HSHA JOINS 400 ORGANIZATIONS TO UNITE IN A WORLDWIDE VIGIL TO REMEMBER THE VICTIMS OF THE ATLANTA SHOOTING

Proud to Support #StopAsianHate National Day of Action and Healing
(President Joe Biden’s tweet)

The Hawaii Speech Language Hearing Association joined a Worldwide Vigil on Friday, March 26th—in support of the #StopAsianHate National Day of Action and Healing—and to unite as a global community in paying respects to the eight victims killed in the Atlanta shooting, to promote communal healing and hope in the face of heightened violence that has traumatized the entire Asian American community, and to call for solidarity under a banner of anti-racism.

The Atlanta shooting, which killed eight people, including six women of Korean and Chinese descent, took place on March 16, 2021, amidst a sharp spike in anti-Asian sentiment and hate crimes since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States last year. The research released by reporting forum Stop AAPI Hate revealed nearly 3,800 incidents against Asian Americans, 68% towards women, since March 19, 2020.

This vigil was part of numerous events taking place on March 26th, which was promoted as the #StopAsianHate National Day of Action and Healing, by Asian American Congressional leaders and civic organizations, with the support of President Joe Biden. March 26th is significant, as it is when the first U.S. law on naturalization, the Naturalization Act of 1790, was enacted to limit citizenship to only “free, White persons.”

The intersectional program included statements from the White House, South Korean Ambassador and four Korean American Members of Congress, Andy Kim (D-NJ), Young Kim (R-CA), Michelle Steel (R-CA), and Marilyn Strickland (D-WA)—with prayers by religious leaders: Imam Abdullah Jaber (CAIR-Georgia), Venerable Seok-Maya (Jun Dung Sa Temple), Mike Tai (4Points Church); poetry reading by Jessie Lian; singing by Adelaide Tai; and remarks by Community Leaders: Sarah Park (President, KAC Metro-Atlanta), Georgia Rep. Sam Park, Soyoung Yun, LPC, Nsé Ufot (Chief Executive Officer, New Georgia Project), Martha Revelo, (Outreach Director, Office of U.S. Senator Raphael Warnock), and Julie Katz (Assistant Director of American Jewish Committee (AJC) Atlanta).

Visit https://326vigil.org for the full recording of the event and full list of supporting organizations, including all major Korean and Asian American organizations, and nation’s top leading civic organizations such as the NAACP, American Jewish
Committee, Hispanic Federation, Human Rights Campaign, and even corporations like NIKE and Amazon.

Here are the statements:

Statement from the White House through Congressman Cedric Richmond, Senior Advisor to the President and director of the White House Office of Public Engagement:

My heart goes out to all who are joining the Asian American community to remember the victims of the horrific shootings in Atlanta that claimed the lives of eight people. I know this is a very painful time for everyone in the community who are mourning this tremendous loss, including the Korean American community -- as four of the victims were of Korean descent who immigrated to the United States in search of a better life; and for the AAPI women’s community--as six of the victims were Asian women.

President Biden has made clear that he condemns the distrusting rise in anti-Asian violence and that hate can have no safe harbor in America.

Our prayers are with the families of the victims and everyone gathered today to grieve and try to find solace together. We will stand together against hate, against racism, against sexism, against violence, including gender-based violence—and stand up for justice, for love, for healing.

Joint Statement from four Korean American Members of Congress, Andy Kim, Young Kim, Michelle Steel, and Marilyn Strickland

Tonight’s vigil is not just a reminder of those we’ve lost; we have come together as Korean American members of Congress to demonstrate our solidarity in the face of hate and fear. No one action, level of government, or individual can stop Asian hate. But by coming together, and bringing allies with us, we can make progress that will keep our AAPI community safe and honor those lives so cruelly and prematurely taken from us. To the families of the eight victims, you have our deepest condolences. We can and must always remember their names and work to address the escalating violence against Asian that cost them their lives.

Statement from Republic of Korea through South Korean Ambassador Lee Soo Hyuck:

I would like to express my deepest condolences to the victims of the tragic shootings that took place on March 16 in the Atlanta Metropolitan area and extend deepest sympathies to the families who lost their loved ones. I would like to offer my sincere sympathies to all Korean-Americans and Asian-American communities in the United States distressed by this tragedy.

The Embassy of the Republic of Korea strongly condemns anti-Asian hate crimes which have increased recently, and reaffirms its support for all the efforts to uphold values of diversity, mutual respect, and co-existence. The Embassy will continue to make every
effort to protect Koreans from hate crimes in cooperation with the law enforcement authorities of the United States.

SPEAKERS:

Sarah Park (President, KAC Metro-Atlanta)
- Racism and hatred is an American and global problem. In order for us to overcome this great challenges together, we must truly love our neighbors as we love ourselves. It is only through love that we can truly change hearts and minds of those are around us.
- Let’s go home, to our workplace, speak and increase our dialog and speak louder.

Sam Park (Georgia State Rep. for HD 101)
- I join in grief, pain and anger for this senseless mass shooting. After a year of escalating violence, there is fear in our community. “Am I next” is what I hear. But do not be afraid. This IS our home. This IS our country. And we WILL stand and fight to protect our community, the vulnerable among us and the next generation.
- We must also understand the troubles we face are not isolated to Asian Americans. Now is the time to stand in solidarity with the Black community that has suffered for 400 years of systemic racism. Now is the time to stand with our Muslim and Jewish brothers and sisters; with immigrants and refugees, with the LGBTQ community. All who face discrimination and violence because of who they are and because of the color of their skin and whom they may love.
- I remind you of the power you have. With the power of our vote we helped change the course of our state and of our country. May we put our differences aside with the understanding that we truly have more in common and are stronger together.

Nsé Ufot (Chief Executive Officer, New Georgia Project)
- I understand that this country is better because of my difference, because of our differences. It is a beacon of hope for man across the globe.
- So I say to you today in the words of another American Writer Zora Neale Hurston 'If you are silent about your pain, they’ll kill you and say you enjoyed it.' And so, I wanted to thank you all for holding this vigil tonight. I want to thank you for saying enough and no more. I want you for not being silent about your pain, about our collective pain. I want to thank you for creating space and community for people to mourn so that we can heal, so that we can continue to build Georgia and the country that each of us deserve.

Martha Revelo, (Outreach Director, Office of U.S. Senator Raphael Warnock):
- I’m here not only on behalf of Senator Warnock but as a Latina. Growing up in Atlanta for me from immigrant parents and seeing everything that happened last week, it hit hard. I just want to let everyone know that we are standing with you against all forms of hate and violence that has been targeted against the AAPI community not only here but nationwide.
- I just want to end with a few words in Spanish. Somos un pueblo, y estamos juntos con ustedes. We are a community, and we stand right next to you.

Julie Katz (Assistant Director of American Jewish Committee (AJC) Atlanta):
● We understand that as minorities, we cannot be free from oppression until all minorities are free from oppression.
● Liberation means freedom from hate and fear. Liberation is having the ability to live in peace, prosperity and acceptance. We lost eight beloved souls in last week’s tragedy, who were deprived of these rights. And when anti-Asian rhetoric and hate crimes began to rise last year, the entire Asian community was deprived of these freedoms and rights. This is unacceptable. We call upon our leaders and community to say no to hate and to take action to ensure the safety of the Asian community. We call upon our leaders to show that hatred has no place in our society.
● We will continue to speak out against anti-Asian hate. The Asian community deserves to feel safe and live free from harm. And the Jewish community will be right by your side advocating with you until this happens.

Poetry reading by Jessie Lian

“Thank you. It’s an honor to be here. This poem that I’m about to read is based off of tiny details that I found about the victims, things that they loved. I hope that it honors them as much as it honors us and our collective experiences, our collective grief, and our collective yearning to be seen, be heard, and belong.

Their hands...
They softened sores,
Tamed tensions,
Untied knots.
They knocked on aches,
Pointed them outside, and said, “Get up, pack your bags, and go.”
Their hands...
They made space for us to breathe easy,
Flipped on the lights in these foreign rooms,
Clasped the edges of the kitchen counter like a prayer,
Like, “Maybe the stove could be an altar for my offerings,
Maybe even a sanctuary for my belonging.”
Their hands...
They patted dry the tofu,
Massaged these leafy immigrant greens,
Scooped up families of rice into a boiling new country,
Never thought once about how brave it all was...
Only that it was necessary.
They stirred the kimchi stew with a wooden spoon,
Then tucked it away into a little white bowl,
Like a parcel of home,
An envelope stuffed with the feeling of “full,”
Postmarked to everyone like it would never run dry.
Their hands made space for us to be full
And take space.
And their hands
They’d sometimes clutch the karaoke mic like a sword,
Slice their songs into the dark and glittering rooms,
Sang-shout their dreams,
Simple dreams,
Like, “One day, I will travel for leisure instead of survival
And I will live long enough to see my grandchildren,
Live life that I paved for them,
The life that I could never live.”
Their hands...
they rocked their children in an envious slumber,
Held their tiny fingers,
Whispered terrified promises of “I will take care of you.”
Their hands took care of us...
Held close everything worth holding.
Let us lay their worn and traveled hands
On top of their holy hearts
To rest.
That they may finally hold,
Hold themselves,
And be held.
Let us stack our hands
On top of theirs,
A planet of embrace,
One collective push,
One breath of world back into their lungs,
Give them back the voice
For what they could never say.
Give us the voice
For what they could never say.
Make space
For us to make loud.
Yes.
Make loud
The sing-shout dreaming,
Make loud
The ripping open of parcels of home,
Make loud
The huffing and puffing before the breathing easy,
Make loud
The soothing and the screaming,
Make loud
The whimpering and the roaring,
Make loud
The peacekeeping and the power-keeping,
Make loud
The standing and the dancing,
The holding and releasing,
The quiet and the mouth wide open like ocean laughter.
Make loud
The whistling of freedom,
Make loud.
Turn on the lights,
Sit at the table,
Weep,
And hold hands.
Hold hands,
And feast.