



White House Initiative

on ASIAN AMERICANS and PACIFIC ISLANDERS

Chinese-American World War II Veterans Congressional Gold Medal Ceremony

January 29, 2019

10:00 a.m.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

810 Vermont Ave., NW

Washington, D.C.

Pledge of Allegiance

National Anthem

Introductory Remarks

General Counsel, performing the duties of Deputy Secretary

James Byrne

U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs

The Honorable Secretary Betsy DeVos

U.S. Department of Education

Remarks from WWII Veterans

James L. Eng

Harry Jung

Henry (Hank) Lee

Robert M. Lee

Elsie C.Y. Seetoo

Keynote Remarks

The Honorable Secretary Elaine L. Chao

U.S. Department of Transportation

Closing Remarks

Congressional Gold Medal Act Enacted to Pay Tribute to 20,000 Chinese-American World War II Veterans

On Dec. 20, 2018 President Trump signed into law the Chinese-American World War II Veteran Congressional Gold Medal Act, which had been passed unanimously on Sept. 12, 2018, by the U.S. Senate (S. 1050) and unanimously on Dec. 12, 2018, by the U.S. House of Representatives (H.R. 2358). The bill passed the House five days before the 75th anniversary of the 1943 Magnuson Act, which repealed the regrettable Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.

By 1941, over 100,000 Chinese-Americans had immigrated to the United States. Before the Magnuson Act, the Chinese-American community faced widespread discrimination, in part due to the passing of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, which restricted immigration of Chinese laborers to the United States. More than 20,000 brave Chinese-American men and women rose to serve the country from every state in the union, in every theater of battle, and in each branch of the armed services. Many earned citations for their heroism and honorable duty to our nation.

The congressional bills, H.R. 2358 and S. 1050, were championed through the legislative process with support from the Chinese American Citizens Alliance (C.A.C.A.) and veterans' organizations across the country.

The White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders extends our gratitude to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and C.A.C.A. for their collaboration and partnership in honoring the Chinese-American World War II veterans today.