



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## BUSINESS LEADERS SHOW SUPPORT FOR THE COVID-19 HATE CRIMES ACT

*Over 135 business leaders have signed onto National ACE's Letter Urging the House of Representatives to Pass the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act*

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today, the [National Asian/Pacific Islander American Chamber of Commerce and Entrepreneurship \(National ACE\)](https://www.nationalace.org) and over 135 business leaders, owners, and advocates sent a letter to the U.S. House of Representatives calling on the legislative body to swiftly pass the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act. For over a year, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) have been the targets of unprecedented levels of violence and anti-Asian sentiment as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

*"A law like the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act - one that bans hate crimes against AAPIs - holds the promise of protecting millions of business owners, like me,"* said Dr. Karen Eng, National ACE Board Chair. *"We will keep working with our House leaders to ensure that our communities are protected and receive equity and justice."*

The pandemic has hit AAPI business owners hard due to prejudice and racism. After the attacks in Georgia, Chinatowns across the United States reported a drop in foot traffic, and AAPI businesses reported a drop in demand. In a recent [survey](#), three in ten Americans blamed China or Chinese people for the pandemic, and sixty percent of Asian Americans have witnessed people blame Asian Americans for the pandemic.

The COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act would create a new position within the Department of Justice to crack down on the wave of racial bias against the AAPI community by facilitating expedited reviews of COVID-19 hate crimes, issue guidance for state and local law enforcement to establish online reporting in multiple languages, and equip community members to be empowered to report hate crime incidents. This bill would raise awareness about hate crimes during the COVID-19 pandemic and establish a hotline so that the crimes can be reported more easily.

*"The United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce is proud to stand with National ACE and other partners to support the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act to prevent discrimination in all shapes and forms. We believe strongly that any act of hatred against our Asian American and Pacific Islander brothers and sisters is an act against our Hispanic American community as well. In the midst of this global pandemic, these heinous crimes impact our small businesses who are trying to rebuild and reopen. We must act*

*now to protect the rights of all Americans and take necessary steps to stop this unacceptable behavior,”* said Ramiro A. Cavazos, President & CEO, United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

The bill passed the Senate with overwhelming bipartisan support in a 94-1 vote on April 22, 2021. Senator Hirono (D-HI) and Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) authored amendments to broaden support on both sides of the aisle. A provision authored by Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) and Senator Jerry Moran (R-KS) allowed for alternative sentencing during prosecution, established a hate crimes hotline, and offered support for hate crimes training for law enforcement.

*“We opened our market in Mesa, Arizona this past January, and our Polynesian and Pacific Islander community have been so supportive,” said Laukau and Paniani Ioelu, owners of Aloha Island Market, AZ. “It’s very hard to hear that people in our communities are being targeted for these hate crimes, just because of the way they look. This COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act is important for our Polynesian, Pacific Islander, and Asian brothers and sisters, so we can have justice for those that are victimized during this difficult time.”*

A nationwide [survey](#) of 5,000+ minority business owners found that 1 in 3 AAPI businesswomen have experienced anti-AAPI sentiment as a result of the pandemic. According to recent [data](#) collected by Stop Asian Hate, 36% of all hate crime incidents targeting AAPI’s occur at their place of business.

*“The hatred and violence being directed at Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders has no place anywhere,”* said Amy P. Healy, Grubhub’s Head of Government Affairs. *“Today, tomorrow and always, Grubhub stands in solidarity with the AAPI community and we are committed supporting actions that protect rights and stop discrimination.”*

National ACE President and CEO, Chiling Tong, added: *“Over the past year, we have seen an increase in hate crimes targeted against the AAPI community. This legislation is receiving strong bipartisan support in Congress, which highlights how serious this crisis is, and underlines the importance of fighting racism and hate. We need to stand together to speak out against hate and take action to stop these acts of violence.”*

Read the letter [here](#).

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### **About National ACE**

National ACE’s mission is to serve as a strong advocate of AAPI business interests and effect positive change on all issues that enhance and advance the goals and aspirations of AAPI business owners, entrepreneurs, and corporate leaders. National ACE strives to do this through supporting and promoting issues that impact the AAPI business community, improving the economic development and economic impact of the AAPI community, advancing coalitions and enhancing community building, and fostering the next generation of AAPI entrepreneurs and executives. National ACE provides a unified voice for the business interests of AAPIs nationally.