



# SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

## COUNCIL STATEMENT

### Council Solidarity Statement with Asian American Community Condemning Hate Crimes

March 8, 2021

As a city, we must express our complete solidarity with the Asian American community and unequivocally advocate for their defense, as well as condemn the growing hate crimes being committed against our Asian American neighbors. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have witnessed a surge in anti-Asian American attacks. This wave of xenophobia, hate crime, and violence is impacting our neighbors in our city and across the country. The fact that these attacks are especially impacting Asian American elders, as reported in multiple news outlets, is heartbreaking and demands our urgent attention.

Stop [AAPI Hate](#), a reporting database created at the beginning of the pandemic, received 2,808 reports across the nation of anti-Asian discrimination between March 19 and December 31, 2020. One recent [study](#) found a 150% increase in anti-Asian American hate crimes in 2020, even though overall hate crimes fell last year. Locally, there have been 59 hate crimes filed with the King County Prosecutors in 2020, up from 39 in 2019 and 30 in 2018. This year, there have already been seven hate crimes against Asian Americans in the Seattle area. Unfortunately, we also know there are verbal and physical attacks that go unreported, or are ignored or mistakenly classified.

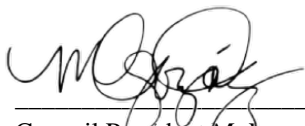
This is why it's our collective responsibility to not only sound the alarm on these hate crimes, but to continue our work to systematically uproot racism, xenophobia, and hate from our city. Many in the Asian-American community have asked for us to be an ally in calling out this violence and to also understand the root causes of this violence, acknowledge the long history of anti-Asian racism, and develop community-centric solutions to address systemic inequity, prioritize the safety of our communities, and foster solidarity.

On February 17, 2021, the Asian Law Caucus of Asians Americans Advancing Justice released a [statement](#) rejecting criminalization and retribution approaches to hate violence and calling for responses that address the causes of racial violence. The statement notes that “[t]rue safety for all must come in the form of investment and resources, not punitive measures that create division and reinforce our criminal justice system’s discriminatory structures....” and that “[d]isrupting and dismantling structural inequities and racism will do much more to make us safe than further criminalization and conflict.”

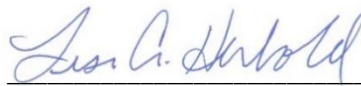
The Seattle City Council stands in solidarity with the Asian American community and commits to follow the leadership of communities most impacted by hate violence in the wake of COVID19. We stand with those who are rejecting calls for more policing or punitive measures, which only address the symptoms, but do not address the underlying cause of the violence and hate crimes. We must work to solve the underlying issues of crime and systemic racism

that have pitted people of color against each other. This requires investing in people and in marginalized communities, as well as meeting people's basic needs like housing, education, and mental health support. While there may be calls for more policing and to strengthen laws and sentencing to punish those committing hate crimes, the Council hears the call to rely on something other than a response using the criminal legal system, given that use of the criminal legal system may only perpetuate deeply entrenched inequities and racism. Instead, we must commit to further addressing the root causes of violence so that we can achieve public safety for all our community members.

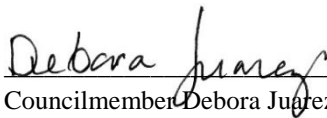
In this statement, the Seattle City Council reaffirms our commitment and solidarity with the Asian American community in our city and beyond, and instead of individualizing the hatred, will actually invest in and improve the social conditions that brew the violence that leads to hate crimes.



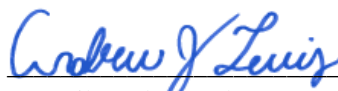
Council President M. Lorena González



Councilmember Lisa Herbold



Councilmember Debora Juárez



Councilmember Andrew J. Lewis



Councilmember Tammy J. Morales



Councilmember Teresa Mosqueda



Councilmember Alex Pedersen



Councilmember Kshama Sawant



Councilmember Dan Strauss