

Asian-Americans add to Florida's diversity – April 17, 2010

By Quan Cao

According to 2000 U.S. Census data, we were the fastest growing minority group in Florida and what the Census defines as Asian-Americans and Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders.

Volunteering and working with the 2010 Sunshine Census and as a Vietnamese-American myself, I have met other passionate Asian-American and NHOPI Floridians who are consistently surprised at the general public's lack of awareness of our demographic group.

According to the 2000 Census, 35 percent of our citizens have a household income of \$75,000 or more. Nationwide, we outspend the entire state of New Jersey — the seventh most populous state in America — in everyday expenses by \$41 billion. Talk about serious buying power. Furthermore, 43 percent of our population has a college degree.

Florida's 41,258 Asian-American and NHOPI-owned businesses brought in \$11.2 billion and employed more than 91,000 people in 2002. It's clear we're a growing economic powerhouse in the Sunshine State. Florida also ranks fourth among the top 10 states with the greatest number of Asian-American and NHOPI women-owned businesses, which account for \$49.1 billion in nationwide sales.

To accommodate this growth, the U.S. government is shaping its materials to meet the needs of our community. The 2010 Census marks the first time our population has been appropriately accommodated with all our complex linguistic needs. Spanning 12 different languages and cultural nuances, new census materials are written by us and for us in messages that truly resonate the overall goals of this national campaign.

Our forefathers' motto, "E Pluribus Unum," says it best: "Out of many, one." The 2010 Census is truly about access and diversity. It is the accuracy of the data that allows government to truly serve the people. It's not one single group trying to outpace any other in a competitive and self-centered fashion. It is one for all, and all for one. We may be "hyphenated Americans," but we are all Americans, speaking multiple languages and sharing cultures, religions and lifestyles.

Now we have a realistic chance to paint a more precise portrait of our demographics by participating in the census. If you mail back your form by April 19, a census taker will *not* visit your household during the door-to-door enumeration. If you would like more information, visit sunshinecensus2010.com or 2010census.gov.

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