



Memorandum

TO: RULES & OPEN GOVERNMENT
COMMITTEE

FROM: Councilmember Raul Peralez

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: April 8, 2020

Approved

Date: 04/08/2020

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION CONDEMNING XENOPHOBIA AGAINST THE
ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER COMMUNITY STEMMING FROM THE
COVID-19 CRISIS AND RELATED ACTIONS

RECOMMENDATION

Agendize for the April 21st City Council meeting the following:

1. Adopt a resolution condemning all xenophobic and discriminatory behavior towards the Asian Pacific Islander (API) Community arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and affirm the well-being and safety of the API community, and,
2. Direct the City Manager to include in a future report what strategies will be implemented to combat xenophobia against all communities post-COVID-19.

BACKGROUND

One unfortunate side effect of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has been the blatant xenophobic attitudes developed against the API community in the past several months. While the point of origin of this specific Novel Coronavirus may have been identified in Wuhan, China, it is absolutely inappropriate to infer responsibility to an entire ethnic community globally and worst, to act upon those inferences. Phrases such as “Chinese Virus” and the “Wuhan Virus” coined by our divisive national figureheads have led to increasing anxiety, tension and fear towards the API community.

The Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council, an Asian and Pacific Island American coalition based in Los Angeles, through their “STOP AAPI HATE” website have received over 1,110 reports of COVID-19 discrimination since March 19th. Notably Asian American women are twice as likely to be the target of these attacks and the harassment is often reported at essential businesses as the City shelter in place. In San José and throughout the Bay Area, we are hearing incidences of Asian Americans being

verbally accosted waiting in line at grocery stores and physically attacked while out. COVID-19 does not discriminate, however actions do. We must collectively think of the well being and safety of our residents and stand with our Asian American community. No community should be met with hostility or have to fear their safety during this difficult time.

The County of Santa Clara recently adopted a resolution (see Attachment #1) against the discrimination of our API community. In San José where 35% of our population identifies as Asian, we need to stand firmly by our neighbors of Asian Pacific Island descent. I do appreciate all the efforts that our City has put forth to combat xenophobia such as public service campaigns and ongoing disclaimers on anti-discrimination. However, that work needs to continue even well after the Shelter-in-Place order has been lifted and our everyday life resumes. Our City has been a model in addressing issues of race and equity head on and we must continue to remain steadfast in our commitment that everyone in San José should feel welcome and safe.

ATTACHMENT #1

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RESOLUTION NO. _____

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA DENOUNCING XENOPHOBIA AND ANTI-ASIAN SENTIMENT ARISING DUE TO FEARS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND AFFIRMING ITS COMMITMENT TO THE WELL-BEING AND SAFETY OF ASIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

WHEREAS, Asian American communities are suffering acts of discrimination, hate crimes, and microaggressions due to fears of COVID-19;

WHEREAS, since the December 2019 outbreak of the COVID-19 virus in Wuhan, China, the infection has grown to more than 600,000 confirmed cases and more than 30,000 confirmed deaths worldwide;

WHEREAS, according to the World Health Organization, over 100,000 cases have been reported in the United States as of March 29, 2020;

WHEREAS, at a White House press conference with the Coronavirus Task Force on March 18, 2020, President Trump dubbed the COVID-19 virus the “Chinese virus,” and a White House official reportedly called it “Kung-Flu”;

WHEREAS, such rhetoric is reminiscent of the late 1800s, when Chinese Americans were deemed the “yellow peril,” despite living in the United States for years;

WHEREAS, such rhetoric is inaccurate and stigmatizing, tends to incite fear and xenophobia, and may put Asian Americans at risk of retaliation;

WHEREAS, scientists have confirmed that the COVID-19 disease does not respect borders and is not caused by ethnicity, and the World Health Organization has cautioned against using geographic descriptors because they can fuel ethnic discrimination;

WHEREAS, as the COVID-19 virus has spread, numerous Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) have reported experiencing microaggressions, racial profiling, hate incidents and, in some cases, hate violence;

WHEREAS, in an effort to quantify and combat hate crimes targeting Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders stemming from people’s reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic, two Bay Area groups—Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council (A3PCON) and Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA)—created an online reporting center where people can fill out a form—currently available in English, traditional Chinese, simplified Chinese, and Korean—to report the location and type of discrimination experienced and other details;

WHEREAS, A3PCON and CAA plan to use the information reported to create targeted education and media campaigns, provide resources to those affected, and advocate for policies to curb racial targeting;

Resolution Denouncing Xenophobia and
Anti-Asian Sentiment arising due to fears
of the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Attachment: COUNSEL SIGNED Resolution Denouncing Xenophobia and Anti-Asian Sentiment for BOS 040720 (100999 : Resolution to

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WHEREAS, in Santa Clara County, one of the first minority-majority counties in the nation, Asians have been the largest racial group since 2014, and currently, Asians make up nearly 38 percent of the county's population; and

WHEREAS, the County of Santa Clara Board of Supervisors wishes to affirm its commitment to the well-being and safety of Asian American community members and ensure they know they are not alone and that they can speak out to help stop the spread of bigotry;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Clara, California, that:

1. The County denounces xenophobia and anti-Asian sentiment and does not support the Trump administration's rhetoric and racist remarks regarding the COVID-19 virus.
2. The County joins cities, counties, and states across the country in affirming its commitment to the safety and well-being of Asian Americans and in combating hate crimes targeting Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.
3. The County will continue its efforts to protect residents and victims of hate, and to prosecute and curb hate acts related to COVID-19 in partnership with nonprofits, the County of Santa Clara's District Attorney's office, the San José Police Department, and others.

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4. The County calls upon all counties, cities, and local governments across the United States to adopt similar commitments to reaffirm their solidarity with Asian American communities and commit to combatting hate.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Clara, State of California, on _____ by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

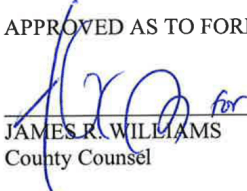
ABSTAIN:

CINDY CHAVEZ, President
Board of Supervisors

Signed and certified that a copy of this document has been delivered by electronic or other means to the President, Board of Supervisors.
ATTEST:

MEGAN DOYLE
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY:



JAMES R. WILLIAMS
County Counsel