

# STATEMENT DENOUNCING CORONAVIRUS-RELATED VIOLENCE & DISCRIMINATION AGAINST ASIANS & ASIAN AMERICANS

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**Dear Columbia Law School Community,**

On March 25<sup>th</sup>, Representative Grace Meng introduced a [resolution](#) condemning coronavirus-related discrimination against Asians and Asian Americans. On April 2<sup>nd</sup>, Senators Kamala Harris, Tammy Duckworth, and Mazie Hirono announced their plan to introduce a [companion resolution](#) in the Senate. **We, the student leaders of the Asian American History and the Law Reading Group, write this letter in support of these resolutions and to condemn all coronavirus-related acts of racism towards Asians and Asian Americans.**

Thousands of coronavirus-related acts of violence and hostility towards Asians and Asian Americans have been reported since January. Despite stay-at-home orders, these incidents have not decreased. In the past two weeks alone, over 1,100 cases of coronavirus-related attacks and discrimination against Asians and Asian Americans have been reported. Undoubtedly, countless more cases have gone unreported as many victims remain silent.

Examples of recent hate crimes against Asians and Asian Americans include:

*[two children \(ages 6 and 2\) and two adults were stabbed at a wholesale grocery in Midland, Texas for “infecting people with coronavirus”;](#)*

*[a 16-year-old boy was sent to the hospital after being attacked in Los Angeles, California by bullies who accused him of having coronavirus;](#)*

*[a woman wearing a mask was kicked and punched at a New York City subway station after being called a “diseased b-tch”;](#)*

*[a woman was attacked by three 15-year-olds on an MTA bus in the Bronx while being told she had “caused the coronavirus”;](#)*

*[and, on our own campus, an anti-Chinese message written on a chalkboard in Butler library that read, “Wuhan virus isolation area – KEEP OUT!”](#)*

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These recent acts of violence are not new to the Asian American community. Asians and Asian Americans have long faced oppression and discrimination in the US, yet most of this history has been swept aside and forgotten. Most people know of the Chinese Exclusion Act and Japanese internment. However, the history of violence and racism toward Asian Americans in this country does not end there. To name only a few other examples, in 1871, the Los Angeles Riots led to one of the [largest lynchings in US history](#), resulting in the hanging of seventeen Chinese men and boys. In June of 1982, [Vincent Chin](#), a Chinese-American man, was hunted down and beaten to death the night before his wedding due to anti-Japanese sentiments during that time. And in 2012, due to heightened xenophobia following 9/11, a white supremacist [opened fire at a Sikh temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin](#), killing six and injuring three. Unfortunately, as recent events have shown, this historical pattern of blaming Asian Americans in times of crises persists.

**In an effort to break this pattern, we write to our Columbia Law School community to ensure that the violence occurring today is not forgotten tomorrow. We write because we condemn these violent acts motivated by racism, xenophobia, and hatred. We write because members of our own law school community have been affected.** The severity of these blatant acts of racism have had real impacts on our daily lives. We fear for our families—not only for their health, but also for their safety. Some of us fear even leaving our homes alone. Most of all, we fear that this culture of hatred and xenophobia will persist long after this crisis has passed. We are aware of the countless impacts coronavirus has had on every member of our law school community; however, we feel a responsibility to speak out on this issue due to the targeting of and acute impact on Asian Americans during these already challenging times.

Despite the use of terms such as “Chinese virus,” “Wuhan virus,” and “Kung Flu” by our President and other elected officials, Asian Americans are no more likely to have or transmit the virus than any other individual. Asian Americans are also not responsible for the actions or statements of the Chinese government. And despite being treated otherwise, Asian Americans are members of this nation deserving equal treatment and respect. If you or anyone you know has experienced or witnessed any act of violence or discrimination, we are here to support you and encourage you to reach out to one of the following resources below:

### **COLUMBIA-SPECIFIC RESOURCES**

Per Professor Goldberg’s email on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, you can [report incidents of discrimination or harassment](#) through Student Conduct and Community Standards, or join Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS)’s [Virtual Support Space for Coping with Racial and Ethnic Bias During a Pandemic](#) on Mondays @ 6 PM from April 6 to May 11, and Tuesdays @ noon from April 7 to May 12.

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## **NYC RESOURCES**

Individuals who have experienced hate crimes and bias-based incidents are encouraged to call the Hotline to Combat Coronavirus Hate Crimes and Xenophobic Rhetoric at 1-800-771-7755, or email [Civil.Rights@ag.ny.gov](mailto:Civil.Rights@ag.ny.gov). You may also reach out to NYPD's Crime Stoppers Hotline at 1-800-577-TIPS (8477).

If you are being harassed due to your race, nation of origin or other identities, call 311 or file a complaint online with the city's [Department of Human Rights](#).

## **OTHER RESOURCES**

You can report hate incidents to the [STOP AAPI HATE](#) Reporting Center. Based on these reports, the lead organizations plan to work with public, private and other community-based organizations to develop targeted education and media campaigns, to provide resources for impacted individuals and to advocate for policies and programs dedicated to curtailing racial profiling.

The National Asian Pacific American Board Association (NAPABA) has a [list of hate crime resources](#) covering pro bono legal services, mental health, bullying, and more.

Signed,

Student Leaders of the Asian American History and the Law Reading Group