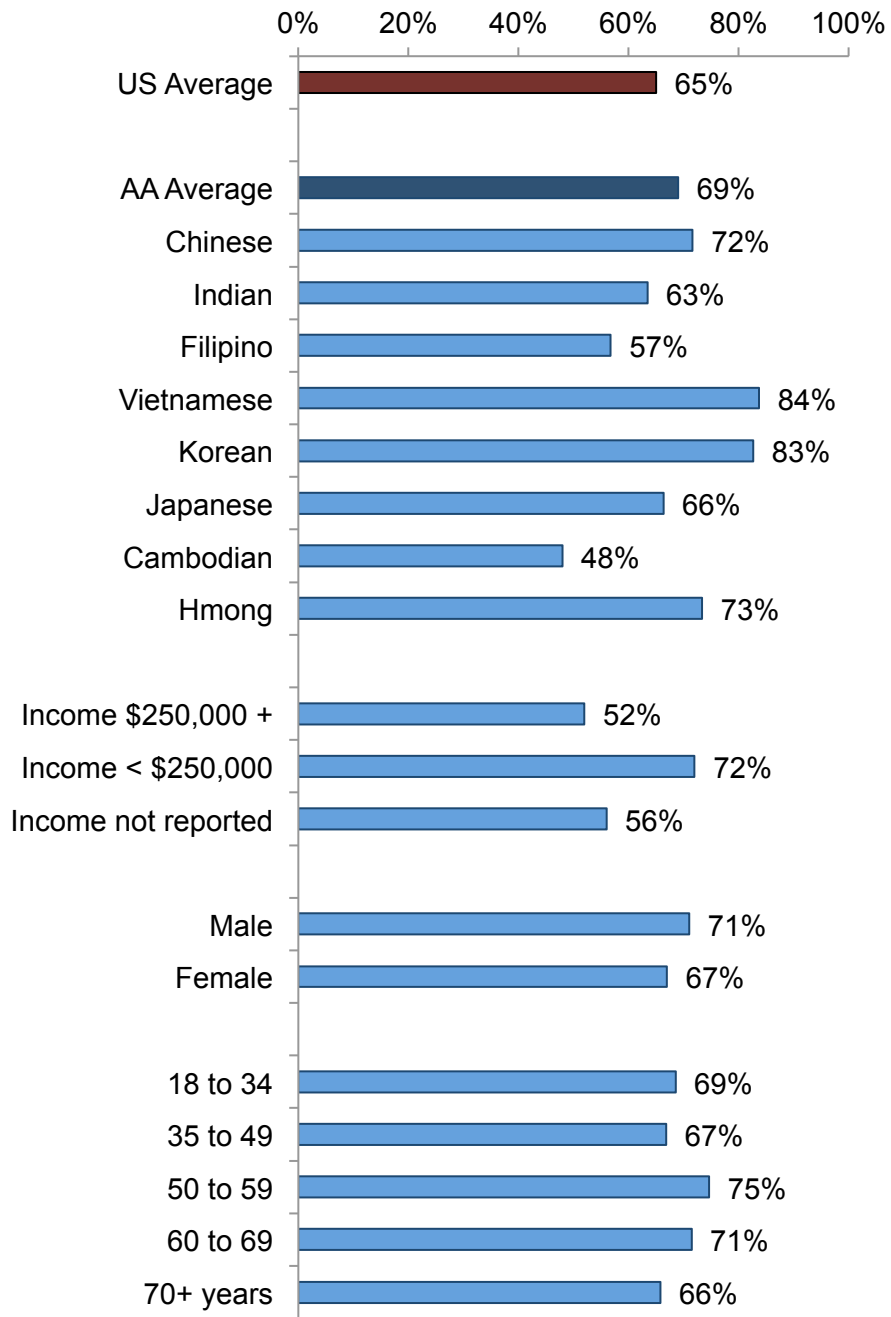
The support for deficit reduction by levying taxes on the wealth is widespread across ethnic groups, gender, and age groups. Notably, even a majority of those who reported earning a household income of more than \$250,000 in the last year supported this option, with 52% supporting it. The “all-cuts” approach is broadly unpopular across income groups, gender, and ethnic origin. The one discernible pattern here is that middle-age adults (ages 50 to 59) are more than twice as likely to support cutting programs (45 percent) than are their 18 to 34 year old counterparts (16 percent support).

²¹ Visit <http://www.naasurvey.com> to download our national report on Asian American issue preferences (*The Policy Priorities And Issue Preferences Of Asian Americans And Pacific Islanders*).

²² In August 2012, a Washington Post/Kaiser Family survey indicated that 63 percent of Americans supported raising taxes to increase for households with incomes of \$250,000 or more. *The Washington Post-Kaiser Family Foundation Dimensions of Partisanship Survey*, August 2012. Accessed online September 2012 at <http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/8341.cfm>.

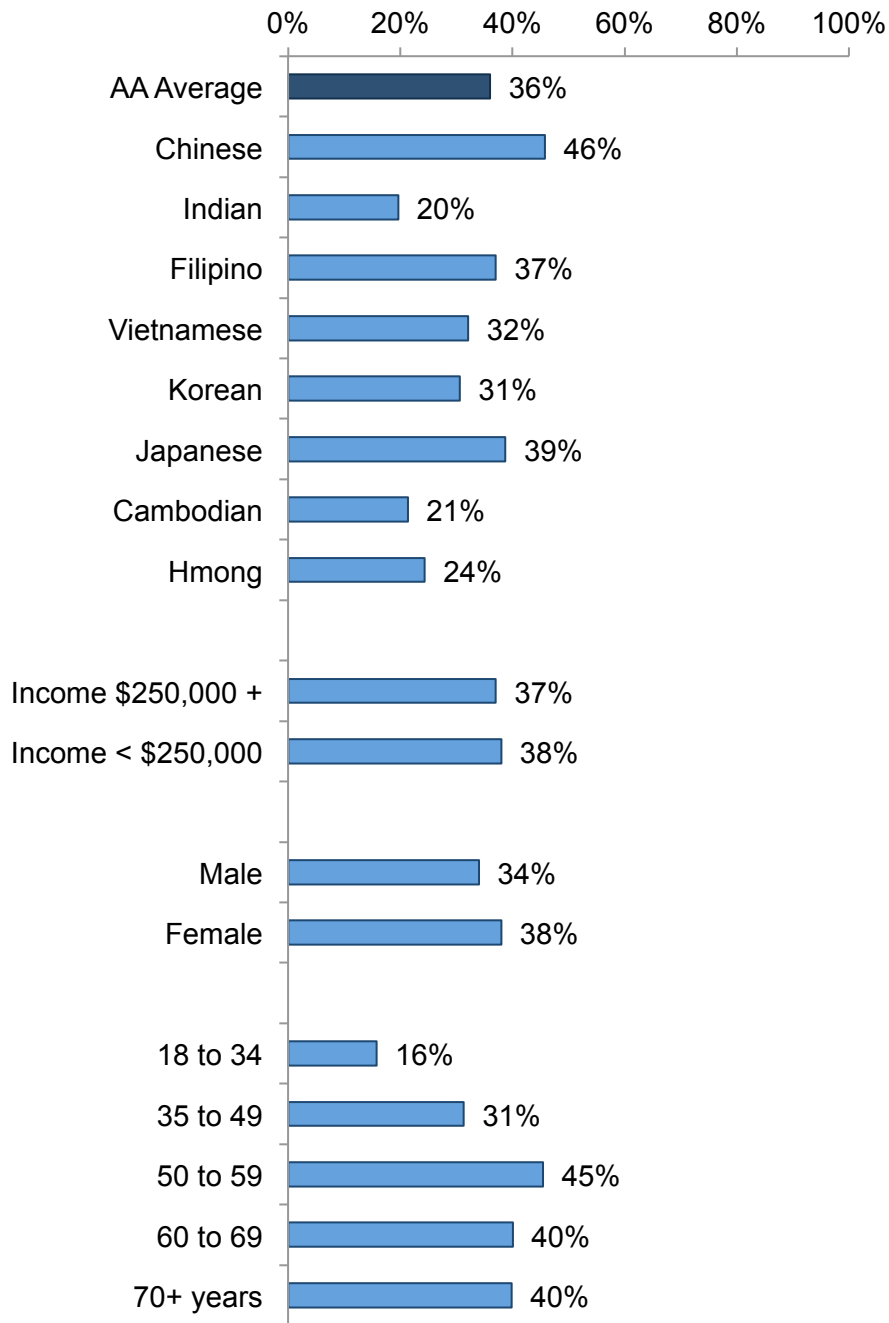
²³ 24% agreed with both statements, suggesting that they would be comfortable with either scenario; 40% agreed only with the tax increase and not a cuts-only scenario, 11% agreed only with a cuts scenario, and 13% did not agree with either strategy.

Figure 11: Asian American Support for Reducing Federal Deficit By Raising Taxes on Those Earning More than \$250,000 (Adult California Residents)²⁴



²⁴ Question wording: Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. “In order to reduce the national deficit, the federal government should raise taxes on those earning more than \$250,000 a year.” Data for the United States from *The Washington Post-Kaiser Family Foundation Dimensions of Partisanship Survey*, August 2012, <http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/8341.cfm>.

Figure 12: Asian American Support for Reducing Federal Deficit With Spending Cuts Only (Adult California Residents)²⁵



²⁵ Question wording: Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. “In order to reduce the national deficit, the federal government should rely only on cutting existing programs.”

News Sources and Ethnic Media

With citizen and likely voter populations that are still mostly composed of first-generation immigrants, the Asian American electorate is notable for the importance of ethnic language media and ballot language access. The 2012 NAAS asked questions about whether respondents received most of their information about "national and international issues" from radio, television, newspapers, magazines and Internet use, limiting respondents to identify up to two primary sources. For each identified primary media source, respondents were asked if it is an Asian or ethnic media source.

Table 10. Sources of News Information Among Asian American Adults and Likely Voters²⁶ (California Residents)

	Any Source	% of source is Ethnic	Any Source (Likely Voters)	% of source is Ethnic (Likely Voters)
Television	70%	51%	71%	43%
Internet	40	41	42	26
Newspaper	29	53	35	37
Radio	12	53	13	31
Magazine	2	13	2	12

As Table 10 shows, television is easily the most commonly cited source of information about politics and other national and international affairs (70%), followed by the Internet (40%). Traditional media sources of the 20th Century, like print newspapers and magazine or radio lag quite far behind in their usage as a primary source of information. Likely voters are somewhat more likely, however, to report reliance on newspapers for their political information. Table 10 also shows that, to a significant extent, Asian Americans continue to rely on ethnic or Asian media outlets for this information. For the most commonly cited media sources (television, the Internet, and newspapers), the reliance on ethnic media among all Asian Americans in the 2012 NAAS sample ranges between 41 percent and 53 percent. This reliance on ethnic media diminishes among likely voters down to a range of 26 percent to 43 percent.

²⁶ Question: "How do you get most of your news about national and international issues? From ... television ... the Internet ... newspapers ... radio ... magazines?" For each identified source, respondents were then asked if that source if that was an ethnic or Asian media source. Question replicated from surveys by Pew Research Center for the People and the Press.

APPENDIX

Methodology

This report is based on data collected from 3,034 telephone interviews of adults in the United States who identify themselves as Asian American, which in the broadest sense includes people with any family background from countries in Asia. We also conducted 342 interviews with Pacific Islanders. Interviews were conducted by telephone from July 31, 2012 through September 19, 2012. Additional interviews are ongoing through October 2012, and a total of roughly 5,000 interviews will complete the data collection.

For our California report, we rely on 1,154 Asian American respondents, whose breakdown by ethnic background is as follows.

Chinese	228
Vietnamese	199
Filipino	186
Japanese	154
Korean	118
Indian	117
Hmong	84
Cambodian	68

There were an insufficient number of Native Hawaiian and Samoans from California at this point of the data collection to provide reliable estimates of political behavior and public opinion. When we report on “likely voters,” we do not report on Indians, Koreans, Cambodians, and Hmong because the sample sizes drop below 50 respondents.

Respondents were offered a choice of language to be interviewed in English, Mandarin, Cantonese, Hindi, Hmong, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Thai, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.

The randomly drawn list sample was obtained from TargetSmart with ethnicity coded by Ethnic Technologies (and Catalist for the Hmong sample, for which TargetSmart does not have an ethnic classification). The listed samples include those not registered as well as those who are registered. Registered voter lists are obtained from state registrars, matched to consumer information data, and updated for address changes. The party registration characteristics of our survey sample are in line with estimates from previous studies of Asian Americans in particular states. The survey was conducted by Interviewing Services of America, Inc. (ISA) of Van Nuys, California, under the supervision of Francine Cafarchia, John Roses, and Frank Weimer. Mobile phones were included in the dialing procedure. Interview translations were conducted by Accent on Languages of Berkeley, California, and audited by a team of bilingual staff in partner organizations.

Sampling error of the groups reported in this survey are as follows:

Overall sample of Asian Americans in California: +/- 3%

Chinese	+/- 6.5%
Vietnamese	+/- 7%
Filipino	+/- 7%
Japanese	+/- 8%
Korean	+/- 9%
Indian	+/- 9%
Hmong	+/- 11%
Cambodian	+/- 12%

Sampling error from the size of our sample is only one type of error possible in surveys like the 2012 NAAS. Findings may also be subject to variation from question wording, question order, and the time and date when the survey was conducted.

The sampling frame was drawn primarily from commercial vendor lists of “very likely” and “likely” Asians. We used Census data from the 2010 decennial census and the 2010 American Community Survey to set sample targets for ethnic sub-groups. Ethnic sub-group targets were set to provide adequate representation for the largest Asian American groups, but also to provide as much statistical power to as many groups as possible.

The findings in this report are weighted statistically to account for any demographic differences of interest between the sample and population parameters for analyses of the national Asian American population, as well as for subgroups of the population, on the following dimensions: size of group within a state, educational attainment, gender and nativity.

The National Asian American Survey is the collaborative effort of Karthick Ramakrishnan at University of California-Riverside and Taeku Lee at University of California-Berkeley. Questions about sample design should be directed to Karthick Ramakrishnan at karthick@ucr.edu.

Glossary of Terms and Concepts

Ethnic subgroups

Respondents in our survey were asked: “What is your ancestry or ethnic origin?” Those that specified an ancestry or ethnic origin to a prior question on racial identification were assigned that ancestry or ethnic origin. For response choices, we used the U.S. Census classification system of Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Hmong, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, and other national origins such as Bangladeshi, Cambodian, etc. Based on the distribution of responses in our survey, we report data on Chinese, Indian, Filipino, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, Cambodian, and Hmong.

For Pacific Islanders, we report data on the two largest groups for whom we have adequate sample sizes: Native Hawaiians and Samoans. We also targeted Tongans for interviewing, but do not have sample sizes large enough to report the data reliably.

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National Asian American Survey (NAAS) is a scientific, independent, and nonpartisan effort to gauge the opinions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the United States. In our 2012 survey effort, we benefited greatly from the help of the following individuals and institutions. We, the authors (Karthick Ramakrishnan and Taeku Lee) are solely responsible for any errors contained herein.

Project partners on the survey who provided significant assistance in funding and outreach included the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF) and the Asian American Justice Center. Asian Pacific American Legal Center provided critical assistance on audits of the sample's ethnic classification.

Outreach partners on the survey include 18 Million Rising, Advocates for Youth, API Equality - LA, Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund, Asian American/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy, Asian Law Caucus, Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, Asian Pacific American Legal Center, Asian Pacific Environmental Network, Asian Pacific Islander American Vote, Asian Pacific Islander Health Forum, California Immigrant Policy Center, Chinese for Affirmative Action, Japanese American Citizens League, Movement Advancement Project, National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development, National Korean American Service & Education Consortium, National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health, National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance, Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance, Reproductive Health Technologies Project, South Asian Americans Leading Together, South Asian Network, and Southeast Asia Resource Action Center.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

This report, and all other reports and data from the National Asian American Survey are available online at <http://www.naasurvey.com/>.

Karthick Ramakrishnan is associate professor of political science at the University of California, Riverside. His research focuses on civic participation, immigration policy, and the politics of race, ethnicity, and immigration in the United States. Ramakrishnan directs the National Asian American Survey and is writing a book on the rise of state and local legislation on immigration over the past decade.

Ramakrishnan received his Ph.D. in politics from Princeton University, and has held fellowships at the Russell Sage Foundation, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, and the Public Policy Institute of California. He has received several grants from sources such as the James Irvine Foundation and the Russell Sage Foundation, and has provided consultation to public officials at the federal and local levels. His articles and books on immigration and politics can be found at www.karthick.com.

Taeku Lee is Professor and Chair of Political Science and Professor of Law at UC-Berkeley. He has authored and edited numerous books on race and ethnic politics, immigration, political parties, and public opinion. Lee serves on the American National Election Studies Board of Overseers and on the Council of the American Political Science Association.

Lee studies political partisanship among Asian Americans as they compare to partisanship for whites, Latinos, and African Americans. He also specializes on the role that identity and civic engagement play in bringing Asian Americans into the political arena. Lee's work has earned him three book awards and several fellowships.

Together, Ramakrishnan and Lee have had extensive experience in survey design and analysis and expertise on public opinion and racial politics. They have collectively written 7 books and dozens of articles on racial/ethnic politics, and have conducted 17 surveys, eight of which have included multiple language support for Asian Americans. They have also overseen several successful research projects and their dissemination to policy-relevant audiences.