

Written Statement from Asian American Leaders Table on COVID-19 Racism

“Hearing on Discrimination and Violence Against Asian Americans” United States House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties

March 18, 2021

We comprise a national network of local and national Asian American organizations that convened in the wake of the pandemic a year ago to address the incidences of anti-Asian racism that were beginning to occur around the country.

Since last March, community groups have been tracking reports of anti-Asian racism and have observed alarming trends. Stop AAPI Hate received 3,800 reports of [anti-Asian hate](#) over the last year, with women twice as likely to report incidences of hate as men. It is important to recognize that this current surge of anti-Asian hate is not occurring in a vacuum. The Trump Administration’s sinophobic, racist rhetoric and scapegoating of Asians for the COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to today’s climate of hate. In addition, the systems and policies of white supremacy, misogyny, imperialism, and capitalism have long compounded to harm the bodies, livelihoods, and rights of Asian Americans through exclusion, incarceration, displacement, deportation, surveillance, profiling, and exploitation.

On Tuesday, March 16th, our worst fears materialized as a massacre occurred in three different places of business in the metropolitan Atlanta area, leaving 8 people killed, including six Asian women. Asian community members in Georgia and around the country [experience](#) these shootings as acts of anti-Asian racism, sexism, and sexual violence against Asian American women. And, they occur in the broader context of racist, misogynistic, and xenophobic systems and policies that harm Black and brown communities in the United States.

In the wake of anti-Asian hate and in the midst of a pandemic, Asian American communities are not staying silent. From Chinatowns around the country to online spaces, we are making it clear that everyone has a role to stop anti-Asian hate and to find solutions that keep all of our communities safe. Young Asian Americans are walking the elderly home, people are becoming trained to peacefully intervene when witnessing an act of hate, and leaders representing Black, indigenous, and Latinx communities are uniting with us in solidarity.

Now, members of Congress and the federal government must take action.

We call for interventions and responses that address the root causes of violence and systemic racism through a community-centered approach. This means providing culturally and linguistically sensitive services for survivors, victims, and their families including access to mental health, legal, financial, and healing support. Federal and state agencies must ensure robust enforcement of civil rights laws to protect people targeted by hate and discrimination. Government agencies, from the Community Relations Service at the Department of Justice to state and local level programs, must prioritize violence prevention, restorative justice, and victims’ assistance funds.

Beyond these immediate steps, members of Congress and federal agencies must invest in our communities with long-term solutions that uplift the lives of everyone. Congress must ensure access to a robust social safety net that includes equitable housing, jobs, health care and education while ending policies that lead to the deportation, criminalization, and surveillance of immigrants and communities of color.

Anti-Asian hate has been a part of the American experience in the past and the present. But, it does not have to be part of our future. What we do today matters. We call upon members of Congress and the White House to work closely with local and national Asian American leaders to identify and implement community-centered solutions that stop anti-Asian hate.

The Asian American Leaders Table on COVID-19 Racism is coordinated by Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Asian Law Caucus, and includes the following members.

18 Million Rising

AAPIs for Civic Empowerment Education Fund

AAPIs for Justice San Antonio, TX

Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)

Asian Americans Advancing Justice – AAJC

Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Asian Law Caucus

Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Atlanta

Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Chicago

Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Los Angeles

Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO (APALA)

Asian Pacific Policy & Planning Council

Asian Solidarity Collective

AYPAL: Building API Community Power

ChangeLab

Chinese for Affirmative Action

Freedom Inc

Grassroots Asians Rising

Hate Is A Virus

Japanese American Citizens League

ManForward

Mekong NYC

National Asian Pacific American Women’s Forum (NAPAWF)

National CAPACD

National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC)

National Queer Asian and Pacific Islander Alliance (NQAPIA)

OPAWL – Building AAPI Feminist Leadership in Ohio

People’s Collective for Justice and Liberation

Seeding Change

South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)

Tsuru for Solidarity

W-Isms