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May 17, 2021

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

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/H.R. 1843, and H.Res. 275, Condemning the horrific shootings in Atlanta, Georgia, on March 16, 2021, and reaffirming the House of Representatives' commitment to combating hate, bigotry, and violence against the Asian-American and Pacific Islander community. Votes on these issues may be included in the NEA Report Card for the 117th Congress.

We have seen increasingly brazen, hateful attacks on Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities, stoked by the racism and xenophobia of those intent on blaming AAPI citizens for the pandemic. [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.

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; and
- 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.

It is crucial that you pass H.Res. 275 not only to specifically denounce the Atlanta murders, but also to make clear that such heinous acts will be called out as the hate crimes they are. Your willingness to come together on these bills will reassure members of AAPI communities that they are valued and respected citizens, and that our nation will not tolerate violent actions against them or bigotry that targets them. We urge you to vote YES on the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act and H.Res. 275.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan
Director of Government Relations
National Education Association