RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF LEGAL PROTECTION OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

WHEREAS, OCA is one of the largest and oldest civil rights organizations in the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, In 1994, OCA resolved to oppose discriminatory practices against the gay and lesbian community;

WHEREAS, OCA will continue to be an advocate and strive toward fulfilling the hopes and aspirations of Chinese Americans and Asian Pacific Americans in the United States; and

WHEREAS, OCA recognizes that Asian Pacific Americans, especially Chinese Americans, have been the targets of numerous discriminatory laws that have harmed their families and communities, including bans on interracial marriage, ownership of property, immigration restrictions, and exclusionary acts; and

WHEREAS, Although lawfully enacted, these discriminatory laws were morally reprehensible and wrong because they legitimized unfair practices which denied basic human rights to certain classes of individuals deemed to be undesirable at the time; and

WHEREAS, That legacy of discrimination continues to impact thousands of gay and lesbian members within the Asian Pacific American community who are currently excluded from over 1,100 federal rights that come with marriage; and

WHEREAS, Those rights include, but are not limited to, the right to sponsor a partner for immigration to the U.S., collect social security survivors benefits, file joint income tax returns, and exercise family and medical leave; and,

WHEREAS, Our country, including the Asian Pacific American community, is strengthened by individuals who are partnered in committed familial relationships; and

WHEREAS, American families, like the fabric of our American Society, are quilts of many colors and cloths with strong, committed families including single parent households, adult children caring for elderly parents, and adult siblings caring for minor siblings; and

WHEREAS, More than 38,000 Asian Pacific Americans are in same-sex relationships, and Asian Pacific American same-sex couples are raising more than 17,000 children under 18, and these families would all stand to benefit from the full protections of marriage; and

WHEREAS, Many Asian Pacific Americans, including Chinese Americans, are advancing the struggle for marriage equality for same-sex couples across the country; and

WHEREAS, OCA recognizes that marriage equality for same-sex couples is an important issue, not only because it impacts so many thousands of families in the Asian Pacific American community, but also because it advances the principles of social justice, equal opportunity, and fair treatment for all; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that OCA supports legal recognition for individuals in marriage and other committed familial relationships without limitation based upon race, religion, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation.