



A Community Update from the San Francisco District Attorney's Office

Dear San Francisco Community Members:

We are more than halfway done with 2021, and we have reason to be optimistic. Although the COVID Delta variant has slowed our reopening, San Francisco's high vaccination rate is saving lives. Last year was of course an indescribably hard year for all of us, but we are in a markedly better place than we were in 2020.

This year has also brought with it tremendous challenges. Overall crime rates have gone down in San Francisco, but we have also seen troubling increases in some crimes: a rise in burglaries locally, an increase in gun violence across the nation, and a surge in hate and violence against members of the AAPI community. My office is working to create innovative solutions to these problems and to make sure that everyone in San Francisco feels safe.

Despite these challenges, I am proud of our office's many accomplishments. With the gradual reopening of courts, we are taking more cases to trial and we are busier than ever. We are continuing to develop new ways to fill gaps in services for victims and ensure that their needs are centered. And we remain committed to our work to make San Francisco safe and just for all.

The immense work of our dedicated staff is too much to cover in this newsletter, so we will be sending out further updates soon, but please enjoy this Part 1 of our newsletter.

Chesa Boudin
San Francisco District Attorney

In Our Courts



Courts Begin to Reopen

Although our courts are still not fully reopened since the pandemic last year, the San Francisco Superior Court has reopened eleven courtrooms for trials to move forward. We had pushed for increased courtroom availability and are glad to be able to advance more cases to juries and bring closure to victims. Nonetheless, due to the backlog of cases created by the pandemic, it will take time to move forward as quickly as we would like.

We have already had numerous trial successes since more courtrooms have been made available; just in the past month, we have secured guilty verdicts in two separate homicide trials and a guilty verdict in a domestic violence case we brought to trial. Our assistant district attorneys have tried more than a dozen felony and misdemeanor cases already since the courts have started to reopen, in cases ranging from sexual assault and child endangerment to driving under the influence.

At the same time, the Delta variant continues to pose new obstacles; a judge recently declared a mistrial in one of our arson trials because a juror contracted COVID. We are so grateful to the hard work of our ADAs, paralegals, victim advocates, investigators, and other staff for ensuring our cases are ready to proceed and for working their hardest under difficult conditions.

In Our Office

New Programs to Support Victims

Expansion of Victim Services

- For the first time, our Victim Services Division will include two Property Crime

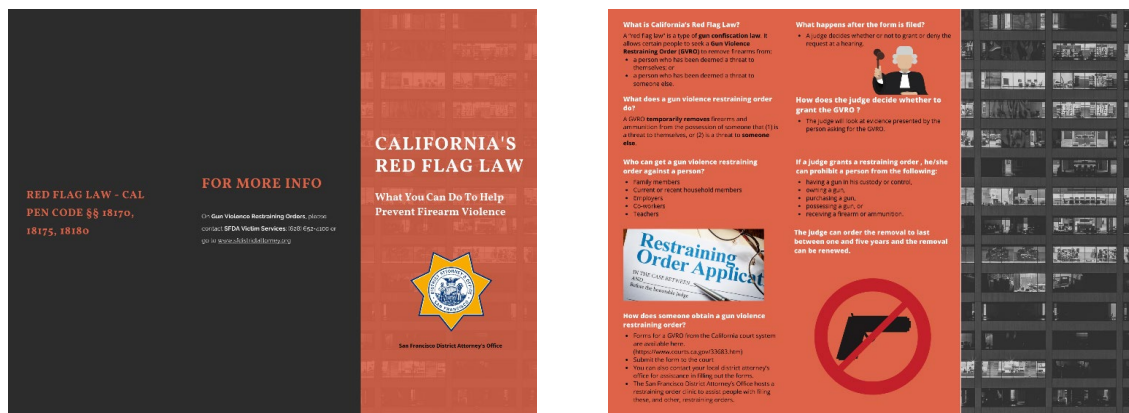
Advocates to support victims of property crime, to help property crime victims file restitution and insurance claims, and to work with businesses affected by property crimes.

- We have added two clinical social workers who will serve as Intensive Care Victim Advocates to ensure that the victims with more intensive needs are assisted and supported.
- We have also secured funding for two Credible Messengers—members of the community with personal experience with the justice system— to help victims of crime to access the resources available to them.

Combatting Gun Violence

As increased access to guns is a growing national problem, we have prioritized new approaches to reducing gun violence. We recently launched a new program to get guns out of the hands of people who pose a threat to themselves or others. Our Gun Violence Restraining Order [Program](#) assists San Francisco community members in obtaining [gun violence restraining orders](#) to remove guns from those who pose a danger to themselves or others.

We are thrilled that we were able to secure additional funding to dramatically expand our Victim Services Division. Thank you to Mayor Breed and the Board of Supervisors for making this possible.



Combatting Hate

Our nation has also seen an increase in hate and violence against the AAPI community this year, which we are dedicated to combatting, both through our work to hold those who commit these crimes accountable as well as through efforts to prevent these crimes before they occur. We have held numerous trainings on hate crimes and have partnered with law enforcement to develop new tools to combat these crimes.

Please watch and share the [PSA](#) I recorded with SFPD Police Chief Scott to raise awareness about the need to prevent and report hate crimes. You can also listen to [this interview](#) where I spoke about combatting hate crimes on NPR.



New Programs to Support Victims Combatting Retail Theft

My office is committed to combatting retail theft crimes, which hurt consumers, businesses, employees, and businesses in San Francisco. We have been working with law enforcement partners to dismantle the criminal networks that make these crimes profitable. To further disrupt and deter these operations, [we partnered with ALTO](#), an organization that represents stores like Walgreens and helps coordinate loss prevention efforts. A recent [op-ed](#) in the San Francisco Chronicle highlighted our work together to support businesses affected by retail crime and to hold those who commit these crimes accountable.

Investigation into Potentially Fraudulent Suits Targeting Chinatown Merchants

Following troubling reports we received from many vulnerable Chinatown merchants, we recently announced an investigation into potentially fraudulent lawsuits targeting Chinatown businesses. The investigation is based on reports of lawyers alleging violations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as an effort to extort small business owners into making payments—without any intent on promoting ADA compliance or advancing disability rights. Anyone who believes they may have been racially targeted by fraudulent ADA demand letters should contact us through our Consumer Protection and Fraud Hotline, (628) 652-4311 or by emailing SFDA.FraudTipline@sfgov.org.

Read about our investigation into potentially fraudulent lawsuits targeting Chinatown merchants in the San Francisco Examiner [here](#).

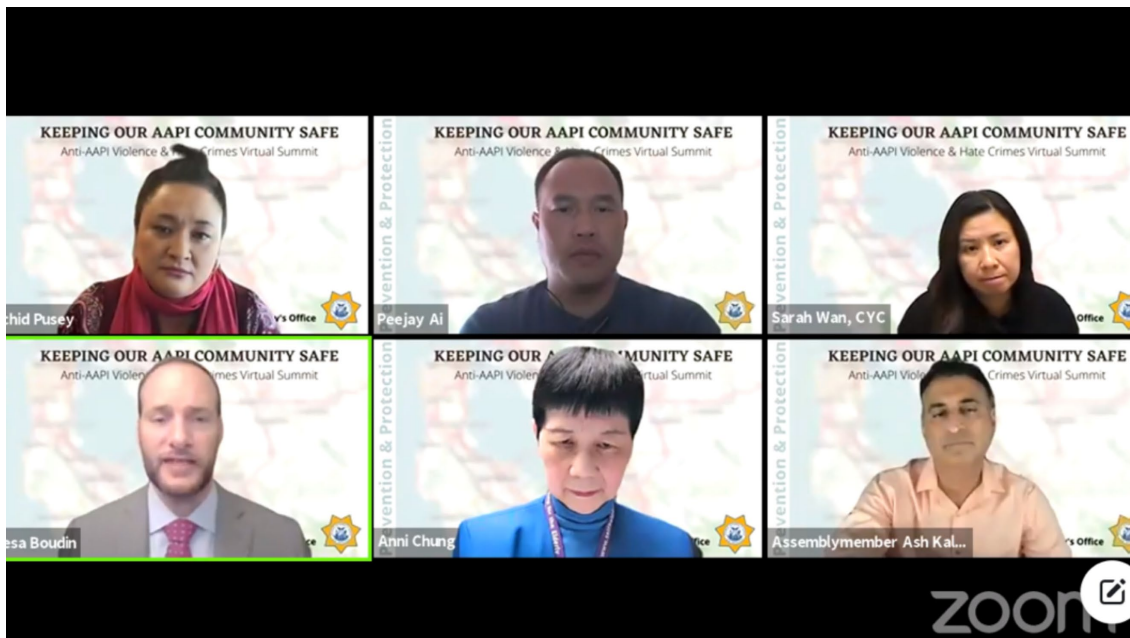


In Our Community

Public Summits to Promote Public Safety

Keeping Our AAPI Community Safe: Anti-AAPI Violence and Hate Crimes Summit

In May, we hosted an Anti-AAPI Violence and Hate Crimes Virtual Summit: Keeping our AAPI Community Safe. We were honored that California Supreme Court Justice Goodwin Liu joined us as the keynote speaker. Justice Liu shared some powerful experiences of the impact of anti-Asian racism on his life, recounting the shame he felt as a child when he was teased for the Taiwanese lunches his mother prepared for him. We were also joined by elected and community leaders for two panels designed to approach the problem of hate crimes from different perspectives. The first panel focused on the societal impact of hate crimes and the second panel focused on the investigation and prosecution of hate crimes. I am humbled by the experiences shared during this summit and our office came away with strengthened partnerships to end the hate and violence against the AAPI community.



We were also lucky enough to have San Francisco Poet Laureate Janice Mirikitani open the Summit with her powerful words, “What form of Madness.” We were heartbroken to learn of her sudden passing on July 29. We will always revere Janice for her impact as a poet, her groundbreaking leadership through Glide, and her invaluable contributions to the San Francisco community.

If you are interested in learning more, you can [watch the summit on my Facebook Page.](#)

Summit to Solve the Mental Health Crisis

In July, we hosted a live summit at Manny’s, “[Public Health is Public Safety](#): Behavioral Health Care in San Francisco.” I moderated two panels comprised of public health and legal experts, personally impacted people, and community leaders to discuss solutions to the crises on our streets. Panelists discussed the need to respond to behavioral health concerns and substance abuse through public health approaches, rather than through the criminal legal system.

Senator Sydney Kamlager delivered the keynote address and spoke of the intersection between the behavioral health crisis and the housing crisis and cautioned against stigmatizing people experiencing mental illness.

You can watch the entire summit on our office’s [Facebook page](#). Read about our recent behavioral health summit’s coverage in Mission Local [here](#). You can also read the op-ed I co-authored in CalMatters with California Senator Sydney Kamlager on the need for public health responses to behavioral health needs [here](#).



National Night Out

Our office was thrilled to participate in this year's National Night Out, an annual celebration that fosters relationships between local communities and law enforcement. We made it out to nine locations throughout San Francisco! I had a wonderful time being back in the Bayview and playing kickball at Ingleside.

Our Victim Services Division contributed immensely to this event, providing resources and information to community members and introducing everyone to Red, our Golden Retriever/Lab therapy dog. Our community liaisons were also instrumental, and we all enjoyed meeting with and engaging with the communities we serve.



In the Media

New Season of Chasing Justice Podcast

We have just finished Season 2 of our podcast, [Chasing Justice](#)! Chasing Justice explores criminal justice reform through the lens of our role as prosecutors and Season 2 has focused on discrete groups in the criminal justice system. I cohost Chasing Justice with Rachel Marshall, our office's Director of Communications and Policy Advisor.

This week we released our [season finale](#) with Earlonne Woods and John "Yahya" Johnson of the renowned podcast, Ear Hustle. [Bryan Stevenson](#), Executive Director of the [Equal Justice Initiative](#) and the author of Just Mercy, joined us for the premiere of Season 2 with a powerful [episode](#) on redemption and justice. The episode was also recently featured on [City Arts and Lectures](#)!



Other guests this season have included [Patrisse Cullors](#), [Zach Norris](#), [Tinisch Hollins](#), and many more as we discuss topics ranging from immigration, to hate crimes, to how to better support crime victims and survivors. Subscribe now to catch up on all of Season 2 (and, of course you can still listen to Season 1—which included guests like [Angela Davis](#), [Emily Bazelon](#), and [James Forman, Jr.](#))

[Subscribe Here](#)

Or anywhere you get your podcasts.

Sample of Facebook Live Events

- Watch our recent Facebook Live with our Director of Data, Research & Analytics, Mikaela Rabinowitz, discussing crime trends [here](#).
- Watch our Facebook Live with Professor Bill Ong Hing discussing anti-Asian hate [here](#).
- Watch our Facebook Live with Interim Chief of Victim Services Kasie Lee [here](#).

In Closing

As 2021 is more than halfway over, I want to congratulate all of you on making it through such a harrowing 18 months of a global pandemic— we are truly stronger together. Looking forward, I am laser focused on holding those who cause harm accountable while

implementing reforms that build safer, healthier communities.



Chesa Boudin, San Francisco District Attorney

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Our mailing address is:

350 Rhode Island Street, North Building, Suite 400N
San Francisco, CA 94103

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