



Photo by Lightcatcher Imagery

From left: Proud Summit Sierra graduates Mia-Aizada Mitchell, An Vu, Sabrina Buparat and Roger Huynh

Summit Sierra charter school graduates first class of seniors

By Kai Curry
NORTHWEST ASIAN WEEKLY

2019 marks a big year for Washington's charter schools, as it is the first year since the charter school initiative was passed in 2012 that graduates are claiming their diplomas. Seniors from Summit Sierra charter school in the International District were the first to do so this June. Most graduates had been founding freshmen at Summit Sierra as well, and had many reasons to celebrate.

Summit Sierra is part of a public school network that operates out of California and Washington. In Washington, there are two other Summit locations in Tacoma and West Seattle. The Summit system of schools prides itself on making students college-ready and in the personalized attention that is given to each student. This year, 98 percent of Summit's graduating seniors in Washington state have been accepted to a four-year college or university.

Summit Sierra regional director of schools, Alex Horowitz, explained that the school provides "self-directed learning" and that they strive to "meet each child where they are and for who they are." It's a well-rounded approach geared towards "developing the whole child." Summit Sierra, which is tuition-free, and has no entrance requirements—everyone is welcome—advocates strongly for their kids. Each student is put into a mentoring group with an adult mentor. This is

see **SUMMIT SIERRA** on 12

A monument to a vanishing Chinatown returns

By Mahlon Meyer
NORTHWEST ASIAN WEEKLY

Trapped by millions of dollars in debt after her family's hotel collapsed in 2013, Tanya Woo walked the streets of the Chinatown-International District (ID), heading for an emotional collapse of her own. Old people would come up to her and ask if they could live there—after it reopened.

She was not sure if it ever would. She took up bartending for a while. Then she found an outside family to invest in the hotel.

On June 17, the Louisa Hotel reopened with fanfare, Buddhist chanting, lion dancing, and tours of jazz-era murals, artifacts from its heyday when it was the center of life in the ID.

However, one thing had changed. It did not appear that many Chinese, at least those that currently live in Chinatown, would ever be able to live there again.



Photo by John Liu

A lion dance honors the reopening of the historic building with its original exterior

Economics

A combination of skyrocketing prices for land and housing has forced family owners like Woo to embrace new options to retain control of their properties.

In the case of Woo, her family partnered with Greg Gorder of Gaard Development to transform the decrepit, gutted hotel into

see **LOUISA** on 11

Port of Seattle race highlights remaining economic engine



Photo courtesy of Preeti Shridhar

Preeti Shridhar



Photo by Mahlon Meyer

Sam Cho

By Mahlon Meyer
NORTHWEST ASIAN WEEKLY

Both candidates want to use the Port to create jobs and housing. Both are concerned with the environment. Both want to assert affirmative action in hiring.

Sam Cho and Preeti Shridhar, the two Asian Pacific Islander (API) candidates for an open Port of Seattle Commissioner seat, recognize that the Port is a major landowner and how that land is used is a major issue.

But the differences between the two candidates' plans appear negligible.

Cho, a second-generation Korean American entrepreneur,

wants to turn non-industrial use land belonging to the Port into affordable housing for the homeless. Then he wants to train the homeless living in that housing to be welders, machinists, and carpenters to do construction for the port as it expands.

Over the past 20 years, the addition of the cruise industry has necessitated increased construction and promises more.

Shridhar, a first-generation immigrant from India who works as a government official in Renton, wants to expand and develop existing technical programs so that unemployed high school and college students can find

see **PORT** on 13

EDITORIAL

Gary Locke urges a boycott on citizenship question

The 2020 Census is getting closer, and the Trump administration's promotion of a citizenship question is expected by the Census Bureau's own experts to exert a chilling effect on families and households that include a noncitizen, and communities of color.

Former Gov. Gary Locke is advising people to boycott that question. He is now the chairman of Complete Count Committee—Washington state's effort to get a complete count in the upcoming census.

"There's absolutely no need for [that question]," Locke told The News Tribune. Locke was Commerce Secretary in the Obama administration during the 2010 Census. The Commerce Department administers the census.

The U.S. Census Bureau's own research shows that Asian Americans have the highest rates of concern about census confidentiality and the mistrust is heightened by the citizenship question.

"The 2020 Census is our only chance in a decade to get a full and accurate count of the Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities," said Terry Ao Minnis of Asian Americans Advancing Justice (AAJC). "Without an accurate count, valuable dollars that support immigrant and minority communities will be lost, and they will not be represented accurately or served in the way they are Constitutionally entitled."

Locke said people still will be counted if they skip the citizenship question and he said the Census Bureau won't send people door-to-door if one question is not answered.

Late last month, The New York Times revealed that Thomas B. Hofeller, a GOP strategist who is now deceased, worked with the administration to include a citizenship question as a way to unlawfully advantage "Republicans and Non-Hispanic Whites."

On June 18, AAJC and Mexican American Legal Defense

and Educational Fund submitted documents to U.S. District Court Judge George J. Hazel that contradicts the Trump administration's claims that it added the citizenship question to enforce the federal Voting Rights Act.

"This new evidence explicitly reveals that the citizenship question was motivated by a desire to minimize representation of Latinos and disadvantage immigrants, non-citizens, and communities of color," said AAJC President John C. Yang. "The census must be free from discrimination so that all communities have the access and resources they need to thrive."

The U.S. Supreme Court is also expected to rule soon on a legal challenge that says the citizenship question is unconstitutional.

Until then, we applaud a prominent figure like Gary Locke for standing up for the rights of the disenfranchised, and stand with him in supporting a boycott. ■

LOUISA from 1

a shining interior space of 84 apartments, available to renters with incomes between \$35,000 and \$85,000 per year.

The arrangement was part of an affordable housing contract developers entered into with the city. In most cases, the city supplies tax breaks. And in exchange, the developers cap the rent at prices affordable to those that otherwise would not be able to live in that area—the working class.

Gorder is a member of Mayor Jenny Durkan's Affordable Middle-Income Housing Advisory Council, which was designed to help middle-income families rather than low-income households.

"We will have teachers and firefighters and others living in the building," said Woo in a telephone interview. "I already met the first tenant. He was so excited to be moving in," she added.

But, asked if he was Chinese, she responded softly that he was not.

And for the poorest of the poor that are still living in the ID—the kind of old people she might have met on the streets during her malaise—the hotel might as well have burned to the ground in the fire that only partially damaged it in 2013.

They cannot afford it.

The average income for a new immigrant Chinese elder on government support is \$197 per month.

Yet the Louisa Hotel is only admitting people who have an income of between \$2,916.67 and \$7,083.33 per month (calculated based on the \$35,000 to \$85,000 per year range).

That means it would take a new immigrant Chinese elder 14 months to save up for one month of rent in the Louisa Hotel—and she would have to go without food the whole time.

Still, this outcome is the result of circumstances that are changing the face of the nation and devastating Chinatowns.

"The second generation of the families that own these buildings in Chinatown are still trapped," said a leading community activist in the ID, who asked for anonymity because of the sensitivity of ongoing relationships. "If they want to retain control of their properties, they have to do it this way."

"If we didn't do something, we would have been forced to sell," said Woo.

What can be preserved

In the months before the opening, Woo focused on the artifacts and historic nature of the building that would be preserved.

She took television crews down a dingy stairwell to show them murals of top-hatted patrons of a jazz club.

"It was a place where different ethnicities could gather together," she said. "The murals are ethnically ambiguous."

During the opening, however, she chose to focus on Chinese themes.

Buddhist monks from the nearby Fa Hsing Temple performed a ritual to appease any ghosts still lingering in the area. The performance was an acknowledgement of the community's "need to heal," said Woo.



Relics of the old hotel and its businesses hang inside the new apartment building.

A cellar adjacent to the hotel was once the most vibrant gambling den in the community—and the site of the city's bloodiest massacre, when 13 people were shot to death in a robbery in 1983.

The ceremony, according to Buddhist practitioners familiar with the ritual, involves chanting sutras for any spirits that are trapped through anger at being killed. Woo's decision to reopen the hotel as a site dedicated to preserving the original material culture of the region was endorsed by various community groups.

Jacqueline Wu, a representative of the Chinatown-International District (CID) Coalition, said that ideally, the city and state governments would supply money to a trust established by the ID community.

"And the community would decide what it wants to do with it," she said in a phone interview.

The newly reopened Louisa Hotel, although rebuilt with a developer targeting the middle class, may serve as a model for such idealism.

Its apartments preserve the original window frames and other features. Its interior is hung with decorations, some in Chinese, from earlier eras. And Woo has already glassed off the original murals.

Yet Woo has also teamed up with an outside marketing team to attract desired tenants.

The hotel's website, under the "Amenities" section, shows a blonde woman in a dress pulling up one leg to put on her socks.

"Room to spread your wings," it advertises.

A hard-fought battle

Yet for Woo and others fighting to preserve what they can of the ID, the battle is both hard fought and personal.

Across the nation, according to a recent study by the American Legal Defense Fund, more non-Asians now live in Chinatowns than Asians.

And as for the poorest of the poor—those living on a government subsidy of \$197 a month—many have already left, to housing south of the city or to families that can still take them in.

"And some have moved into homeless shelters," said the community activist.

And yet, says Wu, of the CID Coalition, "The city is not



Buddhist monks from the Fa Hsing Temple perform rituals to ease the sufferings of any lingering spirits.

tracking them, nobody is tracking where they're going."

A personal triumph for the community

And yet Chinatowns have survived dissolution before.

At the end of the 19th century, politicians and mobs up and down the West Coast drove Chinese out of Chinatowns when they were no longer needed for labor.

In Tacoma, mobs led by a German-born mayor burned the Chinatown to the ground. In Seattle, miners, jealous of the flexibility of Chinese miners that had built houses along China Creek in Newcastle, torched their dwellings.

And it was not until 1943 that the nation finally repealed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which limited more Chinese immigration.

For Woo, just preserving the original building—rather than having it torn down and replaced with a skyscraper, as is happening all over the neighborhood—is a triumph.

At ground level, retail spaces will offer venues for Asian-themed restaurants and other shops in keeping with the flavor of the original neighborhood.

"A Korean barbecue has already committed," she said.

Even one of the original businesses that operated in the building before the fire is coming back. The Gospel Bookstore will continue to offer English-language classes and Bible studies.

Besides that, Woo has preserved the signs of some of the original businesses that once populated the ground floor, such as a bakery and a seafood restaurant. They hang now, in the lobby, for any newcomer to see and at least get a feel for what life was once like.

Then there is her devotion to her family.

Woo said she is not making a single cent from the building, although in a decade, if the building shows profits, her family may.

"I guess a part of this is I still want to gain my father's approval," said Woo.

Her father, Paul, bought the hotel in 1963. He died of a heart attack when she was a teenager. Around the same time, Woo dislocated her kneecap, ending her professional career as a traditional Chinese dancer and ballerina.

"I still like to dance, though," she said. ■

Mahlon can be reached at info@nwasianweekly.com.



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Chinese American veterans honored at last



Photo courtesy of Ed Gor

The team that lobbied Congress, from left: Ed Gor, past national president of C.A.C.A., Wilson Lee, C.A.C.A. Boston Lodge, Kristin Lee, policy analyst, Sen. Debbie Stabenow (MI), Maj. Gen. (ret) Robert G.F. Lee, Chair of the CGM Design Committee, Cdr. (ret) USN, Evelyn Moy, USN (ret) Alexander Cha

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The oldest Asian American civil rights organization in the country is spearheading an effort to award Chinese American World War II veterans and their families Congressional Gold Medals. It is a way to honor their devotion to a country that, at the time, discriminated against them and other Asian Americans.

The awarding of the medals, which required intense lobbying of Congress and which will take place in spring of next year, also comes at a time when many veterans in general are discouraged with their healthcare.

“When people get excited about the little things, they have the confidence to take on greater things,” said Ed Gor, former president of Chinese American Citizens Alliance (CACA), which was established in 1895.

Still, enabling Chinese American

veterans to receive Congressional Gold Medals is hardly a small matter.

While other Asian Pacific Islander groups have lobbied for and received medals, it took Gor years of keen observation, investigation, and lobbying to make it happen.

As president of CACA, from 2013 to 2017, he found that many Chinese American World War II veterans paid their dues, but did not come to meetings.

His own father was a World War II veteran, maintaining engines for P-40 airplanes used by the Flying Tigers that helped protect China, and he was curious.

He found that many aging veterans had joined CACA in the first place because they had been excluded at the time from joining the American Legion due to their race. Now even at their advanced age, they still worked long hours, 12 to 14 hours a day, as small business owners or grocers, and

see CACA on 16

Planned
Parenthood
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after 8 months



Dr. Leana Wen

NEW YORK (AP) — Planned Parenthood’s president has been forced out of her job after only eight months as the organization faces unprecedented challenges related to its role as the leading abortion provider in the United States.

Dr. Leana Wen said in a statement posted on Twitter on July 16 that she had “philosophical differences” with the new chairs of Planned Parenthood’s board regarding abortion politics.

see WEN on 14

API defenders of affirmative action try to persuade opponents

By Mahlon Meyer
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Facing a referendum that could overturn a new affirmative action law, prominent Asian Pacific Islander (API) Democrats defended the law to the group of new Chinese immigrants that oppose it.

Affirmative action is a legal requirement to give marginalized groups encouragement and in some cases advantages in education and business to redress past and current discrimination and oppression in order to create a level playing field.

While the history of affirmative action is fraught with highly charged political struggle, today 61 percent of Americans support it, according to a recent Gallup poll.

Speaking at a briefing at China Harbor on July 10, former governor Gary Locke, state Rep. Sharon Tomiko

see I-1000 on 16



Rep. Sharon Tomiko Santos, former governor Gary Locke, and former Seattle City council member Martha Choe speak about I-1000.

Photo by Mahlon Meyer



Andy Chan and wife, Shang

Andy Chan dies Former owner of Sun Ya Restaurant

A memorial service will be held on July 21 for Andy Chan, who passed away on July 10.

Chan was born on October 27, 1946 in Toi Shan, Canton, China. He immigrated to Hong Kong, attended college in Alberta, Canada, and moved to the United States in the early 1970s.

Chan opened up a restaurant at Seatac Mall, called Peking Express in the late 1980s. He sold that business in 1995 and took over ownership of Sun Ya Seafood Restaurant in Seattle’s

Chinatown. That restaurant has since sold twice and is now known as Ocean Star.

He died on July 10, at the age of 72, surrounded by family and friends. He is survived by his wife and three children. A July 21 memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. in Sunset Hill Memorial Park and Funeral Home in Bellevue.

The following is a eulogy prepared by Chan’s daughter, Cynthia.

see CHAN on 15

CACA from 1

couldn't come to meetings.

And yet during World War II, many of the veterans had shown unwavering devotion despite outright discrimination.

At the time, the United States had not yet lifted the Chinese Exclusion Act, which barred many Chinese from becoming citizens.

In the United States, on the eve of the war, there were 100,000 Chinese Americans in the country. Out of those, nearly 20 percent, or 18,000, served in the military. And of those that served, 40 percent were not even citizens.

As president, Gor visited nearly every CACA lodge and chapter around the nation to muster support for the project.

"We had people making phone calls, writing letters to congress," he said.

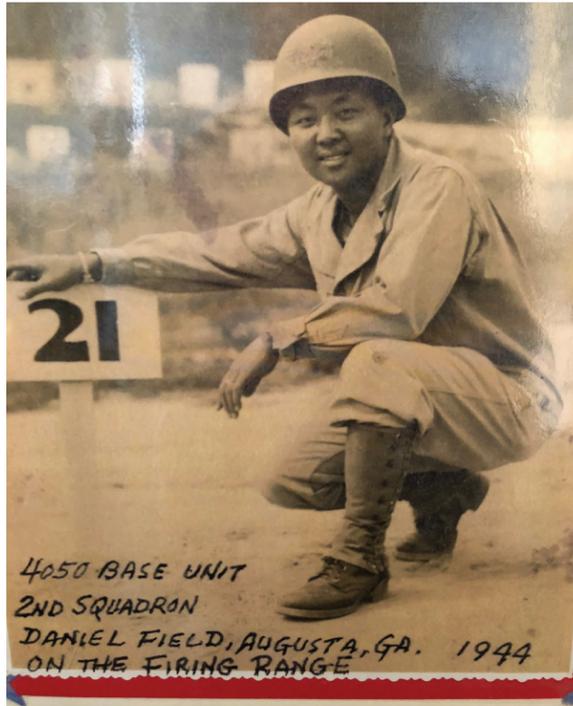
The turning point came when he enlisted several Chinese American generals who walked through the halls of Congress with him and other CACA activists, making both planned and surprise visits to legislators to push the bill that would grant the medals.

"These young staff members really perked up when these generals came in," he said.

The generals also helped artists design the picture that will be emblazoned on the medals.

The ceremony to award the medals, which will take place in Washington D.C. followed by a smaller one in Seattle for those too frail to make the trip, is also an acknowledgment at long last that the Chinese American veterans are deserving of equal honor.

"It is more symbolic than anything else," he said. "But it is a recognition by the U.S. that they dutifully and honorably served alongside everyone else, and this is lost among a lot of



Former CACA president Ed Gor's father, Joe Gor, serviced planes for the Flying Tigers

Photo courtesy of Ed Gor

people who didn't know the Chinese served."

Through its campaign, and with the help of the media, over 100 veterans or their family members have registered in Seattle, said Cathy Lee, president of the Seattle chapter of CACA. Two or three will make the trip to the capital for the national ceremony.

CACA has already raised \$50,000 towards its goal of half

a million to cover all costs, including purchasing a medal for each veteran — 3,000 in all — paying for travel and a color guard.

Although one national organization has agreed to pay for the first 1,000 medals, raising the rest is still a challenge.

"It will not be easy," said Gor.

Raising awareness for all veterans

Through their work, Gor also hopes to raise awareness about other issues facing veterans, such as healthcare coverage.

In recent years, veterans have been committing suicide at a rate one and a half more times the national average, according to a recent article by the New York Times. A spate of suicides has taken place in parking lots outside of the Department of Veterans Administration (VA) hospitals.

At the most recent CACA national convention, Gor invited members of the VA to brief members about how to navigate the system, oftentimes a cumbersome and byzantine process.

"We want to raise awareness and provide encouragement through this process," he said.

But the challenges are numerous. The VA hospital system has suffered from computer and staffing problems, and is now facing possible privatization under the Trump administration.

Major Weldon Lee, who assisted Japanese American veterans to get a high-ranking speaker for their ceremony to receive the Congressional Gold Medal, said he would be joining forces with CACA. ■

Families or veterans seeking more information can visit caww2.org or send an email to info@cacaseattle.org.

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I-1000 from 1

Santos, and former Seattle City Councilmember Martha Choe offered slightly varying rationales for I-1000, which was passed by the state legislature on April 28.

I-1000 overturned I-200, the state's 20-year-old, voter-approved ban on affirmative action.

While opposition to the law is by no means unanimous among new Chinese immigrants, a highly vocal and activist group, primarily from the Eastside, sees it as part of a failure by politicians to uphold their promises to fulfill the American dream. They see it as a betrayal of the principle of equal opportunity.

"It has shattered my clear expectation of American democracy," said Qiu Kan, president of American Coalition for Equality, which is gathering signatures for the referendum.

Locke sought to defuse the activists' fears that it will discriminate against Chinese Americans in higher education.

He argued that the emphasis of the law is to create more opportunities for minority businesses to gain government contracts by allowing the government to reach out and encourage them to apply.

Addressing the major concern of the activists, Locke also said that the state's schools are already admitting increasing number of marginalized students and so there will be no need for admissions officers, under the new law, to make major changes to their practices.

He said I-1000 merely allows schools to do outreach to those marginalized groups whose students might otherwise not be willing to apply to college.

"I was admitted to Yale University under an affirmative action program," he said. "I want to know that I am just as good as anyone else, but I am happy that Yale University sent people to all the Seattle public schools, urging the bright kids to apply. I had never even heard of Yale or Harvard until someone came to our school saying, 'you should apply.'"

I-200 banned any consideration of race, and schools were prohibited from even doing outreach, he said.

Rep. Santos said that many voters were confused by the language of the law when they voted for it, a claim supported by U.S. historian Terry H. Anderson, in his book, "The Pursuit of Fairness: A History of Affirmative Action."

Locke said, that with the passage of I-1000, admissions officers could now consider multiple factors such as the hardship a student had faced, economic background, and ethnicity.

"Affirmative action is taking a hard look at people you might not otherwise consider," he added.

But the activists contend that legislators passed the law out of alarm at the growing number of international students from China in the state's schools.

They say that schools, in considering ethnicity, will lump together students coming directly from China with Chinese American students whose parents are naturalized

citizens.

They say this doesn't happen with white students.

"Imagine if colleges did not make a distinction between those Americans whose ancestors came from England centuries ago and the English students studying here now," said Qiu. "This law lumps all 'Chinese' together—that's racist."

During the marathon, 3-hour briefing, Locke stressed repeatedly that under I-1000, quotas were still abolished so that schools could not set a fixed number of Chinese students to admit.

However, Locke and the other defenders said that the new law would increase competition for limited spots in the state's universities.

"There's an attempt to divide and blame others if kids don't get admitted," said Choe, who has served in various political, philanthropic and educational offices. "Well, there isn't enough room today in universities for every qualified kid, that's a fact. And we can look and blame others for why that is, and it's unfortunate."

"I don't think you would be upset if more students from other communities applied and they had to compete against your kids," said Locke.

He repeatedly urged new immigrant Chinese parents to educate their kids in a "holistic" way, emphasizing not just test scores, but sports and social service, saying schools wanted "active" students.

"We have been working on raising kids that are socially active and make a contribution to society for more than a decade," said Lily Yin, a member of Little Masters Club, which promotes peer education and outreach activities to places like Mary's Place and Children's Hospital.

"We felt that this was an old view of us," she said.

After blank cards for questions were passed out to the audience, Santos responded to one about the difference between 'equity' and 'equality,' a longtime concern of many of the activists, who opposed equity programs in local K-12 school districts last year.

Santos compared 'equality' to a scenario in which she and her cronies had been playing Monopoly for five hours straight and bought up all the property. A newcomer, though getting equal cash, would be shut out from buying any property. 'Equity' would involve making compensations to allow a new player to have a fair stake in owning property.

Another question implied that the law was contravening the principles symbolized by the statue of blind justice.

"Let's not confuse things—blind justice is about the administration of justice," said Santos. "What we're talking about here, with Initiative 1000, deals more with the Statue of Liberty than blind justice, and what does the Statue of



Former Seattle City council member Martha Choe responds to a question about I-1000



Audience members listen to defenders of I-1000

Photos by Mahlon Meyer

Liberty offer? She stands there with a golden torch offering opportunity."

She then recited part of the poem inscribed on its base.

"That is what America stands for, opportunity for all people, not based on your pedigree, not based on who you know or who your parents are," she added.

Still another question was whether the law was partisan, to which Locke replied that both Republicans and Democrats supported it, citing former governor Dan Evans.

Qiu later said he found the answer "contradictory" since the vote to pass I-1000 was along party lines, with Democrats in support, and Republicans opposed.

The briefing was held in English with an interpreter translating into Mandarin Chinese.

Many activists seemed to be listening alternately to both languages.

But those in the front row leaned forward and stared raptly at Locke when, speaking now in a hoarse voice at the end of the evening, he told personal stories to illustrate that marginalized students might be dissuaded from applying to college by their families.

"My uncle was the very first Chinese admitted to the University of Washington Medical School," he said. "Grandpa had told my uncle, 'No, just get a job and be a cook,' but someone had reached out to my uncle and said 'No, you should have big dreams and apply.'"

Scholars argue that support for affirmative action programs like I-1000 reflects the current demographics of the United States.

"Given the growing diversity within the multi-racial and multi-ethnic population in the U.S., the finding that a majority of Americans generally support affirmative action programs is not surprising," said Henry Chow, a sociologist at the University of Regina, in Saskatchewan, Canada.

Activists have until July 23 to gather enough signatures to launch a referendum, which would be held in November.

Qiu said his supporters had visited public events and gone door to door.

"We are confident we will get enough signatures," he said. ■

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Photo courtesy of Ed Gor

The team that lobbied Congress, from left: Ed Gor, past national president of C.A.C.A., Wilson Lee, C.A.C.A. Boston Lodge, Kristin Lee, policy analyst, Sen. Debbie Stabenow (MI), Maj. Gen. (ret) Robert G.F. Lee, Chair of the CGM Design Committee, Cdr. (ret) USN, Evelyn Moy, USN (ret) Alexander Cha

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see I-1000 on 16



Rep. Sharon Tomiko Santos, former governor Gary Locke, and former Seattle City council member Martha Choe speak about I-1000.

Photo by Mahlon Meyer



Andy Chan and wife, Shang

Andy Chan dies

Former owner of Sun Ya Restaurant

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people who didn't know the Chinese served."

Through its campaign, and with the help of the media, over 100 veterans or their family members have registered in Seattle, said Cathy Lee, president of the Seattle chapter of CACA. Two or three will make the trip to the capital for the national ceremony.

CACA has already raised \$50,000 towards its goal of half

a million to cover all costs, including purchasing a medal for each veteran — 3,000 in all — paying for travel and a color guard.

Although one national organization has agreed to pay for the first 1,000 medals, raising the rest is still a challenge.

"It will not be easy," said Gor.

Raising awareness for all veterans

Through their work, Gor also hopes to raise awareness about other issues facing veterans, such as healthcare coverage.

In recent years, veterans have been committing suicide at a rate one and a half more times the national average, according to a recent article by the New York Times. A spate of suicides has taken place in parking lots outside of the Department of Veterans Administration (VA) hospitals.

At the most recent CACA national convention, Gor invited members of the VA to brief members about how to navigate the system, oftentimes a cumbersome and byzantine process.

"We want to raise awareness and provide encouragement through this process," he said.

But the challenges are numerous. The VA hospital system has suffered from computer and staffing problems, and is now facing possible privatization under the Trump administration.

Major Weldon Lee, who assisted Japanese American veterans to get a high-ranking speaker for their ceremony to receive the Congressional Gold Medal, said he would be joining forces with CACA. ■

Families or veterans seeking more information can visit caww2.org or send an email to info@cacaseattle.org.

Mahlon can be reached at info@nwasianweekly.com.

I-1000 from 1

Santos, and former Seattle City Councilmember Martha Choe offered slightly varying rationales for I-1000, which was passed by the state legislature on April 28.

I-1000 overturned I-200, the state's 20-year-old, voter-approved ban on affirmative action.

While opposition to the law is by no means unanimous among new Chinese immigrants, a highly vocal and activist group, primarily from the Eastside, sees it as part of a failure by politicians to uphold their promises to fulfill the American dream. They see it as a betrayal of the principle of equal opportunity.

"It has shattered my clear expectation of American democracy," said Qiu Kan, president of American Coalition for Equality, which is gathering signatures for the referendum.

Locke sought to defuse the activists' fears that it will discriminate against Chinese Americans in higher education.

He argued that the emphasis of the law is to create more opportunities for minority businesses to gain government contracts by allowing the government to reach out and encourage them to apply.

Addressing the major concern of the activists, Locke also said that the state's schools are already admitting increasing number of marginalized students and so there will be no need for admissions officers, under the new law, to make major changes to their practices.

He said I-1000 merely allows schools to do outreach to those marginalized groups whose students might otherwise not be willing to apply to college.

"I was admitted to Yale University under an affirmative action program," he said. "I want to know that I am just as good as anyone else, but I am happy that Yale University sent people to all the Seattle public schools, urging the bright kids to apply. I had never even heard of Yale or Harvard until someone came to our school saying, 'you should apply.'"

I-200 banned any consideration of race, and schools were prohibited from even doing outreach, he said.

Rep. Santos said that many voters were confused by the language of the law when they voted for it, a claim supported by U.S. historian Terry H. Anderson, in his book, "The Pursuit of Fairness: A History of Affirmative Action."

Locke said, that with the passage of I-1000, admissions officers could now consider multiple factors such as the hardship a student had faced, economic background, and ethnicity.

"Affirmative action is taking a hard look at people you might not otherwise consider," he added.

But the activists contend that legislators passed the law out of alarm at the growing number of international students from China in the state's schools.

They say that schools, in considering ethnicity, will lump together students coming directly from China with Chinese American students whose parents are naturalized

citizens.

They say this doesn't happen with white students.

"Imagine if colleges did not make a distinction between those Americans whose ancestors came from England centuries ago and the English students studying here now," said Qiu. "This law lumps all 'Chinese' together—that's racist."

During the marathon, 3-hour briefing, Locke stressed repeatedly that under I-1000, quotas were still abolished so that schools could not set a fixed number of Chinese students to admit.

However, Locke and the other defenders said that the new law would increase competition for limited spots in the state's universities.

"There's an attempt to divide and blame others if kids don't get admitted," said Choe, who has served in various political, philanthropic and educational offices. "Well, there isn't enough room today in universities for every qualified kid, that's a fact. And we can look and blame others for why that is, and it's unfortunate."

"I don't think you would be upset if more students from other communities applied and they had to compete against your kids," said Locke.

He repeatedly urged new immigrant Chinese parents to educate their kids in a "holistic" way, emphasizing not just test scores, but sports and social service, saying schools wanted "active" students.

"We have been working on raising kids that are socially active and make a contribution to society for more than a decade," said Lily Yin, a member of Little Masters Club, which promotes peer education and outreach activities to places like Mary's Place and Children's Hospital.

"We felt that this was an old view of us," she said.

After blank cards for questions were passed out to the audience, Santos responded to one about the difference between 'equity' and 'equality,' a longtime concern of many of the activists, who opposed equity programs in local K-12 school districts last year.

Santos compared 'equality' to a scenario in which she and her cronies had been playing Monopoly for five hours straight and bought up all the property. A newcomer, though getting equal cash, would be shut out from buying any property. 'Equity' would involve making compensations to allow a new player to have a fair stake in owning property.

Another question implied that the law was contravening the principles symbolized by the statue of blind justice.

"Let's not confuse things—blind justice is about the administration of justice," said Santos. "What we're talking about here, with Initiative 1000, deals more with the Statue of Liberty than blind justice, and what does the Statue of



Former Seattle City council member Martha Choe responds to a question about I-1000



Audience members listen to defenders of I-1000

Photos by Mahlon Meyer

Liberty offer? She stands there with a golden torch offering opportunity."

She then recited part of the poem inscribed on its base.

"That is what America stands for, opportunity for all people, not based on your pedigree, not based on who you know or who your parents are," she added.

Still another question was whether the law was partisan, to which Locke replied that both Republicans and Democrats supported it, citing former governor Dan Evans.

Qiu later said he found the answer "contradictory" since the vote to pass I-1000 was along party lines, with Democrats in support, and Republicans opposed.

The briefing was held in English with an interpreter translating into Mandarin Chinese.

Many activists seemed to be listening alternately to both languages.

But those in the front row leaned forward and stared raptly at Locke when, speaking now in a hoarse voice at the end of the evening, he told personal stories to illustrate that marginalized students might be dissuaded from applying to college by their families.

"My uncle was the very first Chinese admitted to the University of Washington Medical School," he said. "Grandpa had told my uncle, 'No, just get a job and be a cook,' but someone had reached out to my uncle and said 'No, you should have big dreams and apply.'"

Scholars argue that support for affirmative action programs like I-1000 reflects the current demographics of the United States.

"Given the growing diversity within the multi-racial and multi-ethnic population in the U.S., the finding that a majority of Americans generally support affirmative action programs is not surprising," said Henry Chow, a sociologist at the University of Regina, in Saskatchewan, Canada.

Activists have until July 23 to gather enough signatures to launch a referendum, which would be held in November.

Qiu said his supporters had visited public events and gone door to door.

"We are confident we will get enough signatures," he said. ■

Mahlon can be reached at info@nwasianweekly.com

Fortune cookie, noodle maker sold

Tsue Chong under new ownership



Photo by Becky Chan

Camillo Cheng (left) and son Isaac, new owners of Tsue Chong who will continue the Rose Brand legacy manufacturing noodles and fortune cookies.

By Becky Chan
NORTHWEST ASIAN WEEKLY

purple and gold décor inside his office at Tsue Chong, the colors of the University of Washington (UW). He is a UW graduate. So is

The transition was easy. Isaac Cheng didn't need to remove any

see **TSUE CHONG** on 11

Jeremy Lin to play for Beijing



Jeremy Lin (right) posted this photo on social media when he made his Aug. 27 announcement, with brother Joseph of the Fubon Braves of the Super Basketball League in Taiwan.

Jeremy Lin announced on social media on Aug. 27 that he will play for the Beijing Shougang Ducks of the Chinese Basketball Association (CBA) for the 2019-20 season.

The former Knicks and Nets guard posted a message on Twitter, writing "Beijing, I'm coming!" He posted a picture of himself in a Beijing jersey. He also posted a message on his Instagram account.

"All I can say is THANK YOU to the NBA, my family, inner circle, every fan who came to watch or rooted for me during these 9 years!" Lin wrote.

"The journey and privilege to rep Asians at the NBA level has been amazing and I'm [sic] overwhelmed with gratitude for each person who has been with me each step of the way.

"Equally excited for this next step with the Beijing Ducks! I always knew my path would go through the CBA solely bc [sic] I knew how much of an honor it would be to hoop in front of all my Chinese fans. I'm [sic] here now and there is more history to be made!"

Lin, 31, said in an emotional

see **LIN** on 13

What trade war? Chaos at opening of China's first Costco

Seattle architect firm designed Shanghai's Costco

By Ruth Bayang
NORTHWEST ASIAN WEEKLY

SHANGHAI — Costco was forced to close early on Aug. 27 on its first day of operations in China due to large crowds of bargain-hunting shoppers.

Despite a deepening trade war between Beijing and Washington, thousands of people thronged the aisles of its maiden store in Shanghai as the Kirkland, Wash.-based chain became the latest overseas retailer to try its luck in China's fast-growing consumer market.

Traffic within a half mile radius around the Costco outlet was brought to a near-standstill as lines of people formed outside. The store suspended operations in the afternoon after officials warned over the traffic.

The Paper, a media outlet run by the Shanghai

see **COSTCO** on 16



Instead of leaving China, US retail giant Costco opened its first Chinese store in Shanghai on Tuesday. Consumers waited in long queue to get inside the store. Such a grand opening can't be seen in other places. Chinese market is crucial to American companies.



Sidney Rittenberg dies
▶ 6



"The Case of Hana and Alice" ▶ 7



"American Factory" ▶ 9



My 6 healthy snacks
▶ 10

Seattle looks on Hong Kong in awe, and starts to organize



Photo by George Liu

Approximately 70 people demonstrated at Westlake Park on Aug. 25 in support of the Hong Kong protest.

By Mahlon Meyer
NORTHWEST ASIAN WEEKLY

Thirty years later, his father still screams at night.

"My father was in prison doing hard labor in a communist camp for seven years," said Tien Ha, a Seattle real estate developer who came here from Vietnam 25 years ago. "It was brutal. He is very traumatized. Up until now, I could still hear him screaming at night from the past."

Now, as millions of Hong Kong people resist a law that could send any one of them to prison in communist China, Ha wants to do something.

"I see the parallel, they could do the same thing,"

he said. "It's the same thing going on, whether the person is guilty or not."

Ha and others are calling for people in Seattle and around the country to support the students and others in Hong Kong that are calling for their guaranteed legal protection from arbitrary arrest, detention, and disappearance into China's prison system.

Students in Hong Kong are aware of reports of forced organ harvesting practiced on imprisoned members of the Falun Gong spiritual sect, which China deems a cult aimed at overthrowing the government.

see **HONG KONG** on 15

HONG KONG from 1

“The extradition bill is only the trigger for all these underlying issues,” said Corina Kwok De Los Santos.

Kwok, 35, moved to Seattle five years ago. On Aug 25, she helped lead a rally of about 70 people in Westlake Plaza to support Hong Kong. Her parents, brother, and sisters are still living in Hong Kong.

“They know that China has been doing stuff like this,” she said. “The reason why the people of Hong Kong are worrying is about the fear of the communist party, and the extradition law is the trigger.”

In a news release, organizers of the Aug. 25 rally said the purpose of the gathering was “to let Washington state and Seattle residents know about the bill that is currently in Congress, H.R. 3289—Hong Kong Human Rights And Democracy Act of 2019, and what this bill can achieve and help to solve the current crisis in Hong Kong.”

Seen and unseen fears

Philip Lipson and Charlette LeFevre, directors of the Seattle Bruce Lee Fan Club at Bruce Lee's grave on Capitol Hill.

Another group calling for action in Seattle and around the United States is the Seattle Bruce Lee Fan Club, which 13 years ago successfully organized resistance to a wildly popular show of dead bodies from China, called “Bodies: The Exhibition.”

The bodies had been encased in plastic, but were leaking fluids, and eventually most were found to have come from political prisoners executed in northern China, according to ABC News.

“There is definitely a legitimate human rights concern by Hong Kong about China imposing an extradition law on Hong Kong given China’s human rights violations of executing prisoners,” said Charlette LeFevre, director of the Seattle Bruce Lee Fan Club, in an email.

“We became very familiar with China’s unjust court system and use of prisoners via the very visible ‘Bodies: The Exhibition’ displays,” she said.

The Seattle City Council eventually passed a resolution banning the exhibit, which had attracted millions nationwide.

The group that held the rally at Westlake Mall, a collection of volunteers calling themselves SEArrious for Hong Kong, says some of what they feared has already come to pass.

They cite the disappearance of prominent publishers into China, the removal of justly elected legislators, and say that Hong Kong police have just arrested two American journalists. All these actions, they insist, are violations of the Basic Law that China signed with Britain to guarantee a



Chinatown organizations organized a counterprotest to the Westlake rally, on violence and Hong Kong's independence on Aug. 25 at Hing Hay Park.

different legal system for Hong Kong until 2047, under an agreement known as “one country, two systems.”

“They are trying to fight for what they are promised in the basic law,” said John Chan, 43, whose mother is still in Hong Kong. “They are not trying to overthrow the government.”

Awe from abroad

Students in Hong Kong have adopted a leaderless, flowing approach to deal with police and government violence, retreating when necessary, seeking alternate routes for protest, and scattering when necessary.

According to the Washington Post and other news outlets, their tactics are based on a saying by Bruce Lee, “Be like water.”

LeFevre said that Bruce Lee is “perhaps the most famous Chinese man in the world,” and that his approach to conflict was part of his commitment to justice and righteousness.

Residing, studying, and working as an actor for many years in Seattle, his memory ties the two cities together, she said.

“Bruce Lee was a son of Hong Kong and Seattle, and of the world. For us, there is no doubt that if Bruce Lee were alive today, he would be standing alongside the Hong Kong protesters fighting for democracy, justice, and equality,” said LeFevre.

“It is scary and frightening to be a protester,” she added, recalling her days protesting the WTO in 1999 in Seattle.

Ha, the developer originally from Vietnam, admires the bravery and persistence of the students.

“The protesters are mostly students, teenagers. They are very young and they are not afraid to stand up to speak for what they believe and what they want,” he said.

“This is the longest protest in Hong Kong history. To organize it is not easy,” he added.

A call for action

As Congress mulls a bill to support human rights in Hong Kong, called the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, the supporters in Seattle are planning more rallies.

Ha is planning to support the Seattle Bruce Lee Fan Club to plan future rallies, possibly on future Sundays in Westlake Plaza or Hing Hay Park.

“The young Hong Kong people deserve support world wide. In a lot of countries, everyone is standing in awe of the protesters in Hong Kong,” he said.

However, in other cities around the world, pro-Hong Kong rallies have been met with counter rallies by people in support of the Hong Kong police and the Chinese government.

In London, Vancouver, Auckland, New Zealand, and other cities around the world, supporters of Beijing have torn down protest walls put up by supporters of Hong Kong while holding counter rallies, according to the New York Times and the BBC.

The Aug. 25 rally in Westlake did

not attract any counter protesters, but organizers suspect it may have been because of heavy police presence.

As for any future rallies in Seattle, the prospects for clashes—or even the ultimate effects of such rallies—is not entirely clear.

“In terms of a march here in support of the protests in Hong Kong, it will demonstrate solidarity for what appears to be the vast majority of Hong Kongers who support the demands for the formal withdrawal of the extradition bill, an independent investigation of police behavior, and perhaps the resignation of Carrie Lam,” said David Bachman, professor at the Jackson School of International Studies at the University of Washington (UW).

“But a demonstration here is not going to affect anyone’s calculus in Hong Kong. And a peaceful march here may generate a counter demonstration by pro-PRC supporters,” he said.

But organizers are not intimidated. “I’m not worried about who is going to stand up against me, I’m only worried about what is the right thing to do,” said

Ha. “Government is to serve people not to create distress or repress people.”

Still, some scholars worry that demonstrations in support of Hong Kong could be seen as a condemnation of China in general and all Chinese immigrants here.

“We should protest and promote targeted sanctions and boycotts of Chinese corporations and political leaders who benefit from the camp system in Xinjiang and who are complicit in oppression in Hong Kong,” said Darren Byler, a lecturer at the UW who studies systems of repression used in Xinjiang and other parts of China.

“The important thing is to be clear that we are opposed to authoritarian power, Islamophobia, and imperialism in all forms (including in the United States) while at the same time we embrace all immigrants, particularly from places like China,” he said.

“It is important to differentiate institutions of oppression from groups of people,” he added.

Organizers here insist they only want to help their home.

“If we can try to tell all the people in America that believe in justice and democracy and human rights, please reach out to your senators and congressional representatives and ask them to support this law for human rights and justice,” said Kwok De Los Santos.

Some volunteers from her group have offered to join future rallies organized by the Seattle Bruce Lee Fan Club in Westlake Plaza or Hing Hay Park in the Chinatown International District. ■

The Seattle Bruce Lee Fan Club asks anyone interested in joining future rallies to email: seattlecharlette@gmail.com.

Mahlon can be reached at editor@nwasianweekly.com.

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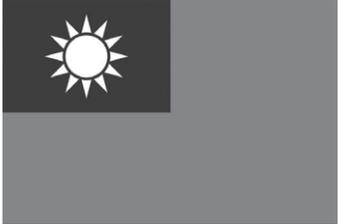
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COMMUNITY NEWS

Battleground for Taiwanese identity shifts to US census

By Mahlon Meyer
NORTHWEST ASIAN WEEKLY



A group of young Asian Americans face the screen. A tall, willowy woman talks about the LGBTQ movement in Taiwan. The screen flashes a picture of her wedding with her partner. Another woman with long shoulder-length hair talks about the goal of their campaign.

"I know that Chinese culture is a lot more prominent here," she says, in English, "But it's also important for Taiwanese culture to be represented."

A Taiwanese group of mostly young working professionals has launched a campaign to encourage Taiwanese and Taiwanese Americans to promote a distinct ethnic identity in the 2020 census.

The Taiwanese American Citizens League (TACL) and its chapters in major cities, the Taiwanese American Professionals (TAP), have mounted a media campaign to

ask all Asian American Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) to fill out the census, and Taiwanese in particular to check the box, "other Asian," and then write in "Taiwanese."

Organizers played down any geopolitical goal, such as trying to influence recognition of Taiwan as a sovereign or independent country, which has been the goal of other write-in campaigns, most notably by the Formosan Association for Public Affairs (FAPA) in the 1990s.

FAPA is, however, one of the sponsors of this campaign, according to one of the videos produced by TACL.

Still, national and local leaders of the campaign insisted their goal was to increase awareness of the needs of the Taiwanese community in the U.S.

Census data is crucial not only to government decisions about funding for education and other programs, but is also widely used by businesses and local communities, they said.

"This is why campaigns are important because it is about the future. The count in 2020 will impact representation, policy, and funding decisions for the next 10 years!" wrote Christina Hu, TACL director of civic engagement.

This is the fourth time the

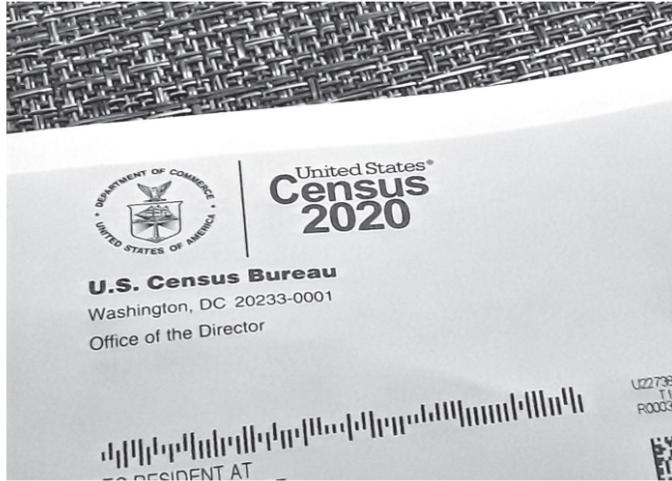


Photo by Ruth Bayang

organizations have promoted the campaign, which kicked off in 1990.

By way of showing its importance, organizers said that although 215,000 people wrote in "Taiwanese" on the last census, the figure reflected only a small portion of the actual number of people from Taiwan or Taiwanese Americans actually living in the U.S.

"It's the same type of thing for a lot of minorities," said Angel Hsu, president of TAP-Seattle. "They are undercounted because they don't fill it in."

The census form has distinct categories for "Asian Indian," "Chinese," "Filipino," "Korean," "Japanese," "Vietnamese," and

"Other Asian."

After "Other Asian" there is a box to write in any other distinct category.

As of press time, the Census Bureau had not responded to an inquiry as to how many write-ins it would take to create a new category.

Taiwanese identity

The word, "Taiwanese," has its own distinct history, laden with political associations, that have changed over time.

Until recent decades, it was used to distinguish those families whose ancestors had been born in Taiwan [benshengren] from those who had migrated to the island in 1949 at the end of the Chinese

Civil War [waishengren].

In the half-century following, any nativist sentiment, such as speaking the local dialect—also called "Taiwanese"—or advocating Taiwan independence, was forbidden and heavily punished by the ruling party, which had also transferred over from China.

But an opposition party has spurred democratic changes that have ultimately lessened affiliations based on family origins.

And ancestral distinctions have become further blurred as children intermarried.

So today "Taiwanese" is often used to refer simply to anyone with roots in the island.

A survey, given to residents of the island by the government's Mainland Affairs Council, has shown a massive increase in those who identify as "Taiwanese"—rather than "Chinese" or "both"—over the past 30 years.

In 1992, over 25% of islanders represented themselves as "Chinese," 46% as "both," and roughly 17% as "Taiwanese."

But in 2019, only 3% identified as "Chinese" and about 34% as "both." Those characterizing themselves as only "Taiwanese"

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Our community calendar page has been suspended due to the uncertainty surrounding events over COVID-19 concerns. We apologize for any inconvenience.

View the solution on page 14

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RESTAURANT CLOSURES from 1

what we hold most dear, our lives and the lives of our loved ones.” The measure has \$175 million going to the public health system and the remainder to a dedicated unemployment fund for coronavirus impacts. The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Washington has the highest number of deaths in the U.S., with most being associated with a nursing home in Kirkland. By March 17, the number of positive cases topped 1,000.

Inslee imposed strict new rules this week to help slow the spread of COVID-19. He mandated an immediate two-week closure of all restaurants, bars, and recreational facilities. The governor also revised his ban on events to prohibit gatherings of 50 or more people. Previously the size limit was more than 250.

The new orders went into effect at 12:01 a.m. on March 17 and will be in place through March 31.

“If we are living a normal life, we are not doing our jobs as Washingtonians,” Inslee said. “We cannot do that anymore. We need to make changes, regardless of size. All of us need to do more. We must limit the number of people we come in contact with. This is the new normal.”

The state Employment Security Department did not immediately have data on the number of unemployment compensation applications since the state was hit by the pandemic, but Inslee said

“We feel really good about where we are in unemployment compensation. We’re going to remain committed one way or another to get people unemployment compensation through this crisis. We know how critical this is. We know how many people that are going to experience, we hope, short-term unemployment. We want to be there for them.”

— Gov. Jay Inslee

that the state’s \$4.7 billion unemployment trust fund was “very, very robust.”

“We feel really good about where we are in unemployment compensation,” he said. “We’re going to remain committed one way or another to get people unemployment compensation through this crisis. We know how critical this is. We know how many people that are going to experience, we hope, short-term unemployment. We want to be there for them.”

For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia. The vast majority of people

recover from the new virus.

A clinical trial evaluating a vaccine began on March 16. The National Institutes of Health is funding the trial, which is taking place at the Kaiser Permanente Washington Health Research Institute in Seattle. Public health officials say it will take a year to 18 months to fully validate any potential vaccine.

Inslee said it was possible the Legislature, which just adjourned its 60-day session last week, might have to be called back into a special session if additional money is needed for the crisis.

“We can call a special session at any time that becomes necessary, and I would not be reluctant to do so,” he said. He said he has told legislative leaders to be prepared to do their work even if needs to

be done remotely due to social distancing requirements.

At the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, it is not business as usual right now, Port of Seattle officials said. This time last year, 50,000 passengers would be headed through airport security checkpoints at the beginning of spring break travel season, officials said. The airport, which remains open and operating, is currently averaging 16,000 passengers through its checkpoints.

On March 17, Secretary of State Kim Wyman and county election officials called on the governor to cancel a special election set for April 28 across 18 counties. Wyman said in a news release that none of the elections is to elect anyone to office, but are levy and bond elections.

“While public contact in an election is greatly reduced because Washington is a vote-by-mail state, the staffing requirements to conduct an election remain,” Wyman and county officials said in a letter to the governor. “From courthouse closures, to workforce reductions of election staff, postal staff ... circumstances outside of our control could make it impossible for counties to meet statutory election requirements. These include mail processing, voter registration, canvassing results, and certifying an election,” the letter said.

Wyman and others to find alternative options, including holding the elections during the August primary or November general. ■

CENSUS from 6

skyrocketed to almost 60%.

Some of these changes are due to the dying off of the first generation of arrivals from China, who mostly characterized themselves as “Chinese.”

But the trend culminated in the reelection of Tsai Ing-wen as president earlier this year.

In the wake of the Hong Kong protests and threats from Beijing to forcibly take control of the island, voters soundly rejected an opposing candidate that had promised closer ties with China.

Taiwanese identity in the U.S.

Such resolve is reflected in the current campaign, said scholars.

“The word ‘Taiwanese’ is more akin to a nationality, a protest, and a symbolic yet important gesture in the U.S.,” said Zhou Yu, associate professor in the Department of Family and Consumer Studies at the University of Utah.

“It was juxtapositioned with the waishengren and benshengren debate and with the use of the Taiwanese dialect in Taiwan before, while it is much less so today,” he wrote in an email.

In a paper on the write-in campaign, “Assimilation and Rising Taiwanese Identity: Taiwan-born Immigrants in the United States, 1990-2000,” Yu suggested that globalization may also allow Taiwan-born immigrants “to maintain a closer tie with their country of origin than before, especially in times of crisis.”

Yu and others, however, said that not all Taiwanese simply wanted to distinguish themselves from Chinese.

While emphasizing that his current research has been informal, he said in the course of many interviews, he found that a number of Taiwan-born immigrants in the U.S. said that “most Americans do not know the differences between Chinese and Taiwanese, nor do they care.”

Rather, a greater factor in promoting participation in the

write-in campaign has been the huge growth in the number of immigrants from China in the U.S.

“Some of the Taiwan-born have felt that many mainland Chinese, especially new arrivals, often toe the line of the Chinese government and disrespect Taiwanese,” said Yu.

“Feeling threatened, many Taiwan-born immigrants have chosen to write in ‘Taiwanese’ on the census form,” he said.

By contrast, many Taiwan-born immigrants living outside Los Angeles—where there are fewer Chinese—might characterize themselves as “Chinese” on the census, added Yu.

Yet it is the freedoms offered by the U.S. government that have encouraged Taiwanese and Taiwanese Americans to want to express themselves, others said.

“A lot of people feel, ‘I’m not Chinese, why do you want to categorize me as Chinese? And we have a free society, and we want the government to respect us,’” said Alex Fan, Director General of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO) in Seattle.

TECO is an informal office as the island does not have formal diplomatic ties with the U.S. Fan said his government was not materially supporting the campaign, but he had heard many community members talking about it.

“I understand why the TAP or others want to promote this campaign. The greater number of people you have answering as ‘Taiwanese,’ the more attention you will get from the government,” he said.

Younger Taiwanese Americans, however, are generally less politically active on issues relating to Taiwan, said one scholar of Taiwan studies, who asked to remain anonymous because of political sensitivities surrounding the subject.

“If they feel general anxiety with the current socioeconomic situation, they would probably express it in other ways that are more in line with current day progressive movements, such as expressing support for Bernie Sanders or Andrew Yang,” said the scholar, who works closely with Taiwanese American student groups.

TAP members range in age between 25 to 40, said Hsu, the president of the Seattle chapter.

TAP holds happy hours for young professionals and recently sponsored a film festival.

The group has some interaction with other Taiwanese organizations around Seattle, representing different age groups, such as speaking with Taiwanese student groups at the University of Washington or asking friends to pass on information about the campaign to church groups on Mercer Island.

TAP also invites other communities to its events.

And it has shared its media kit for the census campaign with other ethnic organizations wanting to imitate their efforts.

“The first step is to get all Asian Americans to just take the census,” said Hsu.

Asian Americans are the least likely to participate in the census, according to aapidata.com, which summarized a recent report by the U.S. census. They are also the group that is the most likely to fear that information they share would be used against them, aapidata.com also reported.

According to the 2010 census, there were 17.3 million Asian Americans in the U.S., accounting for 5.6 % of the population. Of that total, according to official numbers, roughly 3% were Taiwanese.

“But we feel pretty sure we are being undercounted,” said Hsu.

For proof of that, look no further than the only Asian American to run for president, Andrew Yang.

Both his parents are from Taiwan, noted Yu. But he identifies himself as “Chinese American.”

“This shows the limit of the Taiwanese identity in the U.S.,” he said. ■

For information about the write-in campaign, go to tacl.org/census-2020/

Mahlon can be reached at info@nwasianweekly.com.

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