

I want to thank Congressman HONDA again for his leadership, and for making sure that justice prevails for the Asian Pacific American community, because his leadership and bringing together the diversity, closing the health care gap with regard to minority communities, all of the issues that he works on makes this House of Representatives a better place.

ASIAN PACIFIC HERITAGE MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from California (Mr. HONDA) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks, and include extraneous material on the subject of my special order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call upon my colleague, Ms. BORDALLO, who hails from Guam.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Asian Pacific Heritage Month and to recognize the contributions of Asian and Pacific Island Americans to our Nation. First, I want to thank my colleague from California, the Honorable Mr. HONDA, the chairman of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, for his distinct leadership and dedication to the needs of our communities.

Every May during Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, we recognize the contributions Asian and Pacific Island Americans make to the United States economically, culturally, politically, throughout its history. Asian and Pacific Islander Americans continue to make notable and diverse contributions to every aspect of American life. Asian and Pacific Island Americans also serve public interests by serving honorably in the United States Armed Services and ably at every level of government in the United States. I am proud to participate in the effort to honor their contributions to this country and celebrate our heritage with this month's events.

Some people wonder why we continue to celebrate cultural diversity. I respond by saying that doing so helps to remind us that while many of us have no memory of fleeing oppression or desiring to live freely, many Vietnamese Americans can tell you of their desire to live freely and the risks that they took fleeing communism to do so. Or, the experiences of some Korean Americans can help us better understand the importance of family and the hardships and the pain created as a result of being kept apart from loved ones for generations. While many of our lives

are relatively stable and certain, some Chinese Americans or Japanese Americans can inspire you with their stories of succeeding here in the United States after arriving with no money and no possessions.

Freedom and economic opportunity are attributes of the United States that have, for generations, inspired hope among the repressed people of the world. Some of us take the United States and the American way of life for granted. The United States and the privilege and the goodness of America's way of life are particularly important for at least two groups among the Asian and Pacific Islander American community. They are Chamorro or Filipino-Americans. And I say that because Chamorro or Filipino-Americans are among the very few Americans who can identify with heart-swelling pride inspired by witnessing the striking and the unique beauty of the Stars and Stripes flying proudly at the top of flagpoles for the first time after enduring and being liberated from a brutal and extended occupation by the foreign power.

To all Americans I say this: To learn of the experiences endured by these Americans during occupation and liberation will provide you invaluable perspective on what it means to be an American. In fact, before the House this week is H.R. 1595, the Guam World War II Loyalty Recognition Act. This bill would help fulfill a moral obligation on the part of our national government to a group of citizens, the people of Guam, most of whom were indigenous Chamorros who bore the burden of a brutal occupation. The people of Guam were brutalized through public executions, beheadings, rape, and severe injury, forced labor, forced march, and internment in concentration camps.

□ 2000

H.R. 1595 is called the Loyalty Recognition Act because the loyalty of the people of Guam to the United States during this 32-month enemy occupation should be honored.

It is a tragic injustice of history that, following liberation, Congress did not provide for war claims for the people of Guam in the same manner and with the same opportunities that were afforded to other Americans. The people who carried a disproportionate burden of the war were given less than other Americans when it came time to make our Nation whole. Those who gave more in blood got less in recognition. Asian Pacific American Heritage Month would be especially noteworthy if this legislation were to be agreed to by the House of Representatives.

Asians and Pacific Islanders have a powerful story to tell, and they have a love for this Nation that many take for granted. Our contribution to America is not just the great food and the intriguing cultures that we have introduced to this land; it is also the stories of our incredible journeys to freedom.

Our heritage is our gift to this Nation. Our unique cultures have survived and continue to thrive because America has come to know and appreciate how our contributions enrich our Nation.

I am very, very proud of the Chamorro culture on Guam and take every opportunity to share our culture and our traditions.

Today it is worth reflecting on who we are as a Nation and what values we stand for. We are a Nation of immigrants whose parents and grandparents have come to these shores seeking individual liberty, prosperity and human dignity. The Nation we call our own is one of compassion and of justice. And when it comes to our heritage, we may be Chamorros, Hawaiian, Japanese, Samoan, Chinese, Filipino, Palauan, Chuukese, Korean or any of the various proud cultures of Asia and the Pacific, but we all share a common love for this country.

So as we celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, let us honor the contributions of all Asian and Pacific Islander Americans, and let us appreciate the cultural diversity, the patriotism and the communities that make our country, that make America so great.

Dangkulo na Si Yu'os Ma'ase.

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call upon our good friend, colleague from Texas, Representative AL GREEN.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I'm honored to be here tonight to celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. And I want to especially thank Chairman HONDA for the outstanding job that he has done, not only with this event, but also what he does year round, year in and year out with our caucus, the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus. I thank you for what you have done.

Mr. Speaker, I represent the Ninth Congressional District in Houston, Texas. The Ninth Congressional District is one of the most diverse districts in the country. It is 36 percent African American, 31 percent Hispanic, 21 percent Anglo and 12 percent Asian. And I am proud to say that this district, the Ninth Congressional District, has the ballot printed in three languages, English, Spanish and Vietnamese, soon to have it in a fourth language, Chinese.

I'm also proud to say that we have elected a Vietnamese to the State House in the State of Texas. The honorable Hubert Vo is a State Representative from a district that is within my Ninth Congressional District.

I am so honored that we have selected the theme "Meeting the Challenges for Asian Pacific Americans." This is most appropriate. Why? Because in spite of discrimination and degradation, Asian Americans have met the challenges for America. They were there when America needed a national rail connectivity. In spite of discrimination and humiliation, they

helped to construct the first trans-continental railroad.

When the greatest generation went to war in World War II, they were there, not only for America, but for the entire world. Notwithstanding dehumanization and incarceration, Americans of Japanese ancestry were some of America's most decorated soldiers.

They were also there from the Philippines. During World War II, over 200,000 Filipinos fought in defense of the United States of America. More than half died. They answered President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's clarion call for help. They met the challenges of America, and it's time for America to meet the challenges of the Filipino veterans, who were promised, I might add, the same benefits as other veterans and who have not received them to this day.

It is time for Congress to pass the Filipino Veterans Equity Act of 2007. It is time to treat all who sacrificed during World War II the same.

Asian Americans have been there for us. It is time for us to be there for them.

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call upon our good friend from California, Congressman XAVIER BECERRA.

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, more than anything else I'd like to thank Chairman MIKE HONDA from California for organizing tonight's special order to celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month because it's important for us to not only say it today, but have it recorded in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD for all time that we appreciate what members of American society have done for us, especially members, this month we want to celebrate of Asian Pacific American heritage, who are Americans, patriotic, hardworking, and in every respect trying to live the American dream.

And so I stand here with a great deal of pride as a Member of Congress who represents a portion of the city of Los Angeles, a very diverse district with a substantial Asian Pacific American population. I stand here as a very proud member of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus' Executive Committee.

And I also stand here very proud to say that on many occasions I've had the opportunity to author legislation very important to the Asian and Pacific American community here in this country, whether it has been the issue of reuniting families of Korean descent who have not seen family members in North Korea for many, many years, or whether it's been legislation to try to help obtain justice for Asians of Latino descent who were deprived of their rights back during World War II and never, never received the recognition they deserved to get their rights and their property back. I had that opportunity.

But rather than talk about the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act which began the whole process of discrimination and

racism towards Asian and Pacific Americans in this country, or rather than dwell much longer on the history of the internment of Japanese Americans, some 120,000 back during World War II for no reason, without due process, when, in fact, we found out that Japanese Americans served this country proudly and patriotically. In fact, they were among the most decorated of American soldiers during World War II.

And rather than talk about, as I just mentioned, the plight of Filipino soldiers during World War II, who as Filipino veterans, served under the American flag, yet, by an act of Congress in 1946, were deprived of the rights to veterans benefits in this country, let me talk about something else, and not in general terms.

Let me talk to you a little bit about America's leaders today and tomorrow. Just yesterday I had the opportunity to award the winner of my Congressional Arts Competition, which we do every year, so the one winner in my district in high school who has an opportunity to present his or her piece of art work in the Capitol of the United States is introduced on that day of the selection. And that was yesterday.

My winner, for the 31st Congressional District, was Julie Lee, a high school student in my congressional district who did a phenomenal piece of art work. She will be a leader tomorrow. We know it not just because of her artistic talents, but because she came forward to participate in this process.

I could name the various military academy nominees that I've sent off to, whether it's West Point or the Air Force Academy of Japanese, Chinese or Korean American descent that I've had the pleasure and honor to send on to become leaders of this country.

Or I could simply talk about someone by the name of Christine Oh, who happens to be a legislative assistant in my Congressional office here, or Henry Truong, who happens to be my executive assistant here in my Washington, D.C. office, who many would consider my gatekeeper because he decides what my schedule looks like; or perhaps Melvin Tabillas in my district office in Los Angeles, who is one of my field representatives who helps me manage an area that has some 650,000 people there to try to make sure we give the people in my district the coverage they need.

Or perhaps I could mention the names of people like Stuart Kwoh, who has been a champion for civil rights and simply the rights of Americans, especially those of Asian Pacific American descent in Los Angeles through his work with the Asian Pacific American Legal Center.

Or I could speak to you about Grace Shimizu, who has been a champion to have restored to those Japanese Latin Americans the rights they lost during World War II through the organization Campaign For Justice, which she is a part of and leads.

Or I could mention Hyepin Im, who is the leader of the Korean Churches for

Community Development in the Los Angeles area, now a national organization, which tries to help, through the Korean churches throughout this country, to bring Korean Americans forward and to receive the benefits of what this society offers to Americans.

Or perhaps I could mention Joel Jacinto, who is the Director of the Search to involve Filipino Americans, SIPA, an organization which truly goes out into the community, especially in the Filipino American community in Los Angeles to make sure that whether it's on education, housing, health care issues, SIPA is there to offer Filipino Americans those services.

Mr. Speaker, to Mr. HONDA we say, thank you for letting us have this opportunity to talk about the achievements, the accomplishments of people of Asian Pacific and American descent. Clearly, these are Americans who have persevered and excelled in this country.

We could talk about the difficulties of discrimination and racism, the violence that has been experienced by many. But rather than that, I think it's better, most fitting to talk about today's leaders, and tomorrow's leaders in this country.

So to one of today's leaders, Congressman MIKE HONDA, I say thank you for letting us talk today about tomorrow's leaders in this country as well. And with that, with great pride in helping to celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HONDA. Just to comment about both Congressmen AL GREEN and XAVIER BECERRA, they too are also members of the Congressional Black Caucus and the Hispanic Caucus, and so they serve dual roles in their leadership. And I think CAPAC, the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, enjoys the leadership, experience and the insights of these two gentlemen, and it makes our caucus stronger and partners with the other caucuses.

And it's no wonder that they come to Congress on behalf of the community because the communities there trust these two men and they trust their leadership and their insights and their conscience. So to both I say, thank you.

I'd like to call upon a Congresswoman who hails from the Aloha State who, I think, is probably the re-incarnation of the spirit of Patsy Mink, MAZIE HIRONO.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my fellow Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, CAPAC members, and my other colleagues in celebrating Asian Pacific American Heritage Month.

I'd like to, of course, thank Congressman HONDA for organizing this special order tonight, and for his leadership shown throughout the year in his service as chairman of CAPAC.

The heritage month theme is "Meeting the Challenges for Asian Pacific Americans." The APA community has

come a long way since the days when laws excluded us from coming to this country, barred us from many places, public places, and worse, interned us in camps solely because of our ethnic heritage.

□ 2015

Nationwide, we are now 14 million strong, and in the next 30 years the APA population is expected to double to about 8 percent of the entire U.S. population.

Because of our history of labor immigration and our indigenous island population, Hawaii has had a head start in terms of political representation. Our APA communities have lived and worked in our islands since the mid-1800s, when the first Chinese laborers were imported to work in the sugarcane fields. Since 2000, three of our communities, the Okinawans, Koreans, and the Filipinos, have celebrated their centennial anniversaries of arrival to the United States and to Hawaii.

Hawaii produced the first Governors in the Nation of Japanese and Filipino ancestry, George Ariyoshi and Ben Cayetano; the first Native Hawaiian Governor, John Waihee; the first Asian American Senators, Hiram Fong and Daniel Inouye; the first Senator of Native Hawaiian ancestry, Daniel Akaka; the first Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Member of Congress, Prince Jonah Kuhio Kalanianaʻole; and the first woman of color to serve in Congress, Patsy Takemoto Mink. And I am privileged to have served as Hawaii's Lieutenant Governor, becoming the first immigrant woman of Asian ancestry elected to statewide office and to be able to continue my service here as the first immigrant born in Japan serving in Congress.

Asian and Pacific Islander Members of Congress currently number only nine, including ENI FALEOMAVAEGA, our delegate from American Samoa. Also with me in the House are Congress Members MIKE HONDA and DORIS MATSUI, Oregon's DAVID WU, Virginia's ROBERT SCOTT, and Louisiana's BOBBY JINDALS. In the Senate we have Hawaii's two senior statesmen, Senators DANIEL INOUE and DANIEL AKAKA.

Although the successes of our APA community over the years have been many, there is another side to our story that is not often discussed. While more Asians have college degrees than any other group in the country, we also have more people who have not graduated from high school compared with other ethnic groups. And while APAs have higher incomes, the U.S. Census counts 1.3 million Asian and Pacific Islanders living in poverty. There are still many wrongs to be righted. Some of them are decades old.

On March 1, 2007, I reintroduced the Filipino Veterans Family Reunification Act, H.R. 1287, a companion bill to S. 671, introduced by Senator AKAKA. It will accelerate the immigration process for the sons and daughters of the Filipino veterans who fought with our

American troops in World War II. I am also a cosponsor of the Filipino Veterans Equity Act, H.R. 760, to fulfill our promise of full veterans' benefits to those Filipino soldiers.

I know that questions have been raised about the cost of carrying out our obligation to the Filipino World War II veterans. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that the cost of enacting H.R. 760 will be \$1 billion over a 10-year period. While this is a large sum, it is worth noting that the United States spends approximately \$9 billion each month in the war in Iraq.

Challenges are also facing our Native Hawaiian population. The desire for self-determination by the indigenous people of my home State has been ignored for far too long by the Federal Government. Native Hawaiians remain the only indigenous group in our country still awaiting Federal recognition similar to the recognition Congress has granted to American Indians and Alaska Natives. H.R. 505, the Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act, would set up a process for Native Hawaiians to organize a government entity.

By continuing to work together, I am hopeful that we will be able to meet these challenges as we have overcome others in the past. This month Washington, D.C. is hosting the Eighth Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders, PICL. The triennial PICL brings together the heads of government and senior officials from the Pacific, including Hawaii and the U.S. Pacific Territories. This is the first time that the group has met in Washington, D.C., and it is quite an opportunity for all of us here to find common ground on issues facing the Pacific region and our world.

In closing, I would again like to thank Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus Chairman HONDA for allowing us this opportunity to reflect upon how far our APA community has come and yet, of course, remember how much further our community has to go.

Mahalo and aloha.

Mr. HONDA. Mahalo. Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Asian American Pacific Islander community and to commemorate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month.

As Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, commonly known as CAPAC, I feel privileged to be here tonight to speak of the Asian and Pacific Islander American history and accomplishments.

And before I continue, I would also like to recognize you, Mr. Speaker, for presiding over this Special Order and also knowing that you too have worked with other Asian American leaders in your home State, specifically Senator Stan Matsunaga. For that we are grateful.

Additionally, I will be highlighting those issues affecting our community and the priorities for CAPAC.

The history of APA Heritage Month: In celebrating APA Heritage Month, I want to give thanks to the late Representative Frank Horton from New York and my good friend Secretary Norman Mineta, along with Senators Daniel Inouye and Spark Masayuki Matsunaga, that May is now designated as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month.

The first 10 days of May coincide with two important anniversaries: the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants on May 7, 1843, to the U.S. and the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869.

In 1992 Congress passed public law No. 102-450, the law that officially designated May of each year as "Asian Pacific American Heritage Month." The first AAPI settlement in this country dates back to 1763, when Filipinos escaped imprisonment aboard Spanish galleons and established a community near New Orleans.

The AAPI community quickly expanding. Currently, there are approximately 14.6 million AAPIs living in the United States, comprising just over 5 percent of the total U.S. population. By the year 2050, there will be an estimated 33.4 million individuals living in the United States who identify as Asian alone, representing a 213 percent increase from 2000, comprising 8 percent of the total U.S. population. My home State of California has both the largest AAPI population, 4.9 million, and the largest numerical increase of AAPIs since 2000.

There are some needs. Mr. Speaker, this year's theme for Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, "Meeting the Challenges for Asian Pacific Americans," reflects hardships overcome by the AAPI community while highlighting the hope we maintain as we contribute to the prosperity of this great Nation. As our community expands, we must also continue to educate our fellow citizens about the uniqueness of our experiences.

The AAPI community is often misperceived as monolithic. Our community is extremely diverse in our languages, ethnicities, culture, and challenges. Aggregating such a large and diverse group makes it difficult to understand the unique problems faced by the individual ethnicities and subgroups, such as the Southeast Asian Americans, who are refugees that fled their home countries during the late 1970s and the early 1980s. As a country, we need to better address the needs of the AAPI community when we discuss comprehensive immigration reform, education, health issues, and veterans' affairs.

Comprehensive immigration reform: Mr. Speaker, our Nation was founded by immigrants who valued freedom and liberty, who sought to be free from persecution and from tyranny. Families fled their home countries to seek refuge in this great Nation because they too believed in "liberty, justice, and freedom for all." It is in this spirit that

CAPAC supports immigration legislation that shifts the debate from an exclusionary, anti-immigrant, enforcement-only approach to one that confronts the social and economic realities behind immigration; honors the dignity of all families and communities; and recognizes the economic, social, and cultural contributions of immigrants to our great country.

Today, AAPIs constitute a growing and vibrant piece of the American fabric. In 2005 close to 9 million of this Nation's foreign born were born in Asia, constituting approximately one quarter of the foreign-born population and over one half of the total AAPI population. Even with a relatively high naturalization rate, there are approximately 1.5 million Asian undocumented immigrants living, working, or studying in the U.S., representing 14 percent of the undocumented immigrants in the United States. These include victims of immigration fraud, who have become undocumented due to no fault of their own. Many work and study hard, pay taxes, and yet live in fear with no hope of gaining a path to legal permanent resident status. Let's give these workers and these students an opportunity.

In addition to an earned pathway to citizenship, family reunification is a high priority in the AAPI community. Immigration reform must espouse the family values that are so fundamental to our national ideals. Family members provide care for the sick, for their children, and for their elderly. Family members are crucial for small businesses and educational opportunities. Close to 2 million AAPIs wait years, sometimes even decades, in order to reunite with their families in the United States. AAPI families who seek to be reunited with their family members overseas have not seen their dreams come true because of our dysfunctional immigration system. We need comprehensive immigration reform to address these backlogs.

And education: In addition to immigration reform, expanding educational access for all Americans is also a high priority for CAPAC. Mr. Speaker, as Americans, we need to ensure that our children receive a quality education by providing adequate teacher training, funds for after-school and extra-curricular activities, and ensuring that college is affordable for every student who desires to receive a higher education.

According to the U.S. Census, 41 percent of Asians age 25 and over have a bachelor's degree or higher level of education. However, when the data is disaggregated for AAPI subgroups, we find that the "model minority" stereotype is, in fact, a myth. According to the 2000 Census, only 9.1 percent of Cambodian Americans, 7.4 percent of Hmong Americans, 7.6 percent of Lao Americans, 19.5 percent of Vietnamese Americans, and 16.5 percent of Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders who are 25 years and older have a bachelor's degree or higher degrees.

These numbers show that we must do a better job of disaggregating the data and information about our communities to assess the needs of those hard-working Americans who still falter behind.

To address the disparities between subgroups of the larger AAPI community, we need Congress to pass the Asian American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions bill, which my colleague from Oregon, Representative DAVID WU, has introduced in January. This legislation will provide Federal grants to colleges and universities that have an enrollment of undergraduate students that is at least 10 percent AAPI and at least 50 percent of its degree-seeking students receive financial assistance.

As a caucus, we will work to increase the availability of loan assistance, scholarships, and programs to allow AAPI students to attend a higher education institution; to ensure full funding for teachers and bilingual education programs under the No Child Left Behind law to support English language learners; and to support full funding of minority outreach programs for access to higher education such as the TRIO programs to expand services to serve AAPI students.

In health, Mr. Speaker, a common misperception of AAPIs is that as a group, we face fewer health problems than other racial and ethnic groups. But, in fact, AAPI as a group, and specific populations within this group, do experience disparities in health and health care. For example, AAPIs have the highest hepatitis B rates of any racial group in the United States.

□ 2030

This week, health advocates from around the country will be participating in a National Awareness Campaign to bring attention to and educate their communities about prevention of hepatitis B through testing and vaccination. In the United States, 12 million people have been infected at some time in their lives with the hepatitis B virus, and more than 5,000 Americans die from hepatitis B related liver complications each year.

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders account for more than half of the chronic hepatitis B cases and half of the deaths resulting from chronic hepatitis B infections in the United States. In order to break the silence surrounding this deadly disease and bring awareness to the American people, Congressman EDOLPHUS TOWNS, Congressman CHARLIE DENT and I have introduced H.R. 366, which supports the goals and ideals of National Hepatitis B Awareness Week. I hope my colleagues will join me in educating our communities about the dangers of this disease.

AAPIs are also five times more likely to develop cervical and liver cancer than any other ethnic and racial group. Furthermore, according to the Census Bureau, 18 percent of AAPIs went with-

out insurance for the entire year in 2000. This means that the uninsured are not only more likely to go without health care for serious medical conditions, they are also more likely to go without routine care, less likely to have a regular source of care, less likely to use preventive services, and have fewer visits per year.

At the same time, without appropriate language translation services or properly translated materials, limited English proficient immigrants cannot receive adequate care as well as State and Federal benefits for which they may be eligible. In the AAPI community, 76 percent of Hmong Americans, 61 percent of Vietnamese Americans, 62 percent of Korean Americans and 39 percent of Tongans speak limited English. Therefore, eliminating health care disparities in the AAPI community must include data collection, linguistically appropriate and culturally competent services and access to health insurance.

CAPAC has been working with both the Congressional Hispanic and Black Caucuses on the Health Care Equity and Accountability Act to eliminate ethnic and racial health disparities for all of our communities. The act would expand the health care safety net, diversify the health care workforce, combat diseases that disproportionately affect racial and ethnic minorities, emphasize prevention and behavioral health, and promote the collection and dissemination of data and enhance medical research.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to extend my gratitude to the patriotic men and women serving our country in the military, including the 62,378 AAPIs who are on active duty in the military, and the 7,904 AAPIs who are currently deployed in the global war on terrorism. I also commend and thank the 446,000 AAPI veterans who have fought for our country.

I would like to highlight and honor the Filipino veterans who have not been compensated or recognized for their service, which I believe is a national disservice to these brave veterans. As a country, it is our duty to ensure these veterans have equal access to all of the benefits and treatment that other veterans receive. We believe that our troops should be taken care of when we send them into battle and that they should be given the respect when they return home. Therefore, CAPAC endorses H.R. 760, the Filipino Veterans Equity Act introduced by Representative BOB FILNER, who chairs the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. CAPAC thanks Representative FILNER for his leadership on this issue.

H.R. 760 would do justice by providing the full benefits promised to all Filipino veterans who fought in World War II under the command of the U.S. military. The Filipino Veterans Equity Act would eliminate the disparities and

benefits between some Filipino veterans and restore the honor and dignity they so deserve. With Congressman FILNER as the Chair of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, we have a great chance to get this bill to the floor.

There are many firsts among the AAPIs. I am proud of our community's accomplishments, and I would like to recognize many of the AAPIs first in areas of art, film, sports, science, academia and politics, but also emphasize that they should not be the last.

In 1847, Yung Wing, a Chinese American, graduated from Yale University and became the first AAPI to graduate from an American university.

In 1863, William Ah Hang, a Chinese American, became the first AAPI to enlist in the U.S. Navy during the Civil War.

In 1922, Anna May Wong, in her lead role in "The Toll of the Sea," at the age of 17 became the first AAPI female to become a movie star, achieving stardom at a time when prejudice against the Chinese in the United States was rampant.

In 1944, An Wang, a Chinese American who invented the magnetic core memory, revolutionized computing and served as a standard method for memory retrieval and storage. And today we have iPods that are smaller than a deck of cards that can hold up to four gigabytes of information, all coming from this 1944 invention by An Wang.

During World War II, the 442nd Central Postal Directory, comprised mostly of Japanese Americans, became the most highly decorated unit of its size in the history of the U.S. Army, including 22 Medal of Honor recipients, Senator DANIEL INOUYE being one of them.

In 1946, Wing F. Ong, a Chinese American of Arizona, became the first AAPI to be elected to State office.

In 1947, Wataru "Wat" Misaka became the first ethnic minority and the first AAPI to play in the National Basketball Association for the New York Knicks. How about that?

In 1948, two Californian divers, Dr. Samuel Lee, a Korean American, and Victoria Manalo Draves, a Filipina American, became the first AAPIs to win Olympic gold medals for the U.S.

In 1956, Dalip Singh Saud, an Indian American, became the very first AAPI to be elected to the U.S. Congress.

In 1959, Hiram Leong Fong, a Chinese American, became the first AAPI to be elected as a United States Senator and is the only AAPI to actively seek the Presidential nomination of a major party.

In 1965, Patsy Takemoto Mink, a Japanese American, becomes the first AAPI woman and woman of color elected to the United States Congress.

In 1971, Judge Herbert Choy, late Ninth Circuit Court judge, became the first AAPI to sit on the Federal bench.

In 1985, Haing Ngor, a Cambodian American survivor of the Khmer Rouge regime, became the first AAPI to win

an Academy Award for his role in "The Killing Fields" movie.

In 1985, Ellison Onizuka, grandson of a Japanese immigrant, became the first AAPI astronaut to reach outer space, and in 1986 died in the space shuttle explosion of the Challenger.

In 2000, Secretary Norman Mineta was confirmed as Secretary of Commerce under President Clinton and became the very first AAPI to hold a cabinet post; then continued his service to America as Secretary of Transportation under President Bush.

In 2001, Secretary Elaine Chao was confirmed as Secretary of Labor under President George W. Bush, becoming the first AAPI female to hold a cabinet position.

Mr. Speaker, the Asian and Pacific Islander American community continues to fight for our civil rights as Americans. Even after the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, we as a community did not grow embittered or cowed by discrimination; instead, we progressed and moved forward.

I am a proud member of the AAPI community, and I am proud to be one because we continue to serve as positive contributors to our many communities by investing in education, business and cultural opportunities for all Americans.

In closing, this Asian Pacific American Heritage Month we take pride in our history, accomplishments and the promise of our future as we continue to pave the way for a better tomorrow and a better America.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in celebration of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month.

I am proud to represent the city of San Francisco, where we are blessed in our community to have a thriving Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) population. It is home to our Nation's oldest Japantown, one of the largest Chinatowns, and countless other ethnic communities.

As one of the fastest growing ethnic groups in our country, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders contribute to our economic prosperity, cultural diversity, and political process. Representing 11 different ethnicities, they have a unique voice, which plays a role in the work that we do in Congress to improve the lives of Americans every day.

While the debate about comprehensive immigration reform intensifies across the country, it is recognized by many of my colleagues as a hurdle that particularly affects Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Whether it is a Chinese student waiting for a visa, or the South Asian worker waiting to be reunited with his family, comprehensive immigration reform is a challenge that must be met. Their experiences reflect that of the first immigrants to our country, who dreamt of a better life for themselves. Within the AAPI community, there is a beautiful diversity that reflects the ideals of family values, hard work, and a wonderful optimism that our nation was founded upon.

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders also face the tragic challenge of combating hate crimes. Last week, the House of Representatives passed legislation that strengthened the

ability of local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies to solve a wide range of violent hate crimes based on religion, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, national origin, or disability. Although a hate crime may affect the life of one victim, its impact reaches deep into the community. All Americans have a right to feel safe in their community. Sadly, we remember Song Sun Lee, Stephen Kam Yan Li, and Robert Stanford, all recent victims of hate, whose lives were unjustly cut short.

As we work on legislation to improve lives for the future, we must remember the challenges from the past. World War II set the stage for courageous acts of heroism, but at the same time generated acts of grave injustice and discrimination. I salute the Filipino Veterans who fought bravely during World War II and join them in their fight for full veterans' benefits. I recognize the courage of the remaining comfort women and will work to ensure that their rights are protected.

I am pleased to stand here with my colleagues who also recognize the efforts and accomplishments of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in this country. I thank Chairman MIKE HONDA and the rest of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus for their continuous efforts to ensure that the millions of voices of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are heard.

As we celebrate, let us continue well past Asian Pacific Heritage Month to value and appreciate the contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders living in the United States.

Mr. WU. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor and pleasure that I join my fellow members of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus to celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. This May marks the 29th time that America has recognized and celebrated the many contributions and achievements of Asian Pacific Americans.

America has reached greatness in part by the accumulation of ideas from those with varied heritage and backgrounds. In particular, Asian Pacific Americans have made profound contributions to the arts, education, science, technology, politics and athletics. Asian Pacific Americans have played an active and crucial role in the development of the United States, from linking the coasts of the nation with the transcontinental railroad to bringing the world closer through development of the latest Internet technology.

This year, Congress will be debating and voting to reauthorize No Child Left Behind and the Higher Education Act. As a member of the Education and Labor Committee as well as the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, I am working hard to ensure that the Asian Pacific American community not only has a seat at the table of these debates, but also a strong voice to shape the national conversation.

The Asian Pacific American community remains and always will be an integral and vibrant part of American society. As we take part in the celebration of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, I urge everyone to participate more deeply in the civic life of our nation. Asian Pacific American civic engagement will help to define our collective future and ensure that we move forward with determination and unity. Let us work together to build bridges and strengthen our great nation's diverse communities.

I encourage Congress and the American people to spend the month of May absorbing the legacy, culture and achievements of the Asian Pacific American community.

AMERICA FACES LARGEST TAX INCREASE IN HISTORY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, coming to the House floor as I have for the past 4 months to talk about the great concern that I have and to draw attention to what is going to happen in the United States Congress if the new Democratic majority does not act, in just 1,335 days, the American people are going to see the largest tax increase in American history. I also believe, although I haven't been able to verify this, it is probably the largest tax increase in the history of the world. And the Democratic majority doesn't have to even vote on it, all they have to do is run out the clock and allow the tax reductions, the tax cuts that occurred in 2001 and 2003 to expire. And only in Washington, and I have heard this said, that the majority party is not going to raise taxes because they won't vote on raising taxes, but because they are going to expire and people's taxes are going to go up, that is not really a tax increase. Well, if you are sitting out there in middle America and you are making \$40,000 a year and you have two children, your taxes will go up approximately \$2,000. That is a tax increase. Everybody in America knows that. And everybody that knows how to add and subtract knows that if your taxes go up \$2,000 or if anything goes up \$2,000, that is an increase. And as I said, the majority, the Democratic majority will not have to vote on it, they can just, as I have said, run out the clock.

In 2001 and 2003 and every year in the Republican majority, we cut taxes; we cut some tax over the 12 years in majority. And the new Democratic majority, it took them about a week, maybe less than 10 days to have their first tax increase. They passed it back in January. And fortunately it hasn't become law because they haven't been able to pass anything of substance that passed the House and the Senate and gone to the President. So, as I said, we haven't seen that first tax increase, although the Democratic majority did in fact vote on a tax increase and it passed here in the House.

I hope my friends on the other side will take a lesson from history and look back to the 1960s to President John F. Kennedy and what he did in his term as President. One of the first things he did was to cut taxes. And what happened in the 1960s? The economy grew, revenues to the Federal Government grew because of those tax cuts. And then look back just into the

1980s when President Ronald Reagan came to Washington, and with the help of a Democratic majority, he cut taxes. And what happened? The economy grew, the revenues to the Federal Government grew, and that was a positive thing.

The same thing occurred in 2001 and 2003 and continues. We cut taxes, allowing the American people to keep more of their hard-earned dollars, and the economy is growing. Revenues to the Federal Government are at record levels coming into the Federal Government. And the facts are there. Since 2003, 7.5 million jobs have been created. That is more jobs than the European Union and Japan combined have created. Our economy has now added jobs for 43 straight months.

Just last month, in April, 88,000 new jobs were created in the United States. Folks that had been unemployed or happen to find themselves unemployed are finding much shorter duration of unemployment than they had in the past. The national unemployment rate remains at 4.5 percent, which is well below the 5.1 percent rate which was in 2005, and below the average of each of the past four decades.

□ 2045

The U.S. has grown faster than any G-7 industrialized nation over the past 4 quarters. Wages have increased, and tax relief has helped spur economic growth by keeping over \$1.1 trillion in the pockets of Americans. As I said, if the Democratic majority doesn't act by January 1, 2011, all those tax cuts, tax reductions we put in place for small businesses, for families, for individuals, will expire.

In my State of Pennsylvania alone, the average worker, the average taxpayer, will see about a \$3,000 increase in his taxes. My good friend from Florida, RIC KELLER, informs me that the average taxpayer in Florida will see an increase of \$3,000, if we don't act and extend those tax cuts.

Once again, that is what we are going to do tonight, is talk about this countdown. We call ourselves the Countdown Crew, because in 1,335 days, if the Democratic majority doesn't act, the average American and average small business in this country, the individual in this country is going to see their taxes increase.

That money will come out of their pockets, will come to Washington, and they will not have an opportunity to spend it as they see fit. They won't have an opportunity to save it for their retirement, or their children's college education or future education. So it is important that we draw attention to what is going to happen here in Congress.

The Democrats won a majority in the election and they said first of all that they were going to have "6 for 06." They have passed all six of those in the House, but nothing of what they passed, none of those six have made it into law. As I said earlier, very few

things we have passed here on the floor have made it into law. We have named a couple of post offices and Federal buildings, but nothing substantial has been able to pass this Congress and become law.

As I said, I think it is extremely important that the American people are aware that just by running out the clock, the taxes for every American, every small business, every business in America, will go up, without action in this House.

With that, I am joined here tonight by my good friend from Kentucky, a former business owner and a father of several children, I can't keep count, five or six.

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. Six

Mr. SHUSTER. Six. I would like to yield to the gentleman.

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania. I just want to say I appreciate the leadership you have shown since the beginning of this Congress on being the lead sponsor of the Countdown Crew.

Both BILL SHUSTER from Pennsylvania and I were small business owners. We have lived out in the real world. We are not attorneys. We come from an environment of working and manufacturing and distribution and logistics with real people. We know the burdens on making sure our employees are covered with health insurance. We know the impact of tax increases and tax cuts.

For those of you joining us right now, we would love to hear your stories, the impact on being able to keep more of your own money, what it has meant to you and the ability to invest in your children's future, to build a future for yourself, to build a nest egg, to start a small business, to expand the small business that you have.

BILL and I have heard literally hundreds of stories since the first of the year. We would like to hear yours. You can communicate with us directly at Countdowncrew@mail.house.gov. That is Countdowncrew@mail.house.gov.

At the end of the day, I believe that the key principle that we have shared over and over and over again is that our focus and the focus of the government is that the government cannot create value or wealth for people. What the government can do, done rightly, is create a playing field and a framework to unleash the creativity in the American people, to give them the opportunity to pursue their dreams, to pursue a future, to build a future for themselves, and ultimately we start that process by making sure that people can keep more of what they earn.

When you have control over your money, you are going to invest it in such a way that it makes a difference for you, your family, ultimately for your community and the country. That is why we say we want to create taxpayers, not raise taxes.

It has been a few weeks since we were able to get together here on the floor