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SR-52 (2021-2022)

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ENROLLED SEPTEMBER 14, 2021

PASSED IN SENATE SEPTEMBER 10, 2021

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2021–2022 REGULAR SESSION

SENATE RESOLUTION

NO. 52

Introduced by Senator Min

August 18, 2021

Relative to the history of baseball in Asian and Pacific Islander communities.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SR 52, Min.

WHEREAS, While baseball has traditionally been considered America's pastime, the sport has deep roots in Asian American and Pacific Islander cultures and communities; and

WHEREAS, In 1872, Baseball was introduced in Japan by Horace Wilson, an American English teacher at the Kaisei Academy in Tokyo, and became the national sport in Japan during the early post-World War II period; and

WHEREAS, The first generation of Japanese immigrants, referred to as Issei, started to form their own baseball teams after settling in the United States. In 1899, the first recorded Japanese American baseball team was formed in Hawaii by Reverend Takie Okumura. The sport would quickly gain popularity in Hawaii, with organized leagues flourishing by the early 1900s; and

WHEREAS, The earliest known mainland Japanese American baseball team is the San Francisco Fuji Athletic Club, which formed in 1903. Several other California cities developed Issei teams throughout the early twentieth century, including Los Angeles, San Diego, and Fresno; and

WHEREAS, Kenichi Zenimura was a Japanese American baseball player, manager, and promoter. He had a long career with semiprofessional Japanese American baseball leagues in the western United States and Hawaii. Zenimura was a pioneer in the development of Japanese American baseball and helped organize leagues, games, and barnstorming tours of Japan, which brought famed players such as Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig to the west coast and to Japan for exhibition games in the 1920s and 1930s; and

WHEREAS, On September 16, 1956, Bobby Balcena, of Filipino heritage, became the first person of Asian descent to play in Major League Baseball, appearing as a center fielder for the Cincinnati Redlegs, now called the Reds; and

WHEREAS, On September 1, 1964, pitcher Masanori Murakami becomes the first Japanese man to play in Major League Baseball. Murakami pitched a scoreless eighth inning for the San Francisco Giants in a 4-1 loss to the New York Mets; and

WHEREAS, Kim Ng made history in November 2020, as the first woman and first Asian American general manager in Major League Baseball. Ng has won three World Series rings while spending 21 years in the front offices of the Chicago White Sox, New York Yankees, and Los Angeles Dodgers; and

WHEREAS, Dave Roberts, born in Okinawa, Japan, has had incredible success both on and off the baseball field. As an outfielder, Roberts is a two-time World Series champion. The son of a Japanese mother and African American father, Roberts became the first manager of Asian heritage to lead a team, the Los Angeles Dodgers, to the World Series in 2017; and

WHEREAS, Hideo Nomo became the first Japanese major leaguer to permanently relocate to Major League Baseball (MLB) in the United States, debuting with the Los Angeles Dodgers in 1995. Nomo won MLB Rookie of the Year in his first season, leading the league in strikeouts, batting average against, and shutouts. Nomo was selected as an MLB All-Star in 2014, won a World Series championship with the Boston Red Sox in 2013, and was named the American League Championship Series Most Valuable Player in 2013; and

WHEREAS, Shin-Soo Choo, a South Korean professional baseball outfielder, has played in Major League Baseball for the Seattle Mariners, Cleveland Indians, Cincinnati Reds, and Texas Rangers. In 2018, Choo earned a selection to the MLB All-Star Game. That year, Choo had an on-base streak of 52 consecutive games, the longest such single-season streak in Texas Rangers history; and

WHEREAS, South Korean pitcher Chan Ho Park had a very successful 17-year MLB career. He played for the Los Angeles Dodgers, Texas Rangers, San Diego Padres, New York Mets, Philadelphia Phillies, New York Yankees, and Pittsburgh Pirates. Park's 124 career victories rank first all time among Asian pitchers; and

WHEREAS, Ichiro Suzuki, from Japan, is considered among the greatest baseball players of all time. He was named an MLB All-Star 10 times, won the MLB American League Most Valuable Player and Rookie of the Year awards in 2001, and won the Gold Glove Award 10 times. He leads all MLB Asian players in most offensive categories, including hits (2,771), doubles (327), triples (83), batting average (.319), stolen bases (476), runs (1,275) and walks (554); and

WHEREAS, Shohei Ohtani, nicknamed "Shotime," is a Japanese MLB pitcher, designated hitter, and outfielder for the Los Angeles Angels. Ohtani won the American League Rookie of the Year award in 2018 and was selected as an All-Star this year. Ohtani is the first two-way starter in the history of the MLB All-Star Game and is widely regarded as the most accomplished two-way player since Babe Ruth; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, That the Senate recognizes the history of baseball in Asian and Pacific Islander communities and celebrates the contributions Asians and Pacific Islanders have made to the sport; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.