

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Mike Honda, Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) – joined by CAPAC members Senator Daniel Inouye (D-HI), Rep. David Wu (D-OR), Rep. Doris Matsui (D-CA), and Rep. Madeleine Bordallo (D-Guam) – issued the following statement on the national Day of Remembrance:

### **Congressman Mike Honda:**

“This Sunday, February 19, marks the 64th anniversary of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s signing Executive Order 9066.

In signing this Order, President Roosevelt authorized the incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans and legal resident aliens of the United States in internment camps during World War II. Italian Americans and German Americans also faced discriminatory policies during World War II, including being branded as “enemy aliens,” identification requirements, travel restrictions, seizure of personal property, and internment.

In order to preserve the lessons from this shameful era, the Japanese American community – joined by all those who cherish our nation’s fundamental principles of civil liberties – recognize February 19th as a National Day of Remembrance. We encourage all Americans to use this day to learn the lessons from the internment period to avoid making similar mistakes in the future.

Our federal government has recognized and made amends for the fundamental violations of the basic rights of those of Japanese Ancestry that took place pursuant to E.O 9066 but we must continue to learn from these events. In the post-9/11 world, the need to protect our nation and our civil liberties more than ever.

At a time when inflamed passions from our current conflict with Iraq and the war against terrorism may prompt similar discrimination against targeted ethnic groups – particularly those in the Asian Pacific American community – we must remember the lessons from this shameful chapter of US history.

Recognizing February 19 as a “Day of Remembrance” helps us retain those important lessons.”

### **Senator Daniel Inouye:**

“On February 16, 2006, I introduced the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Latin Americans of Japanese Descent Act in commemoration of February 19, 1942, the day that President Roosevelt signed a document that authorized the internment of about 120,000 persons of Japanese ancestry. Each year, on the anniversary of this date, the internment is remembered both for the pain it caused, and the lessons that can be learned. I am certain that these lessons can propel this great nation forward toward more equal justice for all.”

### **Congressman David Wu:**

“When remembering February 19, 1942, we must recognize that measures such as Executive Order 9066, which was found to be shaped by race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership, violate not only the rights of those they target, but in fact, attack the basic freedoms of all Americans guaranteed by the Constitution.”

### **Congresswoman Doris Matsui:**

“With this Time of Remembrance, we mark the 64th anniversary of one of the greatest

suspensions of liberty in our nation's history, when tens of thousands of Japanese-Americans were forcibly removed from their homes and communities. Sadly, this was an avoidable consequence of racial prejudice and wartime hysteria. I hope every American will take this day to reaffirm their commitment to our Constitution and the rights and protections it guarantees for all of us."

### **Congresswoman Madeleine Bordallo:**

"There are lessons to be learned from this experience, and these lessons cannot be learned without discussing and understanding the circumstances surrounding the enactment of Executive Order 9066. We must be cognizant of the fragile nature of our civil rights which have been won on the battlefield and in the halls of Congress. We must always be mindful of the threats to our freedom and security and likewise, we must be mindful of how our own perceptions of our fellow Americans and our own prejudices affect our freedom."

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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> .*