

Commemorate Asian Pacific American (APA) Heritage Month

Written by Mike Honda
Tuesday, 03 May 2011 11:25

Thanks to the efforts of Representatives Norm Mineta and Frank Horton, and Senators Daniel Inouye and Spark Matsunaga, our country first officially recognized APA Heritage Month in 1977. The month of May offers all Americans an opportunity to celebrate, honor and reflect upon the many accomplishments and contributions of the AAPI community.”

The first settlement of an AAPI community in this country dates to 1763, when Filipinos escaped imprisonment aboard Spanish galleons and established a community near New Orleans. From the time of this first settlement, AAPIs have encountered various barriers and discrimination. Rather than be intimidated by systematic discriminatory acts, the AAPI community has forged ahead and made significant contributions to the United States.

Today, the AAPI community is one of the fastest growing and most diverse racial groups in the U.S. AAPIs will play an increasingly critical role in contributing to the economic, political, and social developments of the country.

The contributions of AAPIs need to be recognized and remembered as part of U.S. history. Notable among these are the building of the transcontinental railroad, the courage of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the Filipino veterans, the first elected Indian American in Congress - Dalip Singh Saud, the exploitation of garment workers, the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, and three appointed Asian American Secretaries in the Obama administration.

While the AAPI community has made great strides, there are certain segments of the population, including Southeast Asians and Pacific Islanders, who continue to encounter systematic barriers and have been deprived of access to the American dream. We must ensure everyone receives an equitable opportunity to succeed. I look forward to continuing our work together to advance issues that affect the AAPI community.