[9/15/22] APSC3

[00:00:00]

Good evening. You're tuned into apex express radio. We are bringing you an Asian and Asian-American view from the bay area and around the world. I'm your host Paige Chung. And this is AACRE Thursday, acre Asian-American for civil rights and equality. And we're highlighting one of our 11 organizations: asian prisoner support committee, AKA APSC. For those of you who don't know APRC has been around since 2002 serves direct support to Asia prisoners and to raise awareness about the growing number of Asian prisoners, Asian Pacific Islanders in [00:01:00] prisons, detained and deported.

I woke up feeling great.[00:02:00]

Is that James Fox. Hey, what's up brother? Hey key. How you doing, man? Good to see you. Good to see you too. Hey PJ. Hey James. Yeah. How? Hey James, we gotta get on that yoga soon. Oh, Hey,

gotta get you guys on the mat. Oh, I would love that. Yeah, I missed it, man. It's been a long. Yeah. Still doing it. I'm I it'll be 20 years in about no, this month it's Mark's 20 years. Wow. Wow. I still never forget about the breath, James. All right. Yeah. Yeah. I got you on video talking about that. yeah,[00:03:00]

starting, we're starting actually after the time, so yeah, just feel free to a bit before we get our panel started.[00:04:00]

I totally was playing music intentionally

yeah, I was, yeah. That's okay. We have one ish minute left. So just for folks to know yeah. We'll get started

super excited about tonight. Glad everyone was able to come through tonight should be awesome work panel.

Yeah, lots [00:05:00] of folks. And also just letting people know this is also live on Facebook, which means that there are other people, us just.

Okay. It's 6 0 5. Okay. APSC three. How are you feeling? Are we you feel ready to get started?

The old hip hop song said, let's turn this party out. all right. Sounds that's good. All right. Cool. Hi everyone. Welcome. Welcome to the APC three panel. My name is Victoria. I'm a volunteer and I'm gonna be your panel moderator for this afternoon. Can I get some folks in the everyone in the chat if you're joining us just a quick hi, and just tell us where you're tuning in from.

Yeah. So I am calling in from for example, Oakland where a lot of us are. Cool. And as you're introducing yourselves in the chat yeah, I, today I'll just will be [00:06:00] hearing from the, a PS C three key Maria and PJ all staff members at a PSC all formerly in cursory community members and community leaders now advocating against deportations.

So yeah. Hi everyone. We're gonna be hearing from you three about your journey to healing your advocacy, and now your ongoing pardon campaigns. So as folks are introducing themselves from many different places, AC Berkeley union city various orgs, stuff like that. Yeah. Can I ask the PSC three?

Can you start by introducing yourselves too?

Hey everyone. Thanks for the intro Victoria. My name is key. I go by hehe pronouns. I'm the program facility manager at APSC. I've been with APSC for wow. Six years now. I'll pass it to Maria. Hi, thank you. Key. My name's Maria pronouns. She, her and I'm the re-entry intern for APSC and I've been with APSC for two years now and I'm gonna pass it on to [00:07:00] PJ.

Thank you, Maria. I am PJ and the community advocate with the agent prison support committee. And I have been with APS C for over three years. Now I go by. Hi, his cool. Thank you everyone. Let's get started jumping into some of our questions here today. Thanks everyone also for introducing themselves in the chat.

It's just, yeah. Seeing a big firestorm of support. So thanks everyone. Yeah. So let's get started. Can I ask you three to talk about first our first question how did you become involved with AP. And I'll ask Marie to say, yeah. I can answer that. So my involvement with APSC started back in 2019, but I was introduced to APSC in 2017.

I wrote ALC for legal assistance. What's gonna happen after my, after I get my board date, my program. And so that's how it all started. And in 2019, after I got transferred from prison to Alan [00:08:00] detention center Mia was also working at AOC as a community advocate and she asked APS C to help support me while I was there.

And when I was in atlanto I was at my cat hearing when a PSC showed up and filled up the hearing room with they packed it, and I can't describe, to you all, how my heart was just overwhelmed with joy because looking behind me, there was a group of people, right?

They didn't know me, but they traveled hundreds of miles to just support me. And at that time I was at the lowest point because I was in this battle alone and I was fighting for my life to stay in the United States. So when I left the hearing the guard told me, this has never happened before in all my years, working here at geo.

And that created a lasting imprint in me, and that started that fire, that fight to keep fighting. And so [00:09:00] that's how I got involved with APSC when they had the internship program, I jumped on it and I was very fortunate to be part of it. And now I'm here at APSC to continue the work that was given to me, I paid forward and, I help people coming home, find their, fight their battle with immigration and finding their place here in our society.

So

that's beautiful. Thank you, Maria. Yeah. P PJ, do you wanna share how you got involved with apse? Yeah I do actually. So my journey started when I was in Solan. I joined a lot of programs that helps impact masculinity and trauma, and it changed my life around. And I went back to school, got my trade and started like really doing a lot of positive investment in my own self.

Cuz I wanted to give back to my community, become a healer. And then partly because I felt accountable, I learned about accountability and how [00:10:00] my crime have impacted my community. And so I wanted to give back and provide some healing to my community. And so I went on this journey, of just leading a positive life.

And then through that journey, my counselor at the time saw what I was doing. And she sent me to San Quentin. She said, you know what? You should go to San Quentin cuz there's lot of opportunity there, and that's what you wanted to do. So I ended up in San Quentin and I met APSC at the health fair.

And what was the first time? I've had a model like of community support, because growing up, I never seen it and in prison definitely. You don't see that it doesn't happen. So Ben and COSTI was there. As the leader at the time of of that, being the health fair and I was really impressed by them.

And I was like, I was really impressed. I was very inspired and so I wanted to get involved. And so I joined the team and and I've been with them since, I think I, I went to ice when I got parole for 18 months, PSC launch, a parting campaign for me, there sent letters to me lobby the community on my behalf and I got out.

And so I got out and I joined the team as staff and I was the reentry navigator helping with folks in reentry. And now I'm the community advocates. [00:11:00] So I'm working, in reforming criminal justice system and stop stopping to the deportation machine. And that's of my quick journey with APC.

Yeah, that was that was awesome. Maria and PJ very similar in some sense I think it was in 2009. I was at San queen state prison. We had a health fair for another group. And then with the health fair, we had all of like different folks from Alameda county come in for health, getting blood pressure.

We had Tai Chi and it was weird because I like, I normally don't see, or we normally don't see Asian that comes in, two programs like that. And I saw I saw Eddie, Ben Kasi, and couple other folks. And I heard a lot of story about, especially by Eddie, how you went to AEC and then talking to them, they're like, Hey, we wanna start a cultural group.

Focus around Asian, Pacific iron history and values. I'm like, oh, that sounds dope. Throughout the hair field, we just talked about that program. And for many years we was just working on, developing a curriculum. And then in finally in 2013 [00:12:00] we started a pilot program called roots, restoring our original true self.

And it's been gone since then since 2013 oh, hundreds of guys graduated from that program. I remember that first program, like no one wanted to to stop the program. It was a nine month program and it went over a year. But one thing that was great is that APS E's been, and then after I got found suitable for parole, I was handed over to immigration.

APSC stood through, stood with me. They came and visit me when I was all the way down south in uhto. And even in the county jail in orange county. And they supported me throughout the whole process. And even when I got out, they was there for me and. And it was funny cuz Ben said, Hey, you wanna work for APC?

I said, you guys don't even have funding right now. I ended up just volunteering with them. And then in 2017 was able to get enough funding where I was able to be hire staff and with a few other folks with PJ alone. And so it's been a great journey and I'm happy to be part of a BS.

Thanks everyone. So sorry. There is a very loud car driving [00:13:00] by me if you can hear it, but yeah. Thank you. Thank you for sharing. Just hearing your stories makes me feel like makes me think about how you embody so much of APC three or APS C's mission. People don't talk a lot about Asian folks who inside or incarcerated and thinking about you all as immigrants ands from Cambodia, Vietnam, and the Philippines.

Having support from advocates and now becoming leaders yourselves too. So I wanted go a little bit deeper with you all. What do you currently do with PSC and what communities do you serve?

Thank you that I can go first. So I'm currently working as a community advocate with APSC and my work include being representing APSC in organization spaces like coalition spaces, doing lobby visit any event related to entry programming, helping with the anti deportation defense. I also conduct a lot of workshop around APC program admission to youth students and the community, and an organization throughout the bay area, outside of APSC, I work as a with the new light program at [00:14:00] Siri.

My work with new light includes supporting mental health and healing for folks who've been deported. And my community are my family, my Southeast Asian elders and youth at series, the incarcerated folks, healing from trauma and my grip family has been my journey. Say heal, people heal people.

So that's what I've been on. That was dope. PJ. My story is that I started out as the reentry coordinator. I came out as a juvenile lifer, so I went in there while I was 17 years old. And I came out as adult and there was no one that, that was there to navigate, helped me navigate the life of being an adult.

And it was great when I, when we APSC like, Hey, would you be the reentry coordinator to help folks navigate the process that you learned? I'm like, yeah, most definitely. If this, if it's something I could do for the community and get back, like I'm definitely down for it. And so I've been doing that for years and it just like a year ago I got promoted to program manager and facility manager, where now I, I still oversee reentry services for folks that's coming home, especially young folks.

It's so crucial to have. [00:15:00] Somebody that had that lived experience to help somebody else that's coming home to, to deal with these things, and it is been so hard. But one of the great privileges is that I'm able to do that, but also I get to do what I love to do. I love to fix things. So they say, Hey, you could, Hey, maintain our facility.

I like, sure. Cool great. Can I have a budget? They like, yeah, we give you a budget. Not much, but we give you a budget. So it was it was dope to have that. I think about my community, like who do I serve? Oh my God, like I serve anyone that's need help. It doesn't matter.

You're formerly incarcerated. You're non incarcerated. If you're you, family members that's impacted my system. So one of the things I've been doing with all my life is just I love my bikes, I give out. So since I've been home, I gave out over 600 bikes to anybody that needed one.

So been a privilege and my community is my family, my dogs, my formerly incarcerated young folks. And just everybody. Maria. Thank you, Keith. And my name's Maria and I'm Maria reentry intern for APS C. [00:16:00] And it's funny because PJ and key were there during my reentry and they helped me navigate, my, my place in, what am I gonna do?

Key, what am I gonna do, PJ? Because I don't have any of these. So what now? And because of the compassion, and the support that I got from them that's the whole reason why I jumped into that internship program when they offered it, and being the first reentry female first, first reentry female intern, I was able to uplift the needs of the women coming home. because there's not a lot of resources for women here in the bay area. And so giving light to, okay, this is what we need because men's needs are different from the women and women coming home are mothers, daughters and sisters and wives, and what can we offer them?

So part of who I serve are the women that are coming home. The one women that are still incarcerated, the women are that are still detained. And I help them when they come home, find resources. Some of them are on probation. Some are on parole. Some may not qualify for [00:17:00] resources that are offered by the county or the state.

So my job is to help them, find the resources, assist them so that they don't go back to that cycle that they're used to, because this time they have somebody to help them get through it. And what are my current passions? I love crocheting. So in 2015 one of the ladies. She asked if I was willing to volunteer, for the prison program where we have a sponsor and they deliver the yarn to us and our goal or the goal was to knit, crochet, blankets, beanies, and scarves.

For the community, the babies, the premature babies, the convalescent homes from my elders and the veterans. And so over the course of six years, while we were the overseer, we pretty much donated to all of central valley bay area. And now we we donate to the homeless in San Francisco and most of the [00:18:00] housings homeless shelters here in the bay area.

My people are, the women and my friends and families who adopted me, when I felt like I was alone and I didn't have a family and the faith leaders because they fight, they fight for us without judging my past. And those are the people I serve in my community.

All three of you. Yeah. It's always wonderful hearing so much about your. Yeah, I think a huge part of what makes APS C special is exactly what you all shared. And is also that, knowing that it's a space where impacted people are at the forefront of our movements, right? You three are all really incredible and so knowledgeable as organizers because of your lived experiences and that's how you help so many people.

So I wanted to ask a bit more specifically about how your life in your experiences have shaped your work and how you understand a lot of like different community issues now. So this first question is for Maria actually like within the prison system, women are an underserved population and they have experienced really specific [00:19:00] issues.

For example, being criminalized and punished for surviving abuse or having other issues related to reproductive and gender justice. Yeah. Fo so I was curious to ask how do your unique life experiences as someone who was formerly incarcerated as a Philippian immigrant? How does that inform how you now serve your C.

When I was detention, when I was in detention, I saw a lot of women exploited and it made me upset because they were mothers, they were daughters and they were survivors of violence, sexual abuse, human trafficking, and because they didn't have a voice, they didn't know how to speak up for themselves.

They just signed their deportation papers. And then coming back to the unit crying because they signed their lives away. They didn't know what they were signing because those people were nice to them. Oh no, just sign it. This is what's gonna happen. It'll be all easy. And it didn't sign and it didn't sit right with me.

And so I found a way, speak my broken Spanish or find somebody that speaks Korean Vietnamese and no, this is what we're gonna do. We're gonna let [00:20:00] them know they do not sign this. They, and it's okay to say no, Just if they ask you, do you speak English? No. When they ask you, do you wanna sign it?

No. Giving them that tool that they can say no is a way that they can voice and can be heard because they'll pressure you, but if nobody tells them this, they would never know. And that's one way I know, because I learned to find my voice, in my journey in prison and as a formerly incarcerated undocumented, Southeast Asian Filipino immigrant, the challenges in my reentry was very difficult.

I not only do I have to deal with the shame around being incarceration, being, detained and incarcerated, I didn't have any identification. I didn't have social. Security card. And so I didn't, I couldn't access resources, to help me get my, to help me reenter society. And I couldn't even get [00:21:00] medical care, because I did have an immigration status.

All I had was a state prison ID, a parole memo, and an ankle monitor, so how do I use this experiences by being an example to my people, that I'm not giving up. And instead of being ashamed because of what I don't have that I'm a, I'm like a ghost walking with no identification saying who I am.

No, I'm gonna own it because this is me. This is Maria, not a piece of paper, not a piece of card. So if I can do that, so can you just because they told me I can't doesn't mean I can't achieve it. So today I can walk around with an ID. Did it make a difference? Yes, because now I can show for yet this is Maria and this is my card saying that I am who I am.

And my ankle monitor, when I go to the grocery stores and they see my ankle monitor, they grab their children away from me because they think of something that I'm not. But then I use it as [00:22:00] a talking piece, ice tagged me as a property. And I'm pretty sure you're an immigrant. So you know how that feels, but it's okay because I'm here representing my people that we too have a place in society.

And because I know I'm not alone, I'm able to speak on it. My challenge just turns into victories. And when people come home and they have the challenges I have, I can walk them through it easily because I made it happen for me. So reminding my people that they don't have to do it alone, that's what needs to continue.

That's how we build that systemic healing, when we don't give up on each other and we work together as a community. Thank you, Victoria. Thank you, Maria. We're so grateful for you. yeah, please. Every, oh, feel free to everyone to share like love and support for anything folks are saying to chat. Yeah.

Thank you. My next question is through PJ. Yeah, I wanted to ask you [00:23:00] to talk about what are some of the systemic impacts of being incarcerated as a juvenile.

Therefore a juvenile lifer. It's hard in prison. I think it's probably harder than any person. And partly because we're younger, right? We're younger, we're smaller than everyone else in there. We're vulnerable. We're vulnerable to manipulation. We're vulnerable to become a victim of violence and sexual assault.

And as a youth, like you can't show fear. Like you, you gotta act tough. You gotta be tough because if you don't, then people will come and try to victimize you. So I witnessed so many of my friends, get lost in the system because they have to prove themselves and they end up getting more time, getting involved in crimes, getting involved in prison, getting involved in stabbing just to prove themselves right. Or to fight for their life. And cuz I I've even like witnessed rape, see people in prison, being raped and then do come out and then someone tell them, Hey man, you can't let that happen. You're gonna keep raping you.

So you gotta go do something. And I watch it is a cold place. And being a juvenile life is a dark place. And for the life, for me, I couldn't fathom this, [00:24:00] like how our system could do this to use, like I remember a guy, he was at a canteen line, 16 years old, first time in prison that put, he should have been somewhere else, but he's in prison and he couldn't buy cigarette.

He's sitting there waiting the window for, getting his canteen and then he's looking for a cigarette. And then the guy said, you can't have it. You're too young, but yet he's on adult prison, like on the same yard with all these, adults. So for us, like how we get treated is much different, which is not treated, it's different by the system, which you different by the people around us, and we don't get the same privilege, I think like I was fortunate and I was fortunate. I was able to get involved program and, I was one of those youth. How to prove myself tough, how to do things that I regretted till today and how to talk about at the board hearing, and I'm ashamed of right.

But I needed to survive, like I needed to survive prison. Otherwise I become a victim or I die in prison. So being a youth, you get treated differently. And fortunately, I was able to turn my life around to my process and through where I was at. And I have the elders who supported me, allowed me, to do my time, allowed me to [00:25:00] participate in the program, allowed me to re alter my, my, my trajectory of my life.

So I was able to come to San qu and, get education, get back to my community and come home. But I have friends right now who I looked up to today. I go online and I go to the CDC and may look up and I check on them, like where they, where are they at? Cause they didn't make it a lot of 'em didn't make it and didn't make it because the system isn't designed to treat youth that way, like to allow us to be used.

They're treating us as an adult and then, but we're not, our mind is not fully developed, but then we end up in prison. So for youth it's hard, it's hard on a lot of different ways. And I think, other people have even worse experience than I did, but I think I caught myself as the most fortunate one.

But the truth of the matter is most youth does. Doesn't make it in prison. The first four years in prison defines your outcome of your life, and if you get lucky, you make it. If you don't get lucky, you cannot have life sentence, and you're just stuck in prison forever.

So yeah, this system is just jacked [00:26:00] up. Our system is really jacked up and I'm glad that SB 2 62 61 SB nine has passed, do folks an opportunity now to earn parole. To be treated differently and to be acknowledged that we're different, but like the bill came out late, right? Like it's just more recent that the bill come out in the last few years, but we're spending decades and decades in prison and getting lost in the system that doesn't care.

Yeah. I hear you, TJ. Thank you for sharing. My next question is for key, but it's relevant, obviously all these questions are so relevant to one another too. I wanted ask key. How do you support other formally encourage you to use people who've experienced the same things that PS talk about, how do you support young folks to reenter society after experiencing those things? So I want folks to think about when we talk about youth, I don't wanna just talk about the age factor. I wanna talk about the mindset as well because there's folks that have been incarcerated for 30, 40, 50 years.

Prison is like a time capsule. Nothing really change in there. Everything's [00:27:00] makes these stone age still. And it is hard for folks, especially doing the same program routine day over and day out. People become numb to that process of being incarcerated. They become molded into a certain phrase.

I like, PJ, I wanna emphasize one thing like P just didn't I wanna highlight is that one thing about prison? Is it make us very numb to intimacy. Like we are prevented to learn about intimacy, like in a vision room, you can't touch your family. You can't hug your mom that long when she comes in or your wife or your child.

And so like young. So when young folks come home, they're stuck in this time capsule and it's so hard for them to re you know, to navigate now. And I feel like it's such a privilege and honor, and a blessing for me to be able to be that person that could meet them at the gate that could meet them for their first meal that could meet them to help them take 'em shopping.

I remember like for my first time when I came home, I it broke my neck in Walmart because I was so busy looking at something, [00:28:00] but my body kept moving, but my head was stuck on something. And I realized I'm not alone in that situation. When I remember when I took other guys, I took one guy to to the grocery store and it took him half an hour to decide on what cereal he wanted to eat.

He was a juvenile lifer too. He was just standing there, like stuck on can you make a decision? He say, I don't know how, because in prison choices are made for us. We don't get to make, we are, our choices are very limited, limited to like when we can shower, when we can eat, when we can see our family, when we can make a phone call, like everything is limited.

So when somebody come on, like they all this choices, like what did they do? They don't know, especially for somebody that similar to myself and PJ Maria, like coming straight from prison and getting transferred right over to immigration and coming out and dealing with that process. We don't have no birth to care of it.

We had no social security card. Like we nothing. And especially coming as a juvenile lifer, coming out as a juvenile and learning to the adulthood is like, how do I get my ID since I don't have all these things that [00:29:00] I need I need birth certifi, get, I need a social I don't have that. What do I do?

And I was able to find a process where I could help folks that don't have the right document, get a, at least a California ID and then work their way up to getting a driver's license be. And then the other part is like they had to go through immigration checking like myself and PJ Maria and like scared.

Mindless, going to that, if I go in there they detain me again and then having, and being, be to get advocates on their behalf to show up, not just by myself, but with other folks, cuz I'm scared to go check in with them too, cuz I don't know what might happen to me. And so bring other people in to provide that support and this, and one thing I and know I've been out for six years now and sometimes I catch myself, like it's so easy to take things for granted.

All right. Open up a refrigerator, driving a car. It's like little simple things. Like we don't have in prison. And I realize that and then they go through that same process. They get stuck and they're like, man, I just need somebody to talk to. [00:30:00] And then I know that doing this work, there's less people are so grateful for that support because they're like, man, if I didn't have you, I probably would've went back to prison because my family don't understand me.

The community don't understand me and people, that are coming out. They just don't know. To express, especially men or boys that coming out don't know how to fully express their needs because we've been so conditioned or institutionalized, so like it's hard. And then like we need support of the community to do, to help with that as well.

And also to understand the expectation that we might have on them, to be a better son, to be a better daughter is not always that easy, especially dealing with years of incarceration. And I'm really happy to share more about that. Later on you. Yeah, thanks so much key.

Thanks so much everyone, man. I remember we were talking in one of our campaign meetings about how other places don't have support systems like EPS and they don't have, like the resources that you'll provide and [00:31:00] the understanding that you have for other impacted people.

So it's just so invaluable. And it's tough to ever take that for granted. Yeah. I wanted to also ask you as well. California can do a lot of different things to support folks like you, right? So with the governor's support, for example, the APC three could win their pardon, continue their work without the constant fear of deportation.

Our campaign, isn't just about youth three, it's about all criminalized immigrants and refugees in the state, too. So I wanted to ask you all right, now, what could governor Gavin Newsom do to protect immigrants and refugees?

Okay. I think one way governor Newsome can show support, for formerly incarcerated immigrants and refugees is by granting mass clemency, for all of us coming home. I'm not sure how people, how folks are familiar with the lifer process, but juvenile lifers and lifers in general.

So we go through this rigorous process of being evaluated by state appointed psychiatrist, psychologist, to assess whether we're a threat or not, it's a [00:32:00] comprehensive risk assessment. And each lifer that goes to board goes through that and they prepare for it. They prepare years of rehabilitation for it to even be deemed Worthy of having that parole hearing.

And so for people like us that go through that program it's inve it's very important for folks to know that it's not just a one day preparation, right? So governor Newsom also a point a group of commissioners, right? He gives them this authority, to determine whether we're a threat or a danger to society.

So the commissioners that hurt us on our parole hearing deemed us that we're no longer a threat and we have been rehabilitated and we've changed our lives, our ways, our mind frame, our thinking, our lifestyle, and we could be productive members of society given the chance to prove it, that look, it worked your programs [00:33:00] work.

It helped us because we put our hard work into it. Unfortunately. The parole grant, the parole affirmation from the governor, right? Giving us that parole grant. It doesn't extend. Once we leave those prison walls, it stops there. It's okay, I gave you your parole grant. Good luck. And that's, what's been happening.

We've been transferred to ice. And one way is he can exercise that authority, that power that was vested in him, to grant that NAS clemency. So we can have that chance, that equal chance, like the other parolees we put in the same work we put in the time for it. So open up pave that way for us returning citizens, immigrants, and refugees.

And one more thing, you. When the day on the day of freedom, right on the day of freedom [00:34:00] outside those walls instead of the parolees us, being reunited with our loved ones, we're greeted by coach shackles. I was the day I parole. I was greeted by coach shackles on my feet handcuffs chain to my waist.

That's how freedom greeted me that day. And governor Newsome could stop that from happening for other refugee and immigrant people that are coming home, our lifers are folks that are coming home from prison, and the one, one last thing, the clemency from the governor, right? His power to grant us that second chance and reestablishing ourselves like with a clean slate, you have to, it's also for our families, pardon for us is clemency for our families and our communities because they stood by our side doing the life sentence with us. And [00:35:00] that's a lot, Victoria, guys, that's a lot. They stood by our sites for 20 years, taking care of us, sending us boxes, sending us letters in mail.

So if governor Newsom is really wants to help the families and the community use that power, use that authority to stop that cycle of trauma and hurt that are families and our communities are, sucked back into, by not letting our immigrant families and refugees reunite.

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Next up, we have dumbfounded history of violence.

[00:36:00] Song "History of Violence" by [00:37:00] Dumbfoundead

You are tuned into apex express on 94.1 KPFA and 89.3 KP F B in Berkeley and online@kpfa.org. You just listened to dumbfounded history of violence.

Thank you, Maria. Yeah, I wanna just share also one of, one of the thing that governor Newsom can do is support, send a bill, like the vision [00:38:00] act, bills that what Maria's talking about is like stopping ice transfer, stopping state agency, working with ice and collaborating and filtering people more, into trauma.

Cause as a person, like for me, I went through ice, I went through, I was a transfer and I felt that cold shackle that morning when I was supposed to go home. But I didn't, I ended up in the ice custody again and then going through the whole trauma 18 months, like I put my family through some stuff like it's unbelievable.

And and it's like for me, like my family has gone through trauma, as a refugee. Enduring genocide, enduring family separation, and then lead up to my incarceration. That's, that was like an ongoing process. And it didn't stop, and I think the vision act not only would give us an opportunity to like really stop the trauma.

Like we can reunite with a family finally. And not being, further, putting them into more trauma, but it also gave us a fair chance at a a legal system, like right now, ISIS use detention center to people, make people sign the documentation and to get deported.

And so for us, it's we're still dealing with, the court system, which is asking for a fair chance, come [00:39:00] home to a family. Like we would've able to actually fight our case from home. And a lot of my friends got deported because of that. They signed because I cuz the vision act, was path and it did protect them.

So they ended up in. Cambodia and Thai and in other country in Vietnam. But I think what's disappointing too. Like the vision act should have passed on the Senate floor yesterday. Like it's a lot of people support the vision act, like I think community knows there's over 30 faith, 300 faith leaders who support the vision act 200 organization, a large, like thousands of people have signed to support the vision act.

Like it's a large number of coalition and the Senator just so they could have passed the vision act like they could have stopped the continuation of trauma for Southeast Asian community. Like for me, like I was disappointed cuz Senator Eckman was one of those persons.

Like she's, as a long time Stockton. Families still live in Stockton. I go visit some mom in Stockton, my brother, nephew, cousin, everyone live in Stockton. Like I was disappointed, man. Like she's she, I feel like she's just forgot about us. Like she's claimed to be a social worker in her background, and she was, she from Stockton, like [00:40:00] she should know like all community have endured, trauma, even after like we always settlement, I was experienced a school shooting and the highest of discrimination in Asian hate crime. Talking about Asian hate crime now.

But I lived through that, like I, I watched my cousin die on the playground. I watched my neighbor get shot, and a lot of us didn't feel safe, like that school shooting changed everything for us, changed it. Change are how we see yourself even like in the country.

I didn't just feel, say I felt unwanted. I felt like I don't belong. And the bullying, happens often. And so I think like that, like a lot of the community members who went through the shooting, like they all up in prison. People I have know who were victim all up in prison, and it took us a long time to heal, to change our life around, to come home. And then again, like we're back to to ice, and get deported. Another life sentence. So I felt they, a lot of senators, just, they talking about the constituent, they want to serve the constituent, but what about us?

We're the constituent to like, how come we don't matter? So I don't know. I felt betrayed man. Like that, that, that whole thing was a [00:41:00] nightmare, and I'm very disappointed.

I feel like Southeast Asian shouldn't have to go through drama my whole life simply because we're, I.

Yeah. So what my, I think my voice is that I think we matters, and I think these leaders need to see that we do matters, cuz we're not alone. Like we have community, that's still going through it. My family's still going through it, and I just want it to end, like when do the trauma ends for us?

. That's deep. PJ. Thank you for sharing, man. Thank you for being vulnerable. You too, Maria. Man, I'm feeling a little [00:42:00] emotional about this right now. Wow.

So I just wanna take a. Breath just to take it all in, cuz that was heavy. So when I think about immigrants, when I think about refugee, I think about all of us, no matter what color nationality you are, this country was built on the backs of immigrants and refugees. If we to study the history of America when somebody say, get outta the country, it's wow. Basically you're telling all of us to get outta the country.

And so I like to talk real quick. I wanna highlight somebody a story of my friend pulling. He was a good friend of mine. He made great strides in his life to change. He was viewed from, he was deemed by the governor as not a threat to public safety and eligible for parole. But instead of being parole, like I was similar to me and PJ Maria.

He got handed over to immigration custody. He was a juvenile lifer. People don't understand he went through the, he went through the gang lifestyle. He grew up being bullied, grew up, dealing with the struggle of fitting to the culture. He fit right into the MI to the [00:43:00] pipeline, the migration to school, to prisons, deportation pipeline.

Now he's deported back in, in Cambodia to a country. He knows nothing about it's a, it is it's like for one of us to be deported to Antarctica or something, to another country where we don't speak in language, we don't know the culture. So to him, it's a culture shock, but the governor could have stopped all this.

The governor could have passed, helped pushed the vision act and past it where pu wouldn't have been deported, to Cambodia. He wouldn't have got, that direct transfer to ice, but instead he didn't right. He chose not to the governor, but the governor could still do something now. The governor could actually, even though pun is deported to Cambodia, if the governor, pardon is today, he has to, he has the ability to come back and, return to his society.

But not only that, his whole family's over here, and so like the governor could bring families together and keep families together. And also is a great asset to community. He got he's a, he got multiple skills and I think he could be, a great value to, to especially our [00:44:00] young folks, cuz he, he got locked up when he was young.

So like his story matters. Like it's like taking the bull, elephant out the out of the tribe and the young one just gonna go crazy. And so having the bull elephant back in is really gonna make a difference. And so I think P is one of those examples and the governor could do so much in his power.

I know that he's got constituents. I know he has a, a lot of people bring down his neck, but he could be a game changer. He could, he could set milestones, he could start, a new trend, and all it takes is for us to actually push him, to call him, to call his office.

So we all have the ability and the power to do something. So I say, let your voice be heard. So speak up and shout out

and so much everyone. Yeah, I wanted to know, I think too is yeah. There's or I guess a couple things it is for me is as a community advocate, it is so mind blowing to think that people like whom could come home, just if the governor signed his name on one thing and same [00:45:00] goes for so many, so many families to be reunited.

So many people could return to the loved ones with such simple decisions that could be made for that too. But yeah, I was also. Yeah, grateful to PJ for sharing about the vision act. I really appreciated what the ice of California coalition shared yesterday in their statement too, right?

Was that it wasn't that the bill failed, it's that the California Senate and just failed to keep up with our community's vision for the future where we all are going to be with our families. So I wanna transition to my last question for you all before we get to the audience. I wanted to ask you, what would it mean for you to be granted a part in what are you looking forward to?

Yeah.

For me the day I get the phone call from governor Newsome and he tells me that I got my part in gonna call my mom and dad and tell them that they can sleep better at night, knowing that not gonna get deported. And they're not gonna worry whether I'm going to come out [00:46:00] safe from that plane or not.

That would be the day when they can go to sleep know without worrying about me, but they're still gonna worry about me cuz I'm their baby. Just to be able to say that mama, you don't have to worry. That would be the day. And also a partner with me that I can go visit, my family members that I haven't seen for a long time and also I wanna get my social worker's license so that I can continue my work in my community, so that nobody has to go through what we went through and Make life easier for them.

 That would mean to me.

Dang Maria White. Gotta go so deep. man, give me the chills.

You wanna go? PJ? Yeah, I've been dreaming about, like I think about my [00:47:00] mom a lot. And so I dream about my mom a lot and I always, when I was in prison, I was dreaming about her because my mom would've gone through so much stuff. Like I think when I was younger, I was just really trying to survive the country.

And I didn't really think much about her experience. I don't understand what her spin was like or think more about my experience. She used to tell me, story you about how she survived, the commit Rouge and the genocide and what she had to go through witnessing her whole family, getting killed in front of her and tortured.

I remember grow up, like feeling really dramatic. Like I felt traumatized by those story. And so I have nightmares sometime thinking about it. And when I go see her in Stockton now, even hug her, I hug her and I feel like I'm happy, feel joy. But I also feel a lot of grief.

I feel like man when would be the last time I hug my mom, I feel like I, my mom gone through with me, like thick and thin, like through prison, when I've got found parole no, I don't speak English. She don't understand the cultures. Like a lot of dynamic, even though she's been here a long time, a lot of stuff just didn't make sense to her. First she didn't understand why people go to prison when they're young and they stay there for life. And then when I got found suitable [00:48:00] and I told her like, yeah, I got found suitable. That mean I could come home. Then she got hell of joyful and then realized that I have ice hole. So I'm going to ice. So she's man, what does that mean?

I thought you're coming home. Then now I'm home. I'm on ankle monitor. She's what is that like? What is that? What does that mean? Like I thought you were free. I thought you had your freedom. I thought you, you earned it. And then the courts and I went through the courts. So I keep all this time, keep telling her that mom's over.

It's not, it's over. Mom's not, it's over. I went to my in bank hearing for my pardon and the boy pro hearing in granted my, like recommendation for pardon. So in my mom's mind, she's like my son is finally free. Like you didn't have to worry about no more. And then to find out that governor brown, when he left office, he can sign my pardon.

So I feel like my mom is just I don't know how to tell her, I think like finally get a pardon and governor Newsome. I could finally tell my mom's over.

It's over.

Thank you, PJ. Thank you, Maria. [00:49:00] Two words, come to my mind when I think about what does it mean to be granted a pardon? But one is security. Just like Maria, knowing that no, I won't be taking, taken away from my family and my community. And two, the second one is healing. If I, if I get granted a part in I'm able to help my mom heal, she never got to pay respect to parents who got murdered when we Vietnam.

And so it'd be an opportunity for me to take my mom back to Vietnam and give that respect to her parents. And also for me to give my respect to my grandparents and to visit a city that I ne I don't know nothing about, but where while I was born. And for me is there, it's an answer to a lot of questions.

I never knew that my mom could not even share because she didn't know how. And so being able to have that partner will allow me to bring not just healing to my family, but also to.[00:50:00]

Everyone. Yeah, this is, I feel like, we've shared so many really important, really wonderful, very deep, sometimes heavy things too. So I think before we turn it over for last Q and a things, I think I might just invite us to take a couple deep breaths. So just chair, relax, and then close your eyes if you want to, and then breathe in

and then read out just one more time. Breathe in, read out.

Thank you all for you. Yeah. So in the last few minutes we have let's turn it over to the audience. We have hearing monitoring the chat. So yeah. Do folks have questions in the chat for the APC three? Yes. Someone [00:51:00] messaged and asked how are, let's see, how do you find joy in your community work?

I wouldn't know where to start. Cause I have so many great stories of folks like jumping for joy, just being able to get an ID, California ID. Like for me, that's so much, I know the struggle that I've been there and. That was like the first step to being, independent, but also connecting to my community again, being able to give back.

And so not just one moment, there is thousands of other moments. Another one is when somebody take their first bike ride first pedal on their bike that I gave him and saying I just talked to a guy earlier and he's man, that bike is so much freedom to me. Like I could just ride and just be free again, not worry about, I have to pay bills and I could just enjoy life and nature.

The actual, things of being free.[00:52:00]

Yeah. I think I can echo what case saying. There's a lot to be grateful for. I think I'm always been the person who's grateful, I'm just grateful to be alive. But I think like in my work with APC and was Siri man, we did the rally in Sacramento. And then we have the elders show up, the youth show up, to support, our community members who was being threatened for deportation, seeing them dance, man, like seeing my elder dance was a huge, like for me was like a moment of just joy.

Cause cuz I remember I walk through city one day and I saw my elders like dancing to Cambodia music. And I haven't heard music in a long time because prison, it's hard to get it, but watching them dance, like they I saw the healing like here's survivor of a genocide, who've gone through so much in their life and they're all dancing to Cambodian song.

And just it reminded me of like it rooted my own culture, like the culture, but I really love what I was seeing. And I think, like getting wins, hearing people come home, coming back home from Cambodia, getting wins, you know like [00:53:00] people getting pardons, I think like that gimme hope, that does gimme hope.

I think but also, I think the joy is like when I teach, when I go and do presentation to the students, in the university, like watching their delight bulb goes up, like we don't just read about textbook, but you meet people and you hear the experience, like life experience of what it's like, for the 1.5 generation, like a 1.3 generation or just folks who have gone through this experience.

And I think I'm hopeful, I'm hopeful, not just for myself, but I'm hopeful for a society that someday, like the youth would just get up and they'll the future. And I think they're gonna make the changes that, that I hope to see, and that I wanna see. And I think I'm doing my part, I think that's the beauty that I'm get to do my part on shaping those future, so yeah. Those coalition calls, Running those events, doing those workshops for me, it's been a joy, and it's been a and to connect, cuz I learned too. I learned so much from being the community. And I think like maybe that is the big message for me. Like I have not felt community in a long time, and I [00:54:00] felt safe in a long time. So I feel like being in this space made me feel safe, make me feel like there's a community, so

yeah. I think for me, it's, every day, when I get a client to answer their phone and I get to do a check in with them, that just makes my day because I know that what I say to them can brighten up their day. Everybody has a struggle, right? And every day it's different, but I know that simple hello and high and smile emoji can make a difference.

So that brings me joy and I know I'm in the right, I know I'm more where I'm supposed to be at today. And when yeah,

thank you. I see Macs have put in the chat, Maria. I re how many lives did you touch today? And how many people do you help? Every day? I feel like Victoria, I was hoping to make a remark before that[00:55:00]

my name is Mack and I'm a felon. I've been a felon since I was a child. I've had the mark of a criminal record since I was a teen. And that's my life. When I got out and I preface this to say a lot of times we don't talk about how many people we help and it just gets normalized for these three that the amount of humans they help.

So when I got out, I was a monster. I was good at the practice of violence in prison and it kept me alive and I felt like a monster and society looked at me like a monster, but when I got home and I saw key and PJ and Maria, and they made me feel at home that, you know what, that there's another life.

And when I see PJ, I emulate that I wanna be nice. Like him, both. They occasion me for so long that my, my, my sky is gray. And a lot of times we don't talk about the people we help. And Maria, my question to you is how many people do you help a day? How many people did you help today?[00:56:00]

I help 10 people today. You touched their lives today.

I'm happy doing. If that's my job for the rest of my life, then that's my purpose.

We have. Yeah, so it's just a couple minutes after two, so we gotta close out just to respect folks' times. And so you can get back to your evening, but yeah. Thank you everyone for asking your questions. Thank you to the APS, C three so much for spending time talking to us and sharing your experiences today.

And yeah just wanted to hand it over out for some thank yous and acknowledgements from us all.[00:57:00]

Thanks everyone. We'll be closing out now. Thank you all.

Thank you so much for joining us. Please check out our website, kpfa.org backslash program, backslash apex express to find out more about the show tonight and to find out how you can take direct action. We thank all of you listeners out there. Keep resisting, keep organizing, keep creating and sharing your visions with the world. Your voices are important. Apex express is produced by Miko Lee Jalena Keane-Lee and Paige Chung and special editing by Swati Rayasam. Thank you so much to the KPFA staff for their support have a great night.

[00:58:00]