

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 2001-4626, by Representatives Esser, Santos, Lambert, Rockefeller, Ahern, Alexander, Anderson, Armstrong, Ballard, Ballasiotes, Barlean, Benson, Berkey, Boldt, Buck, Bush, Cairnes, Campbell, Carrell, Casada, B. Chandler, G. Chandler, Chopp, Clements, Cody, Conway, Cooper, Cox, Crouse, Darneille, DeBolt, Delvin, Dickerson, Doumit, Dunn, Dunshee, Edmonds, Edwards, Eickmeyer, Ericksen, Fisher, Fromhold, Gombosky, Grant, Haigh, Hankins, Hatfield, Hunt, Hurst, Jackley, Jarrett, Kagi, Keiser, Kenney, Kessler, Kirby, Lantz, Linville, Lisk, Lovick, Marine, Mastin, McDermott, McIntire, McMorris, Mielke, Miloscia, Mitchell, Morell, Morris, Mulliken, Murray, O'Brien, Ogden, Pearson, Pennington, Pflug, Poulsen, Quall, Reardon, Roach, Romero, Ruderman, Schindler, D. Schmidt, Schoesler, Schual-Berke, Sehlin, Simpson, Skinner, H. Sommers, Sump, Talcott, Tokuda, Van Luven, Veloria, Wood and Woods

WHEREAS, Takuji Yamashita graduated from the University of Washington Law School and passed the state bar examination in 1902; and

WHEREAS, Takuji Yamashita was barred from practicing law in our state because our state Attorney General and Supreme Court interpreted federal law to say that persons of his ethnic background could never become a citizen and, therefore, could not practice law; and

WHEREAS, Takuji Yamashita was the most promising scholar in his hometown of Yawatahama, located in Japan's Ehime Prefecture, and after immigrating to the United States he sailed through Tacoma High School and then through a rigorous two-year law course; and

WHEREAS, Takuji Yamashita, when told that his race made him ineligible to be a lawyer, challenged the State Attorney General, and argued, memorably, that denial of opportunity on the basis of race violated the core values of the "most enlightened and liberty-loving nation of them all. . . in which all men are equal in rights and opportunities"; and

WHEREAS, Takuji Yamashita, in 1922, unsuccessfully challenged the state's Alien Land Law that denied Asian immigrants the right to own property, and was sent to an internment camp during World War II; and

WHEREAS, Legal scholars say Takuji Yamashita's challenges helped pave the way for later legal breakthroughs; and

WHEREAS, Not until 1965 did Congress put Asian immigrants on a par with Europeans, not until 1966 did Washington voters repeal the Alien Land Law, and not until 1973 did the United States Supreme Court finally grant aliens the right to practice law; and

WHEREAS, Takuji Yamashita's crusade against this injustice is enshrined in dozens of legal publications and is slowly entering the broader realm of American history; and

WHEREAS, Takuji Yamashita will be remembered long after the functionaries who opposed him are forgotten; and

WHEREAS, The Washington State Supreme Court has been petitioned to reverse a decision it made 99 years ago and accept Takuji Yamashita, posthumously, as an honorary member of the Washington State Bar; and

WHEREAS, The petition comes from prestigious and well-respected entities such as the Asian Bar Association of Washington, the Washington State Bar Association, and the University of Washington Law School; and

WHEREAS, Today, at the Temple of Justice in Olympia, justice will finally prevail when the Washington State Supreme Court performs a posthumous ceremonial induction to the Washington State Bar, so that Takuji Yamashita's descendants - biological and spiritual - finally will get the opportunity to gather and to cherish the victories that were denied him during his life;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the state of Washington recognize and honor Takuji Yamashita for his dedication and perseverance in eradicating the racial and cultural barriers that existed not just in the legal realm during his time, but also in mainstream society as a whole; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be immediately transmitted by the Co-Chief Clerks of the House of Representatives to members of the family of Takuji Yamashita.

I hereby certify this to be a true and correct copy of
Resolution 4626 adopted by the House of Representatives
March 21, 2001.