

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS HILDA L. SOLIS
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Renewed Commitment to Stop Anti-AAPI Hate During AAPI Heritage Month

Chinese nationals were the first Asian immigrants to arrive on American soil in significant numbers in the middle of the 19th century. Since then, from helping to build the transcontinental railroad to protecting the nation during times of war, Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) have played critical roles in shaping our modern history. AAPIs' myriad contributions can be found in every aspect of society. AAPIs are leaders in industry, politics, entertainment and culture, civic activism, education, and much more. Los Angeles County is proud to be home to more than 1.5 million AAPIs, who collectively speak more than 15 different languages. That is why the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (the Board) join in the celebration of AAPI Heritage Month every year during the month of May.

But such celebration must also be met with a commitment to do more for AAPI residents. During the COVID-19 pandemic, fear-mongering, discrimination, and hate incidents and crimes against AAPIs have increased significantly. This scapegoating will

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have lasting repercussions, and, unfortunately, it is not the first time AAPIs have experienced a dangerous rise in hateful sentiments and physical violence. The history of AAPIs in the United States has been marked by rampant xenophobia, with the 19th century purges of Chinese Americans across the Pacific Northwest, the 20th century “Yellow Peril” rhetoric and Japanese American incarceration, and more recently the post-September 11 surge of Islamophobic sentiments and hate crimes and incidents. In the past two years, brazen attacks and harassment of AAPIs in Los Angeles County have also been reported. Hate incidents and attacks against AAPIs have occurred in Oakland, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and numerous other large and small cities, particularly since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Acts of hate – crimes and incidents – are generally on the rise countywide and nationally, targeting other groups such as African Americans, Latinx, immigrants, LGBTQ+ and the Jewish community.

Nearly 11,000 AAPIs across the country reported hate incidents to the national tracker launched by Stop AAPI Hate between March 2020 and December 2021, including more than 4,100 reports in California and more than 1,000 reports in Los Angeles. The County’s LA vs. Hate initiative received 1,600 reports of hate through the 211-LA hotline.

Nationwide, 63% of hate incidents reported to Stop AAPI Hate described verbal harassment and three-quarters (75.7%) of hate incidents occurred in places open to the public, such as public streets, public transit, and businesses open to the public. Furthermore, 23.1% of non-binary AAPI people and 19.1% of AAPI women that reported hate incidents to Stop AAPI Hate identified gender as one of the reasons they experienced the reported discrimination. Many hate incidents involved street

harassment: unwanted words, gestures, or actions that are forced on a stranger in a public place because of their real or perceived identity, which can include racialized or sexualized slurs.

Existing California laws are ill-equipped to prevent and address street harassment because most laws are under the penal code, despite street harassment necessitating a public health and civil rights response, and require a known person committing the act, despite most street harassment being transitory and taking place between strangers. All people deserve to feel safe and move about freely without becoming targets of hate and harassment. Street harassment is not just an AAPI issue, and all women – particularly Black women, Indigenous women, and women of color, LGBTQ+ people, people with disabilities, unhoused people, the young and the elderly, and people of color experience street harassment, which carries the threat of and occasionally escalates into violence.

Stop AAPI Hate has proposed the No Place for Hate California legislative package to address street harassment from a public health and civil rights framework, which includes California State Assembly Bill No. 2549, introduced by Assemblymembers Mia Bonta, Al Muratsuchi, and Akilah Weber to prevent street harassment, and its corresponding budget request; County-supported California State Senate Bill No. 1161, introduced by Senator Dave Min to prevent street harassment on public transit, and its corresponding budget request; and California State Assembly Bill No. 2448, introduced by Assembly Member Phil Ting to prevent harassment in private businesses.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Proclaim May 2022 as “Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month” in Los Angeles County; and
2. Direct the CEO Legislative Affairs branch to send 5-signature letters to the Governor and appropriate State Legislators to support the Stop AAPI Hate’s No Place for Hate California legislative package, specifically California State Assembly Bill No. 2549 (Bonta, Muratsuchi, Weber) and its corresponding budget request; the corresponding budget request for County-supported California State Senate Bill No. 1161 (Min); and California State Assembly Bill No. 2448 (Ting).

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