



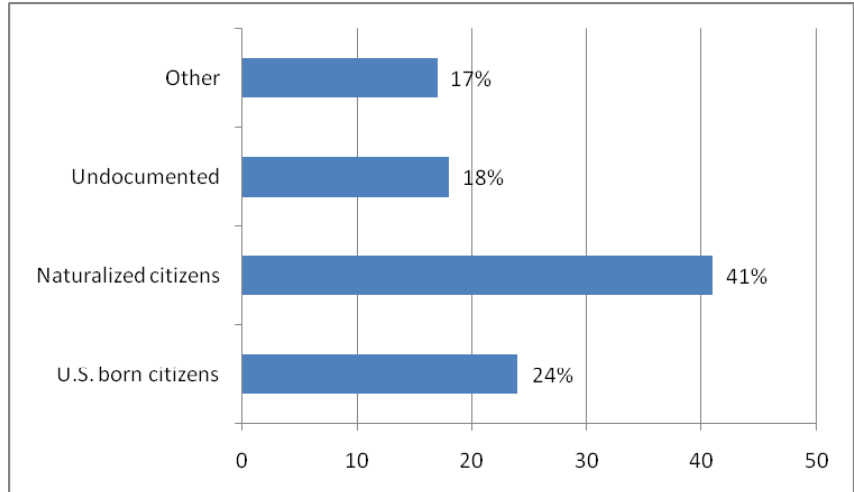
Korean Americans and Comprehensive Immigration Reform

On December 22, 1902, the first group of Korean immigrants arrived in Hawaii to work as laborers on sugar plantations. Since then, Korean Americans have grown to become the fifth largest Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) ethnic community living in the United States. 76% of Korean Americans are immigrants and 51% entered after 1990. Now more than ever, immigration reform is needed to improve the lives of all Americans.

Why comprehensive immigration reform works

Path to Citizenship - The Korean American community numbers 1.34 million; 1 out of 5 is undocumented. AAPIs make up approximately 10% of the total undocumented population.

Keep Families Together - Family and employment immigration are the two primary means of entry to the U.S. for Korean Americans. Close to 77,000 are caught in the backlogs, many waiting decades to bring family members into the country.



Protect Workers' Rights - As a predominantly immigrant work force with a significant population that are limited English proficient, the protection of rights for workers and employers is fundamental. It is estimated that 18.8 million (14%) of the U.S. workforce are immigrants, and 4.9 million (26%) of them are from Asia. One-third of all Korean American families are work in or operate a small business.

Equal Opportunity for All Youth - Every year, 65,000 undocumented students graduate from high school unable to realize their potential and fully participate in American society. Accurate counts of the Korean American undocumented youth population are not available. What is known is that 24% of Korean Americans are under the age of 18, 60% of Korean American youth are U.S. born citizens, and 18% of the total population is undocumented.

Due Process - Basic due process rights and civil liberties to individuals are important for Korean Americans. AAPIs account for about 2% of total deportations and detention and, as a racial minority they face additional and different challenges, such as language barriers, social isolation and lack of access to cultural competent treatment or services. AAPI detainees and their families have reported that they make choices without understanding their rights or have difficulty requesting medical attention because of the lack of language access.

Promote Integration - 469,991(36%) of Korean American are registered voters. Statistics show that when registered, Korean Americans demonstrate high rates of continued political participation. The Korean American citizen voting age population, according to the 2000 Census, is 529,692. That number is expected to increase tremendously, therefore representing the political potential of Korean Americans.

Sources: 2000 Census; 2007 American Community Survey; Department of Homeland Security, "Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States: January 2008." (Feb 2009); and Department of Homeland Security, "2007 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics." (Sept 2008).

Our Solution: Korean American Principles for Comprehensive Immigration Reform

1. Bring millions of hard working undocumented immigrants and their children out of the shadows and provide them a path to citizenship.
2. Keep families together by preserving the family immigration system, eliminating the immigration backlogs, stopping mandatory and indefinite detentions and cruel deportations for minor infractions.
3. Protect all workers regardless of their immigration status.
4. Allow students to reach their full potential through access to college.
5. Protect and restore basic rights and liberties, including allowing every person to have their day in court.
6. Promote the social, economic, and political integration of immigrants.

Community Stories

Kannie Yoon, an undocumented student, is an incredibly gifted young artist who studied at one of the top art institutions in the country. She came to the U.S. from Korea as a teenager and began working in her family's dry cleaning business to support her family. Despite language barriers, Kannie studied hard and graduated with a 4.0 GPA. Because she is undocumented, she did not have access to financial aid or loans. Kannie and her family worked long hours and multiple jobs to pay for her tuition and expenses. Despite these hardships, Kannie was able to graduate. But without the opportunity to become gain full citizenship and contribute to society, how can she put that degree to work?

Andrew Jung's life turned upside down at the age of 15 years. Born in Toledo, Ohio to Young Jung, a volunteer librarian, and Dae Jung, a sushi chef, Andrew was a high school student at Emanuel Baptist. His parents came as a newlywed couple in 1984 from South Korea. However because of a document misfiling, they became undocumented. On Valentine's Day 2005, Toledo police along with the Department of Homeland Security came to their home and took Young away, leaving Dae to care for Andrew as a minor. While being moved to four different detention facilities, with each move unannounced to Andrew and Dae, Young's health began to deteriorate gravely. On August 11, 2005, his parents made the painful decision of leaving Andrew alone in the U.S. with family friends, and self-deported. A minor, with no other family in the United States, Andrew's parents signed away their parental rights and granted guardianship to the parents of his best friend since childhood. What national security threats do a volunteer librarian and a sushi chef pose? How is America made better with the forced removal of Young and Dae Jung?

What You Can Do

1. Tell Members of Congress why this issue matters to you – write, call, or visit.
2. Join the FIRM Cell Phone Action Network. Type “5878423” (or “Justice”) to the phone number “69866.” After receiving a thank you message, reply with email address and zip code to get receive action alerts directly to your cell phone. You can expect only about 1-2 messages per/month.
3. Learn more about how immigration impacts you – sign up for our listserv or Facebook.
4. Join us for Citizenship Day Mobilization on September 17, 2009.

The **National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC)** was founded in 1994 by local community centers to project a national progressive voice and promote the full participation of Korean Americans as a part of a greater goal of building a national movement for social change. NAKASEC maintains its national office in Los Angeles and an office in Washington, D.C. NAKASEC also has affiliates in Los Angeles (The **Korean Resource Center**) and Chicago (The **Korean American Resource & Cultural Center**). NAKASEC is a member of the Fair Immigration Reform Movement (FIRM), Reform Immigration for America Campaign, and the Rights Working Group. *For more information and resources*, visit www.nakasec.org or call 323.937.3703 / 202.339.9318.