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Coalition Of Bar Associations Holds Annual Meeting
*Meets With White House Officials and Congressional Representatives to
Address Issues Affecting Communities of Color*

WASHINGTON – This week, the Coalition of Bar Associations of Color (CBAC) gathered in Washington, DC, for its Annual Meeting. CBAC’s leaders discussed key issues affecting communities of color, including immigration reform, voter suppression, and judicial vacancies. This year’s Annual Meeting included visits with key executive branch officials and members of Congress, including meetings with U.S. Attorney General Eric H. Holder, White House Counsel Kathryn Ruemmler, and high-level staffers from the offices of Senators Patrick Leahy, Orin Hatch, and Marco Rubio.

CBAC was established in 1992 and is comprised of the Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA), the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA), the National Bar Association (NBA), and the National Native American Bar Association (NNABA). CBAC meets annually every spring so that leaders from its member organizations can discuss issues of mutual concern and advocate in support of their shared interests.

“We will continue to work with Congress and the White House to find solutions to issues of concern for the benefit of our country, including the dire need for immigration reform,” said Peter M. Reyes Jr., president of HNBA. “Our mission is to ensure that generations of future lawyers are given the opportunity to make a difference within their respective communities.”

“The CBAC annual meeting provides us with the opportunity to collaborate with other bar associations of color and put forth a collective effort to remain engaged on critical issues, particularly on diversifying the bench and bar,” said Patricia Rosier, president-elect of NBA and host of this year’s CBAC meeting. “For over 20 years, CBAC has demonstrated the importance of and need for our collective efforts and every year our message grows in clarity and strength.”

“Our participation in CBAC provides a unique opportunity for NAPABA and the other national bars of color to collaborate on issues that are of critical importance to Asian Pacific Americans and all of our communities,” said Wendy C. Shiba, president of NAPABA. “We stand stronger together, and this week we collectively advocated for the confirmation of highly accomplished judicial candidates who would further diversify the federal bench, legislation and initiatives to combat human trafficking, and passage of commonsense immigration reform that emphasizes family unity and an earned pathway to citizenship.”

“The lack of knowledge about federal Indian law and tribal law affects how Native Americans fare in the federal court system,” said Linda Benally, president-elect of NNABA. “While NNABA applauds the recent confirmation of a Native Hawaiian to the federal bench, there currently is not a single Native American serving as an Article III judge. NNABA – working along with its CBAC partners – is committed to ensuring that opportunities are provided for Native Americans within the judiciary and the legal profession.”

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The Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA) is an incorporated, not-for-profit, national membership organization that represents the interests of the more than 100,000 Hispanic attorneys, judges, law professors, legal assistants, and law students in the United States and its territories. From the days of its founding three decades ago, the HNBA has acted as a force for positive change within the legal profession. It does so by encouraging Latino students to choose a career in the law and by prompting their advancement within the profession once they graduate and start practicing. Through a combination of issue advocacy, programmatic activities, networking events and educational conferences, the HNBA has helped generations of lawyers succeed.

The National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA) is the national association of Asian Pacific American attorneys, judges, law professors, and law students. NAPABA represents the interests of over 40,000 attorneys and 63 state and local Asian Pacific American bar associations. Its members include solo practitioners, large firm lawyers, corporate counsel, legal service and non-profit attorneys, and lawyers serving at all levels of government. NAPABA continues to be a leader in addressing civil rights issues confronting Asian Pacific American communities. Through its national network of committees and affiliates, NAPABA provides a strong voice for increased diversity of the federal and state judiciaries, advocates for equal opportunity in the workplace, works to eliminate hate crimes and anti-immigrant sentiment, and promotes the professional development of people of color in the legal profession.

Founded in 1925, the National Bar Association is the nation’s oldest and largest national network of minority attorneys and judges. It represents approximately 44,000 lawyers, judges, law professors and law students and has over 80 affiliate chapters throughout the United States and around the world. The organization seeks to advance the science of jurisprudence, preserve the independence of the judiciary and to uphold the honor and integrity of the legal profession. For additional information about the National Bar Association, visit www.nationalbar.org.

Founded in 1973, NNABA serves as the national association for American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian attorneys, judges, law professors and law students. NNABA strives for justice and effective legal representation for all American indigenous peoples; fosters the development of Native American lawyers and judges; and addresses social, cultural and legal issues affecting American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians.

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