

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**HOLDING THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE  
NEEDS OF ITS LIMITED ENGLISH SPEAKING COMMUNITIES**

**SACRAMENTO, CA** (Friday, August 14, 2009) – Asian Americans for Civil Rights & Equity (AACRE) is working to make the State of California accountable for the needs of its residents who have limited proficiency in English. AACRE has introduced legislation for the third year in a row, AB 611 by Assemblymember Paul Fong, (D-Mountain View) which would require the California Emergency Management Agency (CAL EMA) to improve plans for emergency preparedness, response, and recovery for these communities.

The bill proposes to achieve this goal in two ways: 1) Require the state's emergency preparedness system to help local governments plan ahead for the needs of their local limited English proficient (LEP) communities *before* a disaster occurs, and 2) to include the ethnic media outlets and community based organizations in the state's communication plans.

The legislation, AB 611, holds a unique opportunity for the state and ethnic media. The bill allows the state to be proactive in understanding the language needs of these communities before disaster strikes. The ethnic media outlets have a chance to serve their readers and help the state do a better job in preparing for an emergency. The ethnic media is a critical link in how these Californians receive vital information about local issues in their native languages.

AB 611 recognizes that these communities are vulnerable – not victims. These Californians are resourceful. Many of them live in communities that stress self-sufficiency and self-reliance. Advanced planning with LEP needs in mind will assist these communities in being proactive and prepared for an emergency.

AB 611 will be taken up on the Senate floor shortly after the state legislature reconvenes on Monday, August 17<sup>th</sup>. We are urging members of the ethnic media to alert their readers about this important issue through writing editorials and publishing a letter to the governor.

To express your support, contact Howard Quan, legislative assistant for Assemblymember Fong, at (916) 319-2022.

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*Asian Americans for Civil Rights and Equality (AACRE) is a progressive voice advocating for justice in California. As the first and only project based in California's capital with a focus on state legislative and budget advocacy for Asian and Pacific Islander Americans, AACRE fights for critical legislation and funding on behalf of our diverse communities, and empowers APLAs to be an active and effective force in advancing civil rights and social justice. [www.aacre.org](http://www.aacre.org)*

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