



Statement of Wenyuan Wu, Ph.D.

**U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Public Briefing:
The Federal Response to Anti-Asian Racism in the United States
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My name is Wenyuan Wu. I represent Californians for Equal Rights Foundation, a non-partisan and a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the principles of equality and merit. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this hugely important topic of anti-Asian discrimination. I want to first make the following three points:

1. Criminal incidents targeting Asian Americans are egregious and must be addressed in the context of rising threats to public safety in general.
2. Framing anti-Asian hate crimes in the narrative of systemic racism or hate misleads the public on conceptual, methodological and moral grounds.
3. Persistent discrimination against Asian American students in education, justified under the names of diversity, equity and race-based affirmative action, is a much more salient and consequential form of anti-Asian discrimination.

First, data from the FBI Crime Data Explorer shows a 90% increase from 2018 to 2021 in crimes involving Asian-American victims. An initial reading of such an increase could validate the Asian/AAPI hate thesis. But further analysis reveals interlocking nuances. On violent incidents by victim race and ethnicity, the percentage change from 2018 to 2021 was 75% for White victims, 118% for Black victims, and 138% for Hispanic victims. Although Asian Americans are 6.1% of the general population according to the 2020 Census, crimes victimizing Asian Americans hovered around 2% of all violent crimes. These numbers also mirror trends in rates of violent crime offenders desegregated by race and ethnicity during the same period. The rates of violent incidents victims and offenders per 100,000 people, by race and ethnicity, are even more telling.

All things considered, taking into account their percentages in the general population, Asian Americans can be said to be “under-committing” crimes by over 5 percentage points and “over-victimised” by about 4.5 percentage points. That is only if we were to go along with the crime-to-population proportionality rationale. Official data between 1985 and 2020 shows a slight reversal of a historical trend of lowering crimes in recent years, especially since 2014, although the rate of violent crime offenses per 100,000 people was much lower in 2020 than in 1990. In other words, violent crimes committed by all racial and ethnic groups and victimizing all groups have been on the rise lately.

More alarmingly, given the current political climate in which activists and politicians have called for structural reforms to abolish proactive policing, the rates of crimes cleared by the police have decreased in major U.S. cities where such reforms have been adopted to various degrees. The crusade against law enforcement has done a huge disservice by degrading the dignity of the



profession and compromising public safety. In a vicious cycle, many law enforcement agencies have responded to staffing shortages by lowering recruitment and training standards.

In short, when we situate crimes targeting Asian Americans in the broad context of increases in violent crimes and decreases in the capacity of law enforcement to adequately address crimes, the wave of “Asian Hate” is part and parcel of broader crime patterns.

Secondly, pegging anti-Asian crimes to racism lacks rigor. FBI reported 7,264 hate crime incidents in 2021, of which 4,470 or 64.8% were motivated by race, ethnicity or ancestry. There was a 12% decrease compared with the total number of hate crimes in 2020 and a 14.5% drop compared with the number of hate crimes motivated by race, ethnicity or ancestry. But reports by Stop AAPI Hate, which are frequently cited in media as proof of “Asian Hate,” endorse a much more expansive conceptualization: not only do hate crimes involving physical assaults are counted, hate incidents such as verbal harassment, avoidance or shunning, denial of service, and online trolling are also computed. Of the 10,905 anti-Asian hate incidents documented in its 2020 national report, 66.9% were incidents of verbal harassment and 16.2% were physical assaults. The former does not always result in an actual hate crime.

Therefore, the claim of unprecedented anti-Asian hate is inflated by events without traceable criminal element. Such pitfalls are consequential. Upholding anti-Asian racism as a structural issue warranting transformative changes can divert public policy focuses and public funds away from community building to ideological exercises that ultimately do not improve public safety. The Stop Asian Hate movement has garnered tens of millions of funding from various entities. For instance, in March 2022, the California State Government distributed \$14 million in grant funds to 80 regional and local organizations, part of a \$166 million pledge to “combating bias-motivated attacks.” For ideological reasons and also for profit, proponents of the Stop Asian Hate movement skew historical data and incorrectly paint a picture of white supremacy or systemic racism as the most underlying variable of hate incidents against Asian American.

Drummed up charges of hate incidents can have a fear-mongering psychological effect on members of the Asian-American community, especially those who are first-generation immigrants or low-income. Imagine what bearing the burden of feeling like a perpetual victim and being pressured to support virtue-signaling practices of condemning racism would do to an Asian American who has not analyzed the data? He or she would feel powerless and threatened by an imaginary enemy. He or she may even partake in the unproven (and unsuccessful in many cases) reforms of anti-racism and restorative justice, only to see an escalation in crimes harming the community because the underlying issues related to public safety would remain unsolved.



Last but not least, if policy makers and observers are serious about identifying and tackling discrimination against Asian Americans, they must confront the elephant in the room: systemic and ongoing anti-Asian discrimination in education through the practice of race-conscious admissions. Whether it is in admissions to selective U.S. colleges and universities or in recruitment of gifted and talented students at the K-12 level, evidence regarding higher standards, *de facto* quotas, and negative stereotypes to limit the access of Asian-American applicants abound.

In higher education, admission barriers hampering the chances of Asian-American students have been well documented by statistical evidence and eyewitness accounts. Racial preferences for the so-called underrepresented minority students at elite colleges come almost entirely at the expense of Asian Americans. The trend of racial preferences also continues at the graduate school level. For example, for those applying to medical school with average undergraduate GPAs (3.40 to 3.59) and average MCAT scores (27-29), Asian-American applicants have only a 22.5% acceptance rate, about one fourth of that of black applicants, one third of that of Hispanic applicants and 66% of that of white applicants.

Beyond elite schools, the penalty against Asian-American students is endemic throughout the education ecosystem. A survey by Insider Higher Ed revealed 42% of admission officers from private colleges and 39% of admission officers from public colleges admitted that they hold Asian American applicants to a higher standard. In almost every case, race is not used as a plus factor, as claimed by supporters of race-conscious admissions to achieve a critical mass of underrepresented minority students, but to discriminate against Asian Americans. To make matters worse, this practice has filtered down to the K-12 level. Racial balancing reforms have happened in New York, San Francisco, Boston, Montgomery, Maryland and Fairfax County, Virginia.

The persistence of a racial academic achievement gap is frequently cited as the chief factor behind these reforms. Failing to explain why Asian Americans have higher academic performance in spite of historical marginalization and inter-group diversities, the notion of inequity causing discrepancies defies logic. Factors other than racism, including family culture, personal motivation, and community cohesiveness, are clearly at play.

In conclusion, while it is true that hate crimes targeting Asian Americans are on the rise, especially in urban centers, the uptick must be understood in the general context of rising criminal violence in recent years. To reduce criminal violence targeting Asian Americans, policy makers should devise solutions to improve public safety and support law enforcement. On the other hand, if public policy decision-makers are committed to combatting discrimination and bias against Americans of Asian descent, they should not ignore the prevalence of race-conscious education policies which disproportionately harm Asian-American students.



Thank you again for hearing my testimony! I hope the commission will also take in account my much longer written statement which contains more data and examples.