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Congresswoman Matsui Participates in House Cruise Safety Hearing

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congresswoman Doris Matsui (CA-05) participated in the House Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation hearing on cruise safety in the wake of the Costa Concordia accident.

Congresswoman Matsui was one of the first Members of Congress to raise concerns over cruise ship safety. Her legislation, [the Cruise Vessel Security and Safety Act](#), became law in July 2010 and works to protect American passengers from crimes on board cruise ships. In January, Congresswoman Matsui [sent a letter](#) to the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee leadership asking that they expand the focus of this subcommittee hearing to also include a review of the progress of her law's implementation, which they agreed to do.

Congresswoman Matsui's opening remarks, as prepared for delivery, are below:

"Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate you allowing me the opportunity to be a part of this important hearing.

"I would also like to thank the witnesses for being here today, particularly the survivors from the Costa Concordia. And, I'd like to ask unanimous consent that a [letter from the International Cruise Victims Association](#) be submitted for the record.

“The Costa Concordia accident is an unfortunate tragedy that, once again, highlights the need to constantly evaluate cruise ship safety – as does the current situation with the Costa Allegra.

“We must not only examine the physical safety of the ship, and the safety procedures in place to respond to an emergency, but also the security of the passengers while on board.

“In July of 2010, President Obama signed into law the Cruise Vessel Security and Safety Act, legislation I sponsored after learning that one of my constituents suffered a rape while on a cruise vacation and that there was no process on board to properly handle the crime.

“This law is the first step towards providing greater security for passengers – from requiring cabin doors to have peep holes and security latches to improving medical care and support to victims of sexual assault.

“This law also gives the public access to information about the number of crimes committed on cruise ships, and puts much-needed procedures in place to ensure the proper preservation of evidence necessary to prosecute the criminal.

“All provisions of this law went into effect by or on January 27, 2012. I have raised concerns about whether the law is being properly and timely implemented. I look forward to getting further answers to these questions today.”

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