



National Asian Pacific American Bar Association

**Statement Acknowledging the Suffering of WWII Comfort Women
and Other Victims of Human Trafficking**

Endorsed May 2014

WHEREAS, the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA) is the national association of Asian Pacific American attorneys, judges, law professors and law students, representing the interests of over 40,000 attorneys and nearly 70 national, state, and local Asian Pacific American bar associations; NAPABA members include solo practitioners, large firm lawyers, corporate counsel, legal service and non-profit attorneys, and lawyers serving at all levels of government; and NAPABA is committed to addressing civil rights issues confronting Asian Pacific American communities and people of color;

WHEREAS, NAPABA is committed to combatting human trafficking, which predominantly takes the form of labor or sex trafficking, which the U.S. Department of State defines as “activities involved when one person obtains or holds another person in compelled service,” and which is an international human rights issue that requires the attention of the entire international community working toward justice and equality;

WHEREAS, in 2007, the U.S. House of Representatives passed House Resolution 121, which recognized that the Government of Japan, in the 1930's through the end of World War II, forced women to provide sex to soldiers in its Imperial Armed Forces;

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of State in its 2003 Japan Report referred to thousands of these victims of sexual slavery, commonly referred to as “Comfort Women,” who were kidnapped or coerced from countries including China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, and the Philippines;

WHEREAS, House Resolution 121 acknowledged that Comfort Women were deprived of their freedom and endured rape, forced abortions, and other violence resulting in mutilation, death, and suicide;

WHEREAS, in March 2014, the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe acknowledged that Comfort Women “experienced immeasurable pain and suffering;”

WHEREAS, memorials in honor of Comfort Women have been erected in the United States and around the world;

WHEREAS, one such Comfort Women memorial was erected in July 2013 in Glendale, California, which led to efforts to remove it—including a lawsuit filed in 2014, *Gingery et al. v. City of Glendale*;

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WHEREAS, the efforts to remove this memorial have caused controversy and dialogue, particularly about Japanese and Korean viewpoints of the wartime and post-war treatment of the Comfort Women;

WHEREAS, efforts to memorialize victims and survivors of human trafficking help to educate current and future generations and ensure that such crimes will not be repeated;

WHEREAS, these kinds of memorials should not divide communities or strain relationships, particularly among Japanese Americans and Korean Americans, who have long joined together in multiethnic coalitions to support civil rights and the Asian Pacific American community; and

WHEREAS, Asian Pacific Americans should continue to collaborate together in support of our shared goals of unity, fairness, and justice for all;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that NAPABA:

1. Strongly condemns human trafficking in all its forms, and supports efforts to combat human trafficking and aid trafficking victims domestically and abroad.
2. Supports fact-based measures to educate the public about the plight of Comfort Women and other human trafficking victims, past and present, which may include the erection of suitable memorials or other tributes.
3. Supports the anti-trafficking initiatives of local NAPABA affiliates, other bar associations, and entities, that the NAPABA Board deems suitable.
4. Authorizes its president, board, and staff to communicate the content of this resolution to its members, affiliates, other bar associations, members of Congress, the Administration, the press, and others to take steps to implement this resolution, as they deem necessary.
5. Supports this resolution as a policy priority until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.