



SABA North America Congratulates Vice President Kamala Harris on Her Historic Nomination

August 2, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SABA North America congratulates Vice President Kamala Harris on securing the Democratic nomination for President of the United States. The nomination in and of itself is historic, as she is the first South Asian and first woman of color to earn the nomination of President for any major political party in the history of the United States.

A daughter of immigrants, Vice President Harris has been a trailblazer at all steps in her career. She was the first South Asian and first Black woman to become Attorney General of California and the first South Asian to serve as a U.S. Senator. Likewise, as Vice President, she is the first South Asian and first Black person to hold this position.

As a long-time SABA Northern California member and a speaker at the 2007 and 2013 SABA North America conferences, we are grateful to Vice President Harris for her contributions to SABA North America and look forward to the historic path she paves for the South Asian community. Keerthi Sugumaran, SABA North America President, noted: “Vice President Harris’s historic and groundbreaking nomination will pave the way for South Asians seeking leadership positions for generations to come. We are proud of her accomplishments to date and applaud her profound impact on the South Asian community.”

But it is not simply Vice President Harris’ ethnic background that makes this an important election for the South Asian community. For roughly two decades, Asian American voters have been the fastest-growing group of eligible voters in the United States. In fact, a projected 15 million Asian Americans will be eligible to vote in the upcoming elections. And this election cycle has seen a surge of South Asian representation at all levels of government. We anticipate that South Asian voters will have a significant impact on the upcoming election, especially given the importance of key issues like immigration, reproductive justice, and judicial appointments.

Immigration will no doubt play a central role in the upcoming election. Significantly, the 2024 Asian American Voter Survey found that immigration is one of the key issues driving Asian American voters, particularly because immigration policies uniquely impact the Asian American and South Asian communities. In the last few years, SABA North America has stepped up our advocacy efforts by advocating for comprehensive immigration reform and working with Senators and Congressional members, on both sides of the aisle, to find common ground. In December 2023, SABA North America submitted its comments to USCIS’s proposal for “Modernizing H-1B Requirements, Providing Flexibility in the F-1 Program, and the Program Improvements Affecting Other Nonimmigrant Workers.” We also joined a comment, along with 73 other organizations,



regarding the same. In part due to these efforts, we saw real and impactful changes to the H-1B program and registration process under the Biden-Harris Administration.

Like immigration, we expect that reproductive rights will be a critical issue in state and federal elections and, once again, an issue that uniquely impacts Asian American and South Asian American women disproportionately. Indeed, recent studies found that Asian American women are genetically and environmentally predisposed to infertility. In the aftermath of the *Dobbs* decision, however, eighteen states have banned nearly all abortions, threatening much needed access to fertility treatments. That is why consistently for the past few years, SABA North America has advocated for and lobbied for the passage of bills that would protect reproductive justice freedoms for all women in the United States.

Finally, with respect the upcoming Presidential election, our next President will continue to shape the face of the federal judiciary, including the U.S. Supreme Court. Significantly, SABA North America has actively fought for key endorsements and nominations of qualified South Asian attorneys to the bench, including the historic nominations and confirmations of Judge Zahid Quraishi, the first Muslim to sit on a federal district bench and Judge Nusrat Choudhury, the first Muslim woman to serve as a federal judge, among others. Under the current administration, we recognize that there has been greater diversity (both ethnically and in gender) for judicial nominations and confirmations than we have ever seen before in U.S. history. We commend these actions and will continue to fight for the same in the years to come.

This election is an important election, and it is equally important that all in our community get out and vote. We recognize that Vice President Harris has been a great advocate for immigration reform and reproductive justice and has contributed significantly to the diversification of the judiciary. We thank Vice President Harris for her advocacy, especially given the importance of these issues to the South Asian community and congratulate her on this historic nomination!