

2015-J4800

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the employment of large numbers of Chinese laborers on the construction of the Central Pacific portion of the transcontinental railroad on April 12, 2016

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and commend events which symbolize the historical, social and cultural development of this great State and embody the spirit of the principles upon which this Nation was founded; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the employment of large numbers of Chinese laborers on the construction of the Central Pacific portion of the transcontinental railroad, to be feted at the Chinese Railroad Workers' Celebration Gala organized by the Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs Association (APAPA) on Tuesday, April 12, 2016; and

WHEREAS, This auspicious occasion will applaud and pay tribute to the accomplishments and contributions of the Chinese workers; despite facing severe prejudice, discrimination, social isolation, and a language barrier, as well as the inherent physical challenges of labor, the proud Chinese workers persevered; and

WHEREAS, In 1865, construction began for the Transcontinental Railroad, which was predominantly built by Chinese laborers; the Union Pacific Railroad faced a steep labor shortage and recruited heavily from the pool of able-bodied Chinese workers; by the second year of the railroad's construction, approximately nine out of 10 workers were Chinese; and

WHEREAS, Unfortunately, many Chinese workers were often exploited, given the most difficult and dangerous tasks, and subsequently, thou-

sands of Chinese workers lost their lives in the construction of the railroad; and

WHEREAS, 12,000 hard-working Chinese men were tasked with the back-breaking challenge of clearing a path through the Sierra Nevada Mountain Ranges; and

WHEREAS, The sacrifices and laborious efforts made by the steady Chinese workers facilitated rapid economic growth, and forever enriched American culture with their values of hard work, and their vibrant culture; and

WHEREAS, The transcontinental railway marks a pivotal moment in American history, revolutionizing trade and travel; goods could move across the country faster than ever before, and expectedly, the increase in trade facilitated economic growth; and

WHEREAS, Even though the majority of the work was done by Chinese laborers, their contributions have gone largely unrecognized in American history; these steadfast men took on the most dangerous jobs in the face of tremendous prejudice, and epitomized mental fortitude and what it means to be courageous; and

WHEREAS, It is the intent of this Legislative Body to commemorate those events of historical significance which add strength, vigor and inspiration to the cultural diversity and quality of life in the communities of the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body, in keeping with its time-honored traditions, to recognize and pay tribute to those individuals who foster ethnic pride and enhance the profile of cultural diversity which strengthens the fabric of the communities of New York State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the employment of large numbers of Chinese laborers on the construction of the Central Pacific portion of the transcontinental railroad; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs Association.