

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 693

Recognizing the significance of Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month as an important time to celebrate the significant contributions of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders to the history of the United States.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 15, 2024

Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CASEY, Mr. COONS, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. FETTERMAN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. KAINE, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. PADILLA, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. SCHATZ, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. REED, Mr. WARNOCK, Ms. BUTLER, Ms. STABENOW, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. SMITH, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. CARDIN, and Mr. MENENDEZ) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the significance of Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month as an important time to celebrate the significant contributions of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders to the history of the United States.

Whereas the people of the United States join together each May to pay tribute to the contributions of generations of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders who have enriched the history of the United States;

Whereas the history of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders in the United States is inextricably tied to the story of the United States;

Whereas the Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander community is an inherently diverse population, composed of more than 70 distinct ethnicities and speaking more than 100 language dialects;

Whereas, according to the Bureau of the Census, the Asian American population grew faster than any other racial or ethnic group over the last decade, growing by nearly 55.5 percent between 2010 and 2020, and during that same time period, the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander population grew by 30.8 percent;

Whereas there are more than 24,000,000 residents of the United States who identify as Asian and approximately 1,600,000 residents of the United States who identify as Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, making up more than 7 percent of the total population of the United States;

Whereas the month of May was selected for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month because the first Japanese immigrants arrived in the United States on May 7, 1843, and the first trans-continental railroad was completed on May 10, 1869, with substantial contributions from Chinese immigrants;

Whereas section 102 of title 36, United States Code, officially designates May as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month and requests the President to issue an annual proclamation calling on the people of the United States to observe the month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities;

Whereas 2024 marks several anniversaries, including—

(1) the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, a bicameral caucus of Members of Congress advocating on behalf of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders;

(2) the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies, which was founded alongside the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus by former Secretary of Commerce and Secretary of Transportation Norman Y. Mineta and former Delegate to the United States House of Representatives from Guam Robert Underwood;

(3) the 45th anniversary of the first Asian/Pacific American Heritage Week, designated in 1979 by President Jimmy Carter through Presidential Proclamation 4650 (93 Stat. 1504; relating to Asian/Pacific American Heritage Week);

(4) the 50th anniversary of *Lau v. Nichols*, 414 U.S. 563 (1974), in which the Supreme Court of the United States determined that inadequate supplemental language instruction for students of Chinese ancestry with limited English proficiency violated the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000a et seq.), expanding equal educational opportunities and paving the way for bilingual programs and additional English language instruction in public schools;

(5) the 100th anniversary of the enactment of the Immigration Act of 1924 (commonly known as the “Johnson-Reed Act”) (43 Stat. 153, chapter 190), which imposed national origin quotas that limited the number of immigrants allowed entry into the United States and prohibited the entry of Asian immigrants; and

(6) the 155th anniversary of the completion of the first transcontinental railroad, which—

(A) in 1869, connected the Central Pacific Railroad and the Union Pacific Railroad at Promontory Summit, Utah; and

(B) involved more than 12,000 Chinese laborers who faced racial and wage discrimination despite being entrusted with the most laborious tasks;

Whereas Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders have made significant contributions to the United States at all levels of the Federal Government and in the Armed Forces, including—

(1) Dalip Singh Saund, the first Asian American elected to Congress;

(2) Daniel K. Inouye, a Medal of Honor and Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient who, as President pro tempore of the Senate, was the then-highest-ranking Asian American government official in the history of the United States;

(3) Hiram L. Fong, the first Asian American Senator;

(4) Patsy T. Mink, the first woman of color and Asian American woman elected to Congress;

(5) Herbert Y.C. Choy, the first Asian American to serve as a Federal judge;

(6) Daniel K. Akaka, the first Senator of Native Hawaiian ancestry;

(7) Norman Y. Mineta, the first Asian American member of a Presidential cabinet;

(8) Elaine L. Chao, the first Asian American woman member of a Presidential cabinet; and

(9) Kamala D. Harris, the first woman and the first Asian American to hold the Office of the Vice President;

Whereas the 118th Congress includes 21 Members of Asian and Pacific Islander descent;

Whereas, in 2024, the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus is composed of 76 Members, and other congressional caucuses work on Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander issues also;

Whereas, in 2024, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders are serving in State and Territorial legislatures across the United States in record numbers, including in—

(1) the States of Alaska, Arizona, California, Connecticut, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming; and

(2) the Territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands;

Whereas Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders represent more than 7 percent of Federal judges and nearly 7 percent of Federal employees, including hundreds of staffers of Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander descent who serve as staff in the Senate and the House of Representatives;

Whereas, since March 2020, there has been a dramatic increase in reports of anti-Asian hate crimes and incidents, including those related to the COVID–19 pandemic, including—

(1) a 339-percent increase in anti-Asian hate crimes in 2021, and a 124-percent increase in 2020;

(2) according to Stop AAPI Hate, over 11,500 hate incidents reported since the start of the COVID–19 pandemic through March 2022, and countless others that have not been reported;

(3) on March 16, 2021, the murder of 8 people, including 6 Asian women, at 3 separate Asian-owned businesses in the Atlanta, Georgia, region; and

(4) on May 15, 2022, the shooting of 5 people in Laguna Hills, California, in which the Taiwanese congregation at Geneva Presbyterian Church was targeted;

Whereas the incidence of hate crimes against Asian Americans continues to be above levels observed before the COVID–19 pandemic;

Whereas discrimination against Asian Americans, especially in moments of crisis, is not a new phenomenon, and violence against Asian Americans has occurred throughout United States history, including—

(1) the enactment of the Act entitled “An Act supplementary to the Acts in relation to Immigration”, approved March 3, 1875 (commonly referred to as the “Page Act of 1875”) (18 Stat. 477, chapter 141), which restricted entry of Chinese, Japanese, and other Asian women to the United States and effectively prohibited the immigration of Chinese women, preventing the formation of Chinese families in the United States and limiting the number of native-born Chinese citizens;

(2) the enactment of the Act entitled “An Act to execute certain treaty stipulations relating to Chinese”, approved May 6, 1882 (commonly known as the “Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882”) (22 Stat. 58, chapter 126), which was the first law to explicitly exclude an entire ethnic group from immigrating to the United States;

(3) the issuance of Executive Order 9066 in 1942 (7 Fed. Reg. 1407; relating to authorizing the Secretary of War to prescribe military areas), which authorized the forced relocation and incarceration of approximately 120,000 individuals of Japanese ancestry during World War II, the majority of whom were citizens of the United States;

(4) on June 23, 1982, the murder of Vincent Chin;

(5) on January 17, 1989, the Cleveland Elementary School shooting in which a gunman used an AK-47 to kill 5 children, 4 of whom were of Southeast Asian descent;

(6) the rise in discrimination and violence against Muslim, Sikh, Arab, Middle Eastern, and South Asian Americans following the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001; and

(7) on August 5, 2012, the mass shooting at a Sikh temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin, in which a white supremacist fatally shot 6 people and wounded 4 others;

Whereas, in response to the uptick in anti-Asian hate crimes throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress passed the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act (Public Law 117-13; 135 Stat. 265), which was signed into law by President Joseph R. Biden on May 20, 2021;

Whereas, in celebration of the contributions of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders in the United States, Congress passed the Commission To Study the Potential Creation of a National Museum of Asian Pacific American History and Culture Act (Public Law 117-140; 136 Stat. 1259) to establish a commission to study the creation of a National Museum of Asian Pa-

cific American History and Culture, which was signed into law by President Biden on June 13, 2022;

Whereas, as part of the American Women Quarters Program, the United States Mint has issued, or will issue, commemorative quarters honoring the contributions of—

(1) Chinese American film star Anna May Wong;

(2) Native Hawaiian composer and cultural advocate Edith Kanaka'ole;

(3) Japanese American Congresswoman Patsy Mink; and

(4) Korean American disability justice advocate Stacey Park Milbern;

Whereas there remains much to be done to ensure that Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders have access to resources and a voice in the Federal Government and continue to advance in the political landscape of the United States; and

Whereas celebrating Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month provides the people of the United States with an opportunity to recognize the achievements, contributions, and history of, and to understand the challenges faced by, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) recognizes the significance of Asian Amer-
3 ican, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Herit-
4 age Month as an important time to celebrate the sig-
5 nificant contributions of Asian Americans, Native
6 Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders to the history of
7 the United States; and

1 (2) recognizes that Asian American, Native Ha-
2 waiian, and Pacific Islander communities enhance
3 the rich diversity of and strengthen the United
4 States.

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