

May 31, 2024

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Johnson, and Leader Jeffries:

We, the undersigned 88 organizations, urge Congressional leadership to unequivocally denounce and condemn anti-Asian bigotry and its use by Members of Congress, and encourage Members of your caucuses to refrain from peddling this rhetoric. Sadly, the Asian American community has known the painful effect of discriminatory policy and rhetoric from the U.S. government since Asian immigrants first stepped foot into the US nearly two centuries ago.

Recently, responding to amplified anti-Asian bigotry from the White House during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, incidences of anti-Asian hate have skyrocketed. Research from the DOJ's U.S. Commission on Civil Rights showed that anti-Asian hate crimes increased by 164% in 2021.¹ In 2021, a gunman sought out and entered three Asian-owned spas in Georgia, opened fire, and killed eight people, including six Asian women.² Asian Americans have also experienced heightened harassment during the COVID-19 pandemic. Between March 2020 and March 2022, Stop AAPI Hate has had 11,500 acts of hate reported by Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.³ About two-thirds of these hate incidents involved harassment, such as verbal or written hate speech or inappropriate gestures.

Yet today, Members of Congress, including key Committees, amplify the same hateful rhetoric that provided the fertile ground for the outbreak of anti-Asian bigotry. Recent hearings about the so-called '[Unprecedented Surge in Chinese Illegal Immigration](#)' have provided a platform for members to continue to vilify both Asian immigrants and members of the Asian American community. Referring to Chinese immigrants arriving at the US/Mexico border, Rep. Strong (R-AL) said, " Hamas invaded Israel and Israel defended itself. [The] United States is being

¹ [The Federal Response to Anti-Asian Racism in the United States](#)

² [8 Dead in Atlanta Spa Shootings. With Fears of Anti-Asian Bias - The New York Times](#)

³ [Two Years and Thousands of Voices - Stop AAPI Hate](#)

invaded, [sic] that's the right word, by 160 different countries. And this administration has done nothing, 10 million illegal aliens coming across the border. And I'll say this again, this fentanyl is going to kill a generation of Americans.” Rather than embracing Chinese immigrants who are coming to America to escape religious persecution, seek economic opportunity, and flee political repression, this hearing amplified dangerous assumptions that perpetuated xenophobic stereotypes about a “multi-faceted menace” and largely unsubstantiated “nefarious motives.”

To perpetuate this framing is to ignore the long and shameful history of deliberate and explicit racism towards immigrants, specifically Chinese and Asian Americans. From the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, to the incarceration of approximately 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II, to the rise of anti-Asian hate brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the AANHPI community has been through much anguish and systemic oppression. It is especially egregious that such a hearing was held during Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander month, a time meant to celebrate the diversity, sacrifices, and contributions of this community.

Today, we see that much work needs to be done, and urgently so. Our immigration system is in need of desperate and comprehensive reform. The federal surveillance system continues to disproportionately target the AANHPI community. Further, state and federal lawmakers are [introducing and passing](#) discriminatory laws that functionally invite racial profiling by prohibiting foreign nationals from purchasing, leasing, or acquiring property in the U.S.⁴

As we close out Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, we implore House and Senate leadership to not only condemn anti-Asian bigotry, but also to publicly acknowledge the dangers of rhetoric around a so-called “invasion” of immigrants and to publicly encourage the Members of your caucuses to refrain from using such belligerent language. Failure to do so will continue to inflict long-lasting damage to all communities, whether they are persecuted Christians from China, Haitians fleeing violence and political instability, asylum seekers from Nicaragua, or others seeking refuge. We cannot allow prejudiced and inflammatory language to dominate critical policy conversations, nor to threaten the safety and liberty of our communities.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Signed,

⁴ [With New "Alien Land Laws" Asian Immigrants Are Once Again Targeted by Real Estate Bans](#)

National Organizations

Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC

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Acacia Center for Justice

African Communities Together

Alianza Americas

America's Voice

Bend the Arc: Jewish Action

CASA

Center for Law and Social Policy

Church World Service

CommonDefense.us

Communities United for Status & Protection (CUSP)

Foreign Policy for America

Haitian Bridge Alliance

HIAS

Human Rights First

Immigrant Justice Network

Immigrant Legal Resource Center

Immigration Hub

Japanese American Citizens League (JACL)

Justice Action Center

National Education Association

National Employment Law Project

National Immigration Law Center

National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC)

National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund

National Partnership for New Americans

NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice

Nicaraguan American Legal Defense and Education Fund, NALDEF

Pasifika Uprising

Social Workers for Immigration Justice

Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)

Stop AAPI Hate

T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights

Tahirih Justice Center

The National Urban League

Union for Reform Judaism

Union of Concerned Scientists
We Are All America
#WelcomeWithDignity
Western States Center

State/Local Organizations

AAPI New Jersey
APIA Vote - Colorado
APIA Vote - Michigan
Arizona Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander Advocates
Arizona Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander for Equity
Asian American Organizing Project
Asian American Pacific Islanders (AAPI) Coming Together Florida
Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Atlanta
Asian Law Alliance
Asian Texans for Justice
Association of Chinese Americans
Centreville Immigration Forum
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
Comunidad SOL, Ohio
DRUM - Desis Rising Up & Moving
Estrella del Paso (Formerly Diocesan Migrant and Refugee Services Inc)
Greater Orlando Asian American Bar Association
Haitian Bridge Alliance
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
Immigrant Defenders Law Center
Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project
Indian American Coalition of Central Texas
Jewish Activists for Immigration Justice
La Raza Community Resource Center (San Francisco)
Louisiana Organization for Refugees and Immigrants - LORI
Make the Road Action Nevada
Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Coalition
Missouri Asian American Youth Foundation
Montgomery County Progressive Asian American Network (MoCoPAAN)
Network of Asian American Organization
North Carolina Asian Americans Together
OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocates Greater Cleveland Chapter
OCA-Greater Houston

Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance
People Progress Network
Rising Voices
Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network
SEAMAAC, Inc.
South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center
Surveillance Technology Oversight Project (S.T.O.P.)
TARGETOHIO
Tennessee Justice for Our Neighbors
Viet Voices
Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations
Voces Unidas RGV
Voice of Vietnamese Americans
Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Cente