

# CITY OF OAKLAND



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Councilmember Sheng Thao  
DISTRICT 4  
Councilmember Nikki Fortunato Bas  
DISTRICT 2

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**Date:** 5/7/2020  
**To:** Honorable Council President Kaplan  
Members of the City Council  
**From:** Councilmember Sheng Thao, District 4  
Councilmember Nikki Fortunato Bas, District 2  
**Re:** Resolution Condemning Anti-Asian Sentiments and Honoring Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Month

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Dear Councilmembers,

Due to COVID-19 misconceptions, Asian and Pacific Islander communities across the nation are experiencing racial discrimination, hate crimes and microaggressions.

The December 2019 outbreak of COVID-19 was first reported in Wuhan, China. As of May 7, 2020 over 1.26 million Americans people have been infected with the novel coronavirus. With over 70,000 deaths, the COVID-19 pandemic has sparked fear for many individuals. Unfortunately, this fear is being misdirected towards our Asian American and Pacific Islander community members.

On March 18, 2020 President Trump held a press conference at the White House in which he referred to COVID-19 as the “Chinese Virus”. The World Health Organization (WHO) was quick to discourage this language, as the virus is not caused by ethnicity. Still, this discriminatory rhetoric continued under the Trump Administration, with one White House Official using the term “Kung Flu” to describe the deadly virus. The result of this reckless language from our leadership and other prominent figures has been retaliation against Asian American and Pacific Islander residents.

On March 25, Congress passed House Resolution 908 to condemn and denounce anti-Asian sentiments in any form, including the language used under the Trump Administration. The resolution calls for all public officials to condemn this dangerous rhetoric and to reaffirm their support for API communities. On March 31, 2020 the stabbing of an Asian American family, including a 2-year-old at a Texas Sam’s Club became a tragic reminder of our need step-up and voice our support for our API neighbors.

In January 2020, WalletHub recognized Oakland as the second most ethnically diverse large city in the nation. Nearly 70,000 individuals in Oakland identify as Asian American and Pacific Islanders. These individuals provide important leadership and service in our communities as parents, activists, medical and public health officials, restaurant workers, lawyers, artists, educators, environmental service

workers, volunteers, small business owners, retailers and frontline service workers during this pandemic. Moreover, the federal government and the State of California have officially designated May as “Asian Pacific American Heritage Month”

For those reasons, we respectfully request your support of this resolution, which will demonstrate the City of Oakland’s support for H. Reso 908, condemn all forms of anti-Asian sentiments, and reaffirm our commitment to prosecute and curb hate acts. We also ask for your support in honoring Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Month for the month of May.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Sheng Thao in black ink.

Councilmember Sheng Thao  
District 4

Handwritten signature of Nikki Fortunato Bas in black ink.

Councilmember Nikki Fortunato Bas  
District 2