



Headlines

36 Fil-Ams running in US polls

By Rainier Allan Ronda (The Philippine Star) Updated November 07, 2012 12:00 AM [Comments \(7\)](#)

MANILA, Philippines - Thirty-six Filipino-Americans are vying for national and local positions in today's elections in the United States.

According to reports, at least two Filipino-Americans are running for seats in the US House of Representatives. They are Marisha Agana, a Republican eyeing the seat for the 13th district of Ohio, and incumbent Democrat Rep. Robert Scott who is running for an 11th term as representative of the Third District of Virginia.

Fifteen other Filipino-Americans are vying for state

legislative seats in California, Pennsylvania and Hawaii. They are Alameda Vice Mayor Rob Bonta (18th District); Chris Mateo (12th District) and Jennifer Ong (20th District), all Democrats aspiring for seats in the California State Assembly; Will Sylianteng (151st District), a Democrat seeking a seat in the Pennsylvania State House;

Henry Aquino (38th District); Romy Cachola (30th District); Gilbert Keith-Agaran (9th District); Della Au Belatti (24th District); Rida Cabanilla-Arakawa (41st District); Marissa Capelouto (42nd District); Ty Cullen (39th District); and Chris Manabat (40th District), all Democrats running for the Hawaii House of Representatives; and Will Espero (19th District); Donna Mercado Kim (14th District); and Donovan de la Cruz (22nd District), also Democrats running for seats in Hawaii's Senate.

Former Hawaii governor Ben Cayetano, the first Filipino-American governor in the US, is a strong contender for mayor of Honolulu while Kymberly Marcos Pine, Joey Manahan and Ron Menor are aspiring for seats in Honolulu's City Council.

Also running are Greggor Ilagan (4th District) and Chelsea Yagong (1st District) for seats in the Hawaii County Council and Don Guzman for a seat in the Maui County Council.

In California, Jose Esteves is running for mayor of the city of Milpitas; Garry Barbadillo for a seat in the Milpitas City Council; Jim Navarro for a seat in the Union City Council; Herym Almonte for a seat in the San Leandro City Council; and Stewart Chen for a seat in the Alameda City Council.

Go out and vote

The Philippine embassy in Washington called on qualified Filipino-Americans to go out and exercise their right to choose their next leader.

"The United States is host to the largest concentration of Filipinos outside the Philippines and Filipinos are the second largest ethnic group in America," Ambassador Jose Cuisia Jr. said. "Let us use these numbers and play a bigger role in shaping the political, economic and social discourse in this country."

Cuisia echoed Malacañang's statement that the Philippines will work with whoever wins the elections to further strengthen relations between Manila and Washington.

Cuisia issued the statement hours before Americans begin trooping to polling precincts nationwide to decide whether to

keep incumbent Democratic President Barack Obama in the White House or to replace him with Republican challenger, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney.

Based on the 2010 US census, there are an estimated 3.5 million Filipinos based in the US, most of them in the West Coast, particularly in California.

A survey by the National Asian American Survey (NAAS) shows that among Asian-Americans, Filipino-Americans are the ones most likely to go out and vote. They thus represent a significant voting population, according to Cuisia.

"We are counting on you to help make this happen by making sure that you take part in tomorrow's electoral exercise," Cuisia said as he also rallied Filipino-Americans to support their kababayans who are running for national and local positions.

Romney dooms family planning

Eastern Samar Rep. Ben Evardone, for his part, said the US may stop funding support for family planning programs worldwide under a Romney presidency.

He said a Romney win could doom family planning programs and proposed reproductive health (RH) legislation in many countries currently receiving US financial support for population control and development.

He said the Republican candidate has vowed to bring back the "global gag rule," which restricts federal funding support for family planning programs abroad. - **Rhodina Villanueva, Sandy Araneta, Jess Diaz**