

sacramento welcomes

# CAO QUANG ÁNH

FIRST VIETNAMESE - AMERICAN US CONGRESSMAN



**Fundraising Reception**

Sunday, August 22, 2010  
TO SUPPORT HIS RE-ELECTION

# sacramento welcomes CONGRESSMAN **CAO QUANG ÁNH**

Thank you for your leadership, enduring support, and devoted commitment towards the Vietnamese community and the causes we advocate. Your endeavors as well as accomplishments provide a number of opportunities as it opens doors for future Vietnamese leaders and those working in public service. Not only does it help guide the masses, but it also allows us to send the compelling message that refugees as well as their children have the potential and resources to take part in the action and serve as figureheads or leaders of the community. Much like the support behind Obama's journey to presidency, your dedication allows us to reach out to the Vietnamese community and gain the power to believe that achievement can be reflected by our efforts. Anything is possible with the beauty of freedom and democracy.

*Tido Thac Hoang, Event Chair*

## EVENT PROGRAM

- 6:30 National Anthem (English & Vietnamese)
- 6:40 Acknowledgements
- 6:50 Nguyen D. Thang Ph.D.
- 7:00 Entertainment- Cham Hai – One Man Band
- 7:05 Phong La J.D. – The Importance of Engagement and Involvement
- 7:15 Introducing Congressman Joseph Cao Quang Anh
- 7:40 Band – Cham Hai /Slideshow
- 7:50 Closing Remarks /Acknowledgements for Major Sponsors, Volunteers, & Students
- 8:00 End of Program



FIRST VIETNAMESE-AMERICAN  
CONGRESSMAN

## SPEAKERS

**Nguyen D. Thang Ph.D.** – Executive Director, Boat People SOS . Co-founded Coalition to Abolish Modern-day Slavery in Asia (CAMSA). Dr. Thang is an effective advocate of human rights and social justice. He is also an effective community organizer, having mentored over 50 organizations and raised over \$2M to support their good work.

**PHONG LA J.D.** – Professor at San Jose City College, Board Director of Bay Area Women Against Rape (BAWAR), Vietnamese Community Center of East Bay (VACCEB), the Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs Association- Bay Area Chapter of (APAPA-BAC), Vice-President and General Counsel of PTR Manufacturing Inc. as well as the Sai La Family LP, family owned real estate holding company. Phong was born in Cam Ranh, Vietnam. His family escaped Vietnam and arrived in America when he was two years old.

## EXCERPTS FROM

# “HOPE AND DUTY”

“While the Vietnamese community in the United States is still very new, it has achieved many personal accomplishments ranging from areas in education to the economy, from engineering to art. Though these feats have enabled the community to gain much respect, it still has room to progress in terms of the very important region of politics.

Vietnamese people still hold onto notions that politics is risky and dangerous as a result of past historical occurrences. Many Vietnamese parents encourage their children to stick to mainstream ideals regarding politics, for they were raised in a socially and politically unstable environment in which the communist regime forced imprisonment upon those who believed in otherwise.

After arriving in the United States, the motivation to restart a new life and survive in an unfamiliar country led parents to persuade their children to pursue professional careers in the medical, engineering, or computer science field. Meanwhile, social, political, and humanitarian disciplines are less studied. Few participate in social or political activities as a full-time career. This had led to a low number of Vietnamese people involve in American politics. Until recently, the country had only two Vietnamese elected officials on a state level: State Assemblyman Van Tran of

California and State Assemblyman Hubert Vo in Texas. In 2009, Cao Quang Anh was the first Vietnamese elected to Congress as a Representative.

The success of having a young Vietnamese person in Federal Legislature has not only led to a sense of pride for the Vietnamese community, but it has also helped spark interest in politics, as well as a source of inspiration for young Vietnamese people raised in the United States.

It's more vital now than before to raise awareness in the Vietnamese Community about the power of politics in order to continue this source of inspiration and excitement over the Vietnamese youth. With the support and resources, we are able to create a voice and transform the community. Doing so enables us to prove that we have the ability to work together and introduce our marginal population into the U.S. system of government on a local, state, and federal level.

If we can increase the number of Vietnamese candidates to a number larger than those three currently elected, the identity of our community will not only be more respected, but also better represented. Doing so will motivate the U.S. government to voice a greater concern and interest over our community.”

Trích từ cuốn sách của TS Nguyễn Thắng

# THÔNG ĐIỆP, HY VỌNG VÀ TRÁCH NHIỆM

“**C**ộng đồng Việt ở Hoa Kỳ, tuy còn non trẻ, đã có những cá nhân đạt được nhiều thành quả trong rất nhiều lãnh vực từ học vấn đến kinh tế, từ kỹ thuật đến nghệ thuật, tạo sự nể vì của các cộng đồng bạn. Tuy nhiên, chúng ta còn thua kém về một lãnh vực: tham chính.

Người Việt chúng ta vẫn quan niệm rằng chính trị là nguy hiểm và gian hiểm, do quá khứ lịch sử. Xuất thân từ một xã hội miền Nam bất ổn chính trị hay từ chế độ cộng sản mà chính trị đồng nghĩa với tù đày, ít bậc phụ huynh Việt nào khuyến khích con em đi vào con đường tham chính.

Hơn nữa, khi đặt chân đến Hoa Kỳ, vì nhu cầu sinh tồn và tái lập đời sống, cha mẹ thường khuyến con cái chọn học những ngành nghề ăn chắc như kỹ sư, bác sĩ, điện toán. Còn các ngành học như xã hội, chính trị, nhân văn, luật... thì ít người Việt theo học. Khi bước ra đời đi làm, các thanh niên Việt lại thường chọn làm công chức, tư chức; người có đầu óc buôn bán thì mở tiểu thương. Ít ai tham gia hoạt động xã hội hay chính trị như một công việc toàn thời.

Tựu chung, hiện vẫn còn rất ít người Việt tham gia vào chính trường Hoa Kỳ. Mãi đến gần đây trên toàn quốc chỉ mới có hai vị dân cử người Việt ở cấp tiểu bang: Dân Biểu Tiểu Bang Trần Thái Văn ở California và Dân Biểu Tiểu Bang Hubert Võ ở Texas. Năm 2009, người Việt đầu

tiên đắc cử vào Quốc Hội Liên Bang là Dân Biểu Cao Quang Ảnh.

Ngoài niềm hãnh diện chung, sự thành công này của một người Việt trẻ ở Lập Pháp Liên Bang đã khiến thêm nhiều người Việt bắt đầu quan tâm đến các vấn đề chính trường Hoa Kỳ và tạo phần khởi và cảm hứng nơi nhiều người Việt trẻ khác lớn lên ở Hoa Kỳ, trong đó có một ít người có ý định sẽ ra tranh cử trong năm 2010. Đó là một dấu hiệu tốt cho cộng đồng chúng ta.

Hiện nay là thời điểm thuận lợi để đẩy lên ý thức trong cộng đồng Việt ở Hoa Kỳ để biến những cảm hứng và phần khởi cá nhân thành một nỗ lực tập thể nhằm tạo tiếng nói ảnh hưởng cho cộng đồng Việt 10 Năm Để Chuyển Biến Cộng Đồng 111

nói chung. Chúng ta cần chứng minh cho mọi người thấy rằng cộng đồng Việt biết cách và đủ khả năng tổ chức và phối hợp với nhau để đưa người mình vào hệ thống chính quyền Hoa Kỳ từ cấp địa phương đến tiểu bang và liên bang.

Chúng ta cứ tưởng tượng, nếu năm 2010 có thêm hàng chục người Việt ứng cử và trong số đó có thêm vài ba người đắc cử thì chắc chắn các cộng đồng sắc dân bạn sẽ nể trọng chúng ta hơn, các đảng phái chính trị sẽ o bế cử tri Mỹ gốc Việt hơn, và chính quyền Hoa Kỳ sẽ quan tâm đến tiếng nói và nguyện vọng của chúng ta hơn.”

# questions for CONGRESSMAN JOSEPH

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- 1. What is the toughest part of your job as Congressman? What is the most rewarding?**

*The toughest part is being away from my family. The most rewarding is being able to help constituents solve their problems.*

- 2. You're the first Vietnamese-American Congressman, and currently the highest ranking, do you think the expectations and pressure are too unrealistic and overwhelming at times?**

*Based on some constituent requests coming to my office, perhaps some people do expect more than a U.S. Congressman can do, but we work hard to do what we can in response to every request, and we look for ways to be proactive by responding to needs we see on our own.*

- 3. You've traveled all around the country, interacting and serving the Vietnamese communities, please share with us your impressions of the communities overall? What are your thoughts on what we have achieved and overcome the last 35 years?**

*Individual achievements within our communities are admirable. Many among us have made tremendous strides in business, politics, education, medicine, the law and other areas of interest. However, there is too much rancor in most Vietnamese American communities. It seems we are too concerned about who is more anti-communist while not getting involved in mainstream politics where we can be more effective in fighting communism.*

- 4. Why do you think there isn't another Vietnamese congressman or senator or even governor?**

*I think it will take more collective efforts from the communities and more involvement from each individual to achieve representation. I am, however, quite optimistic that as more young people get involved and become more active in public service, Vietnamese-American influence and political representation will grow.*

- 5. What is your message to our youths and our community young professionals in regards to searching for directions and pathways to follow?**

*Be aware. Be involved. Be active.*

# CAO QUANG ÁNH

**6. The district you serve is predominantly African-Americans and Democrats. What does it take for you to keep your seat in the upcoming election?**

*My staff and I work diligently to represent the needs of all of my constituents and the interests of the District as a whole. After all, the constituents are who sent me to Congress to represent them in Washington. I take pride in putting their interests ahead of those of any special lobby or political party. In 2009, 68% of my House votes were in favor of legislation sponsored or supported by the Obama administration, and earlier this summer, my Republican colleagues voted me "Most Independent" Member of Congress. I stand on my record.*

**7. What are your hopes and messages for Sacramento Vietnamese Community (State Capitol, recently approved Little Saigon Business District, estimated 50,000 Vietnamese population)?**

*That Little Saigon will prosper and become more integrated and influential in mainstream American culture even as it preserves something of its own unique cultural identity and heritage.*

**8. What are your favorite Vietnamese traditions on holidays? Favorite Vietnamese comfort foods?**

*Favorite holidays: Tet and all the wonderful traditions to strengthen family and community bonds. Favorite Vietnamese comfort foods: Pho.*

**9. What does it mean to be Vietnamese-American?**

*It means that you respect the God-given inalienable freedom that you possess as a member of the human family and that you take responsibility for what you become in this life, using all the gifts at your disposal including those you may draw from your ethnicity and culture of origin as well as those unique to you as an individual.*

**10. How can we encourage our community members to be active and vote in future elections?**

*By educating the community about the rewards of involvement, the costs of non-involvement and, above all, leadership by example.*

# students' **VOICES**

What would you do to help your community if you were in a position of high governmental power (mayor, council member of a region, and/or congressman of a state)?

If I was mayor of my city, I dedicate attention towards providing a safe environment in which families would be able to easily foster and nurture their children effortlessly. I feel that it's important to invest in public education and provide a number of academic and after school programs to help enhance their learning experiences, while preparing them for higher education. Safety would be a top priority because it is imperative to create an environment that one would want for the next generation. The lack of safety hinders the ability for students to perform well in school and limits the number of opportunities available for them in the future. Not only does investing in education instill a sense of importance on academics in the community, but it also helps develop a strong sense of morale and guides children towards a secure and stable home and school environment.

(Sophia H.-22, Student)

What does it mean to you, your family, and your community to have a high ranking government official (congressman, senator, mayor, and/or council member) who is a part of your community?

To have a high ranking government official is very meaningful. We need someone to represent the Vietnamese community so others can understand our difficulties and struggles that we went through. We need someone who can teach others, so they can also acknowledge the fact that we, too, have fought long and hard for freedom and righteousness. Many generations of the Vietnamese struggled for their children and their children's children so they can gain a better life. So to have a congressman like Joseph Cao would without a doubt mean a tremendous amount of satisfaction.

(Diem H.-16, Student)

To see someone from my community in a high ranked government position gives me hope and pride in myself and the future of my community. In a world dominated by wealthy and affluent Caucasians, I feel there is a lack of representation and interest of the Asian American community at large, giving the impression that our voices do not matter. So the prospect of a high ranking government official who shares our story and struggle gives us the chance to advance our community by having our voices heard.

(Jamie L. 19, Student)



# THE VOICES OF OUR YOUTH

4. Do you feel there are a shortage of role models in our community? (social, political, economic activists or leaders)

In terms of our community I have yet to hear about a role model who I personally feel a connection to or have a lot in common with. I think as a first generation Vietnamese American, it's difficult to find one given the fact that the Vietnamese American culture is still very new and still being developed by my generation. Although my parents are very much traditional in their ideas and lifestyle, I am very much integrated into the American society. There's a delicate balance between maintaining Vietnamese values while assimilating into American culture, and each new generation has defined how involved they want to be in social, political, and economic matters regarding the Vietnamese community. I feel that there is a struggle with this balance for my generation because people find it difficult to have more moderate opinions when the Vietnamese and American community may have extremely different approaches towards these issues.

(Steve-20, Student)

In light of these tough times, what do you propose we, as 1st, 1.5, and 2nd generation Vietnamese community members, do collectively to improve the quality of life for the overall community; to bring about positive changes and solutions, and further elevate as well as shed light upon our voices and unique circumstances?

As a member of the Vietnamese community, I believe we should speak out to the general public to bring about affirmative changes and solutions to our community and shed light to our voices and distinctive circumstances. We can unite as one and make a bigger change to the society. We can also arrange more community events so we can be more familiar with our general aspect of the common wealth.

John-18, Student

Have you ever felt limited, overlooked, or marginalized as a result of your physical appearance or racial background?

To be honest, I always feel like I am being marginalized in some way because of my ethnicity and the given stereotypes and generalizations. There are times when I go to the grocery store or a restaurant and I ask myself, "If I was a white person, would they treat me differently given the same situation?" Sometimes it makes me feel like I am inferior to others and that just makes me feel even worse because I am allowing myself to think that I am not of the same value or worth as another being. This type of mindset can be so hurtful and self destructive that I always try to block it out by remembering where I come from. I remember the struggles and obstacles that we've all had to overcome for a better life and it reminds me of my purpose for a better life.

( Jamie, UC. Davis student)

# vietnamese REFUGEE DAY

**V**ietnamese Americans are the 4th largest Asian American group in the United States. Vietnamese-Americans comprise more than half of all overseas Vietnamese. In April of 2009, the 111th U.S. Congress, 1st Session, designated a specific day within AP-AHM 2009 dedicated to acknowledging and celebrating the heritage of Vietnamese Americans who immigrated to the US as refugees after the fall of Saigon in April 1975. 72% of Vietnamese Americans are naturalized citizens and Congress wanted to commemorate the experiences of Vietnamese Refugees and the contributions they have made to American society and culture. Congress chose May 2nd as Vietnamese Refugee Day to coincide with the May 2, 2009 Journey to Freedom: A Boat People Retrospective symposium sponsored by the Library of Congress' Asian Division along with many Vietnamese-American organizations.

- On April 21, 2009 - U.S. Congressman (Louisiana) Anh "Joseph" Cao introduces and sponsors H. Res. 342 calling for the designation of May 2, 2009 as Vietnamese Refugee Day
- April 28, 2009 - H. Res. 342 passes in the House of Representatives.
- April 30, 2009 - U.S. Senator Jim Webb (Virginia) introduces S. Res. 123 calling for the designation of May 2, 2009 as Vietnamese Refugee Day. S. Res. 123 passed that same day.

"Vietnamese Refugee Day is a very significant day to the Vietnamese community. Many of the younger generation who are not refugees but have parents or relatives who actually are refugees. Vietnamese Refugee Day can help the general public understand the history occurred during the Vietnam War and teach all Vietnamese-Americans about their past generations' history."

(Diem H. – 16, student)

"This is a significant day and achievement for my parent's generation. Though I never experienced it, I live the refugee experience vicariously through my parents. I can't imagine or even accept the fact that people could jeopardize their lives and sacrifice everything they have just to pursue and achieve freedom and democracy. For my generation, the Vietnamese Americans who are born in America, we're more dedicated to getting a decent education, finding a well-paying job and embracing the uniquely American concept of individuality."

(Jennifer T. – 24, Banker)

"My parents scrub toilets 7 days a week to help my siblings and I become doctors and business professionals yet it's difficult for me to separate my professional life from my Vietnamese-American Refugee life. The Vietnamese Refugee Day reminds and reinforces a fact and a history that could easily be forgotten. As much as I feel that I am a successful Vietnamese American, a big part of me still feel empty and sad – I and other Vietnamese-Americans have not fulfill our responsibility and obligations to our community locally and nationally. Our community still has long way toward recognition and representation."

(Phong N. – 37, Dentist)

# MAJOR VIETNAMESE-AMERICAN MILESTONES

- ★ **FIRST VIETNAMESE-AMERICAN PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL PLAYER**  
Dat Nguyen – Dallas Cowboys
- ★ **FIRST VIETNAMESE-AMERICAN FEDERAL JUDGE**  
Honorable Jacqueline Nguyen once said of her appointment, “An important step forward in judicial diversity and not only a testament to the inspiring promise of the American Dream, but also a milestone for the Vietnamese American community.”
- ★ **FIRST VIETNAMESE-AMERICAN NAVY CAPTAIN**  
Captain Hung Ba Le – First ocean voyage was aboard an overcrowded fishing trawler when he was 5. His family and hundreds of other terrified refugees fled Vietnam as Saigon fell to the North Vietnamese army.
- ★ **FIRST VIETNAMESE-AMERICAN TO COMMAND AN ARMY COMBAT BRIGADE**  
Colonel Viet Luong – Commander of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, came to America in 1975 as a refugee from Vietnam and is the first Vietnamese-American to command an Army combat brigade.
- ★ **FIRST VIETNAMESE-AMERICAN CONGRESSMAN**  
Congressman Joseph Cao – Defeated 9 term incumbent and now represents the most African-American and heavily Democratic district of any Republican Congressman in the United States.
- ★ **FIRST VIETNAMESE-AMERICAN ELECTED TO THE CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE**  
Assemblymember Van Tran
- ★ **FIRST PHO NOODLE FRANCHISE IN THE WORLD**  
Pho Hoa (Sacramento)
- ★ **HIGHEST RANKING VIETNAMESE-AMERICAN TO ATTAIN RANK OF CAPTAIN IN CALIFORNIA**  
Captain Trang To – President of Asian Peace Officer Association, led the effort to confirm the first female post commissioner. Captain To has been serving the Sacramento community since 1985 and is still an active volunteer and leader in the community.
- ★ **ONE OF THE FIRST AND MOST SUCCESSFUL VIETNAMESE-AMERICAN ENTREPRENEURS**  
Trong Nguyen – Owner of World of Good Tastes and La Bou Bakery & Cafes. Opened in 1981, offering handmade croissants in 26 company owned stores. also trained as geneticist, former scientist.
- ★ **SACRAMENTO'S ONE AND ONLY ETHNIC BASED BUSINESS DISTRICT**  
Little Saigon of Sacramento

# Congressman Joseph Cao Q. Ánh

AND THE HOST COMMITTEE WOULD LIKE TO

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