

By: Wu

H.R. No. 1854

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, On May 6, 1882, President Chester Arthur signed the
2 Chinese Exclusion Act, the nation's first law to prohibit
3 immigration solely on the basis of ethnicity; and

4 WHEREAS, The Chinese Exclusion Act was based on racial
5 hostility against the Chinese, who were characterized as
6 "unassimilable, vile heathens" and blamed for lowering wages,
7 taking away jobs, draining the economy, and threatening the
8 American way of life; it effectively halted Chinese immigration for
9 a decade and prevented Chinese residents from attaining U.S.
10 citizenship; in addition, Chinese laborers who already lived in the
11 country could no longer leave and reenter without obtaining
12 "certificates of residence" in advance; and

13 WHEREAS, In 1892, the Geary Act extended the Exclusion Act
14 for another 10 years and required all Chinese people to obtain and
15 carry "certificates of residence"; discriminatory laws were
16 expanded and extended in subsequent decades, institutionalizing
17 prejudice against the Chinese and ultimately other immigrants; and

18 WHEREAS, During World War II, imperial Japan attempted to
19 weaken the alliance between the United States and the Republic of
20 China by highlighting American discrimination in its propaganda;
21 President Franklin D. Roosevelt wrote to Congress about the urgency
22 of correcting the "historic mistake" of Chinese exclusion, and he
23 pressed for repeal of the discriminatory laws, which were finally
24 rescinded in 1943; nearly six decades later, in the 112th Congress,

1 the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives unanimously passed
2 resolutions condemning the Chinese Exclusion Act and related laws;
3 Congress recognized the tremendous contributions of Chinese
4 Americans to the growth and success of this nation, and it expressed
5 profound regret for violations of their political and civil rights;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, The Chinese Exclusion Act contravened the
8 principle, enshrined as a foundational precept in the American
9 Declaration of Independence, that all persons are created equal,
10 and by acknowledging this great injustice, we reaffirm our
11 commitment to this nation's core values and to the civil rights
12 protections of the U.S. Constitution; now, therefore, be it

13 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 85th Texas
14 Legislature hereby commemorate the 135th anniversary of the Chinese
15 Exclusion Act and encourage all Texans to learn more about this
16 dishonorable chapter in our nation's history.