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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Georgia Lawyers and Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Leaders  
Launch *National AAPI Violence Prevention & Response Initiative***

*Two funds created to offer financial assistance to victims and support anti-violence work.*

**ATLANTA, Ga.** (March 26, 2021) – AAPI community leaders in Georgia have joined forces with the National Compassion Fund (NCF) to launch the *National AAPI Violence Prevention & Response Initiative*, which will raise money for victims of the March 16 shootings, other AAPI crime victims, and bias prevention in two first-of-their-kind funds.

A virtual press conference was held today, March 26, 2021 at 9:30am ET. The recording is available here: <https://www.facebook.com/175083695856558/videos/912793129497613>.

It featured **Jeffrey Dion**, Executive Director of NCF, and four members from a network of mass shooting families and survivors who work together under [VictimsFirst.org](http://VictimsFirst.org). It also featured **BJay Pak**, former U.S. Attorney, Northern District of Georgia, **Angela Hsu** President of GAPABA, **Victoria Huynh**, Vice President of CPACS, **Edward Sohn**, Board Member of GLF, and **Timothy Wang**, President-Elect of GAPABA.

Donations are being accepted at [gofundme.com/atlanta-aapi](http://gofundme.com/atlanta-aapi). All amounts are welcome, though contributions of \$5,000 or more are encouraged to be sent by wire or check. More information is at [NationalCompassionFund.org](http://NationalCompassionFund.org).

Donations can be allocated to the *Atlanta 3/16 Survivors Fund*, the first fund in the nation where funds go to the full victim base, or to the first-of-its-kind national *AAPI Crime Victims and Education Fund*.

All donations are tax-deductible and support AAPI crime victims or AAPI bias prevention.

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“NCF passes 100% of donations to victims and injured and traumatized survivors using an established vetting process and its years of experience,” says **Jeffrey Dion**, Executive Director of NCF, which has administered relief funds for 14 mass casualty crimes. NCF’s administrative expenses will be covered by a corporate donation from **GoFundMe**, guaranteeing that 100% of donations will go directly to victims’ families, survivors, and traumatized witnesses.

“I can tell you stories for hours of why this is so important. We see time and time again that money is being raised in the names and using the faces of our loved ones, and money does not end up with those families. So that is why the National Compassion Fund is so important, they will get the funds directly to the victims, and they do honor donor intent because donors have no idea where

their money is going,” said **Caren Teves**, a member of the VictimsFirst.org network whose son Alex saved his girlfriend before being shot in the head and killed in the Aurora theater shooting.

“My involvement came after Rynanne’s death. I was afforded the time and had the resources to step away from work and focus solely on the early stages of recovery from that shock. This is not the case with other members of the sad fraternity that we all find ourselves in. No one should have to ever deal with this type of shock let alone deal with being financially ruined by it,” said **Eric Mace**, whose daughter Rynanne was murdered in the mass shooting at Northern Illinois University.

“Keeping things afloat at home, my mom lost her job, my family ended up leaving their jobs because we weren’t mentally there. Had it not been for those funds, I would not have been able to keep myself afloat. When it came down to medical bills, those at Orlando took care of the part when I was in the hospital. I still had to come home and do follow-up appointments and still receive medication and more care, and mental health,” described **Tiara Parker**, a survivor of the Pulse Nightclub shooting whose 18-year old cousin died in her arms.

“It’s really great to see there is such a strong community of people stepping up to support strangers. I wanted to echo Eric and Caren and Tiara for thanking the Georgia Bar Associations for establishing the *Atlanta 3/16 Survivors Fund* and *AAPI Crime Victims and Education Fund* that has designated clear paths for the public to give directly to the victims of the spa shootings and help other victims of violence in the Asian community, and also the *Atlanta 3/16 Survivors Fund* is the first fund for the survivors of the spa shootings in the country where donations will go to the full victim base. These families of survivors will need these funds to heal the way only they know how,” said **Nikki Suzuki**, whose cousin Micayla was murdered in the Aurora theater shooting and cousin Stacy survived the Las Vegas shooting.

In addition to helping those affected on March 16, leaders in Georgia saw a need to assist other crime victims and the AAPI community nationally, given the nearly 3,800 reported incidents against AAPIs in the last year, according to Stop AAPI Hate. In short order, Georgia AAPI leaders formed and launched the *National AAPI Violence Prevention & Response Initiative* in partnership with NCF.

Co-Chair **BJay Pak**, past U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Georgia, recounted an Asian business owner and robbery victim, who was targeted based on stereotypes that Asians operated with primarily cash and that they would not fight back. Although this incident did not meet the statutory definition of a federal hate crime, the crime was racially and bias-motivated.

“She survived the shooting but lost her ability to work. Though our office prosecuted the shooter, there were limited options to assist her when she became indigent,” says Pak, now a partner at Alston & Bird LLP. “It just highlighted the need for an initiative such as the one we are launching today to support these Asian-American victims of race and bias-related crimes, and to educate and to combat negative stereotypes of Asian-Americans.”

“The way that people have rallied around the community gives me hope. I worry though about the next person, who may not make the news. They need help too,” says **Angela Hsu**, a lawyer at Bryan Cave and President of GAPABA.

“It’s not enough to simply support AAPI survivors after a crime occurs. The rise in anti-AAPI hate crimes is alarming as such crimes against Asian-Americans increased by 150% last year, while the overall hate crime rate decreased by 7%. We hope that a national fund will help with addressing this problem by supporting education and anti-violence work. This will benefit everyone, AAPI and non-AAPI alike,” says **Michael C. Wu**, GAPABA Board Member.

NCF is partnering with local AAPI leaders representing organizations including the Georgia Asian Pacific American Bar Association (GAPABA), the Center for Pan Asian Community Services, Inc. (CPACS), the Korean American Bar Association of Georgia (KABA-GA), Raksha, Inc., the Korean American Coalition (Atlanta Chapter) (KAC), and the National Association of Asian American Professionals – Atlanta (NAAAP).

NCF is a subsidiary of the National Center for Victims of Crime, the nation’s leading resource and advocacy organization for crime victims. NCF will collect and distribute the *Atlanta 3/16 Survivors Fund* according to protocols determined by the local steering committee.

The GAPABA Law Foundation (GLF), the non-profit arm of GAPABA, will receive and hold the *AAPI Crime Victims and Education Fund* until the GLF Board of Directors selects a fund administrator. It will ultimately be available on a nationwide basis, until exhausted, to support other AAPI victims of crime nationwide as well as education and awareness initiatives to reduce violence against the AAPI community.

“Over the last ten years, GLF has distributed over \$250,000 in grants and funds received from corporations, law firms, and individual donors. With a Board of Directors consisting of esteemed lawyers from our community, our goal is to make sure everything is transparent, by the book, and non-political,” says **Hon. Chong Kim**, Chairwoman of the GLF Board. “We will hold the funds until we select an administrator that will distribute them with appropriate safeguards and according to fund goals.”

“From this tragedy and the events in the last year, we have a greater calling to create something that will positively impact the community. For individuals and corporations searching for a trustworthy, tax-deductible, and practical way to assist, this is it,” says Co-Chair **Sara Hamilton**, President of KABA-GA and lawyer at Thompson Hine LLP.

#### Co-Chairs

- BJay Pak, Esq. | Partner, Alston & Bird LLP | Former U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Georgia
- Sara Hamilton, Esq. | Associate Attorney, Thompson Hine LLP | President, Korean-American Bar Association of Georgia (KABA-GA)

*About GoFundMe:*

*Founded in 2010, [GoFundMe](#) is a fundraising platform that connects people, causes, and charities seeking support with those able to help. GoFundMe provides an efficient and safe platform to raise money for both immediate and long-term needs, while making an impact on a global scale. GoFundMe is inspiring hope and changing lives through giving. Find us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).*