

Dateline Miami, Florida, February 28, 2010

The Asian-American Federation of Florida and its more than 70 organizational members across the State are disputing and strongly protesting against the unfair decision by the Florida Governor's Office to award a \$105,000 government contract to Ron Sachs Communications for promoting the 2010 Census among Asian Americans in Florida, which they claim do not have any ties with this government-favored public relations firm.

The award was part of the \$2.11 million appropriated by Florida Governor Charlie Crist to develop the most influential grassroots outreach and most effective public relations network possible, as his ongoing effort to ensure that Florida receives its fair share of federal funding and representation. Grassroots organizations and advocates for Florida's minority and other hard-to-count populations were invited to get involved in the 2010 Sunshine Census initiative.

"Community leaders throughout our state are needed to ensure every Florida resident is counted during the 2010 Census," Governor Crist said.

Yet, contrary to the Governor's original intent, the winning bids went mostly to big public-relations agencies that have no direct involvement with the targeted communities.

Moore/Ketchum was selected for Blacks, college and university students, part-time residents, and rural residents. Ron Sachs Communications was selected as the top-ranking company for American Indians, Asian-American and Pacific Islanders and migrant farm workers.

NANAY, Inc., the only Asian entity that submitted a bid to count Asian American and Pacific Islanders in Florida had filed a protest against favoring the Tallahassee-based non-Asian public relations firm over the grassroots Census efforts that are already being undertaken by the Asian-American Federation of Florida, under the leadership of NANAY.

The Asian-American Federation of Florida, made up of more than seventy Asian American community-based organizations, was established in 1984 to promote and enhance appreciation of the ancestral legacy of Asian Americans in Florida, as well as to address the needs and concerns of Florida's Asian American communities. NANAY, Inc. (National Alliance to Nurture the Aged and the Youth), a non-profit community-based organization and leading member of the Asian American Federation, was incorporated in 1994 to provide supportive services to disadvantaged elders and youth, and is lead agency for the Federation's Census outreach initiatives in Florida.

Written by Asian-American Federation of Florida Press Office
Sunday, 28 February 2010 09:00 -

To ensure an accurate count of their hard-to-reach population, the Asian American Federation of Florida, led by NANAY, hosted Statewide Summits in October 2009 and January 2010 to discuss strategies on how to actively engage their community. More-than a hundred events have already been undertaken, and more community-based programs are still being coordinated by NANAY and the four regional lead organizations of the Asian-American Federation to promote Census awareness and participation among Asians in Florida.

"Asian issues and Asian Census are best and most effectively handled by Asian grassroots organizations through the Asian American Federation," says Dr. Joy Bruce, president of both NANAY and the Asian-American Federation of Florida. "We do not need any middleman or broker to do it. We should not be reporting to a non-Asian PR firm that will later claim credit for all our community-based outreach efforts."

Ron Sachs Communications used the October Asian Summit hosted by the Federation to support its bid and claimed that it had "already secured as partners" or intended to partner with various Asian business and civic organizations, engaging the group's leadership to help broadcast the Census message. But most of the Asian organizations mentioned in Ron Sachs proposal categorically denied being part of its initiative.

"I just want to clarify that the Chinese-American Association of Central Florida (CAACF) and the Chinese School of CAACF have not been approached by Ron Sachs, although our organizations were included on their list," says Pauline Ho, President of CAACF. "They never contacted us nor did we sign any agreement with them. This is a misrepresentation. "

Written by Asian-American Federation of Florida Press Office
Sunday, 28 February 2010 09:00 -

The Asian-American Chamber of Commerce of Central Florida, Asian Coalition of Tallahassee, Organization of Chinese Americans-South Florida Chapter, Asian-American Heritage Council, Council for Filipino American Organizations (CFAO), Filipino-American Coalition of Florida, South Florida Dragon Boat Festival and United Chinese Association of Florida echoed the same sentiment, and had issued statements denying their participation with Ron Sachs.

"I just found out that almost all of the organizations Ron Sachs listed in their proposal are identical to (and may have been just copied from) the ones I personally compiled in my web site," claims Shally Wong of *Asia Trend Magazine*. "Honestly, some of them are not that active at all. *Asia Trend Magazine* is listed by Ron Sachs Communications as one of the media outlets that they are going to use. I do not recall that they have either called us or approached us for the outreach. I never heard of this company."

When asked pointblank during the conference call with government officials handling NANAY's protest, the officer representing Ron Sachs could not identify a single Asian organization that has agreed or committed to become its partner in the Census initiative.

"I was very disappointed that we were not given the opportunity to speak out in the teleconference," says Mario Ordon, chairman of the Council for Filipino-American Organizations (CFAO). "I was also surprised that the counsel for the office of the Governor directly told us that we do not have any chance to win the protest. Our member organizations have been active and involved as volunteer partners of the Census (coordinated by the Governor's Sunshine State Complete Count Committee and chaired by Mayor Richard Crotty of Orange County, Central Florida) since February of last year and we had done a lot of activities to educate the hard-to-count and linguistically challenged Asian-American

Written by Asian-American Federation of Florida Press Office
Sunday, 28 February 2010 09:00 -

communities regarding the importance of being counted in this Census 2010.”

The lawyer from Governor's Office claims that the Asian-American community had no standing or reason to complain. At the teleconference that was intended to resolve the issue, the Governor's legal counsel predicted that NANAY, the organization representing Asian Americans, would lose the appeal, and suggested that the protest be withdrawn.

Still, the NANAY and members of the Asian-American Federation of Florida are standing firm in their conviction and refuse to withdraw from addressing the issues that impact the Asian community as a whole.

“The Census bid evaluations and scoring were based on false information submitted by Ron Sachs Communications,” maintains Val Dagani, co-convenor of the Filipino-American Coalition of Florida.

Even after the serious irregularities and were brought to the attention of the Governor's office, officials attempted to brush the issue aside, angering Asian-American leaders across the state.

“Whether we win the protest or not, we cannot allow anyone to think that the Asian Americans in Florida got counted and united because of Ron Sachs Communications”, says Evelyn Bruce, executive director of the NANAY. “Most of us were forbidden to speak our mind during the teleconference with Ron Sachs and the Governor's Office that was supposed to resolve our

Written by Asian-American Federation of Florida Press Office
Sunday, 28 February 2010 09:00 -

issue. But Asians are no longer passive. This is a myth that is about to be proven wrong.”

“It is time for Asian Americans to stand up and stop being taken for granted, “ says Edward Lin, director of 80-20 Educational Foundation and 80-20 Initiative, a national nonpartisan political organization dedicated to winning equal opportunity and justice for all Asian Americans through a bloc vote. “We will deliver a swing vote to defeat politicians who work against us and reward those who stand up for inequities and help to address our rightful concerns.”

The 80-20 Educational Foundation is a member of the Asian-American Federation of Florida.

“It is not about money,” says Dr. Joy Bruce. “We are fighting for principle. Awarding the bid to a non-Asian public-relations corporate agency, instead of a community-based Asian organization that truly represents the target population is another example of the lack of cultural sensitivity for, if not gross discrimination against, this underserved population that the Census is trying to reach. The Governor has good intentions for the Census. Unfortunately, his incentives are not reaching his intended targets.”

The NANAY and the Asian-American Federation of Florida are committed to serving the community, and will continue their efforts to reach out and ensure an accurate count of Asians in Florida.

Written by Asian-American Federation of Florida Press Office
Sunday, 28 February 2010 09:00 -

Asian Americans will no longer be silent over issues adversely affecting their community. The sleeping giant has finally awakened. # # #

[Joomla SEO powered by JoomSEF](#)