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Montgomery County

MAJORITY WHIP

Judicial Proceedings Committee

Joint Committee on
Cybersecurity, Information Technology,
and Biotechnology

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Maryland Legislative Asian American
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Maryland Senate President Bill Ferguson and Senator Susan Lee Speak on Standing Up Against the Surge of Hate Crimes and Violence Against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders

Annapolis, Maryland: Maryland Senate President Senator Bill Ferguson and Majority Whip Senator Susan C. Lee spoke on the senate floor to denounce and call for everyone to unite and work together to strongly stand up against the surge in racially motivated attacks and violence against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, particularly in light of the horrific shooting and murder of eight people in Atlanta, Georgia, six being women of Asian descent. Senator Lee said, “We as political leaders must not only strongly denounce these terrible hate crimes, but also work with our AAPI community to shine light on this dangerous uptick, conduct public information campaigns, encourage victims or witnesses to speak up and report those crimes, work with Department of Justice, other agencies, prosecutors, and law enforcement and forge coalitions with leaders of other communities to protect and keep our families and community safe.” Around the country, there have been chilling reports of the murder of an elderly Thai American man taking a walk and Chinese American seniors being assaulted in California; in Texas, a Burmese American father and his sons stabbed, incurring major head wounds; and an Asian American woman in NYC subway being assaulted. Even Montgomery County has not been immune from these disturbing incidents, with a Rockville Chinese American family’s home being attacked twice and an Asian American woman in Bethesda threatened, but fortunately halted by intervening bystanders. Many point to the toxic political rhetoric, disparaging statements made against immigrants, people of color, women and people of all backgrounds by former President Trump and some in the highest offices, such as calling Covid-19 the “Kung Flu” or “China Virus”, as contributing to making AAPIs the easy targets of violence and scapegoating, especially some of the most vulnerable and helpless. Throughout history, despite facing overwhelming discrimination even in the face of the Chinese Exclusion Act, AAPIs have help build America through their significant contributions in a myriad of fields and raised funds to donate hundreds of thousands of PPEs for frontline health care providers and first responders during this pandemic. “Many have served America in the US Armed Forces, including my father who was a World War II US Navy Veteran who defended freedom on the perilous Atlanta and Pacific during one of the darkest times in the history of the world and was part of the “Greatest Generation.” Often the achievements and contributions of AAPIs have been marginalized and they have been perceived as foreigners and not as Americans. Senator Lee noted, “New immigrants are now building on what has been accomplished by previous generations. What makes our country unique is our rich diversity and those things we all hold in common as Americans. It is important that all our communities unite and come together to fight hate, racism and injustice so that we can make this a better world for all individuals, families and future generations.”