



Tompkins County Legislature

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PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, Jeanie Jew, a former congressional staffer in the 1970s, first approached Representative Frank Horton with the idea of designating a month to recognize Asian Pacific Americans, following the Nation's bicentennial celebrations, and

WHEREAS, in 1977, Representatives Horton, and Norman Y. Mineta, introduced a United States House of Representatives resolution to proclaim the first ten days of May as Asian-Pacific Heritage Week. Later, a similar bill was introduced by Senators Daniel Inouye and Spark Matsunaga to change from a week to a month, and on May 1, 2009, President Barack Obama issued a Presidential Proclamation which recalls the challenges faced by Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and celebrates their great and significant contributions to our society, and

WHEREAS, the vast diversity of languages, religions, and cultural traditions of Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) people strengthens the fabric of American society. From the arrival of the first Asian American and Pacific Islander immigrants to those who arrive today, as well as those native to the Hawaiian Islands and to our Pacific Island territories, all possess the common purpose of leading a life bound by the ideals of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and

WHEREAS, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders have endured and overcome hardship and heartache. In the earliest years, tens of thousands of Gold Rush pioneers, coal miners, transcontinental railroad builders, as well as farm and orchard laborers, were subject to unjust working conditions, prejudice, and discrimination. Even in the darkness of the Exclusion Act and Japanese internment, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have persevered, providing for their families and creating opportunities for their children, and

WHEREAS, amidst these struggles, AANHPI Americans have contributed in great and significant ways to all aspects of society. They have created works of literature and art, thrived as athletes, and prospered in the world of academia, and

WHEREAS, people of AANHPI heritage have played a vital role in our Nation's economic and technological growth by establishing successful enterprises and pushing the limits of science. They are serving in positions of leadership within the government more than ever before. And along with all of our great service men and women, they have defended the United States from threats at home and abroad, serving our Nation with valor, and

WHEREAS, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders have persevered despite anti-Asian sentiment that surged throughout the COVID-19 pandemic as a result of racism, misinformation and xenophobia, and

WHEREAS, the theme for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month 2026 is "Power in Unity: Strengthening Communities Together," which highlights the importance of leveraging collective action, sharing community stories, and acting as bridge builders to foster resilience and connections, and

WHEREAS, Asians, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders make up approximately 11% of residents in Tompkins County, contributing to the intellectual, academic, literary, cultural and economic vibrancy and diversity of our community, with art, businesses, shops, restaurants, and festivals celebrating cultures, cuisines, and events from regions across Asia and the Pacific, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Tompkins County Legislature does hereby proclaim the month of May 2026, as

ASIAN AMERICAN, NATIVE HAWAIIAN, and PACIFIC ISLANDER AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

in Tompkins County, and that together with our entire community, we join in celebration and recognition of the Asian and Pacific Islander American Community.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I, Shawna M. Black, on behalf of the Tompkins County Legislature, have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the great seal of Tompkins County, State of New York, on this the 19th day of May 2026.

Shawna M. Black, Chairwoman
Tompkins County Legislature