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February 22, 2016

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

On behalf of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), we are honored to recommend the nomination of the late Colonel Young Oak Kim for the 2016 Presidential Medal of Freedom. As Members of Congress who represent a diverse America, we believe that Colonel Kim deserves this high honor for his heroic service in the United States Army and his dedicated leadership in underserved communities.

Born in Los Angeles to Korean American immigrants in 1919, Colonel Young Oak Kim was a courageous war hero, civic leader, and humanitarian. He served bravely during World War II as the only Korean American in the 100th Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team, the famous Japanese American unit. The Army offered him a transfer due to fears of ethnic conflict, but he refused, declaring, "There is no Japanese nor Korean here. We're all Americans and we're fighting for the same cause."

During the Korean War, he re-enlisted in the U.S. Army and fought on the front lines, becoming the first minority officer in U.S. history to command an Army battalion on the battlefield. In Seoul, Korea, he led his battalion to adopt an orphanage of over 500 children, who grew up to be successful innovators and leaders in the workforce.

In recognition of his valiant military service, Colonel Kim received the U.S. Distinguished Service Cross for undertaking a "suicide mission" in the 1944 Battle of Anzio during the liberation of Rome. He also earned two Silver Stars, two Bronze Stars, two Legions of Merit, and three Purple Hearts.

After his retirement from military service in 1972, he dedicated his life to public service and developed several charitable, educational, and social service non-profit organizations in Southern California including, the Korean American Museum; the Korean American Coalition; and the Korean Health, Education, Information and Research Center. In the 1990s, he served as chairman of the Center for Asian Pacific Families, which became the largest women's shelter in Southern California under his leadership. He also remained committed to honoring the contributions of the Japanese Americans with whom he served during World War II and helped to establish the

Japanese American National Museum, the Go For Broke Memorial, and Go For Broke Educational Fund.

Colonel Kim's legacy continues to live on through the lives he touched and the humanitarian work of his organizations. We salute Colonel Young Oak Kim for his many contributions to our country and are proud to nominate him for the 2016 Presidential Medal of Freedom. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



**JUDY CHU**  
Member of Congress  
CAPAC Chair



**MAZIE K. HIRONO**  
U.S. Senator



**MADELEINE BORDALLO**  
Member of Congress  
CAPAC Vice Chair



**MIKE HONDA**  
Member of Congress  
CAPAC Chair Emeritus



**MARK TAKANO**  
Member of Congress  
CAPAC Whip



**TAMMY DUCKWORTH**  
Member of Congress



**TULSI GABBARD**  
Member of Congress



**AL GREEN**  
Member of Congress



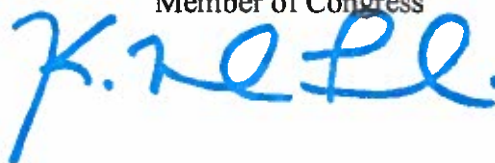
**BARBARA LEE**  
Member of Congress



**TED LIEU**  
Member of Congress



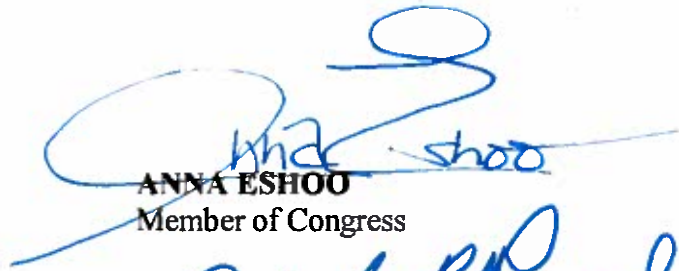
**GRACE MENG**  
Member of Congress



**MARK TAKAI**  
Member of Congress



**GERRY CONNOLLY**  
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**ANNA ESHOO**  
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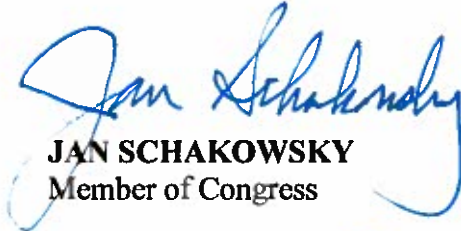
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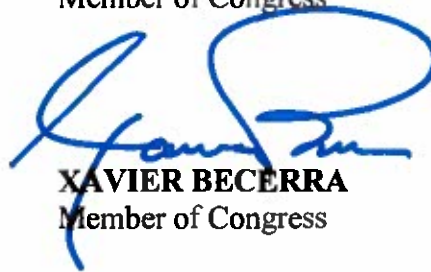
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