



NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHINESE AMERICANS

----- English Translation -----

Chinese-American National Committee
Press Release NCCA-2009-1688
December 16, 2009

Press Contacts: Zhaobo Song, Zi-Qiang Chen, Xue Hai Pei, Li Lu Yuan
Contact Phone: 210-209-9985
Contact Fax: 210-209-9986
Contact E-mail: contact@myncca.org
Chinese-American National Committee (NCCA)

On the 66th anniversary of the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act, the National Council of Chinese Americans is requesting the federal government to acknowledge Chinese Americans.

This is an open letter addressed to Chinese Americans asking to collect signatures in support of activities commemorating December 17th, the day the U.S. government repealed the infamous Chinese Exclusion Act.

Throughout the history of Chinese immigration to the United States, with its mix of joy, glory and hope, has been a picture reflecting the evolution of change in American. Today, with the Chinese-American population of about 3.5 million people, representing one per cent of the total U.S. population, the world's total population of ethnic Chinese immigrants equal more than 40 million people.

Looking back at history, we feel particularly sadden. Although from 1848 onwards, large-scale Chinese immigration to the United States made significant contributions towards the development and construction of the American West, for example: Chinese workers built the Western Terminus of the U.S. the Trans-Continental Railroad, the Chinese workers transformed vast land into agriculture. As well as after the Civil War, Chinese sacrifices continued to play a significant role in the American "industrial revolution." According to 1860 US shipping records, bones of 1,200 Chinese railroad workers were shipped to their homeland in a lot comprising about 20,000 pounds.

But in mainstream American society the contributions of Chinese immigrants to the United States is often ignored and excluded from American history. More seriously, the U.S. federal government and many state governments has had a history of blatant anti-Chinese discrimination such as California's Anti-Coolie Act of 1862, and the federal Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, that led to 60 years of discrimination against Chinese Americans and set of waves of racism and plunder.

The Chinese Exclusion Act denied Chinese Americans the right to own real estate, the Act prohibited intermarriage between the Chinese bachelor society and white woman, it banned Chinese Americans from the courts, and so on. The Chinese Exclusion Act deprived Chinese Americans of basic human rights guaranteed as citizens of the United States, such as Habeas Corpus, as well the rights of citizenship as stated in the United States Constitution's 14th Amendment in US vs. Wong Kim Ark (Jin-Tang Wang). This infamous "Chinese Exclusion Act" continued until it was abolished in December 17, 1943. But the federal government's policy of racial discrimination continued as evident in the civil rights movement led by the mid-twentieth century black pastor Martin Luther King.

In fact, the Chinese Exclusion Act and the Chinese American experience is a microcosm of the U.S. federal government's racist social policies; the African-American experience of centuries long slavery; the War of Independence; Italian and Irish-born immigrants did not escape racial and religious discrimination; the plunder and genocide of Native Americans; the government imposed interment of Japanese Americans to concentration camps during World War II; as well as during

the 911 incident as Americans of Middle Eastern descent faced discrimination and intimidation. This is what we think of as the pain of social stigma.

From the nineteenth century Chinese Exclusion Act to the twentieth century and the recent persecution of Dr. Qian Xuesen and Dr. Wen Ho Lee, we can clearly see that the U.S. federal government's persecution of the Chinese has merely transformed. Government officials backed by American media widely and slanderously claimed "several millions of ethnic Chinese immigrants are Chinese spies", CNN anchor wantonly vilified the Chinese as "thugs"; FOX News had even proposed that the U.S. national laboratories, "fire all the ethnic Chinese researchers." U.S. public opinion polls also showed that: 80 percent of Americans believe that "China is a (U.S.) latent risk"; half of Americans considered "American Chinese are a link to China"; one-third of Americans believe that "Chinese Americans are more loyal to China than to the United States."

We can see that though the Chinese Exclusion Act was repealed 60 years ago, the United States at all levels of government and society still brews exclusion and racial discrimination and continues to view the Chinese as a potential plague.

At the same time, the America is prone towards introspection and reconciliation of their past. In 1988, the U.S. government apologized to Japanese Americans for its internment policy and awarded victims 20,000 U.S. dollars in compensation; in 2008 the U.S. government offered a formal apology to African Americans regarding its institution of slavery.

Internationally, in 2002 the New Zealand government gave a formal apology to the Chinese for its long-standing anti-Chinese discrimination; in 2006 the Canadian Government gave a formal apology to Chinese Canadians and 20000 Canadian dollars in compensation for each person for Canada's Chinese Exclusion policies and the levying of a head tax on all Chinese.

In July this year, Mr. Fang Wenzhong (Assemblymember Paul Fong) and colleagues successfully passed a California apology for the treatment of Chinese immigrants to the state. Any fair-minded person can see that California's anti-Chinese history is only the U.S. government's racist policies in microcosm. The U.S. government has the duty, responsibility, and obligation to offer a formal apology to all Chinese Americans for the Chinese Exclusion Act.

In view of this, the Chinese National Committee (www.myNCCA.org) demands that the U.S. federal government formally apologize to the Chinese in the United States for six decades of the Chinese Exclusion Act.

We also request the federal government to fund institutions, such as the Chinese American Historical Society (<http://www.chsa.org>), Sino-American Museum (www.camla.org), and the University of California, Berkeley Asian American History Collection, \$50 million to enrich the collection, finishing and digital sound processing of cultural and historical information for future generations.

We also fully support and respond to California legislators Mr. Wu Guoqing (Assemblymember Mike Eng) and Mr. Fang Wenzhong (Assemblymember Paul Fong) and request that on December 17 of each year the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act be declared the a national Day of Inclusion.

Chinese-American National Committee (NCCA) calls on all Chinese to respond to our initiative and actively participate in our online signature campaign. In the coming years, we will work with large numbers of Chinese contributing to an apology bill and lobby the U.S. Congress in a letter to the White House.

Chinese-American National Committee considers that the above three requirements and recommendations for America is quite significant towards eradicating the scourge of racism and moves further towards a fair and sustainable long-term prosperity of the United States.

In particular during these low economic times, issues of race does harm to minorities. Today the United States is only 4 percent of the world population but has the world's major resources and economic markets. From the long-term sense, sustained growth and prosperity in the United States will depend on whether we can implement a fair immigration policy.

Please sign! Please support!

United States National Committee of Chinese
National Council of Chinese Americans (NCCA)
www.myNCCA.org
December 16, 2009