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FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500



Dear Mr. President:

I am writing regarding the nomination of the late Colonel Young Oak Kim for the 2016 Presidential Medal of Freedom, which has been brought to my attention by a constituent. His heroic service in the U.S. Army and his dedicated leadership in underserved communities deem him a meritorious American citizen worthy of consideration for the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Born in 1919 to immigrant parents, Colonel Young Oak Kim was a valiant Korean American who served in the U.S. Army during World War II and the Korean War. During World War II, Colonel Kim served as the only Korean American in the famous Japanese American unit, the 100th Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team.

Colonel Kim re-enlisted in the U.S. Army during the Korean War and fought on the front lines. In Seoul, Korea, he led his battalion in adopting an orphanage of over 500 children, who grew up to be successful innovators and leaders in the workforce. Throughout his military career, Colonel Kim earned several awards, including the U.S. Distinguished Service Cross.

After retiring from the military in 1972, Colonel Kim devoted his life to serving minorities, youth, the elderly, and the poor. He founded numerous non-profit organizations including the Korean American Museum; the Korean American Coalition; and the Korean Health, Education, Information and Research Center. When he was on the board of the United Way Asian Center, he added programs for Japanese, Filipino, Vietnamese, and Korean Americans. He was also chairman of the Center for Asian Pacific Families, which, under his leadership, became the largest women's shelter in Southern California in the 1990s. Colonel Kim was also dedicated to honoring the Japanese Americans who served alongside him during World War II, and he helped establish the Japanese American National Museum, the Go For Broke Monument, and Go For Broke Educational Foundation.

Colonel Kim passed away in 2005, but his legacy lives on through the lives he saved during his service in the U.S. Army and the humanitarian work of his organizations. Because of his exemplary lifetime of service on behalf of all Americans, Colonel Young Oak Kim is a worthy candidate for the highest civilian award in the United States, the Presidential Medal of Freedom. I respectfully request your consideration of his nomination consistent with your established policies and procedures.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Johnny Isakson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J".

Johnny Isakson