

Today, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have a profound impact on our society as leaders in all facets of American life, thriving as athletes and public servants, entrepreneurs and artists. Whether as small business owners or as proud members of the United States Armed Forces, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are helping to write the next chapter of the American story.

Although many Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have achieved success, far too many still struggle to overcome obstacles of unemployment, poverty, and language barriers or face significant education, economic, and health disparities. To help address the diverse challenges affecting our AAPI communities, I reestablished the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. The Initiative coordinates the efforts of agencies throughout the Federal Government to promote increased access to and participation in Federal programs for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders who remain underserved, so we can continue to be a Nation where all things are possible for all people. All Americans can visit www.AAPI.gov to learn more about the important work of this Initiative.

From our earliest days, intrepid men and women from the Asia-Pacific region have forged enduring links between America and other nations as they moved across the Pacific. In today's globalized world, these bonds remain critical, reminding the United States of our rich shared history and integrated future with the dynamic Asia-Pacific region. During Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, let us celebrate the millions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders whose talents and contributions strengthen our economy, protect our security, and enliven our country every day.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 2011 as Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. I call upon all Americans to visit www.AsianPacificHeritage.gov to learn more about the history of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-ninth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand eleven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-fifth.

BARACK OBAMA

Proclamation 8660 of April 29, 2011

Jewish American Heritage Month, 2011

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

Since before our Nation's founding, America's shores have been a safe harbor for people seeking shelter, hope, and new lives free from persecution. Here, people of all faiths have broken bread, come together, and built a better future for their families. The Jewish story is intertwined with the American story—one of overcoming great hardship, and one of commitment to

building a more just world. This month, we embrace and celebrate the vast contributions Jewish Americans have made to our country.

Seeking a brighter future, a small band of Jewish refugees came to this land more than three centuries ago, to a place called New Amsterdam. Hundreds of years later, as Holocaust survivors and families caught behind the Iron Curtain made their way to America, their perseverance in the face of unimaginable tragedy inspired the world and proved that the Jewish people will not be defeated. Many endured bigotry even here, reminding us that we must continue to fight prejudice and violence at home and around the globe. In this spirit, President Truman recognized the small, fledgling nation of Israel within minutes of its creation. To this day, we continue to foster an unbreakable partnership with Israel, and we remain committed to pursuing peace in the region and ensuring Israel's security.

From those first days in New Amsterdam, Jewish Americans have dedicated their innovation, creativity, and hearts to the greater good—contributing scientific accomplishments, pioneering works of literature and musical genius, and performing distinguished service in our Nation's military. Jewish Americans have defended our country since the days of the American Revolution as devoted service members and chaplains, and they continue to serve with distinction in our Armed Forces.

Nearly 70 years ago, during World War II, the U.S.A.T. Dorchester suffered an explosion at sea while carrying almost a thousand soldiers and civilian workers. On board were four Army chaplains—two Protestant, one Catholic, and one Jewish. While the ship sank, the four chaplains gave their own life jackets to four men without any, calmed the wounded, and preached strength to the survivors, linking arms and praying together as the ship submerged. In a time of great need, these chaplains showed that their shared commitment to the lives of others was stronger than any division of faith or background.

This same spirit is found in the countless Jewish Americans who, through their every day actions, work to provide a better life for future generations by joining hands with all who seek equality and progress. This month, we remember that the history and unique identity of Jewish Americans is part of the grand narrative of our country, forged in the friendships and shared wisdom between people of different faiths.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 2011 as Jewish American Heritage Month. I call upon all Americans to visit www.JewishHeritageMonth.gov to learn more about the heritage and contributions of Jewish Americans and to observe this month with appropriate programs, activities, and ceremonies.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-ninth day of April, in the year two thousand eleven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-fifth.

BARACK OBAMA