
THIRD READING

Bill No: SR 12
Author: Min (D), et al.
Amended: 3/5/21
Vote: Majority

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE: 11-0, 3/16/21
AYES: Umberg, Borgeas, Caballero, Durazo, Gonzalez, Hertzberg, Jones, Laird, Stern, Wieckowski, Wiener

SUBJECT: Hate crimes

SOURCE: Author

DIGEST: This resolution recognizes the appalling increase in hate crimes, hateful rhetoric, and hateful acts against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (APIs) dating to the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, and resolves that the Senate denounces the tragic increase in hate towards APIs and works to ensure that APIs feel safe and welcome in California, both during the pandemic and beyond.

ANALYSIS: The COVID-19 virus, believed to have originated in Wuhan, China, incited a surge in overt racism and violence against APIs. Anti-API, racist language was propagated at the highest levels of the federal government, with former President Donald Trump referring to COVID-19 as the “Wuhan virus,” the “Chinese virus,” and “kung flu.”¹ The Anti-Defamation League found a clear connection between the rhetoric surrounding the virus and hostility towards APIs: in an analysis of 2.7 million tweets after the former president announced he had contracted COVID-19, anti-API language spiked by 85 percent.² And in an analysis of the former president’s tweets, Stop AAPI Hate found that his tweets

¹ E.g., Nakamura, *With ‘kung flu,’ Trump sparks backlash over racist language—and a rallying cry for supporters*, Washington Post (Jun. 24, 2020), available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/with-kung-flu-trump-sparks-backlash-over-racist-language--and-a-rallying-cry-for-supporters/2020/06/24/485d151e-b620-11ea-aca5-ebb63d27e1ff_story.html [last visited Mar. 2, 2021].

² Dwozkin, *When Trump gets coronavirus, Chinese Americans pay a price*, Washington Post (Oct. 9, 2021), available at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2020/10/09/twitter-asian-americans-discrimination/> [last visited Mar. 2, 2021].

that reflected anti-API racism or stigma were liked or retweeted millions of times, and that he was “the greatest spreader among politicians of anti-Asian American rhetoric related to the pandemic.”³

Sadly, but predictably, the increase in inflammatory language against APIs coincided with a surge in anti-API violence and acts. Stop AAPI Hate received over 2,800 reports of anti-API hate crimes nationwide from the beginning of the pandemic to the end of 2020.⁴ Most of the reported incidents involved verbal harassment (70.9 percent), while physical assaults, including coughing or spitting on an individual, make up over 15 percent of the incidents.⁵

California has been home to some of the most brutal attacks against APIs. Just this year, there have been several widely publicized assaults against elderly APIs, including Vicha Ratanapakdee, an 84-year-old Thai man who was killed in San Francisco and a 91-year old man in Oakland’s Chinatown being pushed facedown onto the sidewalk in an unprovoked attack. Victims from last year include a 16-year-old Asian-American boy who had to go to the hospital after being attacked by bullies “who accused him of having the coronavirus.”⁶ In addition to these violent physical assaults, countless APIs have endured physical intimidation and verbal attacks driven by the erroneous, racist belief that APIs are somehow connected to COVID-19.⁷

In recognition of the historic, horrifying uptick in attacks on the API community, especially the recent attacks on particularly vulnerable API individuals, this resolution makes a number of factual findings about the rash of hate crimes and

³ Stop AAPI Hate, Report, *The Return of “Yellow Peril”* (Oct. 1, 2020), available at <https://secureservercdn.net/104.238.69.231/a1w90d.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Stop-AAPI-Hate-2020-Candidates-and-Anti-Asian-Rhetoric-201021.pdf> [last visited Mar. 2, 2020].

⁴ Stop AAPI Hate, Press Release, *Stop AAPI Hate: New Data on Anti-Asian Hate Incidents Against Elderly and Total National Incidents in 2020* (Feb. 9, 2021), <https://secureservercdn.net/104.238.69.231/a1w90d.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Press-Statement-re-Bay-Area-Elderly-Incidents-2.9.2021-1.pdf> [last visited Mar. 2, 2021].

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Tavernise and Oppel, *Spit On, Yelled At, Attacked: Chinese-Americans Fear for Their Safety*, New York Times (Mar. 23, 2020; updated Feb. 26, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/23/us/chinese-coronavirus-racist-attacks.html> [last visited Mar. 2, 2021].

⁷ E.g., Do, “*You started the corona!*” As Anti-Asian hate incidents explode, climbing past 800, activists push for aid, Los Angeles Times (Jul. 5, 2020), <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-07-05/anti-asian-hate-newsom-help> [last visited Mar. 2, 2021]; Tavernise and Oppel, *Spit On, Yelled At, Attacked: Chinese-Americans Fear for Their Safety*, New York Times (Mar. 23, 2020; updated Feb. 26, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/23/us/chinese-coronavirus-racist-attacks.html> [last visited Mar. 2, 2021]; Liu and Hatzipanagos, “*Nobody came, nobody helped*”: Fear of anti-Asian violence rattle the community, Washington Post (Feb. 25, 2021), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2021/02/25/asian-hate-crime-attack-patrol/?arc404=true> [last visited Mar. 2, 2021].

other anti-API prejudice. This resolution further denounces the hate crimes, hateful rhetoric, and hateful acts against APIs, and expresses the intent of the California State Senate to work to ensure that API Californians feel safe and welcome, for the duration of the pandemic and beyond.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: No Local: No

SUPPORT: (Verified 3/17/21)

California Professional Firefighters

OPPOSITION: (Verified 3/17/21)

None received

Prepared by: Allison Meredith / JUD. / (916) 651-4113
3/17/21 11:09:39

**** **END** ****