

COMMUNITY

JOURNAL

The Voice of FilAmerica

Political empowerment is still a treasure that eludes us as a community here in America. While we are the second largest Asian American community in the United States, we have yet to harvest the power that comes from our numbers. The Voice of FilAmerica features elected and appointed officials – regardless of political affiliation – in the different US states who are of Filipino ancestry. As your Filipino American community newspaper, the Asian Journal recognizes the fact that we all have a responsibility towards bringing political empowerment to fruition, especially for our future generations. It is our hope to have our voices heard all over America.

Eduardo Angeles

The Special Counsel to LA City Council



Eduardo Angeles

THE highest-ranking Filipino American and one of the highest-rated Asian Pacific Islander lawyers in the Los Angeles City Hall is Eduardo Angeles, the first Filipino American lawyer to serve as the Special Counsel to the LA City Council. Besides representing some of the most powerful people in Los Angeles, he is a significant voice for the FilAm community.

As the right hand man to the LA City Council, Angeles has his hands full everyday. Every Tuesday, Wednesday and Fridays beginning at 10 a.m., he proxies for any of the 15 elected officials who will be unable to attend council meetings. He assists council members in facilitating their issues. Sometimes, Angeles goes out on the field and serves as a liaison to the council members' constituents.

Formerly Chief Attorney of Public Protection of San Francisco, Angeles also served as the lead lawyer of the Los Angeles City Attorney's Airport Division.

In a previous interview with the Asian Journal, Angeles related that it wasn't an easy way working his way to the top. "I didn't come from a privileged background," he said. "I have an immigration background. I went to public schools, raised by a single mom, lived below the poverty line and struggled the whole time."

Born in Pasig City, Manila and raised in Angeles City in Central Luzon, Angeles grew up as the only son of his mother and father. He is the youngest of seven siblings from his mother's side and the eldest from his father.

In September 1972, his parents separated. His father stayed in the Philippines and his mother chose to immigrate to the US.

"We boarded a TWA plane," said Angeles. "It was one of the last planes to leave the Philippines. As planes were taking off, military trucks were converging on the airport trying to stop the planes from getting out. When we landed in Hawaii, we found out [President Ferdinand] Marcos had declared martial law."

Growing up in a single family home, he spoke with his mother often asking why she and his father separated. When the arguments escalated, he would pack his belongings, grab his luggage, and threatened to leave their home in San Francisco to join his father in the Philippines.

"It was heartbreaking," he recalls. "I use to say 'I'm going to my dad's', not even having an idea of how far he was. Many of those times, I would love to have seen my parents

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YOUR IMMIGRATION SOLUTION



ATTY. ROBERT REEVES & JEREMIAH JOHNSON

THESE are hard times for Americans, especially for immigrants. The current financial crisis has dominated the media's headlines and the political discourse among the presidential candidates. And yet during these hard economic times, immigrants continue to wait anxiously for some relief, holding out hope while looking to politicians to provide some much needed reform to a broken immigration system. Despite the recent relative silence from the presidential candidates, Republican Senator John McCain and Democratic Senator Barack Obama, their respective party's platforms adopted at their national conventions say a lot. In fact, the party platforms mark a clear distinction among the candidates both in the approach to immigration and in the specific recommendation.

For Republicans, their approach to immigration policy is clear: immigration is a national security issue. Referencing terrorism, drug cartels and criminal gangs, Republicans stress the need to track persons entering and exiting the United States and that "allowing millions of unidentified persons to enter and remain in this country poses grave risks." Republicans propose that by completing the border fence between the United States and Mexico and giving additional resources to border agents, America's borders can be secured.

Complimenting border security, the Republican platform advocates a strict enforcement policy. Specifically, the platform calls for immigration enforcement at places of employment, including prosecution for using false security numbers; limiting the rights of aliens in deportation proceedings; tracking down aliens who overstay their visas; and denying federal funds to "sanctuary cities." Republicans are also opposed to legalization, or "amnesty" programs; driver's licenses for aliens; in-state tuition for undocumented children; and allowing undocumented aliens to receive social security or other

Republican vs Democrat: Platforms on immigration

public benefits. The Republican Party platform is reminiscent to the hard-line, enforcement only approach taken by some members of Congress last year.

In contrast, Democrats view immigration policy as an opportunity to renew the "American Community." Although the Democrats recognize the need to secure the borders, including additional personnel, infrastructure and technology at the borders and ports of entries, and enforce existing immigration laws, they understand the "need [for] comprehensive immigration reform, not just piecemeal efforts." Noticeably absent from the party's platform is reference to the controversial border fence. Rather, "comprehensive" immigration reform remains a top priority for Democrats.

Specifically, the Democrat's

plan calls for increasing family-based and employment based immigrant visas; improving the naturalization process; and addressing the dysfunctional immigration bureaucracy. Moreover, the Democratic platform supports a path for undocumented immigrants to become legal permanent residents, or in their words to "get right with the law." Indeed, Democrats "support a system that requires undocumented immigrants who are in good standing to pay a fine, pay taxes, learn English, and go to the back of the line for the opportunity to become citizens."

The Presidential campaign is in full swing. Over the past year, immigrant communities have seen an increase in immigration raids yet little in the way of immigration reform. Just because the headlines are currently focused

on other topics, and politicians remain silent, this does not mean immigration is not an important issue. Rather, the political parties have adopted party platforms to express their views. Republicans and Democrats take different approaches to immigration, and the outcome of the election will affect you and your family.

Atty. Reeves has represented clients in numerous landmark immigration cases that have set new policies regarding INS action and immigrants' rights. His offices are located in Pasadena, San Francisco, Las Vegas and Makati City.
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The analysis and suggestions offered in this column do not create a lawyer-client relationship and are not a substitute for the personalized representation that is essential to every case.

(Advertising Supplement)

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