



Annual DC Team Visit by Chinese American Citizens Alliance

The 2010 trip of the Chinese American Citizens Alliance to Washington DC divided neatly into three major topics covered in three separate days of Capitol Hill visits. Trip objective as always was to educate top officials and lawmakers on current issues important to Chinese Americans. Immigration policy continues to be the top priority although the Alliance's stance is really a vigorous "rear-guard" action to assure that legal immigration will not be annihilated for the sake of Comprehensive Immigration Reform (CIR). Timing on Senate action necessitated an Alliance voice there on stalled Federal high-level judgeship nominations pending for Goodwin Liu and Edward Chen. In Asian Pacific Islander solidarity, the Alliance supported the Senate passage of the Native Hawaiian recognition bill, known as the Akaka bill. The third major effort was initiating a Congressional project toward a national Apology to Chinese Americans and other groups for Chinese Exclusion Acts, an offensive national measure that acted as a "cover" for six decades of nationwide and local discrimination and acts of harassment against people of Chinese ancestry. In a fourth topic, a smaller section of the team pursued issues of cultural and historical preservation within the House and with the National Trust for Historical Preservation. Team focus on legal immigration, the Apology project, and cultural and historical preservation are outgrowths of 2009 Grand Council resolutions and discussions.

Grand President Carolyn Chan's planning goal this year was to achieve diversity of State representation where Chinese Americans were numerous or important. It so happens that these key states also comprise most of the membership of Congressional committees critical to our top topics, in this case mainly the House and Senate Judiciary and Education Committees. With the return to the fold this year of Chicago Lodge, our team State coverage included California, southwestern international border states of Arizona, New Mexico and Texas, also Maryland, Virginia and key state of Illinois. Appointments and discussions came much easier to the strong Alliance team when actual State representations were matched. For the first time, team included Members who were not necessarily on the Grand Board, as Bro. Herman Wong and Sis. Betty Wong, president and auditor of Chicago Lodge respectively, joined the full effort. Sufficiently large as a Team this year, more subgroups could deploy so key States could be covered by actual residents of the State who are our Members as well.

"For repeater or first-timer, this year's Capitol Hill visits were a great experience and training," summarized Grand Pres. Chan. "They were educational for us and good for our planning into the future. We know that CIR immigration and the Apology issues will continue into next year. And the Senate agenda timing was such that we possibly made some modest impact on moving this year's Senate deliberations on judgeships and the Akaka bill." #