[Name of the Writer]

[Name of Instructor]

[Subject]

[Date]

**How the Chinese Exclusion Act Can Help Us Understand Immigration Politics Today**

**Introduction**

What exactly is the Chinese Exclusion Act? It was basically an American law signed by President Chester A. Arthur on the 6th of May 1882. In accordance with this law, all Chinese people were banned from immigrating to the United States. It further built on the Page Act, which prohibited Chinese females from migrating to America. Chinese Exclusion is the first ever act is the first ever implemented law that prohibited individuals from an ethnic group from migrating (Spring). The United States is deemed as one of the most powerful countries of the world. It is a fact that people from different ethnicities come to the country to settle down. However, the Chinese Exclusion Act prevented the Chinese from settling down in the United States back in 1882 as mentioned above. Regardless of the efforts, China put in to better themselves as a community, they still struggled to get by for a good amount of time. This paper will be discussing the impact of the Chinese Exclusion Act on the Chinese community as well as Americans (Dirlik and Meisner). Light will be shed on the issues surrounding the act and the controversy it brought with it. Lastly, this paper will also discuss the impact of the act today and how it still influences the world to this day.

**Discussion**

The Importance of Having Awareness of the Chinese Exclusion Act

There is no denying the fact that every single being on this earth learns from their mistakes, it goes for Nations as well. Chinese people are known for being hardworking and determined. Their productivity and strongmindedness knows no bounds. The people of the Chinese community have contributed a fair share in the advancement of the United States, but there were some hurdles were created to stop them from integrating into the country completely. A law was passed and signed by then-President Chester A. Arthur to ban all Chinese from the United States in 1882 (Chen, 298-328). The law was supposed to last for ten years but the controversy and debate around it stretched further to the point it was made permanent in the year 1902. There was a lot of distress caused due to this act but was finally revoked in 1943 by the Magnuson Act. It was unfortunate how the individuals born of Chinese descent in the United States saw great discrimination. This bit of history helps people learn today, the Americans are more used to and mesh well with diversity today. In fact, the people of the United States themselves have started to fight for the rights of other ethnicities in contemporary society (Alarcón, 185-218). The politicians and leaders today can very well learn a thing or two from the past to this day and give the people of different ethnicities equal rights as the U.S. citizens regardless of what ethnical group they belong to.

Background

Amid the California Gold Rush, a huge number of Chinese immigrated to the United States. In the start, the Chinese were well respected and known as determined people who worked really hard to be where they are. They were making a mark by stepping in every possible job that they were offered (Chinn, 681). They were the people who had the passion and were willing to do anything to make ends meet as they saw great poverty in the past. Later in the 1860s the Chinese populace grew and kept on thriving as a society. It was time the whites had enough and there was only a little precious metal to get them by, so they decided to protest against the Chinese community accusing them of stealing the majority of the jobs. This was wrong as the Chinese had made a mark based on their hard work and determination (Johnson, 105-119). The cry which is known as "California for the Americans" was raised by the concerned people. The Chinese started to get ridiculed and people started to call them human leeches. Eventually, since things got political the Chinese Exclusion Act initiated. This was the first ever act to target a singular ethnicity. As a result, all the Chinese were made to leave the country, families broke, and a lot of hardships were faced because Americans blamed them for their deflated income. The act was the first of its kind, little did it know that history will be repeating in the future as well. Immigration is still an issue in the United States and ever since the time of President Donald Trump, has not seen better days. Politicians should learn from the past as it is a known fact that Chinese paved the way for further development in the United States form the day they stepped foot in the country.

The Main Issue of the Act

 It is safe to say that the Chinese Exclusion Act was a result of thirty years of racial buildup. It is unfortunate and sad that it ever got materialized as to this day it is said to be the most ineffective and irrational acts of all time. It not only affected the Chinese community but also negatively influenced the United States (Chang, 154). Back when the Chinese first came into the United States, things were in harmony. Both the communities worked together and respected one another. Then came the rise of racial discrimination of the people who could not look past the ethnicity. The Chines people suffered greatly because of the fact but the economy of the United States also dropped. The Chinese community actually helped boost it as the country was going to ruins after the bloody Civil war, but after the exclusion act, there was again a great demise in the American economy. Further. The Chinese community was greatly suffering, the people were not able to expand, but the other ethnicities, however, got the chance to thrive. The European community got an opportunity to integrated into the United States. Further, the impact of the Chinese Exclusion Act did not stay restricted to the United States alone, it had an impact on the Canadian Chinese as well (Romero, 21-32). as if things were not tough enough because of the strict Canadian policies for the Chinese, there was an official ban in 1923. Canada passed a suit and Chinese were banned in the country as well. Over the course of time, there have been only a few occasions when the Chinese community has been completely banned from a country. Americans can learn to this day how diversity is essential to prosper. The Chinese Elimination act did not just impact the Chinese community but also brought great harm to the economy of the United States.

Impressions of the Chinese Exclusion Act

 The Chinese Exclusion Act was a result of the bitterness that was harvested in the whites. The passing of this law was a foolish and cowardly move. As they say, a few people having issues causes a chain effect, that is exactly what happened here. The Chinese people who had to leave the country spread into various other locations, they got separated from their families and their community got segregated. The Chinese people who were in the country could not go and meet their people due to fear that they might not be able to return back, and the Chinese individuals outside America could not even enter the country. The translational relations saw a great demise due to this Exclusion act. Further, the pose-Civil war era was quite hard in the United States (Lew-Williams, 178-180). They could not get back on their feet without the help of the Chinese, as they were the only ethnic group who was willing to give their services and hard work for a small amount of money. America itself suffocated its economy by putting a ban on the Chinese. The thing here to learn is that blaming others is never the answer.

Other Viewpoints Regarding the Act

Today the Exclusion Act is deemed questionable, but it is sad to say that back in the day there were people who were in favor of it. Starting from Dennis Kearney who was the first one to support the act. He was a political leader famous for discriminating the Chinese community. The second being John Bigler, who was the third Governor of California. Bigler also like Dennis was in opposition of Chinese labor. Then there was a supreme order of Caucasians who supported their viewpoint and despised Chinese people (Lew-Williams, 178-180). Bigler believed in the fact that the Chinese can never integrate into the United States. Further, to make things crystal, people from other descent were fully allowed to immigrate to America without any restrictions. This further depicts the racial strain.

**Conclusion**

Looking at things today, America needs to be more accepting of diversity. Even though the Chinese-Americans have made great contributions to the United States economy, there are still many tensions that exist. The Chinese Exclusion Act still remains to this date an example of one of the biggest discriminations of all time, but it cannot defy the 14th amendment. Any child born in America of Chinese descent is a citizen by every right and there is no denying it (Spring). The act just reminds of the darker times which were clouded by racism and foolishness. There is no denying the fact that this act did not just negatively impact the Chinese community, but it also influenced the United States. It is to hope that one day all these tensions will be completely removed between both the nations.

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