



**YWCA USA**  
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**STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD FROM**

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to the

**Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights & Civil Liberties  
U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary**

regarding

**“Discrimination and Violence Against Asian Americans”**

March 18, 2021

Chairman Nadler, Ranking Member Jordan, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to submit this statement for the record on discrimination and violence against Asian Americans.

Founded 160 years ago, YWCA is one of the oldest and largest women's organizations in the nation. Today, there are more than 200 local YWCA associations in over 1,200 communities across 45 states and the District of Columbia, serving more than 2 million women, girls, and their families each year. We have been at the forefront of the most pressing social movements throughout our history, from voting rights to civil rights, from affordable housing to pay equity, from violence prevention to health care reform. Today, we combine programming and advocacy to generate lasting change in the areas of racial justice and civil rights, empowerment and economic advancement for women and girls, and improved health and safety for women and girls.

As an organization dedicated to eliminating racism and empowering women, we at YWCA are devastated by the escalating violence against people of Asian descent in the U.S., including the most recent incident in Atlanta, Georgia on March 16, 2021 that resulted in the murder of eight people, six of whom were Asian women and seven of whom were women. While few details regarding the motive behind the Atlanta shootings have been released, these murders cannot be separated from the rise in harassment and violence against Asian and Asian-American people since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nor can they be separated from the misogyny that underlies an epidemic of violence against women in the U.S. and the long-overdue reckoning with racial injustice that the deaths of Brionna Taylor, George Floyd, and too many others ignited in 2020. YWCA condemns this violence in the strongest possible terms.

As many have noted in recent days, Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities have experienced an unprecedented surge in violence and harassment since the start of the pandemic. Fueled by an increase in white nationalist discourse, anti-immigrant rhetoric, and the disinformation campaign associated with the novel coronavirus in our country, Asian Americans continue to experience a growing number of racially motivated attacks. The over 3,795 incidents of violence and harassment that have been reported to Stop AAPI Hate between March 19, 2020 and February 28, 2021 are estimated to be only a fraction of the actual number of hate-motivated incidents against people of Asian descent in the U.S.<sup>1</sup> This rise in violence is clearly and directly connected to disinformation efforts that intentionally play on racist, misogynistic, and xenophobic biases and fears to perpetuate false narratives and



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stereotypes, and to foment discrimination and violence against Asian people and communities.

Of particular concern to YWCA are the startling statistics at the intersection of race and gender. According to a PerryUndem 2020 post-election survey, 1 in 6 AAPI voters reported that they or a family member have faced racism related to COVID-19, with Asian women twice as likely to be targeted.<sup>2</sup> In a separate study, Asian women reported 2.3 times more incidents of harassment and violence than men.<sup>3</sup> Combined, these reports as well as the Atlanta shooting on March 16, 2021 indicate the depth of trauma that Asian women in particular are experiencing, and heighten our concerns about the well-documented connections between domestic violence, misogyny, white supremacy, and mass shootings.<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, hate and violence against people from Asian and Pacific Islander communities since the start of the pandemic are but the latest manifestations of hate and violence directed toward communities of color in our nation's long history of racial violence. From the colonization of indigenous peoples to the arrival of the first ship of enslaved Africans, our country's history is rooted in systemic acts of racial discrimination, fear, and racist rhetoric. Throughout its ascendance, our nation has perpetuated state-sanctioned hate and violence: from Jim Crow to the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II to emboldened white supremacists rallying in Charlottesville, Virginia and storming our nation's Capitol. Any meaningful attempt by this Congress to address these current domestic crises requires an introspective look at our country's historical evolution of hate and its dehumanization of people of color.

Indeed, the social fabric of our nation is torn and tainted by systematic attempts at silencing, suppressing, and inflicting violence on people of color, women, and other marginalized groups. Harassment, violence, and domestic terrorism propelled by racism and misogyny have come to define this moment in our nation's history.

YWCA calls on Congress to not only investigate the rising tide of hate crimes in America, but to take swift action on common sense solutions like the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act (S. 728/H.R. 1843), which would require expedited review of COVID-related hate crimes by a designated staff member of the Department of Justice. YWCA also urges Representatives to co-sponsor and support the Jabara-Heyer NO HATE Act, which would provide additional resources to states and law enforcement agencies to address hate crimes and improve reporting of hate crimes nationally.

From our extensive community-base work, YWCA knows all too well that incidents of hate and violence have a long-lasting and intergenerational



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impact on people and communities. Where communities are traumatized by racist rhetoric and violence, community healing is imperative. For AAPI communities, the escalating violence and fear that they are experiencing compounds the trauma that they --like so many Americans-- feel from lost jobs, lost family members, and lost cultural and community connections. Accordingly, YWCA calls on Congress to take swift action to ensure that communities traumatized by racist rhetoric and violence have the resources needed for community healing.



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At YWCA, we are unwavering in our demand for justice and in our commitment to creating a world in which all women, girls, and people of color can thrive. The shared experience of structural inequality and racism across all communities of color requires us to deepen our work together to advocate for equity and justice. We join our allies in the racial justice and gender equity communities in demanding justice for the AAPI community. And we call on all Americans to resist ill-informed, biased perspectives about Asian Americans and all people of Asian descent. We do this work because we demand a safe world of equity and human decency, and we will get up and continue to do the work until injustice is rooted out, until institutions are transformed, and until justice just is.

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<sup>1</sup> Jeung, Ph.D., Russell, Aggie Yellow Horse, Ph.D., Tara Popovic, and Richard Lim, (February 2021) "Stop AAPI Hate National Report." Retrieved from <https://secureservercdn.net/104.238.69.231/a1w.90d.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/210312-Stop-AAPI-Hate-National-Report-.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF). "Anti-Asian Harassment and Violence." Retrieved from: <https://www.napawf.org/covid-19/anti-racism>

<sup>3</sup> Jeung, Ph.D., Russell, Aggie Yellow Horse, Ph.D., Tara Popovic, and Richard Lim, (February 2021) "Stop AAPI Hate National Report." Retrieved from <https://secureservercdn.net/104.238.69.231/a1w.90d.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/210312-Stop-AAPI-Hate-National-Report-.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> 2019 YWCA Gun Violence Policy Statement "Preventing Gun Violence." <https://www.ywca.org/wp-content/uploads/20190228-GunViolence-PolicyStatement.pdf>