



Great Public Schools
for Every Student

1201 16th Street, NW | Washington, DC 20036 | Phone: (202) 833-4000

Rebecca S. Pringle
President

Princess R. Moss
Vice President

Noel Candelaria
Secretary-Treasurer

Kim A. Anderson
Executive Director

April 14, 2021

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

On behalf of our 3 million members, who teach and nurture a diversity of students in communities across America and believe respect is a keystone of good citizenship, we urge you to vote YES on the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act, S. 937. Votes on this issue may be included in the NEA Report Card for the 117th Congress.

We have seen increasingly brazen, hateful attacks on Asian American Pacific Islander communities, stoked by the racism and xenophobia of those intent on scapegoating AAPI citizens for the virus. [Stop AAPI Hate reported 3,795 incidents](#) from March 19, 2020 to February 28, 2021. The organization estimates that these are only a fraction of the actual incidents that occurred, which included physical assault, verbal harassment, online harassment, and civil rights violations such as refusal of service and workplace discrimination. Elderly Asian Americans have been knocked to the ground and pummeled. Some citizens have been spat on. A woman in Marietta, Ga. was confronted in a pharmacy by someone who sprayed her with Lysol and yelled “You’re the infection! Go home! We don’t want you here!”

The COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act would:

- Designate a Department of Justice employee to assist with expedited review of COVID-19 hate crimes reported to federal, state, and/or local law enforcement;
- Provide guidance for state and local law enforcement agencies to establish online reporting of hate crimes or incidents and have online reporting available in multiple languages, and expand culturally competent and linguistically appropriate public education campaigns and data collection and reporting of hate crimes;
- Issue guidance detailing best practices to mitigate racially discriminatory language in describing the COVID-19 pandemic, in coordination with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the COVID-19 Equity Task Force, and community-based organizations.

In our current climate, words can easily incite violent—even deadly—acts. Such xenophobia must be condemned, especially during this unprecedented public health crisis. We must stand together to affirm that these words and actions do not represent who we are. We urge you to vote YES on the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan
Director of Government Relations
National Education Association