

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 653

Recognizing the significance of Asian/Pacific American 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 26, 2022

Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. WICKER, Mr. BROWN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CASEY, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. PADILLA, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. SCHATZ, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. SMITH, Mr. WARNER, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. WYDEN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the significance of Asian/Pacific American 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 45 distinct ethnicities and 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, surging 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 approximately 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 or other Pacific Islander, making up nearly 7 percent of the total population of the United States;

Whereas the month of May was selected for Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month because the first Japanese immigrants arrived in the United States on May 7, 1843, and the first transcontinental 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 2022 marks several important milestones for the Asian-American and Pacific Islander community, including—

(1) the 140th anniversary of the enactment of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which barred the entry of Chinese immigrants to the United States for more than 50 years and spurred a series of anti-immigrant policies targeting immigration from the Asia-Pacific region;

(2) the 40th anniversary of the murder of Vincent Chin, a Chinese-American man who was beaten to death in Michigan by 2 White men angered by layoffs in the auto industry;

(3) the 30th anniversary of the enactment of the Act entitled “An Act to designate May of each year as ‘Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month’”, approved October 23, 1992 (36 U.S.C. 102); and

(4) the 15th anniversary of the establishment of the Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions program, which was authorized under the College Cost Reduction and Access Act (Public Law 110–84; 121 Stat. 784);

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 United States Armed Forces, including—

(1) 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;

(2) Dalip Singh Saund, the first Asian-American Congressman;

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

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

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

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

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

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

Whereas the 117th Congress includes a record 21 Members of Asian or Pacific Islander descent;

Whereas, in 2022, the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, a bicameral caucus of Members of Congress advocating on behalf of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders, is composed of 76 Members, and other caucuses working on Asian-American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander issues may be established;

Whereas, in 2022, 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, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming; and

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

Whereas, in 2022, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders honorably serve throughout the Federal judiciary;

Whereas Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders represent more than 6 percent of Federal employees, including hundreds of staffers of Asian or Pacific Islander descent who serve as staff in the Senate and the House of Representatives;

Whereas, according to the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism, there was a 339 percent increase in anti-Asian hate crimes in 2021, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation recorded a 73 percent increase in such crimes in 2020;

Whereas, since March 2020, there has been a dramatic increase in reports of anti-Asian hate crimes and incidents related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including approximately 11,000 hate incidents, including shunning, verbal and online harassment, physical assault, and civil rights violations, that were reported to Stop AAPI Hate from the start of the pandemic through December 31, 2021, and countless other incidents that have not been reported;

Whereas, according to a survey conducted during September and October of 2021 by Stop AAPI Hate, 1 in 5 Asian Americans (21.2 percent) and Pacific Islanders (20.0 percent) reported experiencing a hate incident in the past year;

Whereas discrimination against Asian Americans, especially in moments of crisis, is not a new phenomenon, and vio-

lence against Asian Americans has occurred throughout United States history, including—

(1) the enactment of the Page Act of 1875, 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 Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, 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, which authorized the forced relocation and incarceration of approximately 120,000 individuals of Japanese ancestry during World War II, the majority of whom were United States citizens;

(4) the murder of Vincent Chin;

(5) the Cleveland Elementary School shooting on January 17, 1989, 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, and South Asian Americans following the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon;

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

(8) the shooting of 9 people near Atlanta, Georgia, on March 16, 2021, at 3 separate Asian-owned businesses, in which 8 people were killed, including 6 Asian women; and

(9) the shooting of 6 people in Laguna Woods, California, on May 15, 2022, in which members of the Irvine Taiwanese Presbyterian Church were targeted;

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 the COVID–19 pandemic has deeply impacted the Asian-American and Pacific Islander community;

Whereas Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID–19 pandemic, and Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders have faced among the highest infection and mortality rates out of any racial group in several States;

Whereas more than 2,000,000 Asian-American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander first responders, health care providers, and frontline workers are among the unsung heroes in the Nation’s fight against COVID–19;

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 Government of the United States and continue to advance in the political landscape of the United States; and

Whereas celebrating Asian/Pacific American 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—

1 (1) recognizes the significance of Asian/Pacific
2 American Heritage Month as an important time to
3 celebrate the significant contributions of Asian
4 Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders
5 to the history of the United States; and

6 (2) recognizes that Asian-American, Native Ha-
7 waiian, and Pacific Islander communities enhance
8 the rich diversity of and strengthen the United
9 States.

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