



November 13, 2024

Governor Gavin Newsom
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom,

We write today seeking your immediate attention and action in response to recent violent crimes on BART trains and in stations targeting the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community, seniors and other vulnerable populations. We call for the immediate deployment of California Highway Patrol (CHP) officers on BART trains and in stations to ensure the safety of the community.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a major surge in verbal and physical harassment against Asian Americans. Hate crimes against the AAPI community increased by 145 percent from 2019 to 2020 in our nation's most populous cities, while San Francisco saw a more than 500 percent increase in 2021 as compared to 2020. While that percentage has started to decline in more recent years, Asian Americans continue to be disproportionately targeted on public transit and in other public spaces in the Bay Area. Unfortunately, fear within the AAPI community remains heightened.

Safety issues and concerns on public transit in the Bay Area, actual and perceived, is particularly high amongst this community. This month, a 54-year-old AAPI woman suffered serious and potentially fatal injuries after an unprovoked knife attack on a Saturday morning BART train. In July, a 74-year-old AAPI woman was pushed onto a train at the BART Powell Street station and tragically lost her life. According to a 2023 poll on BART safety, when survey participants were asked if they would describe BART as "very safe," 0 percent of AAPI respondents agreed. In the same poll, 78 percent of AAPI respondents said they are worried that they will be the victim of a crime when riding BART, and 70 percent answered that they often or somewhat frequently hear about people committing crimes or harassing others on BART.

The looming threat of violence against the AAPI community and other vulnerable populations on transit and in other public spaces forces individuals to often find less convenient and more expensive but safer modes of travel, pushing thousands out of our transit systems and public spaces and alters other behaviors such as avoiding travel at certain times, traveling with self-defense products and abandoning any unnecessary trips. The impact is tangible in our communities and on our transit systems, most all of which are struggling to maintain service and keep their systems in operation post-pandemic.

Notably, polling shows overwhelming support by the AAPI community for a stronger law enforcement presence on BART trains and in stations. The aforementioned 2023 poll on BART safety shows that 80 percent of the AAPI community agree with the statement, "I feel more comfortable riding BART if there

is a uniformed BART police or security officer on my train.” Similarly, 76 percent of AAPI respondents answered that it is a high priority to add more uniformed, armed officers on trains and in stations.

The Bay Area Council has been working hard since 2022 to spotlight the issue of safety on BART and other transit systems as one of the key reasons as to why ridership has been slow to recover, and we continue to advocate for solutions. While progress has been made, it is incremental and slow due to the limited capacity of an already strained transit system. Urgent action and additional resources are needed to ensure that no more lives are lost or injured and that travelers in the AAPI community and other vulnerable populations feel safe on transit.

We thank you for your dedication to public safety throughout the state and in the Bay Area. Recent CHP surges in San Francisco and Oakland, and this month’s announcement to continue CHP’s presence in the greater Oakland area is greatly appreciated. Additional support is needed on BART while maintaining the resources already allocated to these and other high-crime areas in the Bay Area. **We call on you and your administration to deploy a surge of CHP officers on BART trains and in stations and otherwise dedicate resources to ensure the safety of the AAPI community, seniors and other vulnerable populations on our region’s primary public transit system.**

Thank you for your consideration of this critically important and life-saving request on behalf of the Bay Area community and industry alike. Should you have any questions or require additional information, please don’t hesitate to reach out to me at jim@bayareacouncil.org.

Sincerely,

Jim Wunderman
President and CEO
Bay Area Council

1990 Institute

Advance SF

ACE NextGen

Angel Island
Immigration Station

APAPA National

APAPA San Francisco

Asian America
Foundation

Asian Hustle Network

Asian Inc.

Asian Justice
Movement

Asian Leaders
Alliance

Asian Pacific American
Leadership Institute

Asians are Strong

BeChinatown

Chime TV Inc.

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| Chinatown Merchants Association San Francisco | Chinese American Democratic Club | Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association | Communities As One / Asians Belong |
| Contemporary Asian Theatre Scene | Dear Community | East Bay Leadership Council | Edwin M. Lee Asian Pacific Democratic Club |
| FACE LA | Goldbridge Institute | IntegrArte SF | Leaders Forum |
| Liucrative Media | LUUM, Inc | Mission Blue Coffee and Gifts | Nihonmachi Street Fair, Inc. |
| Oakland Chinatown Chamber Foundation | Oakland Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce | Office of Victim and Witness Rights, City and County of San Francisco | RADII Media |
| San Francisco Chamber of Commerce | Save Cantonese at CCSF | SF CAUSE | Stand With Asians |
| Stand with Asian Americans | Stop Crime Action SF | Subtle Asian Real Estate | The Association for the Advancement of Asians |
| Third State Books | Value Culture | Vincent Chin Institute | Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau |
| Andrew Chau, Co-Founder/CEO, Boba Guys Inc. | Carl Chan, Community Advocate | Norman Chen, Community Advocate | Olivia Cheng, Community Activist, Actor |

David Chiu,
City Attorney of
San Francisco

Franco Finn,
TV Personality

Assemblymember
Mike Fong

Parag Gupta, School
Board-elect, San Francisco

Assemblymember
Matt Haney

Thien Ho, Sacramento
County District Attorney

Steve Jang, Founder and
Managing Director,
Kindred Ventures

Mary Jung, former Chair,
San Francisco
Democratic Party

Phong La, Alameda County
Assessor

Michael Lai,
Community Advocate

Scott Lan, Executive
Director, Cameron House

Ivy Lee, Director, Office of
Victim and Witness Rights,
San Francisco

Bill Lee, former City
Administrator,
City of San Francisco

Steven Lee, Partner,
SV Angel

Stan Lee, Acting
Lieutenant, SFFD

Steven Lee, Small
Business Advocate

Catherine Liang,
former Miss California

Jeremy Liew, Partner,
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Garry Tan, CEO,
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SFPD

Eric Toda, Executive
Director, Meta Prosper

Marlene Tran, Retired
Schoolteacher,
Community Activist

Nancy Tung, San Francisco
Democratic Party Chair

Kristi Yamaguchi, AAPI
Trailblazer, Olympic Gold
Medalist

Andrew Yang, American
Businessman and Attorney

Sasanna Yee, Community
Advocate / Executive
Director, Communities
As One / Asians Belong

Paul Yep, Retired Police
Commander, SFPD

C.C. Yin, Philanthropist

Mark Young,
Community Advocate

Perry Yung, Community
Activist, Actor

Helen Zia, Founder,
Vincent Chin Institute