



**ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION
OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY**

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April 26, 2021

The Honorable Albert Muratsuchi
Member of the California State Assembly
3424 W. Carson St. Suite 450
Torrance, CA 90503

Re: Letter In Support of California Assembly Bill 557

Dear Assemblymember Muratsuchi:

The Asian Pacific American Bar Association of Los Angeles County (APABA) submits this letter in support of California Assembly Bill 557, co-authored by Assemblymembers Robert Bonta, David Chiu, William Quirk, Alex Lee, Rebecca Bauer-Kahan, and Buffy Wicks, which requires the California Attorney General’s Office to “establish, maintain, and publicize a toll-free public hotline telephone number for the reporting of hate crimes, and for the dissemination of information about the characteristics of hate crimes, protected classes, civil remedies, and reporting options”

Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, hate crimes and incidents against the Asian Americans and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community have surged. Since March 2020, Stop AAPI Hate—a nonprofit organization that operates a reporting center for anti-AAPI violence, discrimination, and harassment—has collected nearly 4,000 reports of AAPI hate incidents from across the United States, with over 44% of those reports from California alone. These reports, however, do not reflect the true number of incidents. Language barriers, cultural background, and lack of confidence in the police or the government are just a few factors that have contributed to the underreporting of hate crimes and incidents against the AAPI community.

In light of these incidents, APABA commends the state’s efforts to document and provide the resources necessary to support those affected—victims and witnesses alike. Proper documentation of hate crimes and anti-AAPI incidents is vital to ensuring that victims and witnesses receive the resources and assistance they need, whether that be in the form of mental health support, funding, or other services.

Anti-AAPI sentiment has led to devastating consequences throughout our country’s history, from the repercussions of the Chinese Exclusion Act, internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, and senseless murder of Detroit autoworker Vincent Chin over 35 years ago, to more recent incidents such as the deadly attack on 84-year-old Vicha Ratanapakdee in San Francisco earlier this year, last month’s tragedy in Atlanta, and more.

As such, documentation, such as through the use of the proposed public reporting hotline, is crucial. APABA believes that California Assembly Bill 557 will make the documentation and reporting of hate crimes and incidents more accessible, paving the way for our state to support the individuals and communities who need it the most.

Sincerely,

Arnold Lee

Arnold Lee
President, APABA

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