

LABOR'S EDGE

Views from the California Labor Movement

Stories from the Field: Why I'm Talking to API Voters About Voting Yes on Prop 30

By Jinjie Lin, Asian Pacific Environmental Network

I was born in Guangdong, China and immigrated to the United States in February of 2006. This is the country where my parents now live and it is my home. One year ago, I became a naturalized U.S. citizen, and this November will be the first time that I vote in a U.S. election and I believe the timing could not be more important.

As the fastest growing group in the state, we Asian Pacific Islanders will play a key role in shaping the future of California and local communities throughout our state. In particular, I believe API voters can play a critical role to the passage of [Proposition 30](#), the school-funding measure that would prevent billions in additional cuts to California's schools and universities. Drastic cuts to education are harming our communities. I know because I have experienced these cuts firsthand. I started college at Laney, a community college located on the outskirts of Oakland Chinatown. After two years, I was able to acquire the necessary credits to transfer to UC Berkeley, where I was able to receive a modest financial aid package. I had to commute to school from my parent's house in San Leandro, but was grateful that I had the opportunity to attend Cal. Although I was on a tight budget, I was hopeful that I could graduate on time to enter the workforce and begin paying back my student loans.

My plan was jeopardized my junior year when my counselor informed me that I was dropped from one of my classes due to budget cuts. Since it was a class in my major, I did not know if I would have to delay my graduation. Eventually, I was able to enroll in a legal class that fulfilled my political science major, even though I have no interest in law. Some of my classmates were not as fortunate.

They had to postpone their graduation, and in turn delay when they would be able to enter the workforce. Others had to take out additional loans. We deserve better.



I believe that Proposition 30 is a solution for students like me. Prop 30 will raise \$6-\$9 billion a year for schools and colleges through a small income tax increase on the wealthiest Californians. If Prop 30 doesn't pass, our state faces \$6 billion in cuts, which means that students attending community and state colleges will face rising tuition and reduced enrollment, making college education out of reach for many working families.

Last week, I spoke about the importance of Prop 30 in English and Chinese at a bilingual press event in Oakland Chinatown, which was organized by the [Asian Pacific Environmental Network](#) (APEN), the [Alameda Labor Council](#), [Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance](#) and [SEIU-United Long Term Care Workers](#). At the press conference, I shared my personal story and connection to this election. I am continuing to talk to other API voters about Prop 30. And on November, 6, 2012, I will be voting Yes on Prop 30 because we need to invest in an educated workforce and build a stronger economy in California.

[Learn more about Prop 30.](#)