



Statement of Senator Dianne Feinstein
On the Death of Congressman Robert T. Matsui

January 5, 2005

Washington, DC - The following statement today from Senator Dianne Feinstein is in memory of Congressman Bob Matsui:

“I would like to offer a few words about the passing of Bob Matsui, one of California’s great political leaders. Bob was one of those people who you always thought would be there. His death has come as a great shock and surprise to many of us.

I want to extend my deep sorrow to Doris, Brian and the rest of the Matsui family. You are in my thoughts and prayers.

Throughout his career his wonderful wife Doris has been by his side. One of the things I remember most about the two of them is the wonderful smile she always had whenever they walked into a room together. They truly were a fine couple.

I would also like to offer my sympathy to everyone in the Sacramento area – you were so well served by this wonderful man. He has done a fantastic job representing you in Washington for the last 26 years and before that on the Sacramento City Council.

I’ve known Bob Matsui for a long time. I will remember him as a great human being, as a trusted colleague, as a fine public servant, and someone in whom I was very proud to place friendship, respect, and collegiality.

Bob really was a superb public servant. He was a thoughtful, constructive leader who brought people together to find solutions for public policy issues. He was a reasoned voice; he was a dependable voice.

When we faced a problem related to the Folsom Dam, Bob was one of the most constructive figures in getting that very divided issue settled.

Bob was also a good thinker and a strong thinker. People knew that when Bob Matsui said something that it was steeped in practicality. He was well respected and influential among his colleagues.

If Bob told me something was true, I knew it was true and not some variation of the facts. This is an important quality in someone who represents others because it gives them credibility among their colleagues. Bob Matsui had that credibility.

We've all heard the story of Bob's family and their internment at the Tule Lake Camp in 1942. I think this probably had a very sobering impact on his life.

I think he knew what could happen in situations of stress and military conflict. I think it presented a challenge to him as a young man growing up. He clearly overcame that challenge and I think it probably had an impact in his knowing what he wanted to do with his life, and that was public service.

One of Bob's most significant legacies will be the work he did to help the government make amends with the Japanese Americans who were interned during World War II.

As a member of Congress, Bob was successful in passing legislation that offered a formal apology from the government for the internment program and provided compensation to victims. This is a great legacy and it will be well remembered.

Another of the areas in which Bob excelled is his knowledge and expertise of Social Security as well as tax and trade policy. He had an influential place on the House Ways and Means Committee. His leadership there will be missed.

Bob did what he did extraordinarily well. Throughout his career he showed that he was a skilled politician as well as a great policy maker.

In addition to his duties as a House member, he took on heading the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee this past election cycle – a particularly demanding and grueling position. Despite the enormous challenges he faced, he did a superb job in guiding the committee through the elections.

Throughout his long and distinguished career Bob Matsui proved to be a dedicated public servant and his constituents considered themselves lucky to have his representation. I consider myself lucky to have known him.

We will truly miss him.”

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