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Undocumented Asian Pacific Islanders React to the Passage of SB 4 as a Stepping Stone to Universal Healthcare and Immigrant Justice

San Francisco – A few hours ago, the California State Senate approved SB 4 (D-Lara) which would allow undocumented immigrants to purchase health insurance on the state exchange, and expand Medi-Cal eligibility regardless of immigration status for children (0-19) as an entitlement, and a cap/waiting list for adults if there is money left over from the \$40 million budget allocated.

The passage of the current SB 4 bill signals that universal healthcare should be a right, not a privilege in order for all of California to live with respect and dignity. However, the limited entitlements for the undocumented community means that 90% of ASPIRE members, our parents, families, and community members will not be eligible for health care. While ASPIRE is committed to providing community education and referral services for undocumented families to access the implemented healthcare expansion once SB 4 becomes law, we will continue fighting for broader inclusion of healthcare coverage for all community members in the upcoming years.

ASPIRE will push stakeholders and coalitional partners to situate universal healthcare for all Californians as a budgetary priority in the upcoming allocation. We hope that the State Assembly and Governor Brown will uplift the bill as a stepping stone to a healthier California and recognize that an expansion of healthcare rights is an investment in the future of our state.

“Centering healthcare as a budgetary priority in California is a preventive measure against the festering reality where undocumented workers are harmed in hazardous workplaces, while families are torn apart because parents and elders are dying from treatable diseases.” said

Hong Mei Pang, ASPIRE Community Organizer. ASPIRE will continue to organize our communities until the true vision of equitable health care becomes a reality for all of California, especially for our undocumented families and communities.

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ASPIRE is the first pan-Asian undocumented youth organization in the U.S. We started with a few young people looking for help with our undocumented status at Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Asian Law Caucus in San Francisco. ASPIRE has grown to an organization of 50+ members in the last 5 years. We educate people about immigration reform, advocate for more just policies on immigration, and mobilize undocumented youth and allies for actions to push for just and inclusive immigration.

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