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Research Article

How AAPIs in Congress Responded to COVID-19

Jeff L Feng and Pei-te Lien

Abstract

The 116th Congress is making history in representational politics with the highest number of AAPI legislators in U.S. history. However, AAPI legislators' increased visibility comes at the same moment as white supremacist politicians and pundits racialize a global pandemic. How have AAPI legislators responded to the COVID-19 outbreak? Our findings provide preliminary support for our hypotheses that AAPI legislators are more likely to be sponsors of AAPI-targeted legislation and that AAPI women legislators are more likely to introduce bills targeting AAPI constituents than their male counterparts. In addition, AAPI women legislators as a whole are more likely to sponsor legislation to advance interests of the intersectionally disadvantaged than AAPI men legislators during our study period (February to mid-May 2020).

Introduction

The 116th Congress (2019–20) includes a historic high of seventeen voting members who are Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI), including three senators and fourteen house representatives. The record high number of nine women or 53 percent of the AAPI congressional delegation is the best gender ratio in the delegation of any major U.S. racial group. Whereas there is still severe underrepresentation of AAPIs in Congress, as AAPIs account for more than 6.5 percent of the U.S. population but only 3.1 percent of the 535 members in Congress in 2020, this is a giant leap from 1965 when Representative Patsy Mink became the first woman of color to serve in the U.S. Congress. Back then, there were only two other Asian Americans in the same Congress—fellow Hawaiians and Senators Hiram Fong and Daniel Inouye. Over time,

AAPI electoral politics has become geographically widespread. Yet the minimal scholarly attention paid to the political representation of AAPIs in Congress remains almost unchanged. There is, however, some recent scholarship on the benefits of having Blacks, Latinos, and women in Congress and the advancement of minority group interests (e.g., Bowen and Clark, 2014; Lowande, Ritchie, and Lauterbach, 2019; Minta and Sinclair-Chapman, 2013). The combination of the unprecedented visibility of AAPI members in the 116th Congress and the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020, a pandemic that has led to a rise in anti-Asian racism,¹ provides a rare opportunity for us to systematically examine the extent and nature of AAPI political representation at the congressional level and to help fill a requisite void in congressional scholarship.

To what extent and how have AAPI members in the 116th Congress responded to the COVID-19 outbreak? In our preliminary investigation, we observed a variety of political actions taken by legislators to address challenges caused by COVID-19 and in relation to racism, economic hardship, disparities in accessing healthcare, and other issues. Examples of such actions include sponsoring and cosponsoring bills and resolutions, calling for hearings, and organizing and submitting letters to leaders. To appraise the responsiveness of the AAPI congressional delegation to this crisis, we examine AAPI legislative advocacy between February and mid-May 2020 or the first three months after the Trump administration declared the coronavirus a public health emergency on January 31, 2020. Racializing the coronavirus as the “Wuhan virus,” “Chinese virus,” or “Kung flu,” the administration was quick to ban nearly all non-U.S. travelers from China to enter the United States but did not declare COVID-19 a national emergency until March 13, 2020.

Our research documents all the bills sponsored (authored and introduced) as recorded in Congress.gov, the official website for U.S. federal legislative information, by AAPI members during the three-and-a-half-month period between February and mid-May. We began by searching Congress.gov for information on bill sponsorship for each AAPI member. However, we fear official records, by permitting only one legislator to serve as a bill sponsor, obscure the contributions of fellow legislators as co-authors who helped conceive and draft the bill. We therefore turned to press releases of each AAPI member to determine if they could claim credit for co-authoring a bill, in addition to sponsoring their own bills. When the legislator not listed on Congress.gov claims bill credit using press releases, we count the co-authored bill as a

separate bill in our database for the legislator. This results in expanding the number of bills beyond what one would typically find in a quick search of congressional records. We believe our approach resulted in identifying a more inclusive scope of advocacy that recognizes the value of allyship and coalition building across legislative chambers and congressional districts. We also believe it is a more adequate approach to document affirmative advocacy (Strolovitch, 2007) in Capitol Hill and the demonstration of a higher level of engagement than what is implied in the traditional concept of bill cosponsorship.²

We analyze by the timing of the action, quantity and type of bill sponsorship, issue focus of sponsored bills, and possible linkage to each legislator's group identity at the intersection of race and gender. To categorize the bills, we developed a predetermined issue list based on prior research of legislative records and employed a research assistant to sort bills into issues. The primary focus of our analysis is to assess AAPI legislators' responses to COVID-19 and how they are connected to AAPI community needs. Following Chaturverdi's (2015) precedent, we also used "Asian" and "Asian American" to search for and later categorize AAPI-related bills in the 116th Congress. We first perform some basic preliminary statistical analyses to assess what variables may impact bill sponsorship. We include an analysis of non-COVID-19 and non-AAPI legislative bills as a comparison to see if AAPI legislative responses to COVID-19 are exceptional. Finally, we use legislators' comments in press releases and to the media to give contextual clarity to what motivated legislators to respond in the particular ways that they did.

A Snapshot of AAPI Members in the 116th Congress

Who are AAPI members in the 116th Congress? We classify elected officials as AAPI following the criteria of the U.S. Census and combed through biographies, news articles, organizational affiliations, and online sources. The roster is part of a larger database of AAPI elected officials in service in 2019–20. This section provides an overview of their personal characteristics, the racial makeup of their jurisdictions, and some examples of past legislative success advocating for AAPIs and minority rights. Table 1 shows that the delegation is dominated by members of Congress (MCs) elected in California; two of the seventeen are from Hawaii and seven were elected from six states other than California or Hawaii. The average year of tenure in the legislator's current office is 7.6 years, ranging from as few as two years (i.e., Cox and Kim were elected in 2018) to as high as twenty-eight years (i.e., Scott was elected in 1992). As many

as six members (35 percent) were immigrants born in Asia. Nevertheless, four entered the United States at a young age either before or while attending grade school. Both Senator Duckworth and Representative Jayapal did not enter the United States until their late teens, but both received their first English-based education in Asia. Whereas this cohort of legislators is fully democratic by partisanship, they are quite diverse in ethnic origin, encompassing all six major Asian ethnic groups and including a high degree of subethnic diversity within those of Chinese descent. Moreover, they are racially diverse with five of the members having multiracial backgrounds. Both Senator Harris and Representative Scott are also Black and Senator Duckworth, Representative Gabbard, and Representative Cox can trace their ancestry to European whites.³ In terms of jurisdictional racial makeup, the average percent Asian (alone) is 18.4, that of Black is 9.1, that of Latino is 20.6, and that of white is 46.4. Only one district (Khanna, CA-17) is majority Asian (alone), and one district (Takano, CA-41) is majority Latino. Yet, Hawaii as a state is majority Asian if including multiracial Asians in the count. Six of the jurisdictions are majority (Non-Hispanic) white, ranging from 51 percent in T. J. Cox's CA-21 to 80 percent in Andy Kim's NJ-3. Finally, eleven of the seventeen MCs or two-thirds of the AAPI delegation oversee constituents who are majority or near majority non-white/minority.

AAPI women legislators in particular have a track record of legislative success in serving AAPIs and fighting for minority rights. In June 2012, the House of Representatives unanimously passed a bipartisan resolution introduced by Congresswoman Judy Chu (CA-32) to express regret for passing the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 and other legislation that discriminated against people of Chinese origin in the United States. Chu's bill, H. Res. 683, is only the fourth resolution of regret in the past twenty-five years to be passed by both chambers of the U.S. Congress (Chu, 2012). Prior such resolutions include the unprecedented 1988 Civil Liberties Act or Japanese American Redress and Reparations bill that provided monetary compensation to generational survivors of internment. In April 2017, Senator Harris introduced S. Res. 118, a resolution condemning hate crimes and any other form of racism, religious or ethnic bias, discrimination, incitement to violence, or animus targeting a minority in the United States. In March 2019, Congresswomen Meng and Chu introduced a resolution that recognizes the Chinese railroad workers for their contributions to the construction of the Transcontinental Railroad and the growth of the United States. As these examples demonstrate, AAPI women legislators serve the AAPI

community through drafting statements of redress on institutional oppression, rectifying racist language, and recuperating the contributions of AAPIs in U.S. nation building.

Prior Research on Symbolic Representation

While there is limited research on AAPI legislative actions, political science research on legislative responsiveness of other racial and gender categories give a sense of the likely nature and extent of AAPI legislative representation. The predominance of empirical political science research on political representation often cite Pitkin's (1967) articulation of representation as being descriptive, symbolic, or substantive and heavily focus on studying substantive representation by white males in Congress without acknowledging white male privilege in legislative halls (Hardy-Fanta et al., 2016). Pitkin (1967) theorized that descriptive representation is achieved when a representative matches the characteristics of a social group in its district or jurisdiction. Symbolic representation refers to the actions and gestures that politicians take to signal to constituencies that they are "one of you" (Fenno, 1978). Finally, substantive representation describes how well politicians address the political and policy needs of distinct social groups.

When paying attention to race, political scientists often overlook the role of symbolic legislation in favor of examining the link between descriptive and substantive representation, despite the pivotal signaling role that symbolic representation plays. Focusing on the political representation by Blacks in Congress, Tate (2003) finds Black legislators to be more likely than non-Black legislators to propose symbolic policies addressing the concerns of Black constituents. Comparing the prevalence and utility of the three concepts of representation by members of the Congressional Black Caucus and charting the understudied pathway between descriptive and symbolic representation, Whitby (2007) notes that "the symbolic value of descriptive representation may be especially important for racial minority groups as they continue to struggle for full inclusion in mainstream American society" (207). In their qualitative research on state legislators in Maryland, Brown, Caballero, and Sinclair-Chapman (2018) find symbolic legislation to be a useful tool for Black lawmakers to voice long-standing Black grievances and fulfill their non-material needs through actions such as renaming airports. Black legislators use bill sponsorship and credit claim on votes cast as mechanisms of symbolic representation to communicate their Blackness to predominantly white colleagues who may feel compelled to stand with their

Black colleagues because of white guilt for past wrongs.

The limited research on AAPI elected officials has focused on the extent of descriptive representation (Lien, 2001; Lien et al., 2007). Except for those from Hawaii, AAPI MCs have not been found to represent districts where they share the race of the majority of the constituents. Focusing on surveying state and local officials, Hardy-Fanta et al. (2016) similarly find that, unlike other elected officials of color, only 14 percent of Asian American legislators believe they represent predominately Asian districts, while close to half of both men and women think they represent mostly white districts. Representing predominantly non-Asian constituencies has meant that Asian American elected officials have run as “cross-over” candidates who strategically “cross” from their Asian identities and appeal to non-Asian voters by advancing universal issues rather than narrower AAPI-specific legislation (Geron and Lai, 2002).

The concept of AAPI symbolic representation has been largely overlooked except for two studies. Takeda (2001) examines bill cosponsorship in Congress on a single symbolic piece of legislation, which followed allegations of espionage against Dr. Wen Ho Lee, and condemned all forms of prejudice against AAPIs (H. Con. Res. 124 of 1999). He finds little evidence of a linkage between racially descriptive and substantive representation of AAPIs in the 106th Congress. Instead, he finds the percent Asian in a legislative district rather than legislator’s race appears to be a better predictor of cosponsorship. At the same time, Takeda finds that being a member of the Congressional Asian Pacific American caucus was a significant variable, suggesting that AAPI organizational affiliation complexifies the linkage between external racial categorization and policy. This finding on the importance of racial identity is modified by Chaturvedi (2015) in his examination of bill sponsorships and cosponsorships of legislation on AAPI interests from the 106th (1999–2000) to the 110th (2007–8) Congresses. He finds representatives with a larger number of Asian American constituents in their districts to be more likely to sponsor or cosponsor resolutions on Asian American concerns. However, only Democrats are more likely to advance the substantive interests of Asian Americans by cosponsoring domestic policy proposals. Furthermore, all else being equal, Asian American legislators are found to be more likely than non-Asian American legislators to sponsor or cosponsor legislation proposed by fellow Asian Americans.

Conceiving Representation by Race and Gender: Practicing Bridge Feminism by Congresswomen of Color

Whereas the largely quantitative research cited in the section on symbolic representation provides evidence of the substantive value of symbolic representation, it provides little guidance on understanding the nature of representation by elected officials at the intersection of race and gender. Several pieces of qualitative research on two pioneering congresswomen of color yield important insights. Examining the writing and speeches of Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, the first Black woman elected to Congress, Curwood (2015) describes Chisholm's version of Black feminism as bridge feminism. Where Black feminism had historically been conceived of solely being a politics of protest, Chisholm's bridge feminism not only connected grassroots and local activism with the insider politics of the nation-state it also bridged the ongoing Black freedom struggles and women's movements. Yet despite this unique bridge feminist positionality, Chisholm experienced intersectional marginalization and struggled to achieve recognition from siloed single-identity politicians and movements.

Studying tensions between the radical and liberal forms of feminism among Asian American activists through the case of Congresswoman Patsy Mink, Wu (2020) argues that Mink also practiced bridge feminism by connecting her concern over women of color's oppression with her conviction in promoting structural change and equal opportunity for women through the legislative process. Though Mink's two primary policy fights around childcare and equal opportunity are traditionally considered women's issues, Mink's personal experience with institutional exclusion, knowledge of racialized and gender exploitation in Hawai'i, and engagement with civil rights policies suggest that Mink's legislative advocacy is filtered through her identity as an Asian American woman. In lobbying for federal legislation for childcare and for women's equal rights to education, Mink practiced bridge feminism by, firstly, bringing grassroots movements' goals to the electoral arena and, secondly, straddling between mainstream feminist organizations and local community-based ones serving working-class women and women of color. Wu's research on Mink underscores the possibilities for progressive AAPI women legislators to simultaneously advance concerns of the local community and those of the mainstream women's movement.

When Mink returned to represent the 2nd congressional district of Hawaii between 1990 and 2002, however, she and other women of color were frustrated by the welfare reform and other debates. As Hawkesworth (2003) unveils, a white-male-dominated workspace in

the U.S. Congress produces raced and gendered institutional norms and practices. Nonetheless, Hawkesworth maintains that “it is important to consider that the identities of congressional women of color may be constituted not only through the racing–gendering practices that silence, marginalize, and constrain but also through resistance and the political mobilization of anger that racing–gendering engenders” (532). Given the context of a significantly expanded congressional delegation of AAPI women and men and other people-of-color legislators in 2020 than in 1965 or 1995, one might anticipate a lessening of raced–gendered barriers, as described by Hawkesworth, in the 116th Congress. Yet, Congresswoman Meng (D-NY-6) described a watershed moment after confronting House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA-23) about his repeated use of the term “Chinese coronavirus” and received a dismissive response (Yam, 2020a). Meng said she “realized as a Congress member that many of my colleagues can’t tell the difference, or don’t want to tell the difference, between Chinese and Chinese Americans” (ibid.) In response, as revealed in our empirical findings, Meng has sponsored the highest number of bills during the study period.

Personal accounts like this and the preceding account of past research points to a need for employing the intersectionality framework to better comprehend the legislative advocacy of women and men of color, including those of Asian and Pacific Islander descents (Crenshaw, 1989; McCall, 2005). Based on district/jurisdictional racial makeup reported in Table 1, we know most AAPI members in the current Congress were not elected from Asian-majority districts/states. Because most AAPI legislators were not elected to serve only the AAPI community, we anticipate that the preponderance of their legislation will not target AAPIs. However, as a collectivity, AAPI women in Congress are expected to introduce more bills that aim to serve not only AAPIs but also other multiply disadvantaged communities (i.e., women, veterans, students, immigrants, and other disadvantaged minorities) than their male counterparts.

Findings

Solely searching through Congress.gov yielded fifty bills sponsored by AAPI members during the study period (see Appendix). However, counting bill authorship to include bills where AAPI legislators helped draft and introduce the bill according to press releases posted on their respective official websites but were only listed as part of the “original cosponsor” of the bill in Congress.gov, we were able

Table 1. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the 116th Congress (Voting Members)

Sex	State/ Dist.	Last Name	Firs Name	Office	Yr. Elect Current	Yr. Elect First	U.S. Born	Ethnicity	% Asian	% Non- white
F	CA	Harris	Kamala	Senate	2016	2003	1	Black/Indian	15.3	63.2
F	HI	Hirono	Mazie	Senate	2012	1980	0	Japanese	38.6	78.2
F	IL	Duck- worth	Tammy	Senate	2016	2012	0	Thai Chinese/ White	5.9	39
F	CA-27	Chu	Judy	House	2009	1985	1	Chinese	37.9	70.8
F	CA-6	Matsui	Doris	House	2005	2005	1	Japanese	16.1	61.1
F	FL-7	Murphy	Stepha- nie	House	2016	2016	0	Vietnamese	4.3	40.4
F	HI-2	Gabbard	Tulsi	House	2012	2002	1	Samoan/ White	28.8	70.2
F	NY-6	Meng	Grace	House	2012	2008	1	Chinese/ Taiwanese	40.5	66.8
F	WA-7	Jayapal	Pramila	House	2016	2014	0	Indian	10.5	24
M	CA-7	Bera	Ami	House	2012	2012	1	Indian	15.1	42.8
M	CA-21	Cox	T. J.	House	2018	2018	1	Filipino/ Chinese/ White	11.2	49.1
M	CA-17	Khanna	Ro	House	2016	2016	1	Indian	51	73.2
M	CA-33	Lieu	Ted	House	2011	2002	0	Chinese/ Taiwanese	13.5	31.5
M	CA-41	Takano	Mark	House	2013	1990	1	Japanese	5.9	73.9
M	IL-8	Krish- namoor- thi	Raja	House	2016	2016	0	Indian	12.7	52.7
M	NJ-3	Kim	Andy	House	2018	2018	1	Korean	3.5	19.9
M	VA-6	Scott	Robert C.	House	1992	1978	1	Black/Filipino	2.6	54.9

to account for sixty-nine bills. In total, forty-seven (68 percent) of the sixty-nine bills were by women and twenty of the women-sponsored bills (42 percent) were by three senators: Kamala Harris, Maize Hirono, and Tammy Duckworth. The earliest bill (H.R. 6040) was sponsored by Velasquez (D-NY-7) on February 28, 2020 and co-authored with Meng and Chu to amend the Small Business Act to assist small businesses that suffer economic harm from the coronavirus outbreak.

In the Appendix, the nineteen bills identified through the expanded methodology are denoted by an asterisk next to each bill number. They include bills that were counted more than once due to the nature of co-authorship described earlier (i.e., S. Res. 580, H. Res. 908, H.R. 6308, H.R. 6040, and H.R. 6721). Nearly three-fourths of these co-authored bills (fourteen out of nineteen) were by women, suggesting the significantly higher likelihood for AAPI congresswomen than AAPI congressmen to be working in coalition with both other AAPI and non-AAPI women and men to draft bills. The non-AAPI sponsors are diverse by race and gender identity and include men and women of Black, Latinx, and white descent.

Comparing the two measures of counting bill sponsorship in Congress by AAPI members, we note that they share the same gender ratios and are highly correlated with each other ($r = .847$, $p = .000$). They also bear similar strength of bivariate relationships to the total bills sponsored by each AAPI member in the 116th Congress (as of August 22, 2020). The Pearson correlation coefficients are $.676$ and $.643$ for the more restrictive and inclusive counting method, respectively; and both are statistically significant at $p = .000$. We also ran the correlation between the total bills sponsored by each AAPI member in the 115th and 116th Congress and found them to be highly correlated ($r = .797$, $p = .000$), but two members (Cox and Kim) in the 116th Congress were not in office during the 115th Congress.

Importantly, neither measure bears any relationship to the share of Asians or that of nonwhites in the jurisdiction. Rather, analyses using ANOVA (one-way analysis of variance) show that gender is a significant predictor of legislative advocacy in bill sponsorship. However, this relationship is only true when bill sponsorship is more inclusively defined in the studied period (between February 1, 2020 and May 15, 2020) and includes the three women senators or when we use the total number of sponsored bills defined by Congress.gov in the 116th Congress (as of August 22, 2020) and, again, include the three women senators. We tested the strength and direction of bivariate relationships between the level of

bill sponsorship (measured either by the expansive or restrictive definition for the COVID period or for the 116th Congress up to August 22, 2020) among women and men separately and the variables of %Asian, %nonwhite, nativity, and length of tenure (years in current office). None is significant. In other words, there is no statistically significant predictor of bill sponsorship, either broadly or narrowly defined, except gender identity among the AAPI delegation of the 116th Congress in the first months of the COVID outbreak in 2020.

To help contextualize our statistical findings, we organize our discussion into three sections: COVID-19 and AAPI-targeted, COVID-19 and non-AAPI-targeted, and non-COVID and AAPI-targeted legislation in the 116th Congress.

COVID-19 and AAPI-Targeted Bills and AAPI Legislative Actions

As shown in Table 2, three individual bills are explicitly AAPI targeted and COVID-19 related and presented as resolutions; two are identical bills introduced separately in the House (H. Res. 908) and the Senate (S. Res. 580). Despite their symbolic nature, several of the bills' authors have declared the importance of introducing the bills after hearing reports about anti-Asian discrimination directly from their constituents. Going beyond legislation, representatives such as Judy Chu and Grace Meng have used the organizational legitimacy of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) to release statements pressuring bureaucrats and politicians and to win seats in COVID-19 committees. Similarly, Senators Kamala Harris, Tammy Duckworth, and Maize Hirono have lobbied federal agencies such as the Department of Justice and the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights to do more in the face of rising anti-Asian racism. On the personal and community level, AAPI legislators carry a knowledge of systemic oppression on their shoulders that guide their actions. According to Representative Mark Takano whose grandparents and parents faced internment, "[W]e as Asian-Americans know that in times like these, mass blame and mass guilt gets assigned to a group of people" (Stevens, 2020, pp. 18). While nearly all the bills have stalled in committees and the letters did not generate much of a response, these actions signal some AAPI legislators' commitment to the AAPI community.

On March 25, 2020, Representative Meng introduced a resolution condemning the use of anti-Asian and xenophobic language to describe the coronavirus. On the day of its introduction, the resolution quickly garnered more than 100 cosponsors (Meng, 2020). Consistent with gener-

al partisanship patterns in Congress, nearly all the cosponsors are Democrats. The resolution directly links anti-Asian rhetoric about the coronavirus, such as the “Chinese virus,” “Wuhan virus,” and “Kung-flu” seen from the president and other Republican politicians with increased ha-

Table 2. COVID-19 Legislation on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (2/1-5/15, 2020)

Bill No.	Bill Text	Introduced	Sponsor	Cosponsor
H.Res.908	<p>This resolution calls on all public officials to condemn and denounce anti-Asian sentiment, racism, discrimination, and religious intolerance related to COVID-19, and to call on federal law enforcement officials, working with state and local officials, to take specified steps.</p> <p>It calls on federal officials to expeditiously investigate and document all credible reports of hate crimes and incidents and threats against the Asian American and Pacific Islander community, and investigate and prosecute perpetrators.</p> <p>The resolution recommits the United States to serving as a world leader in building more inclusive, diverse, and tolerant societies by (1) prioritizing language access and inclusivity in communication practices, and (2) combating misinformation and discrimination that put Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders at risk.</p>	03/25/20	Meng	146, incl. Chu, Takano, Lieu, Khanna, Jayapal, and Kim
S.Res.580	Identical to HRes908	05/14/20	Harris, Duckworth, and Hirono	25
H.Res.956	Recognizing the United Chinese Americans’ nationwide food drive and the contributions of Chinese Americans to the United States (see full text: https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-resolution/956/text .)	05/08/20	Chu, Meng, and Lieu	None

rassment, assault, and discrimination toward Asian Americans (ibid.). Meng's resolution called on other legislators to stand with the Asian American community and also urged federal law enforcement to document all anti-Asian hate crimes and hold any perpetrators accountable (ibid.). Finally, Meng, alongside Ted Lieu of California, cosponsored Chu's May 8, 2020 resolution honoring Chinese Americans' nation-building contributions historically and during the COVID-19 crisis. The resolution lauds the not-for-profit United Chinese Americans (UCA) in their partnerships with other organizations to organize a food drive for COVID-19 impacted communities and the Chinese American community generally for their philanthropy in recent months (Chu, 2020b). As Meng noted to NBC News about her legislative work, "I think for one of the first times in my congressional career, I feel like my colleagues see our Asian American issues as something they're concerned about, too, which is a good feeling" (Yam, 2020a). Meng also mentioned to the *New York Times* in an earlier interview that she has felt helpless in the fight against increased assaults and harassment toward Asians across the globe. Through these statements, Meng frames her legislative advocacy as fighting on behalf of an Asian American community beyond her district, even stretching it to a global ethos (Stevens, 2020).

Chu and Meng, as the chair and vice chair of the CAPAC, respectively, and other members of the caucus have played prominent roles outside of introducing legislation. Right as the COVID-19 crisis was beginning to hit the United States, on February 26, 2020, Chu released a letter on behalf of the CAPAC urging their colleagues to only communicate credible information and stop spreading misinformation, such as conspiracy theories suggesting that the coronavirus was created in a lab in China, which could instigate further xenophobia (Chu, 2020a). A month later, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi appointed freshman Congressman Andy Kim of New Jersey to the House Select Committee on the Coronavirus. In a press release, Representative Chu emphasized the importance of having an AAPI legislator in the committee as an "AAPI voice on this committee can ensure that AAPI needs and experiences are represented as well" (CAPAC, 2020). Back on January 30, CAPAC member and Dr. Ami Bera, in his capacity as chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and Nonproliferation, took the first COVID-19 action in Congress by announcing a plan to call a congressional hearing within a week on how the United States can plan and respond to the coronavirus outbreak. He later introduced on March 23 the Securing America From Epidemics Act (H.R.

6334), which authorizes the United States to participate in the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, an alliance of countries and private partners whose mission is to finance and coordinate the development of vaccines for high-priority, epidemic-potential threats.

Following Meng's introduction of a resolution condemning anti-Asian rhetoric in late March, a trio of Asian American senators, Kamala Harris of California, Tammy Duckworth of Illinois, and Maize Hirono of Hawaii, introduced a companion bill in the Senate in early May. Much like Meng's motivations for introducing the bill in the House, the senators expressed alarm at the rising numbers of hate crimes targeting AAPI communities and explicitly condemned President Trump's descriptions of the virus as the "Chinese virus" (Harris, 2020b). While the senators are quick to call out the overt racism of this rhetoric, they do not appear to note the full range of the virus's constructed racialized logic. Harris, like Meng, noted that "COVID-19 does not target any group by race or ethnicity. We must condemn any instance of racism or discrimination, wherever it exists" (ibid.). Through race-neutral rhetoric, Harris and Meng call out how Republicans create the discursive for assailants to target AAPIs yet elide the structural violence that disproportionately increase COVID-19's impacts on minority communities. Alternatively, in softening their message, the senators and Meng may be appealing to as many fellow legislators as possible to garner their support for the bill. As noted by Brown et al. (2018), white legislators may view their minority colleagues through a color-blind racism framework that makes it easier to pass symbolic resolutions rather than substantive bills.

The three senators have continued to take action on naming anti-Asian hate crimes and urging agencies and committees to address the issue. Directed toward the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division, Hirono wrote a statement with Senator Cory Booker of New Jersey, which Harris and Duckworth signed, calling on the agency to draft a plan to respond to anti-Asian hate crimes and provide monthly updates to Congress (Harris, 2020a). Senator Harris also worked with Senator Dick Durbin of Illinois to advocate for more funding to local and state law enforcement's responses to hate crimes. The letter, signed by Senators Duckworth and Hirono, calls on the party leaders of the Senate and the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee to appropriate emergency funding to support hate crime responses from law enforcement (Harris, 2020c). The senators also played prominent roles in calling on other federal agencies such as the U.S. Commission on

Civil Rights and the president to take action against anti-Asian racism (Yam, 2020b). While the suite of letters and statements are not formal legislation, they have symbolically demonstrated some senators' willingness to advocate on behalf of the Asian American community.

COVID-19 and Non-AAPI-Targeted Legislation

Whereas only three of the unique bills sponsored by AAPI legislators were explicitly AAPI targeted in their contents, we identified at least seventeen issue categories covered by these bills. The issue area that received the highest sponsorship from AAPI members is COVID-19 triggered anti-Asian racism where nine of the seventeen members took action to draft a bill or sponsor one drafted by fellow AAPI colleagues. In the finance or economy bill issue category, as high as eight of the seventeen AAPI legislators sponsored or co-authored a bill introduced by fellow AAPI colleagues. AAPI legislators are also active in advocating for worker relief or protection, immigrants, students or education, and health care—in each issue category, bills were sponsored by seven of the seventeen AAPI members. In contrast, AAPI legislators are comparatively less active on issues concerning women, those who are incarcerated, the environment, or tax relief, and each received sponsorship from only two members. This record of legislative advocacy suggests that certain AAPI legislators are advocating for the intersectionally disadvantaged members of the AAPI community. For example, many AAPI legislators have directed their energy toward immigration policy, which supports the large segments of the AAPI community who are foreign born and noncitizens (Ramakrishnan, 2005; Wong, 2006).

The same AAPI women legislators who play prominent roles in advocating for the AAPI community also lead in other general aspects of the COVID-19 response. For example, Senator Hirono helped introduce the bipartisan Coronavirus Worker Relief Act (S. 3476) on March 12, 2020 to provide unemployment benefits to workers unable to work because of the coronavirus (Hirono, 2020). Similarly, Representative Meng has strongly advocated for immigrants and housing rights. She sponsored, alongside Representative Judy Chu, the Leave No Taxpayer Behind ACT (H.R. 6438) that would amend the CARES Act to extend stimulus checks to noncitizen, yet tax-paying, immigrants (Correa, 2020). Meng was also one of the original sponsors, along with Representative Jayapal, of the Rent and Mortgage Cancellation Act (H.R. 6515) that would create a relief fund for landlords and cancel rent and mortgage for the duration of the pandemic (Omar, 2020).

Chu and Meng were some of the earliest AAPI legislators who responded to anti-Asian rhetoric through legislation. On February 28, 2020, the congresswomen joined Representative Nydia M. Velázquez of New York to introduce H.R. 6040, also known as “Small Business Relief from Communicable Disease Induced Economic Hardship Act of 2020” (Velázquez, 2020). Velázquez, a non-Asian associate member of the CAPAC, may have been motivated to introduce the bill because her district has about 20 percent Asian, which is a higher percentage of AAPI constituents than that of many members in Table 1. Under the bill, small business owners whose businesses have been impacted by the coronavirus would be eligible for interest-free loans from the federal government (*ibid.*). While the bill does not explicitly name Asian American–owned businesses, the bill’s authors stated that the economic impacts of the coronavirus on Asian Americans were a motivation for drafting the resolution. Because of the racialized stigma around coronavirus and fear of coming into contact with Asian Americans, the legislators reported that their Asian American business owners were experiencing sharp losses. For example, Judy Chu noted in the bill’s press release that, “In [her] district, some Asian-owned businesses are reporting a 50 percent drop in customers, and that’s the case elsewhere around the country as well.... We cannot let misinformation and fear ruin communities and businesses. This bill would help by providing necessary assistance to help our Asian-owned businesses continue to operate in the face of a disaster they had no control over” (*ibid.*). Please see the Appendix for similar legislation where the sponsors do not explicitly mention AAPIs, but the bills, such as T. J. Cox’s bills to contest misinformation about COVID-19, if passed, would nonetheless have significant implications for AAPIs.

AAPI legislators besides Senators Hirono, Duckworth, and Harris and Representatives Chu and Meng have also responded to COVID-19 by introducing or sponsoring a number of bills. Representatives Tulsi Gabbard of Hawai‘i and Pramila Jayapal of Washington each introduced their own emergency universal basic income bills. Gabbard’s bill calls for a monthly \$1,000 check for all Americans while the crisis persists whereas Jayapal’s would provide \$2,000 a month to Americans for the duration of the crisis and \$1,000 per month the year following the crisis’s end (Gabbard, 2020; Tlaib, 2020). Jayapal, a leader of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, also introduced a bill with Senator Booker of New Jersey that would move immigrants out of Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention and halt immigration enforcement

against those who are not “public safety risks” (Insider NJ, 2020). Concerned about small businesses struggling to stay open, Representative Andy Kim of New Jersey has introduced two bills that would increase the funding directed toward the Small Business Association’s Micro-loan Program (Kim, 2020). With huge disruptions to schools closing and swiftly moving online because of the coronavirus, Representative Robert Scott introduced two bills that would provide emergency grants to K–12 and higher education and food assistance to college students (Scott, 2020a, 2020b).

AAPI legislators have been less active on issues regarding women, voting, and the environment. On these issues, however, Senators Hirono, Harris, and Duckworth and Representative Meng are again leading among their AAPI colleagues. Senator Duckworth introduced legislation that would require the Environmental Protection Agency to revoke its nonenforcement of environmental laws during COVID-19 because environmental justice communities are doubly impacted by COVID-19 and disproportionate pollution impacts (Duckworth, 2020). With the coronavirus increasing the risks of gathering in-person and existing fears of voter suppression, Senator Harris introduced a bill, joined by Senators Hirono and Duckworth, which would expand vote by mail and early voting (Wise, 2020). Despite the fact that only Senator Duckworth and Representative Meng introduced bills on what we coded as women’s issues, of the bills authored or co-authored by AAPI legislators, 67 percent of the total bills sponsored in the study period were sponsored by AAPI women. While the increased number of AAPI women legislators may not lead to increased representation for women’s issues per se, it does reveal the raced and gendered nature of AAPI symbolic representation.

Non-COVID and AAPI-Targeted Legislation in the 116th Congress

While COVID-19 has laid bare the existing structural inequalities that many communities of color face, AAPI legislators have not stopped addressing Asian Americans’ preexisting grievances that exist independent of the pandemic. Table 3 shows that, as of May 2020, legislators have introduced seven different bills in the 116th Congress that target the AAPI community and are non-COVID related. Several of the bills are symbolic resolutions that honor AAPI communities or individuals of AAPI descent. For example, in 2019, Senator Hirono introduced a resolution, cosponsored by Duckworth and Harris, honoring Patsy Mink, the first woman of color as an Asian American, to serve in Congress (Hi-

rono, 2019).

As the Mink resolution demonstrates, much like the AAPI-targeted COVID bills, the same set of AAPI legislators is also most active in representing Asian Americans on other AAPI issues during and prior to the pandemic. Senator Hirono introduced the symbolic resolution of designating the importance of Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month for honoring the contributions of Asian Pacific Americans to U.S. history. A week later, on May 28, Representatives Chu and Meng, alongside Representative Takano, introduced an identical version in the House. Near the beginning of the pandemic and prior to many physical restric-

Table 3. Non-COVID Legislation on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the 116th Congress (as of May 28, 2020)

Bill	Text	Introduced	Sponsor	Co-sponsor
HConRes91	Authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for a ceremony to present the Congressional Gold Medal collectively to the Chinese American veterans of World War II	03/12/20	Lieu	
H.Res.952	Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives to recognize the resettlement of Southeast Asian refugees, commemorate the contributions of Southeast Asian Americans to the United States, urge the president to halt the deportation of Southeast Asian refugees, and advance equitable policies for Southeast Asian American communities.	05/05/20	Lowenthal (D-CA-47)	27
S.Res.591	A resolution promoting minority health awareness and supporting the goals and ideals of National Minority Health Month in April 2020, which include bringing attention to the health disparities faced by minority populations of the United States such as American Indians, Alaska Natives, Asian Americans, African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders.	5/20/20, passed by unanimous consent	Cardin (D-MD)	17

S.Res.589	A resolution recognizing the significance of Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month as an important time to celebrate the significant contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders to the history of the United States.	05/20/20	Hirono	23
H.Res.983	Identical to SRes589	05/28/20	Chu, Meng, and Takano	21
H.Res.165	Recognizing Chinese railroad workers who worked on the Transcontinental Railroad from 1865 to 1869, and their important contribution to the growth of the United States.	03/01/19	Meng and Chu	33, incl. Khanna and Lieu
S.Res.219	A resolution honoring the life and legacy of Patsy Takemoto Mink, the first woman of color to serve in Congress.	05/23/19	Hirono	20, incl. Duckworth and Harris

tions, Representative Ted Lieu introduced a concurrent resolution for both the House and Senate to authorize the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center on April 29, 2020 to bestow the Congressional Gold Medal to World War II Chinese American veterans (Lieu, 2020).

At the same time, two non-AAPI legislators have also introduced bills representing Asian Pacific American constituents. Representative Lowenthal of California introduced a resolution at the beginning of May that advocated for the Southeast Asian American community by calling on the president to stop the deportations of Southeast Asian refugees and instead urging for their resettlement. Passing by unanimous consent, Senate Resolution 591 from Senator Cardin of Maryland affirmed the legislative branch's commitment to National Minority Health Month (April 2020) and to rectify the health disparities that minority communities face. Sponsorship of pro-AAPI interest legislation by non-AAPI legislators is a pattern of representation identified by Chaturvedi (2015) in his research of five congressional sessions between 2009 and 2019. However, as AAAPs increase their presence in Congress, the proportion of AAAP-focused bills sponsored by AAAP members have overtaken that by non-AAAP members in the 116th Congress.

Discussion

With the highest number of AAPI legislators in the U.S. Congress ever, the 116th Congress is making history in congressional representational politics. However, AAPI legislators' increased visibility comes at the same moment as white supremacist politicians and pundits racialize a global pandemic and directly contribute to the rise of anti-Asian racism and violence, continuing the long legacy of violence against AAPIs in America. In light of these dual developments, how have AAPI legislators responded to the COVID-19 outbreak? Our findings provide preliminary descriptive support for our hypotheses that AAPI legislators are more likely to be sponsors of AAPI-targeted legislation and that AAPI women legislators are more likely to introduce bills targeting AAPI constituents than their male counterparts. In addition, AAPI women legislators as a whole are found to be more likely to sponsor legislation to advance interests of the intersectionally disadvantaged than AAPI men legislators during our study period, as seen in legislative advocacy targeting women, immigrants, and the poor in addition to AAPI-targeted bills. While not quantitatively assessed in our study, we have documented how those same legislators (Chu, Meng, Hirono, and Harris), who in earlier sessions introduced prominent AAPI-targeted resolutions, were also highly active in the COVID-19 response. Future research can more systematically assess the impacts of a prior legislative record on minority issues on COVID-19 legislation. Our study builds on the political science literature on representation by shining a light on symbolic representation and the understudied mechanisms of AAPI legislative representation. Our intersectional analysis of AAPI legislators and their actions also allows us to theorize potential explanations for why certain AAPI women legislators are more likely to practice "affirmative advocacy" (Strolovitch 2007), a point elaborated upon in the concluding section.

We find that symbolic acts of representation by AAPI legislators results from different conditions and takes distinct forms. Our findings support Chaturvedi's (2015) conclusions that AAPI legislators are more likely than non-AAPI legislators to advance bills on behalf of AAPI constituents. Building upon Chaturvedi's work, where he operationalizes symbolic representation solely through measures of bill sponsorship and cosponsorship, we were able to document other evidence of symbolic acts such as letters to federal agencies. For example, by sending letters to party leaders and the Appropriations Committee, Senators

Hirono and Duckworth have furthered mechanisms to stake a position on behalf of Asian Americans and challenge colleagues to become allies.

Symbolic representation from AAPI legislators functions similarly to symbolic representation from Black legislators, but there is specificity in how COVID-19 and the racial formation of Asian Americans shapes AAPI legislators' symbolic actions. Like what Brown et al. (2018) argue with respect to Black legislators, some AAPI legislators see their actions as an obligation and a duty of being Asian American. Extending beyond advocating for AAPI constituents in their districts or jurisdictions, some AAPI legislators are advocating for a larger community of AAPIs. As seen in Mark Takano's comments on his family's experiences of internment (Stevens, 2020), some AAPI legislators carry a collective trauma of anti-Asian violence. Regardless of the nonmaterial nature of many of the bills covered here, AAPI legislators use symbolic legislation as a mechanism for shifting perceptions of AAPIs as outsiders to AAPIs as deserving in the eyes of society and non-AAPI MCs. The racialization of COVID-19 has accelerated the effectiveness of this strategy—the political threat of hate crimes pairs with the political opportunity of increased AAPI visibility to expand congressional agendas to encompass Asian American issues.

On the flipside, constructions of Asian Americans as carriers or vectors of disease have a long historical record beyond the president's contemporary descriptions of the "Chinese virus." Studying the racialization of disease and Chinatown, Shah (2001) argues that public health departments performed imperial violence by constructing Chinese Americans as deviant and unsanitary. Also examining Chinatown politics, Claire Jean Kim (2015) zooms into the ways that attempt to regulate animal markets and Chinese cultural practices that operate under imperialist logics. AAPI legislators, as we noted, have responded to the similar racial constructions of coronavirus through assimilationist logics. Judy Chu, Ted Lieu, and Grace Meng attempted to shift these constructions by recognizing how Chinese Americans have contributed to COVID-19 food drives. Yet by trying to mark Chinese and Asian Americans as deserving of citizenship and belonging, the legislators restrict Asian American citizenship to respectability.

Conclusion and Implications

All the same, our study shows that AAPI women legislators appear to be more likely to serve AAPIs and those who are intersectionally disadvantaged. Where several studies on representation focus either on

race or gender, our analysis reveals that AAPI women legislators have been at the forefront of responding to COVID-19 and AAPI constituents. By count of bills sponsored, AAPI women legislators appear to be practicing affirmative advocacy, or what Strolovitch (2007) refers to as representational politics where advantaged leaders advocate and fight for disadvantaged constituents. In some sense, today's progressive-minded AAPI legislators may be motivated to practice affirmative advocacy because of an ideological commitment to bridge feminism. Those who have a prior record of minority advocacy (Chu, Meng, Hirono, and Harris) are also more active in response to COVID-19. While they face a different institutional and social movement environment than Chisholm and Mink did, a select number of the 116th Congress's AAPI women legislators similarly work to bring movements' goals to the electoral stage. They likewise, as seen in Meng's case highlighted earlier, endure marginalization from white women on the basis of race and from white men on the basis of race and gender.

In addition to AAPI women legislators' past legislative history and progressive politics, local context and personal characteristics likely matter, and future studies would be fruitful in testing the correlations with these factors and the number and nature of bills sponsored. As we saw in Judy Chu's advocacy in sponsoring H.R. 6040, the representative mentioned in a press release concerns that several Asian-owned businesses in her district were seeing drops in revenue. Maize Hirono's socialization in a single-parent and working-class immigrant family likely mattered in her strong response to COVID-19 and in advocating for AAPIs and other disadvantaged communities. The senator grew up without health care and became politicized in the era of anti-Vietnam War protests (Lim, 2013). Experiencing intersecting oppressions firsthand, Hirono, like other AAPI legislators, has expressed a linked fate with other disadvantaged communities to forge cross-racial solidarities.

With that said, these explanations on why AAPI women were more likely to introduce or co-author legislation during the period covered in the study are preliminary. Our sample size is small and the period of the study is mostly confined to a short window into one congressional session. Moreover, all three AAPI members of the Senate are female, so we cannot compare differences between AAPI men and women within the Senate Chamber. We suggest that future studies bring to bear further evidence and methods to determine why we see such variation on the basis of gender. One approach is to model Judy Wu's (2020) analysis of Patsy Mink's legislative activity and mo-

tivations. Wu (2020) reads Mink's advocacy around typical women's issues as couched in Mink's experiences with racial oppression and involvement with civil rights legislation. Our findings show the opposite trend—AAPI women legislators, at least in the period under study, have mostly framed their bills through a racial lens. To adequately understand the raced and gendered dimensions of AAPI women legislators' actions and motivations, we recommend studying the interactions between AAPI women, AAPI men, and non-AAPI legislators as well as whether and how AAPI women's prior records on women's issues inform their advocacy on other issues. In line with Hawkesworth's (2003) conclusions, Meng was mobilized to fight for AAPIs based on Representative McCarthy's marginalization. AAPI women legislators occupy an "outsider within" (Collins, 1986) vantage point that is at once a source of oppression and source of resistance.

We also encourage future research to further examine the complexities of AAPI identity, as multiracial legislators like Kamala Harris may be more driven by their other racial identities rather than their AAPI identity. As they straddle multiple ethnoracial lines, these multiracial elected officials complicate the ways that we consider the linkage of AAPI descriptive representation to symbolic representation and how they are often forced or autonomously choose to identify with one aspect of their identity (Lemi, 2018). In line with previous research on multiracial alliances in Congress (Tyson, 2016), our findings on the wide range of legislative advocacy from AAPI legislators demonstrate that in practice, regardless of their internal identity, there is a sense of linked fate with other marginalized groups.

Our study comes at a time of exceptional rhetoric and violence against AAPIs that may have resulted in anomalous AAPI symbolic representation. What will AAPI symbolic representation look like after the pandemic ends? As the number of AAPI MCs increases, will there be a subsequent increase in substantive representation? If Congress is just beginning to see Asian American issues as national issues, as Meng suggests, will AAPI legislators use symbolic representation as a bridge to substantive representation? How do ethnicity and ethnic identity shape AAPI representation? How does the strength of AAPI social movement activism in a legislators' district or jurisdiction shape AAPI legislative advocacy? Each of these questions will guide us to a fuller understanding of the variation of AAPI representation.

Even as we celebrate the increased presence of AAPIs in Congress, they remain severely underrepresented relative to the population of the

United States. Perversely, the pandemic has increased the visibility of AAPI legislators to contest racial formations of AAPIs as the silent model minority through symbolic legislation. AAPI women legislators appear to be practicing affirmative advocacy and are attempting to redistribute resources to those hit hardest by COVID-19. The signal should be clear to other congressional colleagues and the AAPI community at large: Asianness, particularly its intersections with gender, is a powerful mobilizing resource for legislative advocacy.

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Notes

1. See <http://www.asianpacificpolicyandplanningcouncil.org/stop-aapi-hate/> for a systematic effort by a coalition of AAPI community organizations and leaders to document reports of anti-Asian hate incidents related to COVID-19.
2. In the California state legislature, there is a term called “co-lead author,” which is equivalent to our usage of “co-author”—those legislators who helped draft and co-author a bill but were not identified by official records as bill sponsors.
3. Whereas all multiracial AAPIs serving in Congress are counted in our study, historically not all may be recognized as part of the AAPI community. The importance of racial identification for multiracial legislators seems to be more a function of one’s networks and relationships than blood ties, especially when it involves members from the other side of the aisle. We recognize the limitation of how our racial categorization in the study relies upon ascribed race, particularly as multiracial legislators’ choice to identify with one or all aspects of their ethnoracial identity is mediated by institutional constraints. However, we feel it would be a disservice in recognition to multiracial legislators if they were not included in a study about AAPI legislators. Previous research indicates that Black elected officials have high multiracial identification (Hardy-Fanta et al., 2016) despite how “multi-racial Black officials in particular may grapple with the legacy of the one-drop rule within legislative institutions” (Lemi, 2018, 737).

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Appendix: COVID-19-Related Legislation Sponsored* by AAPIs in Congress (February 1 - May 15, 2020)

*Bills co-authored/cointroduced by legislator not recognized as "bill sponsor" in Congress.gov

Senator Kamala Harris (D-CA)

Bill#	Brief Description		Sponsor	Cosponsor
S. 3534	Pandemic Disaster Assistance Act of 2020 to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to provide assistance to individuals affected by a pandemic, and for other purposes.	03/19/20	Harris	0
S. 3614	A bill to authorize the administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to approve state and local plans to partner with small and mid-size restaurants and nonprofit organizations to provide nutritious meals to individuals in need, to waive certain matching fund requirements, and for other purposes.	05/05/20	Harris	5
S. Res. 580	A resolution to condemn all forms of anti-Asian sentiment as related to COVID-19. It calls on federal officials to expeditiously investigate and document all credible reports of hate crimes and incidents and threats against the Asian American and Pacific Islander community, and investigate and prosecute perpetrators. (House version is H. Res. 908.)	05/12/20	Harris	26, incl. Duckworth and Hirono
S. 3719	A bill to amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to require that supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits be calculated using the value of the low-cost food plan, and for other purposes.	05/13/20	Harris	3
S. 3721	A bill to provide for the establishment of a COVID-19 Racial and Ethnic Disparities Task Force to gather data about disproportionately affected communities and provide recommendations to combat the racial and ethnic disparities in the COVID-19 response.	05/13/20	Harris	20, incl. Hirono
S. 3725	A bill to expand voting by mail and early voting, and to improve the safety, accessibility, and efficiency of in-person voting during elections for federal office.	05/13/20	Harris	18, incl. Duckworth and Hirono

Senator Mazie Hirono (D-HI)

S. 3428	Telework Metrics and Cost Savings Act introduced with two Maryland senators to require federal agencies to expand teleworking during novel coronavirus outbreak.	03/12/20	Hirono	2
* S. 3476	A bipartisan Coronavirus Worker Relief Act introduced with seven colleagues to provide for unemployment benefits to workers affected by COVID-19.	03/12/20	Peters (D-MI)	7, incl. Hirono
* S. 3529	Natural Disaster and Emergency Ballot Act of 2020 introduced with Klobuchar and Wyden. It ensures that Americans are able to vote, even in a public health emergency, by expanding early in-person voting and absentee vote-by-mail to all states.	03/18/20	Klobuchar (D-MN)	36, incl. Hirono, Harris, and Duckworth
* S. 3576	Disaster and Emergency Pricing Abuse Prevention Act introduced with Klobuchar, Blumenthal, and Cortez Masto. The bill would prohibit the sale of goods or services at overly inflated prices before or during a natural disaster, pandemic, or state of emergency.	03/24/20	Klobuchar (D-MN)	3, incl. Hirono
S. 3609	Coronavirus Immigrant Families Protection Act, with fourteen co-sponsors, including Harris. To ensure that all communities have access to urgently needed COVID-19 testing, treatment, public health information, and relief benefits regardless of immigration status or limited English proficiency, and for other purposes.	05/05/20	Hirono	14, incl. Harris
* S. 3690	A bicameral bill introduced with Klobuchar, Peters, Rosen, and others to boost high-speed Internet access for college students completing coursework during coronavirus pandemic.	05/13/20	Markey (D-MA)	44, incl. Hirono, Harris, and Duckworth
*S. Res. 580	A resolution to condemn all forms of anti-Asian sentiment as related to COVID-19. It calls on federal officials to expeditiously investigate and document all credible reports of hate crimes and incidents and threats against the Asian American and Pacific Islander community, and investigate and prosecute perpetrators.	05/12/20	Harris	26, incl. Hirono and Duckworth

Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL)

S. 3474	A bill to authorize the Women Who Worked on the Home Front Foundation to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs, and for other purposes.	03/12/20	Duckworth	2
S. 3475	A bill to direct the Secretary of Labor to issue an emergency temporary standard that requires certain employers to develop and implement a comprehensive infectious disease exposure control plan to protect employees in the health care sectors and other employees at elevated risk from exposure to SARS-CoV-2, and for other purposes.	03/12/20	Duckworth	11
S. 3633	A bill to require the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to continue to update and make publicly available EJScreen or an equivalent tool, and for other purposes.	05/06/20	Duckworth	13, incl. Harris
S. 3679	A bill to require the Internal Revenue Service to establish a procedure by which parents may immediately claim the recovery rebate amount for children born in 2020.	05/11/20	Duckworth	8
S. 3680	A bill to require the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to continue to carry out certain programs relating to environmental justice, and for other purposes.	05/11/20	Duckworth	2
S. 3724	A bill to prohibit the Secretary of Veterans Affairs from charging veterans copayments for preventive services relating to COVID-19.	05/13/20	Duckworth	2
*S. Res. 580	A resolution to condemn all forms of anti-Asian sentiment as related to COVID-19. It calls on federal officials to expeditiously investigate and document all credible reports of hate crimes and incidents and threats against the Asian American and Pacific Islander community, and investigate and prosecute perpetrators.	05/12/20	Harris	26, incl. Duckworth and Hirono

Representative Judy Chu (D-CA-27)

*H.R. 6040	Introduced with Velázquez and Meng to amend the Small Business Act to assist small businesses that suffer economic harm from the coronavirus outbreak.	02/28/20	Velazquez (D-NY-7)	2, incl. Chu and Meng
H.R. 6065	To block the implementation of a recent presidential proclamation (on January 31, 2020) restricting individuals from certain countries from entering the United States.	03/03/20	Chu	3
*H. Res. 908	Introduced with Meng to condemn all forms of anti-Asian sentiment as related to COVID-19. It calls on federal officials to expeditiously investigate and document all credible reports of hate crimes and incidents and threats against the Asian American and Pacific Islander community. Senate version is S. Res. 580 by Harris.	03/25/20	Meng (D-NY-6)	146, incl. Chu, Takano, Lieu, Khanna, Jayapal, Cox, and Gabbard
H.R. 6437	Coronavirus Immigrant Families Protection Act. To ensure that all communities have access to urgently needed COVID-19 testing, treatment, public health information, and relief benefits regardless of immigration status or limited English proficiency, and for other purposes.	4/03/20	Chu	72, incl. Takano, Cox, Jayapal, Lieu, Khanna, and Meng
H.R. 6861	Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Data Diversity and Accountability Act of 2020 to amend the Small Business Act to require collection and reporting of demographic data for applicants of the PPP, and for other purposes such as minority-, women-, and veteran-owned businesses	05/14/20	Chu	35
H.R. 6862	A bill to provide funding to states, localities, and community-based organizations for emergency aid and services in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.	05/14/20	Chu	3

Representative Doris Matsui (D-CA-6)

No sponsored/introduced legislation in response to COVID-19.

Representative Stephanie Murphy (D-FL-7)

H.R. 6198	Emergency Paid Leave Act to provide emergency paid leave to workers affected by coronavirus.	03/11/20	Murphy	8
H.R. 6429	National Commission on COVID-19 Act to establish a 9/11-style commission on U.S. pandemic preparedness and response.	04/03/20	Murphy	10
H.R. 6545	Health Insurance Marketplace Affordability Act to reduce premiums for individuals who purchase plans through the health insurance marketplace by increasing the tax credits that prime working-age Americans—between ages twenty-one and fifty-four—receive from the federal government.	04/17/20	Murphy	7

Representative Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI-2)

H. Res. 897	A resolution that would provide an emergency nontaxable Universal Basic Payment of \$1,000 per month to all adult Americans until COVID-19 no longer presents a public health emergency.	03/12/20	Gabbard	1
*H.R. 6609	Introduced with Rep. Jimmy Panetta (CA-20) to direct the president to use the Defense Production Act to acquire and manufacture necessary components, materials, and supplies to conduct molecular and serological COVID-19 medical testing nationwide.	04/23/20	Panetta (D-CA-20)	35, incl. Chu Gabbard, Meng, and Cox

Representative Grace Meng (D-NY-6)

*H.R. 6040	Introduced with Velázquez and Chu to amend the Small Business Act to assist small businesses that suffer economic harm from the coronavirus outbreak.	02/28/20	Velazquez (D-NY-7)	2, incl. Chu and Meng
*H.R. 6308	Housing is a Human Right Act introduced with Meng and House Progressive Coalition to authorize more than \$300 billion through the next decade for crucial housing infrastructure. It seeks to provide immediate relief to state and community organizations working to provide emergency shelter and other supportive services during COVID -19 outbreak.	03/19/20	Jayapal (D-WA-7)	15, incl. Meng and Chu
H.R. 6309	Natural Disaster Safe Inmate Relocation Act to direct the Federal Emergency Management Agency to encourage states and localities that receive assistance to adopt policies regarding the safe relocation of prisoners before, during, and after major disasters and emergencies.	03/19/20	Meng	0
H. Res. 908	A resolution to condemn all forms of anti-Asian sentiment as related to COVID-19. It calls on federal officials to expeditiously investigate and document all credible reports of hate crimes and incidents and threats against the Asian American and Pacific Islander community. (Senator version is S. Res. 580 by Harris.)	03/25/20	Meng	146, incl. Chu, Takano, Lieu, Khanna, Jayapal, Cox, and Gabbard
*H.R. 6438	Leave No Taxpayer Behind Act introduced with Correa to provide coronavirus relief payments to millions of immigrants and immigrant families who are currently ineligible to receive these critical funds. It urges treating the taxpayer identification number as the valid number for purposes of the 2020 recovery rebates.	04/03/19	Correa (D-CA-46)	55, incl. Chu and Cox

H.R. 6507	COVID-19 Employment Authorization Document Extension Act to direct the Department of Homeland Security to automatically extend an alien's employment authorization if the authorization was valid when a public health emergency period begins.	04/14/20	Meng	14, incl. Jayapal
* H.R. 6515	Rent and Mortgage Cancellation Act introduced with Omar to provide a nationwide cancellation of rents and home mortgage payments through the duration of the coronavirus pandemic emergency declaration.	04/17/20	Omar (D-MN-5)	30, incl. Jayapal
H.R. 6563	Emergency Educational Connections Act of 2020 to establish and provide funding for the Emergency Connectivity Fund, from which the Federal Communications Commission must provide support for certain schools or libraries to purchase specified telecommunications equipment during the public health emergency declared because of COVID-19.	04/21/20	Meng	94, incl. Cox, Jayapal, Matsui, and Chu
H.R. 6608	Menstrual Equity for the Homeless Act to provide for the availability of menstrual hygiene products for homeless individuals under the Federal Emergency Management Agency emergency food and shelter grant program, and for other purposes.	04/23/20	Meng	1
H.R. 6623	COVID-19 Language Access Act to require federal government agencies to translate coronavirus materials into multiple languages.	04/28/20	Meng	51, incl. Jayapal, Takano, Lieu, and Cox
H.R. 6721	COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act introduced with Lieu to provide greater federal government oversight of COVID-19 hate crimes, and require the Department of Justice to provide Congress with regular updates on the status of reported bias incidents.	05/07/20	Meng	33, incl. Lieu, Jayapal, Takano, and Chu

Representative Pramila Jayapal (D-WA-7)

*H.R. 6187	MEALS Act introduced with Omar to protect low-income students' access to school meal benefits during any school closures, as well as a bill to ensure all Americans have access to coronavirus testing and related care without any out-of-pocket cost.	03/11/20	Omar (D-MN-5)	38, incl. Jayapal, Takano, and Khanna
H.R. 6308	Housing is a Human Right Act introduced with Meng and House Progressive Coalition to authorize more than \$300 billion through the next decade for crucial housing infrastructure. It seeks to provide immediate relief to state and community organizations working to provide emergency shelter and other supportive services during COVID-19 outbreak.	03/19/20	Jayapal	15, incl. Meng and Chu
H.R. 6537	Federal Immigrant Release for Safety and Security Together Act or the FIRST Act introduced with five colleagues to impose requirements during a communicable disease-related national emergency, such as the release of certain aliens in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement custody, during COVID-19.	03/23/20	Jayapal	43, incl. Chu, Meng, and Takano
H.R. 6674	Medicare Crisis Program Act of 2020 to make a series of changes to health insurance coverage and requirements during the public health emergency relating to COVID-19, such as by expanding coverage and reducing or eliminating cost sharing of certain services.	05/01/20	Jayapal	44, incl. Khanna, Meng, Takano, and Gabbard
H.R. 6906	A bill to provide reimbursements for certain costs of health care items and services, including prescription drugs, furnished during the public health emergency declared with respect to COVID-19.	05/15/20	Jayapal	25, incl. Khanna and Meng

Representative Ami Bera (D-CA-7)

H.R. 6334	Securing America From Epidemics Act to authorize the United States to participate in the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, an alliance of countries and private partners whose mission is to finance and coordinate the development of vaccines for high-priority, epidemic-potential threats.	03/23/20	Bera	23, incl. Lieu
H.R. 6615	COVID-19 Oral History Project Act to direct the Library of Congress to establish an oral history program in the American Folklife Center for the collection and public availability of individual stories of events and experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States.	04/24/20	Bera	3

Representative T. J. Cox (D-CA-21)

H.R. 6577	Directs the Secretary of Health and Human Services to award grants or contracts to public or private entities to carry out a national awareness campaign to increase factual awareness and knowledge of COVID-19.	04/21/20	Cox	2, incl. Chu
*H.R. 6572	Introduced with Gus Bilirakis to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to carry out a national campaign to increase awareness and knowledge of COVID-19.	04/21/20	Bilirakis (R-FL-12)	Cox
*H.R. 6643	Supporting State and Local Leaders Act (introduced with Schneider and 114 other House members) to make states and local governments eligible for emergency paid leave tax credits.	04/28/20	Schneider (D-IL-10)	118, incl. Cox, Lieu, Krishnamoorthi, Jayapal, and Khanna

Representative Ro Khanna (D-CA-17)

H.R. 6719	Emergency Medical Supplies Procurement Act to require the federal government to provide critical health care resources in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.	05/05/20	Khanna	0
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Representative Ted Lieu (D-CA-33)

*H.R. 6467	Coronavirus Community Relief Act, introduced with Neguse along with more than seventy other House members, to allow smaller cities to directly access coronavirus relief funds.	04/07/20	Neguse (D-CO-2)	151, incl. Lieu, Gabbard, Chu, Cox, Takano, Jayapal, Khanna, and Matsui
*H.R. 6721	COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act introduced with Meng to provide greater federal government oversight of COVID-19 hate crimes, and require the Department of Justice to provide Congress with regular updates on the status of reported bias incidents.	05/07/20	Meng	33, incl. Lieu, Jayapal, Takano, and Chu
H.R. 6768	Prevent Evictions Act to address the eviction crisis by supporting cost-effective solutions to keep families in their homes. The bill is the companion legislation to a U.S. Senate bill, the Prevent Evictions Act of 2019.	05/08/20	Lieu	0
H.R. 6769	Supporting At-Risk Veterans in an Emergency Actor Act to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide food aid to veterans who are not living in permanent supportive housing on campus during certain public health emergencies.	05/08/20	Lieu	0

Representative Mark Takano (D-CA-41)

H.R. 6212	To provide for the continuation of Department of Veterans Affairs educational assistance benefits during emergency situations, and for other purposes.	03/11/20	Takano	1
H.R. 6322	Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act of 2020, which became public law no. 116-140 on April 28, 2020. It authorizes the Department of Veterans Affairs to continue paying work-study allowances as well as educational assistance and subsistence allowances during emergency periods.	03/23/20	Takano	49, incl. Jayapal

H.R. 6612	To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to prescribe the technical qualifications for licensed hearing aid specialists of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.	04/23/20	Takano	23
H.R. 6840	Coronavirus Emergency Non-Congregate Housing Expansion Act to provide for the coverage of non-congregate shelter under the Public Assistance program of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act for COVID-19. It covers the shelter need for isolation or quarantine of individuals who were tested positive or exposed to or asymptomatic of COVID-19.	05/12/20	Takano	23, incl. Bera

Representative Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL-8)

H.R. 6841	Ban Conflicted Trading Act to prohibit Members of Congress and senior congressional staff from abusing their positions for personal financial gain through trading individual stocks and investments while in office or serving on corporate boards.	03/26/20	Krishnamoorthi	9
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Representative Andy Kim (D-NJ-3)

H.R. 6079	Microloan Improvement Act, as part of the bipartisan package that would increase the size of, and ease of obtaining, microloans through the Small Business Administration.	03/11/20	Kim	1
H.R. 6291	Microloan Emergency Assistance Act to strengthen the Small Business Association's Microloan program to help small businesses impacted by the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and the accompanying economic crisis.	03/19/20	Kim	0
*H.R. 6754	Protecting the Paycheck Protection Program Act of 2020 introduced with Fletcher to ensure small business with Paycheck Protection Program loans remain eligible to receive tax deductions.	05/08/20	Fletcher (D-TX-7)	3, incl. Kim
H.R. 6764	Put Our Neighbors to Work Act to create more opportunities for local hiring from military construction projects.	05/08/20	Kim	3

Representative Robert Scott (D-VA-3)

H.R. 6139	COVID-19 Health Care Worker Protection Act of 2020 to require the Department of Labor to promulgate both an emergency temporary occupational safety or health standard and a permanent standard to protect certain employees from occupational exposure to COVID-19.	03/09/20	Scott	54, incl. Jayapal, Takano, Chu, Meng, and Lieu
H.R. 6275	Supporting Students in Response to Coronavirus Act to establish and provide funds for grant programs to respond to safety and health risks presented by qualifying emergencies, including COVID-19.	03/13/20	Scott	28, incl. Jayapal and Takano
H.R. 6559	COVID-19 Every Worker Protection Act of 2020 to require the Department of Labor to promulgate both an emergency temporary occupational safety or health standard and a permanent standard to protect certain employees from occupational exposure to the coronavirus.	04/21/20	Scott	119, incl. Jayapal, Takano, Chu, Lieu, Khanna, and Meng

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