January 10, 2023

Dear Members of Congress,

The undersigned organizations are united in our dedication to fighting the proliferation of racism, xenophobia, and antisemitism, including ensuring the security and protection of all minorities and their communal spaces, and our commitment to the protection of our democratic institutions and processes. Representing cross-sector organizations, we are committed to working in collaboration to highlight the effects of political violence, craft new strategies to address it, and advocate for resources to help combat this pervasive problem. We urge you and your colleagues to take proactive bipartisan steps to address political violence and the factors that fed into the violence we witnessed during the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021.

As we mark two years since the day we watched an unimaginable scene unfold at the Capitol, we know the danger has not abated. This past year's spike in violent actions, among them horrific attacks in Buffalo and Colorado Springs, pose a long-standing threat to the future of our democratic institutions and democracy itself.

Since January 2021, our nation has witnessed a shocking number of incidents and threats of political violence on both the federal and local level. According to Capitol Police records, there were 9,600 recorded threats against members of Congress last year, a jump of nearly tenfold from 2016. Threats against judges were up over 400 percent in the last six years. A report by the National League of Cities released earlier this year showed that, "81 percent [of local officials surveyed] reported having experienced harassment, threats and violence themselves." Additionally, a recent study spearheaded by ADL and Princeton University's Bridging Divides Initiative paints an alarming picture of attacks targeting election officials, educators, and healthcare workers. Of the 400 cases they observed, 40 percent were related to elections, 30 percent to education, and 29 percent to health issues (overwhelmingly COVID-19 issues).

Political violence – fueled by disinformation, the spread of hateful rhetoric, the easy access to guns by extremists and those motivated by hate, and a general increased acceptance of violence as a political tool – is rising exponentially. While our organizations, stakeholders, and agendas might differ in scope, we are united by the threat political violence poses to our work and the people we represent.

To help address factors contributing to acts of political violence, we urge Congress to call on the Biden administration to further execute on its National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism including addressing the long-term contributors that are responsible for much of today's domestic terrorism, and call for a new readout by the Justice Department's Election

Threats Task Force on the latest intelligence, data, and analysis they collect during their second year of work.

We also urge Congress to push for a progress report following the Biden administration's United We Stand Summit to address rising hate-fueled violence in the United States. Acts of hate targeting minority and marginalized populations serve not only to cause violent harm but to incite fear in communities across the country.

Finally, we call on Congress to further examine what federal funds might be allocated to better secure and protect local officials and public servants who face ongoing harassment or potential harm related to political violence.

We look forward to being a resource to you and your office and welcome an opportunity to continue providing resources and offering recommendations for addressing political violence – in your state, and around the country.

Respectfully,

Asian Americans Advancing Justice – AAJC

The Asian American Foundation (TAAF)

Anti-Defamation League (ADL)

Giffords

League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)

National Congress of American Indians

National Urban League

Truman Center for National Policy

Western States Center