

By Senator Latvala

20-01909-15

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Senate Resolution

A resolution commemorating the life of Fred T. Korematsu, American civil rights hero, and recognizing January 30, 2016, and each January 30 thereafter, as "Fred T. Korematsu Day" in Florida.

WHEREAS, shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, which ordered the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, regardless of citizenship, and

WHEREAS, beginning in May 1942, more than 110,000 Japanese Americans were incarcerated in 10 relocation camps scattered across the western United States, and

WHEREAS, Japanese American Fred T. Korematsu, then 23 years of age, refused to comply with the executive order and was arrested and convicted of evading internment, and

WHEREAS, Fred T. Korematsu appealed his conviction all the way to the United States Supreme Court, which, on December 18, 1944, in a 6-3 decision, ruled in favor of the government, finding that the incarceration was justified due to military necessity, and

WHEREAS, in 1983, legal historian Peter H. Irons and researcher Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga discovered key documents that United States Government intelligence agencies had withheld from the Supreme Court in 1944, which substantiated Fred T. Korematsu's defense and showed that Japanese Americans had not committed any acts of treason or other acts of espionage to justify mass incarceration, and

WHEREAS, with this new evidence, a pro bono legal team that

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30 included representatives of the Asian Law Caucus reopened Fred
31 T. Korematsu's 40-year-old case on the basis of government
32 misconduct, and

33 WHEREAS, on November 10, 1983, Fred T. Korematsu's
34 conviction was overturned in a federal court in San Francisco, a
35 pivotal moment in our nation's civil rights history, and

36 WHEREAS, Fred T. Korematsu remained a civil rights activist
37 throughout his life and, in 1998, was awarded the Presidential
38 Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, by
39 President Bill Clinton, and

40 WHEREAS, in 2010, the California Legislature passed
41 legislation recognizing January 30 of each year as "Fred T.
42 Korematsu Day," the first such recognition of an Asian American,
43 and

44 WHEREAS, in the 2014-2015 school year, Catherine Fernandez'
45 grade 7 civics class at Clearwater Fundamental Middle School
46 created a project celebrating the life of Fred T. Korematsu and
47 recognizing January 30, 2015, as "Fred T. Korematsu Day," and

48 WHEREAS, Fred T. Korematsu's growing legacy continues to
49 inspire people of all backgrounds and demonstrates the
50 importance of speaking out against injustice, NOW, THEREFORE,

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52 Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida:

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54 That we recognize January 30, 2016, and each January 30
55 thereafter, as "Fred T. Korematsu Day" in Florida and encourage
56 schools to conduct exercises honoring the life of this civil
57 rights hero and acknowledging the importance of preserving civil
58 liberties, even in times of great national crisis.