

Asian Americans Unsilenced

April 20, 2021 at 3:00pm Hawaii

Speaker Biographies



Manjusha “Manju” P. KULKARNI

Executive Director, Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council and Co-founder, Stop AAPI Hate, Los Angeles, CA, USA [@KulkarniManju](#)

Manjusha “Manju” P. Kulkarni is executive director of the Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council, a coalition of over forty community-based organizations that serves and represents the 1.5 million Asian Pacific Islanders in Los Angeles County. She is also co-founder of Stop AAPI Hate and serves as a lecturer in the Asian American Studies Department at UCLA. Ms. Kulkarni’s work has been featured in numerous publications, including the *New York Times*, PBS Newshour, and NBC, and she has been a regular contributor to *Huffington Post*. She began her career working at the Southern Poverty Law Center in her hometown of Montgomery, Alabama. Ms. Kulkarni received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Duke University and a Juris Doctor degree from Boston University School of Law. In April 2014, she received the White House Champions of Change award for her dedication to improving health care access for Asian American communities.



Ted W. LIEU (D-CA, 33)

U.S. Representative and Member, Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, Washington, DC, USA [@tedlieu](#)

Ted W. Lieu was first elected in 2014 to represent California’s 33rd Congressional District in the United States House of Representatives. In 2016 and 2018, he was reelected and currently serves on the House Judiciary Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee. He was also elected by his democratic colleagues to serve as a co-chair of the Democratic Policy and Communications Committee. Rep. Lieu is a former active duty officer in the U.S. Air Force and currently serves as a colonel in the reserves, stationed at Los Angeles Air Force Base. In Congress, Rep. Lieu has established himself as a leader on the environment; cybersecurity; civil liberties; and veterans. He has been an outspoken proponent for tackling climate change and a leader in Congress against ethnic and racial profiling, and discrimination against the LGBT community. He serves as whip of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, co-chair of the LGBT Equality Caucus, and co-chair of the Cloud Computing Caucus.



Rizwan MANJI

Actor, *Schitt’s Creek*, *Outsourced* and *The Magicians*, Studio City, CA, USA [@Riz_Manji](#)

Rizwan Manji is an actor best known for playing Rajiv Gidwani, the hysterically officious, scheming assistant manager of a call center in the NBC comedy *Outsourced*. He will next be seen on Netflix's *Atypical* and on James Gunn’s upcoming HBO Max series *Peacemaker*. He is currently shooting the Netflix comedy *Wedding Season*.

Mr. Manji's other film and television credits include *The Magicians*, *Mr. Robot*, *Arrested Development*, *Charlie Wilson's War*, *The Tiger Hunter*, and *Paterson*. He has received a 2021 Canadian Screen Award and a Best Guest Actor nomination for his portrayal of Ray Butani in *Schitt's Creek*, the critically acclaimed CBC/Pop TV show and winner of the 2020 Emmy for Best Comedy.



Madalene Xuan-Trang MIELKE

President and CEO, Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies, Washington, DC, USA [@APAICS](#)

Madalene Xuan-Trang Mielke is a nationally recognized civil rights leader and a member of *USA Today's* Inaugural Leaders of Change. As president & CEO of the Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies (APAICS) and founder and principal of Arum Group, LLC, she brings 25 years of experience working in political campaigns and specializes in political/non-profit fundraising and political training. Ms. Mielke began her professional career working at the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and later for the Clinton/Gore coordinated 1996 campaign. After returning from the campaign, Ms. Mielke worked for the co-executive director at the Presidential Inaugural Committee and later on Vice President Gore's team. She started fundraising while working at the New Democrat Network PAC and she returned to her roots as the training director for the Ron Brown-Paul Tully Institute (BTI), the training arm of the DNC. In 2002, Ms. Mielke started her political consulting firm, specializing in fundraising and political training. She has collaborated with national organizations and federal campaigns of all levels to raise millions of dollars to empower communities of color. Ms. Mielke is a graduate of Tulane University, Newcomb College, where she serves as a mentor through a variety of collegiate mentoring programs including the Newcomb College Institute Women to Women Mentoring Program and Georgetown University's Politics Mentorship Program.



Kimmy YAM

Reporter, NBC Asian America, NBC News, New York City, NY [@kimmythepooh](#)

Kimmy Yam is an award-winning journalist best known for her work, covering policy and legislation, as well as her deeply reported features on complex issues impacting the Asian American community. In 2016, she helped launch HuffPost's Asian Voices section, one of two mainstream media verticals dedicated to the Asian American and Pacific Islander community. Today she is a reporter for NBC's Asian America section, where she aims to uplift communities that have largely been forgotten by the media ecosystem.

Moderator:



Ashley WESTERMAN

Journalist, National Public Radio, Washington, DC, USA [@ aswesterman](#)

Ashley Westerman is an award-winning freelance journalist and audio producer soon to be based in Manila, Philippines. She currently resides in Washington, DC. An experienced reporter, editor and producer, she has more than a decade of journalism experience and has previously worked for outlets such as Voice of America and NPR in Washington, DC. Her bylines can also be found at PRI's The World. Ms. Westerman focuses on Southeast Asia and Pacific news and issues, and has reported on everything from the toppling of governments in Malaysia and endangered pachyderms in Laos to Islamists in the Philippines and pearl farms in French Polynesia. She closely follows U.S. policy toward the Asia-Pacific, developments in the Rohingya refugee crisis and has produced in-depth reporting on China's Belt and Road initiatives around the world. Born in Manila, Ms. Westerman was raised in rural Western Kentucky. Her experience as an

Asian adoptee has informed much of her reporting on the AAPI (Asian American Pacific Islander) community and has also led her to become an outspoken advocate for more diversity in news media – in terms of newsroom staffing, voices/sources quoted and the kinds of stories pursued. Ms. Westerman attended the University of Kentucky for her undergraduate degree in journalism and political science and obtained her MA in journalism at the University of Maryland, College Park. She is also an alumna of the East-West Center Jefferson Fellowships (2018).