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March 17, 2020

Governor Gavin Newsom  
Office of the Governor  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom:

On behalf of the Asian Pacific Islander (API) Legislative Caucus, I write to you with deep concerns about discrimination and racist attacks against Asian American communities related to COVID-19. We request your partnership to publicly denounce these discriminatory acts and to partner with California state agencies to address heightened xenophobia during this public health emergency.

With more immigrants than any other state, California's success has been dependent on our immigrant workers and families. In the past several weeks, we have seen an increase in discrimination and racist attacks against one of our oldest immigrant communities—Chinese Americans. As recently as today, the President of the United States further stoked anti-Chinese sentiment by tweeting about the "Chinese virus." Fears of the coronavirus are reminiscent of the time when Chinese Americans were seen as threatening and referred to as the "yellow peril"; these beliefs laid the foundation for the Chinese Exclusion Act which prohibited an entire ethnic group from immigrating to the United States. Today, these fears have led to harassment of Chinese Americans and other Asian Americans and harmed Asian-owned businesses. According to data compiled by Chinese for Affirmative Action and Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council, American media reported nearly 300 incidents related to coronavirus discrimination in the last two weeks. We must not allow history to repeat itself.

We have an opportunity to confront this xenophobia by partnering with state agencies to send the message to Californians that acts of discrimination must not be tolerated. We recommend that the California Department of Public Health add an additional guideline asking Californians to combat stereotyping or bullying of groups of people due to the coronavirus. Based on anecdotal reports of discrimination, we recommend that the State Transportation Agency, Labor and Workforce Development, Department of Education and Department of Fair Employment and Housing also issue similar guidelines and disseminate relevant information related to workplace discrimination, bullying and public transit passenger safety measures.

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact Cat Nou, Chief Consultant of the API Legislative Caucus, should you need more information. She may be reached at [cat.nou@asm.ca.gov](mailto:cat.nou@asm.ca.gov) or (916) 319-3686.

Sincerely,

DAVID CHIU  
Assemblymember, 17<sup>th</sup> AD  
Chair, API Legislative Caucus