



NABPAC *Leaders Speak* Series

NABPAC is committed to building understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion amongst our stakeholders. The month of May is Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage month, a time when we honor, celebrate, and recognize the achievements of Americans of Asian and Pacific Island heritage. The countries of origin that make up Asian Pacific America are Japan, China, Taiwan, Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, the Philippines, Samoa, Fiji, Guam, the US Territories of the Pacific, or the Northern Marianas.

In this installment of *Leaders Speak*, **Kathleen Gamble, Director of Political Affairs** at American Trucking Associations, discusses the importance of recognizing heritage and why associations, like NABPAC, should actively engage in strategic diversity, equity, and inclusion.



Tell us what you do and how you got into the PAC space.

I'm the Director of Political Affairs at the American Trucking Associations. I oversee our political programs, where my main focus is on Truck PAC. I raise money from our members and work closely with our legislative affairs team to ensure they have the resources needed to accomplish our priorities.

PAC just fell into my lap! I needed a job. I started working for Senator Kit Bond (R-MO), in St. Louis in 2002, and then moved to DC in 2005 as his scheduler. I stayed for a year in this role, and then moved to various associations, doing government affairs and administrative work. I then moved to a lobbying firm doing similar work, but with a focus on political affairs. I would oversee the political briefings and fundraising by the firm, as well as manage some of our client PACs that were smaller and had less resources. After that, I made the move to do PAC full time.

You mention that PAC fell into your lap. What are the strengths, qualities, or skillsets that you bring to the table that others may have that can help them be successful in this arena?

My strengths are being organized, detailed oriented, and being able to foresee other's needs including our associations' needs; and working in harmony with our legislative affairs team to make sure they have the resources they need politically. Most people start as PAC managers and learn the ropes by focusing on the details; doing the reports, making sure that money comes in and goes out as it should, and keeping track of the records. As you evolve in the role, you become more strategic and integrated into the government affairs team.



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You're a member of the NABPAC Board. Why is it important for organizations like NABPAC to get actively engaged in diversity, equity, and inclusion?

I think it's important for NABPAC and other organizations and associations to be involved in DE&I to represent more of their membership, to be inclusive. I think for a long time, people have thought of this industry as dominated by white females and have considered diversity to mean inclusion of males but we need to expand our definition of diversity to include all people of color. I think it's important for organizations to reflect the growing diversity of our nation.

The month of May is Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month. Why do you think it's important that we recognize this month?

Celebrating our heritage and culture is important, not just in the Asian community, but celebrating any culture and heritage is important. For so long, and it may continue today, the Asian American community has been what some call "the silent minority" because we may be quiet culturally. It is rare that we see Asians on screens and in very visible roles. It's changing as we see more mainstream Asian actors on the screens. This month brings awareness to the culture and community, as well as heightened attention to the crimes against the AAPI community. I think this month is good step to educate people about the AAPI community.

What advice would you give to other organizations, like NABPAC, who may be

considering dipping their toe into the diversity space?

I would say dip your toe in! You don't have to go all in right away: form a task force, talk to your membership, do a survey. Diversity is important within our country and it's important within your association and to your members. Even if your culture is more apathetic or more legislatively focused, it's important to recognize that the country we are living in is diverse, and your organization needs to represent and show that it reflects our country and the times we live in.