

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 97-4617, by Representatives Mason, Dunn, Cole, Sump, Radcliff, Veloria, Talcott, Tokuda, Hickel, Linville, Johnson, Keiser, Smith, Sterk, Kessler, Robertson, Conway, D. Schmidt and Cody

WHEREAS, February 7, 1997, is the official date of the Chinese New Year and festivities will occur for the following month; and

WHEREAS, Washington state prides itself as the home of Governor Gary Locke, the nation's first Chinese American governor; and

WHEREAS, Chinese Americans first emigrated to the Washington Territory nearly 150 years ago and shaped the early development of Washington state, including its infrastructure; Chinese American laborers made substantial contributions to major rail lines, canals, bridges, and roads in Washington; Chinese American workers contributed to emerging industries such as mining, agriculture, fishing, and salmon canneries; Chinese Americans also made substantial contributions to Seattle following the Great Fire of 1889; and

WHEREAS, Chinese Americans survived harsh conditions and prejudice; discrimination included the anti-Chinese uprisings of the mid-1880s, which forced nearly all Chinese Americans from Tacoma and Seattle; while not long after, Chinese, including those who had mastered masonry techniques, were brought back to Seattle after the Great Fire of 1889 to rebuild the city; and

WHEREAS, Residents of Olympia prevented the forced removal of Chinese Americans from that city in 1886; Olympia's Sheriff Billings deputized scores of local merchants and civic leaders to stand between the angry mob and the Chinese neighborhood, an act which ultimately caused the crowd to disperse; among the peacemakers assembled was an ancestor of Governor Gary Locke; and

WHEREAS, Today Chinese Americans in Washington continue to make contributions in the fields of commerce, science, education, medicine, the military, religion, social science, agriculture, engineering, and the arts; and

WHEREAS, There are more than 275,000 Asian Pacific Americans in Washington state, making Asian Pacific Americans the state's largest and fastest-growing racial minority; among them, Chinese Americans are the third largest subgroup; and

WHEREAS, Washington state is proud of having the nation's greatest number of Chinese American elected officials; current Chinese American officials include Governor Gary Locke, Seattle City Council members Charlie Chong and Cheryl Chow, King County Superior Court Judge Linda Lau, Judge Mark Chow of King County District Court - Seattle Division, and Bellevue City Council member Conrad Lee; other public officials include former King County Superior Court Judge Warren Chan, former King County Superior Court Judge Liem Eng Tuai, former King County Council member Ruby Chow, former Washington State Representative John Eng, former Washington State Representative Art Wang, and former Seattle City Council member Wing Luke. Elected in 1962, Luke was nationally renowned as a trailblazer for Chinese Americans in politics and he is today remembered with a school and an award-winning museum bearing his name; and

WHEREAS, Washington acknowledges that its status as a leading trade state is linked to its ability, familiarity, and knowledge about many cultures; including the Chinese culture; and

WHEREAS, Celebration of ethnic festivals is a mutually beneficial way to promote good will and cultural exchange among all people;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize the contributions of Chinese Americans to the history of Washington state and join in the spirit of the celebration of the Chinese New Year of the calendar year 4695, ushering in the Year of the Ox; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be immediately transmitted by the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives to Governor Gary Locke and the Wing Luke Asian Museum.

I hereby certify this to be a true and correct copy of
Resolution 4617 adopted by the House of Representatives
February 7, 1997.

Timothy A. Martin, Chief Clerk