

Congresswoman Matsui Applauds Passage of The Internment Camp Preservation Bill

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Washington, DC “Before its final approval by the House of Representatives, Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (CA-5) spoke in support of the Internment Camp Preservation Bill, H.R. 1492. This legislation would establish a grant program that allows private citizens, groups, and local, state and tribal governments to partner with the federal government to preserve the internment camps and related historical sites where Japanese Americans were detained during World War II. Following the expected passage of this legislation, which the Congresswoman introduced with Congressmen Thomas (CA- 22) and Honda (CA- 15), it will go to the President for his signature.

Below is the text of her remarks [as prepared for delivery]:

“The internment of thousands of Japanese Americans during World War II is a painful part of our nation’s past. The memories of the time when so many innocent Americans spent in stark and isolated camps continue to resonate today.

“We honor the memories of these people not by forgetting what happened. Nor do we honor them by proclaiming that such events could never occur in today’s United States. Instead, we honor the past by preserving the sites where the internment took place. In doing so, we deepen our understanding of the internment, and we help educate future generations about how to avoid its recurrence.

“Preserving these internment sites is a solemn task we all bear. That is why the legislation before us today is so important. It directs the federal government to partner with local entities to identify and protect internment sites. In the process, it will help to demonstrate our country’s commitment to equality, justice, and liberty for all.

“These are the founding principles of our Republic. We have no greater responsibility as Members of Congress than to protect and further these ideals. This legislation will help us do so by communicating the lessons of the internment to our children and grandchildren.

â€œIt has been a distinct pleasure of mine to collaborate with so many of my colleagues to bring this legislation before the House today. I would like to extend my special thanks to my colleague from California, Chairman Thomas. His leadership has been instrumental in helping to craft this bill and advance it to the point of passage.

â€œI would also like to thank Mr. Honda for his tireless advocacy. Mr. Honda has proven to be a leader on internment preservation issues. He has shepherded this bill through the legislative process, and I appreciate his efforts. I am proud to stand with him and with Chairman Thomas as original co-sponsors of this timely and necessary legislation.

â€œLet us pass it today so that those who come after us â€“ like my two young grandchildren â€“ can visit the places where their grandparents were wrongly imprisoned.

â€œLet us pass it today so that those who come after us will know of the places where their ancestors struggled for freedom in the country that they loved.

â€œAnd let us pass it today so that those who come after us will have a physical reminder of what they can never allow to happen again.â€&A•

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