

White Coat Celebration at UC Davis School of Nursing: Honoring Future Leaders



The Class of 2025 Master's Entry Program in Nursing (MEPN)

By Gabriel Ortigoza

The Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at the University of California Davis held its prestigious White Coat Celebration for the Class of 2025 on Thursday, September 16, 2024. This event marked a significant milestone for the students of the Master's Entry Program in Nursing (MEPN), symbolizing their commitment to the profession as they move into clinical practice.

Among the celebrated students was Sidra Bugsch, whom I had the pleasure of meeting during the Summer Quarter of 2024, where she was a student in my NRS 421 (Health Assessment) class. I distinctly remember the moment Sidra approached me during a skills lab, mentioning that she was also of Filipino descent. Her mother hails from Quezon City, Philippines, and her father is American. This personal connection immediately sparked a deeper conversation between us.

To my surprise, Sidra revealed that she had been a member of the Philippine Women's National Football Team. This team brought immense pride to the Philippines when they qualified for the FIFA Women's World Cup for the first time in 2023. It was an exceptional achievement that resonated with Filipinos around the world. Sidra further shared that she played alongside the daughter of California's Attorney General, Rob Bonta, adding another unique connection to her inspiring story.

As one of the clinical instructors for NRS 420 (Foundations of Clinical Nursing Practice) and NRS 421 during the Summer Quarter, I had the opportunity to observe Sidra's leadership potential. She was consistently engaged in class, actively participating in discussions, and demonstrating a natural ability to relate well with her peers. Sidra's approachable, friendly demeanor combined with her strong public relations skills made her a standout student, not only academically but also as a future nursing leader.

At the White Coat Celebration, I had the honor of meeting Sidra's family. She introduced me to her mother, father, and sister, and I was struck by the warmth and pride they exuded. I shared with them how proud I was of Sidra—not only for her athletic accomplishments as a former national football player but also for her emerging role as a leader in nursing at UC Davis. Her journey exemplifies the values of hard work, dedication, and passion—qualities that will serve her well as she embarks on her nursing career.

Congratulations to Sidra Bugsch and her entire cohort of future nursing leaders. The White Coat Celebration is just the beginning of their journey, and I am confident they will make a significant impact in healthcare, just as Sidra has done on the soccer field and in the classroom.

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The Filipino Community of Sacramento & Vicinity, Inc.
Celebrating Fil-Am History Month
**BUILDING OUR FUTURE THROUGH
THE COMMUNITY CENTER**

Saturday, October 19, 2024
5:00 PM to 11:00 PM
Jose Rizal Community Center
7320 Florin Mall Drive, Sacramento CA 95823
Donation: \$60

Live: Filipiniana

For more info please contact:
Edna Delos Reyes - 916.549.0058
Murray Navarro - 916.230.780
Vince Sales - 415.420.2120
Margie Pasalo - 916.606.7179



Christopher Cabaldon:

Poised to Become California's First Filipino American State Senator



Christopher Cabaldon (2nd, from Left) Atty. Derek Ledda, Cynthia Bonta with other Filipino American supporters.

BY CHRIS MATEO

California's political landscape could soon witness a historic first as Christopher Cabaldon, former Mayor of West Sacramento, emerges as a leading candidate to represent Senate District 3. Should Cabaldon succeed, he would become the first Filipino American to serve in the California State Senate, a monumental achievement not only for him but for the Filipino American community across the state. His candidacy reflects the growing influence of Filipinos in California's political sphere and underscores the importance of representation for the state's largest Asian American ethnic group.

A Champion for Filipino American Communities

Cabaldon's candidacy has ignited enthusiasm within Filipino communities, particularly in Northern California. Senate District 3, which encompasses Solano, Yolo, and parts of Sacramento Counties, is home to a significant Filipino population. Filipino Americans, many of whom are concentrated in the healthcare, education, and public service sectors, have long played a crucial role in shaping the region's economy and social fabric. However, despite their contributions, they have been historically underrepresented in California's legislature. For many Filipinos, Cabaldon's potential election represents more than just a political victory - it signifies a shift in how the community is seen and heard. His platform, which focuses on economic development, healthcare access, education reform, and environmental justice, aligns with the needs of Filipino families across the district. By becoming a voice in the Senate, Cabaldon would not only advocate for policies that benefit Filipino Americans but also elevate

their concerns to the forefront of state governance.

A Storied Career in Public Service

Cabaldon's decades-long career in public service makes him uniquely qualified for the role. As the first openly gay Filipino American mayor, Cabaldon served West Sacramento for over two decades, transforming the city into a thriving hub of innovation, sustainable development, and economic growth. His leadership was marked by a commitment to social justice, inclusivity, and economic equity - values that resonate deeply with the diverse communities in his district. During his tenure, Cabaldon tackled pressing issues such as affordable housing, environmental sustainability, and educational equity. His work on job creation, climate resilience, and public transit infrastructure gained statewide recognition and positioned him as a progressive leader capable of driving meaningful change. It is this track record of success that makes him a compelling candidate for the State Senate, where he could expand his impact on a broader scale.

A Historic Milestone for Filipino Americans

Filipino Americans are the third-largest ethnic group in California, with over 1.6 million residing in the state. Despite their significant numbers, representation at the highest levels of government has been sparse. Cabaldon's potential election would mark a long-overdue milestone, reflecting the increasing civic engagement of Filipinos in state and local politics. Moreover, Cabaldon's candidacy is not the only source of pride for the Filipino community. Jessica Caloza, another prominent Filipino American leader, is poised to make history as well, potentially becoming California's first female Filipino American member of the State Assembly. Together, Cabaldon and Caloza represent a new wave of Filipino leadership that could inspire future generations to pursue careers in public service.

Impact on Senate District 3

Senate District 3, with its diverse and growing population, stands to benefit from Cabaldon's experience and vision. The district faces a range of challenges, including affordable housing shortages, climate resilience, and economic inequality. Cabaldon's comprehensive understanding of these issues, coupled with his proven ability to implement effective solutions, could bring tangible improvements to the lives of district residents. In addition to addressing these pressing concerns, Cabaldon's election would also provide a platform for Filipino Americans in the district to have a stronger voice in decision-making processes that directly affect their communities. From healthcare access to labor rights, issues that disproportionately impact Filipinos would gain visibility and attention under his leadership.

A Call to Action for Filipino Americans in Sacramento

As Christopher Cabaldon moves closer to potentially becoming the first Filipino American in the California State Senate, his candidacy serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of political participation. Filipino Americans in Sacramento, Solano, and Yolo Counties have the opportunity to make

history by ensuring that their voices are heard at the ballot box. This moment is about more than just electing one candidate—it's about galvanizing a community to realize its full political potential. By voting for Cabaldon and other strong candidates like Jessica Caloza, Filipino Americans can secure representation that reflects their values, priorities, and aspirations. The chance to elect leaders who share our experiences and champion our causes is rare, and it is essential that Filipino voters make the most of this opportunity. In this crucial election, every vote counts. Filipino Americans have the power to shape the future of California's legislature and ensure that leaders like Christopher Cabaldon and Jessica Caloza continue to break barriers and pave the way for the next generation of Filipino leaders.

With the potential to make history, Filipino Americans across Sacramento and California must mobilize and vote for candidates who will represent their community's interests and contribute to the diverse leadership of the state. Let's ensure that Cabaldon and others have the opportunity to bring about positive change for all Californians.

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Sacramento Filipino Political Action Committee Announces Endorsed Candidates

BY KYLA AQUINO IRVING & ALEXA MARKS

The Sacramento Filipino Political Action Committee (SacFilPAC), a non-partisan organization dedicated to empowering and improving the lives of Filipino Americans through civic engagement and political leadership, is proud to announce the candidates it will endorse in the upcoming election.

SacFilPAC believes that by electing more Filipino officials and advocating for policies shaped by a Filipino agenda, the community can achieve greater representation and influence in the political process.

How Candidates Were Chosen

To begin the endorsement process, SacFilPAC Board Members submitted nominations of races to the Endorsement Committee. The candidates for these races were then sent an invitation to fill out a preliminary questionnaire and have an interview with our Endorsement Committee members. Topics that were covered in the questionnaire and interview included educational and professional background, knowledge of Filipino American history, views on social justice, and how the candidate plans to support and uplift the local Filipino American community. Candidates who did not schedule an interview by the deadline were not considered.

After a thorough interview process, SacFilPAC has identified candidates who align with its mission and vision. The following candidates include:

- Christopher Cabaldon for California State Senate (Dist. 3)
- Dr. Flojaune Cofer for Mayor of Sacramento
- Susan Davis for Elk Grove School District Board Trustee (Area 1)
- Roger Dickinson for Sacramento City Council (Dist. 2)
- Eric Guerra for Sacramento City Council (Dist. 6)
- Quirina Orozco West Sacramento City Council (Dist. 2)
- Leroy Tripette for Rancho Cordova City Council (Dist. 5)

These candidates have demonstrated a commitment to addressing the needs and concerns of the Filipino community and have pledged to work towards policies that promote the well-being and empowerment of Filipino Americans.

Christopher Cabaldon

A Pinoy himself, Christopher Cabaldon is deeply rooted in the local Filipino community. While serving as mayor of West Sacramento for over 20 years, Christopher expanded educational opportunities through programs such as West Sacramento Home Run. As a State Senator, Cabaldon will continue to be a champion for our community— fighting for more affordable housing, environmental protections, and access to higher education and trade programs. He proudly represents both the Filipino American and LGBTQ communities, and has served in the AAPI, Filipino, and LGBTQ California Democrat caucuses. When elected, Christopher will become the first Filipino American to serve in the California State Senate.

Dr. Flojaune Cofer

Dr. Flojaune Cofer, an epidemiologist and policy director, has earned widespread support from many communities in Sacramento as she campaigns for mayor. Her expertise in public health and advocacy for policy changes aligns with Filipino values and concerns. Dr. Cofer's "people-powered" campaign focuses on key areas that resonate with Filipino American families, such as health equity, affordable housing, and local economic growth. She has championed community health initiatives, addressed housing affordability, and consistently supported small businesses. The SacFilPAC endorsement further solidifies her commitment to creating inclusive policies that uplift diverse populations, making her a strong candidate representing the needs and aspirations of the Filipino American community for a better Sacramento.

Susan Davis

Susan worked as a school secretary in the Elk Grove Unified School District for 24 years, giving her a clear understanding of what EGUSD schools, faculty, and families need to succeed. She is a seasoned leader, having served as president of a classified labor group that represents members of the Elk Grove Unified School District. Davis has been active in the Florin community for decades, leading an afterschool



softball program for girls. While Davis herself is a white woman, she has a multicultural family; her parents had even lived in the Philippines when her father was stationed there just before she was born. We are confident that with her vast experience and care for the Elk Grove Unified School District, she will achieve great things as a School Board Trustee.

Roger Dickinson

Former California State Assembly Member & Sacramento County Supervisor, Roger Dickinson's dedication to public service has earned him a reputation as a trusted leader in Sacramento for his community involvement and advocacy, cultural sensitivity and inclusivity, and responsive leadership. Although he's not Asian American, Dickinson has garnered endorsements from several other AAPI organizations and leaders in our community.

Eric Guerra

Eric Guerra, who proudly immigrated from Mexico, has built a strong reputation within Sacramento's Filipino community through his dedication to public service and community involvement. As a council member for District 6 since 2015, he has tackled quality of life issues, supported working families, and protected the environment. Guerra has served as a Governor's appointee: CSU Board of Trustees, president of Tahoe Park Neighborhood Association & Sacramento State Alumni Association, Sacramento County Planning Commission chair, Vice Chair of the Sacramento Transportation Authority, and is a member of the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Man-

agement District. He pledged to highlight Filipino American contributions, support Filipino community center building efforts, and work with local school districts. SacFilPAC was impressed by Guerra's emphasis on kindness, hard work, and "ganas" -- meaning "will" in Spanish or "appetite" in Filipino.

Quirina Orozco

As a Filipina and Mexican American, Quirina Orozco understands the importance of diversity and representation in our political landscape. Throughout her nearly 8 years as a West Sacramento City Council member, Quirina has been a major changemaker for West Sacramento families. She has partnered with Washington Unified School District and Yolo County Children's Alliance for backpack and school supply giveaway, as well as West Sac Kids Give Back, teaching local kids about the value of community service. She has also partnered with Downtown Streets Team, a nonprofit which works with people experiencing homelessness to help them secure housing and sustainable jobs. A proud Pinay, Quirina will continue to represent our Filipino American community and the city of West Sacramento well.

Leroy Tripette

Leroy is running for Rancho Cordova City Council to improve the local infrastructure, increase housing for all income levels, help small businesses grow, and provide the Rancho Cordova area with adequate educational facilities. He is currently serving as a Planning Commissioner, Chair for Rancho Cordova. As a Black American and alumnus of

Morehouse College, one of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities, he knows the importance of social justice and equity and how it applies to the diverse populations of our area. Though he is not Filipino American himself, Leroy is familiar with the history of our community in California, such as Larry Itliong and Filipino American initiation and leadership with the Delano Grape Strike and United Farm Workers. Leroy is committed to uplifting Filipino Americans and plans to bolster support and publicity for the upcoming Filipino Community Center of Sacramento.

While we appreciate all the candidates who sought SacFilPAC's endorsement, those who did not receive our endorsement did not meet the committee's standards assessed on questions demonstrating knowledge of our community's history, contributions, and interests. However, we welcome these candidates to learn and engage more with the Filipino American community in our region in future events hosted and/or sponsored by SacFilPAC.

SacFilPAC encourages all eligible Filipino Americans to register to vote and participate in the upcoming election. By exercising our right to vote, Filipino Americans can make their voices heard and help elect candidates who will champion their interests and advocate for policies that benefit the entire community.

Take Action!

Join us in supporting these candidates by canvassing, phone banking, donating to their respective campaigns, and voting for them on your ballot. Together, let us build a more empowered Filipino community and ensure that our voices are heard.

For more information on SacFilPAC, its mission, and the endorsed candidates, please visit our Facebook page, Sacramento Filipino PAC, and Instagram, @sacfilpac.



Why Gen Z Filipino-Americans Must Vote

BY SEAN COLALJO

As a senior at a predominantly white high school, I have seen firsthand the barriers to voting and political efficacy that the Filipino Americans of my generation face. We deem politics a distant, exclusionary game that cares little about our priorities. We look at our elected officials and see barely any who look like us. We see a system that seems too far removed from our culture and ways of life to matter to our community. These challenges and perceptions will persist unless we head to the polls and vote for the candidates who will work to eliminate them—all while advancing our culture's interests and expanding our power as Filipino American youth.

Realizing Our Priorities At All Levels

We hold an especially influential place among the Filipino American community. According to the Pew Research Center, nearly a third of all Filipino Americans are Gen Z, and roughly half of us will be eligible to vote next month. Polling from NBC News tells us that our generation is the fastest-growing segment of the electorate as well. We have immense potential to sway our local, state, and federal elections, and we indeed have a seat at the table of political discourse, but only if we vote.

Mustering the courage to do so will allow us to elect candidates who will act on our priorities, all while reminding those seeking political office that they must answer to us—their constituents—if they hope to win. Once elected, these candidates will help us build the future that we not only want to see but that we are destined to live in as well. How else can we realize social justice and equity for both our Filipino American community and the AANHPI community at large? How else can we finally end the tidal wave of anti-Asian and anti-Filipino hate that began with the pandemic? How else can we win broader recognition for Filipino American heritage, ensure a sustainable climate, and expand resources for our mental health?

Our votes must not be confined to the presidential election, though. The down-ballot races—contests



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for seats in Congress, the State Assembly and Senate, school board, and more—are equally important. These offices shape the policies that most directly affect us at the local level and within the communities where we live and work daily. They are proof that politics is not a distant game that we can remain aloof from—it plays out in our own backyards.

Building Filipino-American Representation

That is why it is by voting in every race on the ballot that we are most able to empower our Filipino American community: by electing fellow Filipino American candidates. They look like us, were raised in the same culture as us, and are therefore the best equipped to understand our priorities. Several will be on the ballot in the Sacramento area in November, such as Christopher Cabaldon, who is running for State Senate in Sacramento, Solano, and Yolo Counties, and Quirina Orozco, a candidate for West Sacramento City Council.

Political Literacy and Voting as Culture

Knowing the importance of voting to our representation and policy interests as Filipino Americans is the perfect segue to becoming politically literate—that is, understanding the systems behind government and politics. Submitting your ballot means participating in those same systems, and only by grasping how they work can we appreciate how they will best serve us.

Voting is also an act of cultural loyalty. This is a trait that many Filipino American youth admirably wish to emulate, but we often fail to see its connection to the ballot. That is because voting means civic engagement—being active in addressing your community's concerns—and it is a storied tradition in Filipino American culture. Just look

at Larry Itliong and Philip Vera Cruz. They were Filipino American labor organizers who rallied to defend farm workers alongside Cesar Chávez during the Delano grape strike in 1965. In recent years, Filipino Americans have also campaigned to end racism, such as with the Laban Group right here in Sacramento.

Being civically engaged by proactively meeting our challenges is the Filipino American way of life. Voting carries this heritage of ours forward, and it falls to us—the next generation—to ensure its longevity.

Turning Theory into Action

Luckily, we are better positioned to make that happen than any generation in history. Our familiarity with social

media allows us to mobilize at a moment's notice, so make some posts and spread the word about the importance of voting. Request some materials from your county's registrar and run a voter registration drive at school or a community event—tabling is much easier than it might seem. Hold in-person conversations with your Filipino American peers and amplify your message about voting by having it come from someone just like them.

If we turn out in numbers to vote, our ballots will bring politics closer to their young constituents, elect fellow Filipino-Americans, and reinforce our ties to our culture. We owe it to our community and to ourselves to make good on these goals.

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The Filipino Community of Sacramento & Vicinity Celebrating **FILIPINO AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH** Building our future through the Community Center

BY DALE ESPERANTE

The vibrant celebration of community took center stage at the Filipino American History Month event on October 19, 2024, at the lively Jose P. Rizal Community Center! The Filipino Community of Sacramento and Vicinity, led by President Murray Saturnino Navarro and Chair Edna Delos Reyes, rolled out the red carpet as guests dazzled in their finest Filipiniana attire, setting the tone for an unforgettable evening.

As the atmosphere buzzed with anticipation, two dynamic political supporters stepped up to the podium, passionate in their commitment to the Filipino American community. California State Assemblymember Stephanie Nguyen electrified the crowd as she delivered a significant resolution, officially recognizing Filipino American History Month in California. Board of Supervisor Member Patrick Kennedy, resplendent in his Barong Tagalog, captivated everyone with heartfelt stories of his journey and deep ties to the Filipino community, proudly declaring himself an adopted Filipino. Both Nguyen and Kennedy beamed as they accepted their honorary Filipino status—a moment of unity and pride for all!

The evening kicked off with a lively social hour, where laughter and connections filled the air, followed by a sumptuous buffet dinner that satisfied every palate. The entertainment swept everyone off their feet, complemented by inspiring presentations and colorful pageantry. As the night unfolded, the community erupted in gratitude, showering the organizers with congratulations for crafting such a memorable and joyous event!



Photos by Dale Esperante