

Chinese American History December 17 day of inclusion celebrated throughout state

December 17, 2009

LOS ANGELES, CA -- In commemorating the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act and the recent passage of ACR 76 into California law, California State Assemblymember Mike Eng (D-Monterey Park), joined representatives from the Chinese American Museum, El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument, Time Warner Cable, along with the Yee Fow Museum near the United States Federal Courthouse in downtown Sacramento and the Chinese American Museum in downtown Los Angeles to hold a public conference on December 6 at the Chinese American Museum in California.

According to ACR 76, "By repealing the 'Chinese Exclusion' prohibitions, the United States expressed its commitment to continue to break down cultural barriers, appreciate differences, enrich cultural diversity, and further racial, religious, and cultural tolerance." A Day of Inclusion celebration at the Pico House followed the conference featuring guest speakers, Aztec dancers, a Lion Dance, and a children's choir.

The event memorializes the 66th anniversary of the historic signing of the "Magnuson Act," which signaled a turning point in American history regarding society's harsh attitudes towards Chinese immigrants through state and federal immigration policies. Signed into law on December 17, 1943, the 'Act' repealed the 1882 "Chinese Exclusion Act" and paved the way for people of all backgrounds to come together in appreciating our differences and celebrating our diversity over a century later.

"It is my hope that this celebration will make a greater number of Californians aware of this significant chapter in our history and possibly spark many more commemorations throughout the state in the future." said Eng.

Fittingly, on December 8 in the City of Pacific Grove, Councilmember Lisa Bennett brought before the City Council a motion to recognize December 17th as a Day of Inclusion at their City Hall in recognition of the Chinese contributions to their area.

And, in the city of Monterey Park, on December 12th, UCLA Asian American Studies Center and the Chinese American Studies Endowment invited the Los Angeles community to join and participate in a "State of Chinese America" forum in Monterey Park held their at City Hall in honor of December 17th as a Day of Inclusion. Speakers included Gilbert Hom and Suellen Cheng, the Chinese American Studies Endowment; Stewart Kwoh, co-founder of the Asian Pacific American Legal Center; Dr. L. Ling-chi Wang, professor emeritus at UC Berkeley; Rep. Mike Eng, representative of the 49th District of California; Dr. Tritia Toyota, adjunct assistant professor at UCLA; and Dr. David Yoo, professor at Claremont College and Director-designate of the UCLA Asian American Studies Center.

For more information, visit www.dec17.org.