

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
1705 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

April 23, 2021

RE: The Yellow Whistle Campaign and Congressional Hearing on Racial Profiling

Dear House Majority Leader and Congressman Hoyer:

I am forwarding to you a letter from Dr. Agnes Hsu-Tang about the Yellow Whistle Campaign¹ to combat anti-Asian hate and violence. We write to ask for your leadership and support of the campaign in the upcoming Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month in May and to ensure a requested House hearing will take place.

The campaign officially launched by Dr. Hsu-Tang, her husband Oscar Tang, Li-En Chong, and several other generous individuals on April 19, Patriots' Day is growing rapidly across the nation.²

Asian Americans has faced two viruses since last year – the coronavirus that led to the pandemic impacting all Americans and the re-emergence of the social virus of anti-Asian hate and violence, especially against medical professionals and health care workers. Under the racial profiling practices of recent years, Asian American scientists and researchers have also been criminalized for administrative issues under the Department of Justice's "China Initiative," subject to endless FBI investigations for years, forced to resign or retire, or have their tenured positions terminated without due process.

As the Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month will be commemorated by the federal government and communities, the yellow whistle with a message of "We Belong" is powerful symbol of self-protection and solidarity to signal alarm and call for help for all Americans. It is a reminder of our common fight against historical discrimination, anti-Asian violence, and racial profiling. We are whistleblowing to fight back against the stereotype that Asians are a silent minority. We shall not remain silent, because we belong!

Under your leadership, we request that the yellow whistles will be distributed to members of Congress and their staff, that they are worn or displayed in public events, and encouraged to be used in other manner as they deem appropriate in the month of May.

I also call your attention to a requested hearing by the House Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties to address racial profiling and investigations of scientists and scholars of Chinese and Asian descent.³ The oversight hearing request was made by Maryland State Senator Susan Lee, Terry Lierman, and an alliance of prominent scientific and civil rights leaders and organizations nationwide on February 1, 2021.⁴

¹ The Yellow Whistle Campaign website. <https://www.theyellowwhistle.org/>

² South China Morning Post: Yellow whistles serve as symbol and signal to call out violence against Asian-Americans, April 20, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3v16phm>

³ APA Justice: The Human and Scientific Costs of Racial Profiling Must be Heard. <https://bit.ly/3jaatHd>

⁴ Coalition letter led by Susan Lee and Terry Lierman. February 1, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3cD3XaY>

To date, Congress has held numerous hearings focused solely on the espionage threat, but not one on the human and scientific costs of profiling scientists and scholars of Chinese or Asian descent based on the misguided perception that simply being of Chinese or Asian descent or having ties to China make them prone espionage,⁵ or the long-term consequences and damages to the American research enterprise if this pattern of racial profiling continues.

We strongly support efforts to safeguard America's interests and tax-funded research by prosecuting wrongdoers, but it is a grave injustice to target an entire ethnic group or scientific collaborations with individuals and institutions from specific countries. We cannot continue to be a global leader in science and technology if we promote xenophobia and racial profiling within our own borders.

Almost 30,000 people signed a petition to express these concerns to the President on April 9, 2021. Leaders of the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology and the House Committee on Armed Services also sent a joint letter⁶ to President Biden, urging him to adopt a measured and balanced approach to strengthen the security and integrity of the country's academic research enterprise. On April 19, 2021, Temple University Professor Xiaoxing Xi, wrongfully impacted by racial profiling and 2020 recipient of the American Physical Society's Andrei Sakharov Prize, has offered constructive and sensible approaches to address the threat of influence by foreign nations on research integrity.⁷

The stereotyping of Asian Americans as disloyal "perpetual foreigners" is not new. They led to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the internment of 120,000 persons of Japanese descent. Although Congress expressed apologies generations later, many lives had already been ruined.

Under your leadership, we request that the requested hearing will take place expeditiously. The voices of Asian Americans who helped to build the Transcontinental Railroad and continue to contribute to American leadership in science and technology deserve to be heard.

Very Respectfully,

/s/ Steven Pei

/s/ Vincent Wang

/s/ Jeremy Wu

Co-organizers, APA Justice Task Force

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CC:

Rep. Judy Chu, CAPAC Chair

Erika Moritsugu, White House AAPI Senior Liaison

Maryland State Senator Susan Lee

Terry Lierman

⁵ Cato Institute. Espionage, Espionage-Related Crimes, and Immigration: A Risk Analysis. February 9, 2021.

<https://bit.ly/3xrOIPF>

⁶ House leaders to President Biden on measured and balanced approach to strengthen the security and integrity of the country's academic research enterprise. April 9, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3gwcBtS>

⁷ Nature. The US should listen to scientists about how to counter influence from China. April 19, 2021.

<https://go.nature.com/3dMnaqW>