

January 17, 2023

Dear Chair Moller and members of the Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee:

The Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans (“the Council”) writes this letter in support of House File 181, offered by chief author Representative Vang, to expand reporting and data collection requirements on crimes motivated by bias, update definitions to better identify these acts, and provide additional support to victims.

The Council is charged by the Legislature with the statutory duty of advocating on behalf of Minnesota’s Asian and Pacific Islander (API) communities, acting as the liaison between state government and Minnesota’s API communities, and serving as an advisory body to the Legislature and the Governor. It is in this capacity that we strongly urge the passage of this legislation.

Following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States in March 2020, reported crimes of bias against API communities and individuals across the nation increased to 10,905 incidents between March 19, 2020 and December 31, 2021, according to the Stop AAPI Hate National Report. This dramatic increase of 149%, according to the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism, has been felt in Minnesota as well, leaving Minnesota’s API community feeling threatened, fearful, and unsafe in their own homes and neighborhoods. With these acts, small and large, still fresh in the memory of our communities, it is important for government to act now to address this still-ongoing issue.

This legislation would constitute an important step by state government to address shortcomings in current law by expanding the definition of crimes of bias, including those related to property damage, and the addition of resources to support the victims of hate crimes. Further, the fear these crimes sow in our state and communities do real and long-lasting damage, and the requirement to collect and report on data will provide for more effective and responsive policies in the future. These actions are important steps not only to address the damage caused by these crimes, but to create a pathway to healing for victims as well.

We urge the passage of this important legislation to address shortcomings in current law regarding crimes motivated by bias and provide support for victims, not just for our API communities, but for all Minnesotans.

Sincerely,



Andrew Morris
Legislative and Public Affairs Liaison
Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans