Joint Resolution No. 20-3
San Mateo County Board of Education and
San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools
State of California

Recognizing January 30, 2020, as Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution

Whereas, January 30 is designated as Fred Korematsu Day, an occasion to recognize the extraordinary bravery of one individual’s refusal to enter Japanese internment camps during World War II, his subsequent arrest and conviction, and the issues, such as political scapegoating and mass incarceration, raised by the U.S. Supreme Court Case, Korematsu v. United States which now stands as landmark legislation; and

Whereas, Fred Korematsu was a United States Citizen, born in Oakland, California on January 30, 1919, to parents who were Japanese immigrants; and

Whereas, Fred Korematsu graduated from Castlemont High School in 1937 and attempted to enlist in the military twice but was unable to do so because his selective service classification was changed to enemy alien; and

Whereas, Fred Korematsu trained as a welder and worked as a foreman at the docks in Oakland until the date on which he and all Japanese Americans were fired; and

Whereas, after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, leading the United States to declare war against Japan, Fred Korematsu was arrested for refusing to comply with Civilian Exclusion Order 34, directing all people of Japanese ancestry be removed from designated areas of the West Coast after May 9, 1942; and

Whereas, Fred Korematsu was convicted of violating the Civilian Exclusion Order and unsuccessfully challenged his conviction up to the United States Court of Appeal for the Ninth Circuit, which sustained his conviction; and

Whereas, Fred Korematsu was subsequently confined with his family for two years in an internment camp in Topaz, Utah, mirroring the fate of more than 120,000 other Japanese Americans who were similarly detained, with no charges brought or due process, in War Relocation authority camps; and

Whereas, during his confinement, Fred Korematsu appealed his conviction to the Supreme Court of the United States and although his conviction was upheld by a vote of six to three, dissenting Justice Frank Murphy called the Civilian Exclusion Order the “legalization of racism”; and

Whereas, in 1983, Fred Korematsu filed a writ based on new information and succeeded in having his conviction overturned, and the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians found the exclusion, removal, and detention of United States citizens and permanent residents from Japan was motivated largely by racial prejudice, influencing Congress to pass the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, request a Presidential apology and a symbolic payment of $20,000 in reparations to people who lost their homes, livelihood and freedom due to the discriminatory actions of the Federal Government; and
Whereas, Fred Korematsu, an ordinary citizen who became an advocate for justice and civil liberties and fought against singling out individuals for heightened scrutiny on the basis of race, ethnicity, nationality, or religion, was awarded the Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award of the United States;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that the San Mateo County Board of Education and the San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools recognize Fred Toyosaburo Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution as an opportunity to honor Mr. Korematsu for his loyalty, patriotism, and work to advance the civil rights and civil liberties of all people of the United States, and encourage all schools and educational institutions to conduct activities highlighting the importance of preserving civil liberties, in times of real or perceived crisis.

SAN MATEO COUNTY
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Passed and Adopted on this
Fifteenth Day of January 2020

SAN MATEO COUNTY
BOARD OF EDUCATION

President

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________