

March 8, 2022

Dear Chair Richardson and members of the House Education Policy Committee:

The Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans (“the Council”) writes this letter in support of House File 3260, offered by chief author Representative Hanson, to address incidents involving race, religion, sexual harassment, sexual orientation, and sexual exploitation in schools, particularly in the context of the increase in anti-Asian hate crimes across our nation.

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.

Since 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 have increased 149%, according to the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism. This shocking increase, instigated by racialized language regarding the origins of the pandemic, have left Minnesota’s API community feeling threatened, fearful, and unsafe in their own homes and neighborhoods. High profile crimes committed against API Americans across the country have only exacerbated their fears.

This legislation would constitute a concrete step by committing our school boards and staff to take concrete steps to prevent and address any occurrences of hateful acts, rightfully including a broad scope of potential transgressions. The fear these acts sow in our communities and across our state and nation do real and long-lasting damage, and the requirement to put in place proactive policies will provide for more effective and responsive action. This is important to not only address the damage caused by these acts, but to create a pathway to healing for victims as well.

We urge the passage of this important legislation to provide a greater sense of assurance and accountability to prevent hateful acts, not just during this trying time for our API communities, but for all Minnesotans.

Sincerely,



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