

Legislation Text

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Urging the United States House of Representatives and United States Senate to Pass House Resolution 2358 and Senate Bill 1050, the Chinese-American World War II Veterans Congressional Gold Medal Act.

WHEREAS, World War II was the second-deadliest conflict in American history, surpassed only by the Civil War. According to the United States Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs, there were 405,399 war time United States military deaths in World War II; and

WHEREAS, During World War II, 12% of the American population was part of the armed forces. The contributions of Chinese Americans to the American war effort are some of the most remarkable yet unrecognized, even in the present day; and

WHEREAS, The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was the first federal law to specifically restrict one nationality's immigration to the United States, and it remained in effect through 1943. Because of this, there were only 78,000 Chinese Americans living on the American mainland at the beginning of World War II in 1939, with an additional 29,000 living in Hawaii; and

WHEREAS, Atrocities committed against Chinese Americans included the Chinese Massacre of 1871 in Los Angeles, California; the Rock Springs Massacre of 1885 in Rock Springs, Wyoming; and the Hells Canyon Massacre of 1887 in Hells Canyon, Oregon; and

WHEREAS, Despite the mistreatment Chinese Americans suffered at the hands of the United States, as many as 20,000 Chinese Americans served in the armed forces during World War II. Chinese Americans served in all branches of the armed forces in all theaters of war. About 40% of these were not American citizens at the time, as federal laws denied citizenship to people of Chinese descent; and

WHEREAS, On May 4, 2017, Representatives Edward Royce, Ted Lieu, and Grace Meng introduced House Resolution 2358, the Chinese-American World War II Veterans Congressional Gold Medal Act, in the United States House of Representatives. Senators Tammy Duckworth, Thad Cochran, and Mazie Hirono introduced the same legislation, Senate Bill 1050, in the United States Senate on the same day. The bipartisan legislation currently has 103 cosponsors in the House and 51 cosponsors in the Senate; and

WHEREAS, The Chinese-American World War II Veterans Congressional Gold Medal Act directs the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives to make appropriate arrangements for the award of a single Congressional Gold Medal to the Chinese American Veterans of World War II in recognition of their dedicated service during World War II. The medal shall be displayed at the Smithsonian Institution, which is urged to make the medal available for display at other locations associated with such veterans or with World War II; and

WHEREAS, The largely untold story of the sacrifices made by Chinese Americans during World War II, must be shared and recognized in 2018-the 75th anniversary of the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act. Chinese Americans volunteered to serve a country that discriminated against them and in doing so embodied the highest

ideals of selfless patriotism. A Congressional Gold Medal, the nation's highest civilian honor, in recognition of their service is long overdue and entirely deserved; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby urges the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate to pass House Resolution 2358 and Senate Bill 1050, the Chinese-American World War II Veterans Congressional Gold Medal Act.

RESOLVED FURTHER, That copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Congressional delegation representing Philadelphia.