

Dear Racial and Ethnic Politics Section members,

The Racial and Ethnic Politics section shares our condolences with the victims of the monstrous hate crimes committed against Asian Americans in Atlanta, Georgia and with all of the victims in this growing epidemic of anti-Asian violence. These attacks against members of our community are a reminder that the fight for equal rights and protections for people of color is far from over and require constant vigilance and activism.

While often overlooked, Asian Americans have long faced severe and persistent discrimination in the United States. From the Chinese Exclusion Act of the 1880's, to the unlawful internment of Japanese Americans in the 1940's, to the heinous murder of Vincent Chin in the 1980's, the United States has long treated Asian Americans as second-class citizens. Now, racist rhetoric from politicians tying Asian Americans to the COVID pandemic has once again fueled anti-Asian hate crimes across the country.

We strongly condemn white supremacist rhetoric and policy making and its total cessation must be immediate and without equivocation. It is particularly important for political leaders who have engaged in anti-Asian hate speech to be held accountable and removed from positions of power straightaway. This vile rhetoric has led to significant pain for members of our community and the unnecessary loss of life. Making these changes is only the start. There needs to be more awareness and acknowledgement about anti-Asian bias in the United States and individuals have to be more aware of their implicit biases against this group so we do not continue to replicate the marginalization of Asian Americans.

The continued violence against people of color and the fact that it is growing at an alarming rate, has created a new generation of dedicated activists and supportive politicians who want to combat anti-Asian bias. Online movements like #StopAAPIHate and #stopasianhate have generated a significant amount of attention and have increased awareness of the plight that Asian Americans face in this country. Members of the U.S. Congress such as New York Representative Grace Meng have introduced legislation which will create a database for anti-Asian hate crimes and make it easier for Asian Americans to report these incidents.

We call on members of our section to assist with these and other efforts in any way possible including contacting your member of Congress, donating to anti-racist organizations, and attending protests around these issues. Our members doing research in relevant areas should also be willing to share their expertise and make their important studies as accessible and available as possible to aid in ending anti-Asian bias. Finally, it is important for us as educators to make our students aware of the disparities in opportunities that Asian Americans, Blacks, Latinxs, and Native Americans face and provide the next generation with tools to dismantle racial/ethnic hierarchies in the United States. Given the long history of racial violence against people of color in this country, it may be close to impossible to completely erase racism in the United States. That said, we must do whatever we can to bend the arc of history toward justice because the violence committed in Atlanta cannot stand.

In solidarity,

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