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September 26, 2024

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Leading SF Mayoral Candidates Hear Community Hopes and Concerns at API Council Town Hall

*Asians and Pacific Islanders are nearly 40% of the city's population
Event is only API-focused candidate forum and only one to offer language
interpretation*

SAN FRANCISCO, CA: At the only Asian and Pacific Islander-focused candidate forum in San Francisco, community members heard the priorities of the top five mayoral candidates – and shared their priorities as well. The API Council Town Hall, which took place at the Hilton SF, was also the only candidate forum in San Francisco to offer language interpretation.

“The API community makes up nearly 40% of San Francisco’s population and yet we’ve often been overlooked or misunderstood by our city leaders,” said Cally Wong, Executive Director of the API Council. “We are a powerful electoral force, and today was an opportunity to hear how each mayoral candidate will address the issues that matter most to our community.”

Voters at the Town Hall heard from mayoral candidates London Breed, Aaron Peskin, Ahsha Safai, Mark Farrell, and Daniel Lurie. The event was moderated by MSNBC News Anchor Richard Lui and NBC Bay Area Anchor/Reporter Gia Vang.

“The diverse API community has shaped San Francisco’s rich history and hopeful future,” said Dean Ito Taylor, API Council board member. “Yet more than a third of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the city live below the poverty line. The decisions our city leaders make today and tomorrow will impact all of us and that’s why we are proud to have hosted this Town Hall.”

Before the candidates spoke, community members graphically represented their hopes, dreams, and concerns on a colorful community participation wall. Questions for the candidates were taken from the wall.

“API community members care about the practical issues that affect our daily lives,” said Luisa Antonio, API Council board member. “Affordable and safe housing is a particular struggle for low-income seniors. Too many have been on waiting lists for over a decade. Too many also struggle with food insecurity.” Moderators asked candidates how they would address these issues, as well as their plans for preservation of cultural spaces, for public safety, and for language-accessible, culturally competent health and mental health care.

API Council Executive Director Cally Wong closed the Town Hall by reminding participants to use what they learned today for action: “action in our communities, action with our representatives, and action when we vote in November.”

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API Council is building the voice, visibility, and influence of San Francisco’s diverse Asian and Pacific Islander communities, united in the call for equity. The Council is made up of 57 community organizations providing direct services in San Francisco to underserved communities.