

Dear Senator Harris:

Seven years ago, I stepped onto American soil for the first time. Through the window of a taxicab, I saw an exciting world. When compared to the bustling metropolis of Beijing, the Bay Area, with its green hills and suburban townhouses, seemed so quiet and so small. People of all ethnicities and backgrounds strolled the sidewalks. The streets were filled with different languages, English, Chinese, Spanish, Hindi, Korean, Japanese, and more. Diversified cuisines seemed no longer an exotic adventure but casual lunchtime favorites. To any newcomer, the city seemed to be a welcoming melting pot of all cultures; However, if one digs beyond the surface, one will uncover the loosely concealed tensions and prejudices.

Whenever there are people, there will be biases and stereotypes. Even within the Asian community, barriers do exist. My grandmother once complained how "loud and uneducated" our Cantonese neighbors sounded. Their dialect, different from ours, often strikes us more as a serious argument than a friendly chatter. My mother's friend once commented on the smells coming from her Indian-American neighbor's kitchen as "strange and unsavory." Another one remarked that her daughter's "American"(white) friends were lazy and unintelligent. These comments may seem trivial and superficial, but they reveal a deep-rooted racism that prevails in all communities.

While we no longer tolerate the extreme racism of the past, the mindset of we-against-them still seats in the minds of many. From a young age, children are prone to identify others by the colors of their skin. This natural inclination is then spoon-fed by the pre-cooked generalizations and separations prominent/plagued in their environment. Racism is not an acute disease; no antibiotic or quick medication can cure it. It is a chronic problem, which takes time to fix and to heal. The time to start is now. The sooner we start to treat it, the greater the chances of recovery.

The cure lies in ideology. No law can "ban" racism, as it is something that runs deep in the hearts of many generations. Ideology can only be sprouted through education. The "miracle cure" for racism resides in the hands of the education system. Senator Harris, I beseech you to advocate for the adding of new class materials at the elementary level, to eradicate racial prejudice from the young minds of children in our home state, I strongly believe that to teach true equality and real acceptance of all cultures is to preach genuine justice and ultimate harmony.

Even though I was not born here, I have always viewed California as my home. True prosperity lies in unity. To achieve this unity, we must properly inform and educate the next generation. There is no better investment than in the future. Seventy or eighty years from now, when my grandchildren drive me around in town, I will proudly tell them of the ideals for which we once fought.

Sincerely yours,

Haoxue Che