Asian American and Pacific Islander Voters

The Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) population makes up a growing voter segment, and it's increasingly important for campaigns and candidates to respond to their needs and concerns. This group – which includes Asian Americans as well as the Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander (NHPI) community – was instrumental in President Biden's victory and has helped secure other elections for candidates of both parties. In part because of the diversity of AAPI voters, it's been historically challenging for campaigns to gain a real understanding of how and why they vote and how to properly reach out to them.

In this report, we'll:

- Delve into the demographics of the AAPI population
- Review the AAPI population's overall voting trends and specific impacts in 2020
- Discuss some important components of successful outreach campaigns
- Look at the TV viewing habits of AAPI households so campaigns can better understand how to reach them



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Population

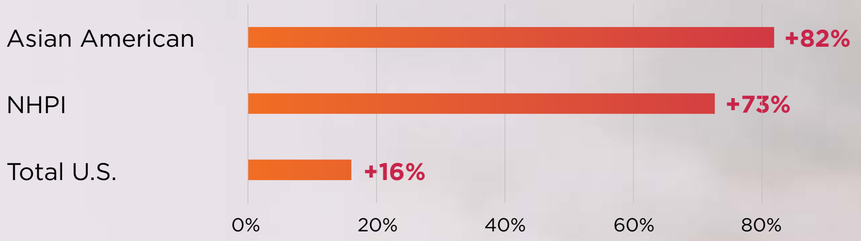
Asian Americans make up about 7.0% of the U.S. population, while NHPI individuals make up another 0.5%.[1]

22.9 M
Americans of Asian descent, alone or in combination with other races

1.6 M
Americans of NHPI descent, alone or in combination with other races

The Asian American community is growing faster than any other major racial or ethnic group,[1] and the NHPI community's growth is close behind, with all 50 states reporting NHPI population increases in the last decade.[2]

Population Growth, 2000 to 2019[1]



If these growth trends continue, Asian Americans will make up the largest population of color by 2065, surpassing the Hispanic population.[3]

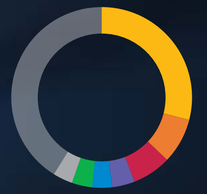
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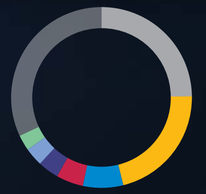
Population Distribution

Much of the Asian American population is concentrated in a few areas of the country, with three states accounting for **44%** of the population.[4]

Asian American Population[4]



NHPI Population[4]



- California
- New York
- Texas
- New Jersey
- Washington
- Illinois
- Hawaii
- Utah
- Nevada
- Florida
- Other

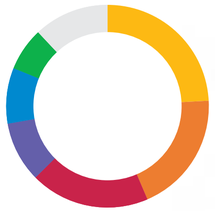
The NHPI population is similarly concentrated. Unsurprisingly, Hawaii has the largest population, closely followed by California. Together, these two states account for nearly half the total NHPI population in the U.S.[1]

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Demographics

The Asian American community has a great deal of diversity. Members of this group speak more than **100 languages**, represent more than **50 ethnic groups**, and practice a variety of religions.[5] And there's no predominant country of origin.

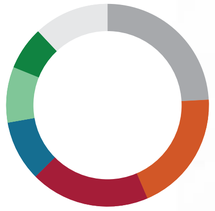
Asian Americans' Ancestry[6]



- Chinese
- Indian
- Filipino
- Vietnamese
- Korean
- Japanese
- Other

The smaller NHPI population has its own fair share of diversity, with individuals' origins tracing back to a variety of islands.

NHPI Ancestry[1]



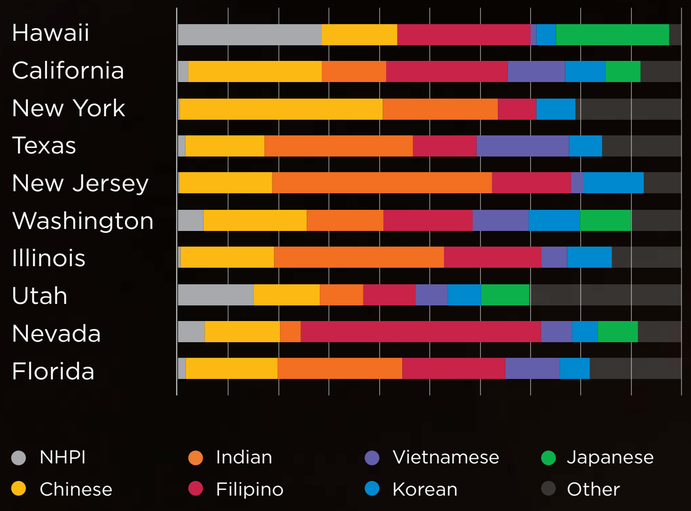
- Native Hawaiian
- Samoan
- Guamanian or Chamorro
- Tongan
- Fijian
- Marshallese
- Other

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Demographics by State

Demographic breakdowns vary by state. Here's a look at the states with the largest AAPI and NHPI populations.

AAPI Ancestry by State[7]



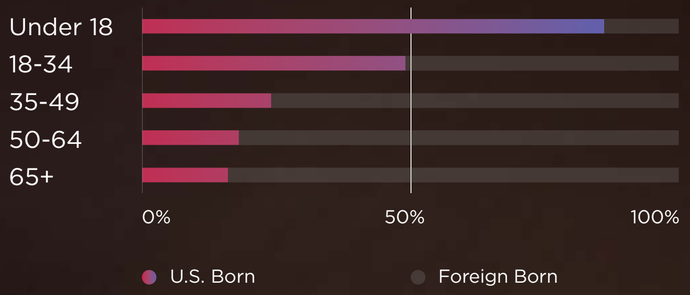
Please note each state's figures include only the most common Asian American ancestries in that state. Therefore, the following ancestries are not shown separately and are instead included in the "Other" category: Indian in Hawaii; Japanese and Vietnamese in New York; and Japanese in Texas, New Jersey, Illinois, and Florida.



Nativity by Age

There's also diversity in origin from a generational perspective. Overall, 57% of AAPI individuals are foreign-born.[6] And younger generations are much more likely to have been born in the U.S. In fact, the average age of all AAPI individuals is 34, fairly close to the national average of 38.[6] For U.S.-born AAPI individuals, the average age is just 19.[6]

Asian Americans' U.S. Nativity by Age[8]



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Language Preferences

Of all AAPI individuals aged 5 and older, **72% are proficient in English**, and a plurality – 34% – exclusively speak English at home.[6] However, other languages are commonly spoken, with Mandarin and Cantonese being the most popular languages after English.[6]

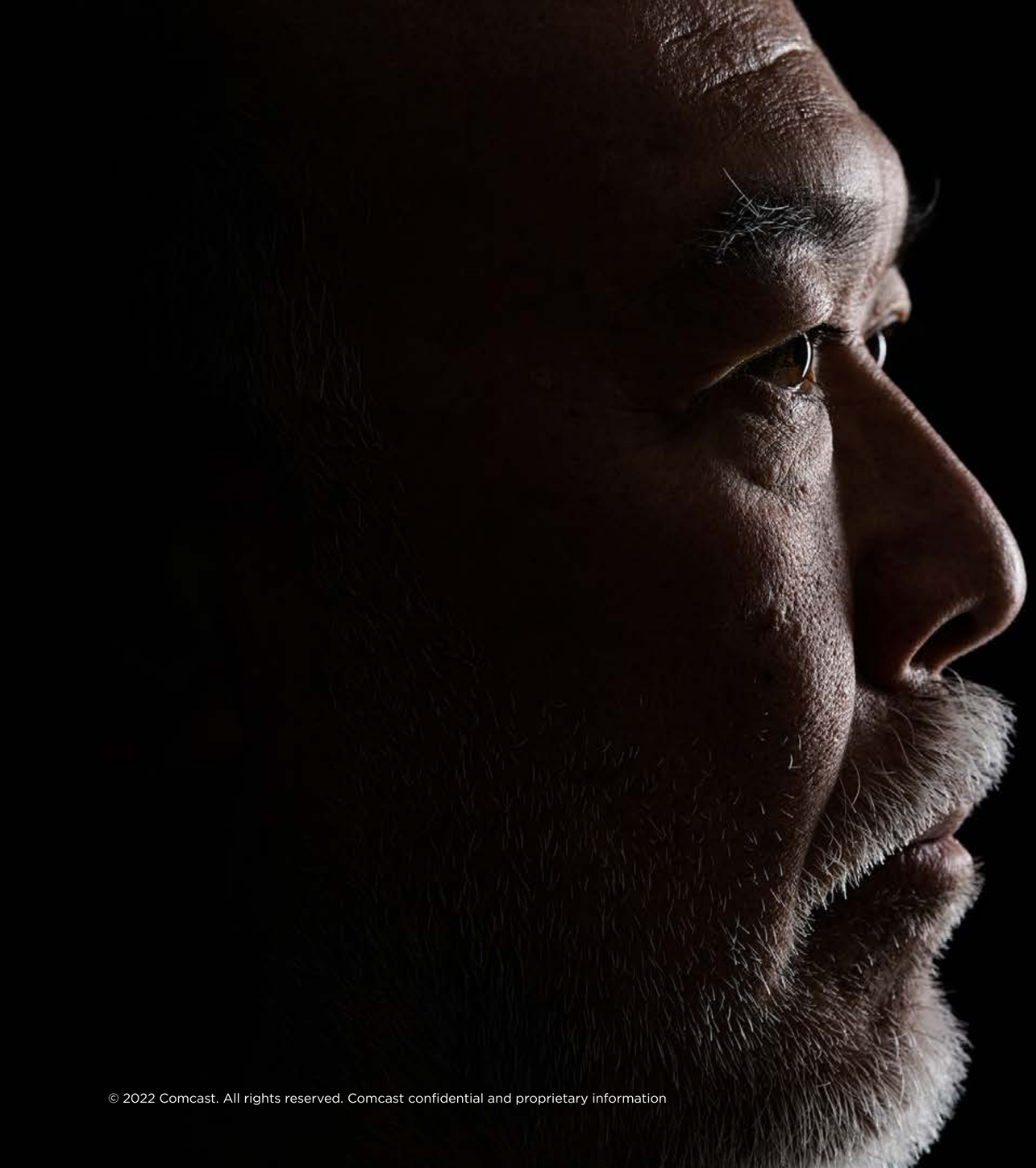
Language Spoken at Home[6]



- English Only
- Mandarin & Cantonese
- Hindi
- Filipino
- Vietnamese
- All other

Nativity, age, and language preferences can all play a role in determining outreach strategies. For example, older Asian Americans could effectively be reached through traditional TV in their native languages, while younger individuals may prefer outreach that focuses on English-language streaming content.

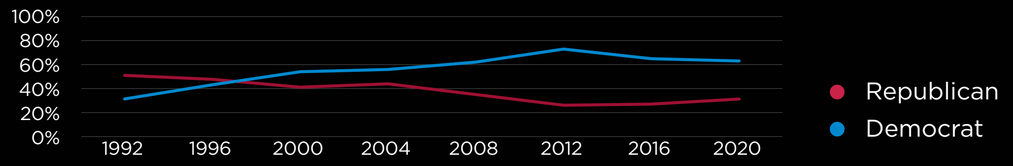
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Voting Trends

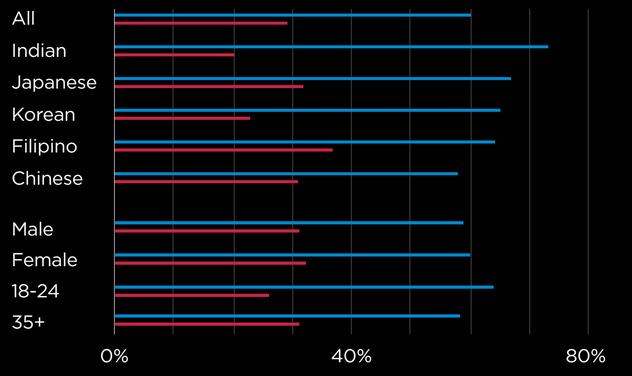
While Asian Americans currently largely vote for Democrats in presidential races, this has not always been the case, and this group tended to vote for Republicans until the 2000 election.

Asian Americans' Voting in Presidential Elections[9,10]



Today, Asian Americans of all backgrounds tend to favor Democrats. This trend goes beyond ancestry; Asian Americans of all ages and genders tend to favor Democrats.

% of Asian Americans with Favorable Opinions[9]



Despite these trends, the AAPI vote is not a guarantee for the Democratic Party. AAPI individuals don't vote as a uniform group and there are countless factors and issues that may affect votes, especially at the local level.

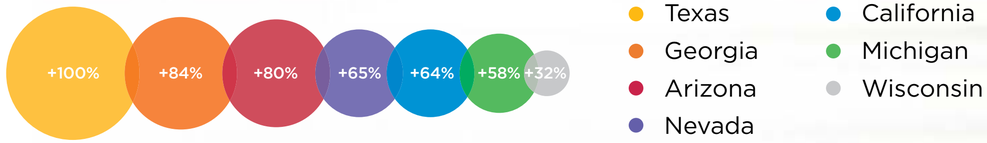
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2020 Turnout

The AAPI community turned out in record numbers for the 2020 presidential election, with roughly 4 million AAPI voters casting ballots.[11] This is an increase of 43% over the 2016 election, the greatest increase among any racial or ethnic group.[11] And roughly two-thirds of AAPI votes for president went to Biden.[12]

Although AAPI voters accounted for only about 2.6% of all ballots cast, some of the biggest turnout increases came in key battleground states and helped seal President Biden's victory.[11] For example, Biden won Arizona by just over 10,000 votes, whereas the AAPI voter turnout in that state increased by 26,000 from 2016 to 2020.[11]

Increase in AAPI Voter Turnout, 2020 vs. 2016[11,12]



Although AAPI voters as a whole often vote Democrat, Republicans aren't out of the running. Take California, where a large AAPI turnout helped two Korean American Republicans, Young Kim and Michelle Steel, win U.S. House seats previously held by Democrats.[12] We'll take a closer look at what strategies worked for Rep. Steel in the following section.

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Outreach Preferences

In general, it's important for campaigns to have the right combination of message and language when trying to reach AAPI voters. These voters often feel marginalized and don't feel as though their voices are being heard by those in political power.[12] Campaigns need to address the issues that matter most to particular voting segments – accounting for ancestry, geographic location, and other defining characteristics – and do it in a way that resonates with the local community.

The Role of Language and Medium: A Case Study

Although most in the AAPI community are fluent in English, results indicate they still appreciate being spoken to in other languages.

Michelle Steel, one of the Republican Korean Americans recently elected to the House, tailored her strategy to the local constituents. Her congressional district, California's 48th, is 20% Asian American[13] and has one of the largest Vietnamese populations in the country.[14] Additionally, just 54% of Vietnamese Americans say they are proficient in English.[14] Based on these demographics, her campaign chose to focus heavily on reaching local Vietnamese Americans in their native language.[12] Her campaign also used a wide variety of mediums, reaching potential voters through TV commercials, radio ads, digital ads, direct mail, phone calls, text messages, and door-knocking.[12] To seal the deal, she focused on issues of importance to this community, such as racism stemming from COVID-19.[12] Ultimately, her strategy helped turn out voters and secure her win.



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Important Issues

The AAPI community cares about universal issues – like jobs, the economy, and healthcare[15] – as well as issues that more specifically affect them. Candidates and campaigns should also pay attention to current events like COVID-19 and its link to rising hate crimes,[15] in addition to addressing local issues that vary by population and demographic.

Experts say this last piece is often missing, and political parties have generally failed to do enough polling research on the AAPI community.[12] This can leave campaigns with little understanding of the issues important to distinct subsets of the population, such as Korean Americans, Indian Americans, or Thai Americans.[12]

According to Sam Oh, a Korean American and Rep. Michelle Steel's lead campaign strategist:[12]

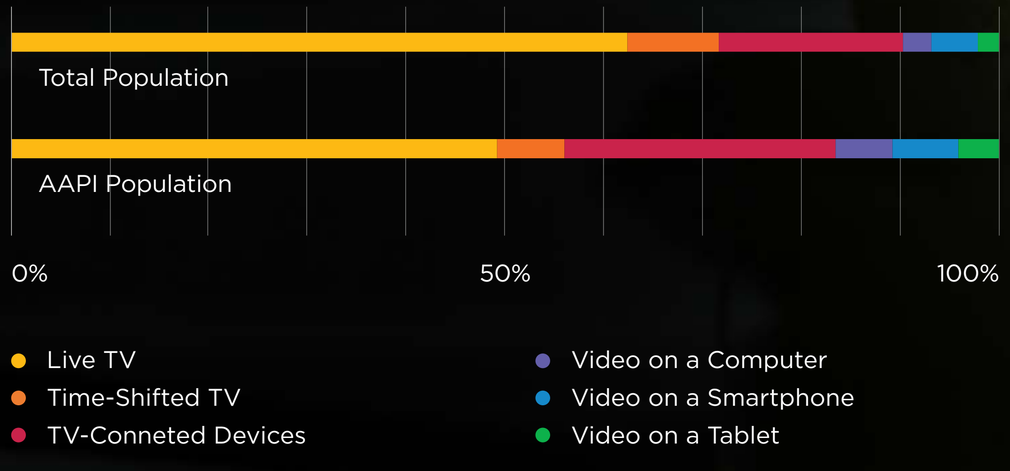
> It's so important to have people who understand these communities, who understand their stories and how policies impact their lives, represent them in Congress, whether you're Democrat or Republican."

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Multiscreen Viewing Time

AAPI individuals spend an average of more than 27 hours per week with TV and video content, making TV an effective medium for reaching them.[16] A significantly higher portion of this time is spent with streaming content, as compared to the general U.S. population's viewing trends.[16]

Viewing Time by Device[16]



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Streaming Habits

82% of AAPI individuals subscribe to at least one streaming service, 14% higher than the total population[17]

78% of Asian American TV viewers stream content, compared to 65% of all TV viewers[18]

Streaming is so popular in the AAPI community in part because of representation and languages spoken.

Among Asian-language viewers, **59%** frequently use streaming services to access Asian-language content.[18]

6 of the top 10 streamed programs among AAPI individuals featured diverse casts.[17]

Sports and News Programming[19]

As with viewers overall, much of Asian Americans' TV time is spent with sports and news programming. In fact, among Asian American households, nearly a quarter of their linear viewing time is spent with news.

Most popular networks by reach:

1. CNN
2. TNT
3. ESPN

Among Asian American households

These households are also more likely than the average Comcast household to tune into sports networks.

MLB Network	**227% more likely**
Golf Channel	**191% more likely**
NFL Network	**104% more likely**
ESPN2	**101% more likely**

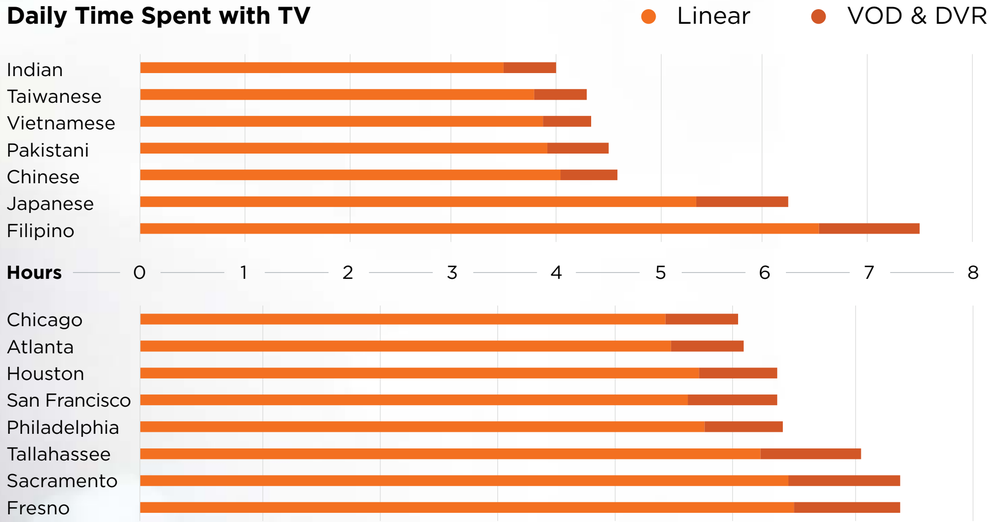
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TV Time by Ancestry[20]

Among Comcast households, Asian Americans' TV viewing time varies significantly by their ancestry. At opposite ends of the spectrum, Filipino American households watch 87% more TV than Indian American households. However, the percentage of TV time devoted to video on demand (VOD) and DVR is consistently between 11% and 14% across all ancestries.

Daily Time Spent with TV



TV Time by Geography[19]

Among Asian American households, time spent with TV is similar across major metropolitan areas. The percentage of time spent with VOD and DVR is again consistent, accounting for between 12% and 14% of Asian American households' TV time across geographies.

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With AAPI audiences spending so much time with TV and video, campaigns and candidates have a prime opportunity to reach them through their favorite content. Campaigns can deliver tailored messages to this audience with strategies like advertising during sports and news, focusing their efforts on streaming, and targeting by audience segment to reach AAPI viewers whenever and wherever they watch TV content.

Effectv is ready to help guide your campaign to victory.
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Sources: 1. United States Census, 2020. 2. Fuchs, Chris, "U.S.'s Pacific Islander community is growing fast, but advocates worry the census won't count them," NBC News, 29 May 2018, https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/u-s-s-pacific-islander-community-growing-fast-advocates-worry-n876051. 3. Imada, Bill, "Asian-American representation today is an investment for tomorrow," University of Southern California Annenberg, 5 March 2020, https://annenberg.usc.edu/research/center-public-relations/usc-annenberg-relevance-report/asian-american-representation-today. 4. World Population Review, "Asian American Population by State," 2021, https://worldpopulationreview.com/state-rankings/asian-population. 5. Bleiweis, Robin, "The Economic Status of Asian American and Pacific Islander Women," Center for American Progress, 4 March 2021, https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2021/03/04/496703/economic-status-asian-american-pacific-islander-women/. 6. López, Gustavo, Neil G. Ruiz, and Eileen Patten, "Key facts about Asian Americans, a diverse and growing population," Pew Research Center, 8 Sept. 2017, https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/09/08/key-facts-about-asian-americans/. 7. Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote, "2020 State Fact Sheets," 25 Feb. 2020, https://www.apiavote.org/2020-State-Fact-Sheets. 8. Nielsen, "Informed Influencers and Powerful Purchasers: The Asian American Consumer Journey," 2019. 9. Tures, John A., "Asian Americans' political preferences have flipped from red to blue," The Conversation, 14 Sept. 2020, https://theconversation.com/asian-americans-political-preferences-have-flipped-from-red-to-blue-145577. 10. Yam, Kimmy, "Asian Americans voted for Biden 63% to 31%, but the reality is more complex," NBC News, 9 Nov. 2020, https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/asian-americans-voted-biden-63-31-reality-more-complex-n1247171. 11. Reimann, Nicholas, "Asian-American Voter Turnout Soared Over 45% In 2020 Election, Study Finds—And That's Probably An Undercount," Forbes, 21 April 2021. 12. Bierman, Noah, "Asian Americans push for greater clout," Los Angeles Times, 20 May 2021. 13 Data USA, "Congressional District 48, CA," 2021, https://datausa.io/profile/geo/congressional-district-48-ca. 14. Budiman, Abby, "Vietnamese in the U.S. Fact Sheet," Pew Research Center, 29 April 2021, https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/fact-sheet/asian-americans-vietnamese-in-the-u-s-fact-sheet/. 15. Lee, Elizabeth, "Asian Americans Emerge as Force in US Politics," Voice of America, 3 Aug. 2021, https://www.voanews.com/a/usa_asian-americans-emerge-force-us-politics/6209066.html. 16. Nielsen, "The Nielsen Total Audience Report," Aug. 2020. 17. Nielsen, "Engaging Asian American Consumers at the Dawn of a New Decade," 2020. 18. Srivastav, Taruka, "Asian TV viewers are the most likely to use streaming services," The Drum, 11 Sept. 2019, https://www.thedrum.com/news/2019/09/11/asian-tv-viewers-are-the-most-likely-use-streaming-services. 19. Comcast viewership data, 2021 Q1. 20. Comcast viewership data, 2019 Q3.

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