

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

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  
3 that were taken by individuals to force out Chinese Immigrants;  
4 and

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

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

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

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

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

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

28 I, Brad Hendrickson, Secretary of the Senate,  
29 do hereby certify that this is a true and  
30 correct copy of Senate Resolution 8684,  
31 adopted by the Senate  
32 February 18, 2020

33 BRAD HENDRICKSON  
34 Secretary of the Senate