



Understanding and Stopping Anti-Asian Hate: Article #16

UNDERSTANDING AND STOPPING ANTI-ASIAN HATE: ASIAN CULTURES

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Hate against any individual or group needs to be addressed. One way to do so is spread information throughout communities and society. By encouraging civic engagement in the Asian American community, violence and discrimination is more likely to be addressed. Civic engagement aims at addressing public concerns through activism, awareness, projects, and political participation. Through doing these actions, Asian Americans can improve the quality of their communities while advocating against racism.

Political participation is important because it is a source of Asian American representation. Whether creating new laws or changing old ones, many of these laws affect most (if not all) citizens. But voter turnout among Asian Americans (compared with other groups) has remained low due to barriers to voter registration. Immigrants from Asia face complications in the registration process, and difficult living situations don't help either. America's history of limiting voting privileges and systematic racism continues to affect people of color, including Asian American

communities. Increasing voter registration can lead to greater political participation to help fight discrimination. A way to increase voter registration could be to switch to automatic voter registration. In some states, citizens are automatically registered to vote, and can opt out (instead of opting in). Online registration would also be helpful for many, because it saves money and makes registering easier. Lastly, preregistration aimed at 16 and 17 year olds can increase political awareness among youth and make it easier for them to vote once they turn 18.

The AAPI Civic Engagement Fund is an organization that aims at strengthening democracy through building the political power of AAPI communities. They donate to struggling communities and work on fostering a culture of civic participation. With annual gatherings and training to facilitate conversations on AAPI communities and perspectives, the organization also conducts research and polls that specifically target the AAPI community.

An example of the impact of spreading civic engagement can be seen in Orange County's Asian American Initiative. Community organizations will work with a nonprofit to increase Asian American voter turnout by educating the community. Anti-Asian racism is a problem that cannot be stopped without political participation. Communities working together to fight against violence and injustice can also serve as a motivator. Without doing anything, many Asian Americans feel dispirited and unwilling to address issues that affect them. By participating in politics, Asian Americans may feel a greater sense of inclusion and capability.

