

Brief History of Michigan Asian Pacific American Affairs

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Ever since the tragic case of Vincent Chin took place in 1982, the Michigan Asian Pacific Americans longed to have a voice. In 2009, the first permanent Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission in Michigan (MAPAAC) was established.

Before MAPAAC was created by the Governor and the Michigan legislators, in 2005, Governor Jennifer Granholm established Governor's Advisory Council on Asian Pacific American Affairs (ACAPAA) within the Department of Civil Rights by an Executive Order. The purpose of the council was to advise the Governor and the Department of Civil Rights on policy matters pertaining to Asian and Pacific Americans (APAs) in Michigan.

In 2009, Governor Granholm, in Executive Reorganization Order 2009-16, transferred powers and duties of ACAPAA to MAPAAC, thereby abolishing the advisory council. The APA community yearned to have a permanent entity, so that future generations would have continuous representation in the state government. Thanks to the sweat, determination, and hard work of the APA community leaders, elected officials, and the ACAPAA appointees, that dream came true in 2009 with the passage of HB 6172 in the House. MAPAAC brought about the beginning of a new era for the Asian Pacific Americans in Michigan. The most notable difference between an advisory council and a legislatively mandated commission is that such a commission is a permanent entity in the state government, not affected by the changing administration.

Prior to the Granholm administration, Governor Blanchard created the Governor's Asian American Advisory Commission in 1987 through an Executive Order. Governor Engler established the Michigan Commission on Asia in the Schools in 2002 to assess Michigan school students' exposure to information about the Asian region.