

RECOGNIZING MAY 2025 AS ASIAN, PACIFIC ISLANDER, AND DESI AMERICAN
HERITAGE MONTH

WHEREAS, May is designated as Asian, Pacific Islander, and Desi American (APIDA) Heritage Month to recognize and celebrate the achievements and contributions, as well as acknowledge the sacrifices, of generations of Asian, Pacific Islander, and Desi American people in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the month of May was selected for Asian, Pacific Islander, and Desi American Heritage Month because APIDA are inextricably tied to the history of the United States, with the first Japanese immigrants arriving in the U.S. on May 7, 1843, and the first transcontinental railroad completed on May 10, 1869, with substantial contributions from Chinese immigrants; and

WHEREAS, Asian and Pacific Islander are terms that encompass all of the Asian continent and the Pacific islands of Melanesia (New Guinea, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Fiji and the Solomon Islands), Micronesia (Marianas, Guam, Wake Island, Palau, Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Nauru and the Federated States of Micronesia) and Polynesia (New Zealand, Hawaiian Islands, Rotuma, Midway Islands, Samoa, American Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Cook Islands, French Polynesia and Easter Island); and

WHEREAS, Desi, a term that refers to those of South Asian descent, a pan-ethnic group of diverse people and communities rather than a nationally bounded category, is one of the fastest growing immigrant groups in the U.S., and the APIDA community is an inherently diverse population, comprising more than 45 distinct ethnicities and more than 100 language dialects; and

WHEREAS, along with their many contributions to our country, generations of the Asian, Pacific Islander, and Desi Americans have faced shameful treatment at the hands of their government, including discrimination, prejudice, and systemic barriers to advancement despite hard work and grueling work environments; and

WHEREAS, because our current U.S. Government is engaged daily in depriving lawful citizens and residents of their Constitutional rights, we must commit to remembering and preventing a repetition of the actions carried out during World War II, when U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, forcibly relocating and incarcerating over 120,000 Japanese Americans and Japanese immigrants in ten internment camps across the American West. Historical accounts and research have since shown that the internment was driven by anti-Japanese sentiment and racism rather than genuine security concerns; and

WHEREAS, Bhagat Singh Thind, an Indian independence activist who immigrated to the United States in 1913 to attend graduate school at UC Berkeley, is known for his historic quest for naturalization and played a key part in the long struggle to remove racial barriers to U.S. citizenship. When the U.S. entered World War I in 1917, Thind enlisted in the U.S. Army. As a member of the Sikh religion, he became the first turbaned soldier in the American military. Thind applied for and was granted U.S. citizenship twice—once during his service in the U.S. Army and once after his service—but each decision in favor of citizenship was challenged by the U.S. Bureau of Naturalization based on racial grounds and subsequently reversed; and

WHEREAS, Bhagat Singh Thind became a U.S. citizen for the third and final time in 1935 after Congress granted legal status to all World War I veterans. His struggle illustrates how definitions of race could change over time and be subject to interpretation in ways that had real consequences for people's lives. He died in 1967. It was not until 1940 that all people from India became eligible for naturalization; and

WHEREAS, through all of these struggles, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Desi Americans have demonstrated resilience, perseverance, and determination, and inspired generations of Americans with their resolve and commitment to participation in civil society; and

WHEREAS, Dane County values the diversity, knowledge, and experience its 166 Asian, Pacific Islander, and Desi American employees bring to the service they provide to the residents of Dane County, and also recognizes the APIDA milestones on the County Board; and

WHEREAS, Supervisor Brenda Yang is the first person of Hmong heritage to serve on the County Board; and

WHEREAS, former Supervisor Ashok Kumar and current Supervisor Yogesh Chawla are the first and second Desi Americans, respectively, to be elected to the County Board; and

WHEREAS, Supervisor Patrick Miles is Nisei, a second-generation Japanese American, and is the first person of color and first Asian American to serve as Dane County Board Chair; and

WHEREAS, Jeff Okazaki is the first person of Asian heritage appointed as the Dane County Clerk of Courts.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Dane County Board of Supervisors recognizes May 2025 as Asian, Pacific Islander, and Desi American Heritage Month and the many valuable contributions and sacrifices these individuals and communities have made from the local to the national level.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Dane County Board of Supervisors reaffirms its commitment to promoting diversity, ensuring equity, and fostering inclusion for all of our Asian, Pacific Islander, and Desi American communities, recognizing that our county and communities are strengthened and enriched when we embrace all of their cultures and peoples.

Patrick Miles, Chair
Dane County Board of Supervisor

Signed and sealed before me this
_____ day of _____, 2025.

Scott McDonnell, Dane County Clerk