SENATE RESOLUTION

8610

By Senator Dhingra

WHEREAS, The pandemic saw a large rise in violence and animus targeting Asian American people across Washington and across this country; and

WHEREAS, It is clear that this violence has been founded on anti-Asian xenophobia and specifically targeted towards Asian and Pacific Islander individuals because of their race, affiliation, or appearance; and

WHEREAS, There have been 3,800 instances of reported hate incidents against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, AAPI, people across the country within the last year, a 150 percent increase and a trend which is reflected in our own state; and

WHEREAS, We recognize Noriko Nasu, a Japanese American high school teacher who is still recovering from an attack in the Chinatown International District during which an assailant used a rock to render her unconscious, fracture her nose, and break her teeth; and

WHEREAS, We recognize the 25 year old Asian American woman in Seattle who was pushed and told Asian people "need to be put in their place," and the Asian American couple who were threatened with an airsoft gun and told to "Go back to [their] country"; and

WHEREAS, We recognize William Barreto, a Filipino Chinese American, who recently experienced a stranger spitting in his face while being told the pandemic is "his fault"; and

WHEREAS, We recognize the numerous targeted vandalisms of Asian American homes, businesses, and places of worship—places where people are meant to feel safe and welcomed; and

WHEREAS, We understand that many members of the Asian American community have expressed feeling so unsafe in their communities that they feel the need to be accompanied in public so as to avoid assault or threat; and

WHEREAS, We acknowledge the ongoing grief and fear of the AAPI community as they grapple with these continued acts of hate and confront the fact that they are rooted in a long, detailed past of violent and discriminatory practices against people of Asian descent; and

WHEREAS, When we, as a state, acknowledge how we arrived at this painful moment, we must include Washington's significant, documented history of segregating Asian Americans from our cities and communities; and

WHEREAS, We must remember the history of brutal assaults on Asian Americans and abhorrent policies instituted against them in Washington, such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the 1885 Squak Valley attack on Chinese laborers, the Seattle riots of 1886 which lead to the expulsion of 350 Chinese residents from Seattle, the 1886 Washington constitutional provision which barred Asian immigrants from applying for citizenship or owning property, the internment of Japanese Americans during the Second World War, and the Wah Mee Massacre of 1983 that claimed 13 Asian American lives; and

WHEREAS, Today, Washington is home to over 870,000 members of the AAPI community; and

WHEREAS, In spite of this traumatic history, the AAPI community has contributed invaluable accomplishments to the state of Washington; and

WHEREAS, In 1962, Wing Luke was the first Asian American to hold elected office in Washington state, with many following after him, including Governor Gary Locke and some of the members of this body today; and

WHEREAS, Washington's AAPI community is an integral part of our state, comprising accomplished individuals of all trades and talents, as evinced by our education system, art scene, thriving international districts, local businesses, and vibrant festivals; and

WHEREAS, Nobody who calls Washington home should live in fear because of who they are, how they are perceived, or what part of the world they or their families came from;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate stand in solidarity with the AAPI community against the acts of violence, hate speech, and displays of intolerance that they have experienced as a result of rampant anti-AAPI rhetoric; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That Washington State Senate honor, respect, and value the contributions of our AAPI residents, seek to reduce the risk of harm or threat, stand in support of our communities as they heal, and express compassion and kindness for our residents, and to protect their right to justice.