



HR0357

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, It is appropriate and right to celebrate a
3 diversity of cultures and heritages; this celebration serves as
4 a reminder that despite our differing backgrounds, everyone in
5 Illinois is bound by a common hope for a better and more
6 inclusive future for our children; and

7 WHEREAS, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are among
8 the fastest growing ethnic groups in Illinois; Asian Americans
9 and Pacific Islanders make up over 5% of the population of
10 Illinois; the community grew by over 40% between 2000 and 2010;
11 and

12 WHEREAS, The Asian American and Pacific Islander community
13 has a long and integral history in the United States; in
14 recognition and celebration of that history, the United States
15 Congress established Asian/Pacific American Heritage Week in
16 1978; that week was extended to the full month of May with the
17 signature of President George H. W. Bush in 1990; and

18 WHEREAS, May is an appropriate month for the observation of
19 Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month: May 7, 1843 was
20 the arrival date of Nakahama Manjiro, the first Japanese
21 immigrant to the United States; it was on May 10, 1869 that the
22 United States was united coast to coast by the Transcontinental

1 Railroad with the placement of the "Golden Spike"; the railroad
2 was made possible by herculean efforts of the mostly Chinese
3 immigrant workers; and

4 WHEREAS, The Asian American community played a heroic role
5 in the Second World War; the 442nd Infantry regiment, made
6 mostly of Japanese Americans, fought for the United States
7 while their families at home were facing harsh discrimination
8 and internment; the 442nd became one of the most decorated
9 units for its size, earning almost 10,000 Purple Hearts; and

10 WHEREAS, Despite the contributions of the different Asian
11 Americans and immigrants, the Asian American community has
12 faced challenges and discrimination in the United States; many
13 of the Chinese laborers were treated extremely poorly during
14 the construction of the Transcontinental Railroad and none of
15 the Chinese Americans were allowed in the famous picture of the
16 "Golden Spike"; Asian immigrants faced xenophobia and outright
17 violence throughout periods of the 19th and 20th centuries; on
18 May 6, 1882, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act;
19 Congress passed even more draconian legislation in 1924 in the
20 form of the Immigration Act of 1924 which prevented most people
21 of Asia from immigrating to the United States; and

22 WHEREAS, Despite this discrimination, brilliant leaders
23 from different Asian American communities have contributed to

1 the legacy of the United States; leaders like Dalip Singh
2 Saund, the first Asian American elected to Congress; Fred T.
3 Korematsu, the champion of civil liberties and of the Japanese
4 Americans interned during the Second World War; Larry Dulay
5 Itliong, hero for the labor movement; and Grace Lee Boggs and
6 Patsy Mink, a transformative force for Title IX; all have
7 served as movers and shakers in the United States; whether as
8 soldiers, laborers, business owners, advocates, or community
9 leaders, those in the Asian American and Pacific Islander
10 community continue to rise up to the challenges they face and
11 serve as a force for good in the State of Illinois and the
12 United States; therefore, be it

13 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
14 HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
15 declare May of 2017 as Asian American and Pacific Islander
16 Heritage Month in honor of the people in these communities in
17 Illinois and the nation.