



GLBT Asian and Pacific Islander survey released

May 17, 2007

NATIONAL GAY AND LESBIAN TASK FORCE STUDY FINDS DISTURBINGLY HIGH RATES OF DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute, on Thursday, May 10, based on data from the largest-ever national survey of Asian and Pacific Islander (API) lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Americans, released "Living in the Margins: A National Survey of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Asian and Pacific Islander Americans."

Among the disturbing findings, according to the Task Force, 75 percent of respondents reported experiencing discrimination and/or harassment based on their sexual orientation and 85 percent reported experiencing discrimination and/or harassment based on their race or ethnicity.

"The lives of Asians and Pacific Islanders are complex, and they are made invisible by popular perceptions of our community as 'the model minority.' This report helps shatter those myths and raises important issues from which we as a community can and need to mobilize," said Mala Nagarajan of Trikone-Northwest in Seattle, Wash.

Matt Foreman, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, during a telephone press conference, said that the study "underscores the need for Congress to pass and the president to sign federal hate crimes legislation."

"Living in the Margins" is based on analysis of survey data from 863 respondents who live in a total of 38 states and the District of Columbia in a pattern that closely reflects the distribution of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States. This online survey was conducted from June through September 2006 in English, Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese. It included a variety of questions focusing on basic demographic information, experiences of discrimination and/or harassment, policy priorities and political behavior. Respondents were recruited through invitations on listservs and Web sites created by API LGBT community organizations in New York, Washington, D.C., Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle and Honolulu. Special appeals were also made to increase participation from traditionally underrepresented groups, including South Asians, Pacific Islanders, Koreans, women, transgender people and elders.

"As the Asian and Pacific Islander community grows in size and clout, we cannot leave behind Asians and Pacific Islanders who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. We are a part of both the API and LGBT communities and we raise our voices for inclusion in national debates around comprehensive and compassionate immigration reform, punitive bans on marriage and hate violence that tears our community apart," said Doreena Wong, co-chair of API Equality-LA. "We are silent at our own peril."

Nearly every respondent (or 98 percent of respondents) said they had experienced at least one form of discrimination and/or harassment in their lives; 75 percent reported that they had

experienced discrimination and/or harassment based on their sexual orientation and 85 percent reported experiencing discrimination and/or harassment based on their race or ethnicity.

Eighty-nine percent of respondents agreed that homophobia and/or transphobia are problems within the broader API community. In addition, 78 percent agreed that API LGBT people experience racism within the predominantly white LGBT community.

More than a dozen ethnicities were represented in the sample, including Chinese (40 percent), Filipino (19 percent), Japanese (11 percent) and Asian Indian (10 percent). Smaller numbers of Vietnamese, Korean, Hawaiian, Malaysian, Thai and Pakistani respondents also participated. Forty-seven percent of respondents self-identified as gay, 19 percent as lesbian and 9 percent as bisexual. Twenty percent identified as "queer," with women more than twice as likely as men to choose that label. Five percent chose various other labels.

"These findings add to the growing body of evidence that support the need for not only legislative intervention, but community introspection," said Alain Dang, a Task Force policy analyst and the study's lead author. •

For more information, including a copy of the report and related fact sheets, connect to www.theTaskForce.org/reports_and_research/api_study.