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NEWS RELEASE

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NAPIPA DENOUNCES VIOLENCE AGAINST ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICANS

The National Asian Pacific Islander Prosecutors Association (“NAPIPA”) denounces the recent violent crimes committed against the Asian and Pacific Islander (“API”) community throughout our country. These despicable acts of xenophobia, racism, discrimination, intolerance, and violence simply cannot be tolerated. We stand in solidarity with the victims, their families, and their communities in demanding action and justice.

Sadly, violent attacks against the API community are not new. However, since the pandemic began, there has been a sharp rise in violence, harassment, racism, and hatred directed at the API community. In the past few weeks, the sheer numbers of attacks, particularly against the elderly, and the deadliness of these crimes have reached monumental proportions. Vicha Ratanapakdee, an 84-year-old Thai American, was walking down the street in San Francisco when a man rushed him, slammed him to the ground, and killed him. Noel Quintana, a 61-year-old Filipino American, was slashed in the face on a New York City subway. These are only two examples of the recent and senseless violence directed at APIs.

NAPIPA calls for our elected leaders to take immediate action to protect the members of our community from further trauma, injury, and death. Publicly condemning these attacks is a small, albeit necessary, first step to raise awareness and show solidarity with an often overlooked and underrepresented community¹. However, more action is necessary. We urge our leaders not to stop there, and to offer and enact tangible solutions to protect all of their constituents.

We implore the media, mainstream and ethnic, to shed more light on these crimes so that everyone understands the devastating effects that these crimes have. Raising awareness and opening a dialogue are essential to our collective education. Many see API Americans, implicitly and explicitly, as “perpetual foreigners.” It is critical that API Americans are seen, and thought of, as Americans in order for the xenophobia against APIs to stop. Elected officials and the media can help to dispel the “API Americans as perpetual foreigners” idea.

¹ For example, today the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), a part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), released life expectancy rates for whites, blacks, and Latinos – they did not include figures for APIs or other racial groups. Leaving APIs out of statistics, and the conversation, is an all-too-common occurrence.

NAPIPA encourages everyone to be vigilant, to help one another, to come forward as victims and witnesses, and to cooperate with law enforcement and the criminal justice system. Do not stay silent. The only way this ends is if we all speak up² and act.

One of the reasons we formed NAPIPA was to act as a bridge between the API community and the criminal justice system. NAPIPA will continue to work to educate the API community about law enforcement and the criminal justice process. We will also work to educate law enforcement and members of the criminal justice system about the API community.

NAPIPA vows to seek justice for all victims of crimes and to continue to work to eradicate racism, xenophobia, and hatred.

² Interpreters for any language will be provided throughout the process.