

Statement of Support for Congressional Expression of Regret for Implementation of Asian Exclusionary Laws

Endorsed by NAPABA

April 2012

WHEREAS, pervasive anti-Asian sentiment during the mid-1800s and early 1900s resulted in the passage of a number of laws at the local, state, and federal levels to exclude Asians from the United States, bar them from naturalization, and impair their ability to integrate into their communities;

WHEREAS, the federal laws targeting Chinese immigrants peaked with Congress's passage of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, which imposed a 10-year moratorium on Chinese labor immigration and was the first law in American history to restrict immigration by race or ethnicity;

WHEREAS, Congress revisited the Chinese Exclusion Act five more times between 1884 and 1904, each time imposing additional restrictions on Chinese immigration and naturalization;

WHEREAS, despite the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943, the United States government has never expressed regret for its passage of the legislation;

WHEREAS, the measures implemented against Asian immigration were not limited to the Chinese;

WHEREAS, in 1907 the "Gentleman's Agreement" between the U.S. and Japanese governments restricted the immigration of Japanese laborers to the United States;

WHEREAS, with the passage of the Immigration Act of 1917, Congress expanded exclusion provisions to anyone born in the "Asiatic Barred Zone," an area that included most of the rest of the Asian continent and the Pacific, with the exception of areas at the time under U.S. jurisdiction;

WHEREAS, the Immigration Act of 1924, which included the National Origins Act, created national immigration quotas based on the population in the United States from the 1890 census – favoring immigration from European countries;

WHEREAS, the Immigration Act of 1924 also excluded immigrants ineligible for citizenship, which meant all Asians due to the racial bar to naturalization;

WHEREAS, the final vestiges of discriminatory immigration policy were not removed until 1965; and

WHEREAS, the present-day acknowledgment of the wrongfully enacted measures would serve as a timely reminder to the United States to live up to its principles of equality and affirm its commitment to the civil rights of all people.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that NAPABA

1. Supports the passage of a congressional resolution expressing regret for the discriminatory 19th and 20th century laws restricting Asian immigration and naturalization.
2. Authorizes its President, officers, and staff to communicate the content of this resolution to other diverse bar associations, members of the House of Representatives, members of the U.S. Senate, the press, and to others the NAPABA Board deems suitable to receive the information.

I, the elected president of the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association, hereby certify that this resolution was enacted by NAPABA on April 18, 2012.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nimesh M. Patel", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Nimesh M. Patel
President