



Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs

<i>Ada L. Loo, Chair</i>	<i>Dana Tai Soon Burgess, Vice-Chair</i>	
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<i>Gregory Cendana</i>	<i>Erick Hosaka</i>	<i>Easten Law</i>
<i>Nicholas Lephram</i>	<i>Thu Nguyen</i>	<i>Sapna Pandya</i>
<i>Laura Shin</i>	<i>Martha Watanabe</i>	<i>Jed Wulfekotte</i>

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CONTACT:

Ada Loo (202) 815-8913

Commission Outraged By Roanoke Mayor's Inflammatory Remarks on the Use of Internment Camps to Justify Suspension of Syrian Refugee Relocation

The D.C. Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (the "Commission") is outraged and deeply disappointed by Mayor David Bowers' recent remarks in which he cited the use of internment camps for Japanese Americans during World War II to justify suspending the relocation of Syrian Refugees to Roanoke, Virginia. The internment camps wrongfully imprisoned over 120,000 Japanese Americans in the United States (two-third of whom were U.S. citizens) during World War II. Although Mayor Bowers delivered a public apology for these remarks, we hope that Mayor Bowers uses the lessons learned from one of the darkest and most shameful acts in American history. The Congress and former Presidents have acknowledged that the use of internment camps was unconstitutional.

As a Commission rooted in both the immigrant and refugee communities, we hope that our Mayor, Muriel Bowser, will take this opportunity to stand up in solidarity with the D.C. community of immigrants and refugees and remind our residents that Washington, D.C. is a sanctuary city that protects the rights of our communities. We also hope that Mayor Bowser will send the message that Mayors should not be invoking the Japanese internment camps as justification to reject Syrian refugees, especially in cities so close to our home.

The Commission currently consists of 14 dedicated members of the AAPI community in the District. More information on the Commission can be found on MOAPIA's website here:

<http://apia.dc.gov/page/commission-api-affairs>.

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