



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Asian American Commission

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Meeting Minutes

April 13, 2021, 5:00pm to 6:30pm

Meeting will be held via teleconference in compliance with the Governor's Executive Order on the Open Meeting Law and COVID-19

Present Commissioners are marked with a *. Absent Commissioners are highlighted

Staff: Yasmin, Jay, Sheila, Kamalani, Sarah

Member of the public: Helen Yang, Houze Xu, Shishan Wang

Meeting is recorded.

Attachments:

- Bill Text: Data Disaggregation, Hate Crimes Act, Safe Communities Act
- Fact Sheets: Data Disaggregation, Hate Crimes Act, Safe Communities Act
- Bill Summaries
- Research Paper – Data Disaggregation

1. Call meeting to order

Sam calls meeting to order at 5:05pm. Meeting is recorded.

2. Discuss legislation (60 mins) - VOTE

HD.1653/SD.972 - An Act to reform the hate crime statutes (Hate Crimes Bill)

Sam opens the floor for discussion.

Member of the public, Helen Yang makes an opening statement that the best way to reduce hate in the AAPI community is through education.

Danielle explains that additional bills regarding education will be discussed in the future.

Betty states that the Commission should be listening to members of the community and that AAC should not be making statements due to AAC being non-partisan. Further expresses the need for AAC to unify the Asian community.

Nate expresses the importance of the bill in addressing and strengthening existing statutes that pertain to hate crimes and are currently underutilized in regards to the high increase in violence towards the Asian community.

Betty thanks Nate for the quote. A crime is a crime. Betty cites her own experience of someone slashing her tires and a fellow Asians car next to hers with his tire slashed. Betty called the police and the officer asked her if she considers her crime as a hate crime. We should overpower hate with love. John Lennon says give peace a chance. Let's unite people of all descents.



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HD.1165/SD.532 - An Act to protect the civil rights and safety of all Massachusetts residents (Safe Communities Act)

Megha states that this bill should be a prerequisite for the other two bills, as the undocumented community face barriers to reporting and getting the assistance they need.

Danielle and Nate recognize the high number of AAPI undocumented groups in the state, along with the surge of deportations. Both express the importance of keeping communities safe and have equitable rights in the criminal justice system.

Sam expresses support for the bill, as it provides protections to the most vulnerable in our community and it's critical to enable them to live their lives to the fullest. He urges the community to center the voices of those most vulnerable.

Betty agrees that we need safe neighborhoods. Betty states that in 2016, there was a crime committed against two Asian women in the South End, and there was no outcry from community leaders and elected leaders. There was no outcry when the Boston School Committee chair mocked the names of Asian names. Why didn't the AAC act in those instances?

Mary Chin leaves at 5:35pm

Nina agrees with Betty's point about focusing on actions that serve our community. She cites that community members, the AAC, and other groups were helpful in advancing the importance of language equity and access in her community of Quincy. These bills codify these values so that they lead to further steps and priorities that benefit our community. We should be focusing on driving bills and issues that will out-live all of us.

Betty says that legislation is important, and we should also hold our Asian leaders accountable to take action.

Nina cites two Chinese American residents who were attacked in Quincy, and how her mom no longer feels safe walking outside at night. What makes her feel safe are further actions and sustainable change.

HD.968 - An Act ensuring equitable representation in the Commonwealth (Data Disaggregation Bill)

Helen references a hearing for a similar bill in 2018, in which 1,000 people attended. No one is against helping those who need to be helped, and expresses concern with disaggregated racial data falling into the hands of people who want to do harm. She states that this information is already collected in the Census, so why duplicate it - and why file it again when it's controversial in our community.



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Shishan quotes united we stand, and divided we fall. He believes that the bill is misguided and it will increase stereotypes and divisions in our community.

Betty states that this is a divisive bill. Betty cites her personal family story of leaving China to move to the Philippines and eventually to the US.

Nate states that this bill is important to address the systemic disparities and racism that affect different racial/ethnic groups. The power of this bill is to not be divisive - but that resources are appropriately directed to communities to support their health and wellbeing. He states that this bill is very important to understand and address these disparities.

Ekta and Haniya express the importance of having data readily available in the public health field in order to know who is not being served and providing appropriate services to those who are underserved. Both also reiterate need for data to justify additional funding needs on which communities to better target.

Houze Xu states that this bill has been filed several times now. He notes that two centuries ago, a Chinese category was introduced in the U.S. census as a means of discrimination, and led to exclusionary policies. He asks if the AAC has considered community input on the bill.

Philjay thanks everyone for providing comments on this bill. A difference between the 1800s and today is that we have AAPI leaders and community members who will ensure that the data aren't used in a harmful way. Philjay affirms Haniya's point about health equity. 30% of all nurses who have died due to Covid-19 are Filipino, when they are only 4% of all nurses. This is an example of how disaggregated data can be used to reveal and address important disparities.

Sam cites his personal experience as a legislative staffer and the importance of data in reinforcing the need for certain bills. He mentions the broad diversity of the AAPI community, and cites that the AAPI population has the largest racial wealth gap.

3. Discuss future actions to take on these bills (25 mins) - VOTE

Betty said she would abstain in all three bills as one needed to get community input. Nate quotes AAC's statute (policy recommendations)

Hate Crimes Bill (HD.1653/SD.972)

Philjay motions, Bora seconds

AYS: Danielle, Bora, Ekta, Haniya, Megha, Nate, Philjay, Vira, Sam

Abstain: Betty, Mary Lee, Nina

Motion passes.

Safe Communities Act: (HD.1165/SD.532)



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Megha motions, Danielle seconds

AYS: Danielle, Bora, Haniya, Ekta, Megha, Nate, Philjay, Vira, Sam
Abstain: Betty, Mary Lee, Nina
Motion passes.

Data disaggregation bill (HD.968)

Haniya motions, Bora seconds
AYS: Danielle, Bora, Ekta, Haniya, Megha, Nate, Philjay, Vira, Sam
NAYS: Betty, Mary Lee
Abstain: Nina
Motion passes.

4. Next Commission meeting: April 20, 2021

5. Other Community updates & Meeting adjourned

Nina motions to adjourn, Nate seconds
Danielle, Bora, Betty, Ekta, Haniya, Mary Lee, Megha, Nate, Nina, Vira, Philjay,
Sam

Meeting is adjourned at 6:26pm.