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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

HOUSE RESOLUTION

COMMEMORATING JANUARY 30, 2026, AS "FRED KOREMATSU DAY OF CIVIL
LIBERTIES AND THE CONSTITUTION"

Introduced By: Representatives Speakman, Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Chippendale,
Ajello, Shallcross Smith, Alzate, Boylan, McGaw, and Potter
Date Introduced: January 29, 2026

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, Fred Toyosaburo Korematsu was born on January 30, 1919, in Oakland,
2 California, the son of Japanese immigrant parents, and was raised with a strong sense of civic
3 responsibility and belief in the promise of American democracy; and
4 WHEREAS, Following the United States' entry into World War II, President Franklin
5 Delano Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, authorizing the forced removal and detention of
6 people of Japanese descent from their homes, without individualized evidence or due process; and
7 WHEREAS, At the age of twenty-three, Fred Korematsu refused to comply with this
8 order, asserting his constitutional rights as an American citizen, and was arrested and convicted,
9 ultimately challenging the legality of Executive Order 9066 before the United States Supreme
10 Court; and
11 WHEREAS, Although the Supreme Court upheld his conviction in Korematsu v. United
12 States, later judicial and historical findings revealed that the government had suppressed evidence
13 demonstrating the absence of any legitimate security threat, and in 1983 a federal court vacated
14 Fred Korematsu's conviction; and
15 WHEREAS, Fred Korematsu devoted his life to public education and advocacy for civil
16 liberties, speaking out against racial discrimination and unjust government action, and was
17 awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998; and
18 WHEREAS, The State of Rhode Island was founded on the radical principle that liberty
19 of conscience must be protected, a belief championed by Roger Williams, who stood against

1 orthodoxy and coercion in matters of belief, knowledge, and inquiry, and insisted that freedom
2 requires the courage to dissent from prevailing power; and

3 WHEREAS, Just as Roger Williams defended freedom of conscience and the right to
4 question authority in the pursuit of truth, Fred Korematsu stood for constitutional liberty, due
5 process, and equality under the law at a moment when fear and government power threatened
6 those principles; and

7 WHEREAS, Rhode Island’s enduring motto, “Hope,” reflects a commitment to learning
8 from history, protecting individual rights, and remaining vigilant in defense of civil liberties,
9 especially during times of crisis; and

10 WHEREAS, Designating Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution
11 provides an opportunity for civic education, reflection, and renewed dedication to the
12 constitutional values that sustain a free and democratic society; and

13 WHEREAS, On January 30, 2026, a public educational program will be held in
14 observance of Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution, hosted by Roger
15 Williams University’s Public Humanities & Arts Collaborative (The Co-Lab) in collaboration
16 with the Roger Williams University School of Law, Roger Williams University's Asian American
17 Alliance, Roger Williams University School of Law’s Asian Pacific American Law Student
18 Association, the AAPI History Museum, Japan–America Society and Black Ships Festival of
19 Rhode Island, Inc., and Communities of Hope Civic Media, bringing together students, educators,
20 legal professionals, and community members to reflect on the legacy of Fred Korematsu, the
21 protection of civil liberties, and the enduring responsibility to uphold constitutional principles
22 through education, dialogue, and civic engagement; now, therefore be it

23 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby
24 recognizes January 30, 2026, as “Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution”;
25 and be it further

26 RESOLVED, That this House encourages all Rhode Islanders to reflect upon the lessons
27 of history and the enduring importance of standing up for constitutional rights, even when doing
28 so requires courage in the face of fear or opposition; and be it further

29 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
30 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to Daniel J. McKee, Governor of the State of
31 Rhode Island and to Ioannis N. Miaoulis, President of Roger Williams University.

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