

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 7, 2019

Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee
c/o Stamp Department
United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Washington, DC 20260-3501

Dear Members of the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee:

We write to recommend the issuance of a commemorative stamp to honor the Chinese railroad workers for the upcoming 150th Anniversary of the completion of the First Transcontinental Railroad on May 10, 2019. Many of us have previously requested this stamp.

One hundred fifty years ago, the Central Pacific Railroad and the Union Pacific Railroad joined their tracks together at Promontory Summit, Utah to officially complete the First Transcontinental Railroad. This notable accomplishment transformed the way Americans traveled and how goods were distributed. Before the railroad, it was prohibitively expensive and took almost six months to travel between New York and California. However, the First Transcontinental Railroad drastically reduced both cost and time—changing American norms, lifestyles, and our economy.

Connecting the East and West Coasts of the United States would not have been feasible without the vital role that Chinese immigrant workers played. Over 12,000 Chinese laborers were employed in the construction of the Transcontinental Railroad and over 80 percent of the workforce of the Central Pacific Railroad Company was Chinese immigrant workers. Chinese immigrants were entrusted with the most difficult and dangerous jobs—nearly 1,200 Chinese workers died from work-related accidents—while being paid lower wages than other workers. Despite their extensive contributions, most, if not all, of their names were not recorded and have been forgotten. It is time for these brave workers to receive the national recognition they deserve.

Congress designated Promontory Summit as a National Historic Site in 1957. There are approximately 60,000 visitors each year and the park performs the reenactment of the driving of the Last Spike, the final rail spike driven to connect the two railroads, every summer.

In 2014, the U.S. Department of Labor honored the Chinese railroad workers by inducting them into their Hall of Honor for the 145th Anniversary of the railroad's completion. Former Labor Department Deputy Secretary Chris Lu stated that there is a special place of honor for those who do things first, and therefore, "for the community of 18 million Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in this country, the Chinese railroad workers are part of our first." These early laborers are significant to the Asian American community for their pioneering work at a time of constant racism and discrimination that eventually opened doors for future generations.

There is community support among Asian Americans nationwide for a commemorative stamp as illustrated by a petition started by the US-Asia Institute that accumulated over 7,000 supporters. Above all, many Chinese Americans have expressed the emotional importance of having these forgotten workers receive this public recognition. Asian Americans are the fastest growing ethnic group in the United States. Accordingly, it is critical to recognize the significance of the Chinese railroad workers and share their stories by embedding them into a part of our daily life.

As we approach the 150th Anniversary of the completion of the First Transcontinental Railroad, we believe there is no better way to honor the rich benefits the railroad brought to our nation and bring light to the Chinese railroad workers' significant contributions to the railroad's completion than a commemorative stamp. Again, we have previously requested this stamp and are aware of how crucial this 150th year is based on your stamp selection criteria.

We ask the Committee to approve our recommendation. Thank you for your time and consideration.


Sincerely,



Grace Meng
Member of Congress




Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



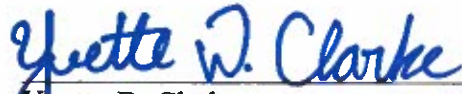
Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



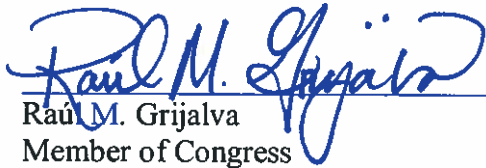
Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



TJ Cox
Member of Congress



Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



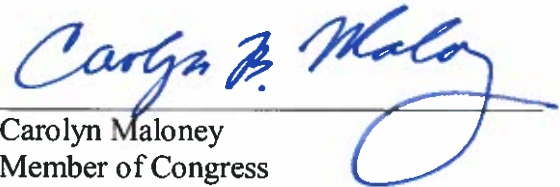
Andy Kim
Member of Congress



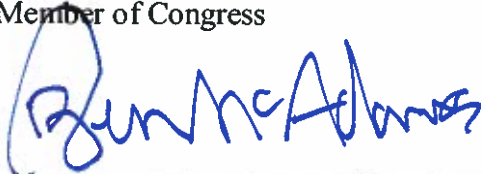
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



Carolyn Maloney
Member of Congress



Ben McAdams
Member of Congress



Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
Member of Congress



Michael San Nicolas
Member of Congress



Albio Sires
Member of Congress



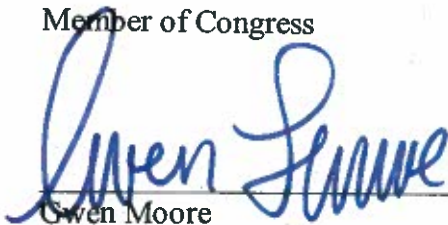
Darren Soto
Member of Congress



Mark Takano
Member of Congress



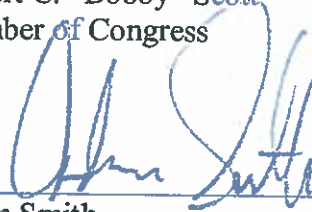
Lee Zeldin
Member of Congress



Gwen Moore
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



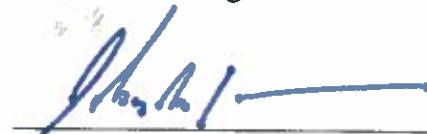
Adam Smith
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Thomas R. Suozzi
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