DEMOCRATIC PARTY of CONTRA COSTA COUNTY
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PROCLAMATION OF MAY 2023 AS ASIAN AMERICAN PACIFIC ISLANDER (AAPI) HERITAGE MONTH

WHEREAS, the month of May was chosen as Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month to commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese citizen, Nakahama Manjiro, to the United States on May 7, 1843, but also the anniversary of the May 10, 1869, completion of the first Transcontinental Railroad, built with the back-breaking labor of nearly 20,000 Chinese immigrants; and

WHEREAS, Contra Costa County's population is more than 18 percent Asian American and Pacific Islander and includes devoted community members who serve as artists, business owners, educators, health care professionals, lawyers and judges, elected officials, clergy members, first responders, military personnel and essential front-line service workers; and

WHEREAS, in the 1920s and 30s, Filipino immigrants arrived in the United States seeking fortune but facing discrimination as they worked in the vast agricultural fields of California. These manongs and manangs played a significant role in building the farm workers movement, including leading the Delano Grape Strike in 1965; and

WHEREAS, we celebrate the achievements and contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders that enrich our history, society and culture, we also must be aware that AAPI history has been whitewashed and significantly erased in American curriculum, including the Chinese Exclusion Act, the Alien Land Acts, the mass incarceration of Japanese Americans, among many other issues. We must also acknowledge a darker aspect of the AAPI experience in America – structural discrimination, prejudice and injustice that most recently manifested itself in racist attacks on Asian Americans, specifically in Half Moon Bay, CA, in January 2023; and

WHEREAS, an analysis by the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at California State University, San Bernardino, found that overall hate crimes in America's largest cities decrease by 7 percent in 2020; while hate crimes targeting people of Asian ancestry rose by nearly 150% during the same time period; and

WHEREAS, individual AAPI populations fare very differently when disaggregated. For example, Pacific Islanders and Southeast Asians fare significantly worse in life outcomes in comparison to East and South Asians, and that colorism in AAPI populations also impact treatment and access; and

WHEREAS, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have distinguished themselves as leading researchers in science, medicine, and technology; innovative farmers and ranchers; distinguished lawyers, judges and government leaders; in the arts, literature, and sports; as war heroes who

defended our country from fascism; and as essential service workers and peacetime healthcare heroes currently on the front lines of the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, today more than 20 million Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders live in the United States and through their actions, make America a more vibrant, prosperous, and secure nation.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Democratic Party of Contra Costa County celebrates May 2023 as AAPI Heritage Month, and encourages all in our community to learn more about Asian American and Pacific Islander heritage, and work to combat racism and xenophobia as we celebrate this month with cultural events and educational activities.

Susan Hildreth, Elected Representative, District 2, with input from AAPI members

Approved by the Democratic Party of Contra Costa County, April 20, 2023