



**Written Testimony of OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocates, New York Chapter
in support of Res. No. 792**

Scheduled for October 25, 2017

**Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations
New York City Council Chambers
New York, N.Y.**

By: Chi Loek, President

Good afternoon, Chairperson Bramer and members of the Committee on Cultural Affairs. Thank you for providing OCA New York - Asian Pacific American Advocates with the opportunity to testify before you today on Res. No. 792. My name is Chi Loek, President of OCA New York Chapter. OCA is a national membership-driven organization headquartered in Washington D.C. dedicated to advancing the social, political and economic well-being of Asian Pacific Americans. The New York Chapter was founded in 1976 and has long been an ardent advocate for the broader AAPI community on issues of immigration, voting rights, civil rights, and social justice.

Let me start by saying that OCA-NY applauds the Council's significant commitment on uploading civil rights and taking the stance of anti-racial profiling. Passage of Res. No. 792 will reinstate this legislature's commitment. By establishing January 30 annually as Fred T. Korematsu Day (of Civil Liberties and the Constitution), we are sending a strong message to cities and states across the country that racial profiling and persecution is not acceptable. We must acknowledge the mistakes of the past, come united, and move forward as a society.

Fred T. Korematsu is a son of immigrants. We, New Yorkers, know the fact that people from all over the world come to the United States to start a new life for a reason. Some of us come here for economic opportunities. But for many, abandoning their home is not a choice or looking for opportunities. It's a survival instinct.

We do understand the historic context of the Second World War and our homeland was being attacked. However, we, as a nation, was found by immigrants, have a proud tradition of providing access to those who seek freedom and opportunity. Exclusion and displacement based on certain racial or ethnic background should never been brought up as a solution. The Executive Order 9066 not only broke our promise to the world but also violated the Constitutional rights of the American citizens of Japanese descent.

OCA-NY praises Mr. Korematsu's courage in fighting for justice and civil liberties which furthered the cause of equality for Asian Americans and made him an inspiration to those in New York City and across the country. Additionally, we look to him as an example of advocacy and seek for brighter future for future generations. I am proud to call Mr. Korematsu my fellow New Yorker.

We urge the Council to pass this important resolution and we look forward to observing Fred T. Korematsu Day annually in the near future.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify.