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San Diego DA's Office Launches Hotline and Online Form for Reporting Hate Crimes

posted by Serena Chow



San Diego District Attorney Summer Stephan said it is a priority of her office to fight hate crimes. Screen capture via [San Diego DA YouTube](#).

The San Diego District Attorney's Office announced the launch of a new hotline and online form for the public to report discriminatory acts on Thursday. Prosecutors say the initiative was organized in part due to the sharp rise of reported hate crimes against Asian Americans during the COVID-19 pandemic, [CBS8 reports](#).

Individuals in San Diego County, California can now access either the online reporting form or call the Hate Crimes Hotline number at (619) 515-8805. Individuals who submit information through these hate crime monitoring tools will later be contacted with further information regarding the District Attorney's review of the report and any subsequent actions to be taken.

According to a [KPBS report](#), the San Diego's District Attorney's Office stated that an estimated 50 to 60 percent of the county's hate crimes are race-based crimes, but these estimates continue to rise as the number of hate crimes against Asian Americans have escalated since the outbreak of COVID-19.

In San Diego County, prosecutors are reviewing a case where a 66 year-old man reportedly attacked another man he believed was Chinese American, according to the San Diego Police Department and the District Attorney's Office.

San Diego police report that on April 25, Joseph Nguyen struck a 27 year-old Asian man with his cane after the victim asked Nguyen to socially distance as they walked past each other, [KPBS details](#).

According to San Diego county records, Nguyen was booked into county jail, where he remains held on \$50,000 bail.

"Fighting hate crimes in all its forms is a priority for my office and these crimes won't be tolerated," District Attorney Summer Stephan [told KPBS](#). "The COVID-19 health crisis has created some concern among victims of crime who may be unsure if law enforcement and prosecutors continue to be ready to protect the community as they respond to the pandemic. I can assure you that we are."

"This reporting tool facilitates access to justice for San Diego County's diverse communities," Stephan added. "This tool can be used to report suspected hate crime against anyone, but we're especially concerned right now that the Asian community will become targets of hate crime as we continue to respond to this pandemic."

Stephan expressed the hope that this initiative will make it more accessible for people to report discrimination and seek justice.

"We know that people often don't report hate crimes because of fear or shame, and we wanted to provide a direct avenue to encourage victims or witnesses to hate crimes to report," Stephen said.

Other counties in California have also taken measures to combat escalating xenophobia directed against local Asian American communities.

Earlier in April, [Santa Clara County in California's Silicon Valley passed a resolution](#) denouncing xenophobia and committing to work with police to combat hate crimes, reports [Palo Alto Weekly](#).

The resolution was unanimously approved by Santa Clara County supervisors. Board President Cindy Chavez called the resolution "an opportunity for us to show solidarity with our Asian American community partners during COVID-19, when we've seen hate rise against the API (Asian Pacific Islander) community."

Also in California, Chinese for Affirmative Action, the Asian Pacific Planning and Policy Council(A3PCON), and the San Francisco State Asians American Studies Department announced in March that the groups have joined to open STOP AAPI HATE, a [reporting center of hate crimes](#), which has since received [nearly 1,500 reports](#) of coronavirus discrimination from Asian Americans.

“First and foremost, we want community members to know they are not alone; [they can speak out](#) and help stop the spread of bigotry. Secondly, the collected data will allow us to assess the extent and magnitude of these incidents and to develop strategic interventions,” said Cynthia Choi, the Co-Executive Director of Chinese for Affirmative Action.

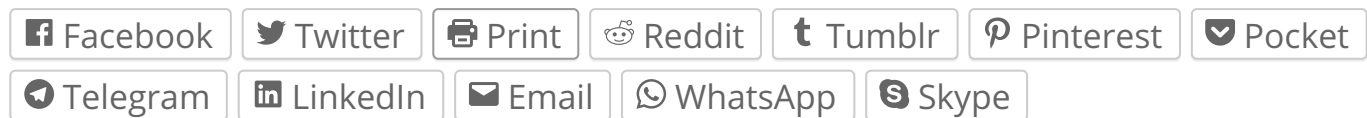
[Asian Americans Advancing Justice \(AAJC\)](#), a partner of *Communities Against Hate*, also founded a hate crime [reporting website](#) in March.

According to [AAJC](#), submitting a report of discrimination is intended to help the efforts of AAJC and other advocates to monitor hate crimes and spread awareness about the rise in xenophobia impacting marginalized communities.

“By sharing what you experienced or witnessed, you can educate the public, empower others, show service providers where help is needed, and strengthen advocacy efforts for hate crimes response and prevention,” [reads the website](#).

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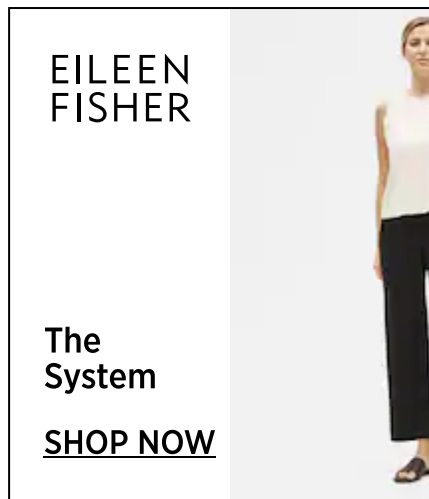
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


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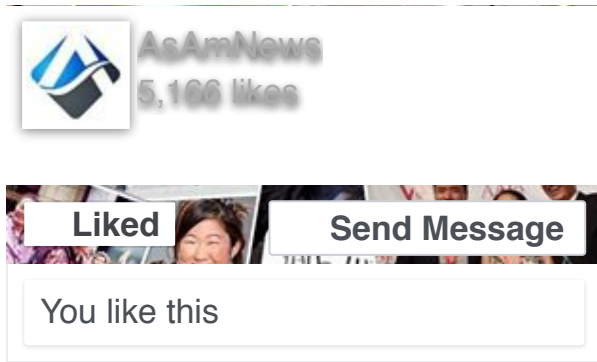


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