



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 16, 2021

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‘This is a do or die situation’

Hate Crime Survivors Join API Legislative Caucus, Stop AAPI Hate, 150 Community Organizations in Urging Governor Newsom to Approve \$210 Million Budget Request

SACRAMENTO, CA — On Tuesday, the California Asian Pacific Islander (API) Legislative Caucus, Stop AAPI Hate, the Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs, hate crime survivors, and supporters from leading API and ally organizations took part in a press conference urging Governor Gavin Newsom to approve a \$210 million Budget investment to ensure California adequately addresses the far-reaching and long-term impacts of anti-API hate.

The API Equity Budget package passed its first major hurdle Monday, when the California State Legislature supported the allocation of \$210 million to API communities across the state. This historic investment responds to the surge in anti-API hate and violence over the past year and addresses racial inequities that have affected the API community since the 1800s. The budget package is now on Governor Newsom’s desk.

Since the start of the pandemic, xenophobia and bigotry against the API community have escalated to unprecedented levels. Stop AAPI Hate has received more than 6,600 reports of hate crimes and incidents of discrimination since March 2020. Almost half of those incidents were reported in California, and these racist attacks have disproportionately affected the most vulnerable members of the community, such as elders, young people, and women who report hate incidents two times as often as Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) men.

“We are facing a dual pandemic with AAPI hate being the worst of it,” said **Carl Chan, President of the Oakland Chinatown Chamber of Commerce and a hate crime survivor.**

“We refuse to be the victims because we want to be the game changers. Today, our Governor is announcing the opening of the economy but many AAPI businesses are not ready because we are still facing many problems from the anti-AAPI hate. This is a do or die situation. We need your help now before it is too late.”

“Long before the pandemic, anti-Asian hate and sentiment had already made its way into the classrooms,” said **Millie Liao, a community organizer and student in the Los Angeles**

Unified School District. “We are still kids, still growing and sometimes we get scared. And the worst part is we’re scared because we can never change the part of us that people hate. The first step toward a safer tomorrow for AAPI students is through their schools and this step can be taken by supporting the API Equity Budget. This budget gives students a promise. A promise that if they can’t be safe anywhere else, they can be safe at school and that there is a place for them in schools to exist, to learn and to grow.”

“I am the daughter of refugee and immigrant parents. Over 40 years later I have experienced some type of anti-Asian hate or violence and I thought that was normal. That is not okay,” said **Stephanie Nguyen, Executive Director of Asian Resources Inc. and Vice Mayor of the City of Elk Grove.** “These anti-AAPI hate incidents are attacking our most vulnerable in our AAPI communities. I see this every single day and I want to be able to say I don’t see this anymore. It needs to stop and it will only stop if Governor Newsom invests in our communities. There is an opportunity for us to move forward but we can’t do that unless this budget is approved.”

“There are far reaching impacts from this hate. We have seen high levels of unemployment in the AAPI community, small AAPI business closures, and significant impacts on mental health and wellbeing,” said **Manjusha Kulkarni, Executive Director of A3PCON and co-founder of Stop AAPI Hate.** “The API Equity Budget is not just about the hate against our community but also about these impacts and the lack of investment over the years for our AAPI communities. Bold and historic action must be taken now.”

“As anti-Asian violence has skyrocketed, our Caucus sprang into action, working to stand up against hate and support our communities under attack,” said **Assemblymember David Chiu (D-San Francisco).** “This budget proposal makes the necessary investments to address anti-Asian hate, support victims and rebuild our communities.”

“The API community has long suffered from barriers to government services and being invisible in too many ways in America, including lack of data on our needs. The COVID-19 pandemic has only highlighted the vulnerability of our community to hate and the need for support,” said **Senator Richard Pan (D-Sacramento), Chair of the API Legislative Caucus.** “The API Equity Budget proposal is a modest request for \$210 million over three years from our community to help the API community, and we appreciate its adoption by the California Legislature. More than 150 community organizations now look to Governor Newsom to lead by including the API Equity Budget as part of the final state budget.”

“Preventing hate crimes against Asian American and Pacific Islanders is the API Caucus’ top priority, but we can’t make meaningful change without rooting out the systemic racism that has metastasized during the pandemic,” said **Assemblymember Evan Low (D-Silicon Valley), Vice Chair of the API Legislative Caucus.** “The API Caucus budget request provides a blueprint to meaningful change, from forming a racial bias task force and data collection efforts on hate crimes to education programs in schools and plans to spur economic development. I look forward to Governor Newsom fulfilling his pledge to stand by the AAPI community’s side and dedicate the necessary funds to stop anti-Asian hate.”

“California’s future growth and success depends on being a state of inclusion,” said **Karthick Ramakrishnan, Chair of the California Commission on Asian & Pacific Islander Affairs.** “We need meaningful investments in language access, community healing, and data equity in order to ensure that Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders from across the country and across the world continue to move to California and remain here,” he added.

View the full press conference here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9hP9PEObElw>

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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>