



KOREAN AMERICAN COALITION

WASHINGTON DC CHAPTER

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Contact: Gie Kim
301.404.0415
giekim@kacdc.org

KAC-DC Announces Support for House Resolution 1397

Washington, DC – The Korean American Coalition, Greater Washington Area (KAC-DC) supports the bill introduced by Representative Michael Honda (CA-15).

It is the understanding of KAC-DC that after being falsely lead to believe a corrupt Immigration and Naturalization Service official, and unknowingly purchasing fraudulent "green cards," two hundred and seventy-five Korean immigrants faced the threat deportation. Many families have either already experienced, or currently face the possibility of separation due to this injustice. While some may speculate that these immigrants knew or should have known that the methods of obtaining their green cards were illegal and fraudulent, according to advocates, the immigrants had trusted the INS system, and did not know of the scheme planned by INS Supervisor Leland Sustaire and immigration consultants, who were convicted of the fraud.

While the INS official served no jail time, and was let off with a fine and probation, some of the families involved are still suffering from the effects of the fraud.

"I've been in the U.S. since I was 9 years old. I consider myself an American," said J.S. Kim, who is now a masters student of behavioral neuroscience at the University of California, San Diego. "My hope was to become a doctor, but I can't apply for medical school or even jobs because I don't have a valid green card. I have no idea what I am going to do after I graduate. I barely speak Korean, but I'm afraid I might have to go back there and start over. Right now, I'm just waiting. Hopefully, Mr. Honda's bill will be able to help us."

Many of the immigrants who were swindled through the well orchestrated scheme are, in fact, productive members of society who entered the U.S. legally. Many of them have been working continuously in the U.S., some for over 15 years, as scientists, physicians, software engineers, and small business owners. To punish those who have worked hard only to be deceived by corrupt members of a government agency would be unfair.

Therefore, KAC-DC lends its full support to Representative Mike Honda's legislation that would suspend the deportation and removal proceedings for the immigrants involved, and that would provide relief to those immigrants who were not involved in the fraud. KAC-DC does not advocate blind amnesty. Rather, it is the hope of KAC-DC that the immigrants receive a fair and impartial process of review. It is unfair to require that these immigrants prove their own innocence since many of the documents that would prove this were destroyed by INS Supervisor Leland Sustaire. Equity and principles of fairness and due process require the federal government to bear the burden to prove actual fraud before the immigrants are forced to leave.

"Congressman Honda's bill justly protects the rights of innocent Koreans who have become victims of immigration fraud through no fault of their own," said Gie H. Kim, President of the Korean American Coalition, Washington DC Area Chapter (KAC-DC). "KAC-DC is not advocating

blind amnesty to all involved; nor does Mr. Honda's measure call for such a solution. Instead, it is the hope of KAC-DC that the immigrants receive a fair and impartial process of review."

The suspension of all deportation proceedings to allow the immigrants to apply for relief under this legislation is a just solution. In the process, national security is preserved in a manner that also preserves and respects the civil and human rights of both citizens and non-citizens residing in the United States, including members of the Korean American community living in California.

This bill was also introduced in the 109th Congress, but unfortunately did not succeed. KAC-DC urges members of the community to call, fax, and email their legislators to support this bill.

The Korean American Coalition is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, nonpartisan, community-based organization established in 1983 in Los Angeles to facilitate the full participation of the Korean American community in civic, legislative and community affairs. KAC has grown into a national organization with nearly 20 chapters and affiliates in major cities, including Washington, D.C., Hawaii and Alaska. As the Korean American community's leading advocacy organization, KAC works to educate, organize, empower and bridge language, cultural and information gaps.

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