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NCAPA REAFFIRMS SUPPORT FOR DIVERSITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION ADMISSIONS

Washington, DC— Following the publication of a recent article in the New York Times, that outlined allegations of discrimination against Asian Americans in Harvard University's admission policies, the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA) released the following statement:

NCAPA rejects the notion that the majority of the Asian American Pacific Islanders (AAPI) are opposed to affirmative action. This false narrative exists only to drive a wedge between AAPIs and other minority and underserved communities. In fact, our community has directly benefited from efforts to increase diversity in higher education. Furthermore, educational attainment and socioeconomic data on the Southeast Asian and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities clearly illustrates the need for the continuation of affirmative action policies for many within our communities.

After further examination of Harvard's own data, we do not believe that there was intentional or implicit bias against Asian American applicants. If we did conclude that Harvard's admissions policies were impacted by implicit bias against our community, we would most certainly voice our concern. We strongly support admission policies that aim to make colleges and universities more diverse and we stand in solidarity with other communities of color. Higher education offers invaluable opportunities, and we believe that these institutions should be accessible to everyone.

We recognize that a holistic admissions process involves the weighing of numerous factors beyond grades and standardized test scores. The inner workings of these admissions policies involve a great deal of subjectivity, but allows institutions to more fairly assess applicants.

Attempting to dismantle these policies over misleading allegations of racial discrimination is dangerous to all communities of color. Affirmative action serves many purposes, none of which is to impose racial quotas. AAPIs have, and continue to benefit from these policies, and we support efforts to ensure that college campuses are rich centers of cultural diversity.

NCAPA National Director, Gregg Orton said:

“So long as people continue to try and define AAPIs as a means to divide communities of color, NCAPA will be there to demand that we be allowed to define ourselves. We will be there to say unequivocally that we support admission policies that aim to increase diversity, and that the entire country benefits when students are introduced to diverse ideas and diverse people in school. We will also be there to listen to those in our community who disagree with us; but also remind them: that but for affirmative action policies, many of the gains we have made as a community would not have been realized.

And finally, we will be there to remind *everyone* that AAPI success is not monolithic—that the ‘model minority’ is a harmful narrative that obscures the reality of many within our community who continue to struggle, like so many people in this country. This is precisely why NCAPA remains unwavering in our commitment to the fight for racial and social justice; not just for ourselves, but for all people.”

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Based in Washington, D.C., the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans is a coalition of 34 national Asian Pacific American organizations that serves to represent the interests of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities and to provide a national voice for our communities’ concerns. Our communities are the fastest growing racial/ethnic group in the United States, currently making up approximately six percent of the population.