



**Statement of
Asian Americans Advancing Justice – AAJC
Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Asian Law Caucus
Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Chicago
Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Los Angeles**

**For the Record of the Hearing on
“Constitutional and Common Sense Steps to Reduce Gun Violence”**

**United States Senate
Committee on the Judiciary**

March 23, 2021

Asian Americans Advancing Justice – AAJC, Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Asian Law Caucus, Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Chicago, and Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Los Angeles, together submit this statement for the record to the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee for its hearing entitled “Constitutional and Common Sense Steps to Reduce Gun Violence” on March 23, 2021.

As members of the Asian Americans Advancing Justice national affiliation, we work together to promote a fair and equitable society for all by working for civil and human rights and empowering Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other underserved communities.

As organizations dedicated to advancing the civil rights of Asian Americans, we speak with one voice to condemn the senseless and hateful acts of violence against Asian Americans we have seen rise over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the horrific mass shooting in the Atlanta area exactly one week ago today when eight people were murdered, six of them Asian American women. We equally condemn cynical attempts to use our community’s tragedy to justify opposing common sense gun laws that our communities overwhelmingly support.

The overwhelming majority of Asian American voters – over 80 percent – support stricter gun laws in the United States.¹ Conversely, only 9 percent of Asian American voters oppose stricter gun laws, leaving only 10 percent without views on the issue.² Furthermore, nearly 90% of Asian American voters viewed gun control as an important voting issue for the 2020 elections.³

¹ APIAVote, AAPI Data, and Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC, *2020 Asian American Voter Survey* (September 15, 2020), https://aapidata.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/aavs2020_crosstab_national.pdf

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

Asian Americans, like all Americans, have seen the rise in gun violence and mass killings in this nation with alarm, even before the hateful tragedy of last week. We have all witnessed the horrors of the massacres of 11 Jewish worshippers at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, of 49 mostly LGBTQ and Latinx young people at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, of 9 Black worshippers at the Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, and 7 Sikh worshippers at the gurdwara in Oak Creek. And now Atlanta has been added to this tragic list.

And only yesterday, less than a week since the hateful tragedy in Atlanta, yet another mass shooting, this time at a grocery store in Boulder, Colorado, took 10 more lives. This senseless violence needs to stop.

Asian Americans, and all Americans, deserve to know that our nation is doing all it can to keep dangerous firearms, especially those capable of mass casualties of this scale, out of the hands of those intent on doing harm, including those who have committed hate crimes and those who have committed domestic violence. That means closing loopholes that allow certain gun sales to go without background checks. That means keeping guns out of the hands of potential mass killers while a background check is underway – which could have prevented the tragedy at the Emanuel AME Church.

More guns will not solve anti-Asian hate and violence, but rather endanger the Asian American community further. In fact, a gun owner and family members are more likely to be killed by that firearm than to use it in self-defense.⁴ According to the American Journal of Public Health, the odds of getting shot increase more than four-fold for individuals in possession of a gun.⁵ In fact, during an assault where the victim has a chance to resist, gun possession actually increases the victim's chance of getting shot more than five-fold over victims without a gun.⁶ What's more – while everyone's risk of death by homicide increases with gun ownership, women are at even greater risk of being murdered when there is access to a gun.⁷ A gun in the home puts women disproportionately at risk of being killed by an intimate partner, another issue disproportionately affecting communities of color – including the Asian American community.⁸

Study after study shows that gun ownership increases the risk of violent death for gun owners and their families and their communities.⁹

⁴ Dylan Matthews, *Living in a house with a gun increases your odds of death*, Vox (November 14, 2018), <https://www.vox.com/2015/10/1/18000520/gun-risk-death>

⁵ Charles C. Branas, Therese S. Richmond, Dennis P. Culhane, Thomas R. Ten Have, Douglas J. Wiebe, *Investigating the Link Between Gun Possession and Gun Assault*, American Journal of Public Health (November 2009), <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/full/10.2105/AJPH.2008.143099>

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ Dylan Matthews, *Guns contribute to domestic violence*, Vox (November 14, 2018), <https://www.vox.com/2015/10/1/18000522/guns-domestic-violence>

⁸ *Id.*; Madeleine Carlisle and Melissa Chan, *Here's Why Domestic Violence Kills so Many Women and Children in America*, TIME (October 17, 2019), <https://time.com/5702435/domestic-violence-gun-violence/>

⁹ See, e.g., Tom Jacobs, *Research finds that having a gun in your home can make your household less safe*, Pacific Standard (July 23, 2019), <https://psmag.com/news/keeping-a-gun-at-home-can-mean-a-higher-risk-of-being-killed-there>; Linda L. Dahlberg, Robin M. Ikeda, Marcie-Jo Kresnow, *Guns in the home and risk of a violent death in the home: findings from a national study*, American Journal of Epidemiology (November 15, 2004), <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/15522849/>; Evan Defilippis and Devin Hughes, *The Myth of the Good Guy With a Gun*, Slate (January 25, 2015), <https://slate.com/technology/2015/01/good-guy-with-a-gun-myth-guns-increase-the->

Arming the community is not the answer to anti-Asian hate and violence.

What is the answer? Comprehensive community-based solutions that address the root causes of violence and hate in communities. That includes investment in communities to address immediate needs such as linguistically accessible and culturally competent victim's support services, including mental health, legal assistance, and reporting. That includes government agencies and services at all levels engaging with Asian American communities and ensuring their services are accessible and appropriate to meet the communities' needs. That includes long-term efforts to address racism and xenophobia in this nation through education from the earliest grades, investing in community organizations that serve the most vulnerable and seek solutions to poverty and violence, and supporting efforts to, ultimately, build solidarity across all communities, true and deep, such that we all stand together in defense of one another against racism, violence, and hate.

[risk-of-homicide-accidents-suicide.html](https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/more-guns-do-not-stop-more-crimes-evidence-shows/); Melinda Wenner Moyer, *More Guns Do Not Stop More Crimes, Evidence Shows*, Scientific American (October 1, 2017), <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/more-guns-do-not-stop-more-crimes-evidence-shows/>.