

WASHINGTON DC – Today, Rep Michael Honda, Chairman of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, introduced legislation, cosponsored by Representatives Teague, Faleomavaega, Kilpatrick, Filner, Israel, Cohen, to honor World War II prisoners of war.

“This legislation celebrates, honors, and commemorates the courageous and faithful men and women who were taken as U.S. POWs,” said Rep Michael Honda. “It also commends the GOJ for the steps it has taken to provide some justice to U.S. POWs and recognizes our strong alliance with Japan. I have long felt that Congress has a moral obligation to honor the men and women who suffered grave injustices during WWII. With fewer than 500 surviving POWs alive today, join me in taking this small, but significant, gesture to show these brave men and women that Congress has not forgotten about their experience and sacrifice, and that we appreciate our ally Japan for the steps they have taken.”

During World War II, an estimated 27,000 men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces were captured by Imperial Japan's military. These American POWs were subjected to brutal and inhumane conditions and forced labor, and nearly 40 percent perished.

The Government of Japan (GOJ) has, in recent years, taken positive steps to address this issue. Last year, Japan's Ambassador to the U.S., Ichiro Fujisaki, delivered an apology on behalf of the GOJ at a U.S. POW convention. This welcome apology was historic, demonstrating that the GOJ realizes the pain still felt by many surviving U.S. POWs and their family members today.

In addition to offering an apology, the GOJ also announced that this year it will invite, for the first time, U.S. POWs to Japan for an exchange program of reconciliation and remembrance.

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