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 50,000 attorneys and approximately 75 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, the admission of refugees to the United States and their resettlement here are authorized by the Immigration and Nationality Act ("INA"), as amended by the Refugee Act of 1980. Under the INA, a refugee is a person who is outside his or her country and who is unable or unwilling to return because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. In special circumstances, a refugee also may be a person who is within his or her country and who is persecuted or has a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion;

WHEREAS, as a signatory to the United Nations’ 1967 Protocol on the Status of Refugees ("Protocol"), the international treaty on refugees, the United States has obligations to assist refugees under international law, which was codified into law by the Refugee Act of 1980;

WHEREAS, many Asian immigrants came and still come to the United States as refugees due to volatile conditions, war, or strife in their countries of origin;

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. State Department’s Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, between 1975 and 2015, the United States admitted a combined 1,863,809 refugees from Asia and the Near East. This is more than half of the total 3,252,493 refugees admitted to the United States from around the world during the same period;

WHEREAS, Asian refugees to the United States have increased in recent years and now many Burmese and Bhutanese nationals come to the United States as refugees;

WHEREAS, refugees, like other immigrants, enrich our communities and contribute significantly to America; research indicates that refugee men are employed at a higher rate than their native-born peers, and refugee women are employed at rates similar to those of native-born women;

WHEREAS, although protecting national security and public safety are important to all Americans, such interests should not be used to justify policies and practices that discriminate
against refugees, already present in the United States or awaiting resettlement, on the basis of national origin, race, ethnicity, religion, and/or other characteristics, including those under the INA, which would undermine our civil and human rights.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that NAPABA:

1. Supports measures and legislation to increase the number of refugees resettled in the United States.

2. Supports initiatives to increase and improve programs and services benefitting refugees in the United States, including extending the formal resettlement period, to promote the full integration and long-term physical, mental, and economic well-being of refugees.

3. Strongly condemns federal, state and/or local measures to restrict refugee resettlement or deny programs and services to refugees already present in the United States, especially any measures based on national origin, race, ethnicity, and/or religion.

4. Authorizes its president, board, and staff to communicate the content of this resolution to its members, affiliate and associate organizations, other bar associations, members of Congress, the Administration, the press, and others and to take steps to implement, as they deem necessary.

5. Supports this resolution as a policy priority until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.