

Dalip Singh (Judge) Saund

1899–1973

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE 1957–1963
DEMOCRAT FROM CALIFORNIA

In November 1956, D. S. Saund, who everyone simply called “Judge,” became the first person of Asian descent elected to serve as a United States Representative. He was a tireless champion of his southern California district and the farmers who called it home. But his unique backstory—born in India, naturalized U.S. citizen, successful businessman, county judge—also catapulted him to the international stage. During his career in the House of Representatives, at the height of the Cold War, Saund became something of a transcendent politician who had the singular ability to engage audiences abroad. Although he frequently confronted discrimination during his life in the United States, Saund maintained his belief in the promises of American democracy.

Dalip Singh Saund was born on September 20, 1899, and raised in Chhajjalwaddi in the far-northern province of Punjab, India, which at the time was a British colony. Saund’s father worked as a construction contractor for the government and died when Saund was only a boy. His parents had lived through the period of British colonialism and neither had attended school, but education was a cornerstone of Saund’s life. His father and uncles saved enough money to open a one-room schoolhouse about a half mile from where Saund lived. At the age of eight, his parents sent him to boarding school 16 miles away in the city of Amritsar near the border with modern day Pakistan.¹

While in college at the University of Punjab, Saund supported the movement for an independent India led by Mohandas Gandhi.² Along with his informal lessons in nonviolence and civil disobedience, Saund majored in mathematics, graduated with a BS degree in 1919, and moved to America to further his education. While he waited for his passport, Saund worked to expand his childhood school, planted trees along the roads throughout his village, and helped establish two community banks.³

During World War I, Saund read the speeches of President Woodrow Wilson in the news and later discovered the writings of Abraham Lincoln, especially the moving words of the Gettysburg Address.⁴ “Lincoln,” Saund later wrote, “changed the entire course of my life.”⁵

Saund had planned to spend no more than a few years in America learning the fruit-canning business before returning home.⁶ His trip west took him from Bombay to England and from England to Ellis Island, New York, where he arrived on September 27, 1920. “You are now a free man in a free country,” one of the immigration officers told him.⁷ Saund made his way west and enrolled in the University of California’s agricultural school and mathematics department as well.⁸

Berkeley, California, was not the most welcoming of places for Indian and Asian students, and “outside of the university atmosphere,” he later remembered, “it was made quite evident that people from Asia—Japanese, Chinese, and Hindus—were not wanted.”⁹ Saund, however, became involved with the local community and then earned MA and PhD degrees in mathematics in 1924.

After he finished his studies, Saund’s family informed him that the Indian government had been keeping tabs on his “anti-British utterances in America.” Saund decided to stay in California and later authored *My Mother India*, a book about his experiences at home and a critique of British imperialism.¹⁰ He moved south to California’s Imperial Valley, where a number of other Indians had settled.¹¹ His first job, he said, was as “foreman of a cotton-picking gang at a ranch belonging to some Indian friends.” Saund saved money and quickly went into the business of growing lettuce. The lettuce market tanked, however, and it was a while before he recouped his losses.¹²

In 1928 Saund married Marian Kosa, the daughter of a close friend and a future teacher in the Los Angeles school





system. Together they had three children: Dalip Jr., who served in the Korean War as a lieutenant in the U.S. Army, and two daughters, Julie and Ellie, who both attended the University of California, Los Angeles.¹³

Initially, Saund's young family settled on a ranch in Westmorland, California, a dry, windy, and hot region of the state just a few miles south of the Salton Sea. The area specialized in sending melons to market before anywhere else, but the Depression hit the local economy hard. Fruit rotted in the field, and harvest work disappeared.¹⁴ Saund came out of the economic collapse relatively unscathed because he grew and baled alfalfa hay and had direct access to Los Angeles.¹⁵ Saund owned his own farming equipment, but because California law prevented people of Asian descent from owning or leasing land at the time, a friend in the valley had to put the contracts in his own name.¹⁶

As the economy rebounded, Saund stumbled for a spell and plunged into debt. Against advice from friends and business associates, he refused to declare bankruptcy and decided to work his way out of the hole "slowly but surely." "That decision to follow the dictates of my own heart was one of the best decisions I've ever made," he wrote years later.¹⁷ After 20 years of farming, Saund opened his own fertilizer business around 1953, commuting a total of nearly 1,000 miles a week between his home near Los Angeles, where his wife taught and where they raised their children, and his business, headquartered in Westmorland.¹⁸

Saund closely followed politics during his time in the west, studying the issues of the 1924 and 1928 presidential contests. "By 1932," he wrote in his memoirs, "I had positively and definitely become a Democrat by outlook and conviction."¹⁹ During the 1930s, his home county received a number of benefits from federal New Deal programs created to help struggling farmers and people out of work.²⁰

When he was not farming, Saund was a popular speaker in the valley and addressed local groups nearly every week.²¹ He learned how to think and speak in the moment, unscripted, during his involvement with the Toastmasters Club.²²

Saund's political activities could go only so far, however, because, at the time, federal law prevented him

from becoming a U.S. citizen. In the 1940s, he helped organize efforts to open citizenship to people of Indian descent living in the States. He worked long hours to build support, and, eventually, Congress passed a bill allowing Indian immigrants to pursue naturalization.²³ Saund became a U.S. citizen three and a half years later on December 16, 1949.²⁴

Saund was elected to the Imperial County Democratic Central Committee in the summer of 1950 and ran for a judgeship in November. He claimed to know every voter in the district and campaigned door-to-door, building momentum. He won, but a higher court vacated his election after it became clear that Saund had not been a U.S. citizen for a full year at the time of his victory.²⁵

Two years later, Saund ran again, and in the buildup to the 1952 judicial election, he faced a barrage of discrimination. Voters, and even old friends, told Saund that they liked him well enough but could never bring themselves to "go for a Hindu judge."²⁶

As the election heated up, Saund adamantly refused to go negative, his message being, "I am not running against anybody; all I'm asking for is a job, and it's up to you to judge whether I deserve your support or not."²⁷

"Doc, tell us, if you're elected, will you furnish the turbans or will we have to buy them ourselves in order to come into your court?" someone later asked him in the middle of a restaurant. "My friend," Saund responded, "you know me as a tolerant man. I don't care what a man has on the top of his head. All I'm interested in is what he's got inside."²⁸ On Election Day, Saund won by 13 votes.²⁹

During his four-year judgeship, Saund worked to institute stiff sentencing that helped clean up blighted areas of Westmorland.³⁰ He earned the reputation as a first-rate legal mind, going head to head with more practiced attorneys.³¹ Saund's judgeship became a huge part of his identity and served as a springboard to national office. When he ran for the House, he ran as "Judge Saund."³²

In 1954 Saund won election as the head of the Democratic Central Committee for Imperial County. Democrats lost the congressional election that year but made a stronger showing than most political experts



expected, encouraging local party officials to go all in for the next race in 1956.³³ Saund had met a number of political kingmakers, and by the next fall, California Democrats began pledging support for Saund—whom they reportedly called “the peacemaker”—if he ever decided to run for Congress. It did not take long. By October 1955, Saund resolved to campaign for a seat in the House from California’s 29th District. He knew half of the district well (Imperial County), but anticipated a struggle in neighboring Riverside County. A handful of party leaders from both counties ended up giving him their backing a month later.³⁴

When the incumbent Congressman, Republican John Phillips, announced his retirement from the House, six Republicans and two Democrats—Saund included—jumped into the race by early 1956.³⁵

Saund’s congressional district was created after the 1940 Census, and voters there had elected a Republican to the House ever since. By 1955, however, Democrats had a slight edge in voter registration.³⁶ Geographically it was huge—larger “than Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Delaware combined,” according to the *New York Times*—and bordered by Nevada to the east, Mexico to the south, and Los Angeles to the west.³⁷ From a population standpoint, it was one of California’s smaller districts, with a total of 233,021 people in 1950; it grew to 378,296 by 1960.³⁸

Saund’s main opponent in the Democratic primary was a lawyer from nearby Riverside County named Carl Kegley. The race began cordially until Kegley filed legal action to disqualify Saund, arguing the Judge had not been a U.S. citizen long enough to serve in the House.³⁹ Undismayed, Saund saw it as an opportunity. “When he filed suit against me,” Saund remembered a few years later, “it became front-page, headline news in all the Riverside and Imperial County papers. Even if I could have afforded it, I couldn’t have bought that kind of publicity.”⁴⁰

Saund remained confident in his eligibility throughout the fight, pointing out that, if he won the election, he would take office in January 1957, making him a citizen for just over seven years, as required by the Constitution.⁴¹

He stayed on message and refused to attack his opponent, eventually winning the primary by more than 9,000 votes.⁴²

Going into the general election, Saund played catch-up to his Republican opponent, Jacqueline Cochran Odlum. A decorated Army pilot known for her work as the head of the Women Airforce Service Pilots during World War II, Odlum owned a successful cosmetics company and had long been a supporter of President Dwight D. Eisenhower.⁴³ Because of the unique backgrounds of the two leading candidates, the race attracted national attention. “A woman’s ‘smoldering hope’ and the success story of an East Indian immigrant are converging into what is likely to be one of the most colorful Congressional contests of 1956,” reported the *New York Times*. “Seldom if ever has the American melting pot cooked up a spicier election dish than the contest now simmering in California’s 29th Congressional District,” read another article in the *Los Angeles Times*.⁴⁴

Throughout the campaign, Odlum reportedly outspent Saund many times over.⁴⁵ Saund, however, used a grassroots approach, holding a series of free community barbeques.⁴⁶ His phalanx of supporters, including members of his own family, campaigned door-to-door while registering voters.⁴⁷ His wife, Marian, and their college-aged daughter, Ellie, spent summer vacation canvassing Riverside, and Saund’s son and daughter-in-law came home often to help. “We didn’t have time to stop and count how many precincts,” Marian said. “We just worked.”⁴⁸ House Majority Whip Carl Albert of Oklahoma also campaigned for Saund in California, and Harold Cooley of North Carolina wired his support.⁴⁹

Saund’s ethnicity and religious beliefs were a constant issue in the race. The Associated Press reminded readers that Saund was “a Sikh Hindu born in India” with “dark-hued” skin before noting that he had been “thoroughly Americanized after 36 years here.”⁵⁰ Saund bought airtime in Southern California to introduce himself to voters throughout the district.⁵¹ But as the *New York Times* told its readers two weeks before the election, Saund ran up against “considerable racial sensitivity in the area.”⁵² Years later, Odlum still believed that Saund was, as she said, “a card-toting Communist.”⁵³



Ultimately, the issues seemed to outweigh everything else. As a farmer who had once struggled to pull himself out of debt, Saund believed in the necessity of farm subsidies, while Odlum, who also ran her own ranch, took a more conditional approach.⁵⁴ Odlum touted her connections in Washington, while Saund promised to work hard and used his personal history as proof of his commitment to the district.⁵⁵ A few years after the election, Saund criticized the idea of campaigning on political connections writing, “My view was that any congressman who expected to get favors from the big boys in Washington got them only by voting the way the big boys wanted him to vote, not the way the interests of his district would lead him to vote.”⁵⁶

During a last-minute debate broadcast a week before the election, Saund pointed out that his political beliefs as a Democrat were often more in line with the popular Republican presidential administration of Dwight Eisenhower than Odlum’s own stances as the actual GOP candidate.⁵⁷ Saund built on that momentum going into Election Day. When the dust settled, he won, taking 54,989 votes, or roughly 52 percent.⁵⁸

Saund credited his victory to his stance on local issues, especially his commitment to small-scale farmers and small businesses.⁵⁹ With his election, Saund became the first Asian American ever to enjoy full voting rights in Congress (he served as a U.S. Representative whose powers were not circumscribed like those of the Delegates and Resident Commissioners who had preceded him.)⁶⁰

“Californians have not always been hospitable to aliens—and especially to aliens of Asian origin,” the *Washington Post’s* editorial board observed. “In this election they ignored ancestry and considered the individual.”⁶¹ “He’s growed cotton. He’s growed lettuce and beets. He’s worked in hay and he’s worked for wages. And he won’t let any smart aleck lawyers trick him,” a district farmer told the culture magazine *Coronet*. “That’s why we sent him to Washington.”⁶²

For the duration of his House career, Saund faced modest competition back home. He won re-election handily in 1958, taking 62 percent of the vote and crushing his Republican opponent, John Babbage, by

almost 26,000 votes.⁶³ In 1960, although he said he was “running scared,” Saund coasted to victory over Republican Charles H. Jameson.⁶⁴

Saund, the *New York Times* wrote shortly after his first election, “is a stocky, dynamic, perpetually grinning man whose walnut skin threatened to handicap him in a race-conscious section where there was some informal school segregation until a couple of years ago. This evidently was more than offset by his manifest dedication to American ideals and by his articulateness—he speaks in a high-pitched, urgent tone, with just a faint alien accent. He looks like an average business man or schoolteacher, and with his serviceable ‘border Spanish’ has occasionally been mistaken for one of the Mexican-Americans numerous in the district.”⁶⁵

Saund’s ethnicity may have been an issue in the election, but the Congressman-elect did not want it to influence his service in the House. Saund wanted his committee assignments to reflect his district’s interests rather than his personal history and told the press he would like a seat on something other than the Foreign Affairs Committee. “I am not so much concerned with India,” he said about a month before the start of the new Congress. “I am concerned with my district right here in California.” He wanted to see better farm supports. He wanted the Air Force to build a new base in his district, and he wanted a nuclear power plant built in the “big spaces” outside the valley. “I would prefer to be on the Agriculture and the Armed Services Committee,” he had said in late November.⁶⁶ On the eve of the new Congress, at least one report had Saund pushing for a seat on the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee.⁶⁷

Saund arrived in Washington on December 17 to look for a home and start organizing his congressional office.⁶⁸ He was already something of a national star and, in his first term, Democratic leaders placed him on the Committee on Foreign Affairs despite his earlier reluctance. Saund called the appointment a “high honor,” and he remained on the committee for his entire House career. Foreign Affairs was one of the most powerful committees in the House during the Cold War, making it a major coup for a novice



lawmaker. In the 86th and 87th Congresses (1959–1963), Saund also served on the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs.⁶⁹

His national profile aside, Saund tried to stay out of the spotlight as much as he could in order to learn how the House worked—a difficult problem when television cameras from CBS followed him around on Opening Day. He and his wife ate breakfast in the House cafeteria every morning before he went up to his office to answer mail from his constituents.⁷⁰ Saund helped veterans and their families access benefits and worked to secure millions in funding for the March Air Force Base and the Naval Auxiliary Air Station and additional money for the Corona Naval Ordnance Laboratory. He collaborated with committee chairmen to fund flood control projects, won funding for irrigation efforts on American Indian land, opened new post offices in his fast-growing district, built new roads, improved airports in the Imperial Valley, and assisted scientists developing new strains of cotton. He worked to protect the Bracero farm labor program, in which immigrants from Mexico took jobs in America’s agricultural sector as part of a guest-worker program. And he helped to settle claims Riverside County had against the federal government for repairs to a regional airport.⁷¹

Saund was a fierce supporter of the 1957 Civil Rights bill. The Judge used his own story to advocate its passage, pointing out that, although being born in India did not prevent him from becoming a Member, being born black in Mississippi would have. “No amount of sophistry or legal argument can deny the fact that in 13 counties in 1 State in the United States of America in the year 1957, not one Negro is a registered voter. Let us remove those difficulties, my friends.”⁷²

Midway through his first term, Saund fulfilled a campaign promise by flying home to India for the first time in almost 40 years. When he first floated the idea in the days after the 1956 election, Saund billed the trip as a “goodwill” visit sponsored by the State Department to clear up “misunderstanding between the people of the United States and India.”⁷³ India had more or less stayed out of the conflict between the United States and the Soviet

Union during the Cold War, but Saund planned to stress America’s “freedom of opportunity.”⁷⁴ “Look,” he wanted to tell the world, “here I am, a living example of American democracy in practice.”⁷⁵

It was not until a year later that Saund returned to India as a representative of the Foreign Affairs Committee, “a one-man subcommittee,” as the Judge called himself.⁷⁶ Saund was quick to acknowledge that racism still existed in the United States, but he hoped to use his personal story to undercut what he called “the Communist lie that racial prejudice against Asians is rampant in America.”⁷⁷

Saund, his wife, and their daughter arrived in Calcutta, India, on November 25, 1957, and spent three weeks touring the country. He touted his assignment to the Foreign Affairs Committee as a reflection of America’s genuine desire to reach out to the world. More than anything, wrote one reporter, Saund’s trip “helped to create a new realization among thinking Indians that they have friends in the United States sincerely devoted to advancing the cause of India.”⁷⁸ Saund also addressed a joint session of the Parliament of India, speaking honestly about America’s failings, but quickly pointing out the steps the United States was taking to correct its wrongs.⁷⁹

During his two-and-a-half-month world tour, Saund visited a host of other locations: “Japan, Hong Kong, South Vietnam, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Burma, India, Pakistan, Israel . . . Rome, Paris, and London,” selling American ideals and encouraging cultural exchange.⁸⁰ Eight months after he returned, Saund told the House that the people he met abroad wanted “freedom and the American way of life. Yet we—a Nation of supersalesman [*sic*], are failing to sell our way of life.”⁸¹

The needs of Saund’s constituents remained at the forefront of his legislative agenda during the 86th Congress.⁸² His bill to protect the date industry in the valley was perhaps his most hard-fought victory in the House. Date growers from his district had been running up against cheaper imports, and to protect the domestic crop, Saund introduced a bill to subject foreign-grown dates and walnuts to a quality inspection. Although the government already had similar programs for a host of other produce,



a number of cabinet departments opposed Saund's bill, as did the large commercial industries that relied on the cheap fruit. The House Agriculture Committee reported Saund's bill favorably, but the Rules Committee sat on it, unwilling to bring it to the floor. In late August 1960, Democratic leadership suspended the rules and allowed for a vote. His bill easily cleared the House but failed to become law.⁸³

Using his position on the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, Saund also helped negotiate a deal between the city of Palm Springs and the residents of the nearby Agua Caliente Reservation. Saund brokered the agreement using two bills (H.R. 8587 and H.R. 6672), whereby existing reservation land would be divided among its residents in a process called "equalization." The holders of tribal lands could then lease their parcels to the city for a period of 99 years in order to meet commercial lending regulations. "This will make possible the development of valuable Indian property, the expansion of business in Palm Springs and the acquisition of the airport by the city," Saund said.⁸⁴

Saund continued to secure funding for flood control in the valley, new infrastructure projects and post offices, and improvements to the military installments in his district. Although he supported the Bracero Program, Saund called for tighter restrictions and criticized the ranchers who exploited the program in order to maximize profit. "American citizens are entitled to jobs on American farms before any imported labor is authorized," he said.⁸⁵

Saund maintained his support for Congress's civil rights legislation and voted in favor of pensions, health insurance for senior citizens, and insurance for the unemployed. On an international scale, Saund wanted to spend less money on military aid and more on cultural exchanges and infrastructure projects in the developing world.⁸⁶ For one thing, Saund wanted to see America's huge agricultural surpluses put to use overseas. "A hungry world," he wrote, "would receive the bounty of American farms with much more gratitude than they do the tons of obsolete military hardware under the Mutual Security Program."⁸⁷

Even into the next Congress, Saund remained critical of the federal government's overseas spending. "We must

admit," he said, "that our efforts to promote democracy and build strong free societies in many of the underdeveloped countries of the world through massive expenditures of U.S. funds have been, to say the least, not successful."⁸⁸ In defiance of the John F. Kennedy administration, Saund pushed Congress to more closely monitor its foreign investments. In particular, he wanted to ensure that whatever money America gave to the world actually made it to the farmers and rural villagers who needed it the most. "That has been our mistake all along," he said during debate on the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. "We have been identified with the ruling classes. We have been coddling kings and dictators and protecting the status quo. The status quo for the masses of people in many lands means hunger, pestilence, and ignorance. . . . And we then wonder why the poor people of the underdeveloped areas of the world do not appreciate the help of Uncle Sam."⁸⁹

Early in the 87th Congress, Saund was named vice chairman of a large congressional delegation participating in the Mexico-United States Interparliamentary Group. With the goal of strengthening ties between legislators of the two countries, four topics dominated the docket: "foreign investments, foreign trade, border affairs, and cultural exchange."⁹⁰ Saund, whose district stretched for miles along the U.S.-Mexico border, first submitted the resolution creating the legislative roundtable in 1959, and it became law a year later.⁹¹ He chaired the committee on border affairs at the conference, where the two countries discussed immigration, the Bracero Program, and customs duties.⁹² In the end, Saund considered the cross-border sit-down a huge success.⁹³

On a flight from Los Angeles to DC on May 1, 1962, the Judge suffered a stroke and was immediately moved to a hospital in Bethesda, Maryland. Saund's family and doctors kept his condition under tight secrecy. His wife reportedly brought work to his hospital room every day while his staff maintained business at his office on the Hill. Saund nevertheless went on to win the party primary a month after his health crisis, and in September his campaign announced he would stand for re-election in the general contest.⁹⁴ On Election Day, however, Saund, who



had been unable to campaign himself, lost to Republican Patrick M. Martin, taking only 44 percent of the vote.⁹⁵

Saund remained in the Bethesda hospital for the next month until he was well enough to travel. Doctors moved him to a medical facility in San Diego and then, in January 1963, moved him to one closer to home in Los Angeles, where he made “slow but good” improvement.⁹⁶ After suffering a second stroke 10 years later, Saund died at his home in Hollywood, California, on April 22, 1973.⁹⁷

The House was in recess when Saund died, but when it gathered again, Members held a memorial service for the Judge in the Capitol and eulogized him on the floor. Colleagues called him “a classic American success story,” a “pioneer,” and “a gentleman in the best sense of the word.”⁹⁸ Some said the House was a better place because of his service, which had paved the way for “those generations from and interested in Asian nations.”⁹⁹ “To chronicle all his legislative achievements and personal successes during his lifetime could not begin to pay Dalip Saund the justice and honor he deserves,” Majority Leader Tip O’Neill of Massachusetts said. “Those of us who knew and admired him in the House, remember him as a man of boundless energy, personal integrity, and strong convictions—consistently and tirelessly fighting for the right of ‘life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness’ for all Americans.”¹⁰⁰

FOR FURTHER READING

D. S. Saund, *Congressman from India* (1960; repr., Amritsar, India: Satvic Books, 2002).

NOTES

- 1 D. S. Saund, *Congressman from India* (1960; repr., Amritsar, India: Satvic Books, 2002): 12–15, 20.
- 2 Saund, *Congressman from India*: 28.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 30–32.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 29–30.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 30.
- 6 *Ibid.*, 32.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 33–35, quotation on p. 35; *New York Passenger Lists, 1820–1957, Arrival New York, New York*, microfilm T715 1897–1957, roll no. 2842, p. 31, National Archives and Records Administration,

Washington, DC, <http://www.ancestrylibrary.com/> (accessed 30 October 2015).

- 8 Saund, *Congressman from India*: 42.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 40.
- 10 Quotation from Joseph Laitin, “Mr. Saund Goes to Washington,” *Coronet* reprinted in the *Congressional Record*, House, 85th Cong., 1st sess. (17 April 1957): 5940; Saund, *Congressman from India*: 44, 47–48.
- 11 Saund, *Congressman from India*: 45; Gladwin Hill, “Colorful Contest Shaping on Coast,” 27 December 1955, *New York Times*: 17.
- 12 Saund, *Congressman from India*: 46–47.
- 13 *Ibid.*, 48–50.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 50–51, 53–55.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 60–61; Hill, “Colorful Contest Shaping on Coast.”
- 16 Saund, *Congressman from India*: 63–64.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 64–66.
- 18 “Mrs. Odlum, Saund Wage Hot Race,” 14 October 1956, *Washington Post*: A12; “First India Native Goes to Congress,” 11 November 1956, *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*: A9.
- 19 Saund, *Congressman from India*: 55.
- 20 *Ibid.*, 56.
- 21 *Ibid.*, 67–70.
- 22 *Ibid.*, 69.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 71–74; “Indian Bill Praised,” 29 June 1946, *New York Times*: 3.
- 24 Saund, *Congressman from India*: 75.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 76–78.
- 26 *Ibid.*, 79.
- 27 *Ibid.*, 80.
- 28 *Ibid.*, 81.
- 29 *Ibid.*, 82.
- 30 *Ibid.*, 81–91; “Hot Race Looms in 29th District,” 6 May 1956, *Los Angeles Times*: 45.
- 31 Laitin, “Mr. Saund Goes to Washington.”
- 32 Bill Becker, “Coast Race Finds Democrat Ahead,” 16 October 1960, *New York Times*: 48.
- 33 Saund, *Congressman from India*: 91–92.
- 34 *Ibid.*, 93–94; Laitin, “Mr. Saund Goes to Washington.”
- 35 Saund, *Congressman from India*: 94–95.
- 36 Kenneth C. Martis, *The Historical Atlas of Political Parties in the United States Congress, 1789–1989* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1989): 197–211; Hill, “Colorful Contest Shaping on Coast.”



- 37 Hill, "Colorful Contest Shaping on Coast." See also Gladwin Hill, "Republicans Lose California Seats," 8 November 1956, *New York Times*: 42.
- 38 For population figures, see *Congressional Directory*, 85th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1957): 18; *Congressional Directory*, 88th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1963): 22.
- 39 Saund, *Congressman from India*: 96–97; "The Southland: Hearing Set on Eligibility of Candidate," 18 April 1956, *Los Angeles Times*: 22; "Appellate Court Refuses to Act in Election Case," 27 April 1956, *Los Angeles Times*: 31.
- 40 Saund, *Congressman from India*: 97.
- 41 Ibid.
- 42 Ibid., 97–98; Seymour Korman, "Adlai Sweeps California," 6 June 1956, *Chicago Daily Tribune*: 1; "Southland: Imperial Provides Major Boost to Odlum Victory," 7 June 1956, *Los Angeles Times*: 41; "Flier, Hindu Judge To Try for Seat From California," 8 June 1956, *Christian Science Monitor*: 19; "Mrs. Odlum, Saund Wage Hot Race."
- 43 Erik Thomas Robinson, "Jacqueline Cochran," in *American National Biography*, vol. 5 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999): 117–118.
- 44 "Congress Only Goal of Jacqueline Odlum," 25 October 1956, *Los Angeles Times*: A14. First quotation from Hill, "Colorful Contest Shaping on Coast." Second quotation from "Hot Race Looms in 29th District."
- 45 "GOP Primary Expenses Reported at \$585,352," 14 July 1956, *Los Angeles Times*: 4; "Mrs. Odlum, Saund Wage Hot Race."
- 46 Saund, *Congressman from India*: 99.
- 47 Ibid., 102–103; "Mrs. Odlum, Saund Wage Hot Race."
- 48 Richard Dyer MacCann, "California Family Shares in Victory of India-Born Contestant for House," 21 November 1956, *Christian Science Monitor*: 10.
- 49 *Congressional Record*, House, 85th Cong., 1st sess. (14 June 1957): 9197.
- 50 "The Southland: Hearing Set on Eligibility of Candidate"; "Hot Race Looms in 29th District"; "The Southland: Mrs. Odlum Leads GOP Ticket in Congress Race," 6 June 1956, *Los Angeles Times*: 39; "Mrs. Odlum, Saund Wage Hot Race." See also "Mrs. Odlum, Saund California Rivals," 7 June 1956, *Baltimore Sun*: 2; Edward T. Folliard, "Adlai's Vote Still Soaring in California," 7 June 1956, *Washington Post*: 1; "Party Line Cohesion Is Noted in California's Primary Votes," 7 June 1956, *Washington Post*: 2; Eileen Summers, "Candidate Cochran Sees Agriculture As Top Issue," 7 June 1956, *Washington Post*: 33; "Flier, Hindu Judge To Try for Seat From California."
- 51 Saund, *Congressman from India*: 105–106; Richard Dyer MacCann, "Democracy Seen in Action," 16 May 1956, *Christian Science Monitor*: 3.
- 52 Gladwin Hill, "California Leans Strongly to G.O.P.," 21 October 1956, *New York Times*: 1.
- 53 Jacqueline Cochran, interview by Joe B. Frantz, 7 April 1974, transcript 1, Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, Oral History Collection, Austin, TX, https://www.eisenhower.archives.gov/research/oral_histories/c.html (accessed 11 April 2016).
- 54 Saund, *Congressman from India*: 103–104; Hill, "Colorful Contest Shaping on Coast"; Eileen Summers, "Candidate Cochran Sees Agriculture As Top Issue," 7 June 1956, *Washington Post*: 33.
- 55 "A Sikh in Congress: Dalip Singh Saund," 10 November 1956, *New York Times*: 13.
- 56 Saund, *Congressman from India*: 104–105.
- 57 Ibid., 105–107; MacCann, "California Family Shares in Victory of India-Born Contestant for House."
- 58 Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives, "Election Statistics, 1920 to Present," <http://history.house.gov/Institution/Election-Statistics/Election-Statistics/>.
- 59 "Upset Victor," 8 November 1956, *Chicago Daily Tribune*: 11; Richard Dyer MacCann, "California Sends Ex-Asian to House," 8 November 1956, *Christian Science Monitor*: 3; Laitin, "Mr. Saund Goes to Washington." Saund's stance toward agricultural subsidies was something of a region-wide trend, and the strength of farmers in the West "did much to offset the pull of President Eisenhower's coattails" in the congressional races. See John D. Morris, "Farmers Helped House Democrats," 8 November 1956, *New York Times*: 31.
- 60 Martis, *Historical Atlas of Political Parties in the United States Congress, 1789–1989*: 195–211; "India Immigrant Wins California Seat," 8 November 1956, *Washington Post*: A17.
- 61 "East Is West," 10 November 1956, *Washington Post*: A8. Not all the press coverage was so welcoming or tolerant. The *Chicago Daily Tribune*, who described Saund as a "detrified Sikh," recommended that Saund "revert to the costume and customs of his former country. . . . If he lets his beard grow and oils it until it shines, and puts his hair up under a bright red turban, he can expect to be a marked man in the house [sic]." See "Advice to the Sikh Congressman," 14 November 1956, *Chicago Daily Tribune*: 16.
- 62 Laitin, "Mr. Saund Goes to Washington."
- 63 "Rep. Saund Faces Fight for Congress," 2 November 1958, *Los Angeles Times*: B2.
- 64 Bill Becker, "Coast Race Finds Democrat Ahead," 16 October 1960, *New York Times*: 48.
- 65 "A Sikh in Congress: Dalip Singh Saund."
- 66 Richard Dyer MacCann, "California Family Shares in Victory of India-Born Contestant for House," 21 November 1956, *Christian Science Monitor*: 10.



- 67 Don Shannon, "Californians Seek Place on House Rules Group," 3 January 1957, *Los Angeles Times*: 18.
- 68 "Nehru Meets India-Born Congressman," 19 December 1956, *Los Angeles Times*: 18. For more information on his staff, see Saund, *Congressman from India*: 109–112.
- 69 Saund, *Congressman from India*: 114–115; Laitin, "Mr. Saund Goes to Washington."
- 70 "Freshman in Spotlight," 4 January 1957, *New York Times*: 14; Saund, *Congressman from India*: 115–116, 122; *Congressional Record*, House, 85th Cong., 2nd sess. (23 August 1958): 19922.
- 71 *Congressional Record*, House, 85th Cong., 2nd sess. (23 August 1958): 19922–19923. For additional constituent services, see Saund, *Congressman from India*: 116–122.
- 72 *Congressional Record*, House, 85th Cong., 1st sess. (14 June 1957): 9197.
- 73 "Congressman-Elect to Visit Native India," 9 November 1956, *Los Angeles Times*: 22. See also "Rep. Saund to Tell His Story to India," 9 November 1956, *Washington Post*: C4; "Winner on Coast Plans India Trip," 10 November 1956, *New York Times*: 13.
- 74 "A Sikh in Congress: Dalip Singh Saund."
- 75 MacCann, "California Family Shares in Victory of India-Born Contestant for House."
- 76 Saund, *Congressman from India*: 151.
- 77 "Congressman Born in India to Visit There," 3 May 1957, *Los Angeles Times*: 7. See also "Saund Visits Japan," 31 October 1957, *New York Times*: 8; "Saund Manila Bound," 18 November 1957, *Los Angeles Times*: 5; "The Price of Indonesian Favor," 19 November 1970, *Los Angeles Times*: B4.
- 78 Quotation from "Rep. Saund Sells U.S. on His Tour," 18 December 1957, *New York Times*: 19. See also "Saund in Indian Homeland," 26 November 1957, *New York Times*: 13; "U.S. Should Sell Itself to Asians, Says Saund," 23 December 1957, *Los Angeles Times*: 6.
- 79 Josephine Ripley, "A Congressman With a Mission," 8 February 1958, *Christian Science Monitor*: 20.
- 80 Earl W. Foell, "U.S. Urged to Clarify Motives in Asia," 7 January 1958, *Christian Science Monitor*: 14.
- 81 *Congressional Record*, House, 85th Cong., 2nd sess. (23 August 1958): 19923. For more on Saund's trip abroad, see Saund, *Congressman from India*: 148–179.
- 82 Saund, *Congressman from India*: 127.
- 83 *Congressional Record*, House, 86th Cong., 2nd sess. (1 September 1960): 19359; *Congressional Record*, House, 86th Cong., 2nd sess. (22 August 1960): 17086.
- 84 *Congressional Record*, House, 86th Cong., 1st sess. (17 August 1959): 16066–16067; *Congressional Record*, House, 86th Cong., 2nd sess. (1 September 1960): 19359; House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, *Providing for the Equalization of Allotments on the Agua Caliente (Palm Springs) Reservation in California*, 86th Cong., 1st sess., H. Rept. 903 (14 August 1959); Unpublished hearing before the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Subcommittee on Indian Affairs, *To Authorize Longer Term Leases on Indian Lands on the Agua Caliente (Palm Springs) Reservation*, 7 August 1959; House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, *Authorizing Longer Term Leases of Indian Lands on the Agua Caliente (Palm Springs) Reservation*, 86th Cong., 1st sess., H. Rept. 901 (14 August 1959).
- 85 *Congressional Record*, House, 86th sess., 2nd sess. (1 September 1960): 19359–19360. On the Bracero program, see also Bill Becker, "Coast Race Finds Democrat Ahead"; *Congressional Record*, House, 86th Cong., 2nd sess. (24 August 1960): 17546–17547.
- 86 *Congressional Record*, House, 86th Cong., 2nd sess. (1 September 1960): 19361; *Congressional Record*, House, 86th Cong., 1st sess. (9 June 1959): 10341; *Congressional Record*, House, 86th Cong., 1st sess. (17 August 1959): 16080–16083. See also Saund, *Congressman from India*: 181–184.
- 87 Saund, *Congressman from India*: 187.
- 88 *Congressional Record*, House, 87th Cong., 1st sess. (16 August 1961): 16060.
- 89 *Ibid.*, 16061. See also *Congressional Record*, House, 87th Cong., 1st sess. (17 August 1961): 16211–16212; Don Shannon and John H. Averill, "Saund Could be Target of Purge in 1962," 27 August 1961, *Los Angeles Times*: B3.
- 90 D. S. Saund, *Report of the First Meeting of the Mexico-United States Interparliamentary Group*, 87th Cong., 1st sess., H. Rept. 197 (24 March 1961): iii.
- 91 Saund, *Report of the First Meeting of the Mexico-United States Interparliamentary Group*: 1.
- 92 *Ibid.*, 6–8.
- 93 *Ibid.*, iv.
- 94 Richard Bergholz, "The Position of Saund is Puzzle to Election," 23 July 1962, *Los Angeles Times*: A4; John H. Averill, "Democrats Worry Over Saund Illness Secrecy," 17 June 1962, *Los Angeles Times*: A4; John H. Averill, "Rep. Saund Will Run Again Despite Illness," 7 September 1962, *Los Angeles Times*: 2; "Rep. Saund of California Campaigns from Hospital," 8 September 1962, *Los Angeles Times*: 16; "Opinions on Health of Rep. Saund Conflict," 17 October 1962, *Los Angeles Times*: 20; "Saund: Mystery Veils His Illness in Capital," 21 October 1962, *Los Angeles Times*: K5; "Rep. Saund Sure He Can Serve, But Leaves Decision to Doctors," 30 October 1962, *New York Times*: 12.
- 95 "Martin Defeats Saund in Congressional Race," 8 November 1962, *Los Angeles Times*: 2; "Saund Replaced by Native-Son Republican," 9 November 1962, *Washington Post*: A2; Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives, "Election Statistics, 1920 to Present."



- 96 "Saund Moved to San Diego Naval Hospital," 30 November 1962, *Los Angeles Times*: 33; "Saund in UCLA Center," 14 January 1963, *Los Angeles Times*: 26; "Ex-Rep. Saund Shows Slow but Good Progress," 10 May 1963, *Los Angeles Times*: 24.
- 97 "Dalip Saund Dies; Ex-Legislator, 73," 24 April 1973, *New York Times*: 44; "Dalip Saund, 73: Former Congressman," 24 April 1973, *Los Angeles Times*: E18; "Ex-Rep. Dalip S. Saund, First Native of India to Hold U.S. Elective Office," 25 April 1973, *Washington Post*: C11.
- 98 *Congressional Record*, House, 93rd Cong., 1st sess. (15 May 1973): 15756, 15757, 15759.
- 99 *Ibid.*, 15758, 15759.
- 100 *Ibid.*, 15760.



“A HUNGRY WORLD WOULD
RECEIVE THE BOUNTY OF
AMERICAN FARMS WITH MUCH
MORE GRATITUDE THAN THEY DO
THE TONS OF OBSOLETE MILITARY
HARDWARE UNDER THE MUTUAL
SECURITY PROGRAM.”

Dalip Singh (Judge) Saund
Congressman from India, 1960

Hiram L. Fong

1906–2004

UNITED STATES SENATOR 1959–1977
REPUBLICAN FROM HAWAII

Known as “the Man of the Pacific,” Hiram Fong served nearly two decades as one of Hawaii’s first U.S. Senators, acting as a surrogate representative for Asian-American constituents at home and as an ambassador of American policies to Asian people abroad. Several path-breaking aspects distinguished Fong’s career. He was the first person of Chinese descent elected to Congress, the first Asian Pacific American elected to the Senate, the first Chinese-American candidate for the presidency, and he remains the only Republican Senator ever elected from Hawaii.¹ While serving in the minority for his entire tenure, Fong supported expanding civil rights programs and liberalizing immigration policies. Simultaneously, he staunchly defended President Richard M. Nixon’s Vietnam policies and traveled extensively in Asian nations, calling attention to the growing influence of Asian Americans in the post-war United States. During his time in the Senate, Fong believed himself to be a spokesman for Asian Americans across the country. “I feel sometimes they think I am their senator,” he explained. “I try to interpret America to them and to interpret them to America.”²

Hiram L. Fong was born Yau Leong Fong on October 15, 1906, in Honolulu, Hawaii, to poor Chinese immigrants, Sau Howe Fong and Lum Shee Fong.³ His father, Sau Howe, worked at the local fertilizer plant while his mother worked as a housekeeper. Hiram was the seventh child and the fifth son of 13 children.⁴ He grew up in Kalihi and picked beans, shined shoes, sold newspapers, caught fish, and caddied for golfers to supplement his family’s earnings.⁵ Fong attended Kalihi-waena Elementary School. He briefly attended St. Louis College and then graduated from McKinley High School in 1924. At his brother’s encouragement, Fong took the federal civil service exam while still a high school senior. Unable to afford

college, he worked at the Pearl Harbor naval shipyard as a clerk for three years, staying on a year longer than first planned after he became the family breadwinner following his father’s death in 1926. In 1927 he left the position with the understanding he would be hired back should he fall out of the University of Hawaii.⁶

Fong need not have worried, as he breezed through college in three years, taking summer courses to accelerate his studies. He first adopted the name “Hiram” around this time, primarily in his work as editor of the student newspaper *Ka Leo*, though he didn’t legally change his name until 1942.⁷ During college, Fong developed ties with the Republican Party while serving in 1926 as a paid orator for George Frederick Wright’s successful mayoral campaign in Honolulu. After Fong graduated from college with honors in 1930, Mayor Wright appointed him to a clerkship in the city’s public works department. Most of his time was spent assisting Wright in his biennial campaigns.⁸ After a few years, Fong applied to Harvard Law School and, after being accepted, took out a life insurance policy to ensure his creditors would not go empty-handed should the worst occur. “I figured if I flunked out the first year,” he recalled, “I would not owe anyone any money.”⁹

Fong returned to Honolulu each summer to work for Wright to afford tuition. After obtaining his law degree in 1935, he returned to Honolulu permanently, passing the bar and accepting the Honolulu attorney general’s office position that Mayor Wright had promised. But the work and pay underwhelmed Fong, “I felt, gee whiz, with all my education, is this all I am going to wind up doing?”¹⁰ In 1938 Fong married teacher and longtime sweetheart Ellyn Lo, with whom he eventually had four children, Hiram Jr., Rodney, Merie-Ellen, and Marvin Allan.

A month after the marriage, Fong’s mentor George Wright passed away. After three years of struggling to





maintain interest in his work, Fong planned to leave his city job and start his own private practice. Hoping to gain public attention to kick-start his practice, Fong turned to his passion: politics. “So I thought, well I’d better get out ... and since I [was] going to get out, I’d better run for office,” he recalled.¹¹ Fong entered the race for one of six territorial house seats in a district encompassing much of the island of Oahu north of Honolulu. He easily won the 1938 Republican primary campaigning on a theme of “local boy makes good” and was swept into office with a surprisingly high vote total for a political newcomer, the second most votes in the district.¹² He resigned from the attorney general’s office and opened his own practice.

Drawing on his popularity, Fong asserted his political independence both within the Republican Party and from the “Big Five,” the five largest sugar companies with stakes in Hawaiian production. This rankled the establishment and led to a failed attempt to declare his election illegal on the basis that he was employed by the territorial government. Over Republican speaker Roy A. Vitousek’s opposition, the legislature seated him by a vote of 27 to 2.¹³ The incident only increased his fame and gained him support from organized labor, bolstering both his political position and his law practice. He easily won re-election in 1940.

Just as Fong began to establish himself in the territorial legislature, war erupted in December 1941 when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. He joined the U.S. Army Air Force as a judge advocate in Honolulu in 1942. A first lieutenant in the U.S. Army Reserve, Fong was promoted to captain shortly after being activated as a full-time officer. He initially retained his seat in the territorial legislature, but new War Department regulations prevented active-duty officers from seeking elected office and forced his withdrawal in the 1942 election. The War Department granted Fong permission to run for the legislature in 1944 with the caveat that he could not campaign. His wife Ellyn gamely stumped on his behalf, and Hiram easily won enough votes to regain his seat. He was honorably discharged in February 1945, just days before the new session convened.¹⁴

Back in the legislature, Fong made a name for himself as a dealmaker willing to upend traditional party dynamics.¹⁵ When his ally Manuel Paschoal stepped aside as speaker in 1948, Fong engineered the “Kauai Inn Agreement,” meeting early with 10 Republican colleagues to strike an accord selecting him as the presiding officer. He then demanded an early caucus to ensure his election as speaker before votes could be discussed.¹⁶ Fong served as vice president of the territorial constitutional convention the following year. In 1953 he relied on Democratic votes in a coalition that preserved his speakership. He narrowly lost re-election to the legislature a year later in the Hawaii Democratic revolution of 1954 with the advent of the closed primary in the territory.¹⁷

“The people have thrown me out. I’m a private citizen now, so I’m taking things easy,” Fong said, doing anything but. “I’ve been retired and I’ll stay retired. I don’t want people to think I’m a bad loser.”¹⁸ To that end, Fong recused himself from politics for five years and turned his attention to his business ventures. He set up the financial services firm Finance Factors Ltd., in 1954 in Wailuku, Maui, to operate alongside his Honolulu legal practice. He diversified his business interests, setting up Finance Realty, Finance Investment, and Finance Home Builders Ltd.¹⁹ In the summer of 1959, however, the prospect of imminent statehood drew him out of self-imposed retirement.

Hawaii had to fill three congressional seats, two Senators and one Representative, simultaneously. Fong entered the race for Senate seat “A,” running against Democrat Frank Fasi. Fong’s years away from politics had made him a millionaire, and while his entrepreneurial acumen endeared him to the business community, he also had retained support from Chinese Americans and labor organizations such as the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU). The ILWU’s support for a Republican was unusual, but largely attributable to both Fong’s personal business practices supporting his unionized employees and the union’s distaste for Fasi, who was a virulent anti-communist. Voters embraced Fong’s rags-to-riches story, and he won 53 percent of the vote against Fasi



in an election that saw significant Republican gains in state elections as well.²⁰

Before the election, Fong was neither certain of victory nor how he would be received in Washington, DC. “I was quite fearful—you know, being the first person from Hawaii, and not being a Caucasian,” he admitted. “I wondered whether I would be considered too provincial, or too partisan.”²¹

Instead, the Republican Party establishment embraced both Fong and his independent streak. Vice President Richard Nixon met Fong and his family at the airport, launching a long friendship that would last through Nixon’s presidency. Senate Republicans held a party in Fong’s honor after the new Hawaiian delegation was sworn in on August 24, 1959.²² At that ceremony, Fong won a coin toss for the role of senior Senator over Oren Long. The pair then drew lots to determine the length of each Senator’s term; Fong secured the longer term, putting off a re-election campaign until 1964.²³ He earned seats on three committees: Post Office and Civil Service; Public Works; and Interior and Insular Affairs. He joined the Judiciary Committee in the 87th Congress (1961–1963) and the Appropriations Committee in the 91st Congress (1969–1971). He also served on the permanent Select Committee on Aging after the 88th Congress (1963–1965) and retired as that panel’s Ranking Member.

Fong requested and was granted placement on the Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health, Education, Welfare and Related Agencies, seeking to check the power of the very unions that had helped launch his Senate career. “I believe labor legislation is essential for our nation as well as for democracy in both unions and business,” he said. “Both will have to conform to the laws of the land.”²⁴ His voting record offered a muddier picture. Fong typically took the business side of consumer and labor issues, drawing heavily on his financial background, but liberal Senators counted on Fong’s labor connections for his vote on key issues.

While, in the abstract, he frequently condemned communism, he also never turned away known communist leaders from the ILWU, saying of them, “From my

viewpoint, knowing these people, I think what they were doing was that they were just protesting the rule [of] the people in control.”²⁵ He had a long relationship with ILWU leader Jack Hall. “Whenever he wanted legislation, I would see that it would pass,” Fong recalled, before clarifying, “as long as it was good legislation.”²⁶

Hawaii’s unions relied on Fong as a go-between with Richard Nixon during his failed 1960 presidential campaign, and they routinely backed the Senator whose advocacy for foreign assistance translated into a steady stream of business through Hawaiian harbors. Scores of shipping containers filled with food supplies and materials set off for ports around the globe, creating work for unionized stevedores and dockhands.²⁷

Despite committee appointments oriented toward Hawaiian interests, Fong devoted much of his attention to international affairs, immigration, and defense policy. Between the first and second sessions of the 86th Congress (1959–1961), he undertook a self-funded tour of 13 Asian nations. Fong returned to dispute Democratic presidential candidate John F. Kennedy’s assertion that America’s prestige had fallen abroad. “I did not find the ‘ugly American’ on my tour,” he insisted, “and I feel we are winning the battle for the minds of people in neutral and free countries of Asia.”²⁸

Fong urged the use of soft power—exercising economic and cultural influence to improve relations—in Asia whenever possible to combat international communism, an ideology which he described as “the wrong concept of man and the universe.”²⁹ Fong focused on engaging Asian nations with the twin lures of democracy and capitalism. He pressed for continued foreign aid, but disputed China’s proposed acceptance into the United Nations, saying the nation still had to prove itself a “good boy.”³⁰ Nevertheless, Fong supported President Nixon’s diplomatic talks with China and joined a congressional delegation to the People’s Republic of China in 1974. He also prided himself on a friendship with the Republic of China President Chiang Kai-shek, whose funeral he attended the following year.³¹ Speaking about strengthening ties with China and other Asian nations,



Fong said late in his career, “America is a two-ocean Nation. We need a friendly Asia-Pacific community, just as much as we need a friendly Atlantic community.”³²

Fong was an early and ardent supporter of the Vietnam War during President Lyndon B. Johnson’s administration, and he maintained that support during the Nixon administration in spite of the conflict’s increasing unpopularity among his Hawaiian constituents. He routinely opposed efforts to restrict funding for the war and frequently defended the Nixon administration.³³ Fong labeled congressional efforts to diminish the U.S. commitment to Vietnam “hypocrisy” and insisted military action was necessary to combat North Vietnam’s aggression against democratic allies.³⁴

In line with his interest in Asia, he also urged passage of President Johnson’s immigration reform in 1965. Fong’s approach reflected his belief in soft power. He pointed to how America inspired nations in Asia and around the world. “Our tenets, regardless of race, creed or color, have inspired freedom-loving people everywhere to look to America as a beacon in their struggle to win freedom and independence,” Fong said. “Our opportunity is to live up to their ideals.”³⁵ The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 notably discarded an outdated formula that set racial quotas from Asian nations, which scholars have credited with a dramatic rise in immigration by Asian professionals.³⁶

Immigration and aid for refugees remained prominent concerns for Fong. In 1971 he introduced 75 private bills, more than any Senator that year, mostly for immigration relief.³⁷ The Senator endeavored to relieve the plight of refugees from both communist China and the Indochinese conflicts, cosponsoring several bills before securing passage of the Indochina Refugee Children Assistance Act of 1975. Complementing his views on immigration reform, Fong urged both new and established Chinese Americans to integrate more fully into U.S. society.³⁸

Senator Fong took seriously his role as a surrogate representative for Chinese Americans and as a link between Asia and the western nations. He followed up on Hawaiian Delegate John Burns’s work to establish the East-West

Center in Honolulu and then fought from his seat on the Senate Appropriations Committee for larger expenditures supporting it. Fong pressured colleagues for more funding, saying about the center, “Wherever men can face one another as peers and exchange their considered views on the vital issues of their lives, the constructive potentialities for cooperative peace increase dramatically.”³⁹

Fong extended that philosophy beyond diplomacy and immigration to civil rights. Though a hawkish supporter of the war in Vietnam, Fong often voted for social legislation that aligned him with Democrats and moderate Republicans. He cast votes for much of President Johnson’s Great Society legislation, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the establishment of Medicare in 1965. He supported the Equal Rights Amendment in 1970. Fong also contributed substantially to the Voting Rights Act of 1965, writing an amendment providing for poll watchers to guarantee the safety and fairness of elections.⁴⁰

Hawaiian issues, of course, ranked high on Fong’s agenda, and he counted the establishment of the East-West Center and securing funding for federal highways on the islands among his greatest achievements in Congress. One of his first successful bills established the Haleakala National Park on the island of Maui, carving it out from land that had been part of the Hawaii National Park established in 1916, and creating additional jobs in the process. From his seat on the Post Office and Civil Service Committee, Fong tended to the interests of Hawaii’s thousands of civil servants. In 1960 and 1962 he drafted legislation raising wages for federal employees. Working from his position on the Public Works Committee, Fong lent his influence to Hawaiian groups seeking federal grants for public works such as dams and harbor improvements. In part for his attention to matters back home, Hawaiian Republicans embraced Fong, even nominating him as a “favorite son” candidate for president at the Republican National Convention in 1964.⁴¹

Fong’s electoral resilience was fully displayed in 1964. Despite a very unfavorable climate for Republicans, Fong, in his re-election bid, comfortably defeated incumbent Democratic Representative Thomas P. Gill,



who was supported by Hawaii's other Senator, Daniel K. Inouye, with 53 to 46 percent of the vote. Like the rest of the country, Hawaii elected Lyndon B. Johnson by a landslide over Fong's Senate colleague and GOP nominee, Barry Goldwater. According to some sources, Fong set a senatorial election record nationally by running 32 percent ahead of Goldwater.⁴²

Fong had a contentious relationship with Inouye, who had served as a U.S. Representative before becoming the junior Senator from Hawaii. Their enmity originated in territorial politics when Inouye and John Burns headed the increasingly dominant state Democratic Party. Though both Fong and Inouye endeavored to tie Hawaiian industry and jobs to federal spending, their relationship in the normally collegial Senate was often frosty. That tension was exacerbated by Inouye's support in the 1970 Senate election for Fong's opponent, television station owner Cecil Heftel. Fong's continued support for President Nixon's policies, particularly his Vietnam strategy, began to frustrate Hawaiian constituents. He refused to debate Heftel, however, relying on his seniority, experience, and name recognition to make his case against the political newcomer. Fong ultimately prevailed with 52 percent of the vote, his narrowest margin of victory to date.⁴³

Barely into his third term, Fong's office faced an unexpected scandal. Robert Carson, a longtime legislative assistant to the Senator, was indicted on charges of bribery, perjury, and conspiracy on January 13, 1971. Allegedly, Carson had attempted to bribe Deputy Attorney General Richard Kleindienst to intercede in a grand jury investigation. While Fong himself remained blameless, rumors flew of an inciting feud between the Senator's office and the attorney general over an appointment to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Fong prided himself on placing Hawaiians on the federal bench to increase Hawaiian influence. Kleindienst wanted and found someone from his home state of Arizona for the position, and several sources speculated that this competition was at the root of Kleindienst's accusations against Fong's aide Carson. Fong stood by his aide during the trial and appeal process in which Carson was convicted. No accusations or charges

were leveled at Fong, but the scandal rocked an otherwise peaceful and focused office.⁴⁴

Following the bruising 1970 campaign and the Carson scandal, Fong declined to run again in 1976, citing a growing workload and desire to spend more time with his family and friends. At the time of his retirement from the Senate in January 1977, he served as Ranking Member on six committees.⁴⁵ Fong returned to his law firm, his plantation on Oahu, and various businesses as chairman of Finance Enterprises Ltd. Fong worked well into his 90s, vowing to "die with my boots on."⁴⁶

Fong died of kidney failure on August 18, 2004, in Kahaluu, Hawaii.⁴⁷ His body lay in state in the Hawaiian capitol building in Honolulu before his interment in the city's Nuuanu Memorial Park and Mortuary.⁴⁸

MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION

University of Hawaii at Manoa Library, Archives and Manuscripts Department, Hawaii Congressional Papers Collection (Honolulu, HI). *Papers*: 1910–1990s, circa 559 cubic feet. The Hiram L. Fong papers primarily contain correspondence, legislative files, committee materials, casework, political party materials, administrative papers, public relations files, campaign memorabilia, and audiovisual materials from his years of service in the U.S. Senate. Some personal and family papers are also included. The collection covers Hawaii statehood, Native Hawaiian land claims, the military presence in Hawaii, shipping issues, work of the Judiciary Committee, civil service issues, immigration, and campaigns. A finding aid is available at the repository and online.

Oral History: February 22, 1978–October 12, 1979, 306 pages. Seven interviews conducted by Michaelyn Chou. An index is available.

NOTES

- 1 "Senator Hiram L. Fong of Hawaii," 17 July 1964, *Christian Science Monitor*: 13.
- 2 Caspar Nannes, "Senator Fong of Hawaii," December 1973, *The Link*: 21.
- 3 David Ignatius, "Hiram L. Fong, Republican Senator from Hawaii," in *Ralph Nader Congress Project: Citizens Look at Congress* (Washington, DC: Grossman Publishers, 1972): 1.
- 4 Michaelyn Pi-Hsia Chou, "The Education of a Senator: Hiram L. Fong from 1906 to 1954" (PhD diss., University of Hawaii, 1980): 59–65.
- 5 Helen Zia and Susan B. Gall, eds., "Hiram Fong," in *Asian American Biography* (New York: UXL, 2003): 74–76.



- 6 Chou, "The Education of a Senator": 143–149.
- 7 Ibid., 48–50, 182–187.
- 8 Ibid., 242–246; Don T. Nakanishi and Ellen D. Wu, *Distinguished Asian American Political and Governmental Leaders* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002): 47–48.
- 9 Nannes, "Senator Fong of Hawaii."
- 10 Chou, "The Education of a Senator": 290.
- 11 Ibid., 314–315.
- 12 Ibid., 323.
- 13 Ibid., 340–342.
- 14 Ibid., 409–417, 429–443.
- 15 Much of Fong's enmity with party elites could be traced back to his rivalry with Roy Vitousek, who led the Hawaii Republican Club after he left as the speaker of the territorial assembly. Fong undermined Vitousek by elevating Manuel Paschoal—a fellow critic of the old guard—in 1945, using key Democratic votes to do so. When the legislature split evenly in 1947, Democrats offered Fong as a compromise speaker alongside Fong's 1945 Democratic collaborator Charlie Kauhane as vice-speaker. Fong publicly repudiated the resolution, prompting a fistfight in the legislature's lobby as Kauhane accused Fong of manipulating Democrats into a resolution he knew would fail. Fong denied the allegations and used the press gained from the incident to pressure Democrats into electing Paschoal again. For additional detail, see Chou, "The Education of a Senator": 444–445, 474–478.
- 16 Ibid., 505–507.
- 17 John S. Whitehead, *Completing the Union: Alaska, Hawai'i, and the Battle for Statehood* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004): 194; Chou, "The Education of a Senator": 708–711.
- 18 Gardiner B. Jones, "Fong Thanks Democrats for Fouling Up Sessions," 21 May 1955, *Honolulu Advertiser*: A6.
- 19 "Senator Hiram Fong 80th Birthday," 1986, pamphlet in files of the U.S. Senate Historical Office, Washington, DC.
- 20 Whitehead, *Completing the Union*: 317–321; Adam Bernstein, "Hiram Fong Dies; One of First Hawaiian Senators," 19 August 2004, *Washington Post*: B6; "Republican Wins Hawaii Governorship," 30 July 1959, *Chicago Daily Tribune*: 5.
- 21 Ray Maneki, "Fong Tells Rags to Riches Story," 4 June 1976, *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, reprinted in *Tributes to The Honorable Hiram L. Fong of Hawaii in the United States Senate*, 94th Cong., 2nd sess., S. Doc. 272 (1977): 21–23.
- 22 Dillon Graham, "Fong Arrives, Welcomed by Nixon," 24 August 1959, *Washington Post*: A8; Eileen Summers, "Senator's Hello, Hawaiian Style," 25 August 1959, *Washington Post*: B3.
- 23 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 86th Cong., 1st sess. (24 August, 1959): 16739–16740; "Congress Seats Hawaii Members," 25 August 1959, *Washington Post*: A10.
- 24 "New Hawaii Senator Favors Union Curbs," 23 August 1959, *Los Angeles Times*: A1.
- 25 Chou, "The Education of a Senator": 733.
- 26 Ignatius, "Hiram L. Fong": 6.
- 27 Hiram Fong, "Mr. Nixon in Hawaii," 12 August 1960, *New York Times*: 18.
- 28 "Hawaiian Senator Here; Praises Aid for Asians," 5 January 1960, *Los Angeles Times*: 5.
- 29 Hiram Fong, "Time Is On Our Side," 5 September 1961, *Christian Science Monitor*: 16.
- 30 "U.S. Prestige High in Orient, Fong Reports," 8 October 1960, *Chicago Daily Tribune*: A7.
- 31 "Senator Hiram Fong 80th Birthday."
- 32 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 94th Cong., 2nd sess. (4 March 1976): 5438.
- 33 Ignatius, "Hiram L. Fong": 19–21.
- 34 Peter J. Kumpa, "An Angry Debate Is on Party Lines," 20 April 1972, *Baltimore Sun*: A1.
- 35 "Fong Urges Passage of Immigration Bill," 21 September 1965, *Los Angeles Times*: 5.
- 36 Mae M. Ngai notably discusses how this influx of Asian immigrants, many of Chinese descent if not immediate origin, led to the rise of a new "model minority" stereotype that shares many similarities with Fong's vision of what the average hardworking Asian immigrant—particularly those converted to Christianity—might have to offer the United States. For more on this, see Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004): 266–268.
- 37 Ignatius, "Hiram L. Fong": 22; Lynda Arakawa, "First Asian in U.S. Senate Broke Barriers," 19 August 2004, *Honolulu Advertiser*: H1.
- 38 "Immigrant Chinese Told to Integrate," 16 November 1959, *New York Times*: 11.
- 39 The East-West Center was established in 1960 under the Mutual Security Act of 1960 to "promote better relations and understanding between the United States and the nations of Asia and the Pacific." Mutual Security Act of 1960, Public Law 86-472, 73 Stat. 134 (1960); *Congressional Record*, Senate, 87th Cong., 1st sess. (28 March 1961): 4977.
- 40 Ignatius, "Hiram L. Fong": 20.
- 41 "Hiram L. Fong: Legislative Record," campaign literature in the files of the U.S. Senate Historical Office, Washington, DC; "Fong Will Be Nominated as Hawaii's Favorite Son," 14 July 1964, *New York Times*: 21.
- 42 Ignatius, "Hiram L. Fong": 9; "Senator Hiram L. Fong: Biographical Sketch," accessed 18 May 2016, http://www.senatorfong.com/bio_sketch.html; *Almanac of American Politics*,



1976 (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1975): 206–209; Dale Andrews, “Paradise Found,” 23 May 2002, *Roll Call*: 38.

- 43 *Almanac of American Politics, 1976*: 209; Ignatius, “Hiram L. Fong”: 9.
- 44 Though vocally steadfast in his support, Fong eventually suspended Carson from his duties. Carson faced 18 months in prison following an unsuccessful plea for stay of sentencing. For more on the Carson affair, see Ignatius, “Hiram L. Fong”: 15; Ken W. Clawson, “Aide to Fong Is Indicted on Bribe Charge,” 14 January 1971, *Washington Post*: A1; John Hall, “Sen. Fong’s Indicted Assistant Back at Desk,” 10 February 1971, *Los Angeles Times*: B5; “Convicted Aide,” 10 November 1972, *Washington Post*: A2.
- 45 “Sen. Fong to Retire,” 15 January 1976, *Washington Post*: A3.
- 46 Andrews, “Paradise Found.”
- 47 Bernstein, “Hiram Fong Dies.”
- 48 Dan Nakaso, “Hundreds Pay Respects to Fong at Capitol Rites,” 27 August 2004, *Honolulu Advertiser*: A1.

Daniel K. Inouye

1924–2012

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE 1959–1963

UNITED STATES SENATOR 1963–2012

DEMOCRAT FROM HAWAII

When Daniel K. Inouye first took his seat in the U.S. House of Representatives in 1959, Speaker Sam Rayburn of Texas took quick stock of the young legislator. “You’ll soon be the second most widely recognized member in the Congress,” mused the Speaker, who embodied the institution for so many Americans. “We don’t have too many one-armed, Japanese Congressmen here.”¹ Indeed, Inouye left an indelible mark on Hawaiian politics and on the U.S. Congress, where he served for a combined 53 years in the House and Senate, serving with 412 Senators during his long tenure in that chamber. A proud war veteran and energetic legislator, Inouye battled for party leadership and embraced Members of Congress from across the aisle. On November 20, 2013, President Barack Obama posthumously awarded Inouye the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Senator Inouye “taught all of us that no matter what you look like or where you come from,” Obama observed, “this country has a place for everybody who’s willing to serve and work hard.”²

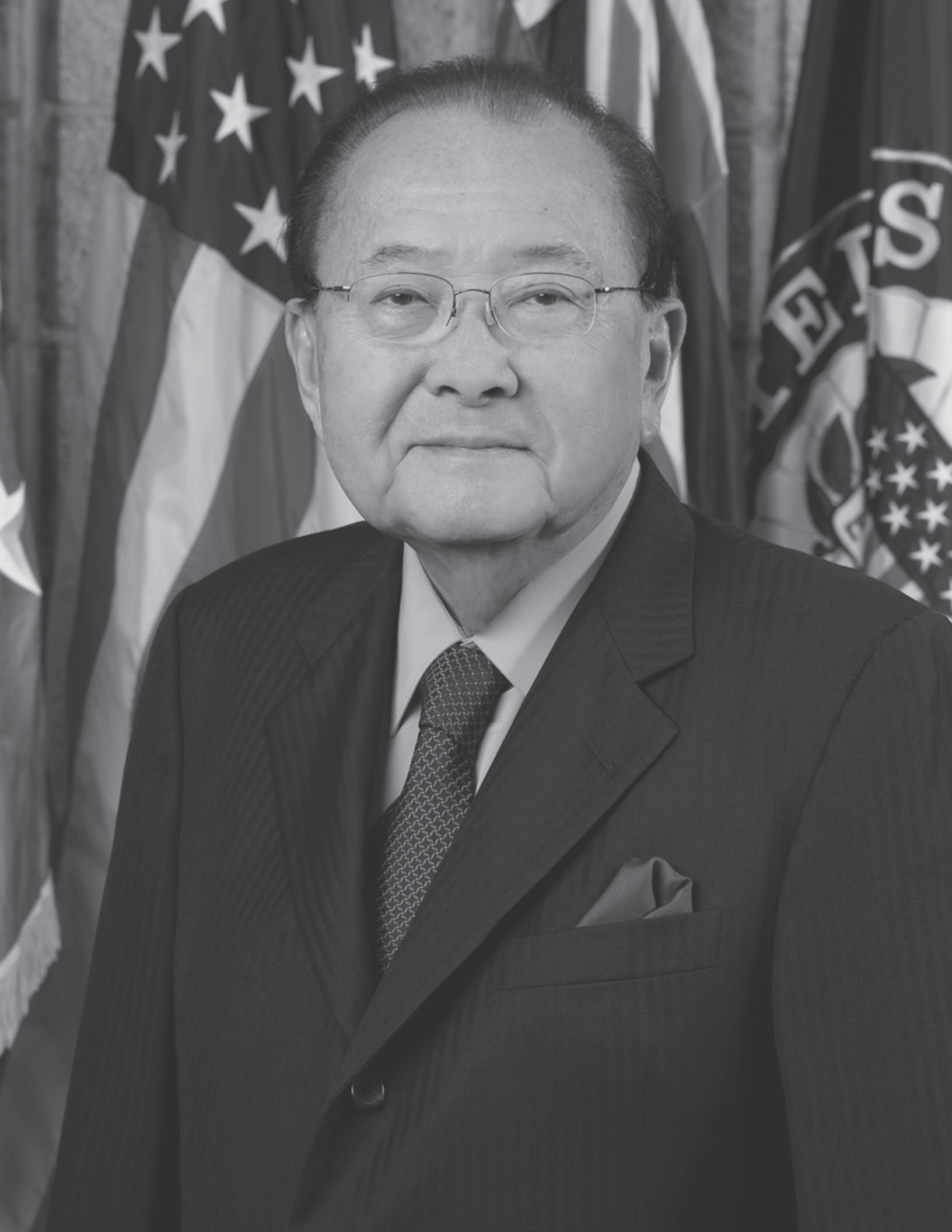
Daniel Ken Inouye was born on September 7, 1924, in Honolulu, Hawaii, to Hyotaro Inouye, a file clerk, and Kame Imanaga, who, as a young orphan, had been taken in by Native Hawaiians.³ A Methodist minister and his family adopted Inouye’s mother, who was homeless. She named Inouye after her adoptive father. “She made it very clear to me from the time I was very young, ‘I owe a lot to the Hawaiian [people], and I expect you to repay that debt,’” Inouye said.⁴ Inouye graduated from McKinley High School in Honolulu, then known as “Tokyo High” because the city’s segregation policies concentrated a high number of ethnic Japanese students at McKinley.⁵

At age 17, Inouye worked for the Red Cross with every intention of becoming a surgeon. “When the war broke out I was a high school senior and preparing myself to go to college and become a doctor,” Inouye said. “I had no

interest in politics.” He rushed to aid the wounded during the devastating attack on Pearl Harbor. Upon turning 18, Inouye applied to enlist in the military but was denied entry because of his race. The U.S. government classified *nisei* (American-born children of Japanese immigrants) unfit for service. “Here I was, though I was a citizen of the United States, I was declared to be an enemy alien and as a result not fit to put on the uniform of the United States,” Inouye recalled.⁶

After petitioning the government to reverse its decision, Inouye volunteered again in 1943 and joined the Army as a private, entering the fabled 442nd Regimental Combat Team. Composed primarily of Japanese-American soldiers, the 442nd served with distinction in the French and Italian campaigns during World War II, and the unit famously rescued the “Lost Battalion” of Texans behind enemy lines in France. Inouye later lost his right arm in a return sweep through Italy, crushing his dream of becoming a surgeon.⁷ After his injury, Inouye recovered at Percy Jones Hospital in Battle Creek, Michigan, where he met future Senate colleagues Philip Hart of Michigan and Robert Dole of Kansas, with whom he discussed becoming a lawyer and entering national politics.⁸

Inouye spent 20 months in U.S. Army hospitals before being honorably discharged and retiring as a captain on May 27, 1947. He earned a Distinguished Silver Cross, Bronze Star, and a Purple Heart, as well as 12 other medals and citations, for his military service. Though Inouye and the other members of the “Go For Broke” regiment were eventually acknowledged as heroes for their efforts on the Italian front, most received little formal recognition at the time. Only when Hawaiian Senator Daniel Akaka insisted on an Army review of war records nearly a half a century later did their heroism come into focus. Inouye received the Medal of Honor with 21 other Japanese Americans on





June 21, 2000, for his service in World War II. “I take this as the greatest compliment I’ve ever had,” Inouye noted. “I will wear it proudly. And I will not tarnish it.”⁹

After the war, with the assistance of the GI Bill, Inouye graduated from the University of Hawaii in 1950. He then pursued a law degree from George Washington University Law School, where he graduated in 1952 before returning to Hawaii. He was admitted to the bar in 1953 and then served as an assistant public prosecutor for Honolulu during 1953 and 1954. Inouye married Margaret Shinobu Awamura, an instructor at the University of Hawaii, on June 12, 1949, and they had one son, Ken, in 1964.¹⁰ Margaret died in 2006, and on May 24, 2008, Inouye married Irene Hirano, president of the U.S.–Japan Council.¹¹

Inouye joined a wave of young Japanese-American World War II veterans graduating from college and returning to Hawaii in the early 1950s. This group, respected for their contributions to the war effort and freshly educated, made an immediate impact on Hawaii’s political system. “The time had come for us to step forward,” Inouye said of this generational shift. “We had fought for that right with all the furious patriotism in our bodies and now we didn’t want to go back to the plantation.... We wanted to take our full place in society.”¹²

Many of the former members of the 442nd became attached to prominent Democrat John Burns. Burns was the final Hawaiian Delegate to Congress and helped secure statehood for the islands before serving three terms as governor from 1963 to 1974. For much of Inouye’s early political career, Burns headed the Hawaiian Democratic Party in spirit, if not always in name.¹³ Inouye stood out from this group of Burns protégés and merited special attention from the party. He was elected to the territorial house during the Democratic revolution of 1954, when Democrats swept statewide positions and took control of the legislature long held by Republicans. Inouye served as majority leader in the territorial house until 1958, when he was elected to the territorial senate.

When Hawaii achieved statehood in 1959, Inouye declared his intention to seek a seat in the U.S. Congress. He first planned to run for the Senate, leaving the House

seat open for his territorial senate colleague Patsy Takemoto Mink. But he withdrew from the race and ran for the lone U.S. House seat instead when party stalwarts Oren Long and William Heen ran for the Senate.¹⁴ Long noted this deference and pledged to retire after his first term ended, clearing the way for Inouye to run for the vacant Senate seat in 1962.¹⁵ In 1959 this decision put him in direct conflict with Mink for the Democratic nomination to the U.S. House, and he narrowly defeated her in the primary. He faced Dr. Charles H. Silva, director of the territorial department of institutions, in the general election. While his campaign style was described as “sunny” and “outgoing,” much of his overwhelming appeal came from his status as a war hero. Inouye won in a landslide, garnering 69 percent of the vote.¹⁶

His election made him the first Japanese-American Member of Congress, but it was his war injuries that initially made him an object of considerable interest in Washington. When Inouye was sworn in on August 24, 1959, he was asked to raise his right hand for the oath. Upon lifting his left hand, “There was a gasp,” Inouye said, noting that many Members did not know he had lost his right arm.¹⁷

Upon arriving in DC, outgoing Delegate Burns directed Inouye straight to the Texas delegation, with whom Hawaiians had developed a working relationship. Inouye became close with Speaker Rayburn, who steered him to the Agriculture Committee, an influential and helpful assignment for the Hawaiian Islands, notable for their sugar production. In turn, Inouye maintained the friendship between Hawaii and Texas. In 1960 Inouye was an early supporter of Texas Senator Lyndon B. Johnson’s presidential campaign before Johnson eventually accepted John F. Kennedy’s offer to be the vice presidential nominee.

Inouye toiled quietly for his two terms in the House, trying to foster a larger network of support for future campaigns and to protect the sugar industry in Hawaii. His only substantial piece of legislation passed late in his first term, extending several key provisions to recognize Hawaiian statehood in the Hawaii Omnibus Act (H.R. 11602). The act amended a bevy of existing laws to ensure the new state



received the full benefits accorded to the other 49 states.¹⁸ Nevertheless, Inouye's popularity in the islands helped him soar to re-election in 1960; he took 74 percent of the vote against his Republican opponent, Frederick Titcomb.

Senator Oren Long retired, as promised, in 1962 and backed Inouye's candidacy for the open seat. In the general election Inouye faced Ben F. Dillingham, a scion of one of Hawaii's wealthiest families. The *Honolulu Star-Advertiser* embarrassed Dillingham by endorsing Inouye even though Dillingham's father served as the newspaper's vice president. Dillingham also had opposed statehood, which cost him voter support as well.¹⁹ Despite Inouye's early fears about Dillingham's influence, he received more than twice the number of votes, winning 70 percent of the total. His victory made him the first Japanese-American Senator.²⁰

Inouye gained a reputation as a prolific legislator, submitting a flurry of bills, resolutions, and amendments. Most of his early legislation tied the Hawaiian economy tighter to federal spending and the federal bureaucracy. He chose his words carefully and rarely made floor speeches in his early terms. He made an early commitment to Senate traditions that held throughout his tenure when his maiden speech in the Senate supported the filibuster because "Hawaii, being a small state, may have to [resort] to the filibuster to get the nation's attention."²¹ Much of his influence derived from that respect for the Senate processes, beginning with the role of the committees.

In the 88th Congress (1963–1965), Inouye was initially appointed to two committees, Armed Services and Public Works. He did not remain on either committee long, moving to the Commerce Committee (later named Commerce, Science, and Transportation) in the 91st Congress (1969–1971) and the Appropriations Committee in the 92nd Congress (1971–1973). He remained on both of these committees through the rest of his Senate career, eventually chairing the Commerce Committee in the 110th Congress (2007–2009) and the Appropriations Committee from 2009 until his death. He also served on the Committee on the District of Columbia in the 1970s and joined the Rules and Administration Committee in 1981, in addition to a number of select and joint committees.²²

Between his workmanlike approach to legislating and his tight ties with the powerful Texas delegation, Inouye's star rose quickly in the national Democratic Party. He published a book, *Journey to Washington*, with author Lawrence Elliott in 1967 detailing his rise to the Senate. In 1968 Inouye served as the keynote speaker at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, which was rocked by anti-war protests. He spoke passionately about the march of progress and the anger of the country's youth, acknowledging their ideals while questioning their confrontational tactics. He called upon the American people to follow their better instincts. "Fellow Americans, this is our country," Inouye said. "Its future is what we, its citizens, will make it. And as we all know, we have much to do. Putting aside hatred on the one hand and timidity on the other, let us grow fresh faith in our purpose and new vigor in citizenship."²³

Afterward, President Lyndon Johnson tried to convince Hubert Humphrey to select the Hawaiian as his running mate: "I've never known him to make a mistake. He's got cold, clear courage.... It would be fresh and different. He's young and new. And I think your secretary could call him and say, 'Would you please go to Utah, South Carolina, San Francisco?' And I believe he could go to all of them and never lay an egg." Humphrey declined to nominate Inouye, believing that such a move "just takes it a little too far, too fast."²⁴ For his part, Inouye claimed he had no interest in the position and was content to remain a Senator.²⁵

Inouye gradually shifted his stance on the Vietnam War after Nixon's inauguration. He had steadfastly backed the war during the 1960s, but as opposition built, he stated that he regretted his support and attributed it to his close bond with President Johnson and the Texas delegation.²⁶ As the war dragged on into Nixon's presidency, Inouye cosponsored the War Powers Act of 1973, which limited the President's ability to engage in conflict overseas by asserting congressional power to place time limits on troop deployments.²⁷

Inouye was drawn into direct conflict with the administration in February 1973, when the Senate voted



77 to 0 to launch the Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities (known as the Ervin Committee for its chairman, North Carolina Senator Sam Ervin). The Ervin Committee investigated the events surrounding the break-in at the Democratic National Committee's Watergate offices in 1972 and the ensuing cover-up. Inouye was selected to serve, but, wanting to keep his head down, refused the appointment four times. Majority Leader Mike Mansfield of Montana told him that, after eliminating chairmen, party leaders, nonlawyers, and presidential hopefuls, only a select few potential candidates remained. Furthermore, congressional Democrats insisted on his participation due to what was seen as his "Mr. Clean image." With that Inouye agreed to serve.²⁸

Within months of joining the investigation, Inouye's name appeared in headlines across the country when John J. Wilson, the attorney representing former Nixon chief of staff, H. R. Haldeman, used a racial slur to describe the Senator from Hawaii. When asked by a United Press International reporter about a line of questioning from Senator Lowell Weicker of Connecticut, Wilson responded, "Oh, I don't mind Senator Weicker. . . . What I mind is that little Jap," and gestured toward Inouye. Earlier in the investigation, a hot mic had picked up Inouye describing another of Wilson's clients as "a liar." Wilson initially denied having made the comment about Inouye, but later admitted to it. Later, when asked for a response, Inouye simply said, "I think his statement speaks for itself."²⁹

In September 1973, Inouye declared the infamous White House recordings featuring President Nixon uttering scandalous expletives and implicating himself in the cover-up "not essential" to the investigation, stating the committee had enough to go on without them.³⁰ He was lauded in the press for his focus on campaign finance reform and fair, but firm, treatment of witnesses on the committee. Following the committee's revelations and the press they stirred, Inouye called for a constitutional convention to limit the power of the presidency, bringing attention to abuses of power by Republicans and Democrats alike.³¹ Now highly visible, thanks to the televised committee proceedings, Inouye's fame expanded nationally.

Given his success on the Ervin Committee, Inouye was appointed to chair the new Select Committee on Intelligence in 1976, established to provide oversight of U.S. intelligence agencies. Persuaded by Mansfield to accept the post after the furor of the Watergate investigation, Inouye struck a careful balance, pledging not to compromise security while ensuring no intelligence agency would "violate the civil rights of any Americans" under his watch.³² Inouye voiced concerns as early as December 1976 about the stresses and strains that the job had placed on him, and he sought to establish a precedent of brief chairmanships, believing that such turnover was the best means of ensuring that the committee was not unduly influenced by the intelligence organizations reporting to it. "I'm afraid if you stay on too long in this job, you either go a little off," he said, "or you become a part of the institutions. . . . Either way is wrong."³³ Though he remained on the Intelligence Committee through the 98th Congress (1983–1985), he stepped down as chair after 1977.

Inouye also flexed his muscles on foreign policy from his post as chair of the Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee, where he frequently cosponsored foreign aid and investment bills and defended them on the floor. "This country has given much, and, in doing so, we have given truth to the ideals we, as a nation, live by," he said. "We must continue to uphold this humanitarian tradition."³⁴

Most of his voluminous floor speeches during the post-Watergate Era centered on aid and investment bills and encouraged a more interconnected planet. Consistent with these beliefs, he also supported opening trade with communist China. In 1984 Inouye developed his foreign policy expertise further, serving as chair of the Senate Democratic Central America Study Group to assess U.S. policy in the region. He also served as senior counselor to the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America, also known as the Kissinger Commission.

In the early 1980s, Senator Inouye again gained national prominence when he spoke out about the Abscam Scandal, an FBI sting operation that targeted Members of Congress.



Inouye criticized the FBI on the Senate Floor in December 1980, sympathizing with observers who worried that the scandal represented a “threat to legislative independence inherent in the Abscam operation.”³⁵ Harrison Williams Jr. of New Jersey was the sole Senator ensnared in the sting. Though uproar persisted on the Senate Floor, the Senate Select Committee on Ethics waited to take up the issue until after the criminal investigation had ended so as not to influence the case.

Following Williams’s criminal conviction and sentencing in February 1982, the Select Committee reported the resolution to expel Williams from the Senate. Inouye acted as Williams’s advocate on the floor, noting first how extraordinary this resolution was in the history of the Senate. “I believe it is important to note that the Senate of the United States has never expelled a Member except where treason or disloyalty to the Union was involved.” He declared the operation was a “manufactured scandal.”³⁶ “I do not believe that a senator should be expelled for being a fool or committing foolish acts,” Inouye said.³⁷ Senators did not agree, and once it became clear that the necessary two-thirds would vote for expulsion, Harrison Williams resigned from the Senate on March 11, 1982.³⁸ The episode earned Inouye a reputation for loyalty under fire.

Inouye’s seniority and success in prior Senate investigatory roles made him a natural choice to lead a new investigation in the wake of another presidential scandal. In late 1986, news organizations brought to light secret operations conducted by National Security Council staff wherein the United States sold arms to Iran and used the profits to fund Nicaraguan Contras, rebel groups opposed to the official Sandinista Junta of National Reconstruction government. Inouye adopted a nonpartisan approach during the so-called Iran-Contra affair, eager to note that the Ronald Reagan administration cooperated in the panel’s investigation while also standing behind the committee’s conclusion that administration officials subverted the rule of law and misled the American public.³⁹

Inouye’s nonconfrontational questioning during the nationally televised hearings contrasted sharply with the testimony of charismatic figures like Lieutenant Colonel

Oliver North, frustrating his more partisan colleagues. Inouye stood by his methods even as he grew frustrated with witnesses’ grandstanding. Inouye stated that the administration’s actions derived from “an elitist vision ... that trusts no one—not the people, not the Congress, and not the Cabinet. It is a vision of a government operated by persons convinced they have a monopoly on truth.”⁴⁰ His fairness won plaudits, though his unwillingness to maximize political advantages in the scandal worried some within his party.⁴¹

Once again thrust into the public eye in a highly publicized investigative panel, Inouye initially thrived under the spotlight, readying his internal campaign to become the next Senate Majority Leader. Inouye had served as secretary of the Democratic Caucus since 1978, placing him in the third-ranking leadership post. Several major newspapers pegged him as the Majority-Leader-in-waiting. In 1986 he reportedly struck a deal with Senator Robert Byrd to help the West Virginian win the post of Senate Majority Leader, with the understanding that Byrd would step aside in 1989 and leave an inside track open for Inouye to run for the post.⁴²

However, neither Inouye’s experience nor careful positioning secured him the Majority Leader post that eventually went to George Mitchell of Maine. The press blamed a controversial 1987 appropriation that Inouye sponsored and later rescinded to support the construction of religious schools in France, which the Senator himself described as an “error in judgment.” Some also recalled Inouye’s handling of the Iran-Contra Select Committee that some Democrats described as “lukewarm” for failing to press the case against the Reagan administration. Within the Democratic Caucus, Inouye won the votes of only 14 of the 55 Senators.⁴³

When Senator Byrd passed away on June 28, 2010, Inouye became the President pro tempore of the United States Senate, making him the highest-ranking Asian American in the United States and third in the line of presidential succession. While the position did not give him a direct leadership role over policy formation, it nevertheless was valued by Inouye, reflecting his colleagues’



acknowledgment that, as the dean of the Senate, he held special knowledge of the chamber's rules, procedures, and practices.

Inouye became famous for supporting earmarks that steered federal dollars to Hawaii. As chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense and later as the head of the full committee, he was highly successful in securing money for his constituency. In 1997 alone, federal spending in Hawaii grew \$170 million to a total of \$8.16 billion, making it the fifth highest per capita recipient of federal funds.

Though his tactics in funneling federal spending to Hawaii made him the target of pork barrel watchdog groups, Inouye refused to apologize for his support of the Hawaiian economy. Inouye often focused on shipping bills.⁴⁴ In 1997 he inserted a provision into an annual appropriations bill that provided what he referred to as a "preference" to American Classic Voyages to run the cruise ship industry out of Hawaii. Senator John McCain of Arizona called the provision a government-sponsored monopoly and encouraged President William J. (Bill) Clinton to use his line-item veto against the bill.⁴⁵ The provision survived. "Since we're insular and dependent on merchant marine," Inouye had proclaimed, "we find ourselves deeply involved in activities of the sea."

Inouye's history with earmarks included acquiring support for a Hawaiian bank and arranging a \$50 million gift to his alma mater, George Washington University.⁴⁶ When the push for earmark reform heated up in 2006, Inouye joined his friend, Republican Senator Ted Stevens of Alaska, in dismissing the idea. "I don't see any monumental changes," he declared. "If something is wrong we should clean house, but if they can explain it and justify it, I will look at it."⁴⁷ Inouye continued to use earmarks as he had for decades until their eventual ban in 2011.⁴⁸

Inouye took largely liberal social positions on policies such as abortion rights, gun control, and civil liberties. His policies frequently favored the disenfranchised. He was a strong supporter of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and, as a close friend of Lyndon B. Johnson, stood strongly behind the Great Society programs such as Medicaid, Head Start,

and food stamps. Inouye's stance on civil rights grew out of his own experiences as a Japanese American and living in the patchwork Hawaiian cultural community. During and after the debate over the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Inouye repeatedly evoked Hawaiian values and the wishes of his diverse constituency.

After passage, Inouye shared an advertisement Hawaiians had placed in the *Washington Post* thanking Congress for the bill's passage, "Now we have rules to help us achieve our ideal—an era of universal tolerance, understanding, peace, and aloha."⁴⁹ Inouye also supported DC statehood, citing Hawaii's own struggle to join the Union. Inouye served on the Committee on the District of Columbia and was a strong proponent of the Metrorail, specifically the work done to give people living with disabilities access to the system. Inouye cosponsored the District of Columbia Self-Government and Governmental Reorganization Act in 1973 (S. 1435).

This support for the disenfranchised extended to the Asian-American community both inside and outside of Hawaii. Inouye served as a member of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus and, in 1997, joined fellow Hawaiian Senator Daniel Akaka to help Philippine veterans of World War II naturalize as U.S. citizens. Inouye kept his promise to his mother to protect Native Hawaiians when he helped to pass the Native Hawaiian Education Act and the Native Hawaiian Health Care Act in 1988, setting up programs to spur Native Hawaiians' incorporation into American society.

Inouye also stood behind fellow Japanese Americans. In 1981 he proposed the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, which led to the 1988 Civil Liberties Act that provided redress to Japanese Americans affected by internment during World War II.⁵⁰ Following the attacks of September 11, 2001, Inouye quickly defended American Muslims, comparing the bigotry directed at them to the experience of Japanese Americans following Pearl Harbor.⁵¹

This interest in preserving the rights of minorities and correcting past wrongs found natural expression through his work on the Select Committee on Indian Affairs.



Inouye wound up on Indian Affairs by chance. As a member of the steering committee, which made committee assignments, he had been directed to fill a vacancy on the select committee. When Inouye could not fill the slot, Senator Byrd suggested Inouye fill the seat himself. Inouye insisted he lacked the expertise, but Byrd responded in jest, “At least you look like one.”⁵² Though Inouye had initially preferred not to serve on the committee, his interest grew as he learned the extent to which the American government had “shortchanged” American Indians. “By God, did we do all these things?” he recalled thinking. “We should be embarrassed and ashamed of ourselves.”⁵³

In 1993 Inouye fought to defend the Committee on Indian Affairs (he had introduced successful legislation in early 1993 to remove the term “select” from the committee’s name) from the threat of disbandment. Testifying with Senator McCain before the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress, Inouye argued that the Constitution vested Congress with power over Indian affairs and, thus, the committee could not be removed except by constitutional amendment. “Even if we were not charged with legal obligations and a trust responsibility, we would still have to recognize the moral imperative that we, as a nation, are charged with when it comes to improving the conditions of life in reservation communities,” he argued.⁵⁴ His commitment to the committee was so strong that, when Senator Wendell Ford of Kentucky retired in 1998, Inouye passed on becoming Ranking Member on the Rules and Administration Committee so he could retain his position on Indian Affairs. He claimed in 1999 that he devoted more time and effort to his work on Indian Affairs than any other committee.⁵⁵

Inouye described his approach to working with Senate colleagues as nonpartisan rather than bipartisan and mused, “I think those of us who get older should make an extra effort to demonstrate what non-partisanship can result in.”⁵⁶ This independent streak occasionally rankled fellow Democrats. Inouye viewed Senator Stevens as a close friend; the pair often called one another “brother” on the Senate Floor.⁵⁷ In 1990 he made a radio ad to

support Republican Senator Mark Hatfield of Oregon, his colleague on the Appropriations Committee.

In 2008, as Senator Stevens faced federal charges and a stiff re-election campaign, Inouye flew out to Alaska to campaign for his old friend.⁵⁸ Near the end of his career, Inouye backed Hillary Clinton as his party’s nominee for President; Inouye had a long, fruitful relationship with President Bill Clinton’s administration. The endorsement created a rift with the eventual nominee, Barack Obama, who spent much of his early life growing up in Hawaii. Until the Obama administration took office in 2009, Inouye’s influence within the Democratic Party and particularly within Hawaii had few equals.

Inouye routinely received between three to four times the number of votes his opponents received. Through 1986, Inouye never won less than 73 percent of the vote in his Senate campaigns, thriving on his easygoing, charming demeanor. He was the master “of a sunny, outgoing type of campaigning.”⁵⁹ His only real electoral challenge came in 1992, facing a broader field of challengers from the Republican, Libertarian, and Green Parties. Republican opponent Richard Reed obtained a secretly recorded tape from Inouye’s longtime hairstylist that purported that the Senator had sexually assaulted her in 1975. Reed used the allegation in campaign ads against Inouye. No inquiry was launched, however, since the hairstylist, Lenore Kwock, declined to press charges. Reed took down the ads when Kwock threatened his campaign with a lawsuit. Inouye, who himself welcomed an investigation but otherwise refused to comment on the allegations, won the election with 57 percent of the vote.⁶⁰ He returned to his typical overwhelming margins in the following elections, receiving at least 75 percent of the vote in each succeeding election after 1992.

Late in his long career in the public eye, Inouye had ascended to the pinnacle of politics in the Aloha State and had become a revered figure in the U.S. Senate. His efforts to shape the political makeup of Hawaii extended back to his time as a protégé of Delegate John Burns. Early in his career, Inouye often joined Burns and fellow 442nd veteran and Democratic strategist Dan Aoki for breakfast to pick



delegates to the Democratic National Conventions.⁶¹ Starting in the mid-1960s and persisting for decades, Inouye had a hand in choosing Democrats for open seats across the state.⁶²

Some observers criticized that influence, but Inouye was largely unrepentant. “In certain circles, I’m the godfather,” Inouye said. His reach extended deep into state and municipal politics thanks to his broad network of former staffers and assistants. “Like the sun is to our solar system, he is to our state,” Honolulu mayor and former legislative assistant Kirk Caldwell said of Inouye.⁶³ It was a shock, then, when Senator Akaka announced his impending retirement in 2011 and Inouye announced his intention to stay out of the primary process. “I’m a good Democrat, and I want to see a Democrat win that seat,” Inouye said in April 2012. By October, however, Inouye had once more tightened his grip on the reins. Representative Mazie Hirono defeated former House Member and longtime Inouye nemesis Ed Case in the primary and won the Senate seat with Inouye’s backing.⁶⁴

In early December 2012, Daniel Inouye was hospitalized. He died of respiratory complications at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center on December 17, 2012.⁶⁵ When the Senate met on December 18, the presumptive dean of the Senate, Patrick Leahy of Vermont, stood to speak and gestured to Inouye’s empty desk, noting, “Today is the first day since Hawaii became a state that it is not represented by Dan Inouye.”⁶⁶ Inouye’s remains were interred at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, Hawaii.

MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

Library of Congress, Asian Division (Washington, DC). *Oral History*: 2003–2011, 8 linear feet. The collection contains videocassettes, DVDs, photographs, and documents related to an oral history project conducted by the United States Capitol Historical Society to document the service of Asian Americans in Congress. Daniel Inouye is included among the interviewees.

University of Hawaii at Manoa Library, Archives and Manuscripts Department, Hawaii Congressional Papers Collection (Honolulu, HI). *Papers*: 1959–2012, 1,237 linear feet. The collection includes casework, legislation, subject files, and committee-related material. Subjects covered include Watergate, Iran-Contra, and Hawaii-related issues. The papers are currently closed, but researchers may apply to access certain portions.

NOTES

- 1 Lloyd Shearer, “Sen. Daniel Inouye: Watergate Changed His Life,” 11 November 1973, *Parade*: 4.
- 2 The White House, “Remarks by the President at the Presidential Medal of Freedom Ceremony,” press release, 20 November 2013, accessed 27 January 2016, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/11/20/remarks-president-presidential-medal-freedom-ceremony>.
- 3 Daniel Inouye and Lawrence Elliott, *Journey to Washington* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1967): 11–17.
- 4 Tom Coffman, *The Island Edge of America: A Political History of Hawai‘i* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2003): 299.
- 5 Shearer, “Sen. Daniel Inouye: Watergate Changed His Life.”
- 6 Mark Preston, “Inouye Reflects on His 40 Years in Congress,” 13 September 1999, *Roll Call*: A56–A57.
- 7 “Daniel Inouye,” Academy of Achievement, 12 August 2013, <http://www.achievement.org/autodoc/page/ino0bio-1> (accessed 15 March 2016).
- 8 Preston, “Inouye Reflects on His 40 Years in Congress.”
- 9 Ed Henry, “Inouye Finally Gets His Medal,” 26 June 2000, *Roll Call*: 1.
- 10 Richard Borreca, “Fatal Cancer Could Not Dim Maggie’s Grace,” 14 March 2006, *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, <http://archives.starbulletin.com/2006/03/14/news/story02.html> (accessed 15 March 2016).
- 11 “About Dan,” official website of United States Senator Daniel K. Inouye, accessed 18 December 2012, <http://www.inouye.senate.gov/about-dan/biography/> (site discontinued).
- 12 Sucheng Chan, *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1991): 171.
- 13 John S. Whitehead, *Completing the Union: Alaska, Hawai‘i, and the Battle for Statehood* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004): 178–179.
- 14 Karen Winkler, “Daniel K. Inouye, Democratic Senator from Hawaii,” in *Ralph Nader Congress Project: Citizens Look at Congress* (Washington, DC: Grossman Publishers, 1972): 5.
- 15 Daniel Inouye, oral history interview by Ronald Sarasin, 3 March 2008, transcript, United States Capitol Historical Society, Washington, DC.
- 16 Coffman, *The Island Edge of America*: 223; John Ramsey, “All Capitol Eyes Will Be on Long, Fong and Inouye,” 21 August 1959, *Washington Post*: B2.
- 17 Preston, “Inouye Reflects on His 40 Years in Congress.”
- 18 Hawaii Omnibus Act, Public Law 86-624, 74 Stat. 411 (1960). Notable inclusions in the Omnibus Act were amendments to the Internal Revenue Code, the Social Security Act, the National



- Defense Education Act, and language in the code of the Interstate Highway System.
- 19 Winkler, “Daniel K. Inouye, Democratic Senator from Hawaii”: 6.
- 20 “Democrats Record a Sweep in Hawaii,” 7 November 1962, *New York Times*: 16.
- 21 Albert Eisele, “Daniel Inouye’s 40-year Climb to Power in the Senate,” 4 August 1999, *The Hill*: n.p.
- 22 For a full listing of Inouye’s committee assignments in the Senate, see Garrison Nelson, *Committees in the U.S. Congress, 1947–1992*, vol. 2 (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 1994): 444–446; and Garrison Nelson and Charles Stewart III, *Committees in the U.S. Congress, 1993–2010* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2011): 769–771.
- 23 “Transcript of the Keynote Address by Senator Inouye Decrying Violent Protests,” 27 August 1968, *New York Times*: 28.
- 24 “That Empty Sleeve,” March 2009, *Harper’s Magazine*: 16.
- 25 Shearer, “Sen. Daniel Inouye: Watergate Changed His Life.”
- 26 “White House-Backed Keynoter: Daniel Ken Inouye,” 27 August 1968, *New York Times*: 28; Shearer, “Sen. Daniel Inouye: Watergate Changed His Life”: 6.
- 27 Helen Zia and Susan B. Gall, eds., *Asian American Biography* (Boston, MA: Cengage Gale, 2003): 97–101.
- 28 Pete Pichaske, “The Bungled Burglary Made Inouye a ‘Star,’” 16 June 1997, *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, <http://archives.starbulletin.com/97/06/16/news/story1.html> (accessed 4 August 2015); Shearer, “Sen. Daniel Inouye: Watergate Changed His Life.”
- 29 Douglas Watson, “Haldeman’s Lawyer Calls Inouye ‘That Little Jap,’” 2 August 1973, *Washington Post*: A23; United Press International, “Haldeman’s Lawyer Terms Inouye ‘That Little Jap,’” 2 August 1973, *New York Times*: 18; Rudy Abramson, “Offhand Remark in Recess: Wilson, Stung by Questions, Calls Inouye ‘That Little Jap,’” 2 August 1973, *Los Angeles Times*: A1.
- 30 “Inouye Doubts Committee Needs Tapes From Nixon,” 10 September 1973, *New York Times*: 21.
- 31 Roy Reed, “Inouye Is Disturbed by Increase in Criticism of Watergate Panel,” 23 January 1974, *New York Times*: 19.
- 32 John H. Averill, “Inouye Takes Another Sensitive Assignment,” 28 May 1976, *Los Angeles Times*: B6.
- 33 George Lardner Jr., “Inouye Sees Peril in Remaining Too Long on Intelligence Panel, May Quit in 2 Years,” 25 December 1976, *Washington Post*: A15.
- 34 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 94th Cong., 2nd sess. (30 June 1976): 21473.
- 35 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 96th Cong., 2nd sess. (5 December 1980): 32793.
- 36 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 97th Cong., 2nd sess. (3 March 1982): 2992.
- 37 Jonathan Fuerbringer, “The White House Crisis: Man in the News; An Esteemed Colleague: Daniel Ken Inouye,” 17 December 1986, *New York Times*: A19.
- 38 U.S. Senate Historical Office, “The Expulsion Case of Harrison A. Williams, Jr. (1982),” http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/expulsion_cases/140HarrisonWilliams_expulsion.htm (accessed 4 August 2015).
- 39 David E. Rosenbaum, “Iran-Contra Report Says President Bears ‘Ultimate Responsibility’ for Wrongdoing,” 19 November 1987, *New York Times*: A1.
- 40 “Iran-Contra Hearings: Summing Up a Summer’s Work; Final Remarks by Leaders of the Panels: A Litany of Mistakes,” 4 August 1987, *New York Times*: A6.
- 41 Emma Brown, “Daniel K. Inouye, U.S. Senator, Dies at 88,” 17 December 2012, *Washington Post*, https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/obituaries/daniel-k-inouye-us-senator-dies-at-88/2012/12/17/61030936-b259-11e0-9a80-c46b9cb1255f_story.html (accessed 18 December 2012).
- 42 Jack Anderson and Dale Van Atta, “The Byrd-Inouye Leadership Deal,” 4 November 1987, *Washington Post*: B11.
- 43 Preston, “Inouye Reflects on His 40 Years in Congress.” For Inouye’s quotation, see Irvin Molotsky, “Inouye Concedes ‘Error’ in Senate,” 2 February 1988, *New York Times*: A1.
- 44 Eisele, “Daniel Inouye’s 40-year Climb to Power in the Senate.”
- 45 Adam Bryant, “The Fine Print: Of Arms and Cruise Ships,” 11 October 1997, *New York Times*: A1.
- 46 Paul Kiel and Binyamin Appelbaum, “After Call From Senator’s Office, Small Hawaii Bank Got U.S. Aid,” 1 July 2009, *Washington Post*, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/06/30/AR2009063004229.html> (accessed 15 March 2016); Kent Jenkins, “Senator Taps U.S. Pockets for Alma Mater Building Fund,” 10 October 1993, *Washington Post*: A29; Helen Dewar, “Inouye, Defending ‘Five,’ Says Senate Is on Trial,” 4 December 1990, *Washington Post*: A6.
- 47 David D. Kirkpatrick, “As Power Shifts in New Congress, Pork May Linger,” 24 November 2006, *New York Times*: A1.
- 48 Inouye chaired the Senate Appropriations Committee at the time and resisted the change for as long as possible. When President Barack Obama joined House Republicans in a refusal to accept the continued use of earmarks, Inouye bowed to pressure. However, he vowed to take up the issue again in the following Congress once “the consequences of this decision are fully understood by the members of this body.” He passed away before he was able to revisit the issue. Carl Hulse, “Senate Won’t Allow Earmarks in Spending



- Bills,” 1 February 2011, *New York Times*, <http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/02/01/senate-wont-allow-earmarks-in-spending-bills/> (accessed 2 February 2011).
- 49 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 88th Cong., 2nd sess. (8 July 1964): 16098.
- 50 Don T. Nakanishi and Ellen D. Wu, eds., *Distinguished Asian American Political and Governmental Leaders* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002): 69–73.
- 51 Matt Bai, “The Way We Live Now: 10-28-01: Encounter; Hyphenated Americans,” 28 October 2001, *New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/10/28/magazine/the-way-we-live-now-10-28-01-encounter-hyphenated-americans.html> (accessed 15 March 2016).
- 52 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 102nd Cong., 2nd sess. (8 April 1992): S4997.
- 53 Preston, “Inouye Reflects on His 40 Years in Congress.”
- 54 Karen Foerstel, “Citing ‘Trail of Tears,’ Sen. Inouye Entreats Panel to Save His Indian Affairs Committee,” 6 May 1993, *Roll Call*: 11.
- 55 Preston, “Inouye Reflects on His 40 Years in Congress.”
- 56 Daniel Inouye, oral history interview.
- 57 Kirkpatrick, “As Power Shifts in New Congress, Pork May Linger.”
- 58 David Rogers, “Daniel Inouye ‘Lived and Breathed the Senate,’” 17 December 2012, *Politico*, <http://www.politico.com/story/2012/12/daniel-inouye-obituary-lived-and-breathed-the-senate-085210> (accessed 12 December 2012).
- 59 Coffman, *The Island Edge of America*: 223.
- 60 Derrick DePledge, “Sen. Daniel K. Inouye Dies at Age 88 of Respiratory Illness,” 18 December 2012, *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*, <http://www.staradvertiser.com/breaking-news/sen-daniel-k-inouye-dies-at-age-88-of-respiratory-illness/> (accessed 27 January 2016); Jane Gross, “Accusations Against Hawaii Senator Meet a Silence in His Seat of Power,” 14 December 1992, *New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/12/14/us/accusations-against-hawaii-senator-meet-a-silence-in-his-seat-of-power.html> (accessed 18 December 2012); “Inouye’s Wife Stands By Him Despite Hairdresser’s Claims,” 19 October 1992, Associated Press; Ken Rudin, “Congressional Sex Scandals in History,” 21 January 1998, *Washington Post*, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/special/clinton/congress.htm> (accessed 28 April 2016); “Report: Inouye Made ‘Chubby’ Comment to Woman Senator,” 22 September 2014, *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*, <http://www.staradvertiser.com/breaking-news/report-inouye-made-chubby-comment-to-woman-senator-2/> (accessed 28 April 2016).
- 61 Coffman, *The Island Edge of America*: 210.
- 62 Horowitz, “Hawaii’s Reigning Son.”
- 63 Ibid.
- 64 Manu Raju and John Bresnahan, “Inouye Relaxes His Grip on Hawaii,” 13 April 2011, *Politico*: 4; Kyle Trygstad, “Daniel Inouye Rooting for Mazie Hirono in Hawaii Primary,” 11 October 2011, *Roll Call*, http://www.rollcall.com/issues/57_39/daniel_inouye_rooting_for_mazie_hirono_hawaii_primary-209338-1.html (accessed 27 January 2016).
- 65 Alexander Bolton and Jonathan Easley, “Hawaii Sen. Inouye Dead at 88,” 17 December 2012, *The Hill*: n.p.
- 66 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 112th Cong., 2nd sess. (18 December 2012): 8103.



“EVEN IF WE WERE NOT
CHARGED WITH LEGAL
OBLIGATIONS AND A TRUST
RESPONSIBILITY, WE WOULD
STILL HAVE TO RECOGNIZE
THE MORAL IMPERATIVE
THAT WE, AS A NATION,
ARE CHARGED WITH WHEN
IT COMES TO IMPROVING
THE CONDITIONS OF LIFE IN
RESERVATION COMMUNITIES.”

Daniel K. Inouye
Roll Call, May 6, 1993

Spark M. Matsunaga

1916–1990

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE 1963–1977

UNITED STATES SENATOR 1977–1990

DEMOCRAT FROM HAWAII

A lifetime proponent of peace, Spark M. Matsunaga, the son of an impoverished plantation worker, became a war hero and Member of Congress. Matsunaga believed firmly in gradual reform and the power of one man to change minds, a philosophy he often applied to the legislative process. As a knowledgeable member of the powerful House of Representatives Rules Committee and later as a United States Senator, Matsunaga influenced a broad swath of legislation during his 28 years in Congress. He alternately identified as a lawyer, soldier, peacemaker, poet, technology enthusiast, and a campaigner for equal rights. Fellow Senator Bob Dole of Kansas referred to “Sparky,” as he liked to be known, as a “renaissance man.”¹

Spark Matsunaga was born Masayuki Matsunaga on October 8, 1916, in Kukuiula on the island of Kauai in Hawaii. His parents, Kingoro Matsunaga and Chiyono Fukushima, emigrated from Japan and worked on a Kauai sugar plantation. Masayuki grew up in a large family; his mother, Chiyono, was a widow with four children from her previous marriage. Kingoro Matsunaga sustained an injury on the job in the mid-1930s and, after his recovery, dedicated himself to a spiritual life as a Shinto priest. The Matsunaga brothers constructed a Shinto temple in their backyard at their father’s instruction. The nickname “Sparky” or “Spark” originated in Matsunaga’s youth; childhood friends used it to razz him for his frequent last-place finishes in races. The name stayed with him.²

Matsunaga’s interest in political office ignited early. While attending Kauai High School, he complained to his *haole* social studies teacher about discrimination against Asians. The teacher replied, “Run for office and fix it.” “Ohhh, he put that bug in my head!” Matsunaga recalled. “He planted a seed in my brain. In everything I did I was building steps toward the U.S. Senate.”³ After

graduating high school in 1933, Matsunaga briefly worked as a bookkeeper and then as a sales clerk to save money for college.⁴ He participated in Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) while attending the University of Hawaii in Honolulu. After receiving his bachelor’s degree in education in 1941, his ROTC experience led him into the military.

Matsunaga’s military career proved to be a defining life experience. He joined the Hawaii National Guard before entering the U.S. Army as a second lieutenant. Matsunaga commanded a company on the island of Molokai when Japanese forces attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Martial law was immediately declared, and Matsunaga took command of the island itself for several months. But after the Battle of Midway in June 1942, the Army removed Matsunaga from command and shipped him and other soldiers of Japanese descent to Camp McCoy in Monroe County, Wisconsin. “Oh, my heavens, that was a sad day,” Matsunaga later said.⁵

At the camp, while the soldiers continued training, Matsunaga helped organize a petition to President Franklin D. Roosevelt to allow the troops to prove their loyalty in battle. In early 1943, the government relented and allowed the formation of the 100th Infantry Battalion and later the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, which entered combat in Italy. Matsunaga was wounded twice traversing a minefield, causing severe damage to his right leg. He was awarded the Bronze Star for his service in Italy before being released from active duty in 1945 at the close of the war.

After the war, Matsunaga officially changed his first name to Spark, but kept the name Masayuki.⁶ He took a job as a veteran’s counselor with the Department of the Interior for two years before joining the War Assets Administration as chief of the Priority Claims Division. He also lobbied Congress on behalf of disabled veterans like





himself. In 1948 he married Helene Hatsumi Tokunaga, with whom he had five children, Karen, Merle, Diane, Keene, and Matthew. Using the GI Bill, Matsunaga pursued a law degree at Harvard University in 1949. He graduated two years later and worked as an assistant prosecutor for the city and county of Honolulu before going into private practice in 1954.

Matsunaga made his entry onto the broader national stage while still in law school when, in 1950, he testified before the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs in favor of Hawaiian statehood. He cited the patriotism of Japanese-American World War II soldiers and said they deserved “full recognition for the supreme sacrifice which they made for us and our country.”⁷ He returned to testify in 1954, once more sharing the perspective of a veteran. Later that year, he was elected to the territorial legislature of Hawaii in the Democratic revolution that swept Republicans out of control. He supported the successful abolition of the death penalty in Hawaii in 1957 and went on to serve as the territorial house majority leader in 1958.⁸

In 1959 Hawaii finally attained statehood after Delegate John Burns arranged a compromise admitting Alaska to the Union first. Matsunaga put his name forward for the position of lieutenant governor. However, Burns, the gubernatorial candidate and de facto head of the Democratic Party on the islands, had already handpicked fellow insider Mitsuyuki (Mits) Kido as his running mate. Matsunaga balked; he asked why he had “risked his life in Europe with the 100th to come home and be told not to run for office.”⁹ He ran anyway and weathered the primary loss. Burns, meanwhile, remained in DC for much of the campaign and lost the governor’s race in a Republican landslide. Matsunaga returned to his law practice, but kept an eye on opportunities for national office.

That opportunity arrived in 1962, when Hawaiian Senator Oren Long declined to run for re-election. Representative Daniel Inouye ran for the vacant Senate seat, and redistricting doubled the number of Hawaiian congressional districts from one to two. Both seats were allotted At-Large in 1962 and were vacant, meaning

Matsunaga could come in second overall but still serve in the House. Once again Democratic operatives pleaded with Matsunaga to reconsider, stating he was “upsetting the racial balance that had been so carefully worked out” for the ticket. Furious at the charge, Matsunaga took the issue head-on in the primaries and ended up polling the most votes of any Democrat.¹⁰ In the general election, he ran alongside Democrat Thomas P. Gill against Republicans Albert Evensen and Richard Sutton. Matsunaga received 123,599 votes, only 50 fewer than Gill; neither Republican candidate managed to attain more than 20 percent of the votes.

Upon entering the House in 1963, Matsunaga was appointed to the Agriculture Committee. He also sat on the Post Office and Civil Service Committee in the 89th Congress (1965–1967) before gaining a spot on the powerful Rules Committee in 1967. Matsunaga’s seat on the Rules Committee was due to his personal friendship with Speaker John McCormack of Massachusetts. When asked whether he had cleared the appointment with incoming Rules Chairman William Colmer of Mississippi, McCormack scoffed, “Absolutely not. The Rules Committee is an arm of the leadership and the Speaker must have complete freedom to select those members on whose personal loyalty he can reasonably depend.”¹¹

Despite having no position of defined power on the committee, Matsunaga’s command of the House Rules ensured him significant influence over the process of lawmaking. He diluted the power of the chairman by shepherding a rule allowing the majority to call a meeting without the chairman’s consent. He frequently cosponsored legislation before it reached the Rules Committee, generating support from moderates on the committee who respected his views. He helped steer several major bills into laws this way, but he did not introduce much legislation himself. His expertise drew acclaim from House leadership. Majority Leader Hale Boggs noted in 1971 that “it’s getting to the point where you have to see Sparky Matsunaga to get a bill passed around here.”¹² In 1976 he published a book with cowriter Ping Chen titled *Rulemakers of the House*, detailing the evolution of the Rules Committee. At one point during a re-election



campaign, Matsunaga defended the importance of his place on the Rules Committee: “The Civil Rights Act of 1968 came out of this committee by an 8-7 vote. So did the Higher Education Act, the Vocational Education Act, the Federal Pay Raise Act, the Gun Control Act and others. You can see the importance of my one vote: Hawai‘i’s vote.”¹³

Matsunaga devoted much of his time and effort to Hawaiian interests, primarily the continuation of sugar subsidies for the island’s most important crop. Typically, a seat on the Rules Committee is an exclusive placement; however, Matsunaga negotiated to retain his spot on the Agriculture Committee as well because he “[knew] a lot about sugar.” Matsunaga valued the committee membership highly, noting that “sugar is the life-blood of Hawaii.”¹⁴ Through his dual positions on Agriculture and Rules, Matsunaga was able to assert his influence in hearings for the Sugar Act Amendments of 1971, speeding its passage. Using his position on the Rules Committee, Matsunaga voted down rules that had the potential to limit sugar benefits on the island, and the bill passed the House under a closed rule on June 10. The Sugar Act Amendments of 1971 maintained favorable prices and quotas for Hawaiian sugar above the world market price, stimulating a key Hawaiian industry.¹⁵

Throughout his congressional career, Matsunaga tirelessly advocated for peace. In an assigned paper during his first year at the University of Hawaii, Matsunaga wrote, “If we want peace, we must first educate people to want peace. We must replace attitudes favorable to war with attitudes opposed to war.”¹⁶ He strongly supported foreign aid as a method of peaceful support to cooperating nations, including India, which he described as “the bulwark of democracy in the East.” Matsunaga argued that foreign aid, an unpopular bill in the House, was “a sound investment in our future security.”¹⁷

However, his stance on Vietnam waffled over the years. Shortly after joining the House of Representatives, Matsunaga was recommissioned as a lieutenant colonel in the Judge Advocate General’s Corps of the U.S. Army Reserve partially to show support for American troops.¹⁸ For much of the conflict, he viewed the defense of the

South Vietnamese government as a moral imperative and supported defense appropriations and the Lyndon B. Johnson administration’s decision to escalate U.S. involvement in the conflict. As the war dragged on under the Richard Nixon administration, however, Matsunaga added his voice to those calling for the war’s end. In early 1971, he offered one of the earliest resolutions for complete withdrawal of U.S. troops.¹⁹ On February 1, 1971, he spoke in favor of his resolution (H. Con. Res. 101), saying, “The war must end. Congress must move to reassert its constitutional responsibilities to ‘raise and support armies’ and to ‘declare war.’”²⁰

Matsunaga had clashed with Nixon’s 1968 running mate over civil rights and treatment of Asian Americans. During the presidential election campaign, Republican vice presidential nominee Spiro Agnew casually referred to a *Baltimore Sun* reporter on his campaign jet as a “fat Jap.” Matsunaga decried it as a hateful episode, and though Agnew initially shrugged off the concerns as “desperate,” he publicly apologized days later.²¹

Matsunaga often spoke in favor of and voted for civil rights legislation, though he resisted its more militant aspects. He waded into the 1964 Civil Rights Bill debate on the House Floor to clearly state, “American society can be true to itself . . . only as rights are accorded to every person because he is a person.”²² But both before and after passage of the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964 Matsunaga warned against provoking civil disorder to further the cause of the movement, saying that African Americans should “exercise the patience of Job, and seek to remedy wrongs only through the peaceful means provided by the new law.”²³ During the debate on the Voting Rights Act of 1965, Matsunaga more passionately assaulted the hypocrisy that civil rights legislation aimed to correct, noting, “It was not pure chance that under Thomas Jefferson’s able draftsmanship the Declaration of Independence should state that ‘all men are created equal.’ These were not hollow words.”²⁴

While he occasionally restrained his fervor for the civil rights movement of the 1960s, he never wavered in his effort to restore dignity to Japanese Americans



wronged during World War II internment. In 1971 he introduced H.R. 234 to repeal Title II of the Internal Security Act of 1950, an act with similar provisions to the executive order that had enabled the United States to detain 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II without due process. The Internal Security Act, also known as the McCarran Act after its sponsor, Senator Pat McCarran of Nevada, had been enacted over President Harry Truman's veto. Matsunaga first introduced his repeal bill in 1969 with Representative Chet Holifield of California as a cosponsor. At the time, Matsunaga insisted the provision "violates the constitutional guarantees and judicial traditions that are basic to our American way of life." Despite considerable support, opponents managed to refer the bill to the Committee on Internal Security, the successor of the House Un-American Activities Committee, where it languished.

When the pair reintroduced the bill in the 92nd Congress (1971–1973), Matsunaga used his position on the Rules Committee to have his bill considered before a competing, less effective proposal from Representative Richard Ichord, a conservative Democrat from Missouri who chaired the Internal Security Committee. Ichord's bill would have continued the threat of denying due process to those accused of subversive activities. Matsunaga's compromise forced Ichord's bill to a vote as an amendment to his own. In debate, opponents argued that the provision had never been used and Representative Allen Smith of California declared the bill "much ado about nothing." Representative Joe Ewins of Tennessee, floor manager for Matsunaga's bill, came out swinging by denouncing Title II as allowing concentration camps on American soil. Ichord's amendment failed, 272 to 124; H.R. 234 then overwhelmingly passed the House, 356 to 49. The Senate passed the bill by unanimous consent two days later, and President Nixon signed it into law on September 25, 1971.²⁵

After his first election, Matsunaga campaigned on his experience and the value of maintaining a strong veteran's voice in Congress for Hawaii. His brochures declared "In the forefront for Hawaii and the Nation," "Keep Hawaii Strong in Congress," and "Spark's rise to

national prominence has been phenomenal." The strategy worked, winning Matsunaga overwhelming victories in each election after 1962.²⁶ In 1964, Representative Thomas Gill unsuccessfully challenged Republican Senator Hiram L. Fong, and state senator Patsy Mink won his spot as Hawaii's junior Representative. Matsunaga and Mink continued to represent Hawaii At-Large until 1970, when the two seats were assigned defined districts. Matsunaga took the district representing urban Honolulu as well as the northwestern Hawaiian islands.

In 1976 Senator Fong announced his retirement. Both Matsunaga and Mink jumped to announce their candidacies to fill the vacant seat. Both candidates attracted fervent support across Hawaii, and experts predicted a close race in the October primary. Ultimately, Matsunaga won with 55 percent of the vote.²⁷ The brief general election campaign pitted Matsunaga against former Republican Governor William Quinn. Quinn had been out of politics for some time and had lost recognition among an electorate that tilted more Democratic than it had two decades prior. Matsunaga won 54 percent of the vote, amassing a comfortable 40,000-vote margin. Once established in the Senate, he returned to his well-practiced method of touting his experience and clout on Capitol Hill. His victories were much larger in his re-election campaigns in 1982 and 1988, when he won 80 and 77 percent of the vote, respectively.²⁸

Reflecting on his arrival in the Senate in 1977, Matsunaga later joked, "I felt very uneasy, very out of place. Everybody else was running for president."²⁹ Still, he made his mark early. As a freshman, he cast the deciding vote in the Democratic caucus to elect Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia as Majority Leader. As a reward, Matsunaga was quickly moved from his early provisional appointments on the Commerce and Foreign Relations Committees and granted a seat on the powerful Finance Committee.³⁰ He was also appointed to the Energy and Natural Resources Committee and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, although he left Energy and Natural Resources for the Committee on Labor and Human Resources in the 98th Congress (1983–1985).³¹



The Senate marked a change for Matsunaga in more ways than one. Fong had retired in part because he grew tired of the long hours. Matsunaga embraced the workload as he adapted to the culture of the Senate. Despite his ceaseless commitment to the job, he developed a reputation for his good nature among his colleagues and his constituents. He became famous for showing visiting constituents around the Capitol and treating them to lunch in the Senate Dining Room. After his death, the Senate named the center table after him to mark the spot where he so often entertained Hawaiian visitors.³²

Matsunaga first experienced being in the minority party during his years in the Senate when Republicans regained control of that body in 1981, riding the coattails of President Ronald Reagan's election. During this period, Matsunaga grew more partisan but maintained his amiability. Weeks after reluctantly voting to confirm Alexander Haig as President Reagan's Secretary of State, Matsunaga attended a White House reception for the visiting Japanese prime minister. Despite his best efforts, the Senator found himself lumped in with the Japanese delegation as they were shuffled along the presidential receiving line. Secretary Haig shook Matsunaga's hand and asked if he spoke English. "Yes, Mr. Secretary, I do," Matsunaga replied in a deadpan, "and I had the honor of voting for your confirmation the other day."³³

Matsunaga spent much of his first term mastering the rhythms of the Senate and forging a cooperative relationship with the senior Senator from Hawaii, Daniel Inouye. They worked closely on legislation important to Hawaii, but each maintained their own legislative focus. Matsunaga added interests in space exploration, alternative energy, and cultural development to his agenda. At the same time, he continued to campaign on behalf of civil rights for Japanese Americans and broader peace initiatives.

Early in his second term, Matsunaga finally achieved a long-sought goal: the establishment of the United States Institute of Peace. He submitted a bill (S. 564) in 1983 to found an Academy of Peace for undergraduates to study the art of diplomacy and peaceful negotiation. More than 140 bills had been introduced during the previous

half-century calling for some sort of agency dedicated to peace.³⁴ Matsunaga had submitted several similar proposals since entering Congress in 1962. S. 564 garnered 51 cosponsors and seemed bound for passage, but was repeatedly held up in various committees, where it was redesigned to be a grant-making institution.

After suffering a heart attack on January 4, 1984, Matsunaga redoubled his efforts to create his Academy of Peace. He asked Oregon Senator Mark Hatfield, chairman of the Appropriations Committee, to submit the United States Institute of Peace Act as Title XVII of the defense appropriations bill. Hatfield steadfastly backed the amendment, which carried it through committee.³⁵ Codified in Public Law 98-525, the institute established a nonprofit corporation with federal funding, an appointed board of directors, and the mission to distribute grants, hold conferences, and award the newly minted Medal of Peace.³⁶ The Institute of Peace was not the academy Matsunaga had originally envisioned, but it carried a mandate to foster peace research in other academic and diplomatic institutions across the nation.

Matsunaga was also taken with emerging technologies, focusing on space exploration and alternative energy sources. While the latter appealed mainly to his love of science, the former tied directly to his tireless efforts for peace. In 1986 he published his second book titled *The Mars Project: Journeys Beyond the Cold War*, advocating cooperation with the Soviet Union to explore the red planet. He was moved to write the book as the Reagan administration pushed the ballistic missile defense system, better known as "Star Wars." Matsunaga addressed the salience of focusing on space exploration at that moment, saying, "They may think I'm out of this world, but one of the objectives I had in mind was to offer something positive in lieu of 'Star Wars' because 'Star Wars' can only lead to our mutual destruction."³⁷

Matsunaga was one of the earliest proponents of an international space station, introducing a resolution (S. Res. 488) in favor of its development in 1982. "Space—the last and most expansive frontier—will be what we make it," he wrote in a 1982 editorial.³⁸ In 1984 Matsunaga



sponsored another resolution (S.J. Res. 236) in favor of U.S.-Soviet space cooperation; this one passed the House and Senate and gained Reagan's signature. Studies were launched to address the feasibility of manned spaceflight to Mars. Matsunaga also suggested turning the manned spaceflight program over to the U.S. Air Force, citing the *Challenger* disaster as evidence that NASA had become "overburdened."³⁹ The International Space Station eventually became a reality in 1998, when the first components were launched for the joint operation.

Another of Matsunaga's longtime goals came to fruition in 1985, when he helped create the U.S. poet laureate position at the Library of Congress. Matsunaga was an amateur poet himself. During Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone's visit in 1986, Nakasone praised the cherry blossoms at a congressional lunch. Inspired, Matsunaga spontaneously stood and formed a haiku: "Cherry blossoms bloom. Washington is beautified. East and West do meet."⁴⁰

In late 1985, he cosponsored the Arts, Humanities, and Museums Amendments of 1985 along with Republican Senator William Cohen of Maine. This bill (S. 1264) introduced a compromise that combined the position of poet laureate with that of the poetry consultant to the Library of Congress. In floor debate on October 3, 1985, Matsunaga claimed that the United States was behind the times, noting the existence of the position in other developed nations across Europe. He also spoke of poetry's cross-sectional appeal: "It is my hope that the work of the future poet laureate ... will also reflect our Nation's great diversity—its multiethnic, multicultural, multiracial heritage, its strength and compassion, and its democratic idealism."⁴¹ The bill passed both chambers by voice vote within a week of each other and became law on December 20, 1985. Robert Penn Warren was chosen as the nation's first poet laureate in early 1986.

The legislation Matsunaga viewed as his crowning achievement came very late in his career. In 1988 working with Representative Robert Matsui of California, among others, Matsunaga obtained redress for Japanese Americans who had been interned during World War II. Like many

of his major accomplishments, this legislation took years to achieve. Matsunaga began lobbying for reparations in earnest shortly after joining the Senate in 1979.⁴² He cosponsored Senator Inouye's bill (S. 1647) in August 1979, establishing the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, which proceeded to conduct a prolonged study of the effects of internment during World War II. "The proposed study would finally make all the facts known and would allow Congress to decide whether any further action should be taken to compensate victims of the wartime relocation policy," Matsunaga explained just before the bill passed by voice vote.

The commission appointed by Congress published a report in 1983 titled *Personal Justice Denied*, which described internment as a product of "race prejudice, war hysteria and a failure of political leadership" and recommended redress payments to the victims and families.⁴³ Shortly after the commission started, however, the Senate changed hands and Republicans blocked any legislation based on the commission's report.

By 1987 Democrats had retaken the Senate and once more held both houses of Congress. Throughout the 100th Congress (1987–1989), Matsunaga became a man on a mission, working alongside the American Civil Liberties Union to approach each Member one by one and assert the need for reparations. In January 1987, Majority Leader Tom Foley of Washington introduced H.R. 442 calling for redress. Matsunaga and Inouye both testified before the House committees considering the legislation. Just before the Easter holiday on April 10, Matsunaga rose in the Senate chamber to report the long-awaited findings of the commission, declaring, "Perhaps the most traumatic experience, the one thing that has haunted Americans of Japanese ancestry for 45 years, was the stigma of being cast as disloyal to their own beloved country, the United States of America."⁴⁴ On September 17, 1987, the House passed H.R. 442 in a 236 to 137 bipartisan vote.

Despite the success in the House, progress stalled on Matsunaga's Senate version of the bill (S. 1009). The proponents of the legislation began a concerted effort to talk down threats of filibuster from conservative

opponents, specifically Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina, who objected to paying \$20,000 to “Japanese.” Matsunaga assured him that only Americans who happened to be of Japanese descent were involved, and Helms temporarily relented.⁴⁵ After obtaining support from the Reagan administration in early 1988, formal debate finally began on April 19. Senator John Glenn of Ohio introduced the bill and commended Matsunaga on his single-minded pursuit of its passage, saying, “He has been a real bird dog on this one.”⁴⁶ Matsunaga thanked Glenn and said, “This bill provides a long overdue remedy for one of the worst violations of individuals’ civil liberties in our nation’s history. Passage of this bill removes a big blot on the Constitution ... [by] bringing about personal justice which had been denied by our own government to our own citizens.”⁴⁷

Senator Helms tried one final time to upend the bill, introducing an amendment seeking compensation from the Japanese government for the families of those killed at Pearl Harbor before awarding reparations to Japanese Americans. That amendment failed spectacularly, 91 to 4, after Matsunaga pointed out its false logic. Afterward, Matsunaga brought up H.R. 442, which had already passed the House, and asked that the text following the enacting clause be replaced with the substance of his bill. The symbolism of that bill number was lost on no one, as it invoked the all-Japanese-American 442nd Regimental Combat Team in World War II. The bill, which spread \$1.3 billion in reparations over five years, passed, 69 to 27, on April 20, 1988.

Reparations began in late 1990, but Spark Matsunaga did not have long to celebrate that achievement.⁴⁸ The Senator fell ill in early 1990 with prostate cancer. His condition deteriorated quickly. He cast his final vote on April 3 from a wheelchair, unable to speak.⁴⁹ Hawaiian newspapers called for his resignation, intimating that he might be unable to properly represent the interests of the state.⁵⁰ Matsunaga waved off the concerns as “trying to make a decision a little too soon.”⁵¹

While seeking treatment in Toronto, Matsunaga died on April 15, 1990. He lay in state in the Hawaiian capitol

rotunda before his ashes were interred in Punchbowl National Cemetery in Honolulu. The United States Institute of Peace he had fought so long to create was renamed the Spark M. Matsunaga Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution shortly after his death on Inouye’s suggestion. Speaking at his funeral, Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell of Maine said of him, “Most of all, Spark Matsunaga loved his country enough to make it right when it was wrong.”⁵²

FOR FURTHER READING

Halloran, Richard. *Sparky: Warrior, Peacemaker, Poet, Patriot*. (Honolulu, HI: Watermark Publishing, 2002).

Matsunaga, Spark M. *The Mars Project: Journeys Beyond the Cold War*. (New York: Hill Wang, 1986).

Matsunaga, Spark M., and Ping Chen. *Rulemakers of the House*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976).

MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION

University of Hawaii at Manoa Library, Archives and Manuscripts Department, Hawaii Congressional Papers Collection (Honolulu, HI). *Papers*: 1916–1990, 908 linear feet. The Spark M. Matsunaga papers include correspondence, speeches, schedules, press releases, newsletters, travel files, audiovisual materials, photographs, and memorabilia. The collection covers a wide range of topics, including space exploration, veterans’ affairs, health care, natural resources, energy, transportation, taxation, and civil rights, especially redress for Japanese Americans interned during World War II. It includes material from Matsunaga’s service in the Hawaii territorial legislature, but primarily documents his career in the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate.

NOTES

- 1 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 99th Cong., 2nd sess. (14 August 1986): S11617.
- 2 Richard Halloran, *Sparky: Warrior, Peacemaker, Poet, Patriot* (Honolulu, HI: Watermark Publishing, 2002): 1–2.
- 3 Carla Hall, “The Senator & His Space Refrain,” 13 August 1986, *Washington Post*: C1.
- 4 Barbara Bennett Peterson, “Matsunaga, Spark Masayuki,” *American National Biography*, vol. 14 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999): 710.
- 5 Hall, “The Senator & His Space Refrain.”
- 6 “Senator Spark M. Matsunaga Papers Finding Aid,” January 2005, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Honolulu, <http://library>.



- manoa.hawaii.edu/departments/archives/congressional/matsunaga/SMMFindingAid_web.pdf.
- 7 Hearings before the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, *Hawaii Statehood*, 81st Cong., 2nd sess. (1950): 247.
 - 8 “Senator Spark M. Matsunaga Papers Finding Aid.”
 - 9 John S. Whitehead, *Completing the Union: Alaska, Hawai‘i, and the Battle for Statehood* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004): 317.
 - 10 Halloran, *Sparky*: 86–87.
 - 11 *Ibid.*, 119.
 - 12 Peterson, “Matsunaga, Spark Masayuki.”
 - 13 Halloran, *Sparky*: 125.
 - 14 Sarah Jane Glazer, “Spark M. Matsunaga, Democratic Representative from Hawaii,” in *Ralph Nader Congress Project: Citizens Look at Congress* (Washington, DC: Grossman Publishers, 1972): 15; Peterson, “Matsunaga, Spark Masayuki.”
 - 15 Glazer, “Spark M. Matsunaga, Democratic Representative from Hawaii”: 16–17.
 - 16 Diana Leone, “Peace Institutes Realize Vision,” 20 August 2009, *Honolulu Advertiser*, <http://the.honoluluadvertiser.com/article/2009/Aug/20/ln/hawaii908200341.html> (accessed 29 April 2016).
 - 17 Halloran, *Sparky*: 96–97.
 - 18 “Senator Spark M. Matsunaga Papers Finding Aid.”
 - 19 Ralph Nader Congress Project, “Spark M. Matsunaga, Democratic Representative from Hawaii”: 17; Halloran, *Sparky*: 134–136.
 - 20 *Congressional Record*, House, 92nd Cong., 1st sess. (1 February 1971): 1281.
 - 21 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 101st Cong., 2nd sess. (19 April 1990): 4460; Halloran, *Sparky*: 126–127.
 - 22 *Congressional Record*, House, 88th Cong., 1st sess. (10 February 1964): 2766.
 - 23 Halloran, *Sparky*: 99.
 - 24 *Congressional Record*, House, 89th Cong., 1st sess. (9 July 1965): 16275.
 - 25 Halloran, *Sparky*: 140–143; Public Law 92-128, 85 Stat. 347 (1971).
 - 26 Ralph Nader Congress Project, “Spark M. Matsunaga, Democratic Representative from Hawaii”: 8–9.
 - 27 “Matsunaga Ends Mink’s Bid in Hawaii Senatorial Race,” 4 October 1976, *Washington Post*: A3.
 - 28 Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives, “Election Statistics, 1920 to Present,” <http://history.house.gov/Institution/Election-Statistics/Election-Statistics/>.
 - 29 Hall, “The Senator & His Space Refrain.”
 - 30 Peterson, “Matsunaga, Spark Masayuki.”
 - 31 For a full listing of Matsunaga’s committee assignments, see Garrison Nelson, *Committees in the U.S. Congress, 1947–1992*, vol. 2 (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 1994): 570–571.
 - 32 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 101st Cong., 2nd sess. (11 May 1990): S6102; Rudy Maxa, “Hawaii’s Senator Who Never Sleeps Says A Millionaire Made Him Do It,” 16 March 1980, *Washington Post Magazine*: 4.
 - 33 Halloran, *Sparky*: 159.
 - 34 Spark M. Matsunaga, “An Academy of Peace: Training for a Peaceful Future,” February 1985, *The Futurist*: 8.
 - 35 Halloran, *Sparky*: 194–196.
 - 36 Department of Defense Authorization Act, Public Law 98-525, 98 Stat. 2492 (1984).
 - 37 Hall, “The Senator & His Space Refrain.”
 - 38 Spark A. Matsunaga, “Find Peace With Russia in Space,” 4 July 1982, *Washington Post*: B4.
 - 39 Public Law 98-562, 98 Stat. 2914 (1984); Spark M. Matsunaga, “Put the Air Force Into Space,” 13 April 1986, *Washington Post*: B4.
 - 40 Hall, “The Senator & His Space Refrain.”
 - 41 Halloran, *Sparky*: 204–205; *Congressional Record*, Senate, 99th Cong., 1st sess. (3 October 1985): 25816.
 - 42 Richard Pearson, “Sen. Spark Matsunaga, Hawaii Democrat, Dies,” 16 April 1990, *Washington Post*: D6.
 - 43 Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, *Personal Justice Denied* (Washington, DC: Civil Liberties Education Fund, 1997): 18.
 - 44 Halloran, *Sparky*: 210–220.
 - 45 *Ibid.*, 224–225.
 - 46 *Ibid.*, 226.
 - 47 “Senate Approves Bill to Settle War Internment,” 21 April 1988, *Miami Herald*: A17.
 - 48 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 100th Cong., 2nd sess. (20 April 1988): 7619–7643; Halloran, *Sparky*: 233–234.
 - 49 “Senator Spark M. Matsunaga Papers Finding Aid.”
 - 50 Karen Foerstel, “Matsunaga, Stricken With Prostate Cancer, Is Only Coming to Hill for Roll-Call Votes,” 19 February 1990, *Roll Call*: n.p.
 - 51 Karen Foerstel, “‘I’m Getting Better,’ Says Matsunaga: Despite Cancer, He’s Far From Resignation,” 12 April 1990, *Roll Call*: n.p.
 - 52 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 101st Cong., 2nd sess. (24 April 1990): H1665.



“AMERICAN SOCIETY CAN
BE TRUE TO ITSELF ... ONLY
AS RIGHTS ARE ACCORDED
TO EVERY PERSON BECAUSE
HE IS A PERSON.”

Spark M. Matsunaga
Congressional Record, February 10, 1964

Patsy Takemoto Mink

1927–2002

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE 1965–1977 ; 1990–2002

DEMOCRAT FROM HAWAII

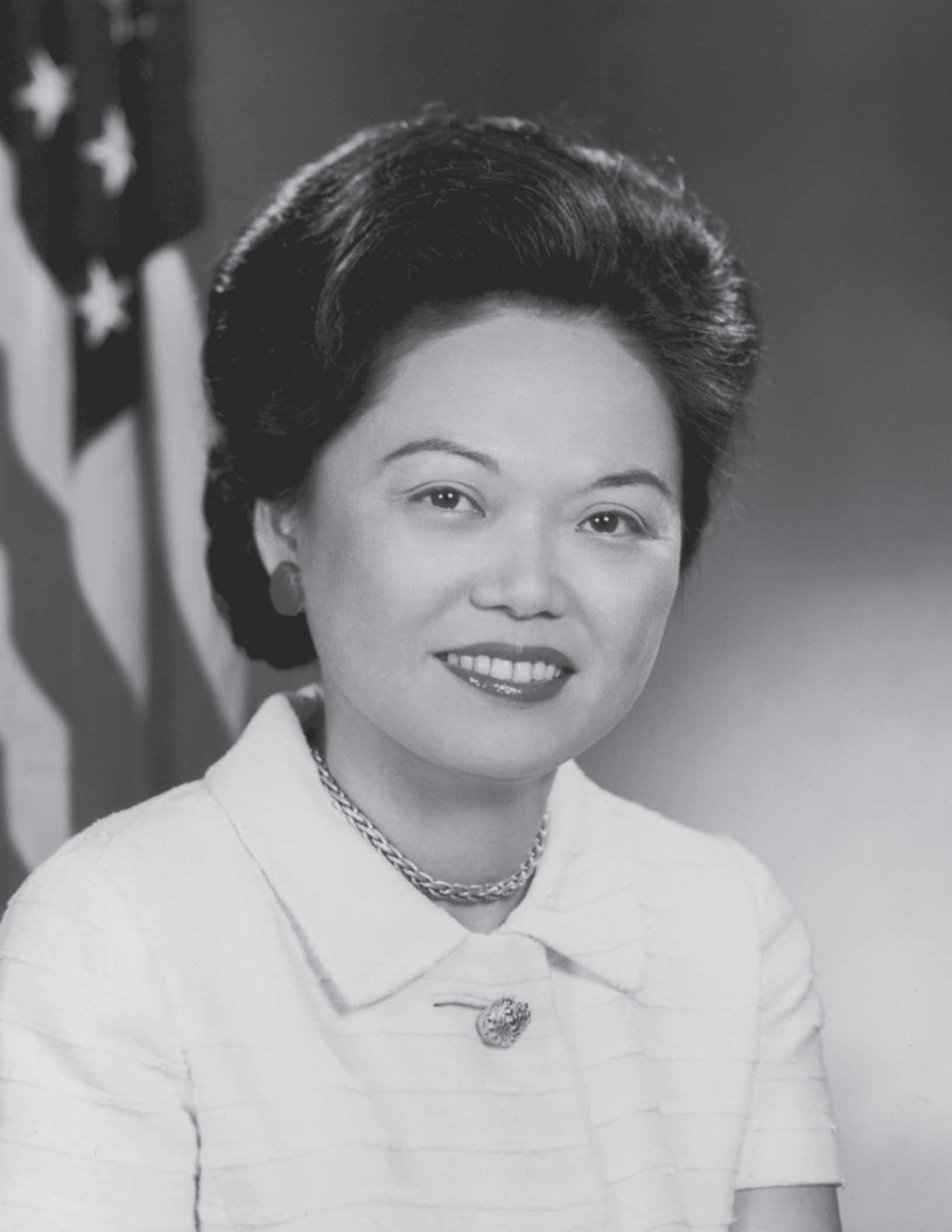
Patsy Takemoto Mink, the first woman of color elected to Congress, participated in the passage of much of the 1960s Great Society legislation during the first phase of her congressional career. After a long hiatus, Mink returned to the House in the 1990s as an ardent defender of the social welfare state at a time when much of the legislation she had helped establish was being rolled back. As a veteran politician who had a significant impact on the nation during both stints in the U.S. House of Representatives, Mink's legislative approach was premised on the belief that representation extended beyond the borders of one's congressional district. "You were not elected to Congress, in my interpretation of things, to represent your district, period," she once noted. "You are national legislators."¹

Patsy Matsu Takemoto was born in Paia, Hawaii Territory, on December 6, 1927, one of two children raised by Suematsu Takemoto, a civil engineer, and Mitama Tateyama Takemoto. She graduated from Maui High School in 1944 as class president and valedictorian and went on to attend Wilson College in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, and the University of Nebraska at Lincoln before graduating with a BA in zoology and chemistry from the University of Hawaii in 1948. Mink originally planned to pursue a medical degree, but turned to law school after several medical schools turned down her application. Three years later, she earned a JD from the University of Chicago Law School, the first Hawaiian *nisei* woman to do so. In 1951 she married John Francis Mink, a graduate student in geology at the university. The couple had one child, a daughter named Gwendolyn, and moved to Honolulu. Facing discrimination from bigger firms due to her interracial marriage, Patsy T. Mink went into private law practice and lectured on business law at the University of Hawaii.² In 1954 Mink founded the Oahu Young

Democrats and worked as an attorney for the territorial house of representatives in 1955. Mink won election to that body in 1956 and 1958 before winning a seat in the territorial senate, where she served from 1958 to 1959.

In 1959, when Hawaii achieved statehood, Mink set her sights on the new state's lone At-Large seat in the U.S. House of Representatives and began to campaign for the post. Hawaii's Delegate and Democratic "boss," John Burns, remained in Washington, DC, until June, when he suddenly began working behind the scenes to rearrange the Democratic ballot to his liking. He convinced Daniel K. Inouye to abandon his Senate campaign and file for the House seat instead, frustrating Mink's efforts and forcing a primary. Though Mink was also one of Burns's protégés, she frequently broke with party leadership in the territorial legislature. Throughout her career, Mink never had a warm relationship with the state leaders of her party; she attributed their lack of support to her unwillingness to allow the party to influence her political agenda.³ Additionally, Burns viewed Inouye as his successor, and the two worked together atop the state Democratic Party for many years. The famously liberal International Longshore and Warehouse Union switched their endorsement from Mink to Inouye, who won by a 2 to 1 margin in the primary, leaving Mink to focus on her legal career.⁴ Mink returned to politics in 1962, winning a seat in the Hawaii state senate, where she served from 1962 to 1964 and eventually chaired the education committee.

In 1964, after reapportionment created a second seat for Hawaii in the U.S. House, Mink again mounted a grassroots campaign that relied on a staff of unpaid volunteers; her husband, John, served as her campaign manager, "principal sounding board," and "in-house critic."⁵ She ran without the blessing of the state Democratic Party leadership, raising campaign funds





largely in small individual contributions. Mink barely edged out two other Democrats in the October primary to secure her spot on the ballot alongside Spark M. Matsunaga, Daniel Inouye's successor in the House. Mink stressed her independence in the general election even as many Democrats arranged deals to support one of the Republican nominees to defeat her.⁶ With help from President Lyndon B. Johnson's landslide victory in the presidential race, Mink and Matsunaga were elected as the state's two At-Large Representatives. In a four-way race, she received 27 percent of the total to become the first Asian-American woman and just the second woman from Hawaii to serve in Congress.

In her subsequent five campaigns for re-election, Mink faced a number of difficult primaries in which the local Democratic Party tried to oust her, twice by running women candidates, which Mink interpreted as an effort to deprive her of the gender issue.⁷ She proved a durable candidate in the general elections, however, despite being viewed initially as a presidential coattail rider. In 1966 and 1968, in a four-way race for the two House seats, she garnered slightly more than 34 percent of the vote. In the 1966 race, she collected more votes than any of the other three candidates. In 1970 Hawaii was divided into two congressional districts. Representing the outer islands and suburban Oahu, Mink began traveling back to her district every other week to combat the notion that she was a purely national figure with little interest in the local needs of her constituents. The configuration of the new district also forced Mink to shift her campaigning methods, since she could no longer rely on the Honolulu media market to spread her message.⁸ Her efforts paid off, however; Mink ran unopposed in 1970 and won 53 percent of the vote in 1972 and 63 percent in 1974.⁹

In the House, Mink successfully sought a seat on the Committee on Education and Labor, on which she served from the 89th Congress (1965–1967) through the 94th Congress (1975–1977). In her second term, she also joined the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs and, in the 93rd (1973–1975) and 94th Congresses, served on the Budget Committee.

Mink's committee assignments allowed her to concentrate on the same issues that had been the focus of her attention in the Hawaii legislature. Among the education acts Mink introduced or sponsored in the U.S. House were the first childcare bill and legislation establishing bilingual education, student loans, special education, professional sabbaticals for teachers, and Head Start. Starting in 1967, she also put significant effort into passing a bill to institute a national daycare system to support low-income households. The Comprehensive Child Development Act was folded into the Economic Opportunity Act (S. 2007) in 1971. But it failed to become law, in part, because opponents objected that it offered too many incentives for mothers to work outside the home and that it promoted a "communal" approach to rearing children. Though the Economic Opportunity Act passed both houses of Congress, President Richard M. Nixon vetoed it in December 1971.¹⁰ Mink later called the bill's failure "one of the real disappointments" of her political career.¹¹

Mink maintained a focus on national issues, especially those affecting Asian Pacific Americans (APA) and the Pacific region. She fought to preserve family reunification provisions in several proposed immigration reform bills and worked alongside Representative Matsunaga to educate Americans about the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II.¹² As a member of the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, she supported the economic and political development of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. As chair of the Subcommittee on Mines and Mining, she helped author the landmark Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1975, and in the following year helped to pass a major overhaul of the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920. The House failed to override President Gerald R. Ford's veto of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act, though a similar measure was eventually signed into law in 1977.

During the Johnson presidency, Mink strongly supported the administration's domestic programs that were part of the Great Society legislation, but she was a critic of America's increasing involvement in the Vietnam



War. In September 1967, she refused to support the President's request for an income tax increase because she feared that the new revenues would be used for military action rather than the expansion of social programs. It was, she said, like "administering aspirin to a seriously ill patient who needs major surgery."¹³ If inflation threatened the economy, she suggested, the administration should raise taxes on big business and not just the average working taxpayers.¹⁴ In April 1972, she cosponsored Massachusetts Representative Michael Harrington's concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 589) calling for an immediate termination of military activity in Vietnam, but the House took no action on it. Her views clashed with those of the three other Members of the Hawaii congressional delegation as well as with those of many of her constituents in a state with a heavy military presence. Years later, however, Mink recalled, "It was such a horrible thought to have this war that it really made no difference to me that I had a military constituency. It was a case of living up to my own views and my own conscience. If I was defeated for it, that's the way it had to be. There was no way in which I could compromise my views on how I felt about it."¹⁵

Mink also advocated many women's issues in Congress, including equal rights. One of her great legislative triumphs was the Women's Educational Equity Act, passed as part of a comprehensive education bill in 1974. It provided \$30 million a year in educational funds for programs to promote gender equity in schools, to increase educational and job opportunities for women, and to excise gender stereotypes from textbooks and school curricula. She realized early in her House career that "because there were only eight women at the time who were Members of Congress, that I had a special burden to bear to speak for [all women], because they didn't have people who could express their concerns for them adequately. So, I always felt that we were serving a dual role in Congress, representing our own districts and, at the same time, having to voice the concerns of the total population of women in the country."¹⁶

Working with Representative Edith Green of Oregon and Senator Birch Bayh of Indiana, Mink built critical

support for Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (S. 659), which barred sexual discrimination in institutions receiving federal funds and opened up opportunities for women in athletics. Though the broad strokes of the legislation were relatively noncontroversial at passage, the House and Senate worked for several months to hammer out more than 250 differences—11 of which dealt specifically with sexual discrimination—between their bills.¹⁷

As enforcement of Title IX took effect, the full ramifications of the act became clear and many supporters of public school men's sports programs objected to it, believing that their funding was being cut in favor of women's sports under the new statute. In 1975 opponents filed an amendment to the appropriations bill (H.R. 5901) for the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare that would exempt school athletics from Title IX. Despite heavy lobbying by Mink, the amendment survived the House version of the bill. After the Senate struck the amendment in conference, the House faced a tight vote on whether to stand by its position. Just before voting, Mink received an emergency call informing her that her daughter had been in a life-threatening car accident in Upstate New York. Mink rushed to her daughter's side while the voting commenced, ultimately ending in a narrow 212 to 211 victory for Title IX opponents. When newspapers characterized Mink's tearful exit as a result of the vote, her allies leapt to the Congresswoman's defense. Speaker Carl Albert of Oklahoma and Representative Daniel Flood of Pennsylvania explained the circumstances of Mink's absence the following legislative day, and the House voted to "recede and concur" with the Senate, with Mink in attendance. Mink's daughter (and Title IX) survived.¹⁸

Mink garnered national attention for her fervent support of liberal causes. In 1971 she received an invitation from Oregon Democrats to appear on the Democratic presidential primary ballot in that state in order to draw attention to the anti-war movement. Mink committed to the symbolism of her place in the race with seven weekend visits to Oregon. "My candidacy offers a real and tangible alternative," she said, "based—if any one word can be singled out—on humanism." Ultimately,



Mink received only 2 percent of the vote and withdrew her candidacy afterward. However, she continued to receive votes in Wisconsin and Maryland even after she had ceased campaigning.¹⁹

In 1976, passing up a bid for what would have been certain re-election to a seventh term in the House, Mink sought the Democratic nomination for a seat in the U.S. Senate. She lost the nomination to fellow House Member Spark Matsunaga.²⁰ Her supporters criticized Mink for not running a more aggressive campaign, but Mink insisted she had been running for the nomination and not against Matsunaga, a respected colleague.²¹ She remained active in politics, serving as Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs from 1977 to 1978. For the next three years, she was president of the Americans for Democratic Action, a liberal political lobbying organization founded in 1947 by an array of scholars, activists, and politicians.²² Mink returned to Hawaii and was elected to the Honolulu city council, serving there from 1983 to 1987 (from 1983 to 1985 as its chair). She ran unsuccessfully for governor in 1986 and then for mayor of Honolulu in 1988. “Life is not based on being an elected politician,” she said during this period. “Politics is a constant involvement in the day-to-day working of society as a whole, one part of which is government.”²³

Despite these electoral setbacks, Mink kept her sights set on returning to public office. An opportunity to return to Congress arose in 1990 when Hawaiian Governor John Waihee III appointed Representative Daniel Akaka to replace the recently deceased Senator Matsunaga. Mink announced her intention to seek both the Democratic nominations for the special election to fill Akaka’s vacancy and the November general election for the new term in the 102nd Congress (1991–1993), though she was not the party’s choice in either case. Hawaii Democratic Party leaders backed Mufi Hannemann, whose youth and business connections they found appealing. Mink countered by using the campaign slogan “The Experience of a Lifetime,” a message that resonated with Hawaiian voters who tended to prioritize seniority and expertise

in their representatives. Both the special election and the primary for the new term were held on September 22, 1990, and Mink edged out her nearest competitor, Hannemann, in both contests by less than 3 percent.²⁴ She easily won the November general election to the full term in the 102nd Congress and was re-elected comfortably to five subsequent terms with winning percentages ranging from a high of 73 percent in 1992 to a low of 60 percent in 1996.²⁵

Mink was once again appointed to the Committee on Education and Labor (later Education and the Workforce) and also was assigned to the Government Operations (later Government Reform) Committee. During the 103rd Congress (1993–1995), she was on the Natural Resources and Budget Committees, serving on the latter through the 105th Congress (1997–1999).

Mink continued to pursue legislative reform in health care and education. Believing that voters cared more about quality health coverage than any other domestic issue, she advocated a universal health care plan that would allow people of all economic backgrounds to receive medical treatment. Mink combined two of her long-standing interests when she cosponsored the Gender Equity Act in 1993. Disturbed that gender discrimination still persisted in the United States 20 years after the passage of Title IX, Mink asserted that targeting gender bias in elementary and secondary education would help reduce inequalities between the sexes. She told the House, “We must assure that schools all across this country implement and integrate into their curriculum, policies, goals, programs, activities, and initiatives to achieve educational equity for women and girls.”²⁶ Mink continued to crusade for women’s rights by cochairing the Democratic Women’s Caucus in 1995.

In May 1994, Mink joined Representative Norman Mineta of California and other colleagues in forming the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus. “We have felt that we have not been consulted on important steps taken by this administration and ones in the past,” Mink declared. With so few APA Members of Congress, the caucus welcomed Representatives and Senators as full members, regardless of ethnicity, as long as they



represented a district with a large APA constituency.²⁷ Mink won election as chairwoman of the caucus when Mineta resigned from Congress the following year, and she served in that capacity through 1997.²⁸

Throughout her political career, Mink remained true to her liberal ideals. Previously in the majority both in her party affiliation and her political ideology, she often found herself in the minority during her second stretch in the House. During the 1990s, Mink expended considerable effort opposing conservative legislation that challenged the agenda she had promoted in the 1960s and 1970s. An outspoken critic of the welfare overhaul legislation that the Republican-led Congress and the William J. (Bill) Clinton administration agreed upon in 1996, Mink exclaimed, “Throwing people off welfare and forcing them to take the lowest-paying jobs in the community has created a misery index for millions.”²⁹ As Ranking Member of the Education and the Workforce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations during the 105th Congress, Mink butted heads with conservative Republicans regarding a proposed \$1.4 million investigation of alleged fraud within the Teamsters union. As a loyal supporter of organized labor, Mink accused Republican leadership of sponsoring a “fishing expedition” that wasted “taxpayers’ money for sheer partisan political purposes.”³⁰

After the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, Mink also raised concerns about the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in 2002. Created in response to the perceived failures of various U.S. intelligence agencies to uncover plots against the homeland, DHS was charged with preventing further domestic terrorist strikes. Mink feared the sprawling new agency might undermine civil liberties by violating the privacy of American citizens in the name of national security. In favor of full disclosure of government attempts to safeguard the nation from international threats, she proposed that no secrets be kept from the public.³¹ “She had already been through that as a Japanese American, seeing people put into detention camps on the basis of what they supposedly were as opposed to what they had actually done,” said fellow Hawaii Representative Neil Abercrombie.³²

On September 28, 2002, after a month-long hospitalization with pneumonia, Patsy T. Mink died in Honolulu, Hawaii. Her name remained on the November ballot, and she was re-elected by a wide margin. Democrat Ed Case defeated Patsy Mink’s husband and more than 30 other candidates in the special election to succeed her in the remainder of the 107th Congress (2001–2003) and later won election to the 108th Congress (2003–2005).³³ Shortly after Mink’s death, John Boehner of Ohio, chairman of the Education and the Workforce Committee, reflected upon Mink’s congressional service: “Patsy Mink was a vibrant, passionate, and effective voice for the principles she believed in. Her passing is a significant loss for our committee, the people of Hawaii and the people of the United States.”³⁴ Norman Y. Mineta, her colleague and a co-founder of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, called Mink “an American hero, a leader and a trailblazer who made an irreplaceable mark in the fabric of our country.”³⁵

FOR FURTHER READING

Davidson, Sue. *Jeannette Rankin and Patsy Takemoto Mink: A Heart in Politics* (Seattle, WA: Seal Press, 1994).

Mink, Patsy T., “Energy and Environment: Which is Undermining Which?” *Natural Resources Lawyer* 9 (1976): 19–39.

U.S. Association of Former Members of Congress, Patsy T. Mink, Oral History Interview (1979), Manuscript Room, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION

Library of Congress Manuscript Division (Washington, DC). *Papers*: 1883–2005 (bulk 1953–2002), 1,530 linear feet. The papers of Patsy T. Mink contain correspondence, memoranda, writings, speeches, notes, interviews, questionnaires, legislative files, testimony, casework, law practice client files, court documents, statements, press releases, appointment books, scheduling files, travel itineraries, campaign files, card files, biographical material, student papers, family papers, scrapbooks, news clippings, printed matter, awards and honors, political ephemera, maps, photographs, and other papers relating chiefly to Mink’s service in the U.S. House of Representatives. Subjects include gender equity, Title IX, Women’s Educational Equity Act, education, women’s rights, welfare, environment, U.S. territories in the Pacific, Asian-American affairs, consumer affairs, civil rights, labor, immigration, health care, Vietnam, and nuclear weapons testing. The collection also



documents Mink's private law practice in Honolulu, involvement in Hawaii and national Democratic politics, service in Hawaii's territorial and state legislatures, activities as Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs. Her work as president of Americans for Democratic Action and chairmanship of the Honolulu city council also are represented. A finding aid is available in the repository.

NOTES

- 1 Patsy T. Mink, oral history interview by U.S. Association of Former Members of Congress, 6 March 1979, 26 March 1979, 7 June 1979, Manuscript Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington, DC: 74.
- 2 Don T. Nakanishi and Ellen D. Wu, "Patsy T. Mink," in *Distinguished Asian American Political and Governmental Leaders* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002): 129.
- 3 Mink, oral history interview: 16.
- 4 John S. Whitehead, *Completing the Union: Alaska, Hawai'i, and the Battle for Statehood* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004): 315–317; Raymond Moley, "Hawaiian Primaries Show ILWU Power," 11 July 1959, *Los Angeles Times*: B4.
- 5 Mink, oral history interview: 31.
- 6 "Fong, Gill Win Hawaii Races; Woman Captures Spot in House Contest," 5 October 1964, *Chicago Tribune*: A6; Mink, oral history interview: 15–16.
- 7 Mink, oral history interview: 25.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 22–23.
- 9 Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives, "Election Statistics, 1920 to Present," <http://history.house.gov/Institution/Election-Statistics/Election-Statistics/>.
- 10 Nancy S. Gates, "Patsy T. Mink, Democratic Representative from Hawaii" in *Ralph Nader Congress Project: Citizens Look at Congress* (Washington, DC: Grossman Publishers, 1972): 9; "Sharpening Day-Care Debate," 11 December 1971, *Christian Science Monitor*: 18.
- 11 Mink, oral history interview: 46.
- 12 Diwata Fonte, "For Asian-Americans, Mink's Death Hits 'Deeply,'" 7 October 2002, *Roll Call*: A20.
- 13 *Current Biography, 1968* (New York: H.W. Wilson Company, 1968): 255.
- 14 *Current Biography, 1968*: 255.
- 15 Mink, oral history interview: 98.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 43.
- 17 "Title IX: A Sea Change in Gender Equity in Education," 10 July 1997, U.S. Department of Education, <https://www2.ed.gov/pubs/TitleIX/part3.html> (accessed 1 September 2016).
- 18 *Congressional Record*, House, 94th Cong., 1st sess. (18 July 1975): 23504–23506; *Congressional Record*, House, 107th Cong., 2nd sess. (17 July 2002): 13370–13371; "Gwendolyn Mink Oral History Interview," Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives, 14 March 2016.
- 19 Hope Chamberlain, *A Minority of Members: Women in the U.S. Congress* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973): 313.
- 20 *Politics in America, 2002* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2001): 290–291.
- 21 Wallace Turner, "Ex-Gov. Quinn to Face Matsunaga in Hawaii," 4 October 1976, *New York Times*: 10.
- 22 James T. Patterson, *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945–1974* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996): 146.
- 23 Patsy Sume Saiki, *Japanese Women in Hawaii: The First 100 Years* (Honolulu, HI: Kisaku, Inc., 1985): 132.
- 24 Tania Cruz and Eric K. Yamamoto, "A Tribute to Patsy Takemoto Mink," *Asian-Pacific Law & Policy Journal* 4, no. 2 (Summer 2003): 594–595.
- 25 Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives, "Election Statistics, 1920 to Present," <http://history.house.gov/Institution/Election-Statistics/Election-Statistics/>.
- 26 *Congressional Record*, House, 103rd Cong., 1st sess. (21 April 1993): 8021.
- 27 David S. Broder and Kenneth J. Cooper, "Asian Pacific Caucus," 22 May 1994, *Washington Post*: A10.
- 28 Alethea Yip, "Mink Leads APA Caucus: Hawaii Representative Warns of Tough Times Ahead," 6 October 1995, *AsianWeek*: 6.
- 29 *Politics in America, 2002*: 290–291.
- 30 *Politics in America, 2000* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1999): 403–404.
- 31 *Congressional Record*, House, 107th Cong., 2nd sess. (26 July 2002): 5852.
- 32 Elissa Gootman, "Patsy Mink, Veteran Hawaii Congresswoman, Dies at 74," 30 September 2002, *New York Times*: B10.
- 33 James Gonser, "Case Wins; Set Sights on Jan. 4," 2 December 2002, *Honolulu Advertiser*: 1A.
- 34 Erin P. Billings, "Rep. Mink, First Asian-American Woman Elected to the House Dies," 30 September 2002, *Roll Call*: n.p. See also Gootman, "Patsy Mink, Veteran Hawaii Congresswoman, Dies at 74."
- 35 Martin Weil, "Rep. Patsy Mink Dies; Hawaiian Pushed Liberal Causes," 29 September 2002, *Washington Post*: A9.



“I ALWAYS FELT THAT WE
WERE SERVING A DUAL ROLE
IN CONGRESS, REPRESENTING
OUR OWN DISTRICTS AND,
AT THE SAME TIME, HAVING
TO VOICE THE CONCERNS
OF THE TOTAL POPULATION
OF WOMEN IN THE COUNTRY.”

Patsy Takemoto Mink
oral history interview, 1979

Antonio Borja Won Pat

1908–1987

DELEGATE 1973–1985
DEMOCRAT FROM GUAM

The son of an immigrant from Hong Kong, Antonio Borja Won Pat’s long political career culminated in his election as the first Territorial Delegate from Guam—where “America’s day begins,” a reference to the small, Pacific island’s location across the international dateline. Known as “Pat” on Guam and “Tony” among his congressional colleagues, Won Pat’s small-in-stature and soft-spoken nature belied his ability to craft alliances with powerful House Democrats and use his committee work to guide federal money towards and protect local interests in Guam.¹ It was these skills and his close relationship with Phillip Burton of California, a powerful figure on the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, that helped Won Pat become the first Territorial Delegate to chair a subcommittee. “To speak of Tony Won Pat’s life ... is to recall the very history of Guam,” noted American Samoan Delegate Fofó I. F. Sunia, who memorialized Won Pat on the House Floor after his death. “Every major political accomplishment of the last quarter century in Guam bears Mr. Won Pat’s valuable imprint.”²

Antonio Borja Won Pat was born in Sumay, Guam, on December 10, 1908, to Maria Soriano Borja and Ignacio Won Pat. According to census records, he had at least two brothers, Vicente and Francisco.³ Ignacio Won Pat was of Chinese heritage, originally from Hong Kong, and had come to Guam with the U.S. Navy to serve as a cook.⁴ Later, as a member of the House Armed Services Committee, Won Pat made note of his family history. “And here I am tinkering with parts of the U.S. Navy budget,” he observed.⁵ Won Pat graduated from the Intermediate School in Agana, Guam, in 1925. He married a native Guamanian (known locally as a Chamorro), Ana Salas Perez, and they had eight children.⁶

Won Pat worked as a teacher at a school (later known as the Dyer School) in Piti, Guam, and then became principal

at the Maxwell School in Sumay, where he worked until 1940. He was teaching at George Washington High School when Japan invaded Guam in December 1941. Following the war, Won Pat left teaching and organized the Guam Commercial Corporation, a group of wholesale and retail sellers. In his new career as a businessman, he became president of the Guam Junior Chamber of Commerce.

Won Pat’s political career also pre-dated the Second World War. He was elected to the advisory Guam congress in 1936 and served until it was disbanded when war broke out. After the war, Won Pat helped organize the Commercial Party of Guam—the island’s first political party. Won Pat served as speaker of the first Guam Assembly in 1948 and was re-elected to the post four times. The Commercial Party evolved into the Popular Party in 1950 and then became the Democratic Party of Guam in 1960. The latter dominated local politics for the next two decades.⁷

Initially, Won Pat supported U.S. naval rule over the island. In 1946 he told the *Chicago Tribune* that Guam needed to achieve greater economic independence before American citizenship. Yet disillusionment over naval leadership led him to change his mind.⁸ Won Pat played a key part in the passage of the Organic Act, which granted U.S. citizenship to Guamanians in 1950; he traveled to Washington to testify on behalf of the legislation. In 1964 the Guam legislature authorized an unofficial representative in Washington to lobby for Guam’s needs. Won Pat narrowly won election to the new post over the Territorial Party’s Felix Lujan Crisostomo and two other independent candidates on March 15, 1965—an election that included personal attacks on Won Pat’s Chinese heritage. Still, he won re-election unopposed in 1968.⁹ Won Pat later characterized the “unofficial representative” position as having “its genesis in something of a lobbying





concept,” and that the position was “a Member of Congress in everything but name” without “the ‘power tools’ ... that other Members had.”¹⁰ Won Pat was also a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 1972.

Won Pat’s duties included lobbying for a Territorial Delegate from Guam in the U.S. House of Representatives. He won approval for the office in 1972, despite reservations at the Department of the Interior. The department’s Office of the Territories argued that granting Guam a congressional Delegate could be tantamount to bestowing “incorporated” status to the territory, including full constitutional rights and protections.¹¹

Having created the Delegate’s post, he then ran for it. In what he characterized as a “good, clean race,” Won Pat faced Republican territorial senator Pedro (Pete) Diaz Perez.¹² Won Pat emphasized his record during the campaign, especially as Guam’s Washington representative, and expressed excitement at having a voice on congressional committees. Whereas Perez wanted to push for a vote in Congress, Won Pat was more hesitant, noting that it was unprecedented for an unincorporated territory to have a vote.¹³ Won Pat also took out several full-page ads in the island’s largest newspaper, the *Pacific Daily News*, in which he reprinted letters of support and praise from congressional giants such as Majority Leader Hale Boggs of Louisiana and Minority Leader Gerald R. Ford of Michigan.¹⁴ Won Pat defeated Perez with 58 percent of the vote.¹⁵

Won Pat was able to win most of his elections with similarly comfortable margins. He ran unopposed in 1974, 1976, and 1978. In 1980 he won every precinct, defeating GOP candidate Tony Palomo with 58 percent.¹⁶ Two years later, he narrowly defeated former Marine General Ben Garrido Blaz by less than 1,000 votes (51 percent); turnout for the election was reportedly at 85 percent.¹⁷ Won Pat frequently emphasized his Democratic Party alliances in the House majority during his campaigns. “I know that no one on Guam has the experience in Washington that I have,” he noted after he easily won his 1976 primary, despite being hospitalized with an illness right before the election. “The important thing is to have friends.... Our greatest asset [in Washington] is friends.

Because, if we don’t have the friends, who the hell is going to support us.”¹⁸

At barely five feet tall, with a tendency to mumble in his Chamorro accent, Won Pat did not command attention. But he maintained a sense of humor. Once, he slipped out of sight behind the rostrum while presiding over a subcommittee hearing and shared a self-deprecating joke with the witness: “You can’t see me, much less understand what I am saying.”¹⁹ He also proved astute at using both the alliances he campaigned on and his committee work to his advantage. Won Pat became a close ally with the powerful subcommittee chairman on Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, Phil Burton. Won Pat was lavish in his praise of Burton’s support: “He has consistently shown great sympathy for the people who live in these territories,” Won Pat told his colleagues on the House Floor.²⁰ He later noted that Burton “has shown an enormous capacity for detail and a keen awareness of what was needed by the people of Guam.”²¹

Won Pat frequently relied on friends in Congress to aid him when his nonvoting status blocked his ability to look after his constituents’ interests. He once bragged to a reporter that when he felt Guam had been left out from a bill, “I’ll get some of my friends to amend it right on the floor.” He even managed to overcome impediments faced by previous Members who represented a far-flung U.S. territory. Initially, Won Pat’s telephone and travel budgets were even less than those of Members who represented suburban districts in the Washington, DC, area. With such a limited budget, the Guamanian Delegate traveled the 19,500-mile round-trip journey home only four times per Congress.²² However, starting in the 95th Congress (1977–1979), congressional office allowances were prorated based on distance from the capital, and Won Pat’s \$111,115 annual allotment for “official and necessary” expenses was the largest of any House Member.²³

Without a vote on the House Floor, Won Pat invested himself in committee work. He served on the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs for his entire career—a key panel on which to keep federal funds flowing to his constituency. Starting in July 1977, federal money was



allocated to territories through large Omnibus Territories Acts—sometimes called “Christmas tree” bills for the territories.²⁴ These allocations were the first checks sent to the Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa as part of a federal anti-recession program and extended to the territories through the work of Puerto Rican Resident Commissioner Baltasar Corrada-del Río, Virgin Islands’ Delegate Ron de Lugo, and Won Pat.²⁵ When the Subcommittee on Pacific Affairs was created in the 96th Congress (1979–1981), it became the bill’s originating subcommittee. Won Pat was the subcommittee’s first chairman and the first Territorial Delegate to chair a subcommittee. When Pacific Affairs’ jurisdiction moved under the Subcommittee on Insular Affairs in the 97th and 98th Congresses (1981–1985), Won Pat chaired that subcommittee.²⁶

Won Pat also served on the Armed Services Committee from the 94th to 98th Congresses (1975–1985), a reflection of the U.S. military presence in Guam. In the 97th Congress (1981–1983), he also served on the Veterans Affairs Committee.²⁷

Won Pat used his committee work to maximize his advantage. By serving on the Research and Development Subcommittee of the Armed Services Committee, he made himself a target for lobbyists seeking permission to develop new weapons, a position that provided the political capital to seek military spending on Guam. A spot on the Military Installations Subcommittee also allowed him to trade committee votes with others seeking to protect military installations in their districts.²⁸

Importantly, too, he helped found the Territorial Caucus and worked closely with Delegate de Lugo, whose post representing the Virgin Islands was created at the same time as Won Pat’s. The two met when they were unofficial representatives of their respective territories in the late 1960s.²⁹

Won Pat spent his career informing congressional colleagues about the uniqueness of Guam and other U.S. territories. “To a certain extent, Guam is still an unknown quantity,” noted one of his press aides in 1978, “so we are engaged in a constant job of education.”³⁰ On February 5, 1973, as

his first act in Congress, Won Pat teamed with Delegate de Lugo to propose an amendment to the Constitution that granted citizens in the Virgin Islands and Guam the right to vote in U.S. presidential elections.³¹ He argued that because voters in the territories were American citizens, they should not be penalized as second-class citizens. “In an age when each citizen, no matter whether he lives in California, Maine, or the territories, is vitally affected by Presidential decisions,” he told his colleagues, “each American of voting age can make his choice of who will lead his country for the next 4 years.” To drive home the point, he emphasized the Guamanians’ Vietnam War service. “Guam lost more boys on the field of battle than did any other State or territory on a per capita basis,” he reminded his colleagues.³² The legislation ultimately died in the Judiciary Committee, but Won Pat submitted the same bill in every Congress in which he served.³³

Won Pat first made mainland headlines in his defense of a local custom: the chewing of betel nuts.³⁴ The nuts were a part of island culture—especially at weddings and other social gatherings, but the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) claimed they were cancerous and attempted to ban their importation into the mainland United States from Guam. Won Pat publicly took on the FDA by submitting a bill to allow Guamanians to take and chew their betel nuts anywhere in the United States. The Delegate admitted that he had a stash of nuts in his desk, smuggled through U.S. customs by a Guam official. “[B]etel nuts and the people of Guam go together,” he told a reporter, comparing the custom to drinking coffee or tea: “a mild stimulant and a source of relaxation at the same time.”³⁵ Though his legislation was unsuccessful, he paved the way for a Guam Delegate Robert A. Underwood’s successful override of the embargo in 2001.³⁶

The end of the Vietnam War profoundly affected Guam, as the economic infusion that came with using the island to stage troops and supplies suddenly dried up.³⁷ Following the fall of South Vietnam, refugees flooded into the island. Starting in April 1975, “Operation New Life” sent more than 110,000 refugees by aircraft carrier to Guam. Illness ravaged the refugee populations living in tent cities, and



riots broke out. Won Pat supported legislation introduced by Representative Glenn Anderson of California to amend the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962 to provide for the Southeast Asian refugees. He also submitted his own resolution asking that the President take steps to prevent a disproportionate number of refugees from settling in Guam. “I rise to express my deep pride in the role which our island is playing in the great humanitarian effort to rescue the thousands of South Vietnamese from almost certain death,” Won Pat told his colleagues. “Guam, however, is a small island with limited resources. Our ability to do more than lend a temporary helping hand is hindered by an economy which is in precipitous decline. . . . Under these circumstances, I am deeply concerned that Guam may find itself called upon to provide permanent residence to more individuals than we can reasonably handle.”³⁸ The final camp closed on November 1, 1975. In 1979 Won Pat was part of a group of nine Members of Congress who visited Hanoi to discuss the influx of Indochinese refugees and their destabilizing effect on Southeast Asian nations.³⁹ But in 1980, he noted that 123,000 refugees remained in Guam and “with the direct assistance of the United States, they have become productive members of the territorial community.” He requested that they be granted special status to remain in Guam.⁴⁰

Guam’s central role in military strategy remained after the end of hostilities in Southeast Asia because of key Pacific military installations on the island. And despite his nonvoting status, by 1983 Won Pat was recognized as a power broker on military spending.⁴¹ He first attempted the establishment of a national cemetery for military veterans in the 97th Congress, but the bill was held up by the Veterans Administration on the grounds that the agency preferred state or territorial funding. “In my opinion, the least the Federal Government can do is to provide a resting place for former military personnel,” he told his colleagues, “and not to leave the burden to the individual States and territories.”⁴² Won Pat steered a bill to passage that established the Guam National Guard.⁴³ The island was the only remaining U.S. territory without

a guard unit. “Because of the intense loyalty of the Guamanian people to the American cause, this unit will quickly be filled to its capacity by some of the best trained personnel in the U.S. military,” he boasted.⁴⁴ In addition, the bill increased the number of appointees allotted to Guam, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico to the United States military service academies. Won Pat also assured continued operation of a naval ship repair facility in Guam, when H.R. 8105 passed both houses in the 96th Congress, with aid from Senator Daniel K. Inouye of Hawaii. “As one who has for some time been warning our colleagues about the danger of the Pentagon’s present policy of removing forces from Guam instead of relying upon our bases in foreign areas of the Pacific,” Won Pat noted on the House Floor, “I am pleased to see this clear signal from Congress that it recognizes the strategic value of our bases on Guam.”⁴⁵ One Won Pat aide remembered that, in the late 1970s, naval officers wondered why ships sailed from their base in San Diego to Guam for maintenance and repair. The aide recalled the officers’ conclusion: “I don’t know, it’s the guy Won Pat that did this.”⁴⁶

Won Pat’s career focus in Congress, however, was Guam’s status as a U.S. territory. From his time as an unofficial territorial representative, he favored statehood for Guam, but, as he told the territorial legislature in 1972, “our idealism must be tempered with practicality.” As an alternative, Won Pat sought commonwealth status for Guam—a self-governing political unit associated with the United States—at least until the territory could “assume the full responsibilities of a state.”⁴⁷

In September 1975, Won Pat submitted H.R. 9491, calling for the creation of a status commission, and H.R. 9492, which provided for establishing a constitution for Guam.⁴⁸ He emphasized that his bills offered Guamanians a chance to choose their status—commonwealth, independence, or statehood—but did not guarantee a change in status or a particular relationship. “We on Guam, as American citizens, know from long experience the meaning and importance of self-determination,” he said. “Ever since Guam came under the U.S. flag in 1898 our people have pursued with singularity of purpose a single



basic goal, full participation in the democratic processes of our country consistent with its high ideals and principles.”⁴⁹

The House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs merged the two bills under H.R. 9491. An amended version passed the House on October 6, 1975, requiring an allowance for the President to veto portions of the constitution and assuring automatic repeal of measures in conflict with the 1950 Organic Act. Senate amendments required that Congress approve Guam’s final constitution and merged Won Pat’s bill with a similar bill introduced by Delegate de Lugo calling for the establishment of a constitution for the U.S. Virgin Islands. De Lugo’s bill, H.R. 9460, passed both chambers and became law on October 21, 1976.⁵⁰

The second Guam Constitutional Convention met from July to December 1977 with Won Pat’s daughter, Judith, serving as chairwoman of the committee on women’s rights—one of two women among the 34 delegates.⁵¹ The final document defined the structure of the Guamanian government, including residency requirements for elected officials, rules on budgets and appointments, orders of succession, and the future structure of the Guam legislature. Antonio Won Pat was among those who witnessed the constitution’s signing on December 15, 1977. Both U.S. President Jimmy Carter and Congress approved it in early 1978.⁵²

Yet the Guam constitution’s ratification was ultimately derailed by continued confusion over status and a local political fight. Before it could be voted on by Guamanians, the constitution’s approval was endangered by a bitter 1978 gubernatorial election. The president of the constitutional convention, Democrat Carl Gutierrez, declared his candidacy for governor as an independent. He chose a Republican running mate—another convention delegate, Dr. Joseph Dizon—and attempted to ride the constitution into the governor’s mansion over incumbent Governor Ricardo J. (Ricky) Bordallo. Gutierrez’s candidacy effectively split the Democratic vote, opening the door for Republican Paul McDonald Calvo’s victory. With an upcoming party change in the governor’s mansion, the legislature delayed a plebiscite to approve the constitution.

The necessary Chamorro support for the constitution waned during the delay. Locals—already confused about the contents of the 14-point document—soured on the constitution’s lack of clarity about Guam’s status. Especially wary of Congress’s requirement that the document not alter the existing Organic Act, Chamorros viewed the constitution as a Washington-mandated revision of the Organic Act rather than a declaration of self-determination. Moreover, opposition mounted from a completely different population—special interest groups primarily dominated by “statesiders.” The local bar association did not approve of the creation of a separate Guam supreme court with appeals directly to the U.S. Supreme Court instead of the Federal 9th Circuit Court. The teachers union and military personnel stationed on Guam feared the effect of greater local autonomy on their interests. With less than half of Guamanians turning out to vote on August 4, 1979, the constitution received a meager 18-percent approval. Won Pat, who was in DC during the election and referendum, did not provide comment to local newspapers.⁵³

Won Pat attempted to jump-start a review of Guam’s status in 1983, but the death of his ally, subcommittee chairman Phil Burton, diminished his ability to capture widespread congressional interest.⁵⁴ The Guam Delegate introduced a resolution (H. Con. Res. 131) calling on President Ronald Reagan to designate a national official to negotiate status change with Guam in October 1983. “Political status for emerging island entities is more than just theories one reads in freshman college textbooks,” he declared. “Political status is a life principle that undergirds all dynamic human society—it is the foundation by which a community of people binds themselves to one another, establishes their identity and develops respect for themselves. More importantly, political status governs the daily relationship between people and their government as equals.”⁵⁵ The resolution was referred to the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs where it languished, awaiting comment from the Interior Department.

New Mexico Representative Manuel Luján, Vice Chair of the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee (and later Interior Secretary), then suggested that Guam submit a



bill for commonwealth status directly to Congress. At Luján's invitation, Won Pat brought a bipartisan group of Guam legislators to Luján's hometown in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in December 1983 to meet with staffers and members of the Interior Committee. The meeting resulted in another bipartisan Commission on Self-Determination, which drafted a document that granted Guam local self-determination under their own constitution. Under its terms, Department of Interior oversight would cease as would provisions of earlier legislation that limited shipping to Guamanian ports to those under American flags. However, Won Pat never had the self-determination document acted on before he left Congress.⁵⁶

General Blaz returned as Won Pat's opponent in 1984. The incumbent campaigned on a platform similar to what had been effective in the past: "Seniority is the most important role in Congress," he noted in a debate between the two candidates. "[It] gives you power. I am able to accomplish more and more over the years."⁵⁷ The local press agreed, telling voters, "Don't risk our rank and influence in Congress ... vote for strength and tradition."⁵⁸ Shortly before his death in April 1983, Burton had boldly told a reporter that Won Pat was so effective that Guam would lose influence and money if they voted him out. In an analysis entitled "Who Would Serve Guam Best in D.C.?" published on the front page of the *Pacific Daily News*, sources interviewed for the article—including those "knowledgeable about Pacific and territorial affairs"—agreed with Burton's take on the election but they also heralded Blaz's potential as a "new" and "articulate" voice for Guam in Washington. Won Pat's support and strategy ended up backfiring as Guamanians connected his friendliness with the powerful Californian with mainland meddling in the island's affairs.⁵⁹

The close contest between Won Pat and Blaz proved dramatic. In the open primary election, Won Pat lost to Blaz by nearly 2,000 votes.⁶⁰ When both moved to the general election, Blaz came out ahead by a narrow margin of 323 votes.⁶¹ The next day, officials found 220 more ballots and computer irregularities that forced election officials to twice count the ballots by hand; recounts put

Blaz in the lead by roughly 350 votes. On November 11, the *Pacific Daily News* reported Blaz had won by 354 votes. "Whatever is decided, I am resigned to accept that decision and to continue to work for my constituents as usual," Won Pat conceded.⁶²

Even with his apparent concession, Won Pat had not yet fully resigned himself to the resulting loss. On December 21, 1984, he contested the election before the Committee on House Administration. Won Pat claimed that election officials had improperly dismissed seemingly blank ballots or those marked for both candidates. He also argued that absentee ballots were sent too late to be counted when returned. The Guam Election Commission mailed ballots 21 days before Election Day, even though federal officials had recommended sending them 45 days in advance for timely return by mail. Those ballots received after the polls closed on November 6 were not counted—amounting to 34 percent of all absentee voters, according to Won Pat. Blaz countered with a motion to dismiss Won Pat's claim on January 21, 1985, and later that year, the committee agreed with him, noting the irregular and absentee ballots had been handled legally.⁶³ The full House defeated Won Pat's challenge on July 24, 1985, in a voice vote.⁶⁴

After his electoral loss, Won Pat lived in Guam but returned to Washington frequently and continued to attend hearings on appropriations for the territories.⁶⁵ Won Pat died of a heart attack in a hospital in Silver Spring, Maryland, on May 1, 1987. He was buried in Piti, Guam, at the locally run veterans' cemetery for which he had sought federal funding.⁶⁶ Among those offering tributes on the House Floor was Delegate Blaz. "Those who knew Mr. Won Pat know that he was not a giant of a man in stature, but he was a giant of a man in accomplishments," Blaz said in eulogy. "They know that he did not talk very much, but he said a lot. They also know that he was a very, very humble man. He was a common man, but a common man with an uncommon touch."⁶⁷ A congressional delegation, mostly made up of other Territorial Delegates, attended his Guam state funeral.⁶⁸ In 1988 the Guam International Air Terminal was officially named A. B. Won Pat Guam International Airport Terminal.⁶⁹



MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

University of Guam, Micronesia Area Research Center (Mangilao, GU). *Papers*: 1965–1984, 285 linear feet. The papers of Antonio Borja Won Pat focus mainly on his years in the U.S. House of Representatives. The papers consist of correspondence, briefing material, audiovisual materials, photographs, invitations, cards, and plaques. Topics include the Guam legislature, political campaigns and elections, legislation, committee reports, official trips, district office work, typhoon rehabilitation, refugees, agriculture, schools and education, civil aeronautics, federal appropriations and budgets, and executive branch agency work. A finding aid is available at the repository.

University of Oklahoma, The Julian P. Kanter Political Commercial Archive, Department of Communication (Norman, OK).

Videocassette: 10 commercials on 1 videocassette. The commercials were used during Antonio Borja Won Pat's Democratic campaign for the 1984 U.S. congressional election in Guam.

NOTES

- 1 Robert F. Rogers, *Destiny's Landfall: A History of Guam* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2011): 226.
- 2 *Congressional Record*, Extension of Remarks, 100th Cong., 1st sess. (4 May 1987): E1696.
- 3 *Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940: Population*, Sumay, Guam, Roll T627_4643, page 8A, <http://ancestrylibrary.com> (accessed 28 January 2016).
- 4 William L. Wuerch et al., "MARC Working Papers #66: Inventory of the Papers of Antonio Borja Won Pat" (Mangilao, GU: Micronesia Area Research Center, 1996): 2.
- 5 Eduardo Lachica, "Despite Obstacles, Won Pat Is Making A Mark in Congress," 22 November 1983, *Wall Street Journal*: 1.
- 6 There is no reliable source for a list of names for Won Pat's children. A daughter, Judith, later served as speaker of the territorial legislature. Daughter Marilyn Won Pat was also elected to the territorial senate but died in 1990 before she could take her seat. Another daughter, Rosalind Won Pat-Fleet, was commended by Guam Delegate Madeline Bordallo in the *Congressional Record*. The 1940 Census records confirm the names of additional daughters Aveline, Jacqueline, and Ellen. See Wuerch et al., "MARC Working Papers": 2; Rogers, *Destiny's Landfall*: 284; *Congressional Record*, Extension of Remarks, 108th Cong., 2nd sess. (30 June 2005): E1400–E1401; *Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940*.
- 7 Wuerch et al., "MARC Working Papers": 2.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 3. As speaker of the territorial legislature in 1949, Won Pat led a walkout of the general assembly when the military governor refused to support their subpoena of an American witness.
- 9 Wuerch et al., "MARC Working Papers": 4.
- 10 Quoted in Arnold H. Leibowitz, *Defining Status: A Comprehensive Analysis of United States Territorial Relations* (Boston, MA: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1989): 340.
- 11 Wuerch et al., "MARC Working Papers": 5; Leibowitz, *Defining Status*: 342.
- 12 Wuerch et al., "MARC Working Papers": 5.
- 13 Pat McElroy, "'Foot in the Door,' Perez Says of Non-Voting Job," 4 November 1972, *Pacific Daily News* (Guam): 6.
- 14 See, for example, 1 November 1972, *Pacific Daily News*: 11.
- 15 Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives, "Election Statistics, 1920 to Present," <http://history.house.gov/Institution/Election-Statistics/Election-Statistics/>.
- 16 Wuerch et al., "MARC Working Papers": 5; Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives, "Election Statistics, 1920 to Present."
- 17 "Guam Reelects Its Non-Voting Delegate to Seat in Congress," 3 November 1982, *Los Angeles Times*: B12; "Guam Delegate to Congress Is Re-elected by 952 Votes," 3 November 1982, *New York Times*: A23; Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives, "Election Statistics, 1920 to Present."
- 18 Wuerch et al., "MARC Working Papers": 5; George Blake, "Pat Won! Vows He'll Run Again in '78," 6 September 1976, *Pacific Daily News* (Guam): 2.
- 19 Lachica, "Despite Obstacles, Won Pat Is Making A Mark in Congress."
- 20 *Congressional Record*, House, 95th Cong., 1st sess. (2 May 1977): 1136.
- 21 *Congressional Record*, House, 95th Cong., 1st sess. (27 September 1977): 31075.
- 22 William Ringle, "Won Pat Pushy In A Nice Way," 14 February 1973, *Pacific Daily News* (Guam): 10.
- 23 "Guam Delegate to Have a Dandy Expense Account," 25 November 1976, *Atlanta Constitution*: 8P. Won Pat's allotment was four times that of local District of Columbia Delegate Walter Fauntroy.
- 24 Leibowitz, *Defining Status*: 34.
- 25 "First U.S. Countercyclical Funds Are Sent to 4 Island Governments," 10 July 1977, *New York Times*: 16.
- 26 Lachica, "Despite Obstacles, Won Pat Is Making A Mark in Congress." See *Congressional Directory*, 96th Cong. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1979): 300; *Congressional Directory*, 97th Cong. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1981): 295; *Congressional Directory*, 98th Cong. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1983): 295.
- 27 Garrison Nelson, *Committees in the U.S. Congress, 1947 to 1992*, vol. 2 (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1994): 948.
- 28 Lachica, "Despite Obstacles, Won Pat Is Making A Mark in Congress."
- 29 *Congressional Record*, House, 100th Cong., 1st sess. (4 May 1987): H3003.



- 30 Olson, "Territories Still Have Quiet Voices in Congress."
- 31 *Congressional Record*, House, 93rd Cong., 1st sess. (5 February 1973): 3232.
- 32 *Ibid.*, 3237–3238.
- 33 *Congressional Record*, Index, 93rd Cong., 1st sess.: 2227; Donnie Radcliffe, No title, 17 April 1984, *Washington Post*: D1; Lachica, "Despite Obstacles, Won Pat Is Making A Mark in Congress." See, for example, H.J. Res. 442, 94th Cong. (1975).
- 34 See, for example, his editorial: Antonio Won Pat, "Why Can't Guamanians Chew Betel Nut in the United States?," 22 February 1978, *Baltimore Sun*: A15.
- 35 Olson, "Territories Still Have Quiet Voices in Congress."
- 36 "Robert A. Underwood," *Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress, 1774–Present*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=U000014>.
- 37 Rogers, *Destiny's Landfall*: 228.
- 38 *Congressional Record*, Extension of Remarks, 94th Cong., 1st sess. (8 May 1975): 13682–13683.
- 39 Keyes Beech, "9 Congressmen Arrive in Hanoi for Talks on Exodus of Refugees," 9 August 1979, *Los Angeles Times*: B7.
- 40 *Congressional Record*, Extension of Remarks, 96th Cong., 2nd sess. (23 July 1980): 19342.
- 41 Lachica, "Despite Obstacles, Won Pat Is Making A Mark in Congress."
- 42 *Congressional Record*, Extension of Remarks, 96th Cong., 2nd sess. (31 July 1980): 20918.
- 43 Public Law 96-600, 94 Stat. 3493 (1980).
- 44 *Congressional Record*, House, 96th Cong., 2nd sess. (13 December 1980): 34060.
- 45 *Congressional Record*, House, 96th Cong., 2nd sess. (9 December 1980): 32923.
- 46 Claudine San Nicolas, "Won Pat Contributions: Guam Guard, Ship Facility," 13 May 1987, *Pacific Daily News* (Guam): 4.
- 47 Leibowitz, *Defining Status*: 335–336; Pat Harrison, "Won Pat: A 'Last' Report," 30 June 1972, *Pacific Daily News* (Guam): 1.
- 48 Rogers, *Destiny's Landfall*: 234. In 1974 the Republican-led Guam legislature created the Legislative Political Status Commission, the first on the island with the goal of determining the ultimate status of the island. The commission reported that Guam should write a constitution to aid islanders in meeting local economic and social needs. The commission requested that U.S. President Gerald R. Ford send a representative to negotiate terms. Commission members also did not consult Won Pat in their decision, as he was a Democrat and in political opposition with the legislature's majority.
- 49 *Congressional Record*, House, 94th Cong., 1st sess. (9 September 1975): 28034.
- 50 Public Law 94-584, 90 Stat. 2899 (1976). For Interior Department objections, see House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, *Providing for the Establishment of a Constitution for Guam*, 94th Cong., 1st sess., H. Rept. 508 (1975): 3–4.
- 51 "Guam Constitution Conventions (ConCon)," Guampedia Foundation, Inc., accessed 21 January 2016, <http://www.guampedia.com/guam-constitutional-conventions-concon/>. A PDF listing of the delegates for the 1977 Guam Constitutional Convention is available at http://guampedia.media.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/2nd-GU_CONCON-delegates.pdf (accessed 21 January 2016).
- 52 Guampedia Foundation, Inc., "Guam Constitution Conventions (ConCon)."
- 53 Leibowitz, *Defining Status*: 335–336; Rogers, *Destiny's Landfall*: 242; Wuerch et al., "MARC Working Papers": 6.
- 54 Rogers, *Destiny's Landfall*: 249.
- 55 *Congressional Record*, House, 98th Cong., 1st sess. (25 May 1983): 13996.
- 56 Wuerch et al., "MARC Working Papers": 6.
- 57 Elaine Santos, "Won Pat, Blaz Face Off," 1 November 1984, *Pacific Daily News* (Guam): 1.
- 58 No title, 3 November 1984, *Pacific Daily News* (Guam): 33.
- 59 John M. Simpson, "Who Would Serve Guam Best in D.C.?" 3 November 1984, *Pacific Daily News* (Guam): 1; Richard Person, "Former Delegate From Guam Antonio B. Won Pat, 78, Dies," 3 May 1987, *Washington Post*: D10.
- 60 "Rival's Tally in Guam Overshadows Incumbent," 3 September 1984, *New York Times*: 9.
- 61 Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives, "Election Statistics, 1920 to Present."
- 62 Stephen Labaton, "Guam's Seat in Congress Still Disputed," 4 June 1985, *Washington Post*: A12; Yvonne Martinez, "It's Blaz By 354 Votes," 11 November 1984, *Pacific Daily News* (Guam): 1.
- 63 Stephen Labaton, "Former Guam Delegate's Challenge Rejected," 9 July 1985, *Washington Post*: A4; Committee on House Administration, *Dismissing the Election Contest Against Ben Blaz*, 99th Cong., 1st sess., H. Rept. 220 (1985).
- 64 *Congressional Record*, House, 99th Cong., 1st sess. (24 July 1985): 20180–20181.
- 65 "Antonio Won Pat, 73, Dies; Guam Delegate to Congress," 3 May 1987, Associated Press; Person, "Former Delegate From Guam Antonio B. Won Pat, 78, Dies."
- 66 Several sources mark his death date as May 2. These are likely using Guam's Chamorro Standard Time (ChST). According to the *Pacific Daily News*, Won Pat died at 5:00 AM on May 2, 1987, ChST. This converts to May 1, 1987, at 3:00 PM Eastern Standard Time



in Silver Spring, Maryland, the location of his death. See Claudine San Nicolas, “Won Pat: A Chapter Closes,” 13 May 1987, *Pacific Daily News* (Guam): 1.

67 *Congressional Record*, House, 100th Cong., 1st sess. (4 May 1987): H3002.

68 “Delegation to Pay Tribute to Won Pat,” 11 May 1987, *Pacific Daily News* (Guam): 1.

69 “History and Timeline,” A.B. Won Pat International Airport Authority, Guam, accessed 31 March 2015, <https://www.guamairport.com/our-business/about/history-and-timeline>.

Norman Y. Mineta

1931–

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE 1975–1995

DEMOCRAT FROM CALIFORNIA

Thirty years after being imprisoned by the United States government because of the happenstance of his ancestry, Norman Y. Mineta helped change forever the inner workings of the United States House of Representatives. Over a 20-year career in the House, the San Jose Congressman worked to make the federal lawmaking process more accountable. From the federal budget to the nation's highway system, Mineta and his generation of reform-minded legislators redefined expectations on Capitol Hill. With the moral authority derived from having been unjustly incarcerated as a child, Mineta convinced Congress to address wartime internment and helped the country understand the sins of its past.

Norman Yoshio Mineta was born in San Jose, California, on November 12, 1931, the youngest of five children, to Kunisaku and Kane Mineta. His father, Kunisaku, had arrived from Japan by himself as a teenager 29 years earlier, finding work in a number of jobs before saving up enough money to start his own insurance business in San Jose.¹ Mineta's family settled in the heart of the city's largely Japanese neighborhood. Because California law prevented Asian immigrants from owning property in the state, a local attorney held the house in his name until he signed everything over to Mineta's eldest sister, who was a U.S. citizen by birth, when she turned 21.²

Growing up, Mineta attended the San Jose public schools, and every day after class he spent an hour learning Japanese. Over dinner the Minetas would discuss the day's events, and at night their neighbors would often come over to talk about issues facing the community. "My dad was the breadwinner, the community leader, the father who encouraged all of us to participate in community activities," Mineta later remembered. His mother, Kane, was equally active in San Jose's social life, serving on the

Parent-Teacher Association, volunteering with the church, and raising money for the American Red Cross.³

But the San Jose community his parents had nurtured was ripped apart on December 7, 1941, when Japan bombed the American military base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Federal officials panicked and ordered the U.S. military to relocate 120,000 Japanese Americans living on the mainland to prison camps often hundreds of miles away from their homes.⁴

Within six months after Pearl Harbor, the government had suspended the Minetas' business license, seized their bank accounts, and moved them out of San Jose. Neighbors disappeared. Mineta's father worried he would never see his family or his home again. Dressed in his Cub Scout uniform, Mineta and his parents were first sent to the Santa Anita racetrack outside Los Angeles, forced to live in small barracks and shower near the horse stables. Even as a boy, Mineta felt the heavy weight of injustice, questioning the presence of armed guards. In the fall of 1942, the government moved the Minetas to a new site in Heart Mountain, Wyoming, their home for the next three years. It was cold and cramped, but they carved out some semblance of a community.⁵

After the war, the Minetas returned to San Jose and began the arduous task of rebuilding their lives. Slowly they and their neighbors reopened businesses and, as the Congressman said years later, "[regained] our standing in the community." They worked to move on from their imprisonment, focusing their energy on the future. Mineta estimated that it took 20 years for his community to recapture what it had lost in 1942.⁶ Sixty years later, he was asked if his internment influenced his decision to go into public service. "No question it did," he replied.⁷

Back home, Mineta enrolled at San Jose High School and served as student body president during his senior year.



Gregory



He stayed close to home for college, graduating from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1953 before serving three years as an Army intelligence officer during the Korean War.⁸ When he returned to San Jose, Mineta joined his father's insurance firm and began exploring a possible entry into local politics.⁹ Mineta had two sons, David and Stuart, with his first wife. When he married his second wife, Danealia, the Congressman welcomed two stepsons, Bob and Mark Brantner.

Early in his life, Mineta had been a staunch Republican. After all, he later said, "It was the damn Democrats that stuck us in those damn camps."¹⁰ But in the 1960s, Mineta grew frustrated with the GOP's approach to the great social issues of the day and left the party.¹¹ From 1962 to 1964, Mineta served on San Jose's human relations commission, and from 1966 to 1967, he sat on the board of directors of the city's housing authority. That year he jumped to the city council, where he served double duty as vice mayor from 1968 to 1971.¹²

In the spring of 1971, Mineta entered a crowded 15-candidate field to succeed San Jose's outgoing mayor. Mineta's career in local government gave him wide name recognition, and he won the support of a number of San Jose's service organizations. In the two decades since Mineta finished college, San Jose and surrounding Santa Clara County had transformed from farm country into a textbook case of suburban sprawl. Its population had tripled, stressing the public services provided by local government.¹³ On Election Day, Mineta took an early lead and never lost it, tallying 62 percent of the vote despite anemic turnout.¹⁴ "It's been full circle," Mineta said of his victory 30 years after being interned.¹⁵

As mayor, Mineta clamped down on San Jose's runaway development. He worked to funnel growth back toward the city's center, tightening zoning requirements and passing a "pay-as-you-grow" tax to cover the cost of additional public services.¹⁶

By the early 1970s, Mineta had become part of a new generation of leaders working to redefine political power in America, calling for greater transparency and accountability. He belonged to a number of national

organizations, negotiating with the federal government to protect grants to public housing and transportation initiatives. In July 1972, he was one of 16 mayors to meet with President Richard M. Nixon about the costs of rapid development and the possibility that the federal government would kick back billions in revenue to the cities.¹⁷

Like his jump to the mayor's office, Mineta moved to the House after the incumbent, Republican Charles S. Gubser, decided to retire. And once again Mineta's work in San Jose's local government gave him an early advantage. California's 13th District leaned Republican, but Mineta's success in managing the city's growth, paired with his work on the national circuit, made him widely popular at home. The district stretched south and east away from San Francisco Bay, encompassing Santa Clara County. It also sat astride the southeastern edge of Silicon Valley, the creative tech corridor that became an economic juggernaut by the time Mineta retired. His Republican challenger, George W. Miliias, was a well-liked former state assemblyman who had the misfortune of once serving in the Nixon administration. With the Watergate scandal dominating the headlines, Miliias could not escape from Nixon's shadow, and Mineta won with almost 53 percent of the vote. Mineta's first election was the closest of his career. He took anywhere from 58 percent (in 1978) to 70 percent (in 1986) of the vote in every subsequent election.¹⁸

In his first term, Democratic leadership placed Mineta on the Public Works and Transportation Committee, a seat he held for his entire career; he became chairman during the 103rd Congress (1993–1995). During the 94th Congress (1975–1977), Mineta also served on the Post Office and Civil Service Committee before transferring to the Budget Committee, where he spent the next six years (1977–1983). In only his second term, Mineta was appointed by new Speaker Thomas P. (Tip) O'Neill of Massachusetts to the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, serving on the highly secretive panel until he stepped down in 1985. Beginning in 1983, Mineta also spent a decade on the Science and Technology Committee (later named the Science, Space, and Technology Committee), a key assignment for a Member representing



part of Silicon Valley. In 1993 Mineta stepped down from Science, Space, and Technology to take over the gavel of the Public Works Committee.¹⁹

As part of the largest Democratic wave in years, Mineta was one of the most promising prospects in a crowd of bright lawmakers. On average, the Watergate Babies, as his highly motivated class of 1975 was called, were 15 years younger than the existing membership. They saw themselves as a political vanguard, and collectively they embodied the deep distrust voters had toward their government.²⁰ Mineta's generation of lawmakers valued accountability and accessibility, but perhaps none more so than him. "It goes back to my own experience in terms of the evacuation and the internment of those of Japanese ancestry," he said years later. "We didn't have access to our political leaders at the time."²¹

In the 1970s, however, it was the criminal activities of the Nixon White House, the ongoing war in Vietnam, and the old, impenetrable seniority system on Capitol Hill. The new Members promised to reform all of it and to restore confidence in the government.²² "We came to Congress on a tide of change," Mineta told the *Los Angeles Times* in the summer of 1975, "and there was a sense of euphoria about the Age of Aquarius having hit Capitol Hill."²³

For the first 30 days of the new Congress, the reform-minded freshmen seemed on course to redefine the art of the possible. They ousted three long-standing committee chairs, brought other chairmen to heel, and weakened the influence of the Ways and Means Committee.²⁴ In June, after House Democrats failed to override a series of presidential vetoes, Mineta's cohort elected him president of the Democratic freshman class for a six-month term, hoping the former military intelligence analyst and "self-described activist" could organize the freshmen into a potent voting bloc.²⁵ "Procedural changes have nothing to do with whether the lot of the unemployed gets better or if education gets better," he said. "In terms of what we have been able to get through, it bothers me that we haven't had the programs that benefit people out in the streets."²⁶

In one of his first acts as leader of the freshman class, Mineta drew up a "six-point plan" he hoped would harness

the restless energy of the young legislators. Nearly every recommendation sought to empower the rank and file. Mineta called for fact-finding roundtables with policy experts and "opinion leaders," regular meetings between freshman officers and the Democratic leadership, stricter oversight of committee activities, a commitment to developing policy in the Democratic Caucus, the creation of national "truth squads" to promote Democratic legislation, and the publication of a freshman newsletter.²⁷ It was "a pledge," he said, "not to allow things to go on as usual, to reassert Congress as a coequal branch of government."²⁸

Mineta helped manage expectations and built rapport between the older and younger generations. While some freshmen talked about removing Carl Albert of Oklahoma from the speakership, Mineta was one of a handful of new California Democrats to reaffirm his commitment to the existing leadership.²⁹ Mineta was known around the Hill as "energetic, competent, and levelheaded" without being overbearing. He and Speaker Albert had a personal history that dated back to the 1950s. Mineta's brother-in-law knew the Speaker "real well," and Mineta's sister babysat for the Albert family.³⁰ Midway through his first term as he was running for re-election in June of 1976, Mineta had Majority Leader O'Neill come out to California to help campaign. During a lull in the trip, while O'Neill and a group of legislators relaxed around a hotel pool in San Jose, Mineta broke some surprising news: "Tip," he said, "I just heard on the radio that Carl Albert is retiring. Let me be the first one to support you for Speaker."³¹

Still, he kept leadership on its toes. The way Mineta saw it, years of Democratic control in the House had nurtured a class of party leaders who lost touch with the rank and file. "When was the last time Carl Albert or Tip O'Neill had opposition?" Mineta was quoted as saying in a front-page article in the *New York Times*.³²

Television, which pulled back the curtain on the political system, became a sticking point between the two generations. "Albert and O'Neill did not grow up in television land," Mineta pointed out. "They can go in and tell a few jokes and buy a few rounds of drinks and people love them and they get re-elected. But we're the products



of a different era and a different system.” It was a system that rewarded new ways of thinking.³³ “More and more demands are being made by the public,” Mineta said. “Watergate heightened the accountability syndrome.”³⁴

Mineta’s early congressional career illustrated just how successful his class was at reforming internal House procedure, especially the committee system. With O’Neill serving as Speaker and the seniority system under attack, Mineta’s leadership prospects improved rapidly. In only his second term during the 95th Congress (1977–1979), Mineta was appointed chairman of the Public Works and Transportation Committee’s Subcommittee on Public Buildings and Grounds, marking the start of a long reign as a subcommittee chairman. In fact, from 1977 until he became chairman of the full Public Works and Transportation Committee in 1993, Mineta served as chairman of four Public Works subcommittees over the course of eight consecutive Congresses: the Subcommittee on Public Buildings and Grounds (95th Congress), the Subcommittee on Oversight and Review (96th Congress [1979–1981]), the Subcommittee on Aviation (97th–100th Congresses [1981–1989]), and the Subcommittee on Surface Transportation (101st–102nd Congresses [1991–1995]).

Mineta’s leadership extended to the Budget Committee as well. Traditionally, the White House managed the federal budget, but after entitlement spending exploded and the Vietnam War dragged on, Congress began formally monitoring legislation that affected the ebb and flow of the country’s finances.³⁵ Almost from the start, Mineta was at the forefront of the House’s new oversight responsibility. In the 96th and 97th Congresses, he held the gavel of Budget’s Task Force on the Budget Process (the committee called its subcommittees Task Forces), giving him a powerful bird’s-eye view of how the federal government managed its money.³⁶

Even with his growing profile, Mineta did not hesitate to keep the pressure on his own party. “I see a vacuum right now,” he told the *Washington Post* just a few days after the 96th Congress convened. “Just a lot of tinkering and holding patterns.”³⁷

It was around that time that Mineta saw his stock rise considerably. In early 1979, he was part of a “damage assessment squad” that squeezed House leadership for answers as to why California Democrats missed out on preferred committee assignments.³⁸ Later that year the *Washington Post* named Mineta as a likely candidate for Transportation Secretary.³⁹ By 1980, he was short-listed for either chairman of the House Budget Committee or the Democratic Whip’s office.⁴⁰ Writing a year later, David Broder, one of the country’s leading political journalists, noted that, “At 49, Norman Mineta of California is perhaps the most widely admired Democrat to enter the House of Representatives in the 1970s.... Many of his contemporaries regard him as a future prospect for Speaker of the House.”⁴¹

Mineta was soon ensconced in party leadership. He was a utility player on the Democratic Whip team, having been named Deputy Whip-at-Large in the 97th Congress (1981–1983); he quickly moved up a rank and spent the rest of his House career as Deputy Whip.⁴² Moreover, in late 1980, Speaker O’Neill appointed Mineta to the powerful Democratic Steering and Policy Committee, where he helped shape the House’s legislative agenda.⁴³ The California Democrat later had roles in the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee and flirted with a run for party Whip.⁴⁴

If Mineta’s early entry into leadership signaled a new era in party mechanics, his work in committees reinforced his generation’s influence on policy. The Budget Committee, created a few years earlier in 1974, was somewhat uncharted territory for the House, but that sort of independence seemed to fit Mineta’s legislative style. “The new members are very selective,” he said in May 1977. “A number of us feel that we don’t have to go along with the New Deal approach of throwing money at a problem, hoping it will go away. We want to target our resources.”⁴⁵

The federal budget process was an arcane, but immensely powerful, mechanism, and over the course of his four years as chairman of the Budget Process Task Force, Mineta became an ardent supporter of Congress’s oversight responsibilities. On Capitol Hill, he became a



counterweight to the budget philosophy in the Ronald Reagan administration, warning that if Congress didn't assert itself and make a few changes to the budget process it risked being replaced by White House economists or what he called "a toothless balanced budget constitutional amendment." Mineta's solutions included a mix of reforms to binding resolutions, the reconciliation and appropriations processes, and the act of impounding unspent funds.⁴⁶

As Task Force chairman, Mineta loathed the idea of a balanced budget amendment. "The Constitution is a marvelously simple document, defining only the most basic human rights and the most fundamental structures of government," he observed in testimony submitted to the House Judiciary Committee. A balanced budget amendment was neither of those things, he said, and would "only ... cheapen the highest law of our Nation." In fact, Mineta argued that a balanced budget amendment would strip Congress of the very control it wanted (the ability to run deficits was key).⁴⁷ Instead, Mineta advocated for sunset laws giving legislators the ability to phase out spending and tax programs deemed unnecessary.⁴⁸ "It's more the badness, not the bigness, of government that is bothering people," Mineta said as far back as 1976.⁴⁹

Mineta was front and center during budget negotiations with the Reagan administration. In 1979 he helped shepherd the Democrats' budget through the House. A year later, he was a member of the "Gang of Five" and, in 1982, part of the "Gang of Four," leading the House effort to protect domestic spending. As Speaker O'Neill readily admitted in 1980, a no vote from Mineta could sway any number of other Democrats.⁵⁰

When Mineta's term on Budget expired, he moved to the Science and Technology Committee. Smartphones and laptops were still decades away, but many of the products coming out of his district were going increasingly mainstream. Mineta was at the forefront of changes to intellectual property law as it applied to the tech industry. As early as 1983, back when Silicon Valley was known as "California's so-called Silicon Valley," he introduced legislation to protect the revolutionary designs of computer

chips being made in his district.⁵¹ "Technology is moving so fast the government has no ability to keep track of it," Mineta said a few years later.⁵² By the early 1990s, Mineta and his Republican colleague from nearby Stanford, Thomas Campbell, had won "reputations as torch-bearers for Silicon Valley companies."⁵³ Mineta, Vice President Al Gore once said, "was Silicon Valley before Silicon Valley was cool."⁵⁴

Mineta, however, made his most lasting contributions on the Public Works and Transportation Committee, first at the head of its Aviation and Surface and Transportation Subcommittees and then as full committee chairman. Mineta had pioneered smart-growth policies back in San Jose, making Public Works something of a natural home for the former mayor. The committee was also deceptively powerful. With control over the nation's infrastructure, it could authorize any number of new projects—roads, federal buildings, airports—which meant a fresh source of jobs for each district.⁵⁵

Mineta first led the Subcommittee on Public Buildings and Grounds, but jumped to the Subcommittee on Oversight and Review after one term, bringing with him the drive for openness and accountability. "Oversight requires patient and detailed and continuing effort," he said during the subcommittee's organizational meeting in early 1979, "but I am absolutely convinced that it need not be dull or unimaginative."⁵⁶ His jurisdiction spread far and wide across every policy area of every one of the subcommittees: water pollution, public mass transit, aviation safety, flood control, America's highways, disaster relief, and public buildings and grounds. The subcommittee held 12 open hearings and heard from nearly 240 witnesses over a combined 34 days.⁵⁷

Mineta jumped to the Subcommittee on Aviation in the next Congress, starting what would become an eight-year reign as chairman. His subcommittee work reads like a deeply researched market summary of the airline industry, one that prioritized safety and its long-term viability. More than anything, Mineta wanted to make sure the Federal Aviation Administration and other regulatory agencies had the resources they needed to ensure the safety of airline passengers.



Mineta tallied a number of early legislative victories on Aviation, often using his expertise in the budget process to his advantage. As part of the budget reconciliation in 1981, Congress agreed to the Airport Development Authorization Act, which included \$450 million for new and improved airports. A year later, Mineta helped attach the Airport and Airway Improvement Act to the Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 1982, providing nearly \$20 billion from an industry trust to help limit “wide-spread congestion and delays” at America’s airports.⁵⁸ Over the next six years, two dozen bills that went before Mineta’s Aviation Subcommittee became law.

When Mineta took over the gavel of the Subcommittee on Surface Transportation during the 101st Congress (1989–1991), the future of America’s roads in “the post-Interstate period” became his most immediate concern. Mineta also considered “high speed transportation corridors,” pipeline safety, sanitary food, and hazardous waste transportation. After two days of hearings, Mineta also worked to include transportation protections in the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.⁵⁹ “The Americans With Disabilities Act gives us a unique opportunity to complete the work that we first started when we passed the Civil Rights Act some twenty-five years ago,” he said in his opening statement during the bill’s first hearing.⁶⁰

Along with a number of smaller bills that became law during the next Congress, Mineta’s major legislative victory in 1991 was the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, which addressed an issue he had wrestled with since his time as mayor.⁶¹ It was a huge, “revolutionary” law that gave state and local governments more control over the roadways in their districts and authorized vast amounts of money—\$151 billion over six years—for a number of different projects. It set the foundation for the National Highway System (NHS) by combining the interstate highway system with a web of other federally funded roads.⁶²

After years of success at the subcommittee level, Mineta sought the chairmanship of the full committee before the start of the 102nd Congress (1991–1993), challenging the sitting chairman, 77-year-old Glenn M. Anderson of California, who had represented the Long Beach area since

1969. Mineta’s bid was partly successful: The Democratic Caucus voted Anderson out, but handed the committee to Robert Roe of New Jersey instead. Roe, however, was not keen on fighting Mineta and retired after just one term as committee chairman.⁶³

Mineta pooled his two decades of experience on Public Works and Transportation and took over the gavel as chairman of the committee for the 103rd Congress. Having led four different subcommittees during his tenure on Public Works, he was fluent in the policy and deeply connected to the issues.

As chairman, Mineta ruled a vast and influential empire. Public Works and Transportation was the largest committee in the House during the 103rd Congress, bigger than either the spending or tax-writing committees. Seven other Californians served with him (three Democrats and four Republicans), and 30 of the 50 states as well as the U.S. Virgin Islands and the District of Columbia were represented on the committee.⁶⁴ His jurisdiction included flood control, roads, bridges, dams, public buildings—everything from airports to post offices to the Smithsonian Institution.

Mineta’s focus as committee chairman was to prepare the government to meet the sure-to-be weighty demands of the upcoming 21st century. More than anything, he felt the need to make up for lost time. The Cold War had dominated America’s discretionary spending for decades, and money that might have gone to improve the country’s infrastructure went elsewhere. “Maintenance, new technologies, and leadership suffered often because, in real terms, we had to try to do more with less,” Mineta remembered.

Looking forward, he identified two lingering hurdles. “The first challenge,” he reiterated, “is to make up for a quarter century of trending downward in infrastructure investments, a trend which has seen the Federal commitment as a share of Gross Domestic Product decline by half. The second challenge is to look ahead to plan for the future with flexibility, with less interference from Washington into local decision-making, and with justification and public scrutiny at the national level for the policies we recommend and enact.”⁶⁵



Given the size and scope of the committee's jurisdiction, Mineta saw a tsunami of legislation during the 103rd Congress. House Parliamentarians referred almost 400 bills to Public Works and Transportation, which resulted in 165 hearings and markups; 53 of the 62 bills the committee reported to the full House became law. The panel also approved 168 committee resolutions covering everything from erosion control studies to improvements to federal buildings.⁶⁶

While some of the legislation was as simple as naming post offices or courthouses, Mineta's committee could generate large amounts of goodwill simply by approving a new road or bridge for a Member's district. Mineta guarded this jurisdiction closely, and in 1993, during the annual appropriations process, he got into a very public turf war with Representative Bob Carr of Michigan, who chaired the Appropriations' Subcommittee on Transportation. Congressional authorizers like Mineta determine which agencies and which programs receive federal funding, while appropriators like Carr dole out money for the upcoming fiscal year.

In the House, it is considered bad form for appropriators to clear funding for projects that have not been vetted by an authorizing committee. But in late June, Mineta accused Carr of including hundreds of millions of dollars for the upcoming fiscal year that the Public Works and Transportation Committee had never approved. Mineta quickly convinced the Rules Committee to remove all unauthorized earmarks from the funding bill. Within the month, House leaders were forced to pull it from the floor completely after Mineta doubled down on what he called "backroom political deal-making."⁶⁷ House leaders eventually sent the bill back to the Appropriations Committee for changes.⁶⁸

By September tensions were still high, and the House had yet to vote on the transportation bill. Mineta cast the fight as one about "process and rules"; Carr said it was all about "ego."⁶⁹ Unable to forge a compromise between the two lawmakers, Speaker Tom Foley of Washington and House leadership ultimately sided with Mineta.⁷⁰ "The episode," wrote the Congress-watchers at *CQ Almanac*, "appeared to give the Public Works Committee veto power

over new highway projects, allowing it to block funding for any specific project not included in one of the committee's authorization bills." It was, *CQ* said, "a sweeping victory." Mineta agreed to reform part of how his committee approved projects, but for the most part the chairman from San Jose had substantially increased his influence.⁷¹

The very next year Mineta ran headlong into an obstinate Senate over a popular highway bill. Back when he chaired the Surface Transportation Subcommittee during the 102nd Congress, Mineta had cleared a bill that created the National Highway System, which targeted federal funding for the most heavily used and most commercially important roads in America. Congress had until 1995 to determine which highways would fall under the NHS, and while most routes had already been selected, Mineta's committee wanted to add a host of new routes to the system. After sifting through Member requests for nearly 300 new road and transit programs, Mineta unveiled a \$2 billion bill in mid-May 1994. Demonstrating just how popular Mineta's committee was, the full House approved the highway bill two weeks later by a huge 400-vote majority. The Senate, however, balked at the bill, and talks between the two chambers failed.⁷²

Outside his immediate committee jurisdiction, Mineta worked to correct what he considered one of America's worst injustices: the forced internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. For Mineta, this was about as personal an issue as he dealt with in Congress. In the late 1970s, Mineta passed a bill crediting the time internees spent in the camps toward their civil service retirement benefits. Around the same time, a grassroots movement started to pressure the government to formally apologize for its policy of internment and ask for redress. Working alongside Hawaiian Senators Daniel K. Inouye and Spark M. Matsunaga, and California Representative Robert T. Matsui, Mineta helped pass a bill to study the wartime relocation and internment to generate awareness and develop policy.⁷³

Out of that study came the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, authorizing the government to pay \$20,000 to every surviving internee (\$1.2 billion total). It also



required a formal apology for the policy of internment, had the Justice Department clear criminal records from internment, and set aside millions to fund public education initiatives.⁷⁴ Mineta was the first person to testify before the House Judiciary Committee about the effect of internment, underscoring the “shame” and “damaged honor” felt by two generations of Japanese Americans for being wrongfully imprisoned.⁷⁵ It was an intensely personal bill, but Mineta voted present during its final passage to avoid a conflict of interest.⁷⁶

After Republicans swept the 1994 elections and took the majority in the House for the first time in decades, Mineta retired from Congress on October 10, 1995. He worked in the policy shop of a major defense contractor after leaving the House, and in 2000 President Bill Clinton named him Commerce Secretary. After two years in the Clinton administration, Mineta joined the George W. Bush administration as Transportation Secretary—the only Democrat in Bush’s Cabinet—serving from 2001 until 2006. “There are no Democratic or Republican highways,” Mineta liked to say, “no such thing as Republican or Democratic traffic congestion.”⁷⁷ Shortly after Mineta stepped down, President Bush awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom for his years of public service. Mineta has since retired from public life.

MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

Japanese American National Museum (Los Angeles, CA).

Papers: 1975–1996, circa 45 linear feet. The collection consists of correspondence, memoranda, government publications, speeches, newspaper clippings, books, briefings, photographs, audiovisual materials, and meeting notes documenting Norman Mineta’s involvement in seeking redress for Japanese Americans interned during World War II. Materials not related to the redress movement include civil rights issues of Asian Americans and Americans from the Pacific Islands, as well as materials that document Mineta’s campaign activities. A finding aid is available at the museum and online.

Library of Congress, Asian Division (Washington, DC). *Oral History:* 2003–2011, 8 linear feet. The collection contains videocassettes, DVDs, photographs, and documents related to an oral history project conducted by the United States Capitol Historical Society to document the service of Asian Americans in Congress. Norman Mineta is included among the interviewees.

San Jose State University, Special Collections and Archives (San Jose, CA). *Papers:* 1961–2001, 435.3 linear feet. The Norman Mineta papers document his long-term political service in Congress and the executive branch. The collection consists of legislative files, administrative files, awards and memorabilia, public relations and press files, subject files, U.S. Department of Commerce files, and files from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

NOTES

- Hearings before the House Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Administrative Law and Governmental Relations, *Civil Liberties Act of 1985 and the Aleutian And Pribilof Islands Restitution Act*, Part I, 99th Cong., 2nd sess. (28 April 1986): 35; E. Michael Myers, “Congressman Mineta Recalls the Days When the Constitution Failed,” 22 May 1988, *Los Angeles Times*: 2; Ken Ringle, “The Patriot: Norm Mineta Was Interned by His Country, but Still He Loved It. Then He Changed It,” 21 August 2000, *Washington Post*: C1.
- Sam Chu Lin, “Working For the People: Norm Mineta Wraps Up More Than Two Decades of Public Service,” 6 October 1995, *AsianWeek*: 10; Johanna Neuman, “Profile: Norm Mineta; What Moves Him?,” 25 April 2005, *Los Angeles Times*: B2.
- Chu Lin, “Working For the People: Norm Mineta Wraps Up More Than Two Decades of Public Service.”
- David M. Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999): 748–760.
- Neuman, “Profile: Norm Mineta; What Moves Him?”; Betty Cuniberti, “Internment: Personal Voices, Powerful Choices,” 4 October 1987, *Los Angeles Times*: 1. See also Irvin Molotsky, “Washington Talk: Friendships, The Heat of War Welds a Bond That Endures Across Aisles and Years,” 26 April 1988, *New York Times*: A22; Frank Davies, “Mineta, Ex-Senator Forged Ties at Internment Camp,” 2 May 2008, *San Jose Mercury News*: n.p.
- Hearings before the House Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Administrative Law and Government Relations, *Japanese American and Aleutian Wartime Relocation*, 98th Cong., 2nd sess. (20 June 1984): 74.
- Norman Mineta, oral history interview by Ronald Sarasin, 11 September 2006, accessed 8 April 2016, transcript, U.S. Capitol Historical Society, Washington, DC: 4, http://www.uschs.org/oral-histories/uschs_mineta.htm (site discontinued).
- Chu Lin, “Working For the People: Norm Mineta Wraps Up More Than Two Decades of Public Service.”
- “3,000 (Over 18, Under 21) Cast First Ballot Today in Maryland,” 13 April 1971, *New York Times*: 26; “Little Sway by Young in Md. Vote,” 15 April 1971, *Boston Globe*: 31.



- 10 David S. Broder, *Changing of the Guard: Power and Leadership in America* (New York: Penguin, 1981): 54.
- 11 Norman Mineta, "San Jose Mayor Finds Role of Parties Waning," 16 December 1971, *Washington Post*: A14; Broder, *Changing of the Guard*: 54.
- 12 "Norman Yoshio Mineta," *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774–Present*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=M000794>.
- 13 *Almanac of American Politics, 1976* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1975): 75; "Around the Nation," 15 April 1971, *Washington Post*: A5; Wallace Turner, "Idyllic Valley Now Urban Anthill, Planner Charges," 7 September 1970, *New York Times*: 12; "San Jose Mayor Is a Japanese-American," 15 April 1971, *New York Times*: 21; "3,000 (Over 18, Under 21) Cast First Ballot Today in Maryland."
- 14 "3,000 (Over 18, Under 21) Cast First Ballot Today in Maryland"; "Nisei Is in Lead," 14 April 1971, *New York Times*: 25; "Mineta is First," 15 April 1971, *Atlanta Constitution*: A20; "San Jose Mayor Is a Japanese-American." For vote totals, see "Little Sway By Young in Md. Vote."
- 15 "Men and Events," 18 April 1971, *Los Angeles Times*: C5.
- 16 *Almanac of American Politics, 1976*: 75; Art McGinn, "Can Towns Bar Their Gates?," 10 February 1974, *Atlanta Constitution*: C6; Gary Blonston, "Houses Achanging, Not for Better," 16 February 1975, *Baltimore Sun*: F1; David Homstrom, "Mayors Strike Gold—Citizen Involvement," 1 December 1971, *Christian Science Monitor*: 1.
- 17 John Herbers, "Despite Problems, Cities Produce Vigorous Mayors," 14 June 1971, *New York Times*: 18; "Revenue Share Consideration Set in Congress, Mayors Told," 18 January 1972, *Atlanta Constitution*: A9; "Mills Quoted as Predicting Action on Revenue Sharing," 9 March 1972, *New York Times*: 33; Peter Negronida, "Daley Leader: Mayors Back Nixon Policy," 22 June 1972, *Chicago Tribune*: 2; John Herbers, "Mayors, In Shift, Back War Policy," 22 June 1972, *New York Times*: 1; "16 Mayors Meet With Nixon," 25 July 1972, *Los Angeles Times*: 2; Martin F. Nolan, "Mayors Fear Bankruptcies Spreading in Public Housing," 7 September 1972, *Boston Globe*: 8; Maurice Carroll, "Mayors Tour City and Assail Nixon For Cuts in Funds," 5 February 1973, *New York Times*: 1; Richard L. Strout, "Mayors Call Nixon Budget Cuts 'Double Cross of City Poor,'" 24 February 1973, *Christian Science Monitor*: 2. For a general account of this generational change, see Broder, *Changing of the Guard*.
- 18 *Almanac of American Politics, 1976*: 76; *Almanac of American Politics, 1984* (Washington, DC: National Journal, 1983): 109–110; Kenneth C. Martis, *The Historical Atlas of Political Parties in the United States Congress, 1789–1989* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1989): 237; Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives, "Election Statistics, 1920 to Present," <http://history.house.gov/Institution/Election-Statistics/Election-Statistics/>.
- 19 Garrison Nelson, *Committees in the U.S. Congress, 1947–1992*, vol. 2 (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1994): 620–621; Garrison Nelson and Charles Stewart III, *Committees in the U.S. Congress, 1993–2010* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2011): 854.
- 20 Richard L. Lyons, "The New House: Members Mostly Lawyers, More Liberal, Younger," 1 December 1974, *Atlanta Constitution*: 2K; "New Members Bring Slice of Life to House," 11 November 1974, *Chicago Tribune*: 7.
- 21 Mineta, oral history interview: 8.
- 22 John A. Farrell, *Tip O'Neill and the Democratic Century* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2001): 384–386; John A. Lawrence, "The Democrats' High-Water Mark," *Politico Magazine*, http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/11/the-democrats-high-water-mark-came-40-years-ago-112492_Page2.html (accessed 13 January 2017).
- 23 Paul Houston, "Hopes Dimmed: Set Backs Give Freshman New View of House," 22 June 1975, *Los Angeles Times*: A1.
- 24 Robert Reinhold, "12 Go to Harvard to Study for Jobs in New Congress," 14 December 1974, *New York Times*: 31; Farrell, *Tip O'Neill and the Democratic Century*: 400–402.
- 25 Richard Lyons, "Caucus Chief Mineta Adopts Activist Role," 5 July 1975, *Washington Post*: A3.
- 26 Houston, "Hopes Dimmed."
- 27 Paul Houston, "Mineta Offers Six-Point Plan to Democrats," 26 June 1975, *Los Angeles Times*: B4; Lyons, "Caucus Chief Mineta Adopts Activist Role."
- 28 Houston, "Mineta Offers Six-Point Plan to Democrats."
- 29 Paul Houston, "5 Newcomers Give Vote of Confidence to Albert," 17 June 1975, *Los Angeles Times*: A19.
- 30 Lyons, "Caucus Chief Mineta Adopts Activist Role"; Mineta, oral history interview: 3–4.
- 31 Tip O'Neill with William Novak, *Man of the House: The Life and Political Memoirs of Speaker Tip O'Neill* (New York: Random House, 1987): 272; Martin Nolan, "O'Neill Views Speaker's Role," 14 June 1976, *Boston Globe*: 1.
- 32 Majorie Hunter and David E. Rosenbaum, "Defeats Split Bitter House Democrats," 2 July 1975, *New York Times*: A1.
- 33 Hunter and Rosenbaum, "Defeats Split Bitter House Democrats"; Mary Russell, "Freshmen Feel Frustration," 27 October 1975, *Washington Post*: A1.
- 34 Jerry Cohen, "Public Is Watching Politics Closer Now," 1 January 1976, *Los Angeles Times*: OC1.
- 35 Donald C. Bacon, Roger H. Davidson, and Morton Keller, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the United States Congress*, vol. 1 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995): 209; Eric Patashnik, "Congress and the Budget since 1974," in *The American Congress: The Building of*



- Democracy*, ed. Julian E. Zelizer (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2004): 671–672.
- 36 Hearings before the House Committee on Rules, Task Force on the Budget Process, *Congressional Budget Process*, 97th Cong., 2nd sess. (15 September 1982): 2.
- 37 David S. Broder, “Democratic Party in Transition, but the Question Is, to What?,” 14 January 1979, *Washington Post*: A1.
- 38 Richard L. Lyons, “On Capitol Hill,” 25 January 1979, *Washington Post*: A2.
- 39 Edward Walsh, “Administration Continues Its Search for Appointees to Fill Top Positions,” 25 July 1979, *Washington Post*: A7.
- 40 David Rogers, “The Scent of Change is Strong,” 16 November 1980, *Boston Globe*: 49; Mary Russell, “Democrats’ Chairs,” 11 November 1978, *Washington Post*: A1; Ellen Hume, “California Lawmakers Jockey for Position,” 27 November 1980, *Los Angeles Times*: C1.
- 41 Broder, *Changing of the Guard*: 54.
- 42 *Congressional Directory*, 95th Cong. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1977): 17; *Congressional Directory*, 97th Cong. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1981): 17; “House Committees, 97th Congress, First Session,” *CQ Almanac*, 1981, 37th ed., (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, Inc., 1982): 82, <http://library.cqpress.com>; “House Party Committees, 99th Congress,” *CQ Almanac*, 1985, 41st ed. (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, Inc., 1986): 73-G–76-G, <http://library.cqpress.com>.
- 43 Margot Hornblower and Richard L. Lyons, “House GOP Picks Michel As Leader,” 9 December 1980, *Washington Post*: A1; John Jacobs, *A Rage for Justice: The Passion and Politics of Phillip Burton* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995): 478.
- 44 “Democrats in Full Control for 100th Congress,” *CQ Almanac*, 1986, 42nd ed. (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, Inc., 1987): 3–7, <http://library.cqpress.com>; *Congressional Directory*, 103rd Cong. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office): 478.
- 45 Lou Cannon, “The Independent Democrats,” 23 May 1977, *Washington Post*: A1.
- 46 Hearings before the House Committee on Rules, Task Force on the Budget Process, *Congressional Budget Process*, 97th Cong., 2nd sess. (15 September 1982): 2–14; *Almanac of American Politics*, 1982 (Washington, DC: Barone & Company, 1981): 101. See also Zelizer, *The American Congress*: 678.
- 47 Hearings before the House Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Monopolies and Commercial Law, *Constitutional Amendments to Balance the Federal Budget*, 96th Cong., 1st sess. (13 June 1979): 423–426.
- 48 Bacon, Davidson, and Keller, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the United States Congress*, vol. 4: 1899.
- 49 Albert R. Hunt, “The Watergate Class,” 26 March 1976, *Wall Street Journal*: 30.
- 50 *Almanac of American Politics*, 1984: 110; “Fiscal 1980 Budget Targets,” *CQ Almanac*, 1979, 35th ed. (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, Inc., 1980): 163–175, <http://library.cqpress.com>. For Gang of Five, see “First 1981 Budget Resolution: Slim Surplus,” *CQ Almanac*, 1980, 36th ed. (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, Inc., 1981): 108–119, <http://library.cqpress.com>; Thomas B. Edsall, “Conflict Between Balancing Budget, Old-line Support Wracks Democrats,” 13 March 1980, *Baltimore Sun*: A1; William J. Eaton, “House Scuttles Budget Plan,” 30 May 1980, *Los Angeles Times*: 1; Martin Tolchin, “House Rejects Budget Compromise As Foes of Military Outlay Prevail,” 30 May 1980, *New York Times*: A1; Steven Rattner, “Conferees Approve Budget Plan for ’81 and ’80 Deficit Rise,” 12 June 1980, *New York Times*: A1; Andrew J. Glass, “Key House Democrats Prepare Own 1983 Budget,” 9 March 1982, *Atlanta Constitution*: A11; Helen Dewar, “House Approves Stopgap Spending Till End of Fiscal Year, 299 to 103,” 25 March 1982, *Washington Post*: A5.
- 51 Dan Morgan, “Battling to Innovate and Emulate: Intel vs. Nippon Electric,” 2 May 1983, *Washington Post*: A1; “Bills Offer Protection for Chips,” 11 June 1984, *New York Times*: D1.
- 52 James A. Martin, “Vendors Decry Stiff U.S. Trade Export Controls: Say Laws Protecting Sensitive Technology Cripple Access to Foreign Markets,” 27 April 1987, *Computerworld*: 85.
- 53 John Hendren, no title, 16 July 1991, States News Service.
- 54 Ringle, “The Patriot: Norm Mineta Was Interned by his Country, but Still He Loved It. Then He Changed It.”
- 55 John M. Barry, *The Ambition and the Power: A True Story of Washington* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990): 11.
- 56 House Committee on Public Works and Transportation, Subcommittee on Oversight and Review, *Organizational Meeting*, 96th Cong., 1st sess. (27 February 1979): 2–3.
- 57 House Committee on Public Works and Transportation, *Summary of Activities*, 96th Cong., 2nd sess., H. Rept. 1565 (2 January 1981): 43–46.
- 58 House Committee on Public Works and Transportation, *Summary of Activities*, 97th Cong., 2nd sess., H. Rept. 1013 (3 January 1983): 7, 16–18.
- 59 House Committee on Public Works and Transportation, *Summary of Legislative Activities*, 101st Cong., 2nd sess., H. Rept. 1007 (2 January 1991): 3–5, 77–80.
- 60 Hearings before the House Committee on Public Works and Transportation, Subcommittee on Surface Transportation, *Americans With Disabilities Act*, 101st Cong., 1st sess. (20 September 1989): 2.
- 61 Bill Anderson, “Cities and U.S. Tussle over Powers,” 7 December 1973, *Chicago Tribune*: 16.



- 62 House Committee on Public Works and Transportation, *Summary of Legislative Activities*, 102nd Cong., 2nd sess., H. Rept. 1071 (16 December 1992): 81–89.
- 63 *Politics in America, 1992* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1991): 193, 948; *Politics in America, 1994* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1993): 147.
- 64 *Congressional Directory*, 103rd Cong. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1993): 460.
- 65 House Committee on Public Works and Transportation, *Summary of Legislative Activities*, 103rd Cong., 2nd sess., H. Rept. 877 (22 December 1994): 3.
- 66 *Ibid.*, 4.
- 67 Al Kamen, “Chairmen Battle Over Transportation Bill,” 28 June 1993, *Washington Post*: A17; William DiBenedetto, “House Action on Transport Bill Delayed By Dispute Over Projects,” 7 July 1993, *Journal of Commerce*: B3; Mark Simon, “Mineta—The Roads Warrior,” 19 July 1993, *San Francisco Chronicle*: A17. Quotation from Al Kamen, “Stalled in a Transportation Tug of War,” 26 July 1993, *Washington Post*: A15.
- 68 Mark Simon, “Light Rail, BART Funds Imperiled,” 28 July 1993, *San Francisco Chronicle*: A17.
- 69 Eric Pianin, “Turf Battle Stalls Transportation Spending in House,” 17 September 1993, *Washington Post*: A17; Martin Tolchin, “2 Powerful Democrats Battle Over Transportation Projects,” 22 September 1993, *New York Times*: B9.
- 70 Eric Pianin, “House Frees Transportation Bill After Carr-Mineta Turf Fight,” 23 September 1993, *Washington Post*: A14.
- 71 “Transportation Programs Score Big Gains,” *CQ Almanac, 1993*, 49th ed. (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1994): 663–670, <http://library.cqpress.com>.
- 72 “Highway Funds Meet Roadblocks,” *CQ Almanac, 1994*, 50th ed. (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1995): 165–168, <http://library.cqpress.com>; *Politics in America, 1996* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1995): 118.
- 73 Mineta, oral history interview: 11.
- 74 “House Votes to Make Amends for Internment,” *CQ Almanac, 1987*, 43rd ed. (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1988): 278, <http://library.cqpress.com>; “Internees Gain Reparations,” *CQ Almanac, 1988*, 44th ed. (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1989): 80–81, <http://library.cqpress.com>; Bill McAllister, “Amends Sought for 1940s Internment,” 12 September 1987, *Washington Post*: A1; Mick Rood, no title, 16 September 1987, States News Service; Jill Lawrence, no title, 17 September 1987, Associated Press; Nathaniel Nash, “House Votes Payments to Japanese Internees,” 18 September 1987, *New York Times*: A15; Jill Lawrence, “Mineta Tearfully Recalls 1942 Internment as House Votes Cash Compensation,” 18 September 1987, Associated Press.
- 75 *Civil Liberties Act of 1985 and the Aleutian And Pribilof Islands Restitution Act*, Part I: 34–36.
- 76 “House Votes to Make Amends for Internment”; “Internees Gain Reparations”; McAllister, “Amends Sought for 1940s Internment”; Rood, no title, 16 September 1987, States News Service; Jill Lawrence, no title, 17 September 1987, Associated Press; Nash, “House Votes Payments to Japanese Internees”; Lawrence, “Mineta Tearfully Recalls 1942 Internment as House Votes Cash Compensation.”
- 77 Johanna Neuman and Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar, “The Nation: Mineta, Cabinet’s Sole Democrat, Quits,” 24 June 2006, *Los Angeles Times*: A6.

Samuel Ichiye (Sam) Hayakawa

1906–1992

UNITED STATES SENATOR 1977–1983
REPUBLICAN FROM CALIFORNIA

Samuel Ichiye (Sam) Hayakawa’s journey from academia to Capitol Hill abounded in contradictions, reversals, and some mirthful moments. He began his long career as a successful author of semantics, later transitioning into academic administration, which, in turn, thrust him to national acclaim as the improbable, tam-o’-shanter-topped hero of the law-and-order crowd. Drawing on that popularity, Hayakawa won election to a single Senate term, where his iconoclasm contrasted with an institution rooted in tradition. Along the way, his ideological trajectory arced from New Deal liberalism to a conservatism borne of the perceived excesses of Vietnam Era protests.

Samuel Ichiye Hayakawa was born on July 18, 1906, in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, the eldest of four children of Ichiro and Tora Isono Hayakawa. Ichiro had left Japan and joined the U.S. Navy as a mess attendant at age 18. Two years later, he returned to Japan, married Isono, and the couple relocated to Canada.¹ Sam Hayakawa was educated in the public schools of Winnipeg before earning a bachelor’s degree from the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg in 1927. A year later, he graduated with a master’s degree in English literature from McGill University in Montreal.

In 1929, the year his parents returned to their native Japan, Hayakawa immigrated to the United States, but because of naturalization restrictions that applied to Asians, he would not become a U.S. citizen until 1954. He attended the University of Wisconsin at Madison, earning a PhD in English in 1935. After finishing his studies, Hayakawa stayed and taught at his alma mater. In 1937 he married Margedant Peters, one of his former students. Many states prohibited such interracial marriages, including California, where the young couple wanted to live. So the Japanese-American husband and Caucasian

wife ended up residing in Chicago for nearly two decades, where he taught at the Illinois Institute of Technology (1939–1947) and the University of Chicago (1950–1955). The couple raised three children, sons Alan and Mark and daughter Wynne.²

After witnessing the ruthless efficiency of the Nazi propaganda machine that aided Adolph Hitler’s rise to power, Hayakawa was inspired to write *Language in Action* (1941), a book that cemented his reputation as a semanticist. Selected by the Book of the Month Club, it was eventually revised as *Language in Thought and Action* (1949) and remained a popular text for many decades. Working from the intellectual foundations laid by the Polish semanticist Alfred Korzybski, Hayakawa’s principal thrust was that words are not the same as reality; while language can be used to approximate reality, it may also be used to obscure it. The success of the book helped establish Hayakawa in the field and earned him an academic appointment. In the mid-1950s, after discriminatory state laws were abolished, Hayakawa and his family moved to California, where he joined the faculty at San Francisco State College (now University) as a professor of English.

Hayakawa rose to national prominence during an era of collegiate unrest in which thousands of young Americans protested the Vietnam War and fought for civil rights reforms. The Bay Area had become something of a social justice incubator, and in 1968 San Francisco State students, as part of a larger call to improve diversity on campus, initiated a strike to support an African-American teacher who had been suspended. After the school suspended classes and the college president stepped down that November, Hayakawa sat on the faculty committee to find a successor. He became a vocal critic of the protestors. “What my colleagues seem to be forgetting is [that] we also have an obligation to the 17,500 or more students—white,





black, yellow and brown—who are not on strike and have every right to expect continuation of their education.” The college trustees, with the support of then Governor of California Ronald Reagan, named Hayakawa as acting president of San Francisco State on November 28, 1968.

When classes resumed a few days later, the protests intensified. Hayakawa called in the police, who arrested dozens of student demonstrators. With television cameras rolling, Hayakawa scrambled onto a sound truck the protestors had commandeered and ripped the cords out of the loudspeaker. The image of a diminutive college administrator wearing a tam-o'-shanter, uncowed by student radicals resonated with Americans who had wearied of college protests and the anti-Vietnam War movement. The strikes and class stoppages continued for months, but Hayakawa was resolute throughout, gaining wide name recognition (the public knew him thereafter as “Samurai Sam”) and plaudits from state and national politicians. To defuse tensions, he made some concessions, such as creating a black studies department. In July 1969, college trustees named him the permanent university president, and he held the position until he retired in 1973.³

As a young man, Hayakawa aligned with Democrats squarely in the New Deal coalition, which tackled the economic crisis of the 1930s and gave America its social safety net. But over time he became more conservative, partly in reaction to the counterculture of the 1960s and partly to protest the expansion of federal government social programs as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society. He became a lightning rod for liberal faculty, who he said “deserted” him during the campus-wide protests. It all made him rethink his longtime political affiliation. “When I kept the university open for the benefit of our students and faculty, I thought I was doing a liberal thing,” Hayakawa wrote years later. “I don't know anything more liberal than to maintain education for all who want it.”⁴ He formally registered as Republican in June 1973, the day after he retired as college president. The government, he had come to believe, was risking the health of the nation by “redistributing income” and “rewarding the unsuccessful.”⁵ “You should govern a great nation as you fry a small fish,”

Hayakawa said, echoing the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu, “with only a little amount of stirring.”⁶

Three years after retiring, Hayakawa decided to try to unseat California's junior Senator, Democrat John V. Tunney, and announced his candidacy for the GOP nomination on January 20, 1976. It was his first campaign for any elected office, and he introduced himself as a “Republican unpredictable.”⁷ Observers described it as a “low-key” effort by a political neophyte against a field of seasoned political veterans, but Hayakawa drew on a strong conservative backlash against the social unrest of the era. “I think the triumph of the New Left in the 1960s was really a blow against certain basic American values,” he explained to a reporter. “One individual can do damn little about it, I suppose. This is some sort of moral gesture on my part. For after all, it seems to me the Senate is a platform from which you can preach.”⁸

He campaigned in what were traditionally heavily Republican parts of the state, mainly in Orange and San Diego Counties, on a platform that opposed big government and deficit spending.⁹ His principal primary opponents were eight-term U.S. Representative Alphonzo Bell Jr., and Robert Finch, a former lieutenant governor and cabinet member in the Richard Nixon administration. Finch and Bell did not take Hayakawa's under-the-radar candidacy seriously. Late in the campaign they scrambled to make up ground by hammering at the front-runner's age—Hayakawa would turn 70 before the general election.¹⁰ The strategy failed. Hayakawa's rivals split enough of the vote to allow the former academician to prevail. On June 8, 1976, Hayakawa captured 38 percent of the vote to 26 and 23 percent, respectively, for Finch and Bell.¹¹

Hayakawa's general election opponent, Senator Tunney, had served three terms in the U.S. House of Representatives, representing a Riverside district, before winning election to the Senate in 1970. Tunney, however, struggled in his first term. Liberals criticized him for supporting big agribusiness, a logical position for him, given his House district based in the Imperial Valley. Conservatives did not like his generally liberal voting



record, and the press often depicted the divorced Tunney as a playboy.¹² During the 1976 Democratic primary, the former student activist Tom Hayden managed to poll 41 percent of the vote against him.¹³

Hayakawa's 1976 Senate campaign cemented his reputation as an iconoclast. At times, the candidate cast himself as a "political innocent," which had an appeal in the aftermath of Watergate. He embraced the role of being the people's candidate. "I admit it," he noted late in the campaign, "I'm a folk hero."¹⁴ He donned the colorful knit tam-o'-shanter that had been his trademark at San Francisco State and even named a campaign train that whisked him from stop to stop along the California coast as the "Tam-O'-Shanter Express."¹⁵ His enthusiastic departure from the niceties of politics and his free-swinging responses broadened his appeal across party lines, particularly in a state where voters often split the ticket in presidential election years. When told that McDonald's restaurant chain operated 100 franchise restaurants in Japan, he replied, "What a terrible revenge for Pearl Harbor." On the hot-button issue of returning control of the Panama Canal to the Panamanians, Hayakawa chirped, "We should keep it. We stole it fair and square." When student radicals heckled him at a campaign appearance, he asked the crowd, "Do the rest of you want to hear my speech?" When the crowd replied resoundingly that they did, Hayakawa shot back, "Well, would you tell those bastards to shut up?"¹⁶

Though he started out as a decided underdog against Tunney, Hayakawa had the momentum. "There is no way for Hayakawa to win this election but he's going to," observed Franklyn (Lyn) Nofziger, an aide to Ronald Reagan, in the weeks leading up to Election Day.¹⁷ Hayakawa prevailed by a narrow 3 percent margin of victory, 50 to 47.¹⁸ Still, some believed that a man who had spent his life parsing the English language and who had little practical experience would have a hard time transitioning to the U.S. Senate. Colman McCarthy observed shortly afterward, "Hayakawa, the politician, may prove to be much less effective than Hayakawa, the semanticist. His campaign was anything but the age of

enlightenment revisited, and he defeated a man whose work in the Senate had at least some substance."¹⁹

Tunney resigned from the Senate two days before the start of the 95th Congress (1977–1979) so that the governor could appoint Hayakawa in the waning hours of the 94th Congress (1975–1977) and give him seniority over the incoming class of Senate freshmen.²⁰ His initial assignments were on the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee and Agriculture and Forestry Committee (later renamed Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry). He kept the Agriculture assignment for his entire term, but within a month left Insular Affairs for seats on both the Budget Committee and the Human Resources Committee. At the opening of the 96th Congress (1979–1981), he traded in both those assignments for a seat on the Foreign Relations Committee, where he served the duration of his term in office. In the 97th Congress (1981–1983), Hayakawa also was assigned to the Select Committee on Small Business, which became a standing committee two months after the start of the session.

In his first year, Hayakawa addressed economic issues affecting California. His first legislative effort was a bill friendly to the Pacific tuna fleet that frequently killed porpoises in its nets and led to protests by environmental groups. His bill provided a "technological solution" to the problem and called for a gradual plan that sought to loosen restrictions of the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Hayakawa sought to provide money for further study of the problem and, rather than bar porpoise kills outright, suggested that the tuna catch be reduced only if the porpoise population continued to decline.²¹ He also supported building the B-1 bomber, a Cold War Era supersonic aircraft that carried nuclear weapons, since many of the plane's components were manufactured in California.

The same plainspokenness and quirkiness that won him votes back home undercut his effectiveness in the U.S. Senate. Hayakawa had an aloof and generally uncooperative working relationship with Alan Cranston, California's senior Senator and the Democratic Whip. Initially, Cranston described Hayakawa's potential in the Senate this way: "He's unpredictable and will cast a lot of good votes and a lot of



bad votes. I don't know how it will add up, but it's great to have a senator who's individualistic and different." But the partnership was not helped by public gaffes. At a committee hearing that both men attended on a California wilderness bill, for instance, Cranston and Hayakawa openly disagreed on it. Hayakawa compounded the awkward encounter when giving remarks against the proposal and nodding at Cranston and saying, "I'm delighted to be here with my colleague from Wisconsin."²²

Observers complained that Hayakawa had hired an eclectic staff ill-prepared to handle the rigors of representing a huge state like California. Nearing the end of his first year in office, Senate insiders suggested that his name "still conjures up more curiosity than clout" and that the professor had been a poor student in learning the institution's folkways.²³ The press made hay with his habit of napping on the job, first in orientation classes for freshman Senators and, in the years that followed, in committee hearings.²⁴ "I have a low threshold of boredom," Hayakawa quipped.²⁵

A year into his term, Hayakawa wrote an essay for *Harper's Weekly* in which he gainsaid the wisdom of his own appointment to the Senate Budget Committee. "This was ironic because I have the greatest difficulty balancing my own checkbook, and my wife handles our investments," Hayakawa noted. "Putting me on the Budget Committee when I don't understand money at all seemed to me to be appallingly irresponsible on the part of the United States Senate." He added, though, that after being on the committee for several months, he discovered that work on a committee that he described as being comprised of free spenders only involved simple math. "It's all simple addition," Hayakawa deadpanned. "You don't even have to know subtraction."²⁶

By the late summer of 1977, Hayakawa already had backed away from the campaign trail rhetoric opposing the transfer of control of the Panama Canal. He claimed that, while his laugh line on stealing it got all the press, his more serious remarks about finding a pragmatic solution to the impasse were ignored. Moreover, Hayakawa insisted he always believed that "our policies toward Panama had

to be examined in the general framework of our relations with the other countries of Latin America."²⁷ As such, he believed President Jimmy Carter's proposal to relinquish control of the canal was sound and could improve U.S. relations with Panama and the rest of Central America.²⁸ On March 16, 1978, Hayakawa voted with the majority to return control of the canal to Panama.²⁹

But Hayakawa's political positions on several hot-button ethnic and cultural issues began to erode his support among California voters. In 1979 he opposed the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), which called for the U.S. government to redress civil rights violations committed against Japanese Americans relocated from the West Coast during World War II. Hayakawa described Franklin D. Roosevelt's executive order as being borne not principally of racism, but of "wartime necessity" and "the essence of prudence." He added that the relocation camps sped up a process whereby Japanese Americans were "integrated into [U.S.] society faster than any other non-English-speaking ethnic group in our history. The camps, unjust though they were, forced the Japanese Americans to break out of the West Coast and into the American mainstream."³⁰ Critics howled in protest not the least because the Canadian-born Hayakawa neither suffered that uprooting nor fought in the U.S. military in the Second World War.

Late in Hayakawa's Senate career, as the congressionally mandated Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC) prepared to release its report, the JACL continued to call for reparations of \$25,000 per individual interned, a nearly \$3 billion outlay. On the 41st anniversary of the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, Hayakawa took to the Senate Floor to note that "my flesh crawls with shame and embarrassment" at proposed reparations. He reminded Japanese Americans of their successful integration into American society vis-à-vis other ethnic groups and their relative level of wealth and educational achievement and warned that, in an era of budget constraints and widespread public concern about Japanese economic gains versus the United States, such a program would invite a "backlash."³¹ Ultimately, CWRIC



recommended reparations along with an acknowledgement of the federal government's violation of Japanese-American civil rights that were eventually embodied in the Civil Liberties Act signed into law by President Ronald Reagan in August 1988.

Hayakawa's views on economic issues, infused with the perspectives of an educator who had spent decades working with young people, reflected mainstream Republican thinking about the value of the free market and the problems with welfare. In 1977 he opposed raising the national minimum wage, arguing that it would have an adverse impact on teenage boys because, when facing elevated wages, employers would cut their workforces. This would hurt particularly minority youth for whom jobs represented economic gain, social advancement, and an opportunity for personal growth. "If an affluent society does not provide boys with challenges," Hayakawa told colleagues on the Senate Floor, "they are compelled by inner necessity to improvise their own."³²

In 1978 he authored a bill to provide incentives to small-business owners to hire teenagers in urban areas. By the early 1980s, Hayakawa advocated reducing the entry-level minimum wage for teenagers, a time at which it was \$3.35 per hour. Amid cries that his plan would create a pool of cheap labor, Hayakawa countered that early employment opportunities presented a crucial step to integrating teenagers into society and steering them away from trouble.³³

In 1982, amidst a steep economic recession, Hayakawa argued that the "voluntarily unemployed"—those people not looking for jobs or those passing up positions that paid too little—ought to be removed from the food stamp program. The proposal, he admitted, "may seem to lack compassion. However, it is the other way around. The Government is lacking compassion by encouraging people to remain idle.... Lost are the opportunities to gain a foothold on the economic ladder and to obtain the basic dignity and self-respect derived from being a productive member of society."³⁴

Given his experience as a school administrator, Hayakawa was an unsurprisingly assertive opponent of

federal mandates at all levels of the U.S. education system. He opposed school busing as a means to desegregate schools and wanted to prohibit federal payments to colleges with affirmative action policies, a position which he voiced consistently throughout his Senate career. In April 1979, he took to the Senate Floor to deride the "foolishness" of "forcing preferential quotas" on U.S. universities. His experience as a university president led him to resent such policies, and as a Senator he sought to defund programs implemented by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare that supported affirmative action. He argued, in part, that such policies undercut the intent of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and had eroded higher education. "In recent years Washington has pushed its foot in the schoolhouse door and created new and sophisticated priorities," Hayakawa told his colleagues. "Every priority they throw in interferes with the educational process."³⁵

Hayakawa repeatedly derided bilingualism efforts in schools and, in April 1981, proposed a constitutional amendment to make English the official language of the United States. He argued, in part, that English proficiency was the great equalizer that helped immigrants assimilate and succeed in the United States: "Participation in the common language has rapidly made available to each new group the political and economic benefit of American society."³⁶ While Hayakawa supported learning other languages, he opposed the tendency of new immigrants in school to be taught primarily in their native language. He also opposed bilingual ballot provisions, which, he argued, conflicted with naturalization requirements that mandated basic English proficiency. In early 1981, he submitted a bill to repeal the bilingual requirements of the Voting Rights Act extension of 1975.³⁷ At the heart of his proposals, he once explained, was an attempt to "prevent a growing split among ethnic groups based on their native languages. With each trying to become more powerful than the other, the function of language could change from a means of communication to a tool of cultural assertion."³⁸

In early 1982, Hayakawa announced that he would not seek re-election to a second term. "I make this choice without urging or pressure from anyone except my own



internal imperative to turn in a record of solid legislative achievement as my small contribution to the history of the state,” Hayakawa said. At the time, polls indicated that he was badly trailing the field of candidates for the nomination, including San Diego Mayor Pete Wilson, who would go on to succeed him in the Senate.³⁹

After Congress, Hayakawa founded the group U.S. English, a political lobbying organization devoted to “preserving the unifying role of English” in the United States.⁴⁰ Hayakawa resided in Mill Valley, California, and passed away February 27, 1992, in Greenbrae. Senator Mark Hatfield of Oregon eulogized him as “a man who had the strength of character to fight unabashedly for what he believed in and for what he felt in his heart was in the best interest of the Nation.”⁴¹

FOR FURTHER READING

Haslam, Gerald W., with Janice E. Haslam. *In Thought and Action: The Enigmatic Life of S. I. Hayakawa* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011).

Hayakawa, S. I. *Language in Thought and Action*, 4th ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978).

MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

Hoover Institution, Library and Archives (Stanford, CA). *Papers*: 1926–1994, 264.1 linear feet. The collection includes correspondence, memoranda, reports, speeches, clippings, photographs, audiovisual materials, and memorabilia relating to many aspects of U.S. foreign relations and domestic policies, U.S. politics, and the Republican Party. A finding aid is available online and at the repository.

San Diego State University, Special Collections and University Archives (San Diego, CA). *Papers*: 1959–1982, 10.2 linear feet. The papers include correspondence, office memos, invitations, biographical data, press releases, subject files, and reports from Hayakawa’s San Diego district office.

NOTES

1 “Ex-Sen. Hayakawa Dies; Unpredictable Iconoclast; Professor: Semanticist First Caught Public’s Attention with His Opposition to Students Radicals at S.F. State,” 28 February 1992, *Los Angeles Times*: A1; J. Y. Smith, “Outspoken U.S. Senator S. I. Hayakawa Dies at 85,” 28 February 1992, *Washington Post*: D4; Katherine Bishop, “S. I. Hayakawa Dies at 85; Scholar and Former Senator,”

28 February 1992, *New York Times*: B6; Samuel W. Crompton, “Hayakawa, S. I.,” *American National Biography*, vol. 10 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999): 372–373.

- 2 Bishop, “S. I. Hayakawa Dies at 85; Scholar and Former Senator.”
- 3 “Hayakawa, S(amuel) I(chiye),” *Current Biography* 38, no. 1 (January 1977): 20–21; Crompton, “Hayakawa, S. I.”; Smith, “Outspoken U.S. Senator S. I. Hayakawa Dies at 85.”
- 4 S. I. Hayakawa, “Toward a Governing Coalition—II. Republicans,” in *Emerging Coalitions in American Politics*, ed. Seymour Martin Lipset (San Francisco, CA: Institute for Contemporary Studies, 1978): 425.
- 5 Tom Goff, “Hayakawa: the Making of a Senator,” 4 November 1976, *Los Angeles Times*: B15; S. I. Hayakawa, “Mr. Hayakawa Goes to Washington,” *Harper’s Magazine* 256 (January 1978): 39–43, quotation on p. 43.
- 6 Lou Cannon, “Hayakawa Breakfast: Lao-tse or Lausche?,” 27 April 1977, *Washington Post*: A1.
- 7 William Endicott, “Hayakawa Makes It Clear: He’ll Seek Tunney’s Seat,” 21 January 1976, *Los Angeles Times*: C1.
- 8 Bill Stall, “Hayakawa Puts the Accent on Action in GOP Senate Campaign,” 2 April 1976, *Los Angeles Times*: OC-B5.
- 9 Tom Goff, “Hayakawa: Soft Sell Pays Off,” 5 May 1976, *Los Angeles Times*: A3.
- 10 William Endicott, “Hayakawa’s Age Becomes Campaign Issue,” 15 May 1976, *Los Angeles Times*: C1.
- 11 *Almanac of American Politics, 1980* (Washington, DC: National Journal, Inc., 1979): 56.
- 12 *Almanac of American Politics, 1980*: 52.
- 13 Tom Goff, “Tunney Defeats Hayden, 59%–41%; Hayakawa Wins,” 9 June 1976, *Los Angeles Times*: 3.
- 14 Larry Stammer, “Hayakawa Cultivates His ‘Political Innocent’ Image,” 4 October 1976, *Los Angeles Times*: B1; Lou Cannon, “Hayakawa’s Style: He Shuns Court Jester Role,” 27 February 1977, *Washington Post*: A1.
- 15 Larry Stammer, “Hayakawa Rides Rails to San Diego,” 31 October 1976, *Los Angeles Times*: A3.
- 16 Lou Cannon, “Hayakawa vs. Tunney: Californians’ Senate Race is Unusual,” 17 October 1976, *Washington Post*: L1.
- 17 Cannon, “Hayakawa’s Style: He Shuns Court Jester Role.”
- 18 Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives, “Election Statistics, 1920 to Present,” <http://history.house.gov/Institution/Election-Statistics/Election-Statistics/>; Goff, “Hayakawa: the Making of a Senator.”
- 19 Colman McCarthy, “A Semanticist Loose in the Political Stacks,” 30 November 1976, *Los Angeles Times*: C7.



- 20 “Head Start For Hayakawa,” 10 December 1976, *Washington Post*: A30.
- 21 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 95th Cong., 1st sess. (10 February 1977): 4151–4152; Richard Bergholz, “Hayakawa Acts to Aid Tuna Fleet,” 22 January 1977, *Los Angeles Times*: A30.
- 22 Cannon, “Hayakawa’s Style: He Shuns Court Jester Role”; Ellen Hume, “Gaffe Puts Hayakawa in Badger State,” 27 September 1977, *Los Angeles Times*: B14.
- 23 Ellen Hume, “Prof. Hayakawa Still a Student in the Senate,” 18 September 1977, *Los Angeles Times*: A1; Linda Charlton, “Hayakawa Finds Senate Friends More Interesting Than Ph.D.’s,” 27 April 1977, *New York Times*: 18.
- 24 “Former Prof. Hayakawa Naps in Congress Classes,” 16 December 1976, *Chicago Tribune*: 7.
- 25 Don Shannon, “Sen. Hayakawa Dots the Eyes and Crosses the Press,” 5 January 1977, *Los Angeles Times*: 1.
- 26 “Former Prof. Hayakawa Naps in Congress Classes”; Shannon, “Sen. Hayakawa Dots the Eyes and Crosses the Press”; Hayakawa, “Mr. Hayakawa Goes to Washington”; Hume, “Prof. Hayakawa Still a Student in the Senate.”
- 27 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 95th Cong., 2nd sess. (23 February 1978): 4281.
- 28 William Endicott, “Hayakawa Ready to Back Panama Canal Treaties,” 19 August 1977, *Los Angeles Times*: B12.
- 29 S. I. Hayakawa, “‘Aye’ ... I Knew that I Had Done the Right Thing,” 30 March 1978, *Los Angeles Times*: D7.
- 30 S. I. Hayakawa, “Reparations for Japanese-Americans? No!,” 11 May 1979, *Los Angeles Times*: E7.
- 31 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 97th Cong., 2nd sess. (7 December 1982): 29209–29213, quotation on p. 29213.
- 32 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 95th Cong., 1st sess. (7 October 1977): 32867–32870, quotation on p. 32870.
- 33 S. I. Hayakawa, “Minimum Wage: Helping Hand or Empty Promise?,” 4 January 1981, *Los Angeles Times*: F5. For a similar argument, see *Congressional Record*, Senate, 96th Cong., 1st sess. (29 March 1979): 6706–6707; *Congressional Record*, Senate, 96th Cong., 1st sess. (11 July 1979): 18012–18013.
- 34 S. I. Hayakawa, “Paid by the Government to Do Nothing,” 8 September 1982, *New York Times*: A26.
- 35 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 96th Cong., 1st sess. (30 April 1979): 8935; see also *Congressional Record*, Senate, 97th Cong., 1st sess. (21 May 1981): 10798–10799.
- 36 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 97th Cong., 1st sess. (27 April 1981): 7444–7445. See also *Congressional Record*, Senate, 97th Cong., 1st sess. (14 October 1981): 23980–23982; *Congressional Record*, Senate, 97th Cong., 1st sess. (24 March 1981): 5088–5089.
- 37 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 97th Cong., 1st sess. (6 January 1981): 167–168.
- 38 S. I. Hayakawa, “English By Law,” 1 October 1981, *New York Times*: A35. See also *Congressional Record*, Senate, 96th Cong., 1st sess. (1 May 1979): 214–215.
- 39 Jay Mathews, “Sen. Hayakawa Drops Bid for Reelection,” 30 January 1982, *Washington Post*: A5.
- 40 “About U.S. English: History,” accessed 30 October 2014, <http://www.usenglish.org/history>.
- 41 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 102nd Cong., 2nd sess. (4 March 1992): 4333.

Daniel K. Akaka

1924–

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE 1977–1990

UNITED STATES SENATOR 1990–2013

DEMOCRAT FROM HAWAII

As the first Native Hawaiian in the U.S. Senate, Daniel K. Akaka used his genial nature and influence in committee to effect change on the national stage. During his 36 years of service in the House and Senate, Akaka built up significant loyalty in Hawaii and within the Democratic Party. However, success eluded him on his signature piece of legislation, a law elevating Native Hawaiians to tribal status with all the privileges commensurate with that designation. “I am not a born politician,” Akaka said of his congressional experience. “People tell me I have to be feisty to get my way in Congress. But that’s not my style. I use my Hawaiian abilities and the spirit of Aloha that brings people together.”¹

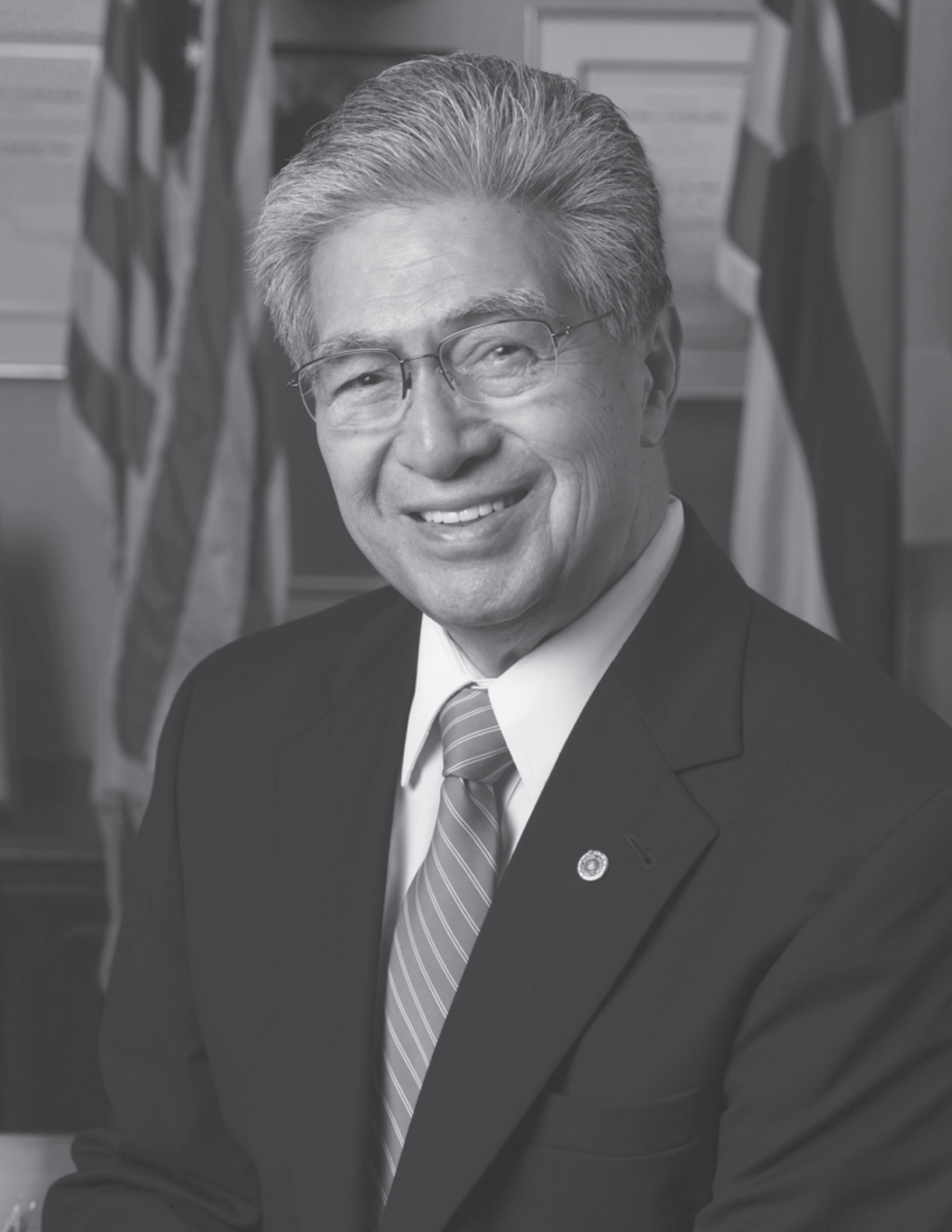
Daniel Kahikina Akaka was born on September 11, 1924, in Honolulu, Hawaii, the son of Kahikina Akaka and Annie Kahoa. His ethnic Chinese father processed sugar and worked as a molder for the Honolulu Ironworks. His Native Hawaiian mother was a homemaker who raised Daniel and his seven brothers and sisters. The family lived in a two-bedroom home with a separate building for the kitchen, cooking on a wood stove.² Akaka’s family was devoutly religious, a quality that stayed with Akaka throughout his life. He briefly considered following his older brother, Abraham, into the ministry before committing himself to education. He remained close with Abraham, whom he invited to act as a guest chaplain in the House in 1977 and the Senate in 1991.³

Akaka attended public schools in Honolulu and graduated from the Kamehameha School for Boys in 1942. After high school, he followed in his father’s footsteps and began working as a civilian welder and mechanic for the Hawaiian Electric Company. He joined the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers upon being drafted in 1945 and received an honorable discharge from the Army in 1947. He then served as the first mate on the schooner *Morning*

Star out of Hawaii for a year. In 1948 Akaka married Mary Mildred Chong, with whom he had five children, Alan, Millannie, Daniel Jr., Nicholas, and Gerard.

After his year at sea, Akaka attended the University of Hawaii, where he received a bachelor’s degree in education in 1952, using benefits from the GI Bill to pay his way. Akaka earned his professional certificate in secondary education and began teaching in 1953 at Kahuku High School. He then moved on to Pearl Harbor Intermediate School and ended his teaching career in elementary schools in suburban Oahu in 1960. After acquiring his professional school administrator’s certificate, Akaka transitioned into school administration. He had also worked for the Hawaii department of education as an education program specialist beginning in 1953, a position he held for 18 years.⁴ While working as a principal in the Oahu school system, Akaka completed a master’s degree in education from the University of Hawaii in 1966. Three years later Akaka became chief program planner for compensatory education for the Hawaii department of education. From 1971 to 1974, he served as director of the Hawaii office of economic opportunity.

Akaka’s ascension through the ranks of the Hawaii education department caught the attention of longtime Democratic godfather Governor John Burns.⁵ Constantly on the lookout for fresh talent, Burns regularly invited Akaka to the governor’s mansion to eat breakfast and discuss the need for a Native-Hawaiian presence in politics. “I had never thought about it before then,” Akaka admitted.⁶ Incapacitated by cancer late in his third term, Burns urged Akaka to transition from administration to politics. In 1974 Akaka ran in the Democratic primary to be George R. Ariyoshi’s running mate for governor. Ariyoshi specifically wanted Akaka on the ticket for lieutenant governor as a Native Hawaiian.





Maintaining a careful ethnic balance in Hawaiian politics had long been a common practice carefully managed by party elites. However, Akaka entered the campaign late and was defeated by Nelson Doi, who went on to win the election for lieutenant governor alongside Ariyoshi. Ariyoshi then hired Akaka as a special assistant in the governor's office, where he served from 1975 to 1976.⁷ Akaka's political interest in helping Native Hawaiians began as Governor Ariyoshi's aide when he was directed to organize a program under the Native American Act in Hawaii. During this time, he helped forge the beginnings of ALU LIKE, a nonprofit organization formed to help increase opportunities and standards of living for Native Hawaiians while preserving their unique culture.⁸

A chain of events created a giant vacuum on the national level for Hawaii when Senator Hiram L. Fong retired in 1976. Both of Hawaii's U.S. Representatives, Spark M. Matsunaga and Patsy Takemoto Mink, announced their candidacies to replace the Senator, setting off an intraparty fight among Democrats and opening up both of Hawaii's congressional seats. Akaka declared his candidacy for Mink's seat, which included most of the land outside the population center of Honolulu except for the smaller northwestern islands. He faced Republican Hank Inouye (no relation to Senator Daniel K. Inouye) among other third-party candidates. Akaka ran away with the election, securing 80 percent of the vote.⁹

A liberal Democrat, Akaka tended to vote the party line on the majority of legislation, which helped him advance within the House. Though he often differentiated himself from his party by supporting defense programs largely due to the military bases on Hawaiian soil, Akaka voted with party leadership on issues they deemed essential. As one example, Akaka was crucial to a successful attempt by Democratic leadership to block President Ronald Reagan's funding for the MX missile. Akaka initially voted for the bill, but changed his mind when Illinois Democrat Marty Russo carried him from a phone booth to the chamber to change his vote.¹⁰

Akaka developed a "Hawaiian style" rapport with his House colleagues. He rejected a more showy or flashy style

on the Hill, instead becoming more well known among Members of Congress for his soft-spoken, but affable, manner. Akaka devoted his time in the House to acquiring funding for his home state and focusing on Hawaiian issues, appearing "quietly competent" without gaining visibility either nationally or broadly across Hawaii.¹¹

As a freshman House Member, Akaka was tapped to serve on four separate committees, including the Agriculture Committee and the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee, both key assignments to oversee legislation affecting Hawaiian industries. Akaka's longest service was on the Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, where he spent much of his time attempting to draw attention to the drug abuse problems on the islands and writing harsher sentences for dealers.¹² His broader agenda included protection of the sugar and merchant marine industries in Hawaii and fostering a stronger relationship between Hawaii and the federal government. Akaka specifically developed a reputation for being a friend of federal workers, who comprised a large part of his constituency. From 1978 through his final House election in 1988, Akaka never received fewer than 75 percent of the vote. Akaka never went uncontested and usually faced a Libertarian opponent, but for many of these elections, Republicans failed to put forward an opponent.¹³

Akaka entered Congress with the hope of securing a seat on the Appropriations Committee, but was told not to expect much, coming from a small state. He recognized the difficulty of his position. "You cannot get into the committee unless somebody dies, or somebody resigns or leaves the House." When a seat did open up during his second term, Akaka aggressively pursued it and reminded Speaker Tip O'Neill of Massachusetts of his unwavering loyalty. "I think that made a difference," Akaka recalled, "because the next day, Charlie Rangel [of New York] called me and said, 'Danny, you're in.'"¹⁴ From the Appropriations Committee and its Agriculture Subcommittee, Akaka supported the causes of the sugar and pineapple industry, tourism, and environmental protection, issues that loomed large for his constituency. He also continued his advocacy for Native Hawaiians.



Akaka focused on that behind-the-scenes approach to legislating particularly through his seat on the House Appropriations Committee, where he coordinated with fellow Hawaiian Daniel Inouye on the Senate Appropriations Committee.

When Senator Spark Matsunaga died in 1990, Governor John Waihee III appointed Representative Akaka to finish out Matsunaga's unexpired term. Akaka delayed taking the Senate oath of office in order to ensure House passage of funding for various projects relevant to Hawaii, using his seat on the powerful Appropriations Committee. It was unlikely he would be in the same position to influence legislation upon entering the Senate.¹⁵

Akaka's appointment officially began on May 16, 1990, but he still had to weather a special election in November to fill the remaining four years of Matsunaga's term. His fellow Representative from Hawaii, moderate Republican Patricia Saiki, declared her candidacy to challenge Akaka, and polls placed them in a dead heat. Saiki entered the race with the full backing of the George H. W. Bush presidential administration. With the potential to retake the Senate in 1990, Republicans made the contest a top priority. Akaka waved off the President's endorsement of his opponent, "I know what I'm up against: the White House. I don't think they know what they're up against."¹⁶

Saiki, with support from the national party, led Akaka in the polls as late as October. While the campaign between the two former teachers remained largely polite and, therefore, true to Hawaiian "Aloha" values, Akaka hit hard on his early Senate service, particularly his work for the sugar industry as well as his party bona fides, in an overwhelmingly Democratic state. "If it were not for the Democrats and the Democratic majority in Congress, Hawaii would suffer," Akaka claimed.¹⁷ In his tightest race since 1976, Akaka won with 54 percent of the vote, surpassing media expectations.¹⁸ Surprisingly, he drew large Japanese-American support despite Representative Saiki's prominent position within that influential Hawaiian community.

Akaka made an immediate impression in the Senate by passing an amendment in the Energy and Natural Resources Committee to rename a scientific research bill in

honor of the late Senator Matsunaga, who had authored it. In July Akaka led the effort to defeat New Jersey Senator Bill Bradley's proposal to lower sugar price supports. Bradley's amendment to the annual farm bill would lower price supports for sugar by 2 cents a pound. Bradley denounced the support as "the S&L of the farm program," a reference to the bankrupt savings and loan industry.¹⁹ Akaka built a bipartisan coalition to defeat the measure, and his motion to table Bradley's amendment passed 54 to 44 on July 24, 1990. After his success, Akaka proudly said of his maneuver against Bradley, a former basketball star, "I'm only 5-feet-7, but I slam-dunked him." He touted his triumph as proof of his legislative effectiveness in the 1990 special election.²⁰

Akaka was initially appointed to three committees in the 101st Congress (1989–1991): Energy and Natural Resources; Veterans' Affairs; and Governmental Affairs.²¹ He served on the latter two committees throughout his tenure in the Senate. His reputation as an ally of federal employees grew out of his position on the Governmental Affairs Committee, renamed the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs in 2005 in response to the executive reorganization in the wake of the September 11, 2001, attacks. He chaired the Federal Workforce Subcommittee and regularly reached across the aisle on behalf of federal employees alongside Senators George Voinovich of Ohio and Susan Collins of Maine, both Republicans. Akaka often referred to Voinovich as a "brother," and he engineered whistleblower protection legislation with Senator Collins.

Akaka was the primary sponsor on the Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act of 2012, which passed the Senate by unanimous consent. Federal worker groups credit him for streamlining the federal hiring process, encouraging telework options, and shepherding to passage the Non-Foreign Area Retirement Equity Assurance Act of 2009, which shifted federal employees in Hawaii, Alaska, and U.S. territories from broad nonforeign cost-of-living adjustments to fairer locality pay levels. The president of the Partnership for Public Service lauded Akaka, "He's not flashy, but he is immensely substantive."²²



Akaka served on the Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee during the 107th Congress (2001–2003) and again during his final term from 2007 through 2013. Akaka helped to develop the Dodd–Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act in 2010, authoring the section of the bill establishing the Office of Financial Education in the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and creating grant programs for consumer education.

Akaka attempted to offer alternatives to predatory financial products like high-interest payday loans. Long an advocate of financial literacy and education, Akaka also sponsored the Excellence in Economic Education Act (S. 1487) in the 106th Congress (1999–2001), which provided federal funding for teacher training and school activities for economic education. Much of his bill passed as part of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2002.

Akaka also sponsored the Credit Card Minimum Payment Warning Act, much of which found its way into the Credit Card Accountability Responsibility and Disclosure Act of 2009. The relevant portions necessitated a box, referred to by his colleagues as the “Akaka Box,” on credit card statements that simply displayed the minimum payments required to pay an outstanding balance within 36 months.²³

As a member of the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee (1990–2013), Akaka helped to expand federal support for veterans and honor their service with education benefits and medal awards. In 1996 he launched a review of World War II records which led to more than 30 medals being distributed in 2000 to retroactively honor the service of Asian-American soldiers, including Senator Inouye. As chairman of the committee (2007–2011), Akaka pushed the panel to authorize the largest increase ever in funding for the Veterans Administration in 2007. Akaka collaborated with Virginia Senator Jim Webb to rework the GI Bill for veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Akaka and Inouye also provided compensation for Filipino veterans who fought under the U.S. flag in World War II. After many different iterations of the Filipino veterans’ bill, the pair finally secured funding in the 2009 stimulus bill through a combined effort, using their positions on the Veterans’ Affairs and Appropriations Committees.²⁴

Despite having a hand in major pieces of legislation, much of Akaka’s work happened behind the scenes to support his state and fellow Asian Americans. “You don’t see him introducing legislation or much important legislation,” a political observer once noted. “He rarely speaks on the floor. He might be effectively talking one on one with other senators, but no one would see that.”²⁵ Akaka arranged for a Federal Emergency Management Agency office to be located in Hawaii in 1993 following Hurricane Iniki.²⁶ He maintained an interest in the protection of the natural Hawaiian environment, and he lobbied for the creation of new national parks. Akaka also supported prohibiting the use of U.S. territories in the Pacific as nuclear waste disposal sites, safeguards against introduction of alien species to Hawaii, and the foundation of the Spark M. Matsunaga Renewable Energy and Ocean Technology Center at Keahole Point.²⁷

With his Senate appointment in 1990, Akaka became the first Native Hawaiian to serve in that body. Throughout his Senate career, Akaka devoted considerable effort to representing Asian Americans broadly and Native Hawaiians specifically. Akaka helped found the Asian Pacific American Caucus in 1994 and briefly served as its secretary. In 1997 Akaka delivered a stirring condemnation of anti-Asian prejudice on the Senate Floor, specifically denouncing the belittling of Asian-American contributions to the political process in the wake of fundraising scandals featuring Asian-American businessmen and politicians.²⁸

In 1993 Akaka secured congressional and presidential apologies for the U.S.-backed 1893 overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy. Senators Akaka and Inouye both lamented the nature of the kingdom’s toppling as a cultural loss. After little debate, the resolution (S.J. Res. 19) passed 65 to 34.²⁹ Akaka introduced the Senate version (S. 1763) of the Stand Against Violence and Empower Native Women Act in 2011, which was folded into the Violence Against Women Act in 2013, extending protections to Native-American and Native-Hawaiian women.³⁰

His signature legislation grew out of his support for Native Hawaiians. Serving on the Permanent Select Committee on Indian Affairs, Akaka threw his weight



behind indigenous Hawaiians following a 2000 Supreme Court ruling that struck down a Hawaiian practice in which state officials responsible for dispensing aid to Native Hawaiians were elected by Native Hawaiians. The Court deemed unconstitutional the racial basis for determining these voters. Less than six months later, Senator Akaka and Hawaii Representative Neil Abercrombie first introduced the Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act, which became known over time as the “Akaka Bill.” The bill reconstituted the Kingdom of Hawaii as a Native-Hawaiian tribal unit similar to other Native-American tribes in the United States, allowing for “government-to-government” interactions and other privileges extended to Native-American tribes.³¹

Proponents of the original legislation argued that Native Hawaiians faced discrimination and loss of opportunity because they lacked the long history of treaties that tribes on the mainland had made with the federal government.³² Hawaiian Representative Mazie Hirono pointed out in 2007 that indigenous Hawaiians, while having no treaties with the federal government, did have a long history of federal statutes providing unique protections for them as a group. In essence, she argued, the bill would be an extension of current federal policy since the United States already treated Native Hawaiians as an indigenous group.³³ Opponents claimed the bill could lead to “an impermissible racial preference in the establishment and operation of a government entity” and likened it to “the ethnic Balkanization of the country.”³⁴

A specific grievance levied against the Akaka bill noted that, unlike other native tribes, Native Hawaiians tended not to live together in one community continuously, but would be accounted for essentially by race, according to this legislation.³⁵ Akaka himself said in the 2009 hearing on the bill that the legislation was merely intended to provide parity, to grant only the same privileges to Native Hawaiians already provided to other native tribes.³⁶

Senator John Ensign of Nevada feared that the bill would lead to legal gambling on Native-Hawaiian land and repeatedly placed holds on it. In response, Akaka led the Hawaiian delegation in inserting a provision into the

bill that prevented any new Native-Hawaiian government from authorizing gambling.³⁷ Akaka gathered support from an overwhelming majority of Democrats and several Republicans, including allies in Alaska and Republican Governor Linda Lingle of Hawaii. However, President George W. Bush promised to veto the bill. As a result, it languished in Senate committees.

The original bill passed the House in 2000 and 2007, but never made it to a vote on the Senate Floor. Akaka reintroduced the bill each Congress following the 107th Congress. It briefly gained some traction during the 2008 presidential campaign. Then Senator Barack Obama, who was born in Hawaii, spent much of his youth there, and attended high school in Honolulu, vowed to sign the Akaka bill, if elected. Akaka grew more optimistic about the measure’s prospects after the 2008 elections increased the Democratic majority in the Senate and ushered Obama into the presidency.³⁸

After the bill stagnated under anonymous holds in the Senate for much of the 111th Congress (2009–2011), the Department of Justice requested revisions in 2010. Governor Lingle rejected those revisions and withdrew her support from the bill, which shrank Republican support in the Senate.³⁹ Unable to overcome Republican opposition, Akaka’s efforts sputtered at the close of the 111th Congress. He reintroduced the bill in the 112th Congress (2011–2013), but had no real expectations of passage.

During the struggles to reconcile the bill in 2010, Akaka said of the legislation, “Over the last 10 years we have held hearings, considered various versions of the bill, and marked it up in both chambers. We believe we have a bill that is constitutionally viable, and a bill that can be supported by all.”⁴⁰ Akaka continued to support the effort through his waning days in the Senate. After his colleague Daniel Inouye died on December 17, 2012, Akaka again pushed in vain for passage of the bill in honor of his late friend, who had been a major proponent of the legislation.⁴¹

Akaka’s quiet, but constant, service in the Senate guaranteed him wide margins in his first two re-election campaigns; he carried more than 70 percent of the vote in both 1994 and 2000.⁴² In 2006, however, he faced his only



real electoral test since his 1990 special election. Voicing concerns about the age of Hawaii's two Senators, who were both more than 80 years old at the time, Representative Ed Case challenged Senator Akaka in the Democratic primary. "We have to think how we will move on, we want to have control how we move forward," Case said in his announcement, setting himself up as the vanguard of Hawaii's next generation of leaders. He also claimed a more moderate voting record than Akaka.

The rest of Hawaii's Democrats were unprepared for the announcement, and Inouye immediately requested that Case withdraw.⁴³ Both the Hawaii and national Democratic establishment shut Case out, but he attracted the support of national business leaders. Despite raising roughly three times more in campaign donations than Case, Akaka felt threatened, as polls showed a surprisingly tight race. He spent the entire month leading up to the primary campaigning in Hawaii and focusing on Case's assertion that he would have voted for the 2002 authorization of force against Iraq, which Akaka had voted against.⁴⁴ Akaka survived the primary, garnering 55 percent of the vote. Republicans expected Akaka to be weakened heading into the general election, but Akaka handily defeated opponent Cynthia Thielen in November with 61 percent of the vote.

After the intense primary in 2006, Akaka decided not to run for re-election in 2012. He retired from Congress at the age of 88 and now resides in Pauoa Valley in Honolulu, Hawaii.

MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

Library of Congress, Asian Division (Washington, DC). *Oral History*: 2003–2011, 8 linear feet. The collection contains videocassettes, DVDs, photographs, and documents related to an oral history project conducted by the United States Capitol Historical Society to document the service of Asian Americans in Congress. Daniel Akaka is included among the interviewees.

University of Hawaii at Manoa Library, Archives and Manuscripts Department, Hawaii Congressional Papers Collection (Honolulu, HI). *Papers*: 1997–2012, 560 linear feet. The collection reflects Daniel Akaka's service in Congress and includes bill files, subject files, committee materials, staff files, memorabilia, administrative files, and audiovisual materials. The collection is closed.

NOTES

- 1 Helen Zia and Susan B. Gall, eds., *Asian American Biography*, vol. 1 (New York: UXL, 2003): 1; *Politics in America, 1992* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1991): 391.
- 2 Rosemarie Bernardo, "Lawmaker Courts Supporters With a Gentle, Personal Touch," 18 September 2006, *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, <http://archives.starbulletin.com/2006/09/18/news/story01.html> (accessed 26 August 2015).
- 3 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 105th Cong., 1st sess. (21 October 1997): S10867–S10869.
- 4 Don T. Nakanishi and Ellen D. Wu, eds., "Daniel K. Akaka," in *Distinguished Asian American Political and Governmental Leaders*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002): 5–8.
- 5 Bernardo, "Lawmaker Courts Supporters With a Gentle, Personal Touch."
- 6 Pete Pichaske, "Akaka Eager to Serve 5th Term," 11 October 1999, *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, <http://archives.starbulletin.com/1999/10/11/news/story4.html> (accessed 4 March 2016).
- 7 Lynda Arakawa, "Ethnicity a Factor in Election," 7 April 2002, *Honolulu Advertiser*, <http://the.honoluluadvertiser.com/article/2002/Apr/07/Hn/ln11a.html> (accessed 14 September 2015).
- 8 Tom Coffman, *The Island Edge of America: A Political History of Hawai'i* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003): 296–298.
- 9 Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives, "Election Statistics, 1920 to Present," <http://history.house.gov/Institution/Election-Statistics/Election-Statistics/>.
- 10 *Politics in America, 1992*: 391.
- 11 As quoted in Maralee Schwartz, "Rep. Akaka Named to Fill Senate Seat From Hawaii," 29 April 1990, *Washington Post*: A4.
- 12 For a full listing of Akaka's committee assignments in the House of Representatives, see Garrison Nelson, *Committees in the U.S. Congress, 1947–1992*, vol. 2 (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 1994): 10–11.
- 13 Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives, "Election Statistics, 1920 to Present."
- 14 Daniel Akaka, oral history interview by Ronald Sarasin, 16 March 2007, transcript, United States Capitol Historical Society, Washington, DC: 3–4, <http://uschs.org/educate/documents-images-and-recordings/> (accessed 28 September 2017).
- 15 *Politics in America, 1992*: 391.
- 16 Karen Foerstel, "Sen. Akaka Sworn In To Serve Six Months," 17 May 1990, *Roll Call*: 14.
- 17 Michel McQueen, "Akaka and Saiki Fight for Hawaii Senate Seat with Some Hula Hoopla but Little Mudslinging," 1 October 1990, *Wall Street Journal*: A16.



- 18 Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives, "Election Statistics, 1920 to Present."
- 19 "House, Senate Vote Against Cut in Sugar Support Price," 25 July 1990, *San Antonio Express-News*: E2.
- 20 Zia and Gall, eds., *Asian American Biography: 2–3; Politics in America, 1992*: 391.
- 21 For a full listing of Akaka's committee assignments in the Senate, see Garrison Nelson, *Committees in the U.S. Congress, 1947–1992*, vol. 2: 10–11; Garrison Nelson and Charles Stewart III, *Committees in the U.S. Congress, 1993–2010* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2011): 560–561.
- 22 Joe Davidson, "Feds Lose a Friend as Akaka Leaves Senate," 29 November 2012, *Washington Post*, https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/feds-lose-a-friend-as-akaka-leaves-senate/2012/11/29/e85e5ada-3a5b-11e2-8a97-363b0f9a0ab3_story.html (accessed 5 December 2012).
- 23 *Politics in America, 2010* (Washington, DC: CQ-Roll Call, 2009): 305–306; *Congressional Record*, Senate, 112th Cong., 2nd sess. (28 December 2012): S8498–8499; Joint Committee on Printing, *Daniel Akaka: U.S. Senator from Hawaii Tributes in the Congress of the United States*, 113th Cong., 2nd sess., S. Doc. 3 (2014): vii.
- 24 *Politics in America, 2010*: 305–306; "Akaka to Renew Fight for Filvets," 17 October 2008, *Filipino Reporter*: 1, 12, 28.
- 25 Bernardo, "Lawmaker Courts Supporters With a Gentle, Personal Touch."
- 26 "FEMA to Keep Honolulu Office," 15 June 2005, *Pacific Business News*, <http://www.bizjournals.com/pacific/stories/2005/06/13/daily23.html> (accessed 18 January 2016).
- 27 *Politics in America, 2010*: 305–306; Joint Committee on Printing, *Daniel Akaka: U.S. Senator from Hawaii Tributes in the Congress of the United States*.
- 28 Albert Eisele, "Sen. Akaka's Defense of Asian-Americans," 26 March 1997, *The Hill*: n.p.
- 29 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 103rd Cong., 1st sess. (27 October 1993): 26423–26429.
- 30 *Politics in America, 2010*: 305–306; Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, "Senator Daniel K. Akaka Introduces Bill To Protect Native Women Against Domestic Violence And Sexual Assault," press release, 31 October 2011, <http://indianlaw.org/safewomen/save-native-women-act-introduced> (accessed 29 September 2015).
- 31 "The Hawaii Decision," 25 February 2000, *Washington Post*: A22.
- 32 Scott Charton, "Native Hawaiians Push for Status as Indigenous People," 25 August 2000, *Northwest Asian Weekly*: 1.
- 33 *Congressional Record*, House, 110th Cong., 1st sess. (17 January 2007): E135.
- 34 "The Akaka State?," 2 June 2006, *Wall Street Journal*: A18.
- 35 "Aloha, Segregation," 17 December 2009, *Wall Street Journal*: A26.
- 36 Hearings before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, *Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act*, 111th Cong., 1st sess. (2009): 3–4.
- 37 Derrick DePledge, "GOP Senators Quietly Muscle in Against Akaka Bill," 21 July 2005, *Honolulu Advertiser*, <http://the.honoluluadvertiser.com/article/2005/Jul/21/In/507210342.html> (accessed 20 January 2016); John Yaukey, "2007 Akaka Bill Gets Reintroduced," 8 May 2009, *Honolulu Advertiser*: B2.
- 38 B. J. Reyes, "Obama Would Sign Akaka Bill as President," 22 January 2008, *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, <http://archives.starbulletin.com/2008/01/22/news/story05.html> (accessed 23 September 2015); Dennis Camire, "Odds for Akaka Bill's Passage Better Than Ever," 8 December 2008, *Honolulu Advertiser*: A1.
- 39 Richard Borreca, "There's Still Some Life Left in Akaka Bill," 21 November 2010, *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*: n.p.
- 40 Daniel Akaka, "Hawaii Delegation Agrees on Final Text of Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act," press release, 22 February 2010, <https://votesmart.org/public-statement/485944/hawaii-delegation-agrees-on-final-text-of-native-hawaiian-government-reorganization-act#.WHj4lVMrKUK> (accessed 23 September 2015).
- 41 Daniel Akaka, "Akaka Calls for Passage of Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act in Honor of Senator Inouye," press release, Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, 21 December 2012, <http://www.indian.senate.gov/news/press-release/akaka-calls-passage-native-hawaiian-government-reorganization-act-honor-senator> (accessed 25 August 2015).
- 42 Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives, "Election Statistics, 1920 to Present."
- 43 Richard Borreca, "Case to Oppose Akaka," 20 January 2006, *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, <http://archives.starbulletin.com/2006/01/20/news/story01.html> (accessed 20 January 2016).
- 44 Nicole Duran, "Where Would You Rather Be?," 13 September 2006, *Roll Call*: 11.

*Robert T. Matsui**1941–2005*

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE 1979–2005

DEMOCRAT FROM CALIFORNIA

Robert T. Matsui served in the House from 1979 to 2005, but his earliest memories were of an internment camp where his family was separated and where they lived like prisoners, denied their most basic constitutional rights. That experience was formative for Matsui. “Adversity made [Matsui] stronger, and along the way he helped countless others to find strength as well,” noted an observer who reflected on Matsui’s long political career.¹ A social liberal with a pro-market approach to trade, Matsui’s workhorse style of legislating earned the respect of his colleagues on both sides of the aisle during his 26 years in the House.

Robert Takeo (Bob) Matsui was born on September 17, 1941, in Sacramento, California, to Yasuji and Alice Matsui, less than three months before Japan’s surprise attack on Pearl Harbor.² Both his parents were born in Sacramento. Following the U.S. declaration of war against Japan, six-month-old Robert Matsui and his family were evacuated from their hometown to an internment camp in April 1942 as part of the relocation of Japanese Americans from the Pacific Coast.³ Becoming family number 25261, the Matsui family initially was sent to the Tule Lake camp in Newell, California—a remote location in the extreme northeast corner of the state. Alice and Robert Matsui were moved to a camp in Caldwell, Idaho, while Yasuji was separated from his family and sent to a Weiser, Idaho, work camp. Alice Matsui gave birth to Robert’s sister, Barbara, at the Caldwell facility.⁴ Eventually, the Matsui family reunited and returned to Sacramento following their release three years later. Like most internees whose livelihoods were shattered, the Matsui’s lost their family produce business in Sacramento during internment. After the war, they had to rebuild their lives.

Robert attended William Land Elementary School, California Junior High, and later graduated from

C. K. McClatchy High School in Sacramento, California, in 1959. In 1963 he graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, with a degree in political science. At Berkeley, he met Doris Okada, another wartime internee who was born at an internment camp in Poston, Arizona.⁵ In 1966 Matsui received his JD from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law, in San Francisco and practiced as a lawyer in Sacramento. Robert and Doris married in 1968 and had one son, Brian.

As a young man studying at Berkeley in 1961, Matsui was motivated by the words of President John F. Kennedy’s inaugural address to enter into public service. Matsui felt inspired to “look beyond ourselves, and look to our community, our state, and our nation to see how we can improve the lot of every American.”⁶ At the age of 29, Matsui, a lawyer in a private practice, was encouraged to run for the Sacramento city council in 1971.⁷ Reflecting on this first election, Matsui said, “For historical purposes, I think it’s good to say people were coming to me, asking me to run, but the reality is that that’s not the way these things happen. You have to want it.”⁸ This election marked the first time the city council was divided into districts. Matsui ran a grassroots campaign and won, earning the distinction as the first Japanese American to hold this position.⁹ He served until 1978, and his time on the council included a year as vice mayor of Sacramento in 1977.

Matsui also worked as the campaign manager for U.S. Representative John Moss’s 1972, 1974, and 1976 re-election contests.¹⁰ After 13 terms in the House, Moss announced his retirement at the end of the 95th Congress (1977–1979) and suggested that Matsui run for the open seat.¹¹ He seemed a natural fit. Like Moss, he was a liberal with a pro-business approach.¹² Matsui won a tight, five-way Democratic primary for the urban district, which encompassed the California state capital. In the general





election for the 96th Congress (1979–1981), Republican Sandy Smoley ran a competitive race against Matsui in the largely Democratic district. Speaker of the House Thomas P. (Tip) O’Neill of Massachusetts and President Jimmy Carter both stumped for Matsui, who struggled with name recognition in the campaign.¹³ Ultimately, Matsui prevailed by a margin of 13,000 votes, winning 53 percent of the total.¹⁴ “I think there [are] only a few times in a person’s life that they have an opportunity to do something very important and this is my opportunity,” he told a reporter after the election. “It might be frustrating, at the same time I can do it.”¹⁵ He won each of the next 12 general election campaigns by wide margins, and despite weighing a U.S. Senate run in 1990, remained in the House for the duration of his political career.

As a House freshman, Matsui initially was assigned to the Government Operations and Judiciary Committees. One year later, he left Judiciary and won a seat on the influential Interstate and Commerce Committee (later named Energy and Commerce), an assignment previously held by his predecessor John Moss.¹⁶ As a sophomore in the 97th Congress (1981–1983), Matsui left his other committee assignments for a post on the exclusive Ways and Means Committee and a spot on the Select Committee on Narcotics. In the 100th Congress (1987–1989), Matsui left Narcotics, and in the 102nd Congress (1991–1993), he joined the Budget Committee.

It was with the assistance of the California delegation and House leadership that Matsui received the coveted Ways and Means seat.¹⁷ When he became the first Asian-American Member to serve on that panel, Dan Rostenkowski of Illinois, the committee’s autocratic chairman, commented that Matsui was philosophically “a pretty good package.”¹⁸ In 1993 Matsui became interim chair of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources, succeeding Harold Ford Sr. of Tennessee.¹⁹ A year later, Matsui was tapped again to serve as an interim chair, this time on the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Trade when Sam Gibbons of Florida moved up to chair the full committee. “The trade subcommittee has a number of important issues to address this year, and it will take a

concerted effort by our members to meet the challenges ahead of us,” Matsui said. “I have the utmost confidence in our committee’s ability to meet those challenges.”²⁰ Matsui later left the Subcommittee on Trade and moved to the Subcommittee on Social Security.

On the Ways and Means Committee for most of his congressional career, Matsui used his knowledge of the tax code and the memory of his family’s experience with internment to help further social change and to look out for the needs of the most vulnerable Americans. In 1985 Ways and Means took center stage as the Ronald Reagan administration pushed a plan to overhaul the tax code. With Matsui’s assistance, Chairman Rostenkowski managed to push through the politically difficult bill (H.R. 3838). The legislation—eventually signed into law as the Tax Reform Act of 1986—reduced the number of tax brackets, altered corporate tax rates, streamlined deductions, and increased personal tax exemptions.²¹ In an op-ed, Matsui argued that the bill, “is fairer and better than the current tax code.” He added, “It may not be perfect,” but “a whole lot more low- and middle-income Americans will be enjoying more of the fruits of their own labor.”²²

Matsui also used his seat on the Ways and Means Committee to push for social equality. “If you think about welfare reform, if you think about the immigrant-bashing, if you think about Medicare/Medicaid cuts, essentially they’re going after the powerless groups that have no constituency that is vocal, that votes, that are involved in the political process,” he once observed.²³ Matsui challenged the William J. (Bill) Clinton administration to ensure that its welfare reform proposals did not place unrealistic burdens on the recipients of federal aid. During Ways and Means subcommittee testimony in the 103rd Congress, Matsui confronted officials from the Department of Health and Human Services, “Can you discuss this with me in a way that I will feel satisfied and comfortable that we can move forward and that these people will not be screwed?”²⁴ He railed against President George W. Bush’s proposal to privatize Social Security, challenging the administration to produce a solid plan. “If the president and leaders of his party are serious about



Social Security reform, I urge them to come forward with a concrete legislative proposal,” he said.²⁵

In the House, Robert Matsui championed the cause of Japanese-American redress. Joined by fellow California Representative Norman Y. Mineta, who also spent part of his childhood in internment camps, Matsui fought for reparations. From the beginning, Matsui declared he would not accept any monetary compensation to keep detractors from accusing him of self-interest.²⁶ During testimony before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Administrative Law and Governmental Affairs in 1983, Matsui mourned Japanese Americans’ loss of constitutional rights.²⁷

In the 99th Congress (1985–1987), Matsui and Mineta first introduced the Japanese American reparations bill, the Civil Liberties Act. It was assigned the symbolic number H.R. 442 to honor the Japanese-American 442nd Combat Team, one of the most decorated units of World War II (Senators Spark M. Matsunaga and Daniel K. Inouye of Hawaii served in the 442nd). Referred to the Judiciary Committee, the bill did not make it to the floor. But in the 100th Congress, Mineta and Matsui steered the Civil Liberties Act to House passage on September 17, 1987.²⁸ In an emotional House Floor speech, Matsui retold his family’s heart-wrenching story of being uprooted from their home.²⁹ In the Senate, Spark Matsunaga introduced the legislation and led the effort to get the bill to the Senate Floor, where it passed with bipartisan support.³⁰ In August 1988, it won final passage and was signed into law by President Reagan. The Civil Liberties Act recognized the injustice of internment, issued a formal apology to internees, and provided each surviving internee a sum of \$20,000 from the United States government.³¹

In the final year of the George H. W. Bush administration, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) became a top issue before Congress. The controversial implementation legislation had become a focal point of the 1992 presidential election cycle and a divisive issue for Democrats.³² Democrats in the House worried about their working-class base and the potential loss of jobs if companies moved to Mexico for cheaper labor. By the time NAFTA came up for consideration in

the House, a pro-NAFTA Democrat, Bill Clinton, was President. But the measure, H.R. 3450, was opposed by Democratic leadership, including Leader Richard Gephardt of Missouri and Whip David Bonior of Michigan. Unable to rely on his party’s Whip operation, which was actively rallying support against the legislation, President Clinton turned to Matsui, a free trade proponent and an influential member on the Ways and Means Committee.³³ Without the formal Whip’s office, Matsui led the Democratic House NAFTA Liaison Group.³⁴ He managed most of the floor debate in lieu of the bill’s sponsor, Ways and Means Chairman Rostenkowski. Matsui also persuaded Republican colleagues to gather the necessary House votes, noting that “many of us as we began this process of NAFTA, just as you felt about us, had trepidations about whether each of us could trust each other. . . . Democrats and Republicans, feel that we have reached a new beginning with each other.”³⁵ Led by Republican Whip Newt Gingrich of Georgia, most Republicans stood behind the trade agreement. With only 102 House Democrats supporting the bill, it passed, 234 to 200.³⁶ President Clinton signed the North American Free Trade Agreement into law on December 8, 1993.³⁷

On the whole, Matsui supported free trade policies and stayed true to that interest throughout his congressional career. In 2000 he was called upon again by the Clinton administration to help gather the necessary votes to grant permanent normal trade relations with China (H.R. 4444).³⁸

Initially hesitant to accept the job of rounding up the votes, Matsui was convinced by Commerce Secretary William Daley.³⁹ The China trade bill had two main hurdles to overcome to win support: its economic impact in America and China’s human rights record. During debate, Matsui addressed the economic benefits and turned his attention to human rights. “Now, let me also talk about the issue of human rights. China’s human rights record is terrible. We understand that. We, obviously, should put the focus on them, and we believe that the Levin–Bereuter bill, will, in fact, do that. But what is really interesting is that many of the Chinese dissidents that have the luxury of living in the United States are opposed to this. But those



that live in China, the Chinese Democracy Movement, they want us to pass this, because they want to engage the United States. They think if they gain economic power, they will be able to oppose the central government of China. So we need to vote yes on this legislation for the future of our country and certainly, for prosperity and peace throughout the world.”⁴⁰

Matsui’s pragmatic approach to the idea that open trade would promote human rights allowed him to focus on the benefits while rounding up the necessary votes. The effort underscored his reputation as a legislative workhorse. “I enjoy trying to work through a strategy on how you get 218 votes,” he said.⁴¹ Matsui saw the open market with China as imperative. “I’ve always believed that technology and trade were the two engines that really drive economic growth,” he observed. “If we want to continue to be the number one nation in the world when it comes to job creation, when it comes to leading the cutting edge, we have to understand that these things are important.”⁴² The trade relations bill passed the House 237 to 197 and was signed into law on October 10, 2000.

In December 2002, fellow Californian and Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi tapped Matsui to chair the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC), which supports Democratic House candidates. Matsui was accustomed to fundraising for the party, having co-chaired the party’s fundraising commission and serving as the party treasurer during the Clinton administration.⁴³ As the chair of the DCCC, Matsui assumed the position as the chief fundraiser. In making the announcement, Pelosi noted that Matsui’s “legislative and political acumen,” made him a natural choice.⁴⁴ Upon his selection, Matsui commented, “I think this gives me an opportunity to play a significant role in our efforts to take the House back.” He added, “It’s an added responsibility, there’s no question, but it’s one where I’ll be able to play a leadership role in terms of the 2004 elections.”⁴⁵

But, following the 2004 election cycle, Matsui’s health deteriorated. After a brief battle with pneumonia, complicated by a rare blood disease, the 63-year-old

Congressman died on January 1, 2005, in Bethesda, Maryland, surrounded by his family. A private person, Matsui had not publicly disclosed his illness, so his sudden passing came as a shock to the congressional community, which held a special memorial service in the U.S. Capitol’s Statuary Hall.

Attending the ceremony, former President Bill Clinton eulogized Matsui as embodying “everything that was right with America. And whether he was right on every issue or not, and whether every battle we fought together was the right position or not, he was the right sort of person.”⁴⁶ Matsui’s friend, political commentator Norm Ornstein, recalled the Californian’s depth of knowledge on the issues and his equally deep commitment to his constituents. “Bob became a world-class expert on welfare and Social Security,” Ornstein said “He was a policy wonk who loved politics, a gentle man who had a fierce attachment to his values and policy views, a partisan who wanted to work with those across the aisle, and a man who could use ferocious rhetoric to defend the downtrodden but who seemed to have no enemies, even among those he excoriated.”⁴⁷ In his home state of California, Robert Matsui’s body lay in state at the capitol in Sacramento. In March 2005, Doris Matsui succeeded her husband in a special election, winning the election with 68 percent to continue, as she put it, “Bob’s work” in the House.⁴⁸

MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION

University of California, Berkeley, Bancroft Library (Berkeley, CA). *Papers*: circa 1940–2006, 306.25 linear feet. The Robert T. Matsui papers primarily document his work in the U.S. House of Representatives. The collection includes correspondence, legislative addresses, campaign literature, press releases, schedules, and ephemera. It covers legislation and issues related to health care, Social Security, taxes, and welfare reform; the North American Free Trade Agreement and approval of the Uruguay Round Agreements; civil rights and Japanese-American internment redress; Sacramento regional water and flood control; and district military base closures. Matsui’s office and press files, personal correspondence, campaign and political files, compose a significant part of the collection; some Sacramento city council materials also are included. The collection is restricted, but researchers may apply for access. A finding aid is available online.



NOTES

- 1 Deb Kollars and Will Evans, “Hundreds Say Last Goodbye to Congressman; Touching Tributes Flow As Colleagues, Family, Friends and Others Praise the Sacramento Native,” 9 January 2005, *Sacramento Bee*: n.p.
- 2 Betty Cuniberti, “Internment: Personal Voices, Powerful Choices,” 4 October 1987, *Los Angeles Times*: n.p.
- 3 William Eaton, “Internee Payment Bill Gets Final OK,” 5 August 1988, *Los Angeles Times*: 1.
- 4 Cuniberti, “Internment: Personal Voices, Powerful Choices.”
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Robert T. Matsui, interview by Brian Lamb, *American Profile Series*, C-SPAN, 4 October 1988, <http://www.c-span.org/video/?4551-1/life-career-robert-matsui&start=1145> (accessed 13 January 2017).
- 7 “Matsui, Robert T.,” *Current Biography Yearbook 1994* (New York: H.W. Wilson Company, 1994): 368.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Sam Stanton and Steve Gibson, “Council Win Was First of Many,” 3 January 2005, *Sacramento Bee*: A10.
- 10 *Politics in America, 1990* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1989): 102–103.
- 11 Stanton and Gibson, “Council Win Was First of Many.”
- 12 *Almanac of American Politics, 1976* (Washington, DC: National Journal Inc., 1975): 56–58.
- 13 Martin Nolan, “O’Neill Lends Celebrity Status to Congressional Candidates,” 21 October 1978, *Boston Globe*: 24; W. Dale Nelson, no title, 5 November 1978, Associated Press.
- 14 W. B. Rood, “3rd District Campaigners Spending Big,” 21 October 1978, *Los Angeles Times*: A23; Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives, “Election Statistics, 1920 to Present,” <http://history.house.gov/Institution/Election-Statistics/Election-Statistics/>.
- 15 “Mr. Matsui Goes to Washington,” archived video, 4:14, from NBC Nightly News on 4 February 1978, accessed 4 April 2016, <http://digital.lib.csus.edu/cdm/ref/collection/mats/id/195>.
- 16 Garrison Nelson, *Committees in the U.S. Congress, 1947–1992*, vol. 2 (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1994): 642–643.
- 17 Richard Lyons, “On Capitol Hill,” 25 January 1979, *Washington Post*: A2; Martin Tolchin, “Congress Plays Party Games by Committee,” 25 January 1981, *New York Times*: E5.
- 18 Tolchin, “Congress Plays Party Games by Committee.”
- 19 Hearing before the House Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Human Resources, *Selected Aspects of Welfare Reform*, 103rd Cong., 1st sess., (30 March 1993); “Harold E. Ford, Sr.,” *Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress, 1774–Present*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=F000261>.
- 20 Gerard Lim, “Matsui Named Chair of Trade Subcommittee,” 17 June 1994, *AsianWeek*: 3.
- 21 Tax Reform Act of 1986, H.R. 3838, 99th Cong. (1986); “House Approves Major Rewrite of Tax Code,” *CQ Almanac, 1985*, 41st ed. (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1986): 480–498; Steven W. Stathis, *Landmark Legislation, 1774–2002: Major U.S. Acts and Treaties* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2003): 325.
- 22 *Congressional Record*, Extension of Remarks, 99th Cong., 1st sess. (16 December 1985): E5638.
- 23 Julie Ha, “Congressman Matsui Criticizes Proposed Medicare Cuts: GOP Plan an Assault on the Elderly,” 31 October 1995, *Examiner*: 9.
- 24 Hearings before the House Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Human Resources, *Welfare Reform Proposals, Including H.R. 4605, the Work and Responsibility Act of 1994*, Part 1, 103rd Cong., 2nd sess. (26–28 July 1994): 342.
- 25 Robert Matsui, “What Can Congress Do To Stabilize the Future of Social Security?” 6 December 2004, *Roll Call*: n.p.
- 26 Hearings before the House Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Administrative Law and Governmental Relations, *Japanese-American and Aleutian Wartime Relocation*, 98th Cong., 2nd sess., (20–21, 27 June 1984 and 12 September 1984): 24.
- 27 *Japanese-American and Aleutian Wartime Relocation*: 24.
- 28 Civil Liberties Act of 1987, H.R. 442, 100th Cong. (1987).
- 29 *Congressional Record*, House, 100th Cong., 1st sess. (17 September 1987): 24304.
- 30 S.1009, 100th Cong. (1987).
- 31 Public Law 100-383, 102 Stat. 903 (1988).
- 32 “Congress OKs North American Trade Pact,” *CQ Almanac, 1993*, 49th ed. (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1994): 172–176.
- 33 Kevin Merida, “The Whip Lashes Out,” 10 November 1993, *Washington Post*: C1.
- 34 *Politics in America, 1998* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1997): 100. House Republicans worked separately with their own NAFTA whip group. See “Congress OKs North American Trade Pact”: 178.
- 35 *Congressional Record*, House, 103rd Cong., 1st sess. (17 November 1993): H29945.
- 36 “Congress OKs North American Trade Pact”: 178.
- 37 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) Implementation Act, H.R. 3450, 103rd Cong. (1993).
- 38 *Politics in America, 2004* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 2003): 77; H.R. 4444, 106th Cong. (2000).
- 39 Ann Scott Tyson, “The Fine Art of Twisting Arms for China Trade,” 19 May 2000, *Christian Science Monitor*: 1.



- 40 *Congressional Record*, House, 106th Congress, 2nd sess. (24 May 2000): H3671.
- 41 Matthew Vitta, "On Hill, Clinton Turns to Calif. Free-Trader; Matsui Has Key Role on China Legislation," 5 April 2000, *Washington Post*: A17.
- 42 Vitta, "On Hill, Clinton Turns to Calif. Free-Trader."
- 43 Paul Houston, "Matsui Named to Top Fund-Raising Post Politics: He and Rockefeller Will Head Democrats' Contribution Drive For 1992 Elections," 5 September 1991, *Los Angeles Times*: 20; Michael Doyle, "Matsui Takes Top Fund-Raising Role," 24 December 2002, *Sacramento Bee*: A1.
- 44 Doyle, "Matsui Takes Top Fund-Raising Role."
- 45 Ibid.
- 46 *Memorial Address and Other Tributes Held in the House of Representatives and the Senate of the United States Together With the Memorial Services in Honor of Robert T. Matsui*, 109th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006): 14.
- 47 Norman Ornstein, "Bob Matsui: Wonk, Fighter, and All-Around Great Guy," 26 January 2005, *Roll Call*: n.p.
- 48 Kevin Yamamura and David Whitney, "Matsui's Widow Launches Campaign for Congress," 13 January 2005, *Sacramento Bee*: A3.



“KENNEDY ... REALLY ASKED US
TO LOOK BEYOND OURSELVES, AND
TO LOOK TO OUR COMMUNITY,
OUR STATE, AND OUR NATION TO
SEE HOW WE CAN IMPROVE THE
LOT OF EVERY AMERICAN.”

Robert T. Matsui
C-SPAN, October 4, 1988

Fofó I. F. Sunia

1937–

DELEGATE 1981–1988

DEMOCRAT FROM AMERICAN SAMOA

As the first Delegate from American Samoa, Fofó I. F. Sunia spent most of his four terms in Congress trying to give voice to and to carve out a new role for his small, faraway constituency in the South Pacific. He quickly found it to be a constant process of having to educate his colleagues. “To be sitting amongst people who really didn’t understand who you are or even why you’re here—that struck me as a point of some frustration,” Sunia observed. “I guess I was expecting a little bit too much. I thought that everybody was going to know that there was a representative from American Samoa come January and (would say), ‘We’ve got to make way for him’ and ‘We know all about his territory.’ That wasn’t so.”¹ While he advocated bringing American Samoans further into the political, economic, and military embrace of the mainland, he also was wary of protecting Samoan traditions and culture. Sunia’s career collapsed, however, when he was implicated in a fraud scheme to enrich himself by paying ghost employees on his official payroll.

Fofó Iosefa Fiti Sunia was born on March 13, 1937, in Fagasa, Pago Pago, American Samoa. He was the eldest of eleven children of Fiti and Savali Sunia. His father, Fiti, was a minister and Sunia himself later served as a deacon and lay minister in the Christian Congregational Church of Samoa.² His brothers, Tauese and Ipulasi, later served as governor and lieutenant governor of American Samoa, respectively. Sunia graduated from Samoana High School in Pago Pago in 1955 before leaving Samoa for Honolulu, Hawaii, to earn his bachelor’s degree in economics from the University of Hawaii. After graduating in 1960, he returned to Samoa, working as a translator and interpreter for the territorial governor. In the early 1960s, Sunia founded and edited the *Samoa News*.

Sunia’s work for the territorial governor and as a journalist provided a segue into local politics. For

much of the 1960s, he served as the territorial election commissioner (1962–1970). He also held a post as the first director of tourism for American Samoa from 1966 to 1972 and was president and chairman of the American Samoan Development Corporation from 1965 to 1971. In 1969 Sunia ran for and won a senate seat in the American Samoa legislature and served from 1970 to 1978. Sunia married Aioletuna V. (Ta’amū) Sunia in 1960, and together they raised eight children: Fiti, Melina, Iosefa, Vaaomala, Alexander, Cynthia, Lupe, and Fiafia.³ In addition to serving in his church, Sunia also was a *matai*, or chief, of a Samoan clan. Fofó means “talking chief” in Samoan, and Sunia preferred that title to simply being called “chief.”

In 1978 Congress extended territorial representation to American Samoa, providing for a Delegate to serve as the islands’ representative on Capitol Hill. The territory, located in the Pacific, roughly between Hawaii and Australia, is made up of five islands and two atolls. Its total land area is comparable to the size of Washington, DC, but is more than 7,000 nautical miles away from the nation’s capital. In 1980, in the first election for Delegate, Sunia ran as an independent and entered a three-way race for the seat. Although he led the field on election day, he did not secure a majority, carrying nearly 44 percent of the vote against 38 percent for another independent candidate, Eni Fa’aua’a Hunkin Jr., and 18 percent for Democratic candidate I. S. Mulitauaoepe. Sunia faced Hunkin in the runoff on November 18, winning with 59 to 41 percent.⁴ In the House, Sunia caucused with the Democrats, which controlled the majority. He coasted to re-election in his subsequent three general elections in which he ran as a Democratic candidate. He was unopposed in 1982 and won 65 and 56 percent of the vote against Aumeoualogo Salanoa Soli in 1984 and 1986, respectfully.⁵





When Sunia entered the House at the opening of the 97th Congress (1981–1983), he was assigned to the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee (where he served through the 98th Congress [1983–1985]) and the Public Works and Transportation Committee. He held the latter assignment for his entire House career, eventually rising to chair the Subcommittee on Public Buildings and grounds for the 100th Congress (1987–1989) in 1987. Sunia also picked up two additional committee assignments during his career: Interior and Insular Affairs (99th–100th Congresses [1985–1989]) and the Foreign Affairs Committee, during his final term. Like other Territorial Delegates, Sunia could vote in committee, introduce legislation, and hold committee leadership positions, but could not vote on the House Floor.

The *Washington Post* profiled Sunia in a 1982 article with the subtitle, “The Village Chief Brings a Touch of the South Seas.” Described by a reporter as a relaxed, jovial, large man—some 300 pounds when he was sworn into office—Sunia emphasized that the easy-going Samoan life could have advantages in frenetic Washington. On Capitol Hill, “everybody’s banging their heads against a wall and rushing around,” Sunia said. “I figure the guy who walks slowly will stand out. If everybody’s yelling, they’re going to take notice of the guy that speaks softly.”⁶ But that low-key approach didn’t necessarily translate into visibility right away. *The Almanac of American Politics* called Sunia “something of an unknown quantity” during his first term in Washington.⁷

Without the ability to vote on legislation on the House Floor, Sunia focused on the time-honored tradition of constituent service. He employed an intimate approach with his modest constituency of roughly 34,000 people—right down to writing personal replies to letters that arrived at his DC office. “Many of these people are friends,” Sunia explained. “I’d feel guilty if I don’t answer personally.”⁸

Although his office was a daylong flight away from his home, Sunia decorated it in a fashion resembling “a microcosm of a Samoan village,” an aide noted. “A woven mat of pandana leaves hangs on the wall, strewn with pink feathers and pearly shells. There are bowls of teak, conch shells, and bright patterns stenciled on pressed bark.”⁹

That décor reflected Sunia’s pride in his culture, but it also highlighted a tension between modern notions of progress and the Samoan emphasis on tradition and family. He was quick to point out, for instance, that American Samoa did not fund island-wide welfare programs, it had declined to participate in federal aid initiatives, and it had refused to accept food stamps. “We felt they were really not in line with the ways of our customs and culture,” Sunia explained. “While it’s always nice to have money, it really would not be helpful in a much larger sense. The very fiber of the place is family units, and families tend to help their own and to help each other. When you start having this almost total dependence on someone else you’re going to lose that.”¹⁰ Nevertheless, he didn’t hesitate to embrace some measure of federal assistance for his largely poor constituency when he supported the Hunger Relief Act of 1984, which covered the states and U.S. territories. “America and its territories promote freedom, equality, and opportunity, and I believe that no American should experience hunger in this land of plenty,” Sunia said.¹¹

In the long tradition of Delegates for the territories, Sunia spent much of his legislative activity testifying before House and Senate committees, including the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs and the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. One of his principal concerns was that Congress retain sole discretion over amending the American Samoa constitution, rather than delegating the power to the Secretary of the Interior. Sunia believed that as the only unorganized and unincorporated territory in the United States, American Samoa needed its status to be directly addressed by Congress: “A people’s constitution, its basic governing document, cannot be placed at the mercy of one man. By giving itself the authority to act on any and all changes, Congress made certain that the Secretary of the Interior did not have unilateral authority to change the American Samoa Constitution and that the territorial government was allowed to develop in an orderly, democratic fashion.”¹² At stake in that debate were issues pertaining to traditional Samoan land rights and titles that the Interior Department sought to open to federal court review.¹³



In four Congresses, Sunia introduced just 13 bills, all of which dealt with American Samoa. All died in committee, with just one bill (H.R. 3555, which amended a “joint resolution to provide for accepting, ratifying, and confirming the cession of certain islands of the Samoan group to the United States”) receiving even a subcommittee hearing. His floor speeches addressed issues touching on education, unemployment and job creation, protecting American Samoa’s tuna fishing and canning industry, infrastructure improvements, and regional security issues in the Pacific islands during the late stages of the Cold War. Among the bills that Sunia authored were measures to amend the National Housing Act to extend loan mortgage insurance programs to American Samoa, to give the Samoan Delegate the right to make appointments to the U.S. service academies, to establish a National Guard in American Samoa, to amend the Social Security Act to create a Medicaid program in Samoa, to exempt Samoan U.S. nationals from having to meet the language requirements for citizenship, and to authorize the American Samoa legislature to draft a constitution for the local self-government of the people of American Samoa.¹⁴ Sunia managed only a handful of cosponsors for these bills; some received none at all.

Without the power to vote, Sunia’s legislative accomplishments were often minor. He claimed credit for convincing Congress to permit the duty-free transportation of fish products in the Pacific territories and worked to maintain import fees on tuna shipped to the United States from the Caribbean. Sunia felt that American Samoa’s tuna fishing and packing industry, its only major job sector, would risk an “economic disaster” if it faced additional competition. Sunia also pushed for a provision allowing American Samoans to enter into the U.S. Merchant Marine.¹⁵

Sunia’s career imploded during his fourth term in Congress because of a scandal arising from the improper use of his official allowance. He was charged with using tens of thousands of dollars of federal funds to hire employees who did not exist and then distributing the money to the personal account of his principal aide,

Matthew Iuli, and to his own election campaign account.¹⁶ Sunia insisted that he had been unaware of the scheme when Iuli hatched it in 1983.¹⁷ In October 1987, the House Ethics Committee began an inquiry into the allegations.¹⁸ After pleading guilty to a charge of conspiracy to defraud the government, Sunia resigned his seat on September 6, 1988.¹⁹ A month later, Sunia was sentenced to five to 15 months in prison, “for conspiring ... to defraud the government of \$130,920 through false payroll claims.”²⁰ At his sentencing, Sunia admitted, “I have come to understand the meaning of shame, fear. I have made apologies to my people and I hope they will forgive me.”²¹ Sunia eventually returned to Pago Pago, where he still resides.

NOTES:

- 1 Ted Gup, “Samoan Adjusts to Washington,” 20 August 1982, *Los Angeles Times*: D5.
- 2 Ted Gup, “American Samoa’s Man in Congress: The Village Chief Brings a Touch of the South Seas,” 26 April 1982, *Washington Post*: C1. The 1940 Census records do not provide information on the Sunias. However, several sources list parent and sibling names. See, for example, <http://politicalgraveyard.com/families/18853.html> (accessed 6 April 2016).
- 3 *Congressional Directory*, 100th Cong. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1987): 229.
- 4 Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives, “Election Statistics, 1920 to Present,” <http://history.house.gov/Institution/Election-Statistics/Election-Statistics/>.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Gup, “American Samoa’s Man in Congress.”
- 7 *Almanac of American Politics, 1982* (Washington, DC: National Journal Inc., 1981): 1213.
- 8 Philip Shenon, “In the House, But Without Votes,” 12 April 1985, *New York Times*: A14.
- 9 Gup, “Samoan Adjusts to Washington.”
- 10 Gup, “American Samoa’s Man in Congress.”
- 11 *Congressional Record*, House, 98th Cong., 2nd sess. (27 July 1984): 21450–21451.
- 12 Hearing before the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Energy Conservation and Supply, *Revised Constitution of American Samoa*, 98th Cong., 2nd sess. (8 May 1984): 2–7. See also *Congressional Record*, House, 97th Cong., 2nd sess. (20 May 1982): 10824.



- 13 Hearings before the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, *Office of Territorial and International Affairs, Department of Interior*, 97th Cong., 1st sess. (15 December 1981): especially 19–22, for an exchange between Sunia and Won Pat.
- 14 *Congressional Record*, House, 97th Cong., 1st sess. (18 November 1981): 27983; *Congressional Record*, House, 97th Cong., 2nd sess. (10 February 1982): 1401; *Congressional Record*, House, 97th Cong., 2nd sess. (23 February 1982): 2011; *Congressional Record*, House, 97th Cong., 2nd sess. (25 February 1982): 2435.
- 15 *Almanac of American Politics, 1986* (Washington, DC: National Journal Inc., 1985): 1491; *Congressional Record*, House, 97th Cong., 2nd sess. (13 December 1982): 30245. Sunia had just assumed the chairmanship of the Public Works and Transportation Subcommittee on Public Buildings and Grounds when he ran into ethics problems. Much of the committee's work was conducted after he resigned his seat. A resume of the subcommittee activities is available in House Committee on Public Works and Transportation, *Summary of Legislative Activities, 100th Congress*, 100th Cong., 2nd sess., H. Rept. 1121 (30 December 1988): 59–61.
- 16 "Samoan Delegate Accused of Fraud," 1 August 1988, *New York Times*: B5. See also "Samoa's House Delegate Accused of Payroll Fraud; \$70,000 Allegedly Paid to Ghost Employees," 15 August 1987, *Washington Post*: A3.
- 17 "Samoan Delegate Enters Plea," 5 August 1988, *New York Times*: A10.
- 18 Jim Drinkard, "Panel Votes to Begin Preliminary Inquiry Involving Delegate from American Samoa," 28 October 1987, Associated Press.
- 19 "House Delegate from Samoa Resigns After Guilty Plea," 7 September 1988, *Chicago Tribune*: 4; "House Schedules Disciplinary Hearings Against Sunia in Fraud Case," 10 August 1988, Associated Press.
- 20 "Samoan Ex-Delegate Sunia Sentenced," 5 October 1988, *Washington Post*: 2.
- 21 "Ex-Delegate for Samoa Faces Prison Term," 5 October 1988, *New York Times*: A17.



“I FIGURE THE GUY WHO WALKS
SLOWLY WILL STAND OUT. IF
EVERYBODY’S YELLING, THEY’RE
GOING TO TAKE NOTICE OF THE
GUY THAT SPEAKS SOFTLY.”

Fofó I. F. Sunia
Washington Post, April 26, 1982

Ben Garrido Blaz

1928–2014

DELEGATE 1985–1993
REPUBLICAN FROM GUAM

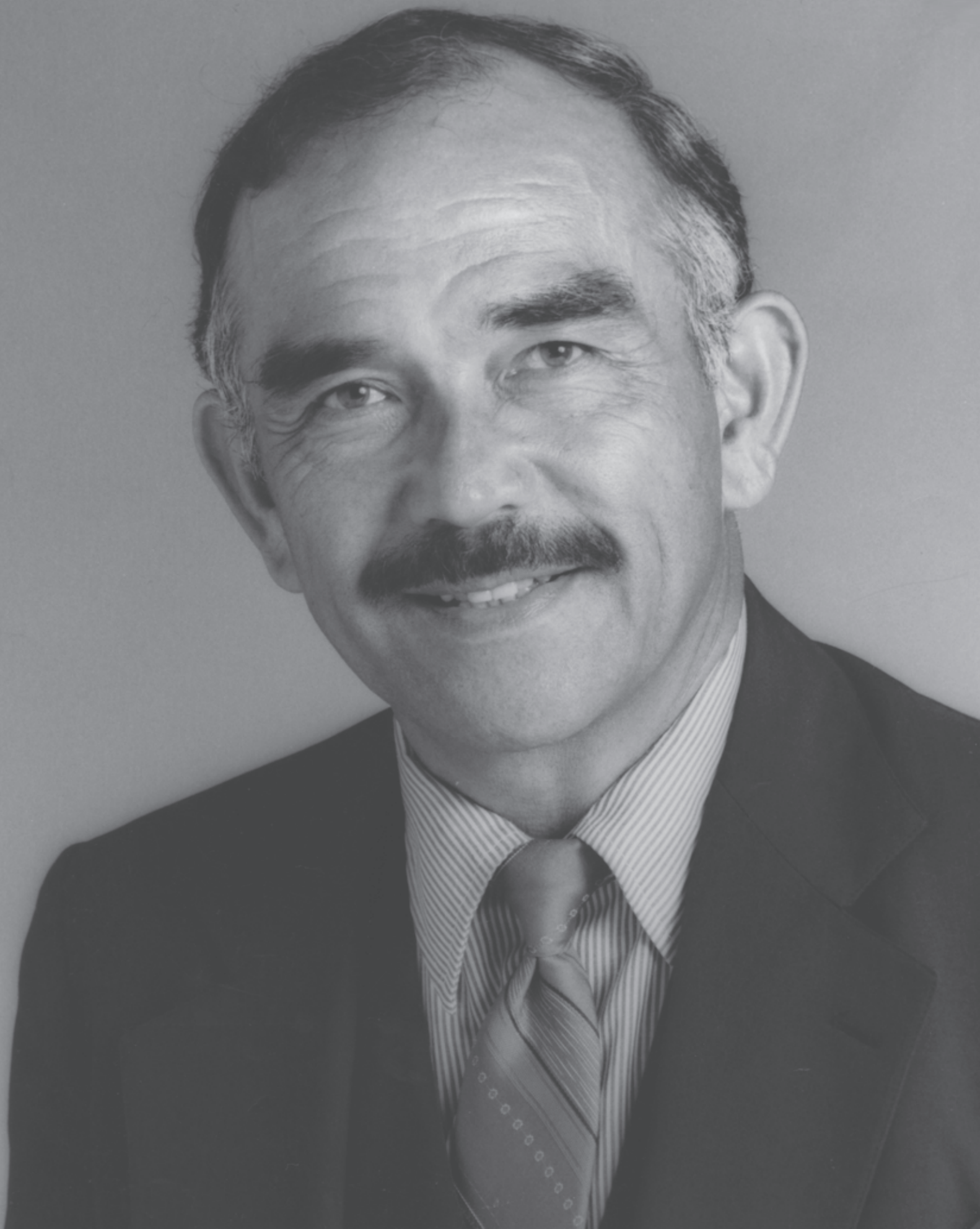
In 1985 Ben Garrido Blaz became just the second Delegate to represent the western Pacific island of Guam in Congress. A decorated military veteran who became a politician later in life, Blaz focused on issues of local importance to the island territory. Acutely affected by the Japanese invasion of Guam during World War II, Blaz used his national position to bring attention to the sacrifices and hardships of the era, including his own imprisonment. During his four terms in the House, Blaz led the charge for commonwealth status for his native land. “We in Guam have embarked on a voyage of political self-determination—a desire on our part for greater local autonomy and an equal place in the American political family.”¹

Vicente Tomas (Ben) Garrido Blaz was born February 14, 1928, in Agana, the capital of Guam.² Thirteen years old when the Japanese invaded Guam during World War II, Blaz worked in labor camps, building aviation fields, planting rice, and digging trenches until American forces retook the island in 1944.³ After the war ended in 1945, Blaz returned to school. In 1947 he left Guam after earning an academic scholarship to the University of Notre Dame, where he majored in physics and chemistry and earned a BS in 1951.⁴ While in school, he joined the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve at the onset of the Korean War. After graduating from Notre Dame, he was commissioned a second lieutenant. Blaz served two overseas tours in Japan and one in Vietnam. In 1963 he earned an MA in management from The George Washington University, and in 1971 he graduated from the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island. Blaz rose to the rank of brigadier general in 1977, becoming the highest-ranking Guamanian to serve in the U.S. military.⁵ That same year, he headed the Marine information division that was tasked with improving public relations in the post–Vietnam War era.⁶ Blaz’s military honors included the Legion of Merit, the

Bronze Medal with Combat “V,” the Navy Commendation Medal, and the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry.⁷ Blaz married Ann Evers, a teacher, and the couple had two sons, Mike and Tom. After retiring from the military in 1981, Blaz returned to his native island, where he taught at the University of Guam. He received an honorary LLD from the University of Guam in 1974.

On August 1, 1950, President Harry S. Truman signed the Organic Act of Guam, granting U.S. citizenship and limited self-government to the inhabitants of Guam. In 1972 the House of Representatives granted congressional representation to Guam and the Virgin Islands. Territorial Delegates were permitted to serve on and vote in committee, but they could not vote on the House Floor. In the 93rd Congress (1973–1975), Democrat Antonio Borja Won Pat became the first Delegate to represent Guam in the U.S. House of Representatives. Despite Won Pat’s popularity and his impressive political résumé, which included service as speaker of the Guam assembly, Blaz challenged the longtime Delegate in 1982. “One reason I decided to run,” Blaz revealed, “is that I did not get the sense that bureaucrats understand and appreciate Guam’s uniqueness.... We’re 100,000 American citizens who deserve a rightful spot in the American family.”⁸ Blaz attempted to offset his opponent’s experience by emphasizing the need for a new, more aggressive strategy to represent Guam—especially with regard to the island’s political status.⁹ Although his first run for Congress was not successful, Blaz earned an impressive 48 percent of the vote against Won Pat.¹⁰

Encouraged by his strong showing at the polls, Blaz challenged Won Pat again in 1984. Both candidates ran unopposed in the primary, but voters had the option of crossing party lines. Tellingly, Blaz polled nearly 2,000 more votes than the incumbent.¹¹ During the general





election campaign, 75-year-old Won Pat stressed his seniority in Congress. The challenger countered by reminding voters that his Republican Party affiliation would be an asset for Guam under the Ronald Reagan administration.¹² “Although I’ll be a junior [Member] I’m not exactly without friends,” Blaz added. “There are many ways to explain clout—seniority is just one of them.”¹³

During the tightly contested campaign, Blaz criticized his opponent’s attendance record in Congress and accused Won Pat of missing opportunities to improve Guam’s economy while serving as its Delegate.¹⁴ He also promised to ensure that Guamanians enjoyed the same privileges as U.S. citizens on the mainland. After the ballots were tallied on Election Day, Blaz had a razor-thin lead of about 300 votes, causing the Guam Election Commission to authorize a recount. On November 11, 1984, the commission certified the election, declaring Blaz the winner by 354 votes.¹⁵ “I’m ready,” Blaz remarked. “I’ve been ready for 40 years. I’m on a mission.”¹⁶

Though eager to start his new career, Blaz still had to contend with the remnants of a competitive and heated campaign. Initially conciliatory, Won Pat contested the election. Citing “substantial irregularities,” Won Pat asked the House to overturn the election results, claiming Blaz had not received a majority of the votes. (Unlike most congressional races in the United States, in which Representatives need only capture a plurality, Delegates in Guam must win a majority of votes to avoid a runoff election.) The House denied Won Pat’s challenge on July 24, 1985, by a voice vote, citing insufficient evidence. “Deep down inside I didn’t have doubts, but the House of Representatives is hard to predict,” Blaz commented afterward.¹⁷

At the beginning of the 99th Congress (1985–1987), the freshman class elected Blaz as its president, marking the first time a Territorial Delegate held this informal leadership position.¹⁸ Blaz received two committee assignments: Armed Services and Interior and Insular Affairs. Both fit his legislative interests and allowed him to oversee and influence legislation affecting Guam. Blaz retained these two assignments during his eight years in the House. In the 100th Congress (1987–1989), he also had

a spot on the Foreign Affairs Committee, which he kept until he left Congress in 1993. From 1985 until 1993, he served on the Select Committee on Aging.

Guam’s strategic location in the western Pacific Ocean significantly affected Blaz’s legislative focus in Congress. After the Americans regained control of Guam during World War II, the island became a military bastion for the United States and a vital Cold War defense point. Guam’s economy prospered with the influx of federal spending for the island’s conversion to a military outpost. It continued to flourish after the Vietnam War, with a construction boom sparked by a budding tourism industry—fueled mainly by Japan. Blaz, however, questioned the need for the U.S. military’s vast land holdings on Guam throughout the latter half of the 20th century. In 1992 he introduced the Guam Excess Lands Act, which called for the United States to return to Guam specified areas that had been appropriated by the military during World War II. According to the Guam Delegate, U.S. forces increased their presence after they regained control of Guam, instead of downsizing at the war’s end. “These lands have remained unjustly inaccessible to my constituents ever since, even though much of it has not been used since the war for any military purpose,” Blaz stated. He went on to say that returning the land to the people of Guam would help the nation’s economy and “close the books on the issue of excess lands since the military has repeatedly indicated that it has no further use for them.”¹⁹

Throughout his tenure in the House, Blaz sought to publicize Guam’s role during World War II. He offered a firsthand account of the hardships the people endured during Japan’s nearly three-year occupation. “There are many horrible and appalling stories I could tell about the atrocities inflicted upon our people,” he said.²⁰ Blaz also recalled serving as commanding officer of the same Marine regiment that rescued him and eventually liberated Guam in 1944. “Taking command of the Ninth Marines was and remains the proudest moment of my life,” he observed.²¹ Building upon legislation drafted by Won Pat in 1983, Blaz introduced a bill to establish a Commission on War Claims to examine assertions of damages that were



suffered by the people of Guam at the hands of Japanese occupation forces. Although he did not attain this goal while he was serving in Congress, Blaz continued to fight for federal reparations for Guam. In 2005 he testified before the House Committee on Resources in favor of the Guam World War II Loyalty Recognition Act. “Loyalty and appreciation for their liberation made many of them hesitant to seek compensation for death, injuries, and damages in the years immediately following liberation,” Blaz explained.²²

While in the House, Blaz worked on a range of issues to fortify Guam’s economy. The island relied heavily on the fishing industry. During the 99th Congress, Blaz introduced a bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to allow alien crewmen working on U.S. fishing boats to go ashore while working in Guam. As Guam was the home port for America’s western Pacific tuna fleet, which supplied much of the tuna for the United States, the fleet’s presence had a major impact on Guam’s economy. Blaz’s measure called for the continued presence of U.S. fishing fleets and the same shore leave privileges for all crew members, regardless of their national origin. “Since Guam is America’s bridge to the Pacific and its finest symbol it is essential that the free enterprise system flourish there,” Blaz observed.²³ Blaz’s bill became law on October 21, 1986. The Guam Delegate also sought to extend supplemental security income (SSI)—federal benefits for low-income, disabled, or elderly American citizens—to his constituents. Blaz introduced legislation to “reverse the meaningless discrimination” of SSI funding, which included residents of the District of Columbia and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands but not the residents of other U.S. territories like Guam. “Affording these benefits to residents of one island and not to another is tantamount to extending benefits to residents of Chicago’s North Side but not to fellow Americans in the South Side,” Blaz concluded.²⁴ Blaz also supported federal assistance for educational programs in Guam, including funding for vocational education and improvements to elementary and secondary education. To help the many veterans residing in Guam, Blaz introduced the Veterans’

Educational Assistance Act during his first term in the House. The measure called for expanded eligibility for basic assistance under the GI Bill.

Throughout his tenure, Blaz’s most consistent and fervent cause remained improving Guam’s political status. He routinely introduced legislation to establish Guam as an American commonwealth rather than an unincorporated U.S. territory. “Commonwealth is the principal issue for Guam,” Blaz asserted. “It’s not a Democratic issue and it’s not a Republican issue. It’s a distinctly Guam issue with political, civil and human rights issues in it.”²⁵ On March 7, 1988, the same week as Discovery Day—a holiday commemorating the day Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan landed in Guam—Blaz introduced the Guam Commonwealth Act. Resulting from the work of the bipartisan Commission on Self-Determination, and ratified by Guam’s voters, the measure called for complete self-government for the people of Guam, the preservation of the indigenous Chamorro culture, and consultation with the United States about matters that would affect the island. Advocating a partnership with the United States, Blaz reminded his House colleagues of Guam’s sacrifices throughout the 20th century. “We on Guam paid our dues—as heavily in war as in peace—to prove our loyalty and pride as members of the American family. Still, we have never enjoyed equal status with other Americans—either politically or economically.”²⁶ Although the Guam Commonwealth Act never made it out of committee, Blaz reintroduced it twice.²⁷

Blaz did not limit his quest for equal rights to Guam. In 1991 he came out in support of statehood for the District of Columbia and compared the plight of his constituents with that of the residents of DC. “Yet the people of Guam—Americans all—remain second-class citizens. Like the people of the District of Columbia, they are denied the fundamental rights afforded their counterparts elsewhere,” he said.²⁸ He also backed legislation sponsored by Virgin Islands Delegate Ron de Lugo that called for increased sovereignty of the U.S. territories of the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands. “The measure before us is the result of careful



consideration and comes to the floor with bipartisan support,” Blaz observed. “It contains several items of importance to each of the territorial representatives and the American citizens from the territories and I urge approval of its passage.”²⁹ The final version of the bill, which became law on August 27, 1986, provided additional funding for and greater autonomy over Guam’s education system. During the 99th Congress, Blaz demonstrated further solidarity with his nonvoting colleagues and their constituents by introducing legislation to authorize the inclusion in the Capitol’s National Statuary Hall Collection of statues from Washington, DC, Puerto Rico, Guam, the Virgin Islands, and American Samoa.³⁰

Until his last election in 1992, Blaz encountered only modest competition in his campaigns to serve as Guam’s Delegate. In 1986 he trounced Frank Torres, a former adjutant general of the National Guard, with 65 percent of the vote; in his subsequent two elections he easily defeated Vicente Pangelinan, a political veteran who worked for Delegate Won Pat, and Guam governor Ricardo Bordallo, capturing 55 percent of the ballots cast in both contests.³¹ In his bid for a fifth term in the House, Blaz faced a strong challenge from Robert A. Underwood, a longtime educator with strong community ties in Guam. Underwood ran an effective grassroots campaign, criticizing Blaz for not spending enough time in Guam. Blaz countered by emphasizing his military and congressional record.³² During Blaz’s re-election, a typhoon hit the island and postponed voting in Guam for nearly a week. By the time voters cast their ballots for Delegate, they already knew that William J. (Bill) Clinton had been elected President. The outcome was significant because Blaz had underscored the value of Guam’s Delegate being from the same party as the President.³³ On Election Day, Blaz garnered only 45 percent of the vote. He later offered to help his successor during the transition, remarking that his political career “started and ended on the high road.”³⁴

After leaving the House, Blaz taught at the University of Guam. He died on January 8, 2014, in Fairfax, Virginia.³⁵

FOR FURTHER READING

Blaz, Ben Garrido. *Bisita Guam: A Special Place in the Sun* (Fairfax Station, VA: Evers Press, 1998).

MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION

University of Guam, Micronesia Area Research Center (Mangilao, GU). *Papers*: 1984–1992, 8 linear feet. The Ben Blaz papers document his service as a Delegate in the U.S. House of Representatives. The collection contains bill files, correspondence, news clippings, and reports. An inventory is available online.

NOTES

- 1 *Congressional Record*, House, 101st Cong., 1st sess. (9 March 1989): 4007.
- 2 Formerly called Agaña, Guam’s capital was renamed Hagatna, which is Chamorro. The names of Blaz’s parents did not appear in any secondary sources, campaign materials, or newspaper articles. The 1930 Census listed a Vicente G. Blas born in Guam in 1928, to Vicente and Rita Blas. *Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930: Population*, Piti, Piti, Guam, Roll 2629, sheet 1A, p. 293, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, <http://search.ancestrylibrary.com> (accessed 25 May 2012).
- 3 “Vicente Tomas (Ben) Blaz,” *Bisita Guam* with Ben Blaz, accessed 9 January 2012, <http://bisitaguam.com/bio/index.html>.
- 4 Neither the name of the high school Blaz attended nor the date of his high school graduation is available on his website, “Vicente Tomas (Ben) Blaz,” accessed 11 April 2011, <http://bisitaguam.com/bio/index.html>. Newspaper accounts provide contradictory information about the high school Blaz attended. See, for example, “Election 1992, a Special Project of the *Pacific Daily News*,” 2 November 1992, *Pacific Daily News* (Guam): 2; Jeremiah O’Leary, “Guam Delegate’s Rise Parallels Struggle for Civil Rights,” 17 July 1989, *Washington Times*: B1.
- 5 Elaine Santos, “The Delegate,” 4 November 1984, *Pacific Daily News* (Guam): 3.
- 6 Harold J. Logan, “Information Head Says Marines Must Be Open to Scrutiny,” 2 July 1977, *Washington Post*: A6.
- 7 “Vicente Tomas (Ben) Blaz,” accessed 11 April 2011, <http://bisitaguam.com/bio/index.html>; O’Leary, “Guam Delegate’s Rise Parallels Struggle for Civil Rights.”
- 8 Susan Kreifels, “We Deserve a Rightful Spot,” 29 October 1982, *Pacific Daily News* (Guam): 3.
- 9 Paul J. Borja, “No Substitute for Experience,” 29 October 1982, *Pacific Daily News* (Guam): 3; Kreifels, “We Deserve a Rightful Spot.”



- 10 Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives, "Election Statistics, 1920 to Present," <http://history.house.gov/institution/election-statistics/election-statistics/>.
- 11 "Rival's Tally in Guam Overshadows Incumbent," 3 September 1984, *New York Times*: 9.
- 12 Elaine Santos, "Won Pat, Blaz Face Off," 1 November 1984, *Pacific Daily News* (Guam): 1.
- 13 Santos, "The Delegate."
- 14 "Ben Blaz on Issues," Ben Blaz campaign advertisement, 2 November 1984, *Pacific Daily News* (Guam): 9; "Issues Facing Guam Now," Ben Blaz campaign advertisement, 3 November 1984, *Pacific Daily News* (Guam): 21.
- 15 Kate Pound, "Recount Set for Delegate Race," 8 November 1984, *Pacific Daily News* (Guam): 1; Yvonne Martinez, "It's Blaz by 354 Votes," 11 November 1984, *Pacific Daily News* (Guam): 1; Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives, "Election Statistics, 1920 to Present."
- 16 Paul J. Borja, "Blaz: On a New Mission," 12 November 1984, *Pacific Daily News* (Guam): 1.
- 17 *Congressional Record*, House, 99th Cong., 1st sess. (24 July 1985): 20180–20181; "House Rejects Bid to Overturn Election of Guam Delegate," 25 July 1985, *Los Angeles Times*: 23; "House Denies Won Pat Challenge," 26 July 1985, *Pacific Daily News* (Guam): 1; Stephen Labaton, "Guam Delegate Resists Demand for Runoff Vote," 6 June 1985, *Washington Post*: A7; Stephen Labaton, "Guam's Seat in Congress Still Disputed," 4 June 1985, *Washington Post*: A12.
- 18 "Minority Reports," 16 December 1984, *New York Times*: E20.
- 19 *Congressional Record*, House, 102nd Cong., 2nd sess. (5 February 1992): 1691.
- 20 *Congressional Record*, House, 99th Cong., 2nd sess. (26 November 1991): 35435.
- 21 Blaz took command of the Ninth Regiment of the Marines 27 years after the liberation of Guam. Blaz recalled escaping with several companions from a Japanese concentration camp shortly after U.S. troops invaded Guam in 1944. The Marines mistook Blaz for a Japanese soldier and briefly held him as a prisoner of war. According to Blaz, the Japanese captured and killed two Guamanians in his group who ran in a different direction. See Bernard E. Trainor, "Lack of Vote Doesn't Deter Delegate from Guam," 3 February 1988, *New York Times*: B6.
- 22 Hearings before the House Committee on Resources, *Guam War Claims*, 109th Cong., 1st sess. (20 April 2005); James Brooke, "Decades after Abuses by the Japanese, Guam Hopes the Military Will Make Amends," 14 August 2005, *New York Times*: 16.
- 23 *Congressional Record*, House, 99th Cong., 2nd sess. (12 May 1986): 10276.
- 24 *Congressional Record*, House, 102nd Cong., 2nd sess. (18 February 1992): 2452.
- 25 Tandra A. Bryant, "Guam Dems: Clinton Win Would Help Underwood," 4 November 1992, *Pacific Daily News* (Guam): 3.
- 26 *Congressional Record*, House, 100th Cong., 2nd sess. (7 March 1988): 3500.
- 27 For detailed information on the commonwealth movement in Guam, see Robert F. Rogers, "Guam's Quest for Political Identity," *Pacific Studies* 12 (November 1988): 49–70; Robert F. Rogers, *Destiny's Landfall: A History of Guam* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1995): 271–290.
- 28 Ben Blaz, "Guam: Equal in War, But Not in Peace," 19 October 1991, *New York Times*: 22.
- 29 *Congressional Record*, House, 99th Cong., 2nd sess. (1 August 1986): 18622.
- 30 *Congressional Record*, House, 99th Cong., 1st sess. (19 November 1985): 32463.
- 31 Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives, "Election Statistics, 1920 to Present"; "About Senator ben" on Senator Vicente (ben) Cabrera Pangelinan's official website, accessed 4 January 2012, http://senbenp.com/?page_id=6; "Guamanians Cast Ballots in U.S. Territory's Primary Election," 6 September 1986, Associated Press.
- 32 Donovan Brooks, "New Turn on the 'High Road,'" 10 November 1992, *Pacific Daily News* (Guam): 1; Donovan Brooks, "Grassroots, Media Use Called Key to Success," 11 November 1992, *Pacific Daily News* (Guam): 7. For an example of Blaz's campaign advertisements, see "Ben Blaz for U.S. Congress," 1 November 1992, *Pacific Daily News* (Guam): 14.
- 33 Bryant, "Guam Dems: Clinton Win Would Help Underwood"; Frale Oyen, "Election Postponed," 3 November 1992, *Pacific Daily News* (Guam): 1.
- 34 Brooks, "New Turn on the 'High Road.'"
- 35 "Vicente Tomas (Ben) Blaz," accessed 9 January 2012, <http://bisitagum.com/bio/index.html>; Matt Schudel, "Vicente T. 'Ben' Blaz, Marine General and Guam Delegate, Dies at 85," 24 January 2014, *Washington Post*, http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/vicente-t-ben-blaz-marine-general-and-guam-delegate-dies-at-85/2014/01/23/a41a445c-8397-11e3-9dd4-e7278db80d86_story.html (accessed 26 February 2014).

Patricia Saiki

1930–

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE 1987–1991

REPUBLICAN FROM HAWAII

Patricia Saiki’s revitalization of the Hawaiian Republican Party propelled her to election as the state’s first GOP Representative since 1959, when it entered the Union. As a Member of Congress, Saiki focused on economic and environmental legislation important to her Honolulu constituency as well as the international Asian community. In 1990 Saiki left the House to campaign for a Senate seat in a race that many political observers believed might signal a shift in the balance of political power in Hawaii. “Before Pat Saiki was elected to Congress, it was hard for us to relate to young people and tell them, ‘It’s great to be a Republican,’” noted a Hawaiian GOP member. “Now we can begin to spin the tale that will make people interested in supporting the Republican Party in Hawaii.”¹

Patricia Fukuda was born to Kazuo and Shizue Fukuda on May 28, 1930, in Hilo, on the big island of Hawaii. She graduated from Hilo High School in 1948 and received a bachelor of science degree from the University of Hawaii at Manoa in 1952. In 1954 she married Stanley Saiki, an obstetrician, and they had five children: Stanley, Stuart, Sandra, Margaret, and Laura. Patricia Saiki taught history in Hawaii’s public and private schools for 12 years.

Her path to politics began with her work as a union organizer and research assistant to Hawaii senate Republicans. In the mid-1960s, Saiki served as the secretary and then the vice chair of the state Republican Party. She attended the state constitutional convention in 1968, and that year won election to the Hawaii house of representatives, where she served for six years. In 1974 Saiki won election to the state senate, where she served until 1982. In 1982 Saiki left the legislature and made an unsuccessful bid for lieutenant governor. She subsequently oversaw a three-fold expansion in party membership and helped the party raise \$800,000 during her two-and-a-half-year tenure

as party chair. Her hand in reviving the Republican Party in the strongly Democratic state aided President Ronald Reagan’s victory there in the 1984 presidential election (the only previous Republican presidential candidate to carry the state was Richard Nixon in 1972) and the election of Democrat-turned-Republican Frank Fasi as Honolulu mayor.

After spending nearly two decades in state politics, Saiki decided to run for the U.S. House seat vacated in July 1986 by five-term Democrat Cecil Heftel, who left to run for governor. As the state’s population center, the district encompassed Honolulu, its suburbs, and the Pearl Harbor naval base (Hawaii’s only other congressional district included the rest of Oahu and the other islands). Tourism and commercial shipping were the lifeblood for the cosmopolitan population of Caucasians, Asian Americans, and Native Hawaiians, most of whom were registered Democrats. The potential for influence in Washington as well as the war on drugs were the major issues leading up to the September special election to fill the remaining four months of Heftel’s term in the 99th Congress (1985–1987). Liberal Democratic state senator Neil Abercrombie was the early favorite; however, a third candidate, Democrat Mufi Hannemann, a 32-year-old corporate lobbyist and former White House fellow, entered the race, siphoning off a portion of the liberal vote. Saiki certainly benefited from the Democratic intraparty warfare but she was unable to best Abercrombie in the September 20 special election. He prevailed over Saiki by fewer than 1,000 votes, 30 to 29 percent; Hannemann trailed by about 2,200 votes (28 percent). On the same day, Saiki won the Republican primary to run for a full term in the 100th Congress (1987–1989), while Abercrombie and Hannemann battled for the Democratic nomination for the full term. As the two Democrats faced off in the closed primary, several thousand Saiki supporters temporarily





registered as Democrats to give Hannemann a narrow win and instantly reduce Abercrombie to lame-duck status in the 99th Congress.²

In the general election for the 100th Congress, Hannemann had history on his side: ever since the state entered the Union in 1959, Hawaii had sent only Democrats to the U.S. House of Representatives. But Hannemann also faced several obstacles. First, the acrimony from the primary carried over as Abercrombie withheld his endorsement. More importantly, Saiki's ancestral roots as a Japanese American—one-third of the voters shared her ethnic background—helped her popularity. Saiki won the general election with 59 percent of the vote, a 33,000-vote advantage; no previous Hawaiian Republican candidate for the U.S. House had ever polled more than 45 percent of the vote.³ She became the first Republican to represent Hawaii in the House since Elizabeth Farrington won election as a Territorial Delegate in 1954 (Republican Hiram Fong served in the U.S. Senate from 1959 to 1977). Two years later, Saiki ran unopposed in the 1988 Republican primary. In the three-way Democratic primary, Mary Bitterman, a former director of the Voice of America, emerged as the convincing winner; however, she spent the bulk of her campaign funds securing the nomination, leaving her little money for the general election. She was not able to dent Saiki's record, and the incumbent won comfortably with a 55 percent majority.

Throughout her career, Saiki established a fiscally conservative voting record on economic issues, in line with most of her GOP colleagues. She also supported much of the Reagan and George H. W. Bush administrations' foreign policy programs—voting for aid to the Nicaraguan Contras, funding for the Strategic Defense Initiative, and the death penalty for drug-related murders. Where she parted company with many Republicans was on her moderate stance on touchstone social issues, chief among them reproductive rights. Saiki supported women's reproductive freedom. "I don't want to be sexist about this, but anything that involves a woman's life or career, it's very personal, very close to us," Saiki told the *New York Times*.

"We're the ones who experience it. We're the ones who have to pay for it."⁴

Saiki received seats on the Committee on Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs, the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries, and the Select Committee on Aging. Her seat on Merchant Marine and Fisheries, with assignments on its Oceanography and Fisheries Subcommittee, was particularly important to her oceanside constituency. Saiki worked to preserve the islands' natural beauty and unique resources. She attempted to persuade the Bush administration to suspend military test bombing on the island of Kahoolawe, situated just offshore from Maui. Claimed by U.S. officials in the early 1950s, the island nevertheless retained significant cultural relevance for Native Hawaiians.⁵ In 1990 she supported an amendment to revise the annual accrual method of accounting for pineapple and banana growers, whose longer growth and production cycles distorted their income statements and exposed them to excess taxation.⁶ Saiki also advocated a ban on environmentally unsound driftnet fishing in the Pacific, urging the U.S. Secretary of State to call an international convention to discuss the topic.⁷

In 1987 Representative Saiki signed on to support H.R. 442, a measure with broad bipartisan support that called for monetary reparations and an official apology to the Japanese Americans who were interned during World War II. Saiki and 62 other Republicans joined 180 Democrats to approve the legislation later that year. After the measure passed the Senate, Saiki was present when President Reagan signed it into law in 1988. She subsequently pressed Congress to expedite payouts.⁸

As an Asian American representing a district in the middle of the Pacific, Saiki also was involved with Pacific Rim issues. She served on congressional delegations that visited Tonga for the birthday of the South Pacific island's monarch and attended the funeral for the Emperor of Japan. In May 1989, several weeks before the Chinese military's massacre of student protestors in Beijing's Tiananmen Square, Saiki introduced a resolution in the House declaring congressional support for democratic rights in the People's Republic of China. "I have been



deeply moved by the determination and idealism of the Chinese students,” she said. “Fighting in a nonviolent way for what one believes to be true has been a cornerstone of many civil rights movements.”⁹

In April 1990, popular, long-serving Hawaii Senator Spark M. Matsunaga died of cancer. Urged by her friend President Bush, Saiki entered the election to fill the islands’ vacant seat. “Hawaii needs a Senator who can make the people on Pennsylvania Avenue and Constitution Avenue understand the people on Kamehameha Avenue,” Saiki said while announcing her candidacy.¹⁰ Democratic Governor John Waihee III appointed Hawaii Congressman Daniel K. Akaka to serve as interim Senator until the November special election. Akaka’s new position made him the favorite to hold onto the seat in the fall.

Yet Saiki proved a formidable opponent. She won the primary against four other Republican candidates with a strong 92 percent of the vote. In the general election, both candidates supported the key economic issues that many Hawaiians favored: maintaining price supports for cane sugar, promoting increased tourism, and halting target practice on Kahoolawe. Saiki proved a more dynamic candidate than the sedate Akaka. She also had repeatedly proved her ability to draw votes from the Japanese-American community. Moreover, the growing suburban, conservative white population allowed her, in the words of one political strategist, to “cut into the Democratic establishment.”¹¹ Political observers believed Saiki might be among a handful of candidates to help Republicans regain control of the Senate. However, Akaka had the support of the well-entrenched Hawaiian Democratic establishment, and his warm, pleasing personality appealed to voters. Saiki lost to Akaka by a healthy margin of about 33,000 votes, 54 percent to 45 percent.

After Saiki left Congress, President Bush appointed her director of the Small Business Administration, where she served from 1991 to 1993. In 1993 she taught at Harvard University’s Institute of Politics at the John F. Kennedy School of Government. The following year, she became the first woman candidate on a major party ticket for Hawaii governor. Saiki lost a three-way race to Democratic

Lieutenant Governor Ben Cayetano.¹² Patricia Saiki returned to teaching and lives in Honolulu.

MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION

University of Hawaii at Manoa Library, Archives and Manuscripts Department, Hawaii Congressional Papers Collection (Honolulu, HI). *Papers*: circa 1970–2006, 18.5 linear feet. The papers primarily document Patricia Saiki’s tenure as a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives. A small portion of the collection concerns her service in the Hawaii state house and the Hawaii state senate. Topics covered include agriculture, environmental issues, and foreign affairs. The papers also contain documents regarding Saiki’s appointment and tenure as administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration. A finding aid is available at the repository and online.

NOTES

- 1 “Liu: Up & Coming in Republican Politics,” 13 February 1987, *AsianWeek*: 5.
- 2 *Politics in America, 1986* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1985): 389.
- 3 *Politics in America, 1986*: 389.
- 4 Robin Turner, “G.O.P. Women Raise Voices For the Right to an Abortion,” 31 October 1989, *New York Times*: A1.
- 5 *Congressional Record*, House, 101st Cong., 2nd sess. (22 October 1990): 32430.
- 6 *Congressional Record*, House, 101st Cong., 2nd sess. (16 May 1990): 10832.
- 7 *Congressional Record*, House, 101st Cong., 1st sess. (17 November 1989): 29997.
- 8 “House Roll-Call Votes,” *CQ Almanac, 1987*, 43rd ed. (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, Inc., 1988): 98-H; *Congressional Record*, House, 101st Cong., 1st sess. (4 August 1989): 17145; *Congressional Record*, House, 101st Cong., 1st sess. (26 October 1989): 26241.
- 9 *Congressional Record*, House, 101st Cong., 1st sess. (23 May 1989): 10013.
- 10 Maralee Schwartz, “Hawaii GOP Rep. Saiki to Run Against Akaka in Senate Race,” 1 June 1990, *Washington Post*: A12.
- 11 “Republicans Select Woman in Hawaii,” 20 September 1994, *New York Times*: A19; Robert Reinhold, “Hawaii Race Tests Democratic Hold,” 1 November 1990, *New York Times*: D22; Robert Reinhold, “Republicans Sense Chance in Hawaii,” 9 May 1990, *New York Times*: A26.
- 12 “West: Despite Voter Discontent, Governors Win Re-Election in California and Colorado,” 9 November 1994, *New York Times*: B8.

Eni F. H. Faleomavaega

1943–2017

DELEGATE 1989–2015

DEMOCRAT FROM AMERICAN SAMOA

In 1989 Eni F. H. Faleomavaega became only the second Delegate from American Samoa to serve in the House. Upon his departure from Congress 26 years later, Faleomavaega owned the distinction, albeit briefly, as the longest-serving Delegate in House history. As a House committee staffer in the 1970s, Faleomavaega had helped American Samoa gain a House seat and during his time in Congress was “dogged in his determination to improve the economic lot of his island territory,” according to one political almanac.¹ Being a Delegate from American Samoa was not always the easiest job, but his strong relationship with Democratic leaders and his work in committee often helped him overcome the circumscribed powers of his office, and earned him the moniker the “champion of the Pacific Islanders.”²

Eni Fa’aua’a Hunkin Faleomavaega Jr., was born on August 15, 1943, to Eni Fa’aua’a Sr., and Taulaitufanuaimaataamalí’i. His last name, in Samoan, “means house where important things or decisions are made.” Faleomavaega grew up in Vailoatai Village, a fishing and boat-building community along the island’s southwest coast. “Our culture is very much closely associated with families,” the Congressman said in 2011. “Of course you have your immediate family, and then we also have what is known as the extended family, or you might say clans in that respect. So I might be related to 15 or 20 different clans—both on my mother’s side and my father’s side.”³

Faleomavaega’s father served in the U.S. Navy, and when the Delegate was just a boy, the military transferred the family to Hawaii, making room deep below deck of an outdated ship for Samoan families by placing makeshift beds in the cargo hold. “It was the most inhumane way of transporting human passengers,” Faleomavaega recalled. “It was like a dungeon in there.”⁴ Faleomavaega spent “about half” his life in Hawaii, graduating from Kahuku High

School in northern Oahu. He spent his first two years of college at nearby Church College, before transferring to Brigham Young University (BYU) in Provo, Utah.⁵ In 1966 Faleomavaega graduated from BYU and enlisted in the United States Army. In 1972, after a tour in Vietnam, where he was exposed to the dangerous chemical Agent Orange during his time in Nha Trang, Faleomavaega earned a JD from the University of Houston in Texas. He then accepted a fellowship at the University of California, Berkeley, earning an LLM in 1973.⁶ Faleomavaega married Antonina Hinanui; together they raised five children.

Also in 1973, Faleomavaega moved across the country and took a job with Paramount Chief A. U. Fuimaono, American Samoa’s “Delegate at Large” and its first elected official in Washington. Since American Samoa did not have an official Delegate in the U.S. House until 1981, Fuimaono worked more like an elected lobbyist for the islands. On issues pertaining to American Samoa and the South Pacific, Fuimaono would often testify before Congress, including the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee’s Subcommittee on Territorial and Insular Affairs, chaired by Phillip Burton of California.⁷

In 1975 Faleomavaega made the jump to the House and took a job with Burton’s subcommittee. He worked with Burton until 1981, helping to secure representation in the House for his home islands. “I kept asking Congressman Burton . . . how do we justify having a small little territory being represented in the U.S. House of Representatives as a delegate[?]” Burton told him that size did not matter; American Samoa was a U.S. territory like Guam and the Virgin Islands and was therefore entitled to a voice in the House.⁸ Faleomavaega later estimated that the eight years he spent working on Capitol Hill were “probably equivalent to me working in American Samoa for thirty years in trying to understand how the system functions, how it operates.”⁹





Faleomavaega returned to American Samoa in 1981 when he became the deputy attorney general, “so I could feel the people’s pains and sufferings and so that I might be able to serve them with more meaningful purpose,” he would later say.¹⁰ In 1985 voters on the island elected him lieutenant governor.

In early September 1988, American Samoa’s first Territorial Delegate, Fofó I. F. Sunia, resigned from the House after pleading guilty to payroll fraud. Faleomavaega, leveraging his wide name recognition as lieutenant governor of the small island chain, ran against American Samoa’s former lieutenant governor, Tufele Li’a, to fill the vacancy. At the time, elections in American Samoa differed from many of those on the mainland in that there were no primary campaigns on the islands. Moreover, if no candidate in the general election captured 50 percent of the vote, the race automatically headed to a runoff two weeks later. On Election Day, Faleomavaega captured 3,739 votes—only 358 votes more than his challenger—and failed to reach the 50 percent threshold that would have given him the victory. But a short while later, on November 22, 1988, Faleomavaega won the runoff and became the second Delegate to represent the islands in the House.¹¹

Like his first race, a handful of his re-election races were nail biters. During Faleomavaega’s career running for Delegate, the total number of votes cast in American Samoa, an island chain with only 56,000 people, exceeded 13,000 only once.¹²

Geographically, American Samoa has slightly more square mileage than the District of Columbia, but the islands have less than one tenth the population of the average congressional district on the mainland.¹³ With access to the South Pacific fishery, American Samoa, during Faleomavaega’s tenure, was home to large tuna canneries, but for the most part, the federal government helped maintain the territory’s standard of living, pumping millions of dollars into the economy every year.¹⁴ In the search for new jobs and better opportunities, many on American Samoa join the U.S. military, giving the islands one of the highest enlistment rates in the country.¹⁵ A number of Samoans also lived full time on the mainland

which, for Faleomavaega, translated to unique re-election campaigns. Whereas the vast majority of Members campaigned in their home district, Faleomavaega often campaigned in regions of the country home to high concentrations of his fellow islanders. “I’m probably the only member that has to go to San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego, or Hawaii where we have communities . . . where I would attend their community activities.” Often, he said, Samoans living on the mainland would rather talk to him than their actual elected Representative. “We are very tribal in our ways.”¹⁶

When Faleomavaega began his House career, he maneuvered to secure a seat on the Foreign Affairs Committee as quickly as possible. As the new Delegate saw it, the committee’s membership did not fully reflect the breadth of America’s interests abroad. “The entire mentality of Washington, twenty-two years ago, was Europe and the Middle East,” he said in a 2011 oral history. “Asia Pacific was not even on the map. It was not even on the radar screen.” But as Faleomavaega understood it, Foreign Affairs was reserved for Members who had already served “at least one or two terms” in the House—meaning that as a freshman, Faleomavaega would likely have been passed over. “So I pleaded my case with the leadership,” he later remembered. “I felt there needs to be some diversity here, infusion of the Asia Pacific, if you will. So they allowed me to be member of the Foreign Affairs Committee.”¹⁷

Faleomavaega suspected the House’s indifference toward Asia stemmed in part from the makeup of Foreign Affairs’ subcommittees. “What was interesting is that when I got onto the Committee, nobody wanted to be on the Asia Pacific subcommittee,” he remembered. “Well, I shouldn’t say nobody[,] but the fact was that the two subcommittees that members really didn’t want to be members of [were] Asia Pacific and Africa.”¹⁸ While Faleomavaega believed that the allure of the already well-developed markets in Europe and the Middle East accounted for such neglect, he also believed there was a deeper, more troubling cause of the global disparity on the committee. “I suspect one reason, if you look at the history; America has never had a positive relationship really with the Asia Pacific region.”



World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War: each conflict likely deepened the prejudice against that section of the world, he said. “In my perspective, I think when we talk about the Asia Pacific ... there’s unbalance, there’s a lot of racial feelings about people coming from the Asia Pacific region, unfortunately, but that’s the reality that we’re faced with.”¹⁹

That first conversation with party leadership was all Faleomavaega needed; he served on the Foreign Affairs Committee for his entire career. During his quarter-century in the House, the Delegate served on a number of subcommittees: Asia and the Pacific; International Economic Policy and Trade; International Operations; Arms Control, International Security and Science; International Operations and Human Rights; East Asia and the Pacific; the Western Hemisphere; and Asia, the Pacific, and the Global Environment. His longevity on the committee translated into leadership positions by 2001. Beginning with the 107th Congress (2001–2003), Faleomavaega was named the Ranking Democrat on the East Asia and the Pacific Subcommittee, and when his party took back the House in the 110th and 111th Congresses (2007–2011), Faleomavaega served as chairman of the Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and the Global Environment. After the Democrats returned to the minority, Faleomavaega resumed his seat as Ranking Member of the subcommittee.²⁰

Faleomavaega’s chairmanship of the Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and the Global Environment became an increasingly important assignment as America’s economy expanded to markets in China and its surrounding trade partners.²¹ As chairman, Faleomavaega held hearings on a host of different issues: human rights, the fishing industry, nuclear and renewable power, climate change, and diplomatic relations with a broad range of Pacific countries—South Korea, the Marshall Islands, Australia, New Zealand, China, and Cambodia. From a general foreign policy perspective, Faleomavaega took a hard line against America’s unilateral military interventions, and called for diplomatic solutions that included the international community.²²

In his second Congress as chairman of the subcommittee, Faleomavaega slowed the pace of hearings and built on the legislative groundwork he set in the 110th Congress, revisiting a number of issues the subcommittee considered earlier: U.S. policy toward North Korea, the South Pacific tuna industry, the continual legacy of Agent Orange, North Korea’s nuclear capabilities, Japan’s changing role in the regional and global economy, the ramifications of global warming, and America’s general policy in the Pacific.²³ As chairman, Faleomavaega also used his influence to look out for the interests of his home islands. Among other measures, the House passed his bill, the Pacific Island Economic and Educational Development Act of 2007 (H.R. 3062), on September 5, 2007. The legislation appropriated \$1 million a year for two years to fund cultural and educational exchange programs in the region.²⁴

That party leaders selected Faleomavaega to lead a subcommittee was a huge legislative boost for the Delegate. House Rules forbid statutory representatives from voting on the floor, but his ability to craft legislation in the early stages gave Faleomavaega outsized influence. “I think we’ve come a long way in improving the situation,” he said toward the end of his career, “delegates now can vote in committee, can hold chairmanships, can introduce bills, can debate on the floor, do all other things as other members do with that one exception ... voting for legislation on the floor. ... I do ninety percent of the work, but that ten percent of voting on the floor, even though that isn’t the most critical aspect of it, being a full member of Congress is that you vote on final passage of legislation. And we’re not allowed to do that simply because of the Constitution.”²⁵

Faleomavaega also served brief stints on a handful of other committees. He spent two terms (101st and 102nd Congresses [1989–1993]) on the Select Committee on Hunger; one term (102nd Congress [1991–1993]) on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee; one term (103rd Congress [1993–1995]) on the Education and Labor Committee; and two terms (108th and 109th Congresses [2003–2007]) on the Small Business Committee.

Along with Foreign Affairs, Faleomavaega served on the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee for his entire House



career as well, although for the vast majority of his time in Congress the committee was called Natural Resources or just Resources. The committee was and remains a natural home for statutory representatives. “All the issues affecting the territories come under that [committee],” he once pointed out. Traditionally, each Delegate and the Resident Commissioner serves on the panel. As Faleomavaega said, “We are the counterparts to the Secretary of the Interior, who oversees all the U.S. territories.”²⁶

Faleomavaega sat on a number of different Resources subcommittees during his House career: General Oversight and Investigations; Insular and International Affairs; General Oversight and California Desert Lands; Native American Affairs; National Parks, Forests, and Lands; Native American and Insular Affairs; National Parks and Public Lands; Energy and Mineral Resources; Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans; National Parks, Recreations, and Public Lands; Insular Affairs, Oceans and Wildlife; Insular Affairs; Fisheries, Wildlife, and Oceans; Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs; and Indian and Alaska Native Affairs.²⁷

Faleomavaega used his seat on the committee to address the immediate concerns of his constituents and campaign for the interests of America’s native peoples everywhere. “I’ve always expressed an interest [in] the rights of the indigenous people throughout the world that I don’t think has been given fair treatment, I suppose you might put it in those terms,” Faleomavaega said towards the end of his career.²⁸ Faleomavaega designed his work on behalf of America’s indigenous population in large part to raise awareness on issues affecting communities all over the country. One of his first legislative successes in 1990 (H.J. Res. 577) proclaimed November “Native American Indian Heritage Month,” which he replicated in 1991 and 1992. In the 102nd Congress, his bill to name 1992 the “Year of the American Indian” garnered 226 cosponsors, and he pushed to improve educational programs for American Indians everywhere.²⁹ Democratic leaders took notice of his work, and for the 104th Congress (1995–1997) they named him the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Native American and Insular Affairs. In the subcommittee,

he submitted a number of bills dealing with the federal recognition of American Indian nations and encouraging the tribes’ self-determination. For the 106th Congress (1999–2001), he was also named Ranking Democrat of the Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans.

By the 106th Congress, Faleomavaega’s work on the Resources Committee included a strong environmental component with direct bearing on American Samoa’s economy. Since his first term, when the House passed Faleomavaega’s H. Con. Res. 214 condemning driftnet fishing in the South Pacific, he worked to end the practice of targeting wild tuna stocks while ensuring his territory’s financial health.³⁰

By 2009 the tuna industry accounted for nearly 60 percent of the economy in American Samoa.³¹ In addition to protecting the resource, Faleomavaega also had to protect jobs in his district. To compete with nearby markets in the South Pacific and the robust fishing industry in South America, officials in American Samoa and Washington had kept wages well below the national average. In 2007, after Democrats won back the House partly on promises to increase the minimum wage, Faleomavaega lobbied his party’s leadership to exclude American Samoa from the raise. Faleomavaega worried that the major canners in his district would move their operations to markets where labor cost a fraction of what it did on American Samoa. The final legislation, however, mandated an increase in the minimum wage by 2014. Though other issues factored in, too, the bill convinced one of the major tuna processors to move abroad, costing the islands thousands of jobs. On the day the tuna packing plant was scheduled to close, a major tsunami hit the territory, caused vast destruction, and killed two dozen people. Once the islands started rebuilding, Faleomavaega submitted legislation—which Congress passed—delaying the minimum wage increase there.³² Along with maintaining the cost of labor, Faleomavaega also worked to protect generous tax breaks for the Samoan fishing industry.³³ Given the territory’s reliance on a handful of employers, he pushed to diversify American Samoa’s



revenue sources and encourage investments in aquaculture and seafloor mineral extraction.³⁴

In 1988 Congress approved the National Park of American Samoa (the United States' 50th national park), which spread across a number of the territory's islands.³⁵ Later a group of village chiefs back home approached the Delegate about expanding the park's boundaries to the include parts of nearby islands, Ofu and Olosega. After four years of planning, Faleomavaega earned a major victory in May 2001 when he sponsored H.R. 1712, which added nearly 3,000 acres to the existing tract. The House Resources Committee reported it favorably on March 12, 2002: "Expanding park boundaries to include land and water on the island of Ofu and Olosega would help protect vast coral communities which harbor a great diversity of species and offer excellent scuba diving opportunities," the committee wrote. The new park would also protect a host of reef ecosystems and a variety of birds, turtles, and rare giant clams. Moreover, the committee observed, "The addition of rainforest and coral reef on Ofu and Olosega would provide greater hiking opportunities and help to diversify visitor use and lessen the impact on the reef. In addition," the committee continued, "a high concentration of medicinal plants in the area would be protected. Many of these plants are disappearing and are in need of preservation."³⁶ When the bill went before the Senate, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources warmly received Faleomavaega's testimony and favorably reported the legislation.³⁷ His bill became law on December 16, 2002.³⁸

Faleomavaega's concern for the environment extended beyond the needs of his district's economy. In the mid-1990s, he worked to end France's nuclear testing in the Pacific (getting arrested during one protest) and a few years later submitted bills calling for the study of the shark population and the protection of coral reefs.³⁹ He also worked to amend the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Establishment Act to make it easier for the organization to accept private donations.⁴⁰ In the 107th Congress, Faleomavaega pushed for a stronger tsunami relief program at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and submitted the Shark Protect

Act of 2001, which outlawed the sale of shark fins.⁴¹ Three years later, he convinced Congress to give the Utrok Atoll a decommissioned NOAA ship that could be used to monitor radiology levels near U.S. nuclear testing sites. The bill also included a number of fisheries regulations.⁴²

Throughout his time in the House, Faleomavaega kept American Samoa at the heart of his legislative agenda: everything from trade to the environment, to its relationship with the federal government. The Delegate worked to include American Samoa in a number of federal initiatives during the 1990s, including the Supplemental Security Income Program, programs serving Americans with disabilities, and even a program that issued emergency livestock feed.⁴³ In the 106th Congress, Faleomavaega amended the Interior Department's appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2000 to establish a payment plan for American Samoa's existing debt and helped clarify the eligibility of U.S. nationals to donate to political campaigns.⁴⁴ He worked to lift the cap on Medicaid spending in the territory and steered to passage a law that required the Internal Revenue Service to treat bonds issued by American Samoa in the same way it treated tax-free bonds issued by the other territories. He also worked on an overhaul of American Samoa's election law which would eliminate the automatic runoff if the islands did not institute a primary season.⁴⁵

Faleomavaega lost re-election in 2014 in a nine-candidate race, taking roughly 31 percent, or 3,157 votes, and finishing second to Aumua Amata Coleman Radewagen, who garnered a 42 percent plurality.⁴⁶ The Delegate's health was a major factor in his loss. Late in the race, Faleomavaega had to be flown to Hawaii to receive emergency medical treatment for the lingering effects of his exposure to Agent Orange during his tour in Vietnam more than 40 years earlier. It nearly cost him his life. "There were ... a lot of rumors floating around that I'm way too sick," he said a few days after the election. "It's understandable."⁴⁷ As Faleomavaega weighed his future, he revealed that he still felt compelled to serve his island territory, working with the next generation back home, "sharing the sense of my experience with our young



people,” he said.⁴⁸ “I go forward, Mr. Speaker,” he said in his farewell address on the House Floor a few weeks later, “knowing that the best is yet to come and hoping that I will be remembered for trying my best.”⁴⁹

Faleomavaega died at his home in Provo, Utah, on February 22, 2017. “Eni was a restless champion for the rights and advancement of his constituents,” House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi said in a statement after learning of his death. “His life and leadership powerfully spotlighted the immense contributions of Americans from U.S. territories.”⁵⁰

NOTES

- 1 *Politics in America, 2012* (Washington, DC: CQ-Roll Call, Inc., 2011): 1087.
- 2 See Hearing before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, *U.S. Policy Toward the South Pacific: Implementation of the Honolulu Summit*, 102nd Cong., 1st sess. (20 November 1991): 80.
- 3 Eni F. H. Faleomavaega, oral history interview by the U.S. Capitol Historical Society, 11 April 2011, accessed 13 July 2015, http://www.uschs.org/oral-histories/uschs_faleomavaega.htm (site discontinued).
- 4 Anthony Millican, “Samoans Speak Out,” 13 October 1991, *Los Angeles Times*: B3.
- 5 *Congressional Record*, House, 113th Cong., 2nd sess. (8 December 2014): H8821; Faleomavaega, oral history interview.
- 6 “Eni F. H. Faleomavaega,” *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774–Present*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=F000010>; Faleomavaega, oral history interview; Fili Sagapolutele, “Faleomavaega Speaks for First Time About his Illness,” 24 September 2014, <http://samoanews.com> (accessed 2 September 2015).
- 7 Hearing before the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Subcommittee on Territorial and Insular Affairs, *Current Problems in American Samoa*, 93rd Cong., 2nd sess. (2 April 1974): 1–6.
- 8 Faleomavaega, oral history interview.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 *Congressional Record*, House, 113th Cong., 2nd sess. (8 December 2014): H8822.
- 11 “Republican is Elected Governor of Samoa,” 12 November 1988, *New York Times*: A8; *Almanac of American Politics, 1990* (Washington, DC: National Journal Inc., 1989): 1351. In 2004 Faleomavaega managed to change the election system on the island by introducing a bill that created a primary system, getting rid of the runoff. See *Almanac of American Politics, 2006* (Washington, DC: National Journal Group Inc., 2005): 1860.
- 12 Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives, “Election Statistics, 1920 to Present,” <http://history.house.gov/Institution/Election-Statistics/Election-Statistics/>; “American Samoa–2010 Census Results: Total Population by County,” U.S. Census Bureau, accessed 15 July 2015, <https://www.census.gov/2010census/news/releases/operations/cb11-cn177.html>.
- 13 According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the average congressional district population following the 2010 Census was 710,767. *Congressional Apportionment: 2010 Census Briefs*, C2010BR-08, prepared by Kristin D. Burnett, U.S. Census Bureau (Washington, DC, issued November 2011): 1.
- 14 *Almanac of American Politics, 2000* (Washington, DC: National Journal Inc., 1999): 1782; *Almanac of American Politics, 2002* (Washington, DC: National Journal Group Inc., 2001): 1699.
- 15 Gregg Zoroya, “From Tiny Pacific Islands Comes Outsized Sacrifice,” 27 May 2005, *USA Today*: A16.
- 16 Faleomavaega, oral history interview. See also Jerry Spangler, “Mormon Democrats Link Up in Congress,” 31 January 2005, *Deseret Morning News*: n.p.
- 17 Faleomavaega, oral history interview.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Various issues of the *Congressional Directory*, from the 101st through the 113th Congresses (1989–2013).
- 21 *Politics in America, 2014* (Washington, DC: CQ-Roll Call, Inc., 2013): 1104; John Pomfret, “As China Rises, So Does its Influence on the Hill,” 9 January 2010, *Washington Post*: A1.
- 22 *Politics in America, 2014*: 1105.
- 23 House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Legislative Review Activities of the Committee on Foreign Affairs*, 111th Cong., 2nd sess., H. Rept. 713 (3 January 2011): 75–76.
- 24 South Pacific Economic and Educational Development Act, H.R. 3062, 110th Cong. (2007).
- 25 Faleomavaega, oral history interview.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Various issues of the *Congressional Directory*, from the 101st through the 113th Congresses (1989–2013).
- 28 Faleomavaega, oral history interview.
- 29 H.J. Res. 577, 101st Cong. (1990); H.J. Res. 182, 102nd Cong. (1991); H.J. Res. 342, 102nd Cong. (1991).
- 30 H. Con. Res. 214, 101st Cong. (1989). See also Les Blumenthal, “Lawmakers Call for Consumer Boycott of Drift Net Caught Tuna,” 25 October 1989, Associated Press.



- 31 “Star-Kist Laying Off Hundreds in American Samoa,” 25 July 2009, *Daily-Journal Messenger* (Seneca, SC): D1.
- 32 *Almanac of American Politics, 2006*: 1860; *Almanac of American Politics, 2008* (Washington, DC: National Journal Group Inc., 2007): 1814; David Cohen, “Ravaged Samoa,” 1 October 2009, *Forbes*, <https://www.forbes.com/2009/10/01/samoa-tsunami-earthquake-opinions-contributors-david-cohen.html#6128ab4c48a2> (accessed 15 July 2015); *Almanac of American Politics, 2012* (Washington, DC: The University of Chicago Press, 2011): 1804; Jonathan Weisman, “Minimum-Wage Hike May Reach to Samoa,” 13 January 2007, *Washington Post*: A2; “Wage Bill to Include Territories,” 14 January 2007, *Deseret Morning News* (Salt Lake City, UT): n.p.; “American Samoa Cannery to Fire 200 Workers,” 6 June 2007, *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*: n.p.; “Tsunami Swamps Samoan Isles,” 30 September 2009, *Seattle Times*: A1; “Tsunami Toll Expected to Rise in Samoan Islands,” 30 September 2009, *Los Angeles Times*: A23.
- 33 *Almanac of American Politics, 2008*: 1816.
- 34 *Politics in America, 2014*: 1104.
- 35 *Almanac of American Politics, 1998* (Washington, DC: National Journal Inc., 1997): 1566.
- 36 House Committee on Resources, *Authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to Make Adjustments to the Boundary of the National Park of American Samoa to Include Certain Portions of the Islands of Ofu and Olosega within the Park, and for Other Purposes*, 107th Cong., 2nd sess., H. Rept. 372 (12 March 2002): 2.
- 37 Hearing before the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, Subcommittee on National Parks, *Miscellaneous National Parks Bills*, 107th Cong., 2nd sess. (12 June 2002): 9–12, 15–16; Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, *Natural Park of American Samoa*, 107th Cong., 2nd sess., S. Rept. 270 (11 September 2002).
- 38 For more on the bill, see *Almanac of American Politics, 2002*: 1701.
- 39 Eni F. H. Faleomavaega, “Perspective on Nuclear Testing: Stop the Rape of the South Pacific,” 25 June 1995, *Los Angeles Times*: M5; Ian Christopher McCaleb, “Panel Slams Proposed French Nuke Tests,” 13 July 1995, United Press International; Philip Shenon, “French Tow Ships off Site of Atom Test,” 3 September 1995, *New York Times*: A9; Scott Kraft, “France Detonates Nuclear Device at Pacific Test Site,” 6 September 1995, *Los Angeles Times*: A1; H.R. 3062, 110th Cong. (2007); H.R. 3133, 106th Cong. (1999).
- 40 H.R. 4010, 106th Cong. (2000).
- 41 H.R. 3720, 107th Cong. (2002); H.R. 2673, 107th Cong. (2001).
- 42 H.R. 2584, 108th Cong. (2003).
- 43 H.R. 189, 103rd Cong. (1993); H.R. 1060, 104th Cong. (1995); H.R. 188, 103rd Cong. (1993); H.R. 185, 103rd Cong. (1993).
- 44 H. Amdt. 268, 106th Cong. (1999); H. Amdt. 454, 106th Cong. (1999).
- 45 *Politics in America, 2006* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 2005): 1138; H.R. 1448, 107th Cong. (2001); H.R. 982, 108th Cong. (2003); H.R. 2010, 108th Cong. (2003).
- 46 Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives, “Election Statistics, 1920 to Present”; Fili Sagapolutele, “1st Woman Elected as American Samoa Delegate,” 5 November 2014, Associated Press.
- 47 Fili Sagapolutele, “Faleomavaega Discusses Future Plans, Which Include Returning Home,” 11 November 2014, <http://samoanews.com> (accessed 2 September 2015).
- 48 Sagapolutele, “Faleomavaega Discusses Future Plans, Which Include Returning Home.”
- 49 *Congressional Record*, House, 113th Cong., 2nd sess. (8 December 2014): H8822.
- 50 Max Greenwood, “Eni Faleomavaega, American Samoa’s Longest-Serving Delegate, Dies,” 23 February 2017, *The Hill*, <http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/news/320931-eni-faleomavaega-american-samoas-longest-serving-house-delegate> (accessed 30 May 2017); Associated Press, “Eni Faleomavaega, 73, American Samoa’s Delegate to Congress,” 24 February 2017, *New York Times*: B15; Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, “Pelosi Statement on Passing of Former Congressman Eni F. H. Faleomavaega,” press release, accessed 30 May 2017, <http://www.democraticleader.gov/newsroom/2232017/>.