



Senate Passes COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act

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– Today, the U.S. Senate passed the *COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act* by a vote of 94-1, a bill to address the rise in hate crimes and violence against the AAPI community. Following its passage, U.S. Senators Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and Mazie Hirono (D-HI), and U.S. Representative Grace Meng (D-NY-06) called for swift House consideration of the bill so President Biden can sign the bill into law.

“After a year of unfathomable suffering and rising hate crimes against the Asian American community, passing the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act in the Senate sends a strong and resolute message that our entire nation is committed to ending AAPI hate,” Senator Duckworth said. “I’m proud to have helped Senator Hirono introduce this important legislation to strengthen our enforcement of existing hate crime laws and support victims of this senseless, misguided violence. It is long past time to break the cycle of discrimination against Asian Americans and I will continue working to make this legislation law.”

“Today’s historic, bipartisan vote on the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act sends a powerful message of solidarity to the AAPI community—that the United States Senate rejects anti-Asian hate. Now, I urge the House to swiftly pass this legislation so the bill can go to President Biden to sign into law,” Senator Hirono said.

“For more than a year, Asian Americans all across our nation have been screaming out for help, and in passing the legislation sponsored by Senator Hirono and I, the Senate showed that they heard our pleas,” Congresswoman Meng said. “I thank and applaud each and every senator who voted to pass our bill which was a bold step in taking action to combat the ongoing hate and violence against Asian Americans. I also want to especially thank my hometown Senator, Majority Leader Chuck Schumer for shepherding the measure through the Senate, and securing its overwhelming bipartisan support. We’ve all heard the sickening stories and seen the horrifying videos of Asian Americans being beaten, slashed and spat on. Today, the Senate said enough is enough, and underscored loud and clear that there is no place for hate anywhere in our society. More reporting of hate crimes will provide us with increased data and a more accurate picture of the attacks that have been occurring against those of Asian descent, and a more centralized and unified way of reviewing these crimes would help to address the problem in a more effective manner. I have heard from so many Asian Americans who tell me that they are scared to walk outside. Families won’t let their kids go to the park or play outdoors. People are urging their parents and grandparents to stay inside, telling them that they’ll run their errands and deliver groceries to them. Being forced to endure this terror and fear is unconscionable and unacceptable. Everybody in our country deserves to feel safe, and that includes the Asian American community. Again, I commend the Senate for moving our COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act closer to the finish line, and I now look forward to the House swiftly following suit.”