



# Manzanar Committee

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Manzanar Committee Denounces President Donald Trump's Pardon of Former Maricopa County, Arizona Sheriff Joe Arpaio**

LOS ANGELES — On August 28, the Manzanar Committee denounced President Donald Trump's pardon of Joe Arpaio, former Sheriff, Maricopa County, Arizona.

Arpaio was found guilty of contempt of court by United States District Court Judge Susan Bolton on July 31, 2017, after he ignored and willfully violated Federal court orders requiring the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office to cease and desist from racially profiling people, primarily Latinos who were "suspected" of being illegal immigrants.

"Not only did defendant abdicate responsibility, he announced to the world, and to his subordinates, that he was going to continue business as usual, no matter who said otherwise," Bolton wrote in her decision, also noting Arpaio's "flagrant disregard" for the court order.

Arpaio, an ardent Trump supporter, was pardoned on August 25, before sentencing for his contempt of court conviction.

The Manzanar Committee has joined the groundswell of protest repudiating the President's action.

"Safeguarding the Constitutional rights of all and upholding the essential checks and balances of our democracy has assumed a new urgency," said Manzanar Committee Co-Chair Bruce Embrey. "Japanese Americans, in general, especially those who endured the harsh reality of life in American concentration camps during World War II, understand all too well the consequences of violating the Constitution of the United States of America."

"Violation of habeas corpus, and other basic rights enshrined in our Constitution, led to the forced removal and unjust incarceration of some 120,000 Japanese in the United States, citizen and immigrant alike," Embrey added. "We understand what it feels like to be the 'other,' and treated as 'enemy aliens,' solely on the basis of race or national origin."

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Indeed, the Arpaio pardon strikes much too close to home for the Japanese American community.

“Through intimidation, racial profiling, and incarcerating people without charges or legal representation, Arpaio terrorized and victimized so many, denying them their Constitutional rights,” Embrey stressed. “A significant number were incarcerated in harsh, makeshift camps, lacking decent sanitary facilities, surrounded by barbed wire and armed guards.”

“That easily describes what Japanese Americans were forced to endure more than 75 years ago,” Embrey added. “The parallels and similarities of what Arpaio did, and what happened in 1942, are clear and obvious. This is why we must speak out.”

Embrey stressed that the Arpaio pardon is antithetical to our Constitution, to our laws, and to our nation, a clear, intentional slap in the face for all who believe in equality and justice.

“That Arpaio was convicted on contempt charges was a clear legal victory for civil and Constitutional rights, reaffirming that we are a nation of laws, that people have rights, and that no one is above the law,” he said. “This was all but thrown out by Trump, whose agenda is to codify institutional racism, ignore the Judiciary and use Presidential powers to impose his autocratic world view whenever possible. This is unacceptable.”

“Our democracy rests on the balance of power codified in the Constitution, including checks and balances between the three branches of our government,” he added. “Rogue, racist sheriffs, or even sitting presidents, cannot dictate the law of the land.”

“As a nation, we are standing at the top of a dangerous, slippery slope that is leading us towards a constitutional crisis. It’s time that all Americans take note and act to safeguard our democracy.”

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*The Manzanar Committee is dedicated to educating and raising public awareness about the incarceration and violation of civil rights of persons of Japanese ancestry during World War II and to the continuing struggle of all peoples when Constitutional rights are in danger. A non-profit organization that has sponsored the annual Manzanar Pilgrimage since 1969, along with other educational programs, the Manzanar Committee has also played a key role in the establishment and continued development of the Manzanar National Historic Site. For more information, send e-mail to [info@manzanarcommittee.org](mailto:info@manzanarcommittee.org), call (323) 662-5102, or check their blog at <https://blog.manzanarcommittee.org>.*