



The Honorable Maxine Waters
Ranking Member, Committee on Financial Services
Representing California's 43rd District

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**Congresswoman Waters Supports Justice
for Seniors at Keiro Senior Healthcare**

LOS ANGELES – Congresswoman Maxine Waters (CA-43), Ranking member of the Committee on Financial Services, released the following statement at the Save Keiro Press Conference on January 14th at First Southern Baptist Church in Gardena.

Congresswoman Waters' statement follows.

“Good morning and thank you all for coming together to protect our seniors who we value dearly. I would like to start by commending the Ad Hoc Committee to Save Keiro, a group of dedicated citizens, led by Committee Chairman Dr. Charles Igawa who has been the force behind this movement to save Keiro and has gathered us here today.

“I would also like to thank those standing beside me today, my colleague, Congresswoman Judy Chu, who serves the 27th district here in California in the U.S. House of Representatives, as well as former California Assemblyman and friend George Nakano.

“Lastly, I would like to thank four other organizations, Bet Tzedek and the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles, the law offices of Gibson Dunn and Crutcher Law Firm, and the California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform Organization, who have all volunteered their invaluable assistance, time and resources in this effort.

“The Ad Hoc Committee, Congresswoman Chu, Mr. Nakano, and I are all here today to voice our objections to a sale that will ultimately close the facilities of **Keiro Senior Healthcare** and end its free and long standing health and residency services for Japanese American seniors. This sale which may happen as early as the end of this **month could cause as many as 600 low income Japanese Americans to lose their residences and medical services.**

“We cannot stand idly by and watch this happen. We owe this to our seniors and Japanese American community to fight back. So, we are here today, **to call on the Attorney General to reverse the sale of Keiro to Pacifica Companies, LLC so that these seniors’ residences and healthcare will be protected.**

“Before I go into further details regarding the sale, let me take a minute to discuss the Keiro Senior Healthcare facility, its residents and the role it plays in our community. Since 1961, Keiro has been a trusted senior resource in the Japanese American community. With facilities located just across the street in my district in Gardena, as well as Boyle Heights and Lincoln Heights, Keiro has grown to become the largest non-profit healthcare organization serving the Japanese American community in the country.

“The healthcare center has served over 130,000 families and was built upon the cultural value of respecting our elders. For over 50 years, a committed community, a competent and caring staff, and hundreds of dedicated volunteers have implemented this value to provide compassionate care and programs for Japanese American seniors in their twilight years.

“Now today, with one in five Japanese Americans over age 65, which is almost twice the national average, it is more necessary than ever that Keiro remains dedicated to providing health and residency services for our Japanese American community.

“Many of these seniors sold everything they owned in Japan with the firm belief that they could spend the rest of their lives in Keiro facilities.

“In spite of this proud history and noble mission, late last year I was notified that Keiro is being sold to a for-profit real estate development corporation, Pacifica Companies, LLC, a company whose corporate objective does not align with Keiro’s current mission or the values of the community it serves.

“While it is always important to pay close attention when non-profits are being sold to for-profit entities, the specific events surrounding this sale are particularly troubling. First, no public hearing was held regarding the

proposed sale, as required by law, statute, as is traditionally held. Residents and family members of the Keiro community did not have the opportunity to express their concerns or objections over the sale. Far too often, seniors and low income citizens are left without a voice and a say over those decisions that most materially impact their lives.

“Second, this sale places limited and insignificant conditions on the buyer, Pacifica Companies, LLC to protect the current Keiro residents and families. Specifically, Pacifica Companies, LLC is not required to extend the same level of cultural care and support of Keiro’s existing programs. It is this cultural care that forms the foundation of Keiro’s existence and what makes the health care center so invaluable to our community. Yet, if this sale goes through, this could all be lost.

“Third, and most troubling, the current sale terms allow for a potential increase in assessment fees on the residential and healthcare services. This increase could potentially render Keiro facilities unaffordable for many of the current low-income, Japanese Americans the centers were designed to serve. Simply put, this is not right, it is not fair, and it is not just.

“As a Member of Congress with the South Bay Keiro Nursing Home in my district, I feel a sincere responsibility to assist the elderly and the low-income seniors in the fight for justice and fairness.

“I have consistently expressed my firm commitment to the Ad Hoc Committee that I support them and their every effort to reverse this sale and preserve Keiro’s nonprofit services for the Japanese American elderly.

“I am pleased to say that in November at a town hall meeting led by the Ad Hoc Committee, Congresswoman Chu and myself, residents, patients, and proud donors of Keiro also expressed their support of the healthcare center and discussed efforts to reverse the sale.

“Over 500 people attended this town hall, and I am pleased to see many of you here today still continuing in the effort to speak up and take part in the discussion to protect our seniors.

“It was also at this meeting where Keiro residents first learned that they were robbed of their opportunity for a public hearing to express opposition. Several residents shared how they felt blindsided and helpless.

“Prior to the town hall meeting, I placed a call to the California Attorney General and arranged a meeting for her team to come to Los Angeles to meet with the Ad Hoc Committee, and the Ad Hoc Committee shared their concerns. Officials from the Attorney General’s office agreed to review the concerns that the Ad Hoc Committee shared with them.

“As opposition to the sale continued to grow, I alerted two renowned Pro Bono legal firms, Bet Tzedek and the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles. Today, I am pleased to announce that these firms are partnering with an outstanding private legal firm, Gibson Dunn and Crutcher, and the California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform organization, to collectively represent the low-income, Japanese American senior residents of Keiro in an investigation and evaluation of the proposed sale.

“To date, the Attorney General’s team that we met with has not responded to our concerns and a recent conversation with the Attorney General was an offer by her to meet with all of the concerned individuals to discuss their concerns. While we are considering having a meeting with the Attorney General, the Ad Hoc Committee, Bet Tzedek, the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles, Gibson Dunn and Crutcher, the California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform organization and Pacifica Companies, LLC, we remain adamant in our insistence that this sale must be stopped.

“We must continue to speak out against this sale, its one-sided terms and lack of transparency. We must continue to advocate for the rights of those elderly Japanese American residents whose voices have yet to be fully heard.

“The threat of losing such comprehensive and unique care is utterly unacceptable, and I will not stop in my requests for a public hearing, a more transparent process, and more protection for our elderly Japanese Americans.

“So again, I would like to commend the Ad Hoc Committee to Save Keiro for their genuine and tireless commitment to fight against injustice in their community, and I thank Congresswoman Judy Chu and Mr. George Nakano. I also thank Bet Tzedek, the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles, Gibson Dunn and Crutcher, and the California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform organization for taking part in this critical press conference with me.

“Most of all, I applaud all of you here today helping to address and make clear that we will continue to fight for a fair and inclusive process that involves the community and ensures adequate protection to our Japanese-American seniors.”

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