

PRESS ADVISORY

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Mark Keam
(202) 505-0300
mark.keam@ka.institute

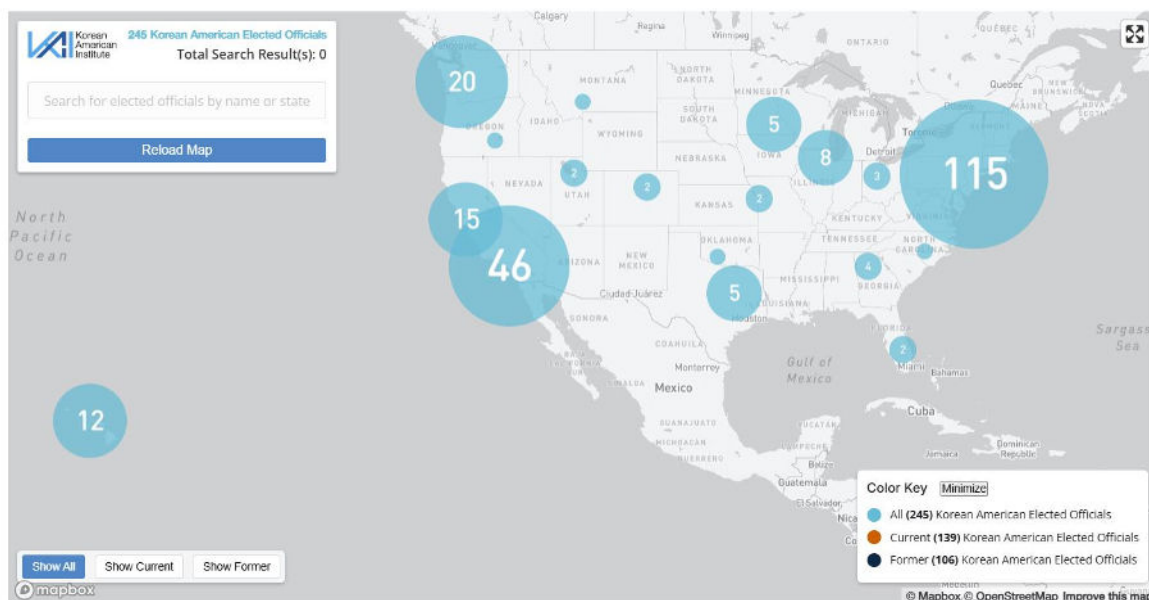
KOREAN AMERICAN POLITICAL ALMANAC – THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE ONLINE HISTORICAL DATABASE OF KOREAN AMERICANS IN ELECTED OFFICE – CREATED BY THE KOREAN AMERICAN INSTITUTE

WASHINGTON – On January 13, 1903, the first Korean immigrants landed on American soil. Today, on the 122nd anniversary of this historic occasion, the [Korean American Institute \(KAI\)](#) unveiled an original educational work product to help interested individuals and organizations better understand the increasing political empowerment of Korean Americans.

The “[Korean American Political Almanac](#)” is an online tool containing essential information about **245 Korean Americans** who have been elected to any executive or legislative branch office of the federal, state, and local governments.

KAI conducted extensive research to identify and publish this most comprehensive information ever curated about Korean American public officials. At this stage, the KAI Political Almanac consists of two parts:

1. An interactive map of the United States of America (minus Alaska for now) showing the locality where each elected official is based, and searchable by their current or former status:



2. A list of all past and current Korean American elected officials, which can be sorted by name, state, and years of service:


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create separate lists of Korean American judges and significant political appointees as future projects.

	Image	First Name (Z-A)	State (A-Z)	Jurisdiction(s)	Position(s)	Service (Earliest-Latest)	Website(s)
1		Philip P. Minn	Honolulu, HI	Hawaii Territorial Legislature Hawaii House of Representatives	State Representative	1955-1959 1964-1966	
2		Robert Won Bae Chang	Honolulu, HI	Hawaii Territorial Legislature Hawaii House of Representatives	State Representative	1958-1959 1959-1964	
3		Alfred Song	Monterey Park, CA	Monterey Park City Council California State Assembly California State Senate	Councilmember State Representative State Senator	1960-1961 1963-1967 1967-1978	
4		Eleanor Kim Chow	Montebello, CA	Montebello Unified Board of Education	School Board Member	1970-1993	
5		Donna Mercado Kim	Honolulu, HI	Hawaii House of Representatives Honolulu City Council Hawaii State Senate	State Representative Councilmember State Senator	1982-1984 1986-2000 2016-2020	Website
6		Jackie Young	Honolulu, HI	Hawaii House of Representatives	State Representative	1990-1994	
7		Jay C. Kim	Diamond Bar, CA	City of Diamond Bar U.S. House of Representatives	Councilmember Member of Congress	1990-1992 1993-1999	Website
8		Ho Young Chung	Garden Grove, CA	Garden Grove City Council	Councilmember	1992-1998	
9		Martha Choe	Seattle, WA	Seattle City Council	Councilmember	1992-1999	

Please note that we purposely excluded judicial branch offices, even if some states select these public positions through a political campaign process. We plan to create separate lists of Korean American judges and significant political appointees as future projects.

The 245 policymakers represent 27 states spanning across America, and they affiliate with different political parties. While they have unique stories for how and why they chose to run for political office, they all share a common ancestry, heritage, or identity as a Korean American.

Here are some notable facts about this Korean American political history:

- Since Hawaii was the first state of Korean immigration, it is not surprising that Hawaii produced the first Korean American public official. In 1954, **Philip P. Minn** was elected to Hawaii's territorial legislature, and in 1959, when Hawaii joined the United States, and Minn served in the Hawaii State House of Representatives until his passing in 1966.
- On the mainland, **Alfred Hoyun Song** became the first Korean American elected official when he became a member of the Monterey Park, California, city council in 1960. He went on to serve as the first Asian American elected to the California state legislature.
- In 1970, **Eleanor Kim Chow** became the first Korean American woman to serve in elected office when she joined the Montebello, California, Unified School District board of education. She held that seat until 1993, but she did not retire from civic duties until she passed away at age 101.

In addition to these three pioneers, there have been countless others who became the first Korean American elected in their region or to that specific office.

- This past November, **Andy Kim** of New Jersey was elected the first Korean American United States Senator, joining **Silvia Luke**, Lieutenant Governor of Hawaii, as the only Korean Americans to ever hold statewide offices.
 - Among 50 states, Korean Americans have served in elected office in 27 states, but none yet in the other 23 states.
 - New Jersey leads with 88 total, followed by California with 60.
 - Washington and Hawaii are the only other states with double digit representation, with 15 and 12 respectively.
 - New York has 9, and Illinois, Oregon, and Virginia each have 6. Texas has 5, Georgia, Maryland, and Massachusetts each have 4, and Minnesota and Pennsylvania each have 3.
 - Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Missouri, Ohio, and Utah each have 2 elected officials.
 - Connecticut, Indiana, Michigan, Montana, Nevada, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin have had only one Korean American elected in their states.
3. There have been 139 male and 106 female Korean American elected officials.
- In Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New York, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, more Korean American women served than men.
 - In Colorado, Maryland, Missouri, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Virginia, an even number of Korean American men and women have served.

In addition to creating this online tool, KAI plans to convene regular in-person gatherings of Korean American elected officials to learn about issues impacting the Korean American community, and to share policy ideas, professional development, mentoring, and other support across political parties, regions, and immigrant generations.

KAI was established in 2022 as an independent national nonprofit organization with a mission to create a democracy where Korean Americans matter. KAI works to produce insightful and actionable research to improve policymaking on issues facing Korean Americans.

For more information about KAI, please visit **ka.institute**.

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