**Excerpts from** [**Senate Resolution 201**](https://www.congress.gov/bill/112th-congress/senate-resolution/201/text)**: Expressing Regret for Chinese Exclusion Acts**

Whereas many Chinese came to the United States in the

19th and 20th centuries, as did people from other countries,

in search of the opportunity to create a better life

for themselves and their families;

Whereas the contributions of persons of Chinese descent in

the agriculture, mining, manufacturing, construction,

fishing, and canning industries were critical to establishing

the foundations for economic growth in the Nation,

particularly in the western United States;

Whereas United States industrialists recruited thousands of

Chinese workers to assist in the construction of the Na-

tion’s first major national transportation infrastructure,

the Transcontinental Railroad;

Whereas Chinese laborers, who made up the majority of the

western portion of the railroad workforce, faced grueling

hours and extremely harsh conditions in order to lay hundreds

of miles of track and were paid substandard wages;

Whereas without the tremendous efforts and technical contributions

of these Chinese immigrants, the completion of

this vital national infrastructure would have been seriously

impeded;

*Summarize the intent of these paragraphs from the Resolution – what points are being made?*

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**Excerpts from** [**Senate Resolution 201**](https://www.congress.gov/bill/112th-congress/senate-resolution/201/text)**: Expressing Regret for Chinese Exclusion Acts**

Whereas from the middle of the 19th century through the

early 20th century, Chinese immigrants faced racial ostracism

and violent assaults, including—

(1) the 1887 Snake River Massacre in Oregon, at

which 31 Chinese miners were killed; and

(2) numerous other incidents, including attacks on

Chinese immigrants in Rock Springs, San Francisco, Tacoma,

and Los Angeles;

Whereas the United States instigated the negotiation of the

Burlingame Treaty, ratified by the Senate on October 19,

1868, which permitted the free movement of the Chinese

people to, from, and within the United States and accorded

to China the status of ‘‘most favored nation’’;

Whereas before consenting to the ratification of the Burlingame

Treaty, the Senate required that the Treaty

would not permit Chinese immigrants in the United

States to be naturalized United States citizens; …

Whereas, on February 15, 1879, the Senate passed ‘‘the Fifteen

Passenger Bill,’’ which would have limited the number

of Chinese passengers permitted on any ship coming

to the United States to 15, with proponents of the bill

expressing that the Chinese were ‘‘an indigestible element

in our midst . . . without any adaptability to become citizens’’; …

*In these paragraphs taken from the Resolution, Congress is acknowledging a number of past injustices. Summarize these injustices.*

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**Excerpts from** [**Senate Resolution 201**](https://www.congress.gov/bill/112th-congress/senate-resolution/201/text)**: Expressing Regret for Chinese Exclusion Acts**

Whereas, in response to reports that courts were bestowing

United States citizenship on persons of Chinese descent,

the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 explicitly prohibited

all State and Federal courts from naturalizing Chinese

persons;

Whereas the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 underscored the

belief of some Senators at that time that—

(1) the Chinese people were unfit to be naturalized;

(2) the social characteristics of the Chinese were

‘‘revolting’’;

(3) Chinese immigrants were ‘‘like parasites’’; and

(4) the United States ‘‘is under God a country of

Caucasians, a country of white men, a country to be governed

by white men’’;[…]

Whereas, on October 1, 1888, the Scott Act was enacted into

law, which—

(1) prohibited all Chinese laborers who would choose

or had chosen to leave the United States from reentering;

(2) cancelled all previously issued ‘‘certificates of return’’,

which prevented approximately 20,000 Chinese laborers

abroad, including 600 individuals who were en

route to the United States, from returning to their families

or their homes; and […]

Whereas, on an explicitly racial basis, the Geary Act deemed

the testimony of Chinese persons, including American

citizens of Chinese descent, *per se* insufficient to establish

the residency of a Chinese person subject to deportation,

mandating that such residence be established

through the testimony of ‘‘at least one credible white witness’’; […]

Whereas on April 29, 1902, Congress—

(1) indefinitely extended all laws regulating and restricting

Chinese immigration and residence; and

(2) expressly applied such laws to United States insular

territories, including the Philippines; […]

Whereas between 1910 and 1940, the Angel Island Immigration

Station implemented the Chinese exclusion laws by—

(1) confining Chinese persons for up to nearly 2

years; […]

Whereas each of the congressional debates concerning issues

of Chinese civil rights, naturalization, and immigration

involved intensely racial rhetoric, with many Members of

Congress claiming that all persons of Chinese descent

were—

(1) unworthy of American citizenship;

(2) incapable of assimilation into American society;

and

(3) dangerous to the political and social integrity of

the United States;

*Based on these paragraphs taken from the Resolution, summarize the actions that Congress took between the years 1882 and 1940.*

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**Excerpts from** [**Senate Resolution 201**](https://www.congress.gov/bill/112th-congress/senate-resolution/201/text)**: Expressing Regret for Chinese Exclusion Acts**

Whereas wartime enemy forces used the anti-Chinese legislation passed in Congress as evidence of American racism against the Chinese, attempting to undermine the Chinese-American alliance and allied military efforts;

Whereas, in 1943, at the urging of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and over 60 years after the enactment of the first discriminatory laws against Chinese immigrants,

Congress—

(1) repealed previously enacted anti-Chinese legislation; and

(2) permitted Chinese immigrants to become naturalized United States citizens; […]

Whereas 6 decades of Federal legislation deliberately targeting

Chinese by race—

(1) restricted the capacity of generations of individuals and families to openly pursue the American dream without fear; and

(2) fostered an atmosphere of racial discrimination that deeply prejudiced the civil rights of Chinese immigrants;

Whereas diversity is one of our Nation’s greatest strengths, and, while this Nation was founded on the principle that all persons are created equal, the laws enacted by Congress in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that restricted the political and civil rights of persons of Chinese

descent violated that principle;

*What events happened around 1940 that forced Congress to re-think its actions regarding the Chinese Exclusion Acts? And what did Congress then do in 1943? What does this Congress of 2011 say about “diversity” in the United States*

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**Excerpts from** [**Senate Resolution 201**](https://www.congress.gov/bill/112th-congress/senate-resolution/201/text)**: Expressing Regret for Chinese Exclusion Acts**

Now, therefore, be it

***Resolved,***That the Senate—

(1) acknowledges that this framework of anti-

Chinese legislation, including the Chinese Exclusion

Act, is incompatible with the basic founding prin-

ciples recognized in the Declaration of Independence

that all persons are created equal;

(2) acknowledges that this pattern of anti-Chi-

nese legislation, including the Chinese Exclusion

Act, is incompatible with the spirit of the United

States Constitution;

(3) deeply regrets passing 6 decades of legisla-

tion directly targeting the Chinese people for phys-

ical and political exclusion and the wrongs com-

mitted against Chinese and American citizens of

Chinese descent who suffered under these discrimi-

natory laws; and

(4) reaffirms its commitment to preserving the

same civil rights and constitutional protections for

people of Chinese or other Asian descent in the

United States accorded to all others, regardless of

their race or ethnicity.

*The Senate in this Resolution is saying that the Chinese Exclusion Acts are incompatible with American principles. What are these principles (both in the Declaration of Independence and in the Constitution)? And what is the Senate doing about it now?*

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Analysis: Compare & Contrast these two statements; one based on the original Acts and the other stating the aim of the newly adopted Resolution.

1. Whereas the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 underscored the

belief of some Senators at that time that—

(1) the Chinese people were unfit to be naturalized;

(2) the social characteristics of the Chinese were

‘‘revolting’’;

(3) Chinese immigrants were ‘‘like parasites’’; and

(4) the United States ‘‘is under God a country of

Caucasians, a country of white men, a country to be governed

by white men’’;[…]

1. Whereas diversity is one of our Nation’s greatest strengths,

and, while this Nation was founded on the principle that

all persons are created equal, the laws enacted by Congress in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that restricted the political and civil rights of persons of Chinese descent violated that principle…

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[Senate Resolution 201](https://www.congress.gov/bill/112th-congress/senate-resolution/201/text)

Now, therefore, be it

***Resolved,***That the Senate—

(1) acknowledges that this framework of anti-Chinese legislation, including the

Chinese Exclusion Act, is incompatible

with the basic founding principles

recognized in the Declaration of Independence that all persons are created equal;

(2) acknowledges that this pattern of anti-

Chinese legislation, including the Chinese Exclusion Act, is incompatible

with the spirit of the United States

Constitution;

(3) deeply regrets passing 6 decades of legislation directly targeting the Chinese people for physical and political exclusion and the wrongs committed against Chinese and American citizens of Chinese descent who suffered under these discriminatory laws; and

(4) reaffirms its commitment to preserving the same civil rights and constitutional protections for people of Chinese or other Asian descent in the United States accorded to all others, regardless of their race or ethnicity.

[House Resolution 683](https://www.congress.gov/bill/112th-congress/house-resolution/683/text)

***Resolved****,*That the House of Representatives regrets the passage of legislation that adversely affected people of Chinese origin in the United States because of their ethnicity.

*The Senate in this Resolution is saying that the Chinese Exclusion Acts are incompatible with American principles. What are these principles? Why might the House resolution say less? Why is the House version different? What is the Congress doing about these principles now?*

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