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Virus Impacts Include Asian Harassment, Less Money To Counter It

By Joyce E. Cutler

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- California anti-hate project asks for state money
 - Budget deficit leaves assembly with less flexibility
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Hostility and harassment toward Asian-Americans led a California group to seek \$1.4 million for an anti-hate project, but a coronavirus-triggered budget deficit could make it difficult for the state to say yes to that request.

California is running a \$54.3 billion deficit for the fiscal year that ends June 30, according to estimates the governor's office released Thursday.

That estimate follows a dramatic decrease in tax receipts as businesses shut down or reduced activity to thwart the spread of the coronavirus.

Personal income tax collections are down by more than 25%; sales and use taxes, down more than 27%, and corporation tax receipts off more than 22%, budget planners for Gov. Gavin Newsom (D) said.

Newsom on Wednesday said his next budget proposal, to be released May 14, "will be tens of billions dollars short of where it needs to be."

"We can't give a guarantee that any proposal will survive in the budget process given the deficit. However, we do think members will give serious consideration to Covid-related asks, which both of these are," said Jen Kwart, spokeswoman for David Chiu (D), chairman of the Assembly Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus.

The University of California Los Angeles Asian American Studies Center and the Stop Anti-Asian Hate collaborative project have made a \$1.4 million budget request.

The groups have tracked 1,497 reports of business and workplace discrimination against Asian-Americans nationwide, with the majority in California and New York.

See also: EEOC Urges Employers To Mind Bias Against Asians

In Sacramento, the Asian and Pacific Islander and Latino legislative caucuses have additional proposals for government spending in response to the virus.

They've suggested expanding Medicaid to undocumented adults, expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit to all income-eligible tax filers regardless of immigration status, and extending disaster relief for undocumented workers unable to work due to Covid-19. The EITC proposal alone would cost \$79 million to \$113 million, according to the California Budget & Policy Center.

To contact the reporter on this story: Joyce E. Cutler in San Francisco at jcutler@bloomberglaw.com

To contact the editors responsible for this story: Katherine Rizzo at krizzo@bgov.com; Tina May at tmay@bloomberglaw.com



Joyce E. Cutler
Staff Correspondent



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