

church does not come to the aid of justice, I have no despair about the future. I have no fear about the outcome of our struggle in Birmingham, even if our motives at present are misunderstood. We will reach the goal of freedom in Birmingham and all over the nation, because the goal of America is freedom.

Mr. TOOMEY. Continuing the reading of a letter from a Birmingham jail.

Abused and scorned though we may be, our destiny is tied up with America's destiny. Before the pilgrims landed at Plymouth, we were here. Before the pen of Jefferson etched the majestic words of the Declaration of Independence across the pages of history, we were here. For more than two centuries, our forebears labored in this country without wages; they made cotton king; they built the homes of their masters while suffering gross injustice and shameful humiliation—and yet out of a bottomless vitality they continued to thrive and develop. If the inexpressible cruelties of slavery could not stop us, the opposition we now face will surely fail. We will win our freedom because the sacred heritage of our nation and the eternal will of God are embodied in our echoing demands. Before closing I feel impelled to mention one other point in your statement that has troubled me profoundly. You warmly commended the Birmingham police force for keeping "order" and "preventing violence." I doubt that you would have so warmly commended the police force if you had seen its dogs sinking their teeth into unarmed, nonviolent Negroes. I doubt that you would so quickly commend the policemen if you were to observe their ugly and inhumane treatment of Negroes here in the city jail; if you were to watch them push and curse old Negro women and young Negro girls; if you were to see them slap and kick old Negro men and young boys; if you were to observe them, as they did on two occasions, refuse to give us food because we wanted to sing our grace together. I cannot join you in your praise of the Birmingham police department.

It is true that the police have exercised a degree of discipline in handling the demonstrators. In this sense they have conducted themselves rather "nonviolently" in public. But for what purpose? To preserve the evil system of segregation. Over the past few years I have consistently preached that nonviolence demands that the means we use must be as pure as the ends we seek. I have tried to make it clear that it is wrong to use immoral means to attain moral ends. But now I must affirm that it is just as wrong, or perhaps even more so, to use moral means to preserve immoral ends. Perhaps, Mr. Connor and his policemen had been rather nonviolent in public, as was Chief Pritchett in Albany, Georgia, but they have used the moral means of nonviolence to maintain the immoral end of racial injustice. As T. S. Eliot has said: "The last temptation is the greatest treason: To do the right deed for the wrong reason." I wish you had commended the Negro sit inners and demonstrators of Birmingham for their sublime courage, their willingness to suffer, and their amazing discipline in the midst of great provocation. One day the South will recognize its real heroes. They will be the James Merediths, with the noble sense of purpose that enables them to face jeering and hostile mobs, and with the agonizing loneliness that characterizes the life of the pioneer. They will be old, oppressed battered Negro women symbolized in a seventy two year old woman in Montgomery, Alabama, who rose up with a sense of dignity and with her people decided not to ride segregated buses, and who responded with ungrammatical profundity to one who inquired about her weariness: "My feet is tired, but my soul is at rest." They will be

the young high school and college students, the young ministers of the gospel and a host of their elders, courageously and nonviolently sitting in at lunch counters and willingly going to jail for conscience' sake. One day the South will know that when these disinherited children of God sat down at lunch counters, they were in reality standing up for what is best in the American dream and for the most sacred values in our Judeo Christian heritage, thereby bringing our nation back to those great wells of democracy which were dug deep by the founding founders in their formulation of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.

Never before have I written so long a letter. I'm afraid it is much too long to take your precious time. I can assure you that it would have been much shorter if I had been writing from a comfortable desk, but what else can one do when he is alone in a narrow jail cell, other than write long letters, think long thoughts, and pray long prayers?

If I have said anything in this letter that overstates the truth and indicates an unreasonable impatience, I beg you to forgive me. If I have said anything that understates the truth and indicates my having a patience that allows me to settle for anything less than brotherhood, I beg God to forgive me. I hope this letter finds you strong in the faith. I also hope that circumstances will soon make it possible for me to meet each of you, not as an integrationist or a civil-rights leader but as a fellow clergymen and a Christian brother. Let us all hope that the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear drenched communities, and in some not too distant tomorrow, the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all their scintillating beauty.

Yours for the cause of Peace and Brotherhood,

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I thank my colleague from the neighboring State, Senator TOOMEY, for joining us. I thank all of my colleagues who were here today, Senators WARNOCK and MURKOWSKI, TOOMEY and CASSIDY, CORTEZ MASTO, and PADILLA for joining to read these powerful words today.

This is about as diverse a group as we could assemble in the U.S. Senate, a group of seven Senators who really reflect our country today: a reverend in a Black church, the son of a union electrical worker, a doctor from the Deep South, an Independent born in the Alaska country, a son of Mexican immigrants, a daughter of Mexican Americans who made this country home for a century, and a son of the Midwest whose father came from Mansfield, OH, and mother came from Mansfield, GA.

We come from different backgrounds, and we disagree on many things, but we love this country—all seven us—and we know we can do better for the people who make it work.

Dr. King and the civil rights leaders of his generation did more than just about anyone to push this country to

live up to our founding ideals and make the dream of America real for everyone.

Protesting, working for change, organizing, demanding our country to do better—those are some of the most patriotic things all of us can do. That is Dr. King's charge of this letter:

Progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability.

That is our charge. I think about the campaign Dr. King was waging when he was assassinated. You can't forget he was martyred in Memphis when fighting for some of the most exploited workers in this country, sanitation workers. He understood the deep connection between workers' rights and civil rights. As he put it, "What does it profit a man to be able to eat at an integrated lunch counter, if he doesn't earn enough money to buy a hamburger and a cup of coffee?"

Until all Americans have the dignity they have earned, Dr. King's work will remain unfinished. That means paying all workers a living wage, giving them power over their schedules, providing good benefits and safety on the job, letting them, if they choose, organize a union. That means all workers should get a fair share of the wealth they create. It means recognizing the dignity of communities that Black Americans have built over generations.

They were denied wealth and investment. The schools were underfunded. Banks wouldn't lend. Highways tore down businesses and tore apart neighborhoods in the Presiding Officer's largest city in Milwaukee, as they did in the largest cities in my State: Columbus, Cleveland, and Cincinnati.

In the face of all of that, Black Ohioans and people all over the country built businesses and churches and vibrant neighborhoods and loving families. But they should not have to do it on their own.

As we emerge from this pandemic and we work together to build a stronger country out of this crisis, we can't make the mistakes of the past. We learned in the Banking, Housing Committee this week that President Roosevelt's collective bargaining laws and investment in housing with the creation of housing agencies created a middle class for Americans who look like me but didn't create a middle class for a whole lot of other Americans.

Think about the infrastructure investments that we made in the 1930s and the years after World War II. Think how we created millions of new homeowners and grew the middle class. Think of how we expanded economic security, with overtime and workers compensation and Medicare and Social Security.

There is no reason we can't do that again, the same thing again, but this time we bring along everyone. We invest in all communities. We bring us closer to the society Dr. King envisioned, where all labor—as he would say, where "all labor has dignity."

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COVID-19 HATE CRIMES ACT

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, on March 29, Vilma Kari was walking to church near Times Square in Manhattan when a man pushed her to the ground and violently assaulted her in broad daylight.

A silent video of the incident captured by a security camera inside a luxury apartment building showed the attack in vivid detail. In it, we can clearly see the assailant pushing Ms. Kari to the ground and kicking her repeatedly in the head and torso before leaving the scene. This video, which has gone viral, is disturbing enough to watch, but it doesn't capture the full picture of what happened. Witnesses to the attack recounted the assailant's repeatedly yelling "You don't belong here" to Ms. Kari—an immigrant from the Philippines who has lived in our country for decades.

Now recovering from multiple injuries, including a broken pelvis, Vilma Kari has become one of the latest victims in a surging wave of hate crimes targeting the Asian-American, Pacific Islander community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Over the last year, we have seen businesses defaced with anti-Asian graffiti, elders verbally accosted on the street, women assaulted, and eight people murdered in cold blood at Asian-owned businesses in Georgia during unprovoked attacks. All told, people of Asian descent have reported more than 3,800 hate incidents across all 50 States and the District of Columbia.

These attacks are disturbing and horrifying, but they are, in many ways, a predictable and foreseeable outgrowth of the use of racist and inflammatory language, like "Chinese virus," "Wuhan virus," and "Kung flu," to describe the COVID-19 pandemic. Last year, as some political leaders, including the former President, started using this language, the FBI warned of a potential surge in hate crime incidents targeting people of Asian descent.

At the same time, public health experts warned of the danger of singling out the Asian-American community as being responsible for the virus. These warnings proved prophetic. A study recently published by the American Journal of Public Health found there was a dramatic increase in tweets using anti-Asian phrases after the first time the former President tweeted using the hashtag "China virus" on March 16, 2020.

This rise in hate crimes targeting AAPIs over the past year has shown the extent to which this inflammatory rhetoric has normalized racist attitudes toward and the stigmatization of Asian Americans with devastating con-

sequences. The Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism, for example, assessed that, in 16 of the Nation's largest cities, hate crimes targeting AAPIs spiked nearly 150 percent during the pandemic.

The current dramatic rise in hate crimes targeting Asian Americans might be a recent development, but we all know that racism is never far below the surface in our country, sadly. Asian Americans have always been targeted as the "other" in our country—considered the perpetual "foreigner." It is what drove the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and is what led to the incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II. It is also what drove two Detroit auto-workers, during the height of hysteria about Japan's growing economic strength, to murder a Chinese-American man named Vincent Chin in 1982 because they thought he was Japanese. Outrageously, neither of Vincent's killers received prison time. Nearly 40 years later, we can see clear parallels between the racism that motivated Vincent Chin's murder and the ongoing surge in anti-Asian racism and hate crimes. We can also see the parallels in the wave of activism both unleashed.

Today, the AAPI community is uniting, once again, to confront this epidemic of racism, discrimination, and hate. We are marching, speaking out, and demanding action in cities and States across the country. As part of our activism, we are working to dispel the model minority myth that all Asians are successful and integrated in society. This racist and discriminatory stereotype devalues the struggles and experiences of an extraordinarily diverse community. The AAPI community is comprised of people from more than 48 distinct ethnic groups who speak over 300 languages. Some of these groups have been in this country for over 100 years. Others have grown in size through waves of immigration in recent decades.

Like other communities of color, elements of the AAPI community have traditionally suffered from a variety of health, economic, and other disparities for years, and the COVID-19 pandemic has only made them worse. AAPIs are contracting and dying from COVID-19 at much higher rates than White Americans and at comparable rates with Black and Hispanic Americans.

Our community has suffered too much over the past year from the two epidemics of racism and COVID, and confronting both will continue to present challenges, but it has been a relief to have a President capable of demonstrating care and empathy and who shares our sense of urgency in confronting this wave of hate.

In his first week as President, Joe Biden issued an executive memorandum that condemned racism, xenophobia, and intolerance targeting the AAPI community and directed the Federal Government to actively combat it. In recent weeks, following the brutal

murder of eight people, including six Asian women in Georgia, President Biden took additional action. He announced new investments for research into anti-Asian xenophobia through the National Science Foundation, directed \$50 million in support for victims of hate crimes, and established a COVID-19 equity task force to combat anti-Asian hate.

Members of President Biden's administration have followed his lead. Attorney General Merrick Garland, for example, pledged to prioritize hate crimes enforcement during his confirmation hearing and has taken additional steps to help local law enforcement agencies investigate bias crimes.

Under President Biden's leadership, the executive branch is doing its part. Now it is time for us—it is time for Congress to act.

I am encouraged that in just a few minutes, the Senate will vote to proceed to the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act on a strong bipartisan vote. This is not a controversial bill. It would focus Federal leadership to investigate and report hateful acts of violence and provide resources for our communities to come together to take a stand against intolerance and hate.

The COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act directs the Attorney General to designate a person whose responsibility it will be to expedite review of anti-Asian hate crimes and report them. It also instructs DOJ to issue guidance to State and local law enforcement on culturally appropriate public education campaigns and on the collection of data on hate crimes or incidents. Such culturally-sensitive, in-language outreach is an important element for strengthening trust and awareness in impacted communities, and it will help overcome established hesitancy to report hate crimes or incidents to law enforcement.

At a time when the AAPI community is under siege, this bill is an important signal that Congress is taking anti-Asian racism and hatred seriously. Significantly, Democrats and Republicans are working together in good faith to come to consensus to pass this bill. For example, I wholeheartedly support a bipartisan amendment from Senators Blumenthal and Moran to attach their NO HATE Act to this bill. Their amendment improves the data collection and reporting of all hate crimes so that we can better understand their prevalence and implement effective policies to prevent them. Senator COLLINS and I are also working on additional language to broaden support for the bill.

The ongoing wave of anti-Asian violence and hate crimes has touched virtually every single member of the AAPI community. We are talking about millions of people in the AAPI community. Many of us are changing our daily routines. Until recently, I usually have my earbuds in, listening to an audio book whenever I leave my apartment to go for a walk. I don't do that now.