

In This Issue

[Sharing Fred Korematsu's Fight for Civil Rights \(Video\)](#)

[Jonathan Bernstein, NIOT Executive Director, Tapped for CA Attorney General Transition Team, Leads Talk for Human Rights Organizations](#)

[Juneau, Alaska: Not In Our Town](#)

Fred Korematsu: A Civil Rights Hero



When Japanese-Americans were sent to camps during World War II, Fred Korematsu refused to go, saying, "I am an American." His 40-year fight became a symbol of equality and freedom.

Just days after Jan. 30, 2011, when California celebrated its first Fred Korematsu Day, we posted a new video, [Fred Korematsu: A Civil Rights Hero](#). Not In Our Town's parent company The Working Group produced this film for [UNITY Lab](#).

The January holiday was the first day named after an Asian-American in the history of the United States and Feb. 19 marks the 69th Anniversary of Executive Order 9066 that legalized the interment of Japanese-Americans. Five hundred teachers in California are teaching Korematsu's story.

"In the long history of our country's constant search for justice, some names of ordinary citizens stand for millions of souls: Plessy, Brown, Parks. To that distinguished list, today we add the name of Fred Korematsu," said President Bill Clinton when he presented Korematsu with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian award in 1998.

Popular Asian-American blog [Angryasianman.com](#) and [Discover Nikkei](#), a community web project of the Japanese American National Museum, have also shared our film.

Bernstein Joins CA Attorney General Transition Team, Leads Talk at CAHRO Conference

Jonathan Bernstein, Not In Our Town executive director, has been tapped for [California Attorney General Kamala Harris'](#) Civil Rights Enforcement Transition Team. The transition team is one of 10 "Smart on Crime Work Groups" and is chaired by Bill Lann Lee, who served as the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Justice under President Clinton.

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NIOT Community

[Not In Our Town](#) allied with [GLSEN](#) for [No Name-Calling Week](#) in January. On [NIOT.org](#) we shared links to resources for students, teachers and parents as well as videos about students standing up to bullying. On the final day of No Name-Calling Week, we shared a video of Julian Hornik, a young performing artist who wrote the original song, ["It Gets Better"](#) for the [Trevor Project](#).

On Martin Luther King Jr. Day [Billings, Montana honored Dr. King](#) in an especially creative way this year; they took a community photo. This event is part of the larger "I Am Billings" campaign, promoting diversity in this Montana town.

On Jan. 27, Indiana Public Media's program, [InFocus](#), discussed diversity and tolerance, following the anti-Semitic acts over the holidays. Host Sara Wittmeyer interviewed Not In Our Town Executive Director Jonathan Bernstein on the show. [Watch the video](#).

For more news and discussions visit [Not In Our Town](#) on Facebook.



Jonathan Bernstein,
NIOT Executive
Director

The transition team includes more than 50 civil rights leaders across the state who are weighing in on immigration, worker's rights and issues in Latino, African-American and LGBTQ communities. Bernstein has been recruited for his hate crime expertise. Before joining Not In Our Town last year, Bernstein worked with the Anti-Defamation League for nearly 20 years, the last 11 of which he served as regional director of the ADL's San Francisco office. The team will be delivering a briefing paper to Attorney General Harris on March 1.

This Monday, Bernstein was one of the featured speakers at the [California Association of Human Relations Organizations](#) conference in Los Angeles. The conference brought together commissioners, staff, volunteers, and activists from human relations and human rights commissions and community-based organizations throughout the state. During his talk, Bernstein introduced the Not In Our Town model and how the positive stories of people coming together to stop hate inspires others to take action. As examples, Bernstein screened several Not In Our Town films that highlighted community actions in the Northern California cities of Sacramento and Anderson as well as a sneak peak at our upcoming film in Lancaster, CA.

Juneau, Alaska: Not In Our Town



In 2009, the [Juneau Human Rights Commission](#) screened our 1995 documentary about Billings, Mont., [Not In Our Town](#), which sparked a discussion about prejudice and discrimination. Since then, the seven-member commission has been working to begin a human rights coalition that includes ethnic and faith groups and social agencies.

"The thing we loved about the Not In Our Town model is groups within the community coming together to support those who don't have as much power," said commission chair Mary-Claire Bernstein.

[Read the full story](#) on how Juneau, Alaska was inspired by [Not In Our Town, Billings](#) to become a part of the Not In Our Town community.

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