

WASHINGTON, DC – This week, the House of Representatives unanimously passed H.Res. 1153, a resolution commemorating Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, introduced by Rep. Mazie Hirono (HI-02). Members of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) made the following statements to celebrate May as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month:

“The contributions and histories of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) must be recognized and remembered as part of the American story, from the construction of the transcontinental railroad, the courage of the Filipino veterans and the 442 nd Regimental Combat Team, and the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II,” said **Rep. Mike Honda (CA-15)**,

Chair of CAPAC. “Asian Pacific American Heritage Month is a time for us to take pride in the diversity of our communities, celebrate the contributions of AAPIs to this nation, and reaffirm our commit to the promise of America’s future for all Americans.”

“The Asian American and Pacific Islander community is composed of over 15 million people,” said **Rep. Mazie Hirono (HI-2)**, member of CAPAC. “AAPIs own 1.1 million businesses, generating an estimated \$326 billion for our economy. The community is a crucial element in the cultural fabric of the United States, representing people from East Asia, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, and the Pacific Islands. We celebrate the month of May as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month to not only commemorate the achievements of the AAPI community but to remind us of the work that is left to do.”

### **Highlighting a few CAPAC initiatives this Heritage Month:**

- Justice for the Filipino veterans - Filipino veterans, who fought alongside American soldiers, were promised full veterans’ benefits, yet, in 1946, President Truman signed the Rescission Act, which stripped them of benefits that were accorded to all other soldiers. The Senate recently passed legislation that would bring justice for the Filipino veterans. One of CAPAC's top priorities this year is to pass similar legislation in the House of Representatives.

- Reuniting families of Filipino veterans - Compounding this inequity are the immigration quotas that delay for up to 20 years the issuance of visas to sons and daughters of these Filipino veterans, a major hindrance to the reunification of these families. Rep. Hirono’s

legislation, H.R. 1287, the Filipino Veterans Family Reunification Act, would exempt the sons and daughters of naturalized Filipino veterans from immigration quotas.

- Securing self-determination rights for Native Hawaiians – Rep. Abercrombie’s legislation, H.R. 505, the Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act, would grant Native Hawaiians the same rights to manage their affairs currently enjoyed by other indigenous people – American Indians and Alaska Natives. The bill passed the House of Representatives last fall. CAPAC calls upon the Senate and the President to ensure passage of this important legislation.

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*The Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) is a bicameral and bipartisan caucus of Members of Congress of Asian and Pacific Islander descent and Members who have a strong dedication to promoting the well-being of the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. Founded in 1994 by then Congressman Norman Mineta, and currently chaired by Congressman Michael Honda, CAPAC has been addressing the needs of the AAPI community in all areas of American life. For more information on CAPAC, please call (202) 225-2631 or visit <http://www.honda.house.gov/capac> .*