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May 3 issue:  
Friday, April 30, 2:00pm

June 7 issue:  
Friday, June 4, 2:00pm

July 5 issue:  
Friday, July 2, 2:00pm

For more information, please contact the Advertising Dept. at (503) 283-4440, or e-mail <ads@asianreporter.com>.

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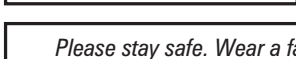
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**REAL ESTATE**

**For Rent/Sale/Lease**

**Accepting Wait List Applications at COTTONWOOD I APARTMENTS**

750 SE 6th St.  
Hermiston, OR 97838

(541) 567-9089  
TTY 711

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Affordable Housing

Water, Sewer & Garbage Paid!

Community Room

Onsite Parking

Income Limits Apply HUD Section 8

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## Asian Americans seek greater political power after shootings

Continued from page 9

fiercely blue within a generation. Democrats hope a similar shift may have begun more recently in Arizona.

Wong said the Asian-American population began to boom in the mid-1990s with the creation of the H1-B visa program, which made it easier for employers to hire immigrants in specialty professions. Many of those people have now been in the country for more than 20 years, and they, or second-generation immigrant families, are starting to come into their own politically, registering to vote and casting ballots at higher rates.

In November's election, 70% of Asian-American voters supported Biden, according to AP VoteCast, a nationwide survey of the electorate. Asian Americans now represent the nation's fastest-growing ethnic minority, accounting for nearly 5% of eligible voters in last year's election, according to the Pew Research Center.

U.S. Census data showed that the community had one of the largest increases in voting rates of any group in the 2018 midterm elections as compared with the 2014 midterms, jumping from an estimated 27% of eligible voters who actually voted in 2014 to 40% in 2018. But the largest Asian-American communities are still mostly concentrated in non-swing presidential states, which means neither political party has focused significant resources on voter outreach.

"There's not the same incentive for parties to mobilize them, and it's much harder because it takes some resources, it takes some attention to outreach and language to understand

Asian-American issues as well," Wong said. "Those things all contribute to lower rates of political participation among Asian Americans, but people — mistakenly, I think — assume that Asian Americans are somehow less interested in U.S. civic life."

That's evolving. Wong points to statehouse races in Virginia this year, where Asian-American voters in the Washington suburbs could have decisive influence.

"People are now much more invested, especially since people in positions of power have been constantly silencing our community," said Michelle Chan, a Chinese-Malaysian-American voter in Alexandria, Virginia.

Kohli of Asian Americans Advancing Justice said the community could also swing house districts in Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Texas during the 2022 midterm elections.

Democratic representative Grace Meng of New York, the first vice chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, said many Asian Americans have reacted to the shootings by trying to better protect themselves, donating to civic groups, and even forming brigades to walk with older people in majority Asian neighborhoods or distributing whistles to try to curb incidents of racism and violence. But she said greater political engagement was the next step.

"We are literally taught not to speak up and not to rock the boat," Meng said. "And so, during this past year especially, it's been such a challenge to say to our older generation Asian immigrants — Asian Americans who might even

have been here for three decades — that now is the time to be invisible no more, that they have to speak up."

Nabilah Islam, a Bangladeshi-American Democratic strategist and organizer in Georgia, ran for congress unsuccessfully last year. She said she felt compelled to do so because, although she had lived in her district outside Atlanta her whole life, she "never saw anyone who looked like me" campaigning.

"What makes a real difference is having activists from within your own community show up," Islam said. "For so long, we've had this top-down strategy where you typically, frankly, have these white consultants come in and tell you how you should organize your communities. But they've never actually visited these homes and talked to these families."

The Asian American and Pacific Islander community encompasses people from an array of different heritages and cultures who often speak languages other than English. Organizers say they are working to better unify those distinct heritages while teaming up with activists from other backgrounds, including African Americans and Latinos — and that the outpouring of public support following the shootings could make such efforts easier.

"Asian Americans didn't necessarily grow up with that vocabulary of advocacy and how to fight for ourselves," Meng said. That's necessitated having "to learn that from other communities like the Black and Latino communities and walking alongside them, witnessing their struggles."

Associated Press writers Emily Swanson and Lisa Mascaro in Washington contributed to this report.

**2021 ADVERTISING RATES**

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