

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
PRESS STATEMENT
Thursday, June 18, 2020



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New Data Examines Political Anti-Chinese Rhetoric and Anti-AAPI Hate

June 18, 2020 — [Stop AAPI Hate](#), the leading aggregator of incidents against Asian Americans during the pandemic, has compiled a [new report](#) examining the rise in hate incidents against Asian Americans and the anti-Chinese rhetoric by political leaders.

“We have seen time and again how dangerous it is when leaders scapegoat for political gain and use inflammatory rhetoric to stir up both interpersonal violence and racist policies. As we’ve seen throughout American history—from the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 to Japanese American wartime incarceration and most recently, immigration bans—Asians have been targeted with such vehement hate.” — Dr. Russell Jeung, chair of Asian American Studies at San Francisco State University.

Last week, Stop AAPI Hate [reported](#) that as of May 13, incidents of anti-Asian American discrimination documented across the U.S. approached 1,900 since the start of the coronavirus pandemic. Of those incidents, approximately 502 incidents specifically mentioned the terms “China” or “Chinese” during the incidents of discrimination.

According to the report, it appears that there was a spike of incidents reported to the website after President Trump repeatedly employed the term, “Chinese Virus.” There are a number of variables that could explain this correlation; nonetheless, Stop AAPI Hate contends that the president’s and the Republican party’s anti-Chinese rhetoric have entrenched racism and xenophobia in the public’s perception of the coronavirus pandemic.

Recent news reports have [drawn](#) the conclusion that the president and other political leaders are stirring up anti-Chinese sentiment as a means to distract from both their handling of the coronavirus pandemic and the nationwide protests against deeply entrenched racism and violence against Black Americans in law enforcement.

“We condemn the racist, inciteful and violent rhetoric coming from the president and political leaders at the very top, who racialize tragedies to score political points and distract from their

own mishandling of the pandemic. This rhetoric continues to devastate and harm communities of color in America.” – Cynthia Choi, Co-Executive Director, Chinese for Affirmative Action

In turn, the president is currently [pouring](#) money into campaign ads against China. On April 17, the GOP sent a memo to campaigns stating that (1) China caused the virus by covering it up, (2) Democrats are “soft on China”, and (3) Republicans will push for sanctions on China for its role in spreading the virus.

Other government leaders are picking up Trump’s racist language—Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) and Rep. Paul A. Gosar (R-Ariz.) have used similar language. Senator Martha McSally, up for re-election, [recently said](#), “China is to blame for this pandemic and the death of thousands of Americans.”

Most significantly, last month the president introduced a ban limiting Chinese students in the United States, raising [concerns](#) from a number of Asian American leaders.

In its report on the 502 incidents of discrimination and harassment with a clear link to anti-Chinese sentiment, **Stop AAPI Hate** noted that the following trends emerged:

1. **Virulent animosity** towards Chinese, with 37.5% of these cases laced with profanity and verbal taunts
2. **Scapegoating of China** for the spread of Covid-19, with 31.7% of the perpetrators blaming China or Chinese people as the source of the disease
3. **Anti-immigrant nationalism** of the assailants as they demand that Asian Americans “go back to China” or view China as the enemy (20.3%)
4. **Parroting of the term**, “Chinese virus” to imply the implicit association between Covid-19 and China (17.5%)
5. **Orientalist and racist depictions** of China and Chinese people as dirty, diseased, and holding strange dietary habits (12.6%)

“President Trump continues to utilize white supremacist and nationalist views as a means of scapegoating his failures for political gain. Unless we hold him accountable, the discrimination and harassment against Asian Americans will become deeply entrenched, cause unimaginable harm and suffering, and take decades to unwind.” – Manjusha P. Kulkarni, Executive Director of Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council.

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The [Stop AAPI Hate](#) reporting center was founded by the Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council (A3PCON), Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA) and San Francisco State University’s Asian American Studies Department.

The [Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council](#) (A3PCON) is a coalition of more than forty community-based organizations that serve and represent the 1.5 million Asian Americans and Pacific

Islanders in the greater Los Angeles area, with a particular focus on low-income, immigrant, refugee and other vulnerable populations.

[Chinese for Affirmative Action](#) (CAA) was founded in 1969 to protect the civil and political rights of Chinese Americans and to advance multiracial democracy in the United States. Today, CAA is a progressive voice in and on behalf of the broader Asian American and Pacific Islander community. We advocate for systemic change that protects immigrant rights, promotes language diversity, and remedies racial and social injustice.