

City of East Lansing, Michigan

**A RESOLUTION ACKNOWLEDGING
ASIAN AMERICAN AND NATIVE HAWAIIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER
HERITAGE MONTH**

May 9, 2023

WHEREAS, one of the earliest records of Asian and Pacific Islander Americans in the United States dates back to 1763 in New Orleans, Louisiana, where Filipino sailors who worked the Manila-Acapulco trade route settled; and,

WHEREAS, the Asian and Pacific Islander Americans population represents diverse ancestries that include, but are not limited to, Asian Indian, Bangladeshi, Bhutanese, Burmese, Cambodian, Chamorro, Chinese, Taiwanese, Filipino, Hmong, Indonesian, Iu-Mien, Iwo Jiman, Guamanian, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Malaysian, Maldivian, Mongolian, Nepalese, Native Hawaiian, Vietnamese, Okinawan, Pakistani, Samoan, Singaporean, Sri Lankan, Thai, Tongan, and other Pacific Islander; and,

WHEREAS, Asian and Pacific Islander Americans have made indelible contributions to the history of our country that include, but are not limited to, building the Transcontinental Railroad, serving honorably in the Armed Forces, fighting for the United States in foreign wars, organizing the Delano Grape Strike, and advocating for civil rights; and,

WHEREAS, Asian Americans, native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders have endured a long history of injustice, unjust working conditions, prejudice, and discrimination in some of the darkest times in our nation's history, including the Page Act of 1875, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the incarceration of Japanese American citizens during World War II, the murder of Vincent Chin, the mass shooting of Southeast Asian refugee children in 1989, and the targeting of South Asian Americans, especially those who are Muslim, Hindu, or Sikh, after the national tragedy of 9/11; and,

WHEREAS, present-day inequities faced by AANHPI communities are rooted in our nation's history of exclusion, discrimination, racism, and xenophobia against Asian Americans; and,

WHEREAS, despite the strength shown and successes achieved, the American dream remains out of reach for far too many AANHPI families. AANHPI communities face systemic barriers to economic justice, health equity, educational attainment, and personal safety; and,

WHEREAS, as a nation, as we continue to mourn the senseless killings of six women of Asian descent in Atlanta, Georgia, and the unconscionable acts of violence victimizing our beloved Asian American seniors in cities across the country; and,

WHEREAS, the East Lansing City Council recognizes the heightened fear felt by many Asian American communities in the wake of increasing rates of anti-Asian harassment and violence during the COVID-19 pandemic; and,

WHEREAS, the United States Congress passed a joint Congressional Resolution in 1978, to commemorate Asian and Asian Pacific American Heritage Week during the first week of May; this date was chosen because two important anniversaries occurred during this time: the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants in America on May 7, 1843, and the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad by Chinese laborers on May 10, 1869; and,

WHEREAS, in 1990, Congress voted to expand the week to a month-long celebration; in May 1992, the month of May was permanently designated as "Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month;" and,

WHEREAS, during Asian American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Heritage Month, we recognize the history and achievements of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (AANHPIs) across our nation; and,

WHEREAS, despite the difficulty of our recent history, we reflect on the tradition of leadership, resilience, and courage shown by AANHPI communities and recommit to the struggle for AANHPI equity; and,

WHEREAS, the American story as we know it would be impossible without the strength, contributions, and legacies of AANHPIs who have helped build and unite this country in each successive generation. From laying railroad tracks, tilling fields, and starting businesses, to caring for our loved ones and honorably serving our nation in uniform, AANHPI communities are deeply rooted in the fabric of our American story; and,

“There is no single story of the AANHPI experience, but rather a diversity of contributions that enrich America’s culture and society and strengthen the United States’ role as a global leader.” ~ President Joseph Biden

WHEREAS, during Asian American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Heritage Month, our nation celebrates the achievements of Vice President Kamala Harris, the first person of South Asian descent to hold the Office of the Vice President; and,

WHEREAS, we also celebrate and honor the invaluable contributions the AANHPI communities have made to our nation’s culture and the arts, law, science and technology, sports and public service, including the courageous AANHPIs who have served on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic as health care providers, first responders, teachers, and other essential workers.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the East Lansing City Council does hereby proclaim May 2023 as Asian American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

Ron Bacon
Mayor

Marie Wicks
Interim City Clerk