PRESS RELEASE
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Note: LGBT individuals and couples from the following communities are available for interviews: Korean, Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Vietnamese, and Indian. Please contact us to arrange interviews.

LEADING ASIAN AMERICAN COALITIONS
EXPRESS SEVERE DISAPPOINTMENT OVER
SUPREME COURT DECISION TO UPHOLD PROPOSITION 8
Ruling on California Proposition 8 Cases allows a bare majority of voters to enshrine inequality into our constitution and to deprive an entire class of Californians of the fundamental freedom to marry.

Los Angeles, CA – The California Supreme Court today ruled in a 6 to 1 decision that the initiative process in California can be used to strip away fundamental rights from a minority group that has historically been subject to discrimination.

API Equality and API Equality–LA, two organizations that have worked single-mindedly to build public support for same-sex marriage in the Asian and Pacific Islander communities since 2004, are severely disappointed that the Supreme Court will uphold a proposition revoking marriage rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people.

“We are extremely saddened that the Court saw it fit to take away rights from a minority group,” said Karin Wang of Asian Pacific American Legal Center. “Essentially, the court has set forth a dangerous precedent where a simple majority vote is able to strip away the fundamental rights of a protected minority group.”

“As Asian and Pacific Islanders, we are no strangers to the perils of selective justice,” stated Jury Candelario of API Equality-LA. “From bans on immigration and interracial marriage, our community has often been the victim of such discrimination. We cannot stand silent as the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender members of our communities come under fire from the same sort of prejudice that has so often hurt our families.”

According to the Williams Institute, an LGBT think tank based at UCLA, there are approximately 66,000 LGBT Asian and Pacific Islanders living in California—the largest in the nation. With the court’s decision to uphold Prop 8, the fundamental right to marry is no longer a right afforded to them.

Fortunately, the Court has chosen to maintain the marriage status of the 18,000 couples who married during the short period that same-sex marriage was legal.

“While today’s decision is deeply disappointing, we are inspired by the recent victories in Iowa and Vermont and are committed to working together so that marriage equality will become a restored right for all,” said HyunJoo Lee from the National Korean American Service and Education Consortium.

Whereas a little over ten years ago, only a handful of API organizations were visibly and vocally supportive of same-sex couples right to marry, among the first was the Japanese American Citizen’s League. Today, through API
Equality – LA and API Equality’s efforts, more than 60 API organizations and our leading API elected officials and community leaders have come on record in support of marriage equality for same-sex couples via an amicus brief supporting last year’s *In Re Marriage Cases* and more recently in public endorsements opposing Proposition 8.

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APALC is the nation’s largest legal organization serving the Asian and Pacific Islander (API) communities. Founded in 1983, APALC is a unique organization that combines traditional legal services with civil rights advocacy and leadership development. The mission of APALC is to advocate for civil rights, provide legal services and education and build coalitions to positively influence and impact Asian Pacific Americans and to create a more equitable and harmonious society. www.apalc.org

API Equality-LA is a coalition of organizations and individuals who are committed to working in the Asian and Pacific Islander (API) communities in Greater Los Angeles for equal marriage rights and fair treatment of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) families through community education and advocacy. www.apiequalityla.org