

SENATE RESOLUTION

8684

By Senators O'Ban, Rivers, Walsh, Padden, Sheldon, Muzzall, Wagoner, Zeiger, Wilson, L., Holy, Braun, Brown, Warnick, Becker, Schoesler, King, Short, Hawkins, Hasegawa, Conway, Frockt, Billig, Carlyle, Wilson, C., and Kuderer

1       WHEREAS, Fifteen thousand Chinese workers across several states  
2 completed the Seattle to Newcastle railroad, helping to connect  
3 Seattle to the rest of the Transcontinental Railroad system; and

4       WHEREAS, The odious Chinese Exclusion act of 1882 became the  
5 first major restriction on immigration in the United States, leading  
6 to the resentment of Chinese American residents in Washington state;  
7 and

8       WHEREAS, In Tacoma, on November 3, 1885, a mob forced over 200  
9 Chinese residents from their shops and homes, and made them walk in  
10 deplorable conditions to a train waiting to take these Chinese  
11 residents to Portland; and

12       WHEREAS, The next day some of Tacoma's citizens ravaged Chinese  
13 businesses downtown and burned shops and lodgings that formed the  
14 Chinese settlement along the waterfront; and

15       WHEREAS, In Seattle, from February 6th through 9th, 1886, a  
16 dispute arose when a mob was formed to carry out a forcible expulsion  
17 of nearly every Chinese person from the city of Seattle and herded  
18 them to a waiting steamer on the waterfront; and

19       WHEREAS, The inexcusable actions of these mobs in Tacoma and  
20 Seattle led to the death of a Chinese resident; and

21       WHEREAS, Twenty-two years after President Lincoln gave the  
22 Gettysburg Address stating, "Our fathers brought forth on this  
23 continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the

1 proposition that all men are created equal" these words were  
2 forgotten by the mob, blind to the wrongdoing of the actions that  
3 were taken by individuals to force out Chinese Immigrants; and

4 WHEREAS, Even after the decades of unacceptable racism and  
5 violence, Chinese Americans wanted to sign up to fight for the United  
6 States; and

7 WHEREAS, The immigration restrictions were not lifted until World  
8 War II. Once they were lifted, the demographic of Chinese Americans  
9 changed dramatically. In the 1950's and 1960's, more Chinese  
10 Americans entered fields that had traditionally been closed to them.  
11 These included medicine, engineering, corporate business, and even  
12 politics; and

13 WHEREAS, In 1962, a Chinese American named Wing Luke became the  
14 first Chinese American City Council Member, and the first Chinese  
15 American on the United States mainland to hold such a post; and

16 WHEREAS, The population of Chinese Americans has more than  
17 doubled since 1979; and

18 WHEREAS, Chinese Americans play a vital role in Washington state;  
19 they are doctors, nurses, students and teachers, CEO's, and  
20 secretaries. They are our neighbors, our friends, and, most  
21 importantly, Washingtonians;

22 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate  
23 condemn the violence and racism that generations of Chinese Americans  
24 have faced and acknowledge the vital role that Chinese Americans play  
25 in the great state of Washington.

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