

To: Clackamas County Board of Commissioners (BCC)
From: Clackamas County Leaders for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Council (LEDIC)
Date: 3/29/2021
Re: Statement condemning anti-Asian discrimination/violence

The Leaders for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Council (LEDIC) is a diverse group of community members who live, work and recreate in Clackamas County. We are charged with advising the Clackamas County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) on issues affecting our underrepresented and underserved communities. As such, we are compelled to address the recent murders of eight people – including six Asian-American women – in Atlanta, a heinous crime that has deeply affected our community, where Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) comprise approximately 4.5% of the population. While this mass shooting has not yet been officially categorized as a hate crime, women – particularly Asian-American women – are not blind to the racism and misogyny underlying this tragedy. LEDIC denounces hate, intimidation and discrimination in any form, and stands with the AAPI communities of Clackamas County to call out and confront targeted racism and sexism.

We urge the you to do the same.

Anti-Asian discrimination has a long and sordid history in Oregon. Historical and systemic racism that is not acknowledged or addressed only continues to fester and perpetuate hate. Hate crimes, especially those targeting the AAPI community, are routinely under-reported due to language barriers, distrust of law enforcement, immigration status or cultural factors. Reporting may bring shame to a family or community, challenging the myth of Asian-Americans as the “model minority.” Because of this we may not have good data on crimes against Asian-Americans in Clackamas County, but it is logical to infer that this is happening. Just a few miles north of the county line, on SE 82nd Avenue in Portland’s Jade District, more than a dozen Asian-owned businesses were vandalized in late January. According to The Oregonian, the Oregon Department of Justice Bias Hotline received 99 reports from Asian Americans since January 2020. And nationwide, over the past year, there has been an unprecedented escalation of anti-Asian harassment and assault, with women reporting the majority of incidents.

Racist acts against any one group reverberate throughout our county, spreading fear and impacting all Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. As your liaisons to the BIPOC community, we propose that when hate targets any one group, and when a national tragedy such as the Atlanta murders shines light on lurking injustices here at home, that as our Leaders you feel empowered to advance the needs of the community by posting strong statements on the county website to demonstrate your support for the effected communities. LEDIC members urge you to join with us, to give voice to those most in need.

Additional/supporting information:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Df5EH9Fhct7Ir4EvkiDXytPnOFHykkwZ2Q9I7Ax2Dlk/edit?usp=sharing>

<https://www.oregonlive.com/crime/2021/02/asian-owned-businesses-hit-in-more-than-a-dozen-acts-of-vandalism-in-portlands-jade-district.html>

<https://www.oregonlive.com/opinion/2021/03/opinion-a-call-to-community-amid-uptick-in-anti-asian-crime-and-harassment.html>