

Berkeley Unified School District
Resolution 21-036

Denouncing Hate Crimes and Bigotry Targeting Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders

WHEREAS, The Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council and Chinese for Affirmative Action launched a hate incident-reporting internet website, titled "Stop AAPI Hate," at the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak in March of 2020, which documented over 2,800 hate incidents against Asian-American Pacific Islanders (AAPI) in 2020 and over 700 of these incidents occurred in the Bay Area of California; and

WHEREAS, On January 30, 2021, 84-year-old Vicha Ratanapakdee, a nearly-blind and gentle elderly Thai man, died from injuries resulting from an attack while he was walking in the City of San Francisco, in what is deemed as a hate crime; and

WHEREAS, On February 3, 2021, a 64 year old grandmother was assaulted and robbed of her purse, which included more than \$1,000 cash, in broad daylight in the parking lot of the Dai Thanh Supermarket in downtown San Jose; and

WHEREAS, 21% of the Berkeley population is Asian and 8% of Berkeley Unified School District students are Asian.

WHEREAS, On March 9, 2021, Berkeley City Council adopted a resolution condemning anti-Asian hate and violence and encouraging all residents to speak up, and intervene if possible, when witnessing anyone being targeted by anti-Asian hate; and

WHEREAS, On March 16, 2021, 8 people (6 being Asian, 2 white, all but one being women) were gunned down by a White man in Atlanta, Georgia;

WHEREAS, These reports depict a disturbing reality, especially for Asian women, who experience violence nearly 2.5 times more than their male counterparts. However, the numbers do not tell the full story: They don't include many of the unreported and increasingly normalized incidents of violence; and

WHEREAS, Racism and anti-AAPI sentiments has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and perpetuated by language used by former President Trump, who characterizes this global pandemic as the "Chinese virus"; and

WHEREAS, Politically charged and culturally insensitive rhetoric referring to COVID-19 as the “Chinese virus” or “kung flu” further encourages racism, prejudice, and hate crimes against AAPIs; and

WHEREAS, Racism toward AAPIs has always existed ever since AAPIs began immigrating to the United States, such as the 19th-century scapegoating of AAPIs, also known as the “Yellow Peril,” as well as the 21st-century scapegoating of AAPIs for the COVID-19 pandemic. These examples are painful, but they are also part of a larger, and often dismissed, history of violence. In addition to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the 1875 Page Act which created a presumption of Asian women as sex workers, the assaults against Filipino farmworkers in the 1930s by white mobs, and the Japanese internment camps of the 1940s, there’s a longstanding history of racialized colonial wars that have shaped AAPI communities’ histories before AAPIs even arrived to the United States; and

WHEREAS, The recent rise of violence against Asian Americans is part of a larger history of violence against communities of color, we must work together to create community centered solutions that stop the violence in all communities; and

WHEREAS, The counter movement condemning the violence against AAPIs is also part of a larger history of resistance against White supremacy and colonization, highlighting inter-racial solidarity, which the Black community has consistently shown dating back to Frederick Douglass’s opposition to restrictions on Chinese immigration, Black support for the Filipino community during the Phillipine-American War (1899-1913), Black opposition to the Vietnam War (1955-75) through an anti-war and pro-refugee lens, Asian American women activists’ (i.e. Grace Lee Boggs and Yuri Kochiyama) work in abolition and Black liberation, and the Third World Liberation Front which united Latinx/Chicanx, Indigenous, Black and AAPI communities in the fight for Ethnic Studies in the 60s; and

WHEREAS, The Model Minority myth continues to divide communities of color, feed into racism, and contributes to the false notion that the AAPI community does not experience racial oppression or is impacted by White supremacy, which ignores the AAPI community’s experience with Islamophobia, anti-Arab racism, and anti-South Asian violence, especially post 9/11; and;

WHEREAS, The Model Minority myth also creates the stereotype that the AAPI community is a monolithic group, a stereotype that obscures and makes invisible the economic, academic and social struggles of our diverse communities (i.e. Native

Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, Southeast Asians, Arab-Americans, mixed-race Asians/Hapas, undocumented Asians, Hmong students, etc.), which is why this resolution also forcefully condemns the ideology of the Model Minority myth and dispels it due to its role in hindering solidarity amongst communities of color; and

WHEREAS, the rise of anti-AAPI racism and violence that occurs every day also serves as a reminder of the dire need for Ethnic Studies from k-12th grades, because if we do not develop anti-racist consciousness with and for our youth, White supremacy ideology will persist; and

WHEREAS, the Berkeley Unified School District Board of Education stands with the Asian-American and Pacific Islander community and wishes to affirm its commitment to the safety and wellbeing of Asian American students, staff and community members and ensure they know they are not alone and that they can speak out to help stop the spread of bigotry; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Berkeley Unified School District Board of Education calls on all community members and leaders to join us in condemning racist attacks against Asian Americans in all forms, and renewing our commitment to speak out against such attacks, encourage the reporting of hate incidents, defend and protect those targeted, and seek justice and accountability against those who commit hate crimes against AAPI members of our community; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the the Berkeley Unified School District Board of Education denounces hate crimes, hateful rhetoric, and hateful acts against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and works to ensure that AAPI students feel safe and welcome, both during this COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Education of the Berkeley Unified School District this 24th day of March 2021.

AYES: 6

NOES: 0

ABSENT: 0

ABSENT: 0