



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
DISTRICT 1
File #: 20-215

Board Meeting Date: 4/21/2020

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors
From: Supervisor Dave Pine, District 1
Supervisor David J. Canepa, District 5
Subject: Resolution Denouncing Xenophobia and Anti-Asian Sentiment

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution denouncing xenophobia and anti-Asian sentiment due to fears of the COVID-19 pandemic and affirming the County of San Mateo's commitment to the well-being and safety of Asian American communities.

BACKGROUND:

Hate crimes, discrimination, and aggression against Asian Americans are on the rise throughout the country as Asian American ethnic groups are being blamed for the COVID-19 outbreak. The volume of incoming hate incident reports makes it evident that our community must be proactive in curtailing racial discrimination and harassment during this pandemic.

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus, more than 2,240,191 cases and more than 153,379 deaths have been confirmed worldwide as of April 17, 2020, according to the Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Center. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 661,712 cases and 33,049 deaths have been reported in the United States as of April 17, 2020.

The World Health Organization has cautioned against using geographic descriptors for the COVID-19 virus because such characterizations lead to ethnic and racial discrimination.

DISCUSSION:

According to 2019 estimates, approximately 30 percent of San Mateo County's 766,570 residents are of Asian heritage, compared with 15.3 percent for the State of California.

As the COVID-19 virus has spread, Asian Americans across the country have reported experiencing offensive comments and actions related to their race, racial profiling, hate incidents, and, in some cases, hate violence, according to the Asian Pacific Policy & Planning Council. COVID-19, however,

is a public health issue not a racial one. Characterizing COVID-19 as a “Chinese virus” encourages hate crimes and other attacks against Asian Americans at a time when communities should be working together to get through this crisis.

On April 10, 2020, the San Mateo County Asian Pacific Islanders Caucus and peninsula leaders issued a statement denouncing racism and xenophobia. It is critical that the County stand in solidarity with its Asian American communities to send a message that discriminatory and hate-motivated behavior will not be tolerated. The Board of Supervisors condemns xenophobia and anti-Asian sentiment and joins cities, counties, and states across the country in affirming its commitment to the safety and well-being of Asian Americans and combatting hate crimes targeting them.

The Board also adopts this resolution to encourage the reporting of any such xenophobic or discriminatory incidents to the proper authorities for investigation. The County will continue its efforts to protect and aid victims of hate acts, and to prosecute and curb hate crimes, related to COVID-19 in partnership with nonprofits, the County of San Mateo’s District Attorney’s Office, and our law enforcement partners.

Our county must remember that we can only overcome this pandemic by standing united, not divided.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with the adoption of this resolution.