

Resolution Condemning Anti-Asian American Scapegoating And Hate Violence

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Whereas incidents of anti-Asian American violence and harassment have spiraled since the pandemic began, and particularly following statements by former President Trump attempting to blame Chinese people for the virus, including calling the virus, “the Chinese Virus” and “Kung Flu;”

Whereas, while data is scant, there have been significant and horrific incidents including assaults, slashing, and death. There have also been numerous incidents of verbal taunts and threats coupled with xenophobic and racist remarks. Two cities have reported an increase in anti-Asian hate crimes in 2020. Asian Americans are reluctant to report incidents, due to cultural and linguistic barriers, as well as fear. A community effort called Stop AAPI Hate has collected some 2,808 self-reported incidents by the end of 2020. Most victims have been women or over 60 years of age and have included all Asian ethnicities. Moreover, Pew Research Center found that one third of Asian Americans report being the target of racial slurs or scapegoating since the pandemic. Polls also show that a third of all people and 60% of Asians have witnessed Asians being blamed for the pandemic;

Whereas Asian American businesses and workers have been hurt by the increase in hate and scapegoating incidents. Business owners report that business is down, more than for their counterparts that are not clearly Asian American owned or staffed. A business owner, following targeting of employees, has reduced hours to allow workers to get home safely. Asian American unemployment has been higher during the pandemic than it has for the general population;

Whereas, while this phenomenon reflects a dramatic increase since the inception of the pandemic in this country, it neither begins nor ends with former President Trump or the pandemic itself. Indeed, anti-Asian American hostility has erupted throughout Asian American history, inflamed by labor pressures, international conflicts or economic issues. It has sometimes led to racist governmental acts, such as the Chinese Exclusion Act or the internment of Japanese Americans in concentration camps. And it has led to violence, mass lynchings of Chinese in the 19th century, and the hate killing of Vincent Chin in Detroit during a period of intense competition with Japanese automobile companies;

Whereas the fatal shootings of eight people in Atlanta, GA, six of whom were Asian American women, demonstrate the tendency by some authorities to downplay the hate in the killings and the complexity of hate violence that could include racial, ethnic, and misogynistic motivations. Incidents also could involve property crimes that also include racist targeting or other hate elements;

Whereas federal, state, and local hate crimes laws vary widely; many jurisdictions have none, and many are not well known, reported, or enforced. State laws, like Virginia, often include sentence enhancement provisions. Federal laws, conceived before many jurisdictions had their own hate crimes ordinances, have been utilized only where local jurisdictions failed to adequately prosecute the underlying crimes;

Whereas President Joe Biden issued an order “Condemning and Combating Racism, Xenophobia, and Intolerance Against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the United States.” In it, he cites the government’s responsibility for preventing “bullying, harassment, and hate crimes against AAPI persons.” He commits his Administration to reverse this intolerance and to combat the racism against Asian Americans and all groups facing hate. He instructs all federal departments to cooperate to the extent allowed by law in fighting xenophobic and racist scapegoating, in promoting reporting of such incidents; in prosecution of hate and other federal crimes associated with this phenomenon; and coordinating with community and civil rights groups and state and local governments in challenging these hate incidents; and

Whereas the Democratic National Committee, through Chair Jaime Harrison, Vice Chair Senator Tammy Duckworth, and AAPI Caucus Chair Bel Leong-Hong, has condemned the persistent violence and hatred against members of the AAPI communities and are alarmed by the recent disturbing increase in these abhorrent attacks. They say that, As Democrats, we know that diversity is our strength, and that unity is our power. We must call out racism and xenophobia and urge leaders and law enforcement agencies to combat the recent rise in attacks, to work with communities to ensure the appropriate reporting of these attacks and to prosecute those who are responsible to the fullest extent of the law.” Now, therefore, be it—

Resolved that the Alexandria Democratic Committee—

- 1) Rejects the racial scapegoating, resulting in violence or verbal harassment, at any time and to all groups, but now specifically as to the rising hate encountered by Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders since the beginning of the Pandemic and the divisive remarks of the former President;
- 2) Urges our city and our state public officials to take the actions sought by President Biden’s Presidential Memorandum condemning racism, xenophobia, and intolerance against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders during and following the pandemic. This shall include public statements and education against scapegoating and promoting the report of incidents that constitute crimes or hate crimes to law enforcement and hate harassment to human rights and civil rights groups collecting such data, such as Stop AAPI Hate and Asian Americans Advancing Justice. It shall also include outreach and engagement with Asian American businesses, organizations, and residents to promote reporting and provide support. Law enforcement should reach out and respond to any possible violations of the law and should report and coordinate as to any possible hate crimes with appropriate State and Federal authorities;
- 3) Recognizes that hate incidents may involve intersecting motivations such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, or in property crimes targeting race or otherwise including hate elements. This complexity should not diminish the consideration of hate motivation or the prosecution of hate crimes; and
- 4) Supports legislation and executive action at all levels to make hate crime and hate incident reporting easier and more uniformly collected and reported.