

May 8, 2020

To: Arizona Attorney General Mark Brnovich
Office of the Attorney General
Phoenix Office
2005 N Central Ave
Phoenix, AZ 85004-2926

Dear Attorney General Brnovich,

We are writing to you as residents of Arizona to urge you to use your role as the state's chief law officer to speak out against anti-Asian/American racism, xenophobia and violence. We also ask that you publicly challenge any political attempts to label COVID-19 a "Chinese virus" or "Wuhan virus," because of the effects this association has on everyday lives of Asian Americans in Arizona and in the United States.

Media research shows that xenophobic and scientifically incorrect rhetoric in political statements and media representations about the Chinese/Asian origins and Asian transmission of COVID-19 have fueled the rise of racist discrimination against Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) individuals and communities in the past few months. The Stop AAPI Hate website, organized by the Asian Pacific Policy & Planning Council and launched on March 19, received 1,497 reported incidents in its first four weeks, ranging from verbal abuse to physical violence. Among the 282 reported incidents with location references, three were in Maricopa County (Chandler and Phoenix). Both incidents in Phoenix involved physical assaults.

The scapegoating of Asian Americans potentially may negatively affect their health as well. Many Asian Americans, especially recent Asian immigrants and elders, are reporting fear and hesitation in seeking proper medical care with the rise of hate crimes against Asian Americans.

Arizona is home to many AAPIs with substantial growth in our numbers over the past 20 years. As the son of an immigrant mother, we hope that you will recognize the particular vulnerability of Asian immigrants in Arizona right now. Irrational scapegoating based in fear and racial prejudice will further undermine social cohesion and health at a time when social cooperation in slowing down the transmission of the virus is critical.

We ask that you help to educate the public that Asians and Asian Americans are NOT more likely to be carriers of COVID-19 than anyone else. In addition, we ask that you strongly condemn any acts of misinformation, violence, or discrimination that target any population by race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, or socioeconomic status as being carriers of COVID-19.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

AZ AANHPI for Equity

Asian Chamber of Commerce Incorporated

Asian / Asian Pacific American Students' Coalition (AAPASC) at Arizona State University

OCA Greater Phoenix

Japanese American Citizens League, Arizona Chapter (JACL AZ)

Asian Pacific Community in Action

Asian American Pacific Islander Democratic Caucus

The Arizona Korean Association

Arizona Corporate Entrepreneur Leaders (ACEL)

National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum AZ Chapter

Arizona Council for the Social Studies

Island Liaison, Inc.