

# Fast for Families: QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

## *Call for Citizenship & Immigration Reform*

### **1. What is Fast for Families?**

Fast for Families is a diverse coalition of individuals and organizations from the faith, immigrant, labor and civil rights communities that was formed to urge Congress to act quickly to pass just and humane immigration reform legislation. Its goal is to shed light on the crisis of family separation due to deportation and uplift the importance of strengthening family immigration and providing a path to citizenship for the over 11 million undocumented Americans.

Fast for Families was launched on November 12, 2013 as a 30-day campaign. In an effort to underscore the suffering experienced by millions of immigrant families, a core group fasted for 22 days in a tent in front of the U.S. Capitol. Thousands of others joined in solidarity fasts in Washington D.C. and across the country. Several nationally coordinated actions in Washington, D.C. and other cities across America also took place, demanding that legislators put families first.

As a result, Fast for Families has captured the attention of everyday Americans as well as labor, religious, political and civil rights leaders. President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama, Secretary of Labor Tom Perez, Reverend Jesse Jackson and Gloria Steinem all visited the fasters and offered their support. Congresswoman Judy Chu and Congressman Mike Honda were among many members of Congress who also visited the fasters and reaffirmed their commitment to a just and humane immigration bill. Thousands of advocates, faith leaders, and organizations around the country have joined the fasters and organized activities.

### **2. How are Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) affected by the current immigration system?**

Like other immigrants, AAPIs are deeply impacted by the broken immigration system. 10% of the over 11 million undocumented immigrants are AAPIs. More than 100,000 of estimated one million DREAMers are AAPIs. As of November 2012, nearly half of the 4.3 million people trapped in the family immigration backlog were from Asian countries. Immigrants from some Asian countries, such as the Philippines, experience some of the longest wait times - as long as 23 years - to be reunited with their family members. Finally, of the roughly two million individuals deported and whose families have been torn apart under the Obama Administration, approximately 250,000 are AAPIs.

### **3. What role have AAPIs played in Fast for Families?**

AAPIs have played an integral role in Fast for Families campaign since its beginning and this has been widely reported by local, national, and international media. NAKASEC

staff, board, and community members were core and solidarity fasters throughout the 30 days of the campaign. Many other AAPI organizations and individuals across the country, including the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans have organized and participated in solidarity fasts and events. Over several hundreds of AAPI community members fasted and multi-ethnic religious and community organizations from 19 different states (Hawaii, South Carolina, Louisiana, Florida, Indiana, Missouri, New Jersey, California, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Wisconsin, Maryland, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Illinois, Oregon, Ohio, Washington, Utah) held solidarity fasts and prayers.

#### **4. What is the next phase of Fast for Families?**

On January 27, 2014, Fast for Families Across America launched its second phase with plans to visit over 100 Congressional districts in all. For one month, fly-ins was organized to reach more than 25 key Congressional districts. On February 24, 2014, the campaign kicked off its two-bus nationwide tour in Los Angeles. "Fast for Families" leaders DJ Yoon (NAKASEC) and Rudy Lopez (Fair Immigration Reform Movement) will travel on the northern route while leaders Eliseo Medina (SEIU) and Cristian Avila (Mi Familia Vota) will travel on the southern route for the entirety of the tour. Stopping at more than 75 districts with daily events calling for Congressional action on immigration reform, the two buses will meet in Washington DC in April. To see a map of the districts on the tour, please visit: <http://fast4families.org/tour/>

#### **5. How can the AAPI community get involved with the tour?**

AAPI Fast for Families is asking AAPI leaders, community members, community-based organizations, faith based institutions, labor groups and others to join the campaign and mobilize community members in each legislative visit. It is critical for legislators to hear the AAPI community voice!

#### **6. Is 2014 the year for immigration Reform?**

Last June, the U.S. Senate passed a comprehensive, bipartisan immigration bill (S.744) and President Obama voiced his support for fixing the broken immigration system. At present, the House of Representatives have only released their principles for discussion. Actions such as the Fast for Families have drawn national media attention and raised the hopes of immigrant communities. We are on the cusp of historic reforms to our nation's immigration laws and it is up to us to make it happen.

#### **7. Why is a pathway to citizenship vital for undocumented immigrants?**

Without a pathway to citizenship, America is relegating our nation's 11 million undocumented immigrants into second-class status. While working hard and paying taxes, our friends, neighbors and family members will never be able to exercise their rights as Americans. This kind of system harkens back to some of this country's darkest days of segregation or the exclusion laws barring most Chinese immigrants from becoming naturalized U.S. citizens.

#### **8. Can immigration reform happen during an election year?**

Members of both political parties agree that immigration reform is a national priority. They have the power and ability to pass legislation this year.

### 9. How can AAPI leaders and organizations get involved?

There are many ways AAPI leaders and organizations can participate in Fast for Families. For a detailed list of how to get involved, please visit:

[standwithfamilies.org/2014/02/10/fast-for-families-across-america/](http://standwithfamilies.org/2014/02/10/fast-for-families-across-america/)

- [Endorse](#) the AAPI Fast for Families
- Join the AAPI Fast for Families Committee Monday Calls
- Participate in a Fast for Families city or state based host committee
- Organize or participate in a one-meal or one-day solidarity fast on Wednesdays during the Fast for Families Across America
  - Sign up on [fast4families.org/join-us](http://fast4families.org/join-us) and by emailing [eakessel@nakasec.org](mailto:eakessel@nakasec.org)
- Attend a Fast for Families event
  - [Click here](#) to see a list of tour districts
- Turn out members for the April Fast for Families event in Washington D.C.
- Promote AAPI immigration stories by
  - Sending us your story
  - Forward updates through social media outlets such as [facebook](#) and [twitter](#) (#Fast4Families #AAPIs4Families #TimIsNow)
  - Blogging about your stories on the [Stand with Families](#) website
  - Calling Speaker Boehner at (202) 224-3121 or your district representative

To learn more about the campaign and Fast 4 Families & NAKASEC's immigration reform principles, please visit: <http://www.fast4families.org> or [www.standwithfamilies.org](http://www.standwithfamilies.org) Everyone's participation is critical! For more information, please feel free to email Emily Kessel at [eakessel@nakasec.org](mailto:eakessel@nakasec.org) or Dong Yoon Kim at [dkim@nakasec.org](mailto:dkim@nakasec.org) or call (703)-256-2208.

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The National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC) was founded in 1994 by local community centers to project a progressive voice and promote the full participation of Korean Americans on major social justice issues. NAKASEC maintains offices in Annandale, Virginia and Los Angeles, California. NAKASEC has affiliates in Chicago (Korean American Resource & Cultural Center) and Los Angeles (Korean Resource Center).