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Racist attacks and rhetoric must stop [letter]

May 3, 2020

As a military veteran from Ephrata who served in Vietnam, Iâ€™m writing today to stand in solidarity with the Asian American, Native American and Pacific Islander communities against the hateful rhetoric and violence that have erupted across the country in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nationwide, Asian Americans in particular have been refused service at businesses, bullied and attacked by classmates, verbally attacked on public transit and spat on in the street.

In one tragic case in Texas, an Asian American family of three was stabbed. And recently, a 39-year-old Asian American woman in Brooklyn sustained chemical burns after being attacked by a stranger.

One website maintained by the Asian Pacific Policy & Planning Council and Chinese for Affirmative Action has revealed an average of 100 reported racist incidents per day.

Right-wing politicians and conservative media, led in my view by President Donald Trump, are using the COVID-19 crisis to drive racism against Asian Americans and immigrants. These ignorant attacks are seemingly meant to intentionally mislead the public into believing dangerous myths about how COVID-19 is spread. They stoke xenophobia among some Trump supporters and deflect attention away from the incompetent response to this deadly outbreak by the president and his administration.

As a combat veteran who served to defend the rights of all Americans, I urge my community here in Lancaster County, our local leaders and all of our members of Congress to reject anti-Asian bigotry and bigotry in all its forms. We are better than this.

Jim Sandoe

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