

Transcribed Excerpts from H.Res 683, A Resolution from the U.S. Congress Regarding Chinese Exclusion Act, June 8, 2012

Whereas many Chinese came to the United States in the 19th and 20th centuries, as did people from other countries, in search of the opportunity to create a better life;

Whereas the United States ratified the Burlingame Treaty on October 19, 1868, which permitted the free movement of the Chinese people to, from, and within the United States and made China a “most favored nation”;

Whereas in 1878, the House of Representatives passed a resolution requesting that President Rutherford B. Hayes renegotiate the Burlingame Treaty so Congress could limit Chinese immigration to the United States;

Whereas, on February 22, 1879, the House of Representatives passed the Fifteen Passenger Bill, which only permitted 15 Chinese passengers on any ship coming to the United States;

Whereas, on March 1, 1879, President Hayes vetoed the Fifteen Passenger Bill as being incompatible with the Burlingame Treaty;

Whereas, on May 9, 1881, the United States ratified the Angell Treaty, which allowed the United States to suspend, but not prohibit, immigration of Chinese laborers, declared that “Chinese laborers who are now in the United States shall be allowed to go and come of their own free will,” and reaffirmed that Chinese persons possessed “all the rights, privileges, immunities, and exemptions which are accorded to the citizens and subjects of the most favored nation”;

Whereas the House of Representatives passed legislation that adversely affected Chinese persons in the United States and limited their civil rights, including —

(1) on March 23, 1882, the first Chinese Exclusion bill, which excluded for 20 years skilled and unskilled Chinese laborers and expressly denied Chinese persons alone the right to be naturalized as American citizens, and which was opposed by President Chester A. Arthur as incompatible with the terms and spirit of the Angell Treaty ...

(4) on September 3, 1888, the Scott Act, which prohibited legal Chinese laborers from reentering the United States and cancelled all previously issued “certificates of return,” and which was later determined by the Supreme Court to have abrogated the Angell Treaty; and

(5) on April 4, 1892, the Geary Act, which reauthorized the Chinese Exclusion Act for another ten years, denied Chinese immigrants the right to be released on bail upon application for a writ of habeas corpus, and contrary to customary legal standards regarding the presumption of innocence, authorized

the deportation of Chinese persons who could not produce a certificate of residence unless they could establish residence through the testimony of “at least one credible white witness” ...

Whereas in an attempt to undermine the American-Chinese alliance during World War II, enemy forces used the Chinese exclusion legislation passed in Congress as evidence of anti-Chinese attitudes in the United States; Whereas in 1943, in furtherance of American war objectives, at the urging of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Congress repealed previously enacted legislation and permitted Chinese persons to become United States citizens; Whereas Chinese-Americans continue to play a significant role in the success of the United States; and Whereas the United States was founded on the principle that all persons are created equal: Now, therefore, be it Resolved,

SECTION 1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.

That the House of Representatives regrets the passage of legislation that adversely affected people of Chinese origin in the United States because of their ethnicity.