



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 23, 2026

Contact: Yang Chen, Executive Director
(646) 653-2168

**ASIAN AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK JOINS COALITION OF
NEW YORK BAR ASSOCIATIONS URGING GOVERNOR HOCHUL TO APPOINT
FIRST ASIAN AMERICAN NATIVE HAWAIIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER JUDGE TO
NEW YORK COURT OF APPEALS**

July 23, 2026 – New York, NY – The Asian American Bar Association of New York (AABANY) joined the Filipino American Lawyers Association of New York (FALA New York), the Korean American Lawyers Association of Greater New York (KALAGNY), the South Asian Bar Association of New York (SABANY), and the South Asian Indo-Caribbean Bar Association of Queens (SAICBA-Q) in a joint statement calling on Governor Kathy Hochul to appoint the first Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) judge to the New York Court of Appeals, the state's highest court.

The statement comes after the New York State Commission on Judicial Nomination announced on June 17 that it is accepting recommendations and applications to fill the vacancy created by the expiration of Senior Associate Judge Jenny Rivera's term on February 10, 2027.

“The New York Court of Appeals has never been a static institution,” the joint statement declares. “Throughout its history, it has adapted alongside the legal profession and the State it serves, strengthening itself through successive generations of exceptional jurists reflecting the diversity of the State.”

In nearly 180 years, the joint statement points out, no AANHPI jurist has ever served on the Court of Appeals, despite the New York City metropolitan area being home to the largest AANHPI community in the nation. Additionally, approximately 11 percent of New York State’s population—2.1 million residents—is AANHPI.

The joint statement notes that other states, including several with far smaller AANHPI populations than New York, have already appointed AANHPI judges to their highest courts—among them Hawaii, California, Georgia, Illinois, Minnesota, and neighboring Vermont. The statement also credited Governor Hochul for appointing more AANHPI judges to the Appellate Division and Court of Claims than any governor in New York history, noting that AANHPI lawyers now serve at every level of the state's judiciary except its highest court.

“We urge Governor Hochul to seize the opportunity and make a historic appointment of the first AANHPI judge to serve on the Court of Appeals. The time has come; the time is now. Let us live up to the motto of New York State: *Excelsior*, ever upward.”

The full text of the joint statement is [attached](#).

For more information, please contact Yang Chen, AABANY Executive Director, at (646) 653-2168, or direct any inquiries to main@aabany.org.

The Asian American Bar Association of New York is a not-for-profit 501(c)(6) professional membership organization of attorneys concerned with issues affecting the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. Incorporated in 1989, AABANY seeks not only to encourage the professional growth of its members but also to advocate for the AAPI community as a whole. AABANY is a New York regional affiliate of the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA). AALFNY is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization that has helped to fund the production of the documentary.

###

Additional information about AABANY is available at www.aabany.org

Follow our blog at www.blog.aabany.org

Follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/aabany

Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/aabany