



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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# **API Caucus Announces COVID-19 Response Proposals**

*Budgetary and legislative efforts focus on confronting incidents of hate against Asian Americans and supporting immigrant communities*

**Sacramento, CA**--The Asian and Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus (APILC) released a [package of measures](#) today aimed at combating anti-Asian sentiment in the wake of COVID-19 and supporting Asian and Pacific Islander (API) communities during the pandemic. APILC has prioritized a budget proposal of \$1.4 million in one-time funding for research, advocacy, and education on the impacts of COVID-19 on California's API communities.

"Our API communities are not only under attack from COVID-19, but also from the virus of racism," said Assemblymember David Chiu (D-San Francisco), APILC Chair. "This package seeks to alleviate some of the economic, political, and societal burdens on our API communities in California."

For Asian Americans and Pacific Islander communities, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused widespread health and economic concerns as well as an increase in discrimination and racist attacks.

To better understand the scope of incidents of anti-Asian American and Pacific Islander hate and violence, Asian Pacific Planning and Policy Council (A3PCON), Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA), and the San Francisco State Asian American Studies Department launched the [Stop AAPI Hate reporting center](#) in March. The center allows individuals who have been directly impacted by or have a firsthand account of an incident of hate to report the incident. In its first month, the reporting center received 1,500 incidents of verbal harassment, shunning and physical assaults. Of those incidents, 600 occurred in California.

The \$1.4 million budget request would go towards funding work already underway by organizations involved in the Stop AAPI Hate reporting center and the UCLA Asian American Studies Center. Specifically, the funding would allow these groups to analyze hate crimes and hate incidents in California, the economic impact of COVID-19 on API small business, and the health and mental health of API communities in California. They would also be tasked with recommending policy proposals and creating an education campaign on anti-Asian sentiment.

APILC is joining with the California Latino Legislative Caucus on a second budget ask to provide relief to California's undocumented communities. At a time when undocumented people have been largely left out of COVID-19 recovery efforts, the budget proposal asks for Medi-Cal inclusion for all low-income undocumented adults, the expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit to all income-eligible tax filers regardless of immigration status, and disaster relief for undocumented workers unable to work due to COVID-19.

In addition to budget proposals, APILC will be supporting a number of bills throughout the legislative process. The bills identified as crucial priorities are as follows:

- **Senate Bill 890** by Senator Richard Pan (D-Sacramento) aims to protect victims of crimes from being further traumatized by requiring social media companies to remove photos or videos of a crime posted by the perpetrator at the request of the victim or victim's family.
- **Assembly Bill 1916** by Assemblymember Kansen Chu (D-San Jose) ensures Californians have access to important emergency information in the languages that they speak. During times of declared emergencies, the state would be required to translate all emergency materials into the languages spoken by three percent of the population. Local counties would be required to do the same during local emergencies for languages spoken by more than 1,000 people.
- **Assembly Bill 2113** by Assemblymember Evan Low (D-Silicon Valley) seeks to alleviate the barriers refugees and asylum seekers face in obtaining employment. The bill would direct boards under the Department of Consumer Affairs to expedite refugee and asylee licensing applications.
- **Assembly Bill 2598** by Assemblymembers Rob Bonta (D-Oakland) and David Chiu increases transparency and gives local communities a greater say in if local law enforcement agencies participate in the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) program, which has inappropriately targeted API communities in the past. Further, by cross-deputizing local law enforcement to act as federal agents, the JTTF uses local resources to add to the deportation pipeline, undermining California's sanctuary state policies.
- **Assembly Bill 2788** by Assemblymember Todd Gloria (D-San Diego) recognizes that utilities like electricity and gas are essential to all households and Californians should not have to forego these essentials in order to protect themselves from deportation. This bill would prohibit electric and gas companies from sharing consumer consumption data with immigration authorities without a court-ordered subpoena or judicial warrant.

The bills are expected to be heard in the Legislature in the coming weeks.

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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>