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**Democratic Leaders of Color: Trump’s Use of “Chinese Virus” Endangers Lives**

**Washington, D.C.** – On [Monday](#) and again [today](#), President Donald Trump in two tweets referred to the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) as the “Chinese Virus.” He later doubled down on the use of this term during a press conference earlier today. This violates guidance issued by the World Health Organization and the promises by members of Trump’s own administration, [including Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar](#) and [Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Dr. Robert Redfield](#), to refrain from using that term precisely to describe COVID-19 because it incites blame, racism, and hatred towards Asian Americans, putting them at risk for prejudice and violence. Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) Chairwoman Judy Chu, Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) Chairman Joaquin Castro, Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) Chairwoman Karen Bass, and Congressional Native American Caucus Co-Chair Deb Haaland issued the following joint statement:

“The name of the virus causing the crisis in America and around the world is the 2019 novel coronavirus, or COVID-19 for short. It has a name. But Republicans, from President Trump on down, have insisted on creating and using alternatives such as the ‘Chinese’ or ‘Wuhan’ virus. This is dangerous and they know it. The World Health Organization has said labeling a disease by region or ethnicity makes it harder to contain the disease and promotes stigma that can negatively impact ethnic groups. And the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has said creating stigma endangers public health. Yet still, Republicans are rejecting that expert guidance in order to stoke xenophobia and blame all people of Chinese ethnicity for a public health crisis that knows no boundaries. But by telling people who to blame, they are telling people who to fear and who to hate. Unfortunately, we have already seen how this bigotry has impacted Asian Americans across the country who are facing increased prejudice and violence. Many have even

been assaulted to the point of needing to seek medical care in hospitals due to the injuries sustained from physical attacks. This is the consequence of spreading xenophobia, something that cannot continue to be amplified by the Trump Administration and Republican Members. Not now, not ever.

“Republicans have a choice: they can either help contain this global pandemic, or they can exploit it and exacerbate it to serve the President’s narrow political and xenophobic interests. But by doing the latter, they are putting American lives at risk. Conversely, it’s heartening to see the four national caucuses of state legislators of color join our efforts by issuing a statement denouncing the Administration’s efforts to spread xenophobia. We are also grateful to all the local elected officials, governors, and community leaders adhering to clear, consistent messaging that rightfully places no blame on Asian Americans or any other ethnic group. Once again, we implore all leaders to stick to expert guidance and not spread xenophobia. Lives depend on it.”

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*The Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) is comprised of Members of Congress of Asian and Pacific Islander descent and Members who have a strong dedication to promoting the well-being of the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. Currently chaired by Congresswoman Judy Chu, CAPAC has been addressing the needs of the AAPI community in all areas of American life since it was founded in 1994.*