

NEWS RELEASE

Oakland County Board condemns hate against Asian Americans

Resolution passed unanimously denounces all forms of anti-Asian sentiment, including those related to COVID-19

March 26, 2021, OAKLAND COUNTY, MI. – The Oakland County Board of Commissioners unanimously passed a resolution at its meeting last night condemning hate crimes, hateful rhetoric and hateful acts against Asian Americans. According to Stop AAPI Hate, 3,795 incidents of discrimination against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have been reported between March 19, 2020 and February 28, 2021, including 16 in Michigan. Incidents have included verbal harassment, shunning, workplace discrimination, refusal of service, online harassment, physical assault and death.

“The increased hatred targeted at the Asian American community over the last year has been horrible,” Board Chairman **David T. Woodward** (D-Royal Oak) said. “We will not be silent. We will stand up against hate. Oakland County will always lift our voice to speak out against and condemn hateful crimes, hateful rhetoric, and hateful acts against Asian Americans, and we stand in solidarity with the community.”

“I find it appalling that anyone would seek out individuals that are different from them to instill fear or to harm them,” Minority Caucus Chair **Michael Spisz** (R-Oxford) said. “I ask everyone, please do your best to help and show respect towards others and walk away from hate.”

“In Oakland County, our hearts go out to those who have lost family members, and who face harassment and fear every day just because of who they are,” Commissioner **Gwen Markham** (D-Nov) said. “Our diversity is our strength. Hateful acts against a part of our community are hateful acts against us all, and we must stand together to rebuke all hate speech and hateful acts toward Asian Americans.”

“It's up to us to make a change in the world,” Commissioner **Penny Luebs** (D-Clawson) said. “This behavior is not acceptable. If you witness negative behavior, speak out about that behavior or call 911. Be a friend and show your support for all people in our community.”

Oakland County is home to the second largest Asian population in Michigan and nearly half of Asians in the tri-county area. Through the resolution, the Board acknowledged that the health and safety of all Oakland County residents, no matter their background, must be the utmost priority. The Board encourages all who experience, or witness hate crimes to report such incidents to local law enforcement, the Michigan Attorney General's Hate Crime Unit and the Michigan Department of Civil Rights.

"As state representative for Clawson and Troy, and as the first Indian immigrant in the Michigan Legislature, I have heard from many Asian American community members about the increase in hostile treatment they are facing during this pandemic," Rep. Padma Kuppa (D-Troy) said. "It's only when we build relationships across diverse communities that we move toward inclusion, where all voices are heard. Those who are in positions of leadership in our communities can be allies and help protect those who are vulnerable."

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