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Res. No. 321

Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign S.6359/A.7260, to require public elementary and high schools to provide instruction in Asian American history and civic impact.

By Council Members Lee, Ung, Krishnan, Won, Hanif, Zhuang, Gennaro, Bottcher, Hudson, Avilés and Ariola

Whereas, There was a significant increase in anti-Asian hate crimes from 2020 to 2021 across major cities in the United States, according to an analysis of police department statistics released by the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism (CSHE) at California State University; and

Whereas, The CSHE analysis found that hate crimes targeting Asian people in 16 of America's largest cities increased by 164 percent in the first quarter of 2021 in comparison to the same period in 2020; and

Whereas, Further, anti-Asian hate incident reports, including verbal harassment, physical assault, civil rights violations and online harassment, nearly doubled in March 2021 in comparison to March 2020 according to a national report released by Stop AAPI Hate; and

Whereas, NBC News and other media outlets attribute the recent increase in anti-Asian hate incidents to negative stereotyping of Asians and rhetoric linking the coronavirus pandemic to Asians; and

Whereas, Many advocates, including the NYC Coalition for Educational Justice, contend that schools can play a significant role in helping to reduce racial prejudice and diminish implicit bias in our society; and

Whereas, Research shows that use of culturally responsive teaching and curricula that reflects the diversity, identities, and experiences of students of all races and ethnicities benefits all students by helping them to understand different perspectives, appreciate others' strengths, build empathy and reduce implicit bias, according to the NYU Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools; and

Whereas, The curriculum in New York schools is often devoid of content related to the impact of Asian Americans on the history and culture of the state and the country at large, and the discrimination they have historically faced; and

Whereas, A lack of understanding and knowledge of Asian Americans has contributed to the recent increase in violence and hate crimes against people of Asian descent, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to Stop AAPI Hate, leading the US Congress to pass the Covid-19 Hate Crimes Act in May 2021; and

Whereas, S.6359, sponsored by Senator Liu, and its companion bill A.7260, sponsored by Assemblymember Kim, would require public elementary and high schools in New York to provide instruction in Asian American history and civic impact; and

Whereas, This legislation directs the Board of Regents to develop a course of study in the events of Asian American history and directs the Commissioner of Education to provide technical assistance in the development of curricula on Asian American history and civic impact and to provide suitable course materials; and

Whereas, The required instruction would include, at minimum, the history of Asian Americans in New York and the Northeast; the contributions of Asian Americans toward advancing civil rights from the nineteenth century onward; the contributions made by individual Asian Americans in government and the arts, humanities and sciences; and the contributions of Asian American communities to the economic, cultural, social and political development of the United States; and

Whereas, Companion bills S.6359 and A.7260 would ensure that students in New York State schools are taught about the historical contributions of Asian Americans, which will help foster respect and understanding of Asian American history, and allow Asian American students to see themselves reflected as an important part of the history and culture of New York and the United States; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign S.6359/A.7260, to require public elementary and high schools to provide instruction in Asian American history and civic impact.

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