

# National Asian and Pacific Islander Month

## History

National Asian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month began as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Week, first observed in 1979 under President Jimmy Carter, who noted the “enormous contributions to the sciences, arts, industry, government and commerce” made by Asian and Pacific Islanders. In 1990, President George H.W. Bush expanded the celebration to cover the whole month of May. Organizers chose this month in recognition of May 7, 1843, the date the first Japanese immigrants arrived in the United States, and of May 10, 1869, the day the transcontinental railroad was completed — an accomplishment that would not have been possible without the contributions of Chinese Americans.

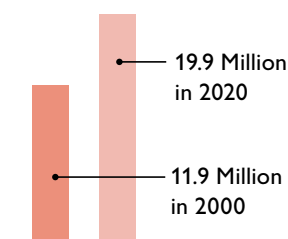
### Asian and Pacific Islanders in the U.S.

The history of Asian and Pacific Islanders in America stretches back hundreds of years. The first record of Asians in North America is from 1587, when Filipino sailors came to what is now California. The first Chinese people recorded in the United States were three sailors who came to Baltimore in 1785 as part of an interracial shipping crew.

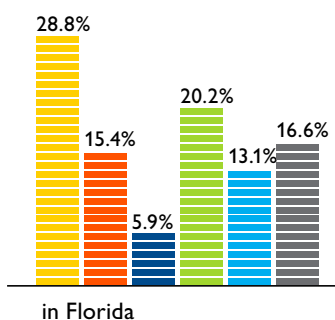
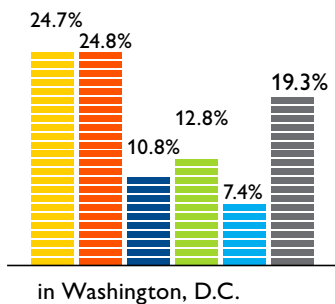
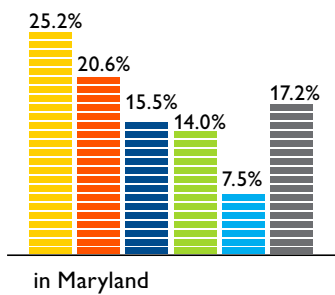
### U.S. Population: Asian Alone or in Combination with Other Races

Asian and Pacific Islanders are a diverse group, making up more than 50 ethnic groups and speaking more than 100 languages. Asian and Pacific Islanders in the United States increased by 45% between 2000 and 2010, making them one of the fastest growing minority groups in the country.

Asian and Pacific Islander population in the United States



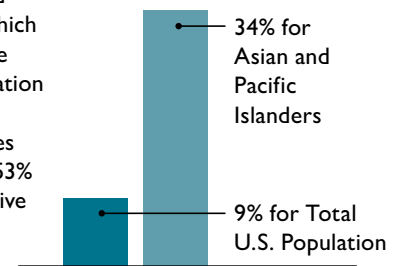
Asian and Pacific Islander population by ethnicity



### Rates of Limited English Proficiency

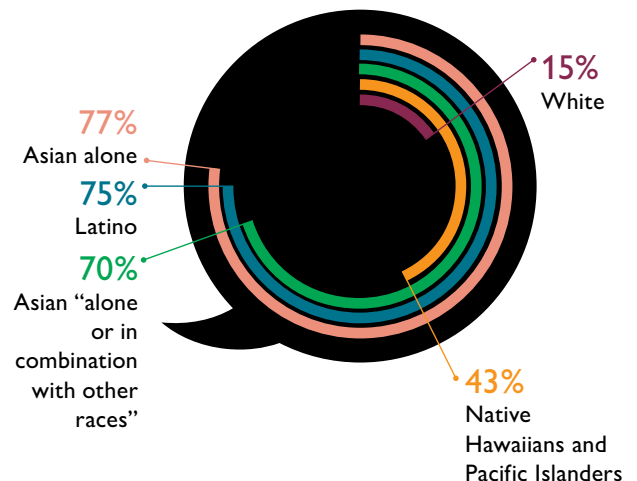
Roughly a third of Asian and Pacific Islanders have limited English proficiency (LEP), which is significantly more than the numbers for the U.S. population as a whole.

Not surprisingly, LEP rates differ by ethnic group, with 53% of Vietnamese and 2% of native Hawaiians considered LEP.



### Speaking a Language Other than English at Home

Asians are more likely than any other minority group to speak a language other than English at home.



# National Asian and Pacific Islander Month

## Asian and Pacific Islander Innovators

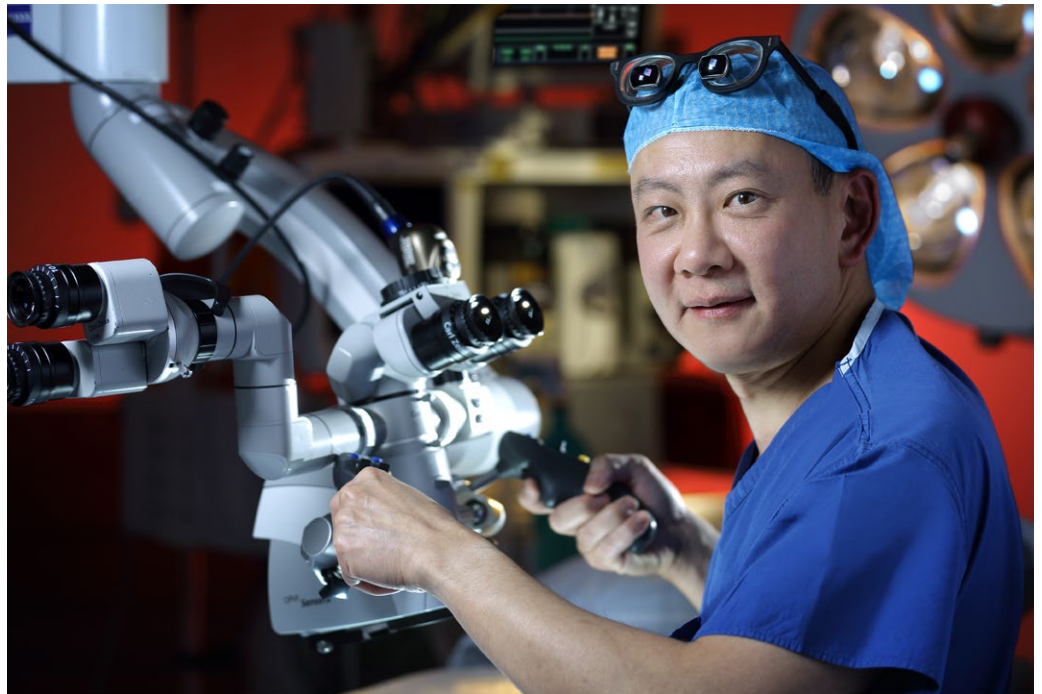
Asian and Pacific Islanders have made tremendous contributions to medical science and innovation.

**Min Chueh Chang**, born in Taiyuan, China, helped develop the birth control pill and was a pioneer of in vitro fertilization who paved the way for the birth of “test-tube babies.”

**David Ho**, a Taiwanese-American physician, developed foundational research for the modern “cocktail” antiretroviral therapy, of which Ho was an early champion.

**Anandi Gopal Joshi**, born in India, was the first Hindu and first Indian female doctor to receive a medical degree in the United States, graduating at age 20 in 1886.

**Katherine Luzuriaga**, a Filipino American physician and pediatric immunologist was recognized, in conjunction with Johns Hopkins virologist Deborah Persaud, for work leading to the “functional cure” of an HIV positive infant.



### Improving Asian Health

Cancer is the leading cause of death among Asians, unlike most demographic groups, with kidney cancer rates nearly three times and stomach cancer rates two times those found for non-Hispanic whites. The Asian American Cancer Program at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health aims to reduce that disparity by using community-based participatory research to improve liver, breast and cervical cancer screening rates in the Asian community.

### Overcoming a History of Persecution

Throughout American history, Asian and Pacific Islanders have been both a highly desired and deeply debased immigrant group, responsible for some of the nation’s greatest achievements and the targets of the country’s worst instincts. Victims of both individual and institutional prejudice, Asians have faced a long history of inequality and exclusion. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was the only piece of immigration legislation to ever exclude a group based on their nationality. Similarly, the World War II internment of Japanese Americans in 1942 represented the only time since the end of slavery that parts of the population was imprisoned solely because of its ethnicity. The vast majority of the 117,000 people interned were American citizens, and 17,000 were children under the age of 10.

# National Asian and Pacific Islander Month

## Health Disparities Affecting AAPI in the United States

The National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD), an institute of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the nation's medical research agency, focuses scientific research on the health inequities that Asians face regarding cancer, chronic diseases (heart disease, hypertension and diabetes) and mental health, as well as inequities among older adults. It is the only U.S. population for which cancer is the leading cause of death. In particular, Asians have the highest incidence and mortality rates of liver and stomach cancers — the most preventable cancers — largely due to high prevalence of related infections such as hepatitis B. In addition, Asians have the lowest cancer screening rates and are typically diagnosed at a later stage compared with other racial and ethnic groups.

NIMHD has been a leader in strengthening the scientific community's focus on nonbiological factors such as socioeconomic, politics, discrimination, culture and environment in relation to health disparities, with initiatives providing scientific knowledge and designing interventions to improve health outcomes and to reduce and ultimately eliminate health disparities. Visit the institute's website, [nimhd.nih.gov](https://nimhd.nih.gov), for information on the recently introduced **NIH Minority Health and Health Disparities Strategic Plan 2021–2025**.

### TUBERCULOSIS

**5x**  
 as likely to contract tuberculosis (Asians)

**16x**  
 as likely to contract tuberculosis (Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders)

*\*Among U.S.-born persons.*

### LIVER CANCER

**72%**  
**of WOMEN** are more likely to develop liver and IBD cancer

**66%**  
**of MEN** more likely to develop liver and IBD cancer

### OBESITY

**76%**  
 more likely to be obese

### DIABETES

**76%**  
 more likely to be diabetic (Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders)

**51%**  
 more likely to be diabetic (Asian-Indian)

**50%**  
 more likely to develop end-stage renal disease (Asians)

### PRENATAL

**47%**

more likely to receive late or no prenatal care (Chinese Americans)

**2x**

as likely to receive late or no prenatal care (Hawaiian and part Hawaiian)

### STOMACH CANCER

**76%**

**of WOMEN** more likely to develop stomach cancer (Asian and Pacific Islanders)  
 2.6x as likely to die from stomach cancer (Asian and Pacific Islanders)

**53%**

**of MEN** are more likely to develop stomach cancer (Asian and Pacific Islanders)  
 2x as likely to die from stomach cancer (Asian and Pacific Islanders)

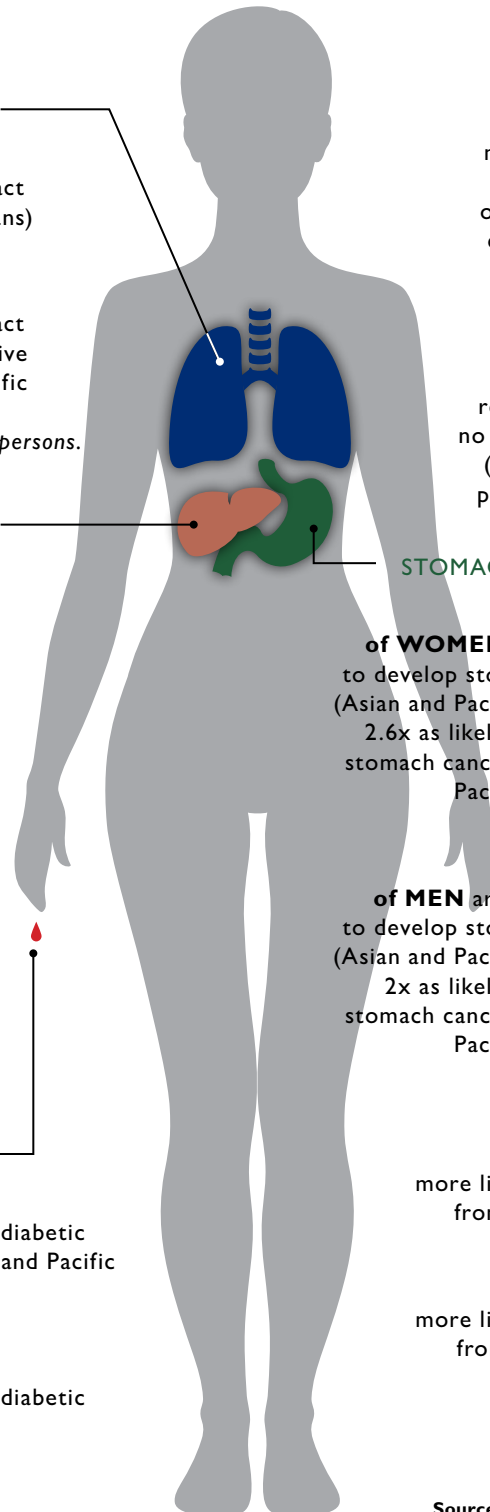
### HEPATITIS

**68%**

more likely to suffer from Hepatitis A

**18x**

more likely to suffer from Hepatitis B



Source: Families USA  
<https://familiesusa.org/resources/asian-american-pacific-islander-health-disparities-compared-to-non-hispanic-whites/>

# National Asian and Pacific Islander Month

## Autoimmune Disease Spotlight: Lupus

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention conducted multiple population-based lupus patient registries to collect information on people diagnosed with the disease.<sup>1</sup> The studies found that a disproportionate number are women and people of color — particularly Asian and Hispanic women.

Lupus is a complex, chronic autoimmune disease that triggers inflammation in different tissues of the body. The disease causes the immune system to attack virtually any organ or tissue with severity ranging from mild to life-threatening. Lupus affects up to 1.5 million people across the U.S., including people of all ages. Women of childbearing ages (15–44) are at greatest risk. Men are at lower risk than women.

Healio, a clinical information website, highlights an article in *Arthritis Care & Research* indicating that lupus is more severe in U.S. Asian populations than white people, particularly among Filipino at young ages. More research is important so that clinicians can improve outcomes by detecting more severe disease earlier. Further defining unique disease patterns, genetic influences and treatment responses among Asian subgroups may help identify patients at greatest risk for disability and death.

<sup>1</sup> Lupus among Hispanic and Asian Persons  
[cdc.gov/lupus/features/lupus-asians-hispanics.html](https://www.cdc.gov/lupus/features/lupus-asians-hispanics.html)

### Resources

#### Asian/(Asian/Pacific) Pacific American Heritage Month

[www.asianpacificheritage.gov/](http://www.asianpacificheritage.gov/)

#### Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies

<https://www.apaics.org/hate-crime-resources>

#### National Association of Asian American Professionals

<http://www.naaap.org/events/>

#### U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health

##### Asian Americans

<https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/omh/browse.aspx?lvl=3&lvlid=63>

##### Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders

<https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/omh/browse.aspx?lvl=3&lvlid=65>

### Johns Hopkins Resources

#### Asian American Cancer Program at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

<https://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/asian-american-cancer-program/index.html>



# Celebrating Asian and Pacific Islander Heritage

Created by the Johns Hopkins Asian and Pacific Islanders and Allies Employee Resource Group



## GLOBAL MAP OF ASIAN COUNTRIES

**East Asians:** people from China (including Macau and Hong Kong), Korea, Japan, Okinawa, Taiwan and Mongolia

**South Asians:** people from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka

**Southeast Asians:** people from Burma, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Philippines and Vietnam

**Pacific Islanders (Pasifika, or Pasefika):** people of the Pacific Islands of Polynesia. The largest ethnic subgroups of Pacific Islander Americans are Native Hawaiians, Samoans, Chamorros, Fijians, Palauans and Tongans. American Samoa, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands are insular areas (U.S. territories), while Hawaii is a state.

## Who We Are

We are Asian Americans and Pacific Islander Americans. Asian and Pacific Islanders by birth and American by birth or choice. Many of us were born of this land, while others came to this great nation with dreams in our eyes. First generation immigrants, third or even fourth; we all learned to adapt to our new surroundings and culture. We wanted to embrace this great nation, and want it to embrace us. Instead we are sometimes pushed away for being different.

We are often asked, “Where are you from?” When we are asked this question, sometimes we feel people are genuinely interested; at other times, we feel we are purposefully reminded of our otherness. In today’s atmosphere of racial intolerance, we are more sensitive of our otherness. As Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, we stand out and often hear, “Go back to your country!” We want to remind such people, we are in our country. This is our country. This is our home. Let us, together, build a community that embraces diversity and celebrates differences. Let us be the solution to intolerance by learning and growing together.

—The JHM Asian and Pacific Islander ERG

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## Asian and Pacific Islander Diaspora in the Americas

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) are a diverse group from 48 countries, broken down into more than 50 ethnic groups speaking more than 100 languages. AAPI in the United States increased by 45% between 2000 and 2010, making it one of the fastest growing minority groups in the country. AAPI have hundreds of years of history in the U.S. The first record of Asians in North America dates to 1587, Filipino sailors who were among the crew of a Spanish galleon sent exploring the coast of Northern California. The first Chinese people recorded in the United States were three sailors who came to Baltimore in 1785 as part of an interracial shipping crew. Japanese immigrants arrived first on the Hawaiian Islands in the 1860s for work in the sugarcane fields. Many moved to the U.S. mainland and settled in the Pacific Northwest, working primarily as farmers and fishermen.

The term Asian American originally came out of the pan-Asian student movement of the late 1960s, as part of an effort to unify what had been disparate Asian American groups into an umbrella that acknowledged a shared history and identity, and rejected the antiquated and geographically subjective term Oriental.

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sciences, arts, industry, government and commerce” made by Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. In 1990, President George H.W. Bush expanded the celebration to cover the month of May, which organizers chose in recognition of May 7, 1843, the date the first Japanese immigrants arrived in the United States, and of May 10, 1869, the day the transcontinental railroad was completed — an accomplishment that would not have been possible without the contributions of Chinese Americans.

### Overcoming a History of Persecution

Throughout American history, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have been both a highly desired and deeply debased immigrant group, responsible for some of the nation’s greatest achievements and targets of the nation’s

worst instincts. Victims of both individual and institutional prejudice, Asian Americans have faced a long history of inequality and exclusion. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was the only piece of immigration legislation to ever exclude a group based on its nationality. Similarly, the World War II internment of Japanese Americans in 1942 represented the only time since the end of slavery that a portion of the population was imprisoned solely because of its ethnicity. The vast majority of the 117,000 people interned were American citizens, and 17,000 of them were children under the age of 10. Filipinos in the 1930s faced many anti-Filipino riots in part because of Filipino men having intimate relations with white women, which was in violation of the California anti-miscegenation laws of the time.

# Celebrating Asian and Pacific Islander Heritage

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## Current Cultural Landscape

Recent events surrounding the coronavirus pandemic have brought public need to find the balance in cultural pride and celebrating what each country of Asia brings to the nation while addressing racial divide and violence toward Asians/Asian Americans. The urgency to confront racial divisions that have led to violence is addressed at Johns Hopkins Medicine through listening sessions and presentations, which have been a good place to start the much-needed conversations. Online platforms/forums, polls and discussions through Zoom are proving to be good venues for continuous education of our Johns Hopkins community about our colorful heritage and unique differences. These avenues give voice about the lived experiences of our AAPI community, and offer ways to navigate conversations about stereotypes and biases.

## Representation Matters

President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris recently announced new actions to respond to the increase in anti-Asian violence and to advance safety, inclusion and belonging for all Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities. They called on Congress to pass the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act introduced by Sen. Mazie Hirono (Hawaii) and Rep. Grace Meng (New York), created a historically diverse administration in which 15% of all appointees identify as Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders; sought funding for AAPI survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault;

established a COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force committee to address xenophobia against Asian Americans, and establish a Department of Justice cross-agency initiative on anti-Asian violence.

## Ways to Support the AAPI Community

What can you do to support our Asian and Pacific Islander employees, trainees and students?

- Send a note to ask your colleagues how they are. If they are willing to talk and share, be a good listener and resist the temptation to give answers or try to solve the problem.
- Similarly, use departmental discussions and town halls to listen to the needs and recommendations of your colleagues instead of assuming what the needs are ([Racial Discussion Resources](#)).
- [Educate](#) yourself about the history and experiences of Asians and Pacific Islanders in our country.
- Volunteer and support organizations promoting inclusion.
- Amplify the voices of the Asian and Pacific Islander community.
- Speak up and be an ally.

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## We Are Represented by Local and National Leaders

**Aruna Miller**, the first South Asian woman elected to the position of lieutenant governor in the United States and the first Asian American to hold the office in Maryland. Miller is an advocate for the environment, working families and domestic abuse victims.

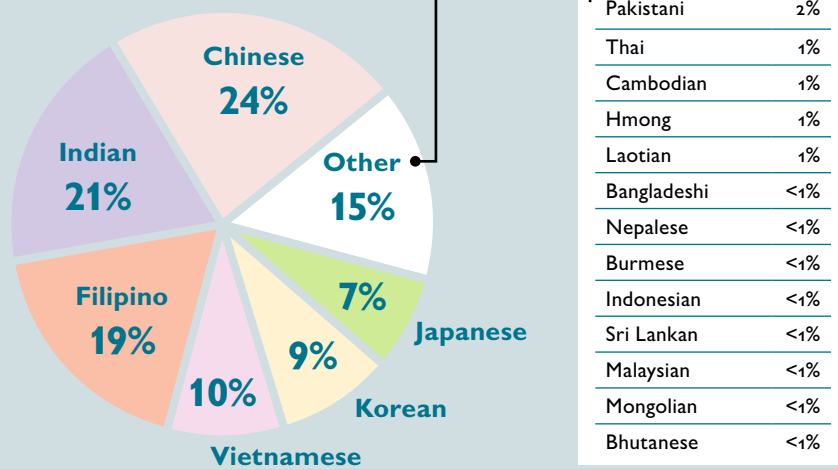
**Yumi Hogan**, former first lady of Maryland and wife of former Gov. Larry Hogan, is a first-generation Korean American, a philanthropist, an accomplished artist, adjunct professor at the Maryland Institute College of Art, and an advocate for cancer awareness, the benefits of art therapy and awareness for caregivers.

**Maryland Legislative Asian American and Pacific Islander Caucus** seeks to engage the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities in Maryland to ensure that legislative and policy goals are fully represented. There are currently 10 members of the caucus of Asian American or Pacific Islander descent. To see the full list of legislators, go to the Maryland General Assembly website at [msa.maryland.gov/msa/mdmanual/07leg/html/caucus/asian.html](https://msa.maryland.gov/msa/mdmanual/07leg/html/caucus/asian.html).

**Kamala Harris**, the 49th and current U.S. vice president, is the first female vice president and the highest-ranking female official in U.S. history, as well as the first African American and first Asian American vice president.

## U.S. Census — Demographics of Asian American

The Pew Research Center posted Keys facts about Asian origin groups in the U.S. on their website April 20, 2023, highlighting the rise of income inequality among Asian Americans over other racial or ethnic groups that also reflect wide disparities in income among Asian origin groups.



**Katherine Tai**, U.S. trade representative is the first woman of color and first American of Asian descent to serve in the position. She previously served as chief trade counsel for the House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee.

**Vice Adm. Vivek Murthy**, the 21st surgeon general of the United States, was also the 19th person to hold that post (2014–2017), the first surgeon general of Indian descent and the youngest active duty flag officer in federal uniformed service.

**Julie Su**, U.S. deputy labor secretary, is a veteran civil rights attorney who previously served as California labor secretary.

**Mazie Hirono**, a U.S. senator representing Hawaii since 2013, is a first-generation Japanese American and the first woman senator from Hawaii.

**Tammy Duckworth**, a U.S. senator from Illinois, is also a retired Army National Guard lieutenant colonel, an Iraq War veteran, a Purple Heart recipient and a former assistant secretary of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. She was among the first Army women to fly combat missions in Iraq, and in 2018 she became the first senator to give birth while serving in office. Duckworth secured a historic rules change to allow senators to bring their infant children onto the Senate floor.

**Clarence K. Lam, M.D.**, a state senator representing Anne Arundel and Howard counties, is chair of the Maryland Legislative Asian-American and Pacific-Islander Caucus.