

House Resolution 1692

By: Representatives Park of the 101st, Nguyen of the 89th, Marin of the 96th, Holcomb of the 81st, Glanton of the 75th, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing the 75th anniversary of the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act; and for other
2 purposes.

3 WHEREAS, many Chinese came to the United States in the 19th and 20th centuries, as did
4 people from other countries, in search of the opportunity to create a better life; and

5 WHEREAS, the United States ratified the Burlingame Treaty on October 19, 1868, which
6 permitted the free movement of the Chinese people to, from, and within the United States
7 and made China a "most favored nation"; and

8 WHEREAS, in 1878, the House of Representatives passed a resolution requesting that
9 President Rutherford B. Hayes renegotiate the Burlingame Treaty so that Congress could
10 limit Chinese immigration to the United States; and

11 WHEREAS, on February 22, 1879, the House of Representatives passed the Fifteen
12 Passenger Bill, which permitted only 15 Chinese passengers on any ship coming to the
13 United States; and

14 WHEREAS, on March 1, 1879, President Hayes vetoed the Fifteen Passenger Bill as being
15 incompatible with the Burlingame Treaty; and

16 WHEREAS, on May 9, 1881, the United States ratified the Angell Treaty, which allowed the
17 United States to suspend, but not prohibit, immigration of Chinese laborers, declaring that
18 "Chinese laborers who are now in the United States shall be allowed to go and come of their
19 own free will," and reaffirming that Chinese persons possessed "all the rights, privileges,
20 immunities, and exemptions which are accorded to the citizens and subjects of the most
21 favored nation"; and

22 WHEREAS, the United States House of Representatives passed legislation that adversely
23 affected Chinese persons in the United States and limited their civil rights; and

24 WHEREAS, on May 6, 1882, President Chester Arthur signed the Chinese Exclusion Act,
25 which was the nation's first law to prohibit immigration solely on the basis of ethnicity; and

26 WHEREAS, the Chinese Exclusion Act was based on racial hostility against Chinese, who
27 were characterized as "unassimilable, vile heathens" and were blamed for lowering wages,
28 taking away jobs, draining the economy, and endangering the American way of life; and

29 WHEREAS, on May 3, 1884, the Chinese Exclusion Act was expanded to apply to all
30 persons of Chinese descent, "whether subjects of China or any other foreign power"; and

31 WHEREAS, on September 3, 1888, the Scott Act prohibited legal Chinese laborers from
32 reentering the United States and canceled all previously issued "certificates of return"; and
33 this Act was later determined by the Supreme Court to have abrogated the Angell Treaty; and

34 WHEREAS, in 1898, the United States annexed Hawaii, took control of the Philippines, and
35 excluded only the residents of Chinese ancestry of these territories from entering the United
36 States mainland; and

37 WHEREAS, the Chinese Exclusion Act, which was renewed in 1892, 1902, and made
38 permanent in 1904, prevented Chinese laborers from entering the United States and a
39 pathway to citizenship for Chinese immigrants; and

40 WHEREAS, these federal statutes enshrined in law the exclusion of the Chinese from the
41 democratic process and the promise of American freedom; and

42 WHEREAS, on December 17, 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Magnuson
43 Act, which repealed the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and permitted Chinese Americans
44 to become naturalized citizens for the first time in more than 60 years; and

45 WHEREAS, December 17, 2018, should be remembered as a Day of Inclusion in recognition
46 of the harm caused by racially discriminatory immigration measures and to honor the
47 contributions of all immigrants and refugees who have enriched our communities; and

48 WHEREAS, the United States Senate in 2011 and the United States House of
49 Representatives in 2012 unanimously condemned the Chinese Exclusion Laws and "affirmed
50 Congress' commitment to preserve the civil rights and constitutional protections for all
51 people"; and

52 WHEREAS, Chinese Americans continue to play a significant role in the success of the
53 United States; and

54 WHEREAS, the United States was founded on the principle that all persons are created
55 equal.

56 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
57 the members of this body recognize the 75th anniversary of the repeal of the Chinese
58 Exclusion Act.

59 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
60 and directed to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the
61 public and the press.