



May 30, 2024

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

As Members of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), we write with wholehearted support for the posthumous nomination of Mitsuye Endo Tsutsumi for the Presidential Medal of Freedom. It is past time her courage and determination in challenging the incarceration of Japanese people during World War II be acknowledged and honored with the nation's highest civilian award.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the U.S. government forced 120,000 people to leave behind their homes, businesses, and nearly everything they owned and incarcerated them in some of the most desolate locations in the western United States. This imprisonment was based solely on their Japanese ancestry and in a presidential proclamation has been called, "one of the most shameful chapters in our nation's history."

Four brave people stood up and legally challenged this incarceration. Three of these challengers, Fred Korematsu, Gordon Hirabayashi, and Minoru Yasui, were all men who lost their cases at the U.S. Supreme Court. Decades after losing at the Supreme Court, their cases were revisited and their convictions were overturned. All three men have received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the last was bestowed on Minoru Yasui in 2015, posthumously.

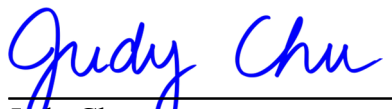
The fourth challenger to the incarceration, Mitsuye Endo Tsutsumi, was the only case brought by woman. Although her case is less well-known, her case was legally significant because in a unanimous decision, the U.S. Supreme Court sided with Endo, forcing the government to close the internment camps and allowing thousands of Japanese Americans to return to the West Coast. This outcome is all the more significant because when given the opportunity for an early release, Endo refused, knowing her release would end her legal challenge. Her sacrifice and dedication to "the good of everybody" led to victory and justice for thousands.


In recent years, Endo's selfless courage has gained more attention but continues to be overlooked. She is the only challenger to the government's incarceration that has not received

the Presidential Medal of Freedom. It has been nearly 26 years since Fred Korematsu received his medal and nearly 80 years since Endo won her legal victory for Japanese Americans. Mitsuye Endo Tsutsumi should no longer be overlooked. Her bravery and unswerving dedication to justice should be recognized with the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

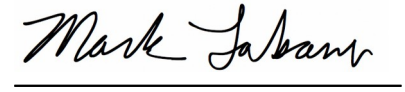
We thank you for your time and attention on this important matter for our caucus, and we look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,


  
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Judy Chu  
Member of Congress

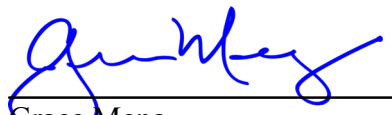
  
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Jim Tokuda  
Member of Congress

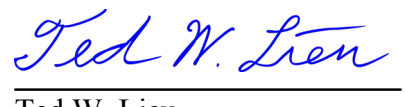
  
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Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator

  
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Mark Takano  
Member of Congress

  
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Doris Matsui  
Member of Congress

  
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Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator

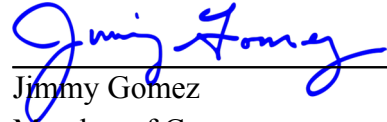
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Grace Meng  
Member of Congress

  
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Ted W. Lieu  
Member of Congress



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Ami Bera, M.D.  
Member of Congress



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Jimmy Gomez  
Member of Congress



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Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress



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Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress



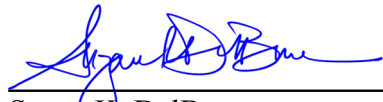
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Gregorio Kilili Camacho  
Sablan  
Member of Congress



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Shri Thanedar  
Member of Congress



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Suzan K. DelBene  
Member of Congress




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Robert J. Menendez  
Member of Congress



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Kevin Mullin  
Member of Congress



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Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress

*Linda T. Sánchez*

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Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress