

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

Each May, many people from colleges, the Government, and the community hold events in celebration of **ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN (APA) HERITAGE MONTH**. It is a time to educate, understand and celebrate the evolution of the many diverse groups that comprise the APA community.

The term ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN attempts to give expression to cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity while recognizing common historical experiences in American history.

EVOLUTION OF APA MONTH

The evolutionary process of Asian Pacific American recognition officially began in June of 1977, when representative Frank Horton (R-NY) and Norman Y. Mineta (D-GA) introduced Pacific/Asian Heritage (House Resolution 540) to the House of Representatives. It called upon the President to proclaim the first ten days in May as Pacific/Asian Heritage Week. On July 19 of the same year, Senators Daniel Inouye and Spark Matsunaga introduced SJ RES 72 to the Senate. This resolution was similar to the one introduced by Horton and Mineta in the House..

Nearly a year later, on July 10, 1978, the House Representatives passed legislation to proclaim an Asian/Pacific American Heritage Week in May. At this point, the proclamation had to be obtained on a yearly basis because the final joint resolution did not contain an annual designation. On October 5th, former President, Jimmy Carter signed the joint resolution.

On May 7, 1990, Asian Pacific American leaders from around the country gathered at the White House to witness the signing of a proclamation by former President George Bush, declaring May to be "ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH". In the latter part of 1992, on October 23, former President Bush signed legislation designating May of each year as "ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH". The law (HR 5572), introduced by Representatives Horton and Mineta, was approved unanimously by the House of Representatives and the Senate during the 102nd Congress.

THE NATIONS OF ASIA

While there is only one continent named Asia, the nations of Asia are grouped into six subdivisions. The Pacific Island nations are divided into three. They are:

Central Asia	Southwest Asia	East Asia	South Asia	North Asia	SE Asia	Pacific Islands
Mongolia	Afghanistan	China	Bangladesh	Armenia	Brunei	Micronesia
Tibet	Bahrain	Japan	Bhutan	Azerbaijan	Myanmar (Burma)	Melanesia
Xinjiang	Cyprus	North Korea	India	Georgia	Kampuchea (Cambodia)	Polynesia
	Iran, Iraq	South Korea	Maldives	Kazakhstan	Indonesia	
	Israel		Nepal	Kyrgyzstan	Laos	
	Jordan		Pakistan	Russia	Malaysia	
	Kuwait, Lebanon		Sri Lanka	Siberia	Phillippines	
	Oman, Qatar			Tajikistan	Singapore	
	Saudi Arabia			Turkmenistan	Thailand	
	Syria, Turkey			Uzbekistan	Vietnam	
	United Arab Emirates					
	Yemen					

Per a 1997 Office of Management and Budget directive, the Asian or Pacific islander racial category was separated into two different categories: "Asian" and "native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander."

The Census Bureau reports that 13.5 million is the estimated number of U.S. residents who say they are Asian or Asian in combination with one or more other races. This group comprises five percent of the total U.S. population. California has both the largest population (4.6 million) and the largest numerical increase (367,100) of people of this group since April 2000; Hawaii is the state where Asians make up the highest proportion of the total population (58 percent). Next to Spanish, Chinese is the most widely spoken non-English language in the U.S.