

1 [Transcontinental Chinese Railroad Workers Day - May 10, 2025]

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3 **Resolution recognizing May 10, 2025, as Transcontinental Chinese Railroad Workers**
4 **Day in the City and County of San Francisco.**

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6 WHEREAS, The nearly 2,000 mile Transcontinental Railroad, which shortened travel
7 time across the United States (U.S) from six months to one week, was completed on May 10,
8 1869, when the Central Pacific Railroad Company and the Union Pacific Railroad Company
9 linked railroad tracks with a golden spike at Promontory Summit, Utah; and

10 WHEREAS, On July 1, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed into law the Pacific
11 Railroad Act of 1862, which authorized the Central Pacific Railroad Company to build a
12 transcontinental railroad that would link the U.S. from east to west; and

13 WHEREAS, Work began in 1863, as the Central Pacific Railroad Company started to
14 build its tracks in Sacramento moving east and the Union Pacific Railroad Company started to
15 build westward from Council Bluffs, Iowa, where railroad lines were already operating from the
16 eastern part of the country; and

17 WHEREAS, For six years, the workers of both companies toiled to lay down the rail
18 beds, tracks, and other necessary infrastructure; and

19 WHEREAS, Because of difficulties in recruiting a sufficient number of workers, nearly
20 12,000 Chinese immigrants were employed by the Central Pacific Railroad Company and
21 made up more than 80 percent of its workforce; and

22 WHEREAS, Chinese workers were given the most difficult, dangerous jobs and were
23 paid lower wages than other railroad workers and nearly 1,200 Chinese railroad workers died
24 from work accidents, avalanches, and explosions while working in the Sierra Nevada
25 Mountains; and

1 WHEREAS, Chinese workers, who once set a world record when they laid 10 miles of
2 track in one day, were thought of as indispensable by their foremen and were respected for
3 their work ethic and discipline; and

4 WHEREAS, In 1865, then California Governor Leland Stanford testified to U.S.
5 Congress, “Without these Chinese Railroad Workers it would be impossible to complete the
6 Western portion of this great national enterprise”; and

7 WHEREAS, In 2014, the U.S. Department of Labor inducted the Chinese railroad
8 workers into the Labor Hall of Honor, noting that they faced prejudice, low wages and social
9 isolation, but, in spite of these challenges, they courageously took a stand to organize for
10 fairer wages and safer working conditions; and

11 WHEREAS, The Chinese workers’ fight against unfair labor practices set an example
12 for the millions of Asian Americans who came to the United States after them; and

13 WHEREAS, It is fitting that the early contributions of the Chinese railroad workers
14 continue to be remembered and honored by San Francisco every year in May during Asian
15 American Pacific Islander Heritage Month; now, therefore, be it

16 RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors recognizes May 10, 2025,
17 as Transcontinental Chinese Railroad Workers Day in San Francisco.

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