

Department of Commerce Unit Had No Authority and Targeted Asian American Employees

BREAKING NEWS: The Washington Post reported today how a security unit tasked with protecting the Commerce Department's officials and facilities evolved into something more akin to a counterintelligence operation that collected information on hundreds of people inside and outside the department, searching and monitoring many Asian American employees over benign correspondence. It is the same unit that interrogated Sherry Chen, a hydrologist with the National Weather Service, and was credited by the Department of Justice for the prosecution against her that was dropped in 2015. The article cited multiple whistleblowers and an inspector general's report that the unit had no legal authority to conduct criminal investigations. On August 15, 2018, the Sherry Chen Legal Defense Fund submitted a whistleblower letter to the Office of Inspector General at DOC. Read more about the complaint at <https://bit.ly/3unhxEl>. The Post also reported that the minority-party staff of the Senate Commerce Committee under Sen. Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) has been conducting an investigation since early this year. Read more at <https://wapo.st/2QM747X>.

A Memorable Day on May 20, 2021

May 20, 2021 was a memorable day for Asian Americans and all Americans.

President Biden signed legislation aimed at countering a rise in anti-Asian hate crimes throughout the coronavirus pandemic following overwhelming support from the Senate (94-1) and the House (364-62). The COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act was introduced by New York Rep. Grace Meng and Hawaii Sen. Mazie Hirono. While the law is a necessary first step, combating systemic discrimination and racial profiling will require substantive implementation and enforcement of the laws to protect the civil rights of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, as well as persistent efforts by the community and allies to stand up and speak out for justice, solidarity, and healing.

Race relations have always been a difficult topic to discuss in the U.S., especially on the deeply rooted tensions between Black and Asian American communities. On May 19, 2021, journalist Lisa Ling spoke at the Red Table Talk to the negative impact of stereotypes, and shares how her life has been affected by prejudice. She was joined by scholar Dr. Michael Eric Dyson who explained the origins of the complicated relationship. Watch this important discussion at: <https://bit.ly/2TbDUQu>.

Lisa Ling has also been on the front front to launch The Asian American Foundation (TAAF), along with Naomi Osaka, Steven Yeun, Kevin Durant, James Harden, Jeremy Lin, H.E.R. and others to discuss the importance of racial and social equality. Read more at <https://bit.ly/3oEMsek>.

On April 8, 2021, Jennifer Ho, President of the Association for Asian American Studies, opined that anti-Asian racism has the same source as anti-Black racism: white supremacy. So when a Black person attacks an Asian person, the encounter is fueled perhaps by racism, but very specifically by white supremacy. White supremacy does not require a white person to perpetuate it." Read more at <https://bit.ly/3wqzW4K>.

Discussion of race relations should also include Whites who do not subscribe to White Supremacy.

On May 20, 2021, TAAF announced the commitment of over \$1 billion to support the AAPI communities. On the same day, Sonal Shah, TAAF President, and members of TAAF's Board briefed the Biden-Harris administration in the White House on their plans to deploy the committed resources across the foundation's three priority investment areas: combating anti-AAPI hate, data and research, and education. TAAF's representatives met with White House Public Engagement Director Cedric Richmond, Domestic Policy Advisor Susan Rice, and Deputy Assistant to the President and AAPI Senior Liaison Erika Moritsugu. President Biden and Vice President Harris dropped by the meeting to express their support for TAAF and solidarity with the AAPI community. Read more at <https://prn.to/2SIDdnj>.

On May 20, 2021, the Chinese American Civil Rights Coalition, Inc. filed a lawsuit ([Case 1:21-cv-04548](#)) in the Southern District of New York against former President Donald Trump for defamation and infliction of emotional distress on Asian Americans. It is seeking roughly \$22.9 million, or \$1 for every Asian American and Pacific Islander living in the United States, which would be used to establish a museum showcasing AAPI contributions to the US. Read more at <https://bit.ly/348TsGY>.

Also on May 20, 2021, New York Times reported that the city of Antioch in California has apologized for its treatment of Chinese Immigrants who came to the city during the state's gold rush, atoning for its past as a "sundown town" where the Chinese were barred from the streets after dark. Read more at <https://nyti.ms/3ytYoE9>. Antioch Mayor Lamar Thorpe said Antioch is the first city in the United States to officially apologize for the mistreatment of Chinese immigrants. He said he hopes other cities follow Antioch's lead when he announced the apology with APAPA California President Andy Li. Read more at <https://cnn.it/3bQlcmC>.



More on #StopAAPIHate and Anti-Racial Profiling Activities

Pictures, videos, and media reports upholding the yellow whistle as a symbol of self-protection and solidarity continue to come in; they are posted as soon as they are received at <https://bit.ly/2RDZMmB>, including:

- May 15 Unity Against Hate rallies in Sacramento and Fremont, CA; Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Central Ohio; and New York City.
- May 19, 2021, Cincinnati local TV-12 raised awareness of anti-Asian hate and violence with the yellow whistle featuring Lee Wong and Leo Chan.
- May 21, 2021, high school students in Blacksburg, Virginia, distributed yellow whistles in front of a grocery store.
- May 21, 2021, Baylor School of Medicine led by Provost Alicia Monroe and Associate Provost Tori Harris hosted a Unity Against Hate rally. The event featured a moment of silence, guest speakers including Professor Steven Pei (Founding Chair of United Chinese Americans) and Professor Hui Zheng (President of the Society of Chinese Bioscientists in America), and personal testimonies. Read and watch here: <https://bit.ly/3hSWuY3>

On May 16, 2021, the Yellow Whistle Team announced that distribution of the yellow whistles will be increased from 100,000 to 200,000.

Some of the upcoming activities include:

- May 26, 2021, the Commonwealth Club hosts a webinar titled Asian Americans: Learning From The Past To Change The Future, featuring Dan Chao, Chair of 1990 Institute; Dennis Wu, President of APAPA San Francisco, and Evelyn Dilsaver, Chair of Commonwealth Club Board of Directors. Register for the event here: <https://bit.ly/3u9qS9v>.
- On May 27, 2021, the 1990 Institute and the USC US-China Institute will co-sponsor a webinar on The Rise of China and Asian Americans, featuring Clay Dube (moderator), Gordon H. Chang, Margaret Lewis, and Peter Leroe-Muñoz. Read more and register for the event here: <https://bit.ly/2S8esul>.
- May 31, 2021, Solidarity Against Hate rallies are planned for at least 17 cities in the states of California, Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Nevada, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Washington DC. Read more at <https://bit.ly/3od6wUK>.
- June 7, 2021, the jury trial of Professor Anming Hu will begin in Knoxville, Tennessee. He will be the first professor in the U.S. to go to trial under the "China Initiative." The community is urged to attend the trial and hold a rally outside the courtroom. Read more at https://bit.ly/APAJ_AnmingHu.

On May 21, 2021, World Politics Review published "Amid U.S.-China Tensions, 'Dual Loyalty' Rears Its Ugly Head." According to the article, the phrase 'dual loyalty' has a regrettable and sordid history, given its origins as a nasty anti-Semitic canard in old Europe." The idea that a citizen of any state has a second, conflicting allegiance to another authority has often been evoked against Jewish Americans, as well as other

minorities, such as Catholics who have run for president. And over the past century, the dual loyalty trope has been used repeatedly against the Asian American community ... it acts like an enhanced form of racial profiling. When the state fails to distinguish a Taiwanese American scientist from a Chinese spy, or a Chinese American public servant from a Chinese government official, or Japanese American citizens from Japanese imperial agents, it is equating ethnicity with disloyalty. U.S. citizens of Asian descent continue to feel the injurious impacts of this profiling. Read more at <https://bit.ly/3faojsK>

Meanwhile, steady progress is being made with the Biden Administration and Congress to address the racial profiling and related justice and fairness concerns.

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