

## Johnnie Q. Nguyen

Denver, Colorado | (303) 931-4385 | [Johnnie.Nguyen@Colorado.edu](mailto:Johnnie.Nguyen@Colorado.edu)

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Dear Law Student Leaders,

My name is Johnnie Nguyen, and I am running to be your next Law Student Division Chair. I won't waste your time with any political fluff, so, I'll get straight to the point: I don't beat around the bush, I create real results, and I believe that I can empower our law students today in becoming the best lawyers of tomorrow.

### *Platform*

- **Student Debt** - The average law school debt is well within the six-figure mark. But, it's not impossible to overcome. **I support the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program**, lobbying states and Congress to provide more higher-education funding, and a campaign to assist students in loan repayment.
- **Diversity** - As a child of Vietnam War refugees, an Asian American, a proud member of the LGBTQ community, and a first-generation student, **I understand the barriers that stand in between diverse students and success in the legal profession**. I am committed to working with the ABA Diversity and Inclusion Center by contributing to their current projects as well as proposing my own initiatives, such as creating legal work experience pipelines for diverse high school, college, and law students.
- **Environment** - Let's be honest, our profession wastes a lot of paper, and we've accepted it as a norm. [A study led by Arnold and Porter LLP](#) showed that in 2006, the average attorney used 20,000 - 100,000 sheets of paper. This data is shocking, but also outdated. As a proud native to the beautiful outdoor state of Colorado, I'm committed to working with the ABA in starting initiatives and conducting more research that would encourage lawyers to be more environmentally conscious.
- **Wellness** - Don't get me wrong, I love celebrating the end of exams or advancing in mock trial with a cold stout. Unfortunately, with the stress of our profession, alcohol and substance abuse has become a major problem. I'm committed to working with the National Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being in battling addiction and promoting wellness to support our thriving community.
- **Sexual Assault and Harassment** - **I WILL NOT** accept any nonsense that has excused people in positions of power from being held accountable by their actions. I will support the important work that the ABA Commission on Women in the Profession is leading regarding this matter. However, I want to further support their mission by creating an entirely new ABA Commission on Sexual Assault and Harassment because it should be on all of us, not just women, to fight this cause.

## *About Me*

Being a victim of violent racism during my youth ignited my enthusiasm for leadership. My coming-of-age experiences as a first-generation student in one of Denver's poorest school districts included a day that a group of bullies assaulted me. "Go back to China, chink!" are the words I recall while on the ground shielding my face. I asked my parents for guidance, but unfortunately, they said "chū dì," which means to be acquiescent and to bear the difficulty. "This is the tax we must pay as foreigners." My parent's words constructed me to be passive in life's moments of controversy.

But in college, the issue of racism became more apparent in my life. There was a University of Colorado (CU) professor who referred to Michelle Obama as a monkey, students scrawling the n-word in bathrooms, and an undocumented guest lecturer who took refuge in a church to hide from ICE's deportation efforts. In response, I leveraged my student government leadership role on campus to empower students by having them testify to school administrations, organize rallies, and call Congress, urging all to stand up against racism.

While I encouraged others to stand, at times I felt hypocrisy as I reflected on the moments of my childhood that I decided to chū dì. Seeking resolution, in the summer of 2016, I returned to the neighborhood I grew up in to teach for the Colorado I Have a Dream Foundation. Teaching my students was a memorable experience. Regardless of where their parents fell on tax brackets, they were still kids who loved fidget spinners and running underneath rainbow parachutes. The seven hours I got to spend with them every day was a joyous escape from 2016's dark political culture. But, inevitably, days came when some of my 8-year old students asked: "If he wins, do I have to go back to Mexico?"

In working with my legislator, I kept my students in mind as I helped her run bills designed to curtail the school-to-prison pipeline, such as banning corporal punishment, early childhood expulsions, and physical restraints on students. I also worked on another legislator's bill that mandated multicultural civics courses in public schools so that the importance of learning about diverse history wouldn't be minimized as an elective but rather an essential part of an American education. My work was recognized by the Denver Public School Board, which led to my appointment in serving on their Strengthening Neighborhoods Committee. On this committee, we created neighborhood-driven policy plans to tackle gentrification issues that injure our schools.

I believe that an education can cure any societal illness caused by ignorance and bigotry. With the unique opportunity of being a law student, I'm maximizing this privilege towards helping others reach their educational and academic goals. If I'm fortunate enough to be elected as Chair, I will have access to a national network of talented law students and attorneys to leverage my abilities in successfully executing this mission. If you have any questions or comments regarding my candidacy or platform, please feel free to reach out to me. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Johnnie Nguyen

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## Education

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**University of Colorado Law School**, Boulder, CO Aug. 2018 - May 2021  
Juris Doctor Candidate.

Activities: Class President; Mock Trial; Student Ambassador.

Memberships: Asian American Pacific Islander Bar Association; LGBT Bar Association

**University of Colorado Denver**, Denver, CO Aug. 2014 - Dec. 2017  
Bachelor of Arts in Political Science; Minor in Ethnic Studies. *Honors*

Honors: CU President's Diversity Award; CU Student Advocate of the Year; CU Rosa Parks Award.

Activities: Student Government; Council of Asian Student Leaders; Pre-Law Society.

## Experience

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**Woodrow and Peluso, LLC**, Denver, CO Feb. 2018 – July 2018

### Law Clerk

- Drafted and edited settlements, discovery requests, and other trial documents for class action law firm.
- Researched case law regarding the Colorado Consumer Protection Act, Telephone Communication Protection Act, and Federal Credit Reporting Act.

**University of Colorado President's Office**, Denver, CO Sep. – Dec. 2016, May – Oct. 2017

### CU Student Advocate

- Led 4-month project collecting numbers to update data on CU's economic impact on Colorado.
- Published press and social media releases on CU's community, educational, and economic engagement.

**Colorado State Legislature**, Representative Susan Lontine, Denver, CO Jan. 2016 – May 2017

### Legislative Aide (2017 session); Intern (2016 session)

- Served as 2017's youngest (20 years old) and only Asian American legislative aide.
- Presented bill research in meetings with lobbyist and legislators.
- Managed three college interns.

**Colorado I Have A Dream Foundation**, Denver, CO Summer, 2016

### Teaching Fellow

- Taught math, literacy, and leadership skills to third-graders in an underserved Denver neighborhood.

**White House Initiative on Asian Americans / US Dept. of Agriculture**, Washington, DC Summer, 2015

### Intern

- Compiled data on 107 of the "1890's Historically Black University" for USDA to create pipeline program to diverse recent-graduates to apply and become employees of the Federal workforce.
- Researched, drafted, and published to the White House website the "*US Department of Agriculture's FY 2015-2016 Agency Plan for the White House Initiative of Asian American Pacific Islander's*."

## Community Involvement

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**Democratic National Committee**, USA Feb 2015 – Present

**Roles:** Chair, CO Dem's Asian American Caucus. Fmr. VP, Young Dems of America, College Caucus. Fmr.

Secretary, Denver Young Dems. Fmr. Member, Denver Public Schools Strengthening Neighborhoods Committee

**Campaigns:** Michael Carrigan for Denver DA; Phil Weiser for CO Attorney General; Steve Sherick for Senate.

- Provided nominating speech for US Rep. Diana DeGette's 2016 re-election campaign.
- Led U.S. Sen. Bennett's lobby team of 60+ students to advocate for international women's rights and family planning for the non-profit, Population Connection.
- Fundraised net of \$24,400+, organized 50+ events, canvassed 2,000+ doors, and registered 150+ voters
- Organized and raised \$3,000 for a protest trip in support of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

## Skills and Interests

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Fluent in Vietnamese, cooking Vietnamese food, road-cycling, pick-up basketball, tennis, and yoga.