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., Kuderer, Cleveland, Darneille, Das, and Wellman

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, Twenty-two years after President Lincoln gave the Gettysburg Address stating, "Our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal" these words were forgotten by the mob, blind to the wrongdoing of the actions that were taken by individuals to force out Chinese Immigrants; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

I, Brad Hendrickson, Secretary of the Senate,

do hereby certify that this is a true and

correct copy of Senate Resolution 8684,

adopted by the Senate

February 18, 2020

BRAD HENDRICKSON

Secretary of the Senate