

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4606

COMMITTEES:
FINANCE

BANKING, HOUSING, AND
URBAN AFFAIRS

BUDGET

INTELLIGENCE

RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

March 13, 2020

The Honorable Michael R. Pence
Vice President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Vice President Pence,

I am deeply concerned about increasing reports¹ of verbal harassment² and attacks³ against Americans of Asian descent across the country since the outbreak of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). I encourage you, your coronavirus task force, and members of the Administration to share only confirmed and verifiable information about COVID-19 and dispel misinformation or discriminatory rhetoric to help prevent suspicion, panic, and race-based assaults.

Referring to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) as a “foreign virus” that “started in China”⁴ spreads xenophobia and racism, which is especially concerning as we experience a rise of domestic terrorism⁵ right here at home.

I request your help to counter this narrative and help ensure Americans are not vulnerable to any kind of race-based attack or harassment because of this outbreak, which has been a disturbing byproduct of the COVID-19 outbreak. Thank you for your attention to this request and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Mark R. Warner
U.S. Senator

¹ *Coronavirus panic sparks rise in racist incidents against Asian Americans*. (2020 March 6). *CBS News*. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/coronavirus-panic-fear-racism-attacks-against-asian-americans-world-us-restaurant-jing-fong/>

² Capatides, Christina (2020 February 14). Bullies attack Asian American teen at school, accusing him of having coronavirus. *CBS News*. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/coronavirus-bullies-attack-asian-teen-los-angeles-accusing-him-of-having-coronavirus/>

³ Griffith, Janelle (2020 March 11). Asian woman attacked in New York City in possible coronavirus bias crime. *NBC News*. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/asian-woman-attacked-new-york-city-possible-coronavirus-bias-crime-n1155716>

⁴ Riechmann, Deb (2020 March 12). Trump officials emphasize that coronavirus ‘Made in China’. *Associated Press*. <https://apnews.com/5866bf32d5723402d2df32baa844fff3>

⁵ United States. Cong. House Homeland Security Committee. *Confronting the Rise of Domestic Terrorism* May 8, 2019. 116th 1st Session. <https://www.fbi.gov/news/testimony/confronting-the-rise-of-domestic-terrorism-in-the-homeland> (statement of Michael C. McGarrity, Assistant Director, Counterterrorism Division, FBI).