



April 29, 1993

COPY

Paul M. Igasaki
Asian Law Caucus, Inc.
488 Bush Street, Third Floor
San Francisco, CA 94108

Dear Mr. Igasaki:

As you may know, I was a participant in and one of the principal organizers of the recent ADL program on the constitutionality of Wisconsin's hate crime statute. I also serve as president of ADL's Central Pacific Regional Advisory Board and as an ADL national commissioner.

One of our main goals in planning this program was to bring together some of the key civil rights organizations which have been working so long and so closely together on this (and other) issues. To me this was not just an educational program. It was also a celebration of solid relationships in the past and a dedication to ongoing joint efforts against hate crimes whatever the outcome of the Mitchell case might be.

Accordingly, I was dismayed on a number of levels when I learned that the Asian Law Caucus felt it necessary to pull out of this program on short notice as a protest of some sort against ADL. At one level, I thought the pull-out was highly discourteous to the organizers and participants (such as Mr. Keane and Justice Grodin, if not myself). Secondly, I thought the pull-out was an insult to a fellow member of a national and local civil rights coalition.

Finally, I thought the pull-out was completely unjustified and unfair given the status of the "Gerard Issue" at that time. Rick Hirschhaut recently showed me your explanatory letter of April 13, 1993. It confirms my view at the time that the pull-out could only have been premised on an uncritical acceptance of "allegations" -- one-sided and hostile media allegations at that. Is that the way the Asian Law Caucus would want to be treated by ADL in similar circumstances? I doubt it.

Rick Hirschhaut and his staff are under incredible pressure and stress because of the drumbeat of media "allegations." That is why I wanted to respond to your letter myself. It is a time when thoughtful allies should show support, not leap to hostile conclusions. I would like to sit down with you and/or your leadership group some time soon to find ways to rebuild an important relationship.

In the interim, I enclose for your review a copy of ADL's initial public statement on this affair. Please feel free to circulate it among your staff and leadership.

Sincerely,

Elliot L. Blen
President, Regional Board

ELB:ski
Enclosure

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