



COUNCILWOMAN
SUELY
SARO

Date: March 16, 2021

To: Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilwoman Suely Saro

Vice Mayor Rex Richardson

Councilwoman Cindy Allen

Councilmember Roberto Uranga

Subject: Condemning the hate incidents, xenophobic rhetoric, and harassments against Asian Pacific Islander Americans (APIA).

RECOMMENDATION:

Request the City Attorney to prepare a resolution condemning hate incidents, xenophobic rhetoric, and harassment against Asian Pacific Islander Americans and work towards ensuring that APIA feel safe both during this COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

BACKGROUND

When the COVID-19 pandemic began, inflammatory and xenophobic rhetoric referring to COVID-19 as the “Chinese virus” or “kung flu” has put the Asian and Pacific Islander American families, communities, and businesses at risk for bullying, harassment, and hate crimes.

Many APIA in Los Angeles county and around the nation have been unjustly blamed for causing the pandemic and are targeted for discriminatory treatment, hostility, and violence. Yet, an estimated 2 million APIA are sacrificing their lives to make our country safe and are serving on the front line of this crisis as healthcare providers, as first

responders, and other essential roles. According to a report by the National Nurses United, nearly 31.5% of the nurses who have died of coronavirus in the United States are Filipino, even though they make up just 4% of the nursing population nationwide.¹

Racism and discriminatory treatment, hostility, and violence towards APIA have existed in this country for a very long time. Racism and its consequential acts of hate have fueled legislations such as the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, the first law barring immigration solely based on race to the 1942 Executive Order 9066, the resolution that led to the relocation and incarceration of 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry.

According to a Pew Research Center report, about three-in-ten Asian adults (31%) say they have been subject to slurs or jokes because of their race or ethnicity since the outbreak of the pandemic.² The Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple in Little Tokyo, for example, was recently vandalized with items stolen and included an assault. In the City of Rosemead, Matthew Leung, an elementary school worker waiting at a bus stop was brutally beaten with his own cane and lost part of his finger as a result of his injuries, and finally, 84-years-old Vicha Ratanapakdee, an elderly Thai resident of San Francisco and nearly blind, died from injuries he sustained during an assault he suffered while walking. The Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council shared that 250 hate incidents and hate crimes have been reported to Los Angeles County, but they believe there are many more that have gone unreported.³

The City of Long Beach, therefore, condemns the discriminatory treatment, hostility, and violence against Asian Pacific Islander Americans and commit towards ensuring APIA feel safe both during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

FISCAL IMPACT

No Financial Management review was able to be conducted due to the urgency and time sensitivity of this item.

¹ "Sins of Omission: How Government Failures to Track Covid-19 Data Have Led to More Than 1,700 Healthcare Worker Deaths and Jeopardize Public Health" Sept 2020
https://www.nationalnursesunited.org/sites/default/files/nnu/graphics/documents/0920_Covid19_SinsOfOmission_Data_Report.pdf

² "Many Black and Asian Americans Say They Have Experienced Discrimination Amid the COVID-19 Outbreak" Jul 2020 <https://www.pewresearch.org/>

³ "'I Was Fearful To Go Outside': Woman Recalls Asian American Hate Crime Against Her As More Incidents Are Being Report" Feb 2021
<https://losangeles.cbslocal.com/2021/02/26/asian-american-hate-crimes-hate-incidents-los-angeles-county/>