

# **JOSH NEWMAN FOR STATE SENATE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 29, 2020

## **JOSH NEWMAN ANNOUNCES ASIAN AMERICAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

*Orange County, Calif. -- Underscoring his commitment to ensuring that the perspectives and concerns of Senate District 29's Asian American communities are addressed and uplifted in his campaign, today U.S. Army veteran, businessman, and former State Senator Josh Newman announced the formation of an Asian American Advisory Committee within his 2020 campaign for State Senate.*

*The Advisory Committee hosted its inaugural session via Zoom today, May 29, 2020 at 3pm.*

*Senate District 29 is one of the most diverse Senate Districts in California, with nearly one in every three residents identifying as Asian American. The Asian American Advisory Committee will be called upon to provide policy guidance, communication strategy and outreach assistance throughout the campaign, particularly to residents who may have never been brought into the political process.*

*The Asian American Advisory Committee is currently comprised of the following:*

***Aaruni Thakur**, Fullerton School Board Member  
**Andrew Chou**, Small Business Owner and Diamond Bar City Councilmember  
**Al Jabbar**, Anaheim Union High School District Trustee  
**Hong Alyce Van**, Community Leader and Stanton City Councilmember  
**Olivia Lee**, Health Advocate  
**Karen Chang**, Asian Pacific American Community Liaison  
**Alvin Wong**, Cal Poly Pomona Student  
**Dr. Priya J. Shah**, Professor and Civil Rights Activist  
**Sunny Youngsun Park**, Buena Park City Council Member and Community Leader  
**Joe Pak**, Korean-American Community Leader  
**Gary Chow**, Mt. San Antonio Community College Trustee  
**Vishwa Padigepati**, Student Activist  
**Katie Nguyen Kalvoda**, founder of Asian Americans Rising*

*Several Asian American Advisory Committee members also released statements accompanying the announcement:*

“Josh Newman is the right person to represent our district and our community. He’s the education candidate in this race and he can be trusted to ensure that everyone, especially members of the Asia American community will have access to the highest quality public education possible. He graduated from Yale and he has seen firsthand how education opens doors and is the foundation for success. I know how important education is to Asian Americans in this district and we need Josh back in the State Senate to fight to maintain the quality we expect from our school system. It’s my pleasure to serve on the Newman 2020 Asian American Advisory Committee and I intend to do my part to help Josh get elected so he can once again serve our community.”

**-Gary Chow, Mt. San Antonio Community College Trustee**

“I know the minority community in Buena Park can count on Josh Newman to lead on the issues that matter most to us. From making sure that everyone feels safe and is valued, to showing up and standing with minority businesses owners, Josh was ready to support our community’s initiatives. The formation of the campaign’s Asian American Advisory Committee is another example of Josh Newman showing that he is a trusted partner and a proactive leader on behalf of our community. I am proud to be a part of the committee and do my part to help to elect Josh Newman to the California State Senate.”

**-Sunny Youngsun Park, Buena Park City Council Member and Community Leader**

“It is my honor to join Josh Newman’s Asian American Advisory Committee. What my 2+ decades living in Orange County has shown me is that most politicians, even ones who identify as Asian American, are simply not interested in representing the complexity of Asian Americans, particularly not the interests of the more marginalized communities under the larger Asian American umbrella. Josh, on the other hand, has a proven track record of reaching out to all Asian American constituencies and recognizing the intersectionality that shapes interests and priorities. As an advocate for South Asian American and LGBTQ+ issues, I am looking forward to working with Josh to ensure all of us are represented.”

**-Dr. Priya J. Shah, Professor and Civil Rights Activist**

“As a young officer in the U.S. Army Josh Newman served in Korea, dedicating himself to protecting the peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula. While serving in Korea he gained an appreciation for Korean culture and our people which continues through to today. As a legislator and community leader Josh has been a reliable partner to the Korean-American community, I feel strongly that we should return the good will by fighting with Josh for his re-election. As a member of the Asian American Advisory Committee I’ll do my part to help connect Josh to the Korean-American community because I know he will work hard for us when he’s back in the State Senate.”

**-Joe Pak, Korean-American Community Leader**

“I’m honored to be a part of the Asian American Advisory Committee of the Newman 2020 campaign. Josh has never shied from fighting for the values that Asian Americans hold dear and I’m thrilled to roll up my sleeves to get to work to get Josh Newman elected to the State

Senate. As a proud South Asian immigrant, advocate for human rights and a rising sophomore at Yale University, I know that while we can always make improvements, California stands out as an example for the world of how diversity is strength and inclusivity generates opportunity for all. Josh Newman has always stood up for the values that make California the most diverse, welcoming and dynamic state in the union, and I stand with him.”

**-Vishwa Padigepati, Student Activist**

“When I worked with faith leaders across the state to call upon those seeking public office to stand up to anti-Asian bigotry, xenophobia and assaults, Josh Newman was the first among many to respond to that call. He forcefully pushed back on the xenophobia and biases perpetuated against Asian Americans that the current pandemic only exacerbated. This is what leadership looks like at a time of crisis. I am proud to be associated with his campaign’s Asian American Advisory Committee, which is just one more example of Josh’s commitment to, respect for and partnership with California’s Asian American community.”

**-Katie Nguyen Kalvoda, Founder of Asian Americans Rising**

### **AAPI Advisory Committee Members**

**Dr. Priya J. Shah** has been teaching Gender and Sexuality Studies for over ten years and has gained insight and wisdom from her transgender and gender non-conforming students. Priya is on the Equality CA Advisory Board, Human Rights Campaign (HRC)'s Parents for Transgender Equality Council, and the Orange County Equality Coalition (OCEC)'s Board of Directors. She has put together a number of education panels, worked with school districts, spoken at various board meetings, put on inclusive book fairs that featured stories about children of all kinds, and is currently working with Desi Rainbow Families to put on the first South Asian American panel on supporting transgender and non-binary youth. Priya is currently serving as an elected delegate to the CA Democratic Party from AD 55.

**Sunny Youngsun Park** is a community-minded leader, Buena Park City Council Member and small business owner experienced in bringing together diverse constituencies to effectively advocate for their needs. As a board member of the Los Angeles Community College Foundation, she has worked to assist financially-struggling students to acquire a higher education and achieve their dreams. Sunny received her law degree in 1999 and is the principal partner of the Park and Asher Law Firm. Sunny served on the California Board of Accountancy, a State Regulator for approximately 100,000 licensed accountants, to protect consumers in California.

**Aaruni Thakur** is a board member of the Fullerton School District from Area 1. Elected in December of 2018, he is passionate about bringing educational equity and access to Fullerton's elementary schools. Aaruni grew up in Fullerton and is husband, father to two school-aged children and attorney in Orange County. He attended Orangethorpe Elementary, Nicolas Junior High, and Sunny Hills High School, where he met his wife, Pamela. After attending UCLA and

USD Law he returned to Fullerton to begin his career, raise a family, and be involved in the community.

**Andrew Chou** was elected to the Diamond Bar City Council in November 2018, where he serves as the City Council's delegate to the League of California Cities – L.A. County Division, Pomona Unified School District, and several other leadership bodies. Andrew was born in Taiwan and raised in Hacienda Heights. In 2000, he graduated from the University of California, Irvine with a degree in Social Science and is currently the President of the UCI L.A Alumni Chapter. He has also served on the board of the UCI Alumni Association. Andrew founded NexGen Wealth Management, a full-service financial planning firm based in Diamond Bar, and is a Board Member of the local Kiwanis Club. Andrew and his wife Jennifer, along with their two young children, reside in Diamond Bar.

**Al Jabbar** is a member of the Anaheim Union High Board of Trustees, representing Trustee Area 1 in California. Before serving as a member of the Anaheim Union High Board of Trustees, Jabbar served on the North Orange County Community College Board as a student representative. He has also served on Anaheim's cultural arts commission and has been involved with West Anaheim Neighborhood Development (WAND). Jabbar works as a program supervisor for correctional health services at Orange County's health care agency. He earned his associate degree in business from Cypress College, his bachelor's degree in marketing from California State University at Fullerton and his master's degree in public administration from California State University at Long Beach. He lives in Anaheim with his wife and two children.

**Hong Alyce Van** was unanimously chosen to fill a vacancy on the Stanton City Council and was officially sworn-in on May 14, 2019. Alyce served as a Planning Commissioner and a board member of the Stanton Community Foundation. She was born in a refugee camp in Hong Kong and is the daughter of Vietnamese immigrants. Alyce was raised in Stanton and returned to the city of her childhood after receiving a B.A. from Yale University, an M.A. from Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and working international affairs in Washington, D.C. Alyce worked to improve living conditions in rural Vietnam before returning to California and working at CSU Dominguez Hills in international education. Alyce and her husband have been foster parents since 2015, and their son was born in 2016.

**Joe Pak** is longtime community leader in Fullerton and Buena Park. He has led many important community campaigns to raise awareness of the issue important to the Korean-Americans as well as people with disabilities. He is a former Director of External Affairs at AT&T and in 2009 was named Member of the National Council on Disability for the Obama White House. Joe was the 16<sup>th</sup> Vice President and 18<sup>th</sup> chair of the Korean American Federation of Orange County.

**Olivia Lee** is currently the Legislative and Advocacy Affairs Manager for AltaMed Health Services, where she works at the intersection of policy, advocacy, and public relations. Previously, she served as the Public Policy Manager for the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, where she advocated for the Chamber on the federal, state, regional, and local levels of government on behalf of multiple stakeholders and local interests. Olivia comes from an

extensive experience in legislative work and has served several campaigns and staffed multiple state representative offices. She holds a B.A degree from UCI in Political Science.

**Karen Chang** is currently a Government Program Analyst at the California Science Center, where she works at the intersection of legislation and information security. She has previously worked as a Special Assistant for State Controller John Chiang, coordinating statewide Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and Financial Literacy programs. In this role, Karen partnered with local organizations and liaised with the Asian Pacific Islander Community in Southern California. Karen received her bachelors and masters from the Leonard N. Stern School of Business at New York University and her MPP in Public Policy from the University of Southern California. Her husband and she have two young sons.

**Gary Chow** is currently a Trustee of Mt. San Antonio Community College and represents Area 2, which encompasses Covina, West Covina, north Walnut, and San Dimas. He has extensive financial expertise in the public and private sectors being a CPA and is a Registered Investment Advisor for GT Management Group Inc. Chow is also the current treasurer and a board member for the SGV Charitable Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit which supports Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, U.S. military members and local educational institutions in the San Gabriel Valley. Chow graduated with a bachelor's degree in Sociology from UCLA and attended California State University at Los Angeles where for two years he studied Accounting.

**Vishwa Padigepati** is a rising sophomore at Yale University where she is majoring in Cognitive Science and Political Science. She has lived in France and South India, where she was born, before moving to California at age eight. She has served as the Policy Coordinator for STAND USA, Aegis Trust an organization based in D.C dedicated to mass atrocity prevention and humane foreign policy. Vishwa interned in offices of multiple elected officials as well as political campaigns in Southern California. She is on the board of the Yale Review of International Studies, Yale Undergraduate Human Rights Journal, and a researcher for Yale Law School's Lowenstein Project. As a proud South Asian, she is on the national board of SAHI, a progressive South Asian Youth Organization combating religious violence in India and is a Washington Leadership Program Fellow, Class of 2020.

**Avlin Wong** has been an intern for Josh Newman's 2020 State Senate campaign for the past 4 months. As a first-year university student at Cal Poly Pomona, he has observed and reported on social, economic, and political trends that might impact voter turnout. Moreover, he has also conducted and presented university supported research, contributed to the advancement of three political campaigns, and reviewed various manuscripts for publishing purposes. He has contributed considerably to the campaign bringing youthful energy and perspective and a can-do spirit to campaign.

**Katie Nguyen Kalvoda** is founder of Asian Americans Rising, a hybrid-super PAC for progressive political causes. Prior to turning her attention toward politics, she was an investor and financial manager and founder of Newport Wealth Management.

