

# AG Kaul: Speaks out against recent acts of discrimination targeting Asian American community

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MADISON, Wis. – Wisconsin Attorney General Josh Kaul is condemning recent xenophobic acts targeting Wisconsinites of Asian descent and encouraging others to do so as well.

“Yesterday, I had the opportunity to talk to community leaders who are working to raise awareness about recent acts of discrimination against members of the Asian-American/Pacific Islander community and who are taking action to fight discrimination,” said AG Kaul. “We must stand together and speak out against racism and xenophobia.”

Recent [news stories](#) have reported instances of discrimination against Wisconsinites of Asian descent during the coronavirus outbreak.

## **Wisconsin’s Hate Crime Provisions**

Information regarding hate crimes should be promptly referred to law enforcement. Under Wis. Stat. § 939.645, a hate crime penalty enhancer can apply when certain crimes are committed, at least in part, based on a “belief or perception regarding the race, religion, color, disability, sexual orientation, national origin or ancestry of” the victim.

Wis. Stat. § 939.645(2) provides the following enhancements:

“(a) If the crime committed ... is ordinarily a misdemeanor other than a Class A misdemeanor, the revised maximum fine is \$10,000 and the revised maximum term of imprisonment is one year in the county jail.

“(b) If the crime committed ... is ordinarily a Class A misdemeanor, the penalty increase under this section changes the status of the crime to a felony and the revised maximum fine is \$10,000 and the revised maximum term of imprisonment is 2 years.

“(c) If the crime committed ... is a felony, the maximum fine prescribed by law for the crime may be increased by not more than \$5,000 and the maximum term of imprisonment prescribed by law for the crime may be increased by not more than 5 years.”