



CALIFORNIA ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 30, 2013

Contact: Andrew T. Medina
Phone: (916) 319-3686

Asian & Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus Recognizes Fred Korematsu Day

Sacramento, CA - Assemblymember Paul Fong (D-Cupertino) released the following statement in observance of Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution, which falls on January 30th. Authored by former-Assemblymember Warren T. Furutani (D – South LA County), Assembly Bill 1775 of the 2009 – 2010 Legislative Session was signed into law on September 23, 2010.

“As chair of the Asian & Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus, I would like to join the community in celebrating Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution.

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order (E.O.) 9066 on February 19, 1942, which forced Americans of Japanese ancestry to be incarcerated into concentration camps. Fred Korematsu took a stand and defied these orders leading to his arrest.

While he was in county jail, Mr. Korematsu was approached by Ernest Besig of the American Civil Liberties Union to see if Mr. Korematsu would like to be a test case to challenge the constitutionality of E.O. 9066. Mr. Korematsu agreed, and they appealed the case up to the Supreme Court.

In 1944, the Supreme Court ruled against Mr. Korematsu. The decision maintained that E.O. 9066 was not an act of racism but was justified by the military’s suspicions that Japanese Americans were colluding with the enemy.

Nearly 40 years after the Supreme Court decision, Mr. Korematsu’s conviction was overturned in the federal courts in 1983 thanks to the discovery of key government documents that revealed that Japanese Americans had committed no acts of treason. These documents were not presented to the Supreme Court in the 1944 case.

President Bill Clinton recognized Mr. Korematsu’s bravery and work with the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998.

Fred Korematsu Day allows us to remember the life of Mr. Korematsu and reflect on his brave actions to preserve our civil liberties.”

The API Legislative Caucus was established in 2001 with the mission of representing and advocating for the interests of the diverse Asian and Pacific Islander communities throughout California. Additionally, the Caucus seeks to increase Asian Pacific Islander participation and representation in all levels of government. Assemblymember Paul Fong and Assemblymember Das Williams serve as chair and vice-chair, respectively, of the caucus

###