

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 18, 2023

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Speaker, House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jim Jordan
Chairman, Judiciary Committee
2138 Rayburn House Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker McCarthy and Chairman Jordan:

We request that you rescind your invitation for Robert F. Kennedy Jr. to testify as a witness before the Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government on Thursday, July 20, 2023. Mr. Kennedy has repeatedly and recently spread vile and dangerous antisemitic and anti-Asian conspiracy theories that tarnish his credibility as a witness and must not be legitimized with his appearance before the U.S. Congress nor given the platform of an official committee hearing to spread his baseless and discriminatory views.

Just last week, a video recording was released in which Mr. Kennedy asserted that COVID-19 was bioengineered to target certain races. Specifically, Mr. Kennedy floated the conspiracy theory that the coronavirus was purposely bioengineered in a lab to target Caucasians and Black people—but to spare Ashkenazi Jews and Chinese people. These false claims echo centuries of Jews being scapegoated and held collectively responsible for illnesses like the Black Plague—often as a precursor for massacres and pogroms, and Chinese immigrants being blamed for plague outbreaks since the mid-1800s.^{1 2}

The conspiracies promoted by Mr. Kennedy were made without any basis in scientific evidence, which is not a surprise, since no such evidence exists. In fact, the British Office of National Statistics recently revealed data showing that British Jews had a higher mortality rate from COVID-19 in the UK than other ethnic groups.

By promoting the unfounded notion that scientists are developing bioweapons that can target certain races and exempt others, while referring to Jews as a separate race, Mr. Kennedy is employing a pernicious form of antisemitism that has been used for centuries. This technique was used by Hitler claiming that there are biological differences between ethnic or racial groups to portray Jews as a lesser form of humanity, a steppingstone to justifying the annihilation of the Jews during the Holocaust. Additionally, by referring to Jews as a separate race, Mr. Kennedy promoted a conspiracy theory that asserts that Jews have the ability to cause or avoid harm that is inflicted on other people.

Mr. Kennedy's recent antisemitic statements are not new. He has a history of making statements minimizing the plight of the Jews during the Holocaust. In January of 2022, he suggested that

¹ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/11625662/>

² <https://www.history.com/news/bubonic-plague-honolulu-fire-san-francisco>

life was more difficult today than it was for Anne Frank and those attempting to flee Nazi Germany.³ A few years before that, Mr. Kennedy compared mask mandates during the pandemic to Nazi medical experimentation on Jews in concentration camps by saying that “Nazis did that in the camps in World War Two – they tested vaccines on gypsies and Jews.” Even last week, he referred to the “de-Nazification” of Ukraine, which is currently fighting a Russian invasion under the leadership of a Jewish president.

As you no doubt know, the Anti-Defamation League recently determined in its annual audit that antisemitic incidents rose by 36 percent last year to the largest number ever recorded by this audit. In a time of rising violent antisemitism in the United States and around the world, the failure to call out Mr. Kennedy’s antisemitic rhetoric is unacceptable and dangerous.

Equally important, Mr. Kennedy’s remarks further incite violence against members of Asian and Asian American communities. We have seen a rise in anti-Asian violence over the last few years, which builds on a long history of anti-Asian discrimination in our country. Since the onset of COVID-19 in early 2020, there has been a more than 300 percent increase in anti-Asian hate incidents. In fact, according to Stop AAPI Hate, there have been over 11,000 anti-Asian hate crimes and incidents reported since March 2020.⁴

Additionally, heightened US-China tensions have resulted in sharp increases in Sinophobia, further fueling the xenophobia, hate, and violence against people of Asian descent across the country. Alarming, 1 in 4 Americans believe that Asian Americans are more loyal to countries other than the United States and 1 in 5 Americans still believe Asian Americans are partly responsible for COVID-19.⁵ Scapegoating Chinese people as Mr. Kennedy has done will only inflame xenophobia and violence against Asian American communities. Given this history, we cannot allow Mr. Kennedy’s inflammatory and racist discrimination against Asians to go unchecked.

Mr. Kennedy has repeatedly attacked two groups that have long been subject to deadly discrimination. His own credibility as a witness is nonexistent. Allowing Mr. Kennedy to serve as a witness before the Select Subcommittee only serves to legitimize his antisemitic and anti-Asian views. We therefore request that Mr. Kennedy be removed from the witness list for the upcoming hearing on July 20, 2023. We further call on Congressional leadership and all the members of Congress to condemn Mr. Kennedy’s preposterous, bigoted, and harmful comments.

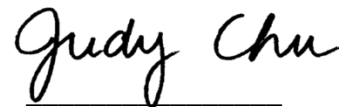
Sincerely,



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



Daniel S. Goldman
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Chair, CAPAC
Member of Congress

³ “Even in Hitler’s Germany, you could cross the Alps to Switzerland. You could hide in an attic like Anne Frank did,” he said in January 2022.

⁴ <https://stopaapihate.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/23-SAH-CivilRightsReport-1.pdf>

⁵ https://staatus-index.s3.amazonaws.com/2023/STAATUS_Index_2023.pdf