

**TOWN OF BRISTOL – DRAFT PROCLAMATION- RECOGNIZING JANUARY 30, 2026 AS
“FRED KOREMATSU DAY OF CIVIL LIBERTIES AND THE CONSTITUTION”**

Fred Toyosaburo Korematsu was born on January 30, 1919, in Oakland, California, the son of Japanese immigrant parents, and grew into a courageous advocate for civil liberties and constitutional rights; and

Whereas, in the aftermath of the United States’ entry into World War II, Executive Order 9066 authorized the forced removal and detention of people of Japanese ancestry from their homes and communities without individualized evidence or due process; and

Whereas, at age 23, **Fred Korematsu** chose to resist this order, asserting his rights as an American citizen—a stance that led to his arrest and conviction and ultimately to a legal challenge that reached the United States Supreme Court; and

Whereas, although the Supreme Court upheld his conviction in *Korematsu v. United States*, subsequent review revealed that critical government evidence was withheld, and in 1983, a federal court formally vacated his conviction, acknowledging the injustice that had occurred; and

Whereas, **Fred Korematsu** spent his life educating the public about civil liberties, racial justice, and the strength of the Constitution, and in 1998 was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom for his lifelong commitment to justice; and

Whereas, the Town of Bristol cherishes principles of liberty, tolerance, and freedom of conscience, grounded in Rhode Island’s historic legacy of dissent and inquiry first advanced by Roger Williams, who championed liberty of belief and the right to question authority as essential to a just and humane society; and

Whereas, **Fred Korematsu’s** life and legacy echo that tradition, reminding all Bristol residents that protecting civil liberties and constitutional rights requires vigilance, courage, and hope—values reflected in Rhode Island’s motto and in the proud heritage of this community; and

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

WHEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED, on behalf of the Town of Bristol, do hereby proclaim January 30, 2026 as **“Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution”** in the Town of Bristol, and encourage schools, civic organizations, community groups, and residents to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and educational activities that honor **Fred Korematsu’s** legacy and promote reflection on constitutional rights, justice, and equality for all.