

## **AAPI Strong Announcement**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Lauren Oto

Email: [loto@calasiancc.org](mailto:loto@calasiancc.org)

### **NEW ANTI-ASIAN HATE CAMPAIGN LAUNCHES IN CALIFORNIA**

With corporate support, focus is on awareness and training for minority-owned business where the largest percentage of Asian hate crimes occur

SACRAMENTO, CA, July 19, 2021 – The meteoric rise of hate crimes aimed at Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) during the past two years has created a national effort called AAPI Strong led by Asian/Pacific Islander American Chamber of Commerce and Entrepreneurship (National ACE). The California Asian Pacific Chamber of Commerce (CalAsian) has launched the California effort, a public awareness and training program – called AAPI Strong CA – supporting AAPI small business owners and their employees in California, thanks to funding by lead sponsor Verizon with major support from Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) and East West Bank.

“The rise in hate crimes and xenophobia is not limited to Black and Brown America,” said Pat Fong Kushida, President/CEO of CalAsian. “Members of the AAPI community feel it when we do business, take care of our children, and walk in our neighborhoods. We can be an easy target. Many of us are taught from birth not to make waves. It’s not typical for us to step out or speak up when injustice is visited upon us. Well, no more.”

Thirty six percent (36%) of all hate crime incidents targeting AAPIs occur at businesses according to a recent study by Stop AAPI Hate, a San Francisco-based organization that runs the Stop AAPI Hate Reporting Center. This nonprofit tracks incidents of hate and discrimination against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the United States.

“AAPI businesses – often small, family-run enterprises – are a huge part of daily life for many Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders,” said Rudy Reyes, West Region Vice President and Associate General Counsel for Verizon. “We are proud to make this \$175,000 lead contribution to help end hate and intolerance in California. CalAsian’s AAPI Strong campaign creates a path forward, and we hope others will join us in our commitment to creating a safe and inclusive society.”

Launching this fall, the AAPI Strong campaign is working with authorities to develop linguistically accessible and culturally appropriate training resources in several languages aimed at safeguarding AAPI business owners, employees, customers, and suppliers while supporting hate-crime reporting, aligning the training to support local efforts to build local resources and capacity that create resilience and new partnerships, and coordinate and help build appreciation of the lived experience of Asian Americans with local authorities. A professional marketing campaign will reach out to the more than 600,000 AAPI employers in California to build hate crime awareness and understanding, especially on the problem of underreporting pervasive in the AAPI community.

“The attacks on Asian Americans are in direct conflict with our values of diversity, equity and inclusion here at PG&E, and we encourage everyone in our communities to stand together in solidarity against all forms of hate. Supporting our local businesses through efforts like AAPI Strong will help us build a

healthier, more resilient community,” said Stephanie Isaacson, director of Community Relations at PG&E. PG&E donated \$50,000 toward the new campaign.

“East West Bank was founded to serve the Asian American community, and we have seen firsthand how the pandemic and xenophobia has impacted AAPI small businesses and the communities we serve,” said Travis Kiyota, President of the East West Bank Foundation. “As one of the largest minority depository institutions in the country, East West Bank’s mission embodies the goals of this campaign. We’re proud to support the CalAsian Chamber and many other organizations that are effecting positive change for AAPIs.” The East West Bank Foundation made a \$35,000 contribution to AAPI Strong.

“These investments by Verizon, PG&E, and East West Bank build on millions of dollars the state has approved to address the historic inequities and surge of violence impacting our AAPI communities in California,” said Pat Fong Kushida, President & CEO of CalAsian Chamber. “The contributions made by these organizations will reinforce the state’s investment in solutions that promote safety and wellness in our communities and achieve a more equitable state for AAPI Californians.”

*The CalAsian Chamber was founded in 2010 to give a voice to the over 600,000 AAPI- owned businesses in California. Today, the CalAsian Chamber is the largest statewide ethnic chamber in California, with the mission to grow and empower the AAPI business community throughout California. Visit [www.calasiancc.org](http://www.calasiancc.org) to learn more.*

To learn more about AAPI Strong, visit <https://www.calasiancc.org/aapi-strong-ca>

# # #