

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING FIREFIGHTER ROGER MILLER

HON. JOHN JOYCE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 19, 2021

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Firefighter Roger Miller for his 40 years of service with the Meyersdale Volunteer Fire Department in Somerset County, Pennsylvania.

Firefighters' commitment and service to our community are invaluable. Volunteer firefighters often are called on to respond to emergencies of all types. From battling structure fires to conducting search and rescue operations, volunteer firefighters respond immediately whenever disaster strikes. These heroes often go above and beyond—they teach first aid, educate students about fire and other dangerous hazards, and even install car safety seats for children. Through their diverse and often-difficult work, volunteer firefighters provide lifesaving services and are a staple of our local community.

Firefighter Miller has worked throughout his career to serve the people of Somerset County. On behalf of Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District, I thank him for his work to protect life and property in our community and wish him continued health, safety, and success.

CONDEMNING THE HORRIFIC SHOOTINGS IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA ON MARCH 16, 2021

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, as Chair of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Homeland Security, and Terrorism, and a senior member of the Homeland Security, and Budget Committees, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 275—Condemning the horrific shootings in Atlanta, Georgia, on March 16, 2021, and reaffirming the House of Representative's commitment to combating hate, bigotry, and violence against the Asian-American and Pacific Islander community.

Madam Speaker, we all awoke earlier this year to the horrific news that in suburban Atlanta, Georgia, a 21-year old angry white man murdered 8 persons at three Asian massage spas.

Among the innocent victims were 6 young Asian American women who worked in the establishments.

The suspected perpetrator of these brutal crimes has been arrested and charged with 8 counts of murder.

According to the Atlanta Police Department, the killer is reported to have told police that he

has an issue, what he considers a 'sex addiction,' and 'sees these [Asian massage spa] locations as something that allows him to go to these places' and 'it is a temptation for him that he wanted to eliminate.'

Adding insult to injury, a Georgia sheriff's captain, acting as spokesperson for law enforcement investigators, characterized the killer as "having a really bad day."

Madam Speaker, since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, there has been a significant increase in harassment and violence against the Asian American community.

Unfortunately, this is not new; there is a long history of racism against Asian Americans, especially during times of social and economic unrest.

Throughout American history Asian Americans are often blamed for the emergence of pandemics and diseases, even if the sickness originated far outside the Asian American community.

The COVID-19 pandemic is no exception, as American citizens, and residents of actual or perceived Chinese descent, have received intense and unjust scrutiny, violence, and harassment as perpetrators associate them with the cause of the pandemic and resulting social and economic turmoil.

And the racist practice of the 45th President of always referring to the coronavirus as the "China Virus," or "Kung Flu" certainly contributed to, and inflamed, an already dangerous climate for persons of Asian descent.

Asian migration to the continental United States can be traced as far back as 1800's.

Despite their long residence in the country, throughout American history Asian American communities have been stigmatized as perpetual foreigners.

These xenophobic sentiments are especially exacerbated in times of social and economic discontent, leaving Asian American communities vulnerable to white supremacist and racist violence and harassment.

Especially notable to today, historically anti-Asian racism often associates Asian communities with illness—leaving Asian Americans particularly vulnerable to medical scapegoating and violence during epidemics.

Xenophobia and racism against the Asian American community continued well into the 20th century.

Most infamously, in 1942 President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which ordered the forced internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II.

While American immigration policies' still forbade the free migration of Asian immigrants into the country, thousands of Japanese-Americans had lived in the United States for decades, many of whom were second and third-generation Americans.

As the 1980 investigation and report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians would later conclude, Japanese internment was primarily driven by racism and xenophobia rather than a legitimate security threat.

Even though nearly two-thirds of Japanese internees were American citizens, Japanese-Americans were considered as a collective to be disloyal, un-American, and a security risk.

In 1982, amid a downturn in the U.S. automobile industry that was blamed on competition from Japanese companies, Chinese American Vincent Chin was beaten to death by two white autoworkers, one allegedly saying, "it's because of you little m-f-s that we're out of work."

Chin's assailants never spent a day in jail and instead were only sentenced to probation and fined and the resulting outrage from the Asian American community served as a galvanizing force to organize for Asian American civil rights and advocacy, and it remains a central rallying cry and example of injustice for contemporary Asian American activism.

In the aftermath of the September 11th attack on the United States, South Asian, Muslim, and Middle Eastern Americans increasingly became the targets of violence and discrimination.

In the week following the terrorist attack, media outlets reported 645 bias incidents targeting people perceived to be Muslim or of Middle Eastern descent.

At the time, the Bush Administration condemned the harassment and urged respect for the Muslim and South Asian community, with President Bush himself stating that the perpetrators of these racialized attacks should be "ashamed."

Then-Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director Robert Mueller reiterated President Bush's sentiments, stating that: "vigilante attacks and threats against Arab-Americans will not be tolerated."

In the years since, the Department of Justice has investigated over 800 incidents of violence, threats, and harassment against Arab, Muslim, Sikh, and South Asian Americans, and others of perceived Middle Eastern descent.

Sparked by xenophobic rhetoric framing fault for the coronavirus around its country of origin, Asian Americans, notably those of Chinese descent or assumed Chinese descent, have suffered increased rates of violence, harassment, and intimidation over the last year.

Led by the racist rhetoric of the 45th President, targeted xenophobic and anti-Asian sentiments have exacerbated the scapegoating and targeting of the Asian American community.

Between March 16 and March 30, 2020, the worst president in history referred to COVID-19 as the "Chinese virus" more than 20 times, claiming that his phrasing was not racist at all, but rather accurate because the virus came from China.

He even had the word "Corona" crossed out of his press conference notes, replaced with "Chinese" handwritten above it, and he also called the virus "Kung Flu" at a rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma on June 20, 2020 then again at a church rally in Phoenix, Arizona on June 24, 2020.

Examples of additional violent physical assaults against the Asian American community over the last year include:

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

1. A sixteen-year-old boy was sent to the emergency room after being physically attacked at his high school by an assailant who claimed the boy had COVID-19 simply because he was Asian.

2. An 81-year-old woman was punched in the face and lit on fire outside her home.

3. A woman was kicked, punched, and hit with an umbrella in a subway station in New York.

4. A man and his ten-year-old son were followed to a bus station by a man who was yelling and cursing at them before eventually hitting the man over the head.

5. A 61-year-old man was slashed across the face with a boxcutter on the subway in New York City. His injuries required him to receive nearly 100 stitches.

6. A woman was doused in a caustic chemical as she took out the trash; resulting in chemical burns on her face, neck and back.

7. A 52-year-old woman was shoved to the ground and hit her head on a metal newspaper stand.

8. A 51-year-old man was beaten with his own cane at a bus stop. His injuries were so severe, he lost part of a finger.

Further, in addition to these violent incidents, data shows that general and daily harassment of Asian Americans has increased in the last year, examples of which include:

1. A couple found a note pinned to their door that read: "We're watching you f— c— take the chinese virus back to china. We don't want you hear [sic] infecting us with your diseases!!!!!!!!!!!!—Your friendly neighborhood."

2. A woman was cursed at while taking out her trash, a man walking by yelling "F— Chinese" and "Yea, I'm talking to you, Chinese B—."

3. A woman was yelled at, followed, and spit on as she walked to her gym.

4. A man was yelled at while grocery shopping, the customer in front of him at the checkout line shouting at him "It's you people who brought the disease."

Finally, Madam Speaker, in my home state of Texas, about this time a year ago, a Burmese American family was shopping at a Sam's Club in Midland, Texas when a man repeatedly hit the father on the back of his head and slashed at his face.

Later, the assailant returned to continue to attack the family—stabbing their two-year-old child and slashing their six-year-old across the face.

In light of increasing attacks on Asian Americans, several members of Congress have called for a stronger hate crime tracking law to add to the existing legal framework of hate crime legislation.

Congresswoman CHU, the Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, has called on this consider new hate crime tracking legislation, noting that all of us must be vocal in rejecting xenophobia and racism."

And I am pleased to be an original cosponsor of the March 25, 2020 resolution introduced by Congresswoman MENG of New York and passed by the House on September 17, 2020, condemning anti-Asian sentiment related to COVID-19 and calling on federal law enforcement officials to work with state and local officials to investigate hate crimes and incidents against the Asian American community.

In my hometown of Houston, Texas, we know all too well the fear, horror, and heart-

break inflicted on members of vulnerable and marginalized communities when they are targeted by hate crime violence.

That is why I have reintroduced H.R. 133, the David Ray Hate Crimes Prevention Act or "David's Law," to amend the federal criminal code to impose penalties for willfully causing bodily injury to any person or, through the use of fire, a firearm, or an explosive device, attempting to cause such injury, whether or not acting under color of law, because of the actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or disability of any person, where the offense is in or affects interstate or foreign commerce.

This legislation is named in honor of David Ray Ritcheson, a constituent and high school student, who was brutally beaten and left for dead simply because his assailants hated his national origin.

Madam Speaker, hate crimes are among the worst atrocities that exist in modern day society.

A hate crime is defined as the incidence of violence motivated by the actual or perceived race, color, national origin, relation, sexual orientation, gender, and disability of the victim.

Unfortunately, hate crimes are underreported for several reasons, including fear and intimidation.

As most of us in this Congress know all too well, hate-motivated violence disrupts the tranquility and safety of our communities, impedes the movement of members of targeted groups, and prevents members of targeted groups from purchasing goods and services, obtaining, or sustaining employment, and achieving the American Dream.

The mass shootings in Georgia are one part of a nationwide pattern of Asian women's being disproportionately targeted in hate incidents, and this Resolution proclaims loud and clear that the United States Government is committed to combatting hate, bigotry and violence against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

For this reason, I urge all of my colleagues to rise with me in support of H. Res. 275—Condemning the horrific shootings in Atlanta, Georgia, on March 16, 2021, and reaffirming the House of Representative's commitment to combating hate, bigotry, and violence against the Asian-American and Pacific Islander community.

[From BuzzFeed New, Apr. 1, 2020]

A MAN WHO ALLEGEDLY TRIED TO KILL AN ASIAN AMERICAN FAMILY BECAUSE OF THE CORONAVIRUS COULD FACE HATE CRIME CHARGES

(By Julia Reinstein)

The incident is just one in a surge of racist attacks that Asian-Americans have faced during the coronavirus pandemic.

A man who allegedly tried to kill an Asian American family of three because he believed they were spreading the coronavirus at a Sam's Club in Texas could face hate crime charges, the FBI told BuzzFeed News on Wednesday.

Jose L. Gomez, 19, stabbed the three people on March 14 at the Midland, Texas, Sam's Club before being taken down by a store employee, who saved the family's lives and was injured in the process, police told BuzzFeed News.

Gomez was then taken into custody by an off-duty Border Patrol agent. He was charged with three counts of attempted capital murder and one count of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon.

Bernie Ramirez, the Border Patrol agent, told CBS7 he initially approached Gomez and family with the intention of breaking up what he thought was a fight over scarce goods.

Ramirez said "credit is due" to Zach Owen, the store employee who stopped Gomez by putting him in a chokehold and suffered stab wounds to the hand in the process.

"He went into a knife fight bare-handed," Ramirez said. "He took control of the individual, and he disarmed him. If Zach had not been there, things could've gone really badly."

Ramirez did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The father in the family declined to comment.

Gomez allegedly stabbed the three "because he thought the family was Chinese, and infecting people with the coronavirus," the FBI stated in a document obtained by ABC News.

An FBI spokesperson told BuzzFeed News they were unable to comment on the document but confirmed that the case is being treated as a possible hate crime.

According to the FBI report, federal law enforcement officials are warning there could be a surge in hate crimes against Asian Americans.

"The FBI assesses hate crime incidents against Asian Americans likely will surge across the United States, due to the spread of coronavirus disease . . . endangering Asian American communities," the document reportedly states. "The FBI makes this assessment based on the assumption that a portion of the US public will associate COVID-19 with China and Asian American populations."

The Texas stabbing was just one of the many racist attacks Asian Americans have been facing amid the coronavirus pandemic's rise in the US.

On March 11, a woman in New York punched another woman for not wearing a face mask and "made anti-Asian statements and fled the location on foot." In February, a 16-year-old boy was sent to the hospital after being physically attacked by bullies who accused him of having the coronavirus. One couple in Minnesota got a note on their door that said "we're watching you" and "take the Chinese virus back to China."

President Donald Trump has deliberately referred to COVID-19 as the "Chinese virus" on multiple occasions, which critics have seen as a way of scapegoating China and, in turn, inciting hatred and harassment of people of Asian descent. The World Health Organization has urged people not to attach locations or ethnicity to the virus to prevent social stigma.

When questioned, Trump defended his use of the term,

"It's not racist at all, no. Not at all," Trump said. "It comes from China."

The FBI spokesperson told BuzzFeed News the agency "will use all authority granted to us by federal law to investigate and hold those who commit violent acts accountable for their actions."

"During the COVID-19 pandemic, we want to remind everyone that any violent criminal act against any person because of their race, ethnicity or national origin is a hate crime," the spokesperson said. "This includes violence toward Asian Americans or individuals from East Asian countries."

[From the New York Times]

8 DEAD IN ATLANTA SPA SHOOTINGS, WITH FEARS OF ANTI-ASIAN BIAS

The man who police say went on a rampage at three spas in the Atlanta area has been charged with eight counts of murder in connection with the attacks.

Here's what we know:

1. The suspect in the spa attacks has been charged with eight counts of murder.

2. Six of the eight victims were women of Asian descent.

3. President Biden: 'I know Asian-Americans are very concerned.'

4. A survivor of the shooting spree called his wife: 'I've been shot! Please come.'

5. The suspect's parents identified him in surveillance footage during the manhunt.

6. Experts warn of a rise in hate crimes motivated by 'male supremacy.'

7. Asian-Americans were targeted in nearly 3,800 hate incidents in the past year.

The Atlanta police on Wednesday said a 21-year-old suspect was arrested and charged in the shootings that took place at three massage parlors Tuesday night:

"This was a tragic day with many victims, but thankfully the suspect was quickly apprehended." "The suspect did take responsibility for the shootings. He said that early on, once we began the interviews with him. He claims that these, and as the chief said, we know this is still early, but he does claim that it was not racially motivated. He apparently has an issue, what he considers a sex addiction, and sees these locations as something that allows him to go to these places. And it is a temptation for him that he wanted to eliminate." "So obviously, whatever the motivation was for this guy, we know that many of the victims, the majority of the victims, were Asian. We also know that this is an issue that is happening across the country. It is unacceptable. It is hateful, and it has to stop." "We put out an image of a possible suspect very early on in this incident, and we were notified by his family, who were fully cooperative, and we are greatly appreciative of their assistance in this matter."

ACWORTH, Ga.—The man who police say went on a rampage at three spas in the Atlanta area, killing eight people, was charged on Wednesday with eight counts of murder in connection with the attacks.

The brazen shootings, which took the lives of six women of Asian descent, stirred considerable outrage and fear in the Asian-American community. Investigators said they had not ruled out bias as a motivating factor even as the suspect denied such racial animus once in custody.

The gunman told the police: that he had a "sexual addiction" and had carried out the shootings at the massage parlors to eliminate his "temptation," the authorities said on Wednesday. He also said that he had frequented massage parlors in the past and launched the attacks as a form of vengeance. All but one of the victims were women, the police said.

Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms of Atlanta said that regardless of the determination about motive, the tragedy was clear.

"Whatever the motivation was for this guy, we know that the majority of the victims were Asian," Ms. Bottoms said. "We also know that this is an issue that is happening across the country. It is unacceptable, it is hateful and it has to stop."

The authorities charged Robert Aaron Long, 21, on Wednesday with eight counts of murder and one count of aggravated assault in connection with the shootings. Four of the murder counts and the assault charge stem from the first shooting, in Cherokee County, and the other four murder counts relate to the shootings at two spas in the city of Atlanta less than an hour later, the authorities said.

Capt. Jay Baker of the Cherokee County Sheriff's Office said the gunman had told the police he was driving to Florida when he was caught after the shootings on Tuesday evening, and that he said he may have been

trying to commit similar violence at a business connected to the "porn industry" there. He was stopped after his parents alerted the police that they believed their son might be the suspect, and the police were able to track his phone.

Sheriff Frank Reynolds of Cherokee County said the gunman may have "frequented these places in the past and may have been lashing out."

The police arrested Mr. Long, who is white, about 150 miles south of Atlanta after a manhunt, the authorities said. They had earlier released a surveillance image of a suspect near a Hyundai Tucson outside one of the massage parlors. Mr. Baker said that Mr. Long, of Cherokee County, had admitted to the shootings and that he appeared to be acting alone.

Rodney Bryant, the acting chief of the Atlanta Police Department, said it was not yet clear whether the shooting spree would be classified as a hate crime.

"We are still early in this investigation, so we cannot make that determination at this moment," Chief Bryant said. "We are just not there as of yet."

(By Scott Reinhard)

Four people died in the first shooting, at Young's Asian Massage near Acworth, a northwest suburb of Atlanta, Mr. Baker said. That shooting, in which a Hispanic man was injured, was reported around 5 p.m.

At 5:47 p.m., the Atlanta police said, officers responded to a robbery at Gold Spa in the northeast part of the city, where they found the bodies of three women with gunshot wounds. While the officers were at the scene, the police said, they received a report of shots fired at the Aromatherapy Spa across the street, where they found the body of another woman.

A 911 caller who said she was hiding in the back of Gold Spa told the emergency operator that a "white guy" had a gun, according to audio recordings released by the Atlanta Police Department.

She was not sure where the gunman was, she told the operator, because she was hiding, and was unsure what he was wearing. "I don't know," she pleaded in response to questions. "Please just come."

Six of the eight people killed in the shootings at Atlanta-area spas on Tuesday were women of Asian descent, raising fears that they could have been targeted because of their race, even as the police said it was too early to know.

On Wednesday, the police named the victims of the shooting at Young's Asian Massage in Acworth, Ga., as Delaina Ashley Yaun; 33, of Acworth; Paul Andre Michels, 54, of Atlanta; Xiaojie Tan, 49, of Kennesaw; and Daoyou Feng, 44. One person, Elcias R. Hernandez-Ortiz, 30, of Acworth, was injured.

An official from the South Korean Consulate in Atlanta, citing the Foreign Ministry in Seoul, confirmed on Wednesday that four of the eight killed in the shooting spree were ethnic Koreans. But the nationalities of the four women were not immediately known, the official said.

Ms. Yaun was a customer at Young's Asian Massage and had been planning a date night with her husband, her half sister, Dana Toole, said. She was killed, and her husband survived after locking himself in a nearby room as gunshots rang out, Ms. Toole said.

"He's not OK," Ms. Toole said about her sister's husband. "He's taking it hard."

Ms. Yaun was one of four siblings who grew up in Acworth, and had worked as a server at a Waffle House restaurant. She raised a 13-year-old son as a single mother and had an 8-month-old daughter, Ms. Toole said.

"It was just all about family," Ms. Toole said. "Whatever we'd do, we'd do it to-

gether." Now the shooting has left the family in shock.

"It doesn't seem real. I expect to see her walking through the door any minute. It just hasn't quite sunk in yet," Ms. Toole said.

"My eyes hurt so bad because I've been crying so much," she said. "It's just hard right now for us to even think about moving forward, because she's not here."

Young's Asian Massage is tucked in a modest strip mall, with a beauty salon on one side and a boutique on the other. Like much of suburban Georgia, the mall is a diverse place, with panaderias and Latin businesses and American-style chain restaurants.

On Tuesday night, the blue lights of police vehicles cast an eerie glow as detectives worked inside the spa.

Rita Barron, 47, the owner of Gabby's Boutique next door, was with a group of onlookers standing near a used car lot. She said she had been with a customer when she heard noises through the wall that sounded like claps—and then women screaming.

She called 911, and soon saw victims being taken out by police officers.

Nearby, a wall of anguish went up from another cluster of people waiting for any news. Three dropped to the pavement, two of them embracing and shaking as they cried.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DAVID SCOTT

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 19, 2021

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I would like to reflect that had my vote for H. Res. 275, a resolution condemning the horrific shootings in Atlanta, Georgia, on March 16, 2021, and reaffirming the House of Representative's commitment to combating hate, bigotry, and violence against the Asian-American and Pacific Islander community, been cast, it would have been recorded as AYE. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 149,

HONORING FIREFIGHTER BRUCE HARTMAN

HON. JOHN JOYCE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 19, 2021

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Firefighter Bruce Hartman for his 10 years of service with the Meyersdale Volunteer Fire Department in Somerset County, Pennsylvania.

Firefighters' commitment and service to our community are invaluable. Volunteer firefighters often are called on to respond to emergencies of all types. From battling structure fires to conducting search and rescue operations, volunteer firefighters respond immediately whenever disaster strikes. These heroes often go above and beyond—they teach first aid, educate students about fire and other dangerous hazards, and even install car safety seats for children. Through their diverse and often-difficult work, volunteer firefighters provide lifesaving services and are a staple of our local community.

Firefighter Hartman has worked throughout his career to serve the people of Somerset