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Proclaiming May 2022 as Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month in Philadelphia to pay tribute to the rich history and significant contributions made by generations of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders to our country, state, and city.

WHEREAS, Section 102 of Title 36, United States Code, officially designates May as Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month and authorizes the President to issue each year a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to observe this special month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities; and

WHEREAS, May was chosen in recognition of two important historical dates in Asian American and Pacific Islander history; on May 7, 1843, the first Japanese immigrants arrived in the United States and on May 10, 1869, the building of the transcontinental railroad was completed due to significant contributions from Chinese workers; and

WHEREAS, The Asian American population grew faster than any other racial or ethnic group over the last decade. There are approximately 22,000,000 Asian Americans and approximately 1,600,000 Native Hawaiians or Pacific Islanders, accounting for roughly 6 percent of the total population of the United States; and

WHEREAS, AAPIs have a rich history of service to the U.S. in the armed forces. For centuries, AAPI members of the military led the efforts to secure civil rights for veterans and immigrants. During the entire history of the U.S., tens of thousands of AAPI veterans, both men and women, served with honor and distinction. After their service, many of these veterans made significant contributions to society both in their civilian lives and in politics; and

WHEREAS, Filipinos were the first recorded Asians in the U.S. military, having served during the War of 1812. AAPIs continued to serve the U.S. military in significant numbers during the Civil War, World War 1, World War II, Korean War and the Vietnam Conflict. Notably, Hidemitsu Toyota, an Issei, and Bhaghat Singh Thind, a Sikh, served in WWI and petitioned the Supreme Court for citizenship. Sergeant Major Tokutaro Nishimura Slocum, an Issei, who also served in WWI in the 328th Infantry Regiment, 82nd Division, later lobbied for naturalization of alien veterans as provided in the 1935 Nye-Lea Act (1935). Additionally, the Japanese American WWII 100th Infantry Battalion (442nd Regimental Combat Team) became the most decorated unit in U.S. military history for size and length of service; and

WHEREAS, Until the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943 and the passage of the McCarran-Walter Immigration Act of 1952, Asian immigrants were legally excluded from becoming U.S. citizens and faced a long history of immigration and socioeconomic restrictions based on race. In addition, Asian Americans were the victims of acts of violence that included beatings, murder, and arson. Japanese Americans were also targeted with unwarranted incarceration and expulsion. Extreme examples of Anti-Asian hostility included: the 1871 Los Angeles Massacre, the 1880 Denver Anti-Chinese Riot, the 1885 Rock Springs Massacre, and the 1887 Snake River Massacre among countless others from history that have been forgotten; and

WHEREAS, There is a long history of AAPIs challenging discriminatory legislation in the U.S. Landmark decisions include: 1) Yick Wo v. Hopkins (1886) a Supreme Court decision that overturned a discriminatory ordinance that appeared race neutral on its face but in practice selectively targeted Chinese laundry owners and violated the 14th Amendment that guarantees equal protection of the law. This decision has been cited over 150 times to strike down other discriminatory laws. 2) Tape v. Hurley (1885) and Lum v. Rice (1927) paved the way for school desegregation by arguing for the enrollment of Chinese girls in white schools. The courts decided against such integration at the time, but these case decisions set "separate but equal" precedents later to be overturned by Brown v. Board of Education (1954). 3) United States v. Wong Kim Ark (1898) that secured birthright citizenship for all U.S born Americans; and

WHEREAS, Despite these obstacles, there are more than 510,000 citizens in Pennsylvania today who trace their roots to Asia and the Pacific Islands, including 113,000 citizens residing in Philadelphia. The Asian American and Pacific Islander community of Philadelphia is a diverse and dynamic group of 25 different ethnicities that impacts all facets of our great City; and

WHEREAS, Let the month of May serve as a period of reflection and understanding in which all citizens of Philadelphia are encouraged to learn about the culture, heritage, and contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, including their on-going struggles and challenges that are inextricably tied to the history of the United States; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, that it hereby proclaims May 2022 as Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month in Philadelphia to pay tribute to the rich history and significant contributions made by generations of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders to our country, state, and city.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the Pan Asian Association of Greater Philadelphia as evidence of the sincere admiration of this legislative body.

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