



Taxpayers watchdog since 1945

707 Broadway, Suite 905, San Diego, CA 92101 • P: (619) 234-6423 • F: (619) 234-7403 • www.sdcta.org

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Contact: Rachel Laing
(619) 929-7946

TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION NAMES HANEY HONG TO LEAD RESPECTED WATCHDOG ORGANIZATION INTO FUTURE

The San Diego County Taxpayers Association has named Haney Hong, a small business owner, Navy Reservist and policy expert, as its president and CEO.

Hong joins the Taxpayers Association after serving as managing partner of HDH & Associates LLC, a management-consulting firm he founded that assists public and private organizations with strategy and managing through change. He served as a submarine officer in the U.S. Navy on active duty from 2003 to 2010, and is now the commanding officer of his U.S. Navy reserve unit.

Hong has lived in San Diego since 2012, and in that relatively brief timeframe has become deeply engaged in the local community. He founded and leads a local alumni group that fosters civic engagement in the region. He graduated from LEAD San Diego in 2014 and was part of the Public Leadership Institute's class of 2015. The San Diego Regional Economic Development Corp. featured Hong in "Today's and Tomorrow's Leaders of San Diego" at their 50th anniversary celebration last year, and he earned LEAD San Diego's Herbert G. Klein Memorial Award for Exemplary Leadership in 2014. A child of immigrants from South Korea, Hong said he was raised to value public service and the importance of a vibrant democracy.

Hong has taught undergraduate and professional courses at the University of San Diego's School of Business Administration and School of Professional and Continuing Education, and he formerly chaired the advisory council of the university's "Changemaker Challenge" program.

Hong draws on his policy experience in his service as a member of the National Navy Reserve Policy Board, a Congressionally mandated advisory body to the Secretary of the Navy on reserve policy matters. His previous policy experience includes two years as an active duty officer in the Office of the Secretary of the Navy at the Pentagon; a fellowship in the office of New York Governor Andrew Cuomo; and a global public policy and communications associateship at Eli Lilly & Co.

Hong's fundraising experience includes co-leading a campaign to raise \$1 million from his 2003 graduating class at Stanford University, as well as a class-giving campaign at

Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, from which he graduated with a master's in public policy. He also sits on the board of directors of the Jean and Alfred Friendly Foundation, which places journalists from developing nations in U.S. newsrooms.

"Haney brings a very forward-thinking viewpoint to the Taxpayers Association," said Bill Geppert, a longtime San Diego business and community leader who co-chaired the search committee. "His diverse background — with both military and business experience — equips him well for this important leadership role."

Hong was tapped for the leadership role of the government-accountability organization after the June retirement of former head Mark Leslie. Barry Jantz, SDCTA's 2016 board chair and co-chair of the search committee, said Hong stood out in a pool of esteemed and highly qualified applicants because of his ability to articulate a strong vision for the organization, including using technology to foster broader civic engagement.

"Haney walked into the first interview with a several-page draft plan, showing how he looks at a challenge and how to address it," Jantz said. "He's not only full of innovative ideas, he has the energy and know-how required to see them through. We're excited and optimistic about his ability to lead this organization into the future."

Jantz also praised Theresa Andrews, who served for several months as interim president and CEO while the committee conducted its search.

"After just a few months as head of our policy team, Theresa stepped into the top role and ably managed the organization, allowing us to conduct a very thorough selection process," Jantz said. "We are deeply appreciative of her hard work and professionalism during a time of transition."

The Taxpayers Association board ratified Hong's appointment on Friday; he'll start in his new role next week.

The San Diego County Taxpayers Association is a non-profit, non-partisan organization, dedicated to promoting accountable, cost-effective and efficient government and opposing unnecessary new taxes and fees. Founded in 1945, SDCTA has spent the past 70 years saving the region's taxpayers millions of dollars, as well as generating information to help educate the public.

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