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Ensures historical sites and the lessons of this tragic period do not fade from national memory

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Washington, DC – Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (CA-5) spoke in support of the Internment Camp Preservation Bill, H.R. 1492, which 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. The House is expected to pass the legislation that the Congresswoman introduced with Congressmen Thomas (CA- 22) and Honda (CA- 15).

The following is the statement she gave on the floor of the House highlighting the importance of preserving the internment camps:

[Click here to view Congresswoman Matsui's floor statement regarding the preservation of the Internment Camps](#)

“History plays a significant role in this country. Not only does it influence and inform our decisions today, but it clearly shows the successes and failures of this nation to ensure every citizen is protected under the Constitution.

“Sixty years ago, Executive Order 9066 permitted the federal government to uproot 120,000 American citizens of Japanese descent from their homes and their communities; forcibly interning them in one of several camps across the Western United States. This included my husband, Bob, who was an infant, and his family, who were held a short time at Tule Lake, in California before being sent to Caldwell, Idaho. After being expelled from their communities, my parents met at the camp in Poston, Arizona, where I was born at the end of World War II.

“It was one of the greatest suspensions of liberty in our nation’s history, an avoidable consequence of racial prejudice and wartime hysteria.

“These camps are the physical “tangible” representation of our government’s failure to protect the Constitutional rights of every American. However, they are also a symbol of this nation’s ability to recognize and acknowledge our mistakes.

“For both of these reasons it is essential that the internment camps and sites be preserved and maintained. In protecting them, we are reaffirming our belief in the Constitution and the rights and protections it guarantees for each and every American.

“The bill before us embraces this idea. H.R. 1492 allows for camp committees; private citizens; and state, local and tribal governments to partner with the federal government to preserve the historical sites from this period. By preserving the history behind these physical landmarks new generations of Americans will learn the lessons of this tragic period “and significantly, the lesson will not fade from our national memory.

“I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to Congressman Thomas for his leadership in working with this bill and in bringing it to the floor. I would also like to thank Congressmen Honda and Pombo for their bipartisan dedication to this

issue. I would like to acknowledge Mike Holland with Congressman Thomas's personal staff.

Finally, I must also thank my good friend Gerald Yamada, who originally brought this my husband's attention, for his tireless effort behind the scenes on behalf of the Japanese American community.

Through this legislation, we refresh the pact established in our Constitution between citizen and government, which ensures our government is a protector of our rights and liberties.

The House is expected to pass this legislation today.

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