

June 16, 2016

Phil Griffin
President
MSNBC

Andrew Lack
President and Chairman
NBC News

Craig Robinson
Executive VP, Chief Diversity Officer
NBC Universal

Jeff Zucker
President
CNN

Geraldine Moriba
VP of Diversity
CNN

Roger Ailes
Chairman and CEO
Fox News

Jay Wallace
Executive Vice President
Fox News

Dear Mr. Griffin, Mr. Lack, Mr. Robinson, Mr. Zucker, Ms. Moriba, Mr. Ailes, and Mr. Wallace,

We write this joint letter to express our concerns regarding the representation of the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community on your cable news networks. Collectively, CNN, MSNBC and Fox reach more than 3.5 million primetime viewers per day,¹ and recent events raise troubling questions about the characterization and lack of inclusion of the AAPI community on your programming.

On Friday, May 27, 2016, Ann Coulter appeared as a guest of the *Hardball with Chris Matthews* show on MSNBC. During her segment, Ms. Coulter referred to Asian Americans as “Mandarins.” We are shocked by Ms. Coulter’s use of this archaic and inappropriate term to refer to our community, and we are further disappointed that when challenged by fellow guest, Joy Reid, Ms. Coulter refused to correct her problematic usage of this term. The platform provided to Ms. Coulter underscores our frustration regarding the absence of AAPI guests on cable news network programming.

We are reminded of similar incidents, including last month when Representative Peter King used an anti-Japanese American slur during an appearance on MSNBC’s *Morning Joe*², and was not challenged by anyone on the program for doing so, and when Fox News’ *The Five*’s then-co-host Bob Beckel (currently an analyst for CNN) used an anti-Asian slur on-air to refer to Chinese people in 2014.³

¹ Nielsen Reports. *Network Rankings for 2014-2015*. Nielsen. Web. 2015.

² Kane, P. *Rep. Peter King defends using Japanese slur in describing his anti-Trump views*. The Washington Post. Web. 14 May 2016.

³ Fang, J. *Fox News’ Bob Beckel uses racist slur ‘Chinamen’ on air*. Reappropriate. Web. 11 Jul. 2014.

More alarming to us, however, is that commentators such as these routinely receive opportunities on your networks to discuss -- and, too often, to offend -- the AAPI community and other marginalized groups, while members of those same marginalized groups are not presented with similar opportunity to respond. While we understand that a guest's comments are not generally reflective of the network's views, it is troubling that representatives from our communities are routinely absent from your networks' programming.

The topic of Asian American underrepresentation and misrepresentation in Hollywood has been the focus of recent articles in *The New York Times*⁴ and *NPR*, as well as MSNBC's own *NBC Asian America*, and our absence from cable news outlets is cause for similar concern. At nearly 6% of the American population, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are the fastest-growing racial community in America. Comprising more than 21.8 million Americans, AAPIs are voracious consumers of televised and digital media, spending approximately 30% more of our screen time on websites devoted to news and information compared to the average American.⁵ Yet, reports find that Asian Americans constitute less than 3% of guests invited to appear on cable networks' nightly news⁶ or Sunday morning political talk⁷ shows, with fewer still identified as Southeast Asian American and/or Pacific Islander. Furthermore, topics explicitly affecting the AAPI community are discussed with even less frequency.

We recognize that MSNBC, CNN and Fox have all made significant investments towards improving overall racial and gender diversity on your networks, but clearly more work remains to be done.

To that end, we urge your networks to consider the message sent to Asian American and Pacific Islander viewers and consumers when non-AAPI analysts use air-time to label Asian Americans with slurs while AAPI commentators are not invited on-air to discuss the AAPI community. We ask that your networks devote more air-time to serious discussion involving the AAPI community and that you commit to significantly increasing the number of AAPI guests who appear on your networks' shows to discuss these and other issues.

The Asian American and Pacific Islander community is a growing political force in America. We are deeply troubled by recent examples of flippantly offensive comments

⁴ Hess, A. *Asian American Actors are Fighting for Visibility. They Will Not Be Ignored.* New York Times. Web. 25 May 2016.

⁵ Nielsen Reports. *State of the Asian American Consumer Report.* Nielsen. Web. 2012.

⁶ Savillo, R. and Willis, O. *REPORT: Gender and Ethnic Diversity in Prime-Time Cable News.* Media Matters. Web. 31 May 2013.

⁷ Savillo, R. *REPORT: Diversity on the Sunday shows in 2015.* Media Matters. Web. 15 Mar. 2016.

made towards Asian Americans on cable news, but more importantly we expect that MSNBC, CNN and Fox will take the necessary steps to address the continuing lack of AAPI representation on primetime cable news that permitted such insensitive remarks to be made about the AAPI community in the first place. We propose that such steps to improve AAPI inclusion be discussed in a meeting between your network's editorial board and representatives of the AAPI community, which we ask to take place within 90 days.

Please direct responses to this letter to Christopher Kang (chris@ncapaonline.org) and Jenn Fang (jenn@reappropriate.co).

Sincerely,

18 Million Rising

Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF)

Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)

Asian American Psychological Association (AAPA)

Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Asian American Justice Center (AAAJ-AAJC)

Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Asian Law Caucus (AAAJ-ALC)

Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Chicago (AAAJ-Chicago)

Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Los Angeles (AAAJ-LA)

Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO (APALA)

Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO)

Center for APA Women

Japanese American Citizens League (JACL)

Leaders Forum

National Asian / Pacific Islander American Chamber of Commerce &
Entrepreneurship (ACE)

National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA)

National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse (NAPAFASA)

National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)

National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA)

National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA)

National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance (NQAPIA)

OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates (OCA)

Reappropriate

South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)

Organizations

18 Million Rising was founded to promote AAPI civic engagement, influence, and movement by leveraging the power of technology and social media. For the past three years, we've convened a network of creative, tech-savvy, and passionate individual and organizations working in and with AAPI communities in every US state and territory. Our vision of engaged AAPI communities began with, but doesn't end with, the ballot box: it also includes year-round civic activity locally and nationally, holding corporations accountable, building interracial coalitions and developing our shared identities.

Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF) is a health justice non-profit organization dedicated to improving the health and well-being of more than 17 million Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders living in the United States and its jurisdictions. We believe that all persons have the right to be healthy, the right to live in a thriving community, and the right to quality, affordable, and accessible healthcare.

Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF), founded in 1974, is a national organization that protects and promotes the civil rights of Asian Americans. By combining litigation, advocacy, education, and organizing, AALDEF works with Asian American communities across the country to secure human rights for all.

Asian American Psychological Association (AAPA) was founded in December 1972 by a group of Asian American psychologists and other mental health professionals in the San Francisco Bay Area. Since its inception, the Association advocated on behalf of Asian Americans as well as advancing Asian American psychology.

Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Asian American Justice Center (AAAJ-AAJC) is a national nonprofit founded in 1991 to protect civil and human rights. As a national advocate for Asian Americans based in Washington, D.C., we serve our country's newest American community by promoting justice for all Americans, empowering our communities, bringing local and national constituencies together, and ensuring Asian Americans are able to fully participate in our democracy.

Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Asian Law Caucus (AAAJ-ALC) was founded in 1972 and is the nation's oldest legal organization defending the civil rights of Asians and Pacific Islanders.

Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Chicago (AAAJ-Chicago) is the leading pan-Asian organization in the Midwest dedicated to empowering the Asian American community through advocacy, research, education, leadership development and coalition-building.

Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Los Angeles (AAAJ-LA) is the nation's largest legal organization serving Asians and Pacific Islanders through direct legal services, impact litigation, policy advocacy, leadership development and capacity-building.

Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO (APALA) was founded in 1992 and is the first and only national organization of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) workers, most of whom are union members, and our allies advancing worker, immigrant and civil rights. Since its founding, APALA has played a unique role in addressing the workplace issues of the 660,000 AAPI union members and as the bridge between the broader labor movement and the AAPI community. Backed with strong support of the AFL-CIO, APALA has more than 20 chapters and pre-chapters and a national office in Washington, D.C.

Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO) was formed in 1987 by community health centers primarily serving medically underserved Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. Since that time, we have advocated for policies and programs that improve the provision of health care services that are community driven, financially affordable, linguistically accessible, and culturally appropriate.

Center for APA Women is a national, non-profit, non-advocacy organization dedicated to enhancing and enriching leadership skills for Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Island (AANHPI) leaders. Our mission is to address the challenges facing us and to nurture trusteeship within our communities by expanding leadership capacity, fostering awareness of AANHPI issues, creating a supportive network of AANHPI leaders, and strengthening community.

Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) was founded in 1929, and is the oldest and largest Asian American civil rights organization in the United States. The JACL monitors and responds to issues that enhance or threaten the civil and human rights of all Americans and implements strategies to effect positive social change, particularly to the Asian Pacific American community.

Leaders Forum is a nonpartisan, Asian American Pacific Islander consortium of premiere thought leaders who are heads and trailblazers in their industries. Our goal is to propel

Asian American leadership by innovating, building and sustaining significant pathways between the federal government and the private sector.

National Asian / Pacific Islander American Chamber of Commerce & Entrepreneurship (ACE) is a national organization founded in 2012 that gives a voice to the business interests of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. It seeks to improve the economic, political and social well-being of AAPIs by encouraging the growth of existing AAPI entrepreneurs, advocating for AAPI businesses in Washington, D.C., fostering the next generation of AAPI entrepreneurs, and promoting the need for wider AAPI leadership in corporate America.

National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA) is the national association of Asian Pacific American attorneys, judges, law professors and law interests. NAPABA represents the interests of over 50,000 attorneys and over 75 national, state, and local bar associations.

National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse (NAPAFASA) is a private, non-profit, 501(c)(3) membership organization dedicated to addressing the alcohol, tobacco, and other drug issues of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) populations on the continental U.S., Hawaii, the six Pacific Island jurisdictions and elsewhere. Founded in 1988, NAPAFASA involves services providers, families, and youth in efforts to reach API communities to promote health and social justice and to reduce substance abuse and related problems.

National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF) is one of the few staffed national women of color organizations in this country. NAPAWF bridges the many issues that confront AAPI women and their communities, and our mission is to build a movement to advance social justice and human rights for AAPI women and girls in the United States.

National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA) was founded in 1996, and is a coalition of thirty-five national Asian Pacific American organizations around the country. Based in Washington D.C., NCAPA serves to represent the interests of the greater Asian American (AA) and Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander (NHPI) communities and to provide a national voice for AA and NHPI issues.

National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA) makes empowerment happen through its vision, voice, vigilance and action. NaFFAA is recognized by Washington policy makers, private industry and national advocacy groups as the voice of Filipinos and Filipino Americans throughout the United States. It is a non-

partisan, non-profit association that promotes the active participation of Filipino Americans in civic and national affairs.

National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance (NQAPIA) is a network of Asian, South Asian, Southeast Asian, and Pacific Islander LGBTQ organizations. We seek to build the organization capacity of local LGBT AAPI groups, develop leadership, promote visibility, educate our community, enhance grassroots organizing, expand collaborations, and challenge homophobia and racism.

OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates (OCA) was founded in 1973 and is a national membership driven organization dedicated to advancing the social, political and economic well-being of Asian Pacific Americans, touching tens of thousands of individuals each year through its extensive network of over 100 chapters, affiliates and partners from around the country.

Reappropriate was founded in 2001, and is one of the web's largest and oldest blogs dedicated to long-form writing on the intersection of Asian American race and gender identity, as well as politics, pop culture, civic engagement, and current events.

South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT) is a national, nonpartisan, non-profit organization that elevates the voices and perspectives of South Asian individuals and organizations to build a more just and inclusive society in the United States. SAALT is the only national, staffed South Asian organization that advocates around issues affecting South Asian communities through a social justice framework.