

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2022

Statement on the One-Year Anniversary of the Shootings in Acworth and Atlanta, Georgia
March 16, 2022

One year ago today, eight people, six of them women of Asian descent, were tragically killed by a gunman who attacked three Asian-run businesses. These horrific murders shook communities across America and underscored how far we have to go in this country to fight racism, misogyny, and all forms of hate—and the epidemic of gun violence that enables these extremists.

In the aftermath of these senseless deaths, the Vice President and I traveled to Atlanta to meet with leaders of the Asian American community. We heard about the terror and anguish that too many Asian Americans have felt since the beginning of the COVID–19 pandemic, when anti-Asian xenophobia, harassment, and violence skyrocketed to alarming levels: grandparents afraid to leave their homes; small-business owners targeted and gunned down; families living in fear for their lives just walking down the street in America. It was a stark reminder that anti-Asian violence and discrimination have deep roots in our Nation, with Asian American women experiencing the compounded harms of being targeted on account of their race as well as their gender.

Today we honor the victims, their families, and the Atlanta community that has shown extraordinary resilience in the face of tragedy. While nothing we do can bring the victims back, their loss has compelled us to reckon with our Nation's long legacy of anti-Asian sentiment and gender-based violence and recommit ourselves to delivering the full measure of justice, safety, and dignity the Asian American and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander community and all communities deserve. I was proud to sign the bipartisan COVID–19 Hate Crimes Act into law last May, which dedicated new tools and resources across Government and law enforcement to help prevent, track, and respond to acts of hate, along with new Department of Justice grants and other measures to enhance community engagement, empowerment, and education.

This tragedy is also yet another reminder of the gun violence epidemic. My administration has taken more executive action to reduce gun violence than any other administration in its first year. But there is more to do, and Congress must act.

On this somber anniversary, my administration remains fully committed to advancing safety, inclusion, and belonging for all Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders—especially the women and girls who disproportionately bear the burdens of hate—and to reducing the gun violence that terrorizes our communities. Together, we must build a future where no one fears violence.

NOTE: The statement referred to Robert A. Long, suspected gunman in separate shootings at Young's Asian Massage Parlor in Acworth, GA, and Gold Spa and Aromatherapy Spa in Atlanta, GA, on March 16, 2021.

Categories: Statements by the President : Shooting in Acworth and Atlanta, GA, one-year anniversary.

Names: Harris, Kamala D.; Long, Robert A.

Subjects: Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander civil rights leaders, meeting with President; Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders : Hate crimes and race-based violence;

Civil rights : Racial equality; Diseases : Coronavirus, domestic prevention efforts; Georgia : 2021 shooting in Acworth and Atlanta; Georgia : Shootings in Acworth and Atlanta; Holidays and special observances : Shooting in Acworth and Atlanta, one-year anniversary; Law enforcement and crime : Gun control; Law enforcement and crime : Gun violence, prevention efforts; White House Office : Vice President.

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