FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ASIAN AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK COMMENDS NYPD AND THE QUEENS DISTRICT ATTORNEY’S OFFICE FOR OBTAINING GUILTY PLEA IN PATRICK MATEO CASE AND DEMANDS CONTINUED VIGILANCE AND JUSTICE FOR ANTI-ASIAN VIOLENCE VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS IN NEW YORK

NEW YORK – January 24, 2022. The Asian American Bar Association of New York (AABANY) has learned that on January 25, Patrick Mateo will return to Queens Supreme Court for ongoing monitoring as part of his plea agreement for the hate crime he committed. Last year, on February 16th, Patrick Mateo cursed at and forcibly shoved an Asian woman to the ground outside a Flushing bakery, causing her serious injury. The incident drew widespread attention and condemnation across social media and news outlets, leading to his arrest. When contacted by a New York Times reporter, Mateo repeated in a text message what he had shouted at his victim, “[Y]ou are in america ... NOT CHINA! Please give me space with coronavirus.”

In response to Mateo’s racist rhetoric, AABANY strongly advocated with the Queens District Attorney’s Office to prosecute the incident as a hate crime. Even though he was not initially arraigned on hate crime charges, following AABANY’s meetings with the Queens District Attorney’s Office, Mateo was eventually indicted by a grand jury for Aggravated Harassment in the Second Degree as a hate crime. On August 13, 2021, Patrick Mateo pled guilty to a top count of Aggravated Harassment in the Second Degree as a hate crime. As part of his plea agreement, Mateo is undergoing sensitivity training for a year at the mental health service agency, Queens Counseling for Change. Failure to complete this training will result in Mateo being sentenced to imprisonment for a year minus a day, the maximum penalty permitted for harassment in the second degree.

AABANY salutes the New York Police Department and the Queens District Attorney’s Office for their efforts in pursuing a hate crime conviction and seeking Mateo’s rehabilitation through anti-bias training.

Hate crimes against AAPI persons and other acts of anti-Asian violence in New York City unfortunately continue to increase, with STOP AAPI HATE reporting over 10,000 incidents nationally through September 30, 2021. Most recently, on Saturday, January 15, Michelle Alyssa Go tragically lost her life when she was pushed onto a subway track in Times Square.

As the Hate Crimes Act recognizes, hate crimes impact both the immediate victim and the groups to which that victim belongs. The police and prosecutor’s offices must be transparent and partner with the AAPI community in their pursuit of justice in these awful attacks against AAPI New Yorkers.
“AABANY hopes to continue its dialogue with police and with prosecutor’s offices around the city to ensure that the individual victims, their families and AAPI communities get the safety and justice they deserve,” said AABANY President Terry Shen. “AABANY’s Anti-Asian Violence Task Force has been working actively in the past year to educate and communicate with the general public about anti-Asian hate and has been advocating to law enforcement and elected officials for meaningful reform and modernization. The Task Force has also been tracking data about bias incidents and hate crimes against New York’s AAPI community to provide necessary research and analyses to support our legislative and policy proposals. Although accounts of anti-Asian attacks have faded from the headlines, the attacks continue unabated, and AABANY demands continued vigilance in the face of this unfortunate reality and demands justice for all victims and survivors of anti-Asian hate.”

For more information, please contact Yang Chen, AABANY Executive Director, at (646) 653-2168, or direct any inquiries to main@aabany.org.

The Asian American Bar Association of New York is a not-for-profit 501(c)(6) professional membership organization of attorneys concerned with issues affecting the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. Incorporated in 1989, AABANY seeks not only to encourage the professional growth of its members but also to advocate for the AAPI community as a whole. AABANY is a New York regional affiliate of the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA).

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