US State and Federal Actions
Targeting Asians, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders

State of California

Foreign Miners Tax Act of 1850. Levied a $20/month tax to be paid by all Asian immigrants. This was an impossible fee given wages and costs of living. Repealed 1851.

Foreign Miners' License Tax Act of 1852. Required all Asian immigrants in California working in mines to pay a monthly fee of $3/person to avoid deportation. The fee was increased to $4/month in 1853.

Anti-Coolie Act of 1862. Levied a fee of $2.50/month on all other adult Asian immigrants as a "police tax."

United States Federal Government

Naturalized Citizen Act (1870). Restricted naturalized citizenship to white people and people of African descent. No one of Asian descent could be naturalized as a US citizen.

Page Act (1875). Prohibited the immigration of Chinese women on suspicion of prostitution.

Chinese Exclusion Act (1882). Imposed a 10-year ban on all Chinese laborers immigrating to United States. Extended another 10 years in 1892 (Geary Act), and made "permanent" in 1902, adding requirements for Chinese immigrants already in the U.S. to hold a "residency license." Repealed in 1943, while limiting immigration from China to 105 persons/year. Congress condemned these acts in 2011-2012.

Overthrow and Occupation of Kingdom of Hawai'i (1893). After the illegal overthrow, the U.S. annexed Hawaii in 1898, at which point it also banned the teaching Hawai'ian language in any schools. The illegitimacy of the overthrow was acknowledged in 1993 by President Bill Clinton.

"Gentleman's Agreement" (1908). Permitted women and families of Japanese immigrants already in the United States to immigrate to the U.S., but almost no one else. Also ended forced segregation of Japanese schools in San Francisco.

Immigration Act of 1917. Prohibited entry from all Asian countries except Japan and the Philippines.

United States vs. Bhagat Singh Thind (U.S. Supreme Court, 1923). Ruled the limits of the Naturalized Citizen Act applied to the defendant and to all Hindu persons because they were not white or of African descent.

Immigration Act of 1924. Ended all Asian immigration to the U.S. until reopened on a limited basis (for family relocation and certain job skills in 1952.

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Executive Order 9066 (U.S. President, 1942). Removed all Japanese Americans in designated "military zones" from their homes and incarcerated them in military camps. They were released after the conclusion of World War II. Reparations not awarded until 1990.

Operation Crossroads (U.S. Military, 1946-present). Permanent destruction of Bikini Atoll in the U.S. Marshall Islands as part of ongoing nuclear testing. No reparations have been offered for the loss of land and lives to radiation-related cancers and other illnesses caused by extensive nuclear testing.

USA PATRIOT Act (2001). Created and sustains domestic and worldwide surveillance of Arab, Indian and other central Asian persons; creates barriers to travel and to citizenship; affects many non-Muslim Asians in America and abroad.

Vietnamese Repatriation Agreement (2008, 2017 expansions; Executive Branch). Deports Vietnamese persons from the U.S., many of whom had been granted asylum as refugees.

Trump v. Hawaii (2017, U.S. Supreme Court). Decision upholds President Trump's "Muslim Ban" executive orders, which prohibited all travel and refugee emigration to the U.S. from six predominantly Muslim countries, including two in Asia (Iran, Iraq).

Anti-Asian labelling of the SARS CoVI-2 pandemic (U.S. President, 2020). Associated with dramatic rise in anti-Asian rhetoric and crimes against Asians of all nationalities in the United States.

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