

# MATSUI INTRODUCES BIPARTISAN LEGISLATION TO PRESERVE HISTORIC INTERNMENT, CONFINEMENT SITES

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WASHINGTON, DC – Today, Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (D-CA) announced her original co-sponsorship of legislation to preserve historic “confinement sites” used to detain Japanese Americans during World War II. Matsui joined Congressman Bill Thomas (R-CA) and Congressman Mike Honda (D-CA) in introducing the legislation yesterday. The bill, H.R. 1492, is Matsui’s first piece of original legislation in Congress.

“The internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans in 1942 as a result of wartime hysteria remains a powerful lesson today for the protection of basic rights and freedoms. This bill will work in partnership with local communities to preserve these sites and ensure that their lesson does not fade from our nation’s memory,” Matsui said. “Several of these sites are in need of protection from the effects of time – protection this bill will provide – and I urge my colleagues to adopt it as quickly as possible. I was pleased to see that the House Resources Committee has already scheduled the bill for a hearing.”

Earlier today, the House Subcommittee on National Parks, Recreation and Public Works announced that it will hold a hearing on H.R. 1492 next Thursday, April 14, 2005.

“In addition, I am grateful for the work that Congressman Thomas invested to hone this legislation, and appreciative of the Japanese American National Heritage Coalition for its longstanding consultation on this issue at the local and federal level.”

H.R. 1492 was introduced on April 6, 2005. It authorizes \$38 million in grants for preservation projects at historic “confinement” sites across the country, with a twenty-five percent non-federal match required to distribute funds. In the legislation, the phrase “confinement sites” is used to designate that funds may be used for the ten internment camps as well as associated sites. H.R. 1492 calls for the grant program to be administered by the National Parks Service in consultation with the Japanese American National Heritage Coalition. The program would sunset two years after all of the authorized appropriations are awarded.

Congressman Honda stated, “I am excited to be working with my distinguished colleagues Congressman Thomas and Congresswoman Matsui on this important project, which promises to carry on the important lessons of the internment period.”

Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui was born in the Poston Relocation Center in Arizona. Her husband, the late Congressman Robert T. Matsui, was interned at the Tule Lake Relocation Center in California. The legislation continues work started by Congressman Thomas, the late Congressman Robert T. Matsui, and the Japanese American National Heritage Coalition in the fall of 2004.

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