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Jewish Federation of New Mexico Statement Regarding the Attacks on the AAPI Communities March 19, 2021

We have witnessed, yet again the horror of hate crime in our country, as those who have been emboldened in recent times to traffic in hatred have brought murderous violence to the Asian American and Pacific Islanders communities. In a year that has seen Hate Crime against Communities of Color, the Jewish Community, the LBGTQ Community, the AAPI Communities and others reach new heights – we must continue the vigilant work together to stop the epidemic of racism and hatred raging in our country.

We in the Jewish community grieve for our AAPI brethren and share their outrage at the murder of six Asian women and two other victims in Atlanta this week and the ongoing hate-driven incidents directed at their communities. *Stop AAPI Hate* reports that there have been at least 3,975 racially motivated attacks on the AAPI communities in the United States in the last twelve months – and the number is much higher considering the many incidents that never get reported.

In Atlanta, while some offending reports suggest the perpetrator didn't display the usual elements of a Hate Crime...the fact is, he targeted a specific group of people. Our experience tells us...this is a Hate Crime. It points out the challenges in the current state of Hate Crime laws which usually call for very specific qualifications for a Hate Crime designation.

Here in New Mexico, our Hate Crime statute addresses Hate Crime as an, "enhancement," meaning it is added on to other primary crimes - I.e., Vandalism. If the hateful intent of the perpetrator can be fully proven, a year or two "enhancement" may be added to the sentence for the primary crime at the discretion of the judge. The court also has the *option* to impose restorative justice requirements like community service, counseling and making restitution.

There is a growing coalition in our state that includes the NAACP, the Holocaust Museum of New Mexico, the Chinese American Citizen's Alliance, Equality New Mexico and the Jewish Federation of New Mexico working together to strengthen our Hate Crime law. Changes might include creating stronger sentencing guidelines and especially, calling for the mandate to impose restorative justice requirements. We are also exploring the possibility of proposing a stand-alone Hate Crime bill so that the "enhancement," approach will give way to treating Hate Crime as a crime unto itself. Over the next year we look forward to working with other communities at risk to expand our coalition to bring about these needed changes. We invite all who concerned about Hate Crime to join us in this grassroots effort.

We, in the Jewish community steadfastly stand up against all forms of hate and racism, and today stand in firm solidarity with the AAPI communities. And although it is important to recognize that the suffering perpetrated through racism and hate are uniquely experienced by each and every victimized community – we believe, the only path forward is to stand together!

For more information, please contact rob@Jewishnewmexico.org.