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Founded in 1973 as the Organization of Chinese Americans, OCA is a national organization dedicated to advancing the social, political, and economic well-being of Asian Pacific Americans in the United States.

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To kick off nationally recognized Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage month in May, OCA-Pittsburgh has been working with Councilman Gilman's office to issue a proclamation recognizing the 135th anniversary of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, and to highlight the positive contributions of all immigrants and refugees in the region.

We Chinese Americans came to Pittsburgh as early as 140 years ago. 135 years ago, the US government discriminately decided to exclude any more entry of Chinese. Today, it is our responsibility as Chinese American Pittsburghers to remind this city and the nation "never again".

OCA is proud to take on the leadership role in having the great city of Pittsburgh recognize this "Day of Inclusion," and spotlight that all immigrants and refugees are welcome here. We would like to invite everyone to join us on Tuesday, May 2, 2017 at 10:00 a.m. at the City Council building to show how much the Chinese and Asian American community matter to this region. Below is the text of the proclamation to be presented at that City Council Meeting. Please email us at info@ocapghpa.org to let us know you can attend. We look forward to seeing you there!

Pittsburgh City Council

Proclamation

WHEREAS, on May 6, 1882, President Chester Arthur signed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which was the nation's first law to prohibit immigration solely on the basis of ethnicity;

WHEREAS, the Chinese Exclusion Act was based on racial hostility against Chinese, who were characterized as "unassimilable, vile heathens" and were blamed for lowering wages, taking away jobs, and endangering the American way of life, and was renewed in 1892, 1902 and 1904 denying Chinese a pathway to citizenship for more than 60 years;

WHEREAS, subsequent legislation such as the 1892 Geary Act, which required all Chinese to register for and carry on their persons Certificates of Residence or risk imprisonment and deportation set a precedent for future discriminatory registries of immigrants and descendants of immigrants;

WHEREAS, OCA-Advocates of Asian and Pacific Americans—Pittsburgh Chapter has worked for the last 43 years dedicated to advancing the social, political, and economic well-being of Asian Pacific Americans (APAs) in our region, recognizing the origins of the Chinese community in Pittsburgh date back all the way to the 1870's and have evolved into a strong, productive community who have contributed to all sectors in Pittsburgh—including government, business, arts and sciences, medicine, law enforcement, and the military and whose abilities and contributions strengthen our economy, enrich our diverse culture, and invigorate our city's neighborhoods; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Pittsburgh recognizes the 135th anniversary of the Chinese Exclusion Act as a day to condemn hatred and prejudice, promote diversity and inclusivity, and reaffirm our values as a welcoming city that values the importance of immigrants and refugees.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh does hereby recognize the 135th anniversary of the Chinese Exclusion Act as an opportunity to restate that Pittsburgh is as a city for all and celebrate the important contributions of Pittsburgh's Chinese community; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh does hereby declare May 6th, 2017 to be the Pittsburgh "Day of Inclusion," and proclaim and celebrate the month of May as Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage month in our region.

SPONSORED BY: COUNCILMAN DAN GILMAN

Co-Sponsored By Council Members:

Ricky V. Burgess, Deborah L. Gross, Darlene M. Harris, Theresa Kail-Smith, Bruce A. Kraus, R. Daniel Lavelle, Corey O'Connor, and Natalia Rudiak

Attest: Bruce Kraus
President of Council

Attest: Mary Beth Doheny
City Clerk