



Asian Americans and Congress: A Documentary History (Documentary Reference Collections)

Robert H. Hyung Chan Kim

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With California's passage of the Save Our State Initiative in 1994, fear of aliens has once again appeared in U.S. legislative history. Since 1790, congressional legislation on federal immigration and naturalization policy has been harsh on Asian immigrants, although less so since 1965. This documentary history covers all major immigration laws passed by Congress since 1790. The volume opens with an overview of the basis on which Congress has restricted Asian immigration. It then includes discussions of particular immigration legislation, showing the significance to Asian Americans and the documents themselves.

With California's passage of the Save Our State Initiative in November 1994, fear of aliens has once again appeared in U.S. legislative history. Since 1790, congressional legislation establishing federal immigration and naturalization policy has been particularly harsh on Asian immigrants. Although Congress has been less hostile to Asian immigration since 1965, there was a renewed effort to limit immigration from Asia as recently as 1989, and the restrictive national mood will undoubtedly find its way into the 1996 elections. Showing the impact of immigration laws on Asian immigrants, this documentary history covers all major immigration laws passed by Congress since 1790.

The volume's opening chapter points to three major theses?that initially Congress restricted and excluded Asian immigration on the basis of its traditional policy of denying citizenship to nonwhite people, that Congress denied Asians entry to the U.S. on the grounds that their culture made them incompatible with Americans, and that Congress passed laws treating each of the Asian ethnic groups as a racialized ethnic group. The volume then includes discussions of particular immigration legislation, showing the significance to Asian Americans and the documents themselves.

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