



Cheryl Davila  
Councilmember  
District 2

## **TIME CRITICAL AGENDA MATERIAL**

**Meeting Date:** April 14, 2020

**Subject:** Condemning the derogatory usage of the terms “Chinese Virus” (CV) and Wuhan Virus” (WV) as synonyms for the coronavirus, urging members of our community to refrain from using such hateful language, and condemning President Trump’s use of these phrases and his racist xenophobic attacks on Asians.

**Submitted by:** Councilmember Cheryl Davila

**Rationale:** Find that pursuant to California Government Code Section 54954.2(b) that immediate action is required and that the matter came to the attention of the City Council after the agenda was published.



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CONSENT CALENDAR  
April 14, 2020

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Cheryl Davila

Subject: Condemning the derogatory usage of the terms “Chinese Virus” (CV) and “Wuhan Virus” (WV) as synonyms for the coronavirus, urging members of our community to refrain from using such hateful language, and condemning President Trump’s use of these phrases and his racist xenophobic attacks on Asians.

#### RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a resolution to: 1) Condemn the 45th President of the United States’ use of the terms “Chinese Virus (CV)” and “Wuhan Virus (WV)” as a synonym for COVID-19; 2) urge City of Berkeley employees and residents to refrain from using the terms “CV”, “WV”, or similar stigmatizing names to describe COVID-19; 3) prompt the City to support outreach and education efforts to prevent racist attacks and hate crimes against Asian residents and businesses.

#### BACKGROUND

When President Donald Trump was elected in 2016, a number of white supremacist rallies organized by the Alt-Right were held within the City of Berkeley, and the City responded with a campaign showcasing that Berkeley is “United Against Hate”. The values of unity and inclusion demonstrated in the first “United Against Hate” week continue to guide our City’s governance and culture. Now under the global pandemic of coronavirus, we must continue to uphold these principles and remain united against hate, xenophobia, scapegoating, and racist xenophobic rhetoric.

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines on naming infectious diseases recommend against using location-based names for infectious diseases to avoid the stigmatization of locations and ethnicities. The SARS-CoV-2 virus commonly goes by the name of the illness it causes, COVID-19, but is more colloquially known as the “coronavirus”. The names SARS-CoV-2, COVID-19, and coronavirus are recognized and commonly used by the WHO, CDC, and other public health and medical institutions. Though the coronavirus was first documented from an outbreak in China, there is no racial, ethnic, nor cultural basis for the spread of the coronavirus.

Contrary to public health guidelines, the 45th President has used the term “CV” when referring to the coronavirus, and members of his administration have used similar discriminatory terms

such as “WV” to denote COVID-19. The President’s repeated use of the term “CV” and other dangerous rhetoric have a harmful and dehumanizing effect on the community, particularly, the Asian American community. This language fuels xenophobia, bigotry, discrimination, and violence. The WHO, CDC, United States Commission on Civil Rights, Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, California Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus, and many other organizations have condemned the use of these derogatory and inflammatory terms to refer to coronavirus. The use of the term “CV” stigmatizes Asian communities and has incited violence and xenophobic attacks against the Asian populations. According to the Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council’s Press Release on April 3, 2020, there have been over 1,100 reports of xenophobia and racist behavior against the Asian American community, including physical violence, attributed to reactions to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The City of Berkeley stands alongside many other organizations and concerned community members in condemning the President’s negligent and violent use of the divide terms such as CV and WV, and urges our community to remain united against hate as we seek to end the global pandemic and protect our friends, family, loved ones and neighbors from COVID-19.

#### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Condemning hate and racist terms is fiscally responsible.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Protecting our communities from racism and xenophobic attacks are important for maintaining a sustainable environment.

#### CONTACT PERSON

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#### ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution

#### REFERENCES:

1. Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council’s Press Release on April 3, 2020  
[http://www.asianpacificpolicyandplanningcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/Press\\_Release\\_4\\_3\\_20.pdf](http://www.asianpacificpolicyandplanningcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/Press_Release_4_3_20.pdf)
2. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/cases-in-us.html>

RESOLUTION NO. XXXX

A RESOLUTION OF THE BERKELEY CITY COUNCIL CONDEMNING THE DEROGATORY USAGE OF THE TERMS “CHINESE VIRUS” (CV) AND “WUHAN VIRUS” (WV) AS SYNONYMS FOR THE CORONAVIRUS, URGING MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY TO REFRAIN FROM USING SUCH HATEFUL LANGUAGE, AND CONDEMNING PRESIDENT TRUMP’S USE OF THESE PHRASES AND HIS RACIST XENOPHOBIC ATTACKS ON ASIANS.

WHEREAS, Berkeley stands “United Against Hate”; and

WHEREAS, The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines on naming infectious diseases recommends against using location-based names for infectious diseases to avoid the stigmatization of locations and ethnicities; and

WHEREAS, According to the CDC, as of April 6, there has been over 330,000 cases and 8,900 deaths attributable to COVID; and

WHEREAS, The SARS-CoV-2 virus commonly goes by the name of the illness it causes, COVID-19, but is also more colloquially called the “coronavirus” and these names are commonly used by the WHO, CDC, and other medical organizations and practitioners; and

WHEREAS, Regardless of its origin, there is no racial, ethnic, or cultural basis for the spreading of the coronavirus; and

WHEREAS, The 45th President has time and again used the term “CV” when referring to the coronavirus, and members of his administration have used similar discriminatory terms such as “WV”; and

WHEREAS, Contrary to the public health guidelines, the 45th President of the United States and other political leaders continue to defend the use of these racist terms; and

WHEREAS, The WHO, CDC, United States Commission on Civil Rights, Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, California Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus, and many other organizations have condemned the use of such racist terms; and

WHEREAS, The use of the term “CV” and other such stigmatizing terms can normalize and incite violence and xenophobia against the Asian American population; and

WHEREAS, According to the Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council’s Press Release on April 3, 2020, there have been over 1,100 reports of xenophobic and racist behavior and many physically violent attacks against the Asian American community attributed to reactions to the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, The 45th President’s repeated use of the term “CV” and paired with other dangerous rhetoric has harmful and dehumanizing effects on the community, especially Asian Americans, and fuels xenophobia, bigotry, discrimination and violence; and

WHEREAS, There is broad support for the condemnation of the usage of the terms “CV” and “WV” by the 45th President; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the City Council for the City of Berkeley hereby adopts this resolution:

(1) The City Council to condemn the 45th President's use of the term "CV" and his administration's use of stigmatizing and xenophobic terms in describing the COVID-19 virus;

(2) Urging employees and community members not to use the terms "CV", "WV", or similar stigmatizing terms in describing the coronavirus

(3) Urges the City to support outreach and education efforts to prevent racist attacks and hate crimes against residents and businesses;

(4) The City Council condemns hate and xenophobia against the community and seeks to unify Berkeley in the face of this global pandemic.