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April 23, 2021

**CONTACT:**

Josh Koehn

[Josh.Koehn@asm.ca.gov](mailto:Josh.Koehn@asm.ca.gov)

## **API Legislative Caucus Applauds U.S. Senate for Passing COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act**

**SACRAMENTO, CA** — The California Asian Pacific Islander (API) Legislative Caucus applauds the United States Senate for passing the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act, which was led by Senator Mazie K. Hirono (D-Hawaii) and Representative Grace Meng (D-NY) and comes in response to the surge of anti-Asian hate crimes.

The Act overwhelmingly passed the U.S. Senate in a 94-1 vote. Once signed into law, the bill will create a new position at the Department of Justice to expedite review of COVID-19-related hate crimes, while also requiring guidance for state and local entities on best practices for reporting and responding to hate crimes. The bill now heads to the U.S. House of Representatives.

“Thankfully, the U.S. Senate took a bipartisan stand against hate,” said **Senator Richard Pan (D-Sacramento), Chair of the API Legislative Caucus**. “For far too long API communities have been rendered invisible, but enough is enough. We will no longer be silenced. Today’s vote validated our lived experience and turned words into actions. This is a critical step in combating hate in America.”

Since the start of the pandemic, the Stop AAPI Hate project has received nearly 3,800 reports of anti-Asian attacks and discrimination. Almost 50% of these incidents occurred here in California, and around 70% of the reports came from women. In 2021 alone, more than 500 reports of anti-Asian discrimination have been reported.

“The U.S. Senate deserves credit for passing this bill to protect Asian American and Pacific Islanders, but it should be noted that this vote didn’t come until after nearly 4,000 hate crimes and incidents of discrimination,” said **Assemblymember Evan Low (D-Silicon Valley), Vice Chair of the API Legislative Caucus**. “Were it not for the incredible AAPI representation we have in Congress, I worry this national crisis might have been ignored. The AAPI community — and all Americans — must continue to demand greater accountability in rooting out racism and xenophobia until we know our voices have been heard.”

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*The California Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus represents and advocates for the interests of the diverse API communities throughout California. It seeks to increase Asian Pacific Islander participation and representation in all levels of government.*

*Website of the California API Legislative Caucus: <http://apicaucus.legislature.ca.gov>*