
HOUSE BILL 1759

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2023 Regular Session

By Representatives Santos, Barnard, Robertson, Senn, Callan, Reed, Ormsby, Doglio, Duerr, Peterson, and Pollet

Read first time 02/06/23. Referred to Committee on State Government & Tribal Relations.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing January of each year as Chinese
2 American month; adding a new section to chapter 43.117 RCW; and
3 creating a new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature intends to designate a
6 time of year to formally remember and recognize the contributions of
7 Chinese Americans and finds that January of each year is a relevant
8 and appropriate time for such recognition. The legislature finds that
9 the California gold rush began on January 24, 1848, which brought
10 thousands of people to the area, approximately 30 percent of whom
11 were Chinese immigrants. With the immigration to the west as a result
12 of the gold rush, Washington became home to many Chinese immigrants.
13 Chinese immigrants contributed greatly to Washington's economy as
14 miners and workers in the salmon canning industry. The Chinese
15 population in Washington also grew when construction of the Northern
16 Pacific Railroad transcontinental line began in 1871, which ran from
17 Wisconsin and Minnesota to Washington and Oregon, as many laborers
18 who were recruited to work on the railroad were Chinese.

19 The legislature also finds that designating January of each year
20 as a time to recognize the contributions of Chinese Americans is
21 relevant in acknowledging the contributions of notable early Chinese

1 settlers. Goon Dip was well known as a visionary, philanthropist,
2 entrepreneur, and is said to be the most influential Chinese
3 immigrant in the Pacific Coast during the early 20th century. Goon
4 Dip created a garment industry in Portland, Oregon where he taught
5 Chinese men who were disabled and unable to perform manual labor how
6 to sew. Goon Dip later expanded his business ventures to Seattle when
7 in January 1909, the Chinese government appointed him as honorary
8 consul for the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition, Washington's first
9 world's fair, held in Seattle. Anticipating large crowds for the
10 fair, Goon Dip built the Milwaukee Hotel at 662 King Street, which
11 would house hundreds of tourists. Goon Dip was also influential in
12 persuading Chinese businessmen to move Chinatown away from the
13 Elliott Bay tidelands to the area around the new King Street Station
14 at 2nd Avenue and Jackson Street. After his role as honorary consul
15 during the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition, Goon Dip was named
16 permanent consul and served under both the Manchu dynasty and the
17 Kuomintang. Goon Dip died on September 12, 1933, at the Milwaukee
18 Hotel and is buried in the family plot in Lake View cemetery in
19 Seattle. January is also the birth month of notable contemporary
20 Chinese Americans in the state, including Gary Locke, who graduated
21 from Seattle's Franklin High School and was the first Chinese
22 American elected as Governor in the continental United States, the
23 first Chinese American Secretary of Commerce, and the first Chinese
24 American ambassador to China.

25 The legislature finds that these and other contributions to the
26 state's rich history and economy by Chinese Americans is worthy of
27 recognition and celebration. The legislature further finds that
28 teaching this history in schools will help to commemorate the
29 important achievements of Chinese Americans.

30 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.117
31 RCW to read as follows:

32 (1) January of each year will be known as Chinese American month.
33 Each January is designated as a time for people of this state to
34 commemorate the contributions of Chinese Americans to the history and
35 heritage of Washington state and the United States.

36 (2) Public schools are encouraged to designate time for
37 appropriate activities in commemoration of Chinese American month and

1 the lives, history, achievements, and contributions of Chinese
2 Americans.

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