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Chinese American Citizens Alliance

~ National ~

1044 Stockton Street, San Francisco, California 94108 • Telephone/Fax (415)829-9332

National Lodge
ESTABLISHED 1895

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Solidarity and the 19th Amendment

San Francisco, August 18, 2020 — The Chinese American Citizens Alliance (C.A.C.A.) joins with thousands of organizations to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution in 1920. This amendment guarantees American women the right to vote, but when it was passed, it did not include Chinese American women, or “aliens ineligible for citizenship,” and the Suffragists Movement largely ignored help from black women who joined the struggle knowing full well that Jim Crow laws were strengthening against its community.

In the 1913 march to “Fight for the Vote” at President Woodrow Wilson’s inauguration, black suffragists were segregated and assigned to the rear of the march lest their mixing with white suffragists offend Southern women. Fiery black journalist Ida B. Wells advocated for black women to join the Suffragist Movement even as she was exposing lynchings in the South. It would take another 30 years before Chinese and Asians got a pathway to the vote after the repeals of the Chinese exclusion laws and “Asiatic Barred Zone.” But strong Chinese Americans such as community activist and prominent suffragist Mabel Ping-Hua Lee in New York and Tye Leung Schulze in San Francisco, who was the first Chinese American woman to vote, advocated for Chinese American women to be engaged with the largely white Suffragist Movement.

“Although denied the benefits of full U.S. citizenship, Chinese American heroines were at the forefront of the struggle for women voting rights and human dignity. They understood that the struggle for civil rights, even if at the times that did not include them, were struggles for everyone,” states C.A.C.A. National President Melanie Chan.

At the time of the centennial celebration of the passage of the 19th Amendment, let us also recognize the courage and selfless foresight of Chinese American women who understood the strength of demonstrated solidarity in support of civil rights for any of our brothers and sisters.

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The Chinese American Citizens Alliance, established in 1895, is among the oldest civil rights organizations in the United States. Headquartered in San Francisco with chapter/lodges in Albuquerque (NM), Boston (MA), Chicago (IL), Greater San Gabriel Valley (CA), Greater New York (NY), Houston (TX), Las Vegas (NV), Los Angeles (CA), Mississippi, Oakland (CA), Orange County (CA), Peninsula (CA), Portland (OR), Phoenix (AZ), Sacramento (CA), Salinas (CA), San Antonio (TX), San Francisco (CA), Seattle (WA) and Washington, D.C., the Alliance addresses issues regarding voter education, political participation, racial discrimination and hate crimes, and supports youth leadership training programs and equal employment opportunities for all Chinese Americans.