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Community Leaders Join Gov. Wolf to Call for End to COVID-Related Discrimination

Allentown, PA – Governor Tom Wolf’s advisory commissions are calling for the public to remain vigilant against hate after the Pennsylvania State Police [reported](#) an increasing number of incidents targeting members of the Asian American community due to misinformation regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I am advocating for all Pennsylvanians to take a stand against anti-Asian racism and report any discrimination they see,” said Gov. Wolf. “Hate is just one more symptom of this terrible disease. If we want to win our war against COVID-19, then we all need to work together.”

Governor's Advisory Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs Chairperson Wasi Mohamed released the following statement:

“All Pennsylvanians are facing the COVID-19 pandemic together, but not all are being blamed for it. As the number of coronavirus cases rise, so do the instances of harassment and discrimination targeting the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community in PA.

“It is not just physical violence and verbal abuse, but the boycotting of AAPI-owned businesses, the denial of public accommodation, and the denial of access to relief efforts. Much of the abuse is being weathered by the over 2 million AAPI healthcare workers on the frontlines of responding to this pandemic.

“Not only must we stop the overt forms of discrimination against the AAPI community, but we must not forget them in our response to this crisis. To push back against this racism and xenophobia we must speak out against xenophobic statements and misinformation, ensure AAPI communities have access to health and financial assistance information, and patronize the AAPI businesses that are being crippled by this crisis. In these times, it is critical for us to stand together, support our AAPI neighbors and communities, and move together as a Commonwealth to meet the needs of all Pennsylvanians.”

Legislators and leaders of other communities voiced their support for the Asian community and called for an end to all discrimination.

"We want to remind Pennsylvanians that it is unacceptable to tolerate racial slurs, xenophobic attacks and harassment, especially during this global pandemic. It's wrong to shift blame or accuse Asian-Americans for this crisis," said State Representative and Asian American community member Patty Kim. "Pathogens do not discriminate. I stand ready to help and protect anyone who is being discriminated against during the COVID-19 crisis. Moving forward, do not hesitate to contact my office for direct assistance and to report these instances of abuse and harassment. We stand united together in our fight against hate."

"Crimes against anyone based on their race, creed, gender, country of origin or sexual orientation are absolutely unacceptable," said Senate Democratic Leader Jay Costa Jr. "There is no place for discrimination in Pennsylvania at any time. But as we are in the midst of a public health crisis, we need now more than ever to work together and support each other as best we can."

"I am saddened to hear of the hateful rhetoric directed at our Asian communities," said State Representative and Pennsylvania Commission for Women Commissioner Carolyn Comitta. "This is a crucial time for us to unite and work together to protect our friends, families, and neighbors. The only way we can overcome this unprecedented outbreak is by bringing all Pennsylvanians together. We cannot allow hateful acts and words to distract us from combatting this crisis."

"Senseless acts of hatred, violence, and microaggressions against Asians and Asian Americans is not the America that I know we can be," said Pennsylvania Commission for Women Commissioner and Asian American community member Itha Cao. "Asians are not the 'other.' We have been a part of American fabric for generations and will continue to be. Stand up, speak up, and do what is right, not what is easy."

"Now is a time when Pennsylvanians are coming together to support each other through a challenging time for all of us – and it's also a time when we should be unequivocal in messaging that hate has no home here," said Commissioner Adrian Shanker, Pennsylvania Commission on LGBTQ Affairs and Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission.

"As we experience and survive this difficult time, we encourage all Pennsylvanians to join efforts in the battle of the pandemic by embracing all citizens indistinctively of race, ethnicity, gender, disability, etc.," said Governor's Advisory Commission on Latino Affairs Chairperson Teresa Donate. "This is not the time, and never has been, to discriminate against those who are perceived to be at fault for the current crisis, especially Asian Americans. There is no place for hate in this Commonwealth."

"Calling COVID-19 the 'China virus' creates confusion and is an affront to Chinese Americans and Chinese people across the globe," said Governor's Advisory

Commission on African American Affairs Commissioner Blane F. Stoddart. “The virus is mobile and borderless. We should be taking a global leadership role in this pandemic, and working with Europe, Russia, Asia, and Cuba to come up with a solution to this pandemic.”

“Yesterday is gone, tomorrow has not yet come, and we only have today,” said Pennsylvania Commission for Women Vice Chair Jazelle Jones. “Let us begin to love our neighbors. We are our brother’s keeper, so make peace not war. We are in this together.”

“During this global pandemic, physical and verbal attacks against Asians should not be tolerated,” said Pennsylvania Commission for Women Commissioner Sara Manzano-Diaz. “Remember, hatred is also a contagious virus. Stop the spread!”

Pennsylvanians are encouraged to report incidents of discrimination or harassment by visiting the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission’s website or emailing the commission at PHRC@pa.gov. Incidents can also be reported to the Pennsylvania State Police by calling the [local troop](#).