

## ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER LEGAL OUTREACH

### 8 Dead in Atlanta

There is very little anyone can say about the tragic violent events this week in the Atlanta area. Our hearts and souls reach out to the families and friends of those murdered and wounded. We are struck by a deep sadness for all and a frustration at the lack of progress against racism and misogyny.

Should we talk about a history of gun violence in the US; or about a society and culture that accepts assault weapons used on children; or engage in some political discourse about the right to bear arms even to the point of mass shootings at schools, synagogues, and malls? Ultimately, it will be communities of color and hated faiths that will suffer and wonder what are the values of this country.

Should we talk about a history of misogyny that allows presidents, executives, celebrities, athletes, and men from all walks of life to abuse and kill women?

Should we talk about a history of racism that continues to forget about deadly violence against people of color because they are seen as less than human; maybe based on some image portrayed in ads, television, or so-called entertainment?

Should we talk about a history of racism and the demonizing of Asian and Pacific Islanders since we first arrived in the US that continues today no matter what level of education or professions?

Should we talk about racism against Asian and Pacific Islanders in this and most countries outside of Asia that perpetuates stereotypes of meek, quiet, greedy, sneaky, not-to-be-trusted people with strange religions, men that are neutered and objectified women?

Should we talk about our easy, go-to remedies of victim blaming especially with women, seniors, youth, and those with disabilities?

Should we talk about Asian and Pacific Islanders fooling themselves into thinking they are accepted as equals, as real people, as valuable contributors in this country, who would not be targeted by presidents, by people looking to rob, even by passersby?

No, let's not.

Let's reinforce ourselves to avoid the quick memory dump of yesterday's news cycle, to rid ourselves of the tendency to be immune or numb to the violent acts that face us today and to see tragedies as someone else's problem.

We live in the Bay Area, the center of API life in the continental US but also a region with one of the highest rates of reported hate violence. If you grew up in a neighborhood where API's were few, you remember the stigma, the racist teasing, the feeling imposed by the majority of being somehow inadequate, and the racism. Let's think about our folks isolated in areas where they have no support and no enforcement that cares about reporting. We can reach out to them and offer support through our business, family, social, and religious contacts.

Let's reinforce our understanding of API history through research or by taking some Asian American studies classes. And, if there are none available, maybe that's just another problem to overcome.

Let's reinforce our commitments to be better people, to understand and respect each other, to refuse to accept the racism and misogyny expressed by our co-workers, friends, and families, to speak out and advocate for all communities of color, and to keep pushing for progressive change.

Let's not talk any more, let's take action! But hang in there; it's a lifelong struggle.