

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 4689, by Representatives Hasegawa, Santos, and Conway

WHEREAS, On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, under which more than 120,000 Americans and resident aliens of Japanese ancestry, 12,000 of them residing in Washington state, were incarcerated in 10 internment camps scattered throughout western states during World War II; and

WHEREAS, The order for assembly and detention at Camp Harmony in Puyallup, Washington inflicted a great human cost of abandoned homes, businesses, careers, professional advancements, and disruption to family life, thus causing Japanese-Americans from the state of Washington to lose millions of dollars in property and assets, to suffer immeasurable physical and psychological damage, and to be deprived of their constitutional liberties without due process of law; and

WHEREAS, The alleged purpose of this drastic course of action was to prevent Japanese-Americans, all of whom were deemed disloyal and untrustworthy, from committing acts of espionage and sabotage against the United States during its involvement in World War II; and

WHEREAS, An overwhelming number of Japanese-Americans from the state of Washington responded to questions of their loyalty and patriotism by volunteering from within barbed wire camps to serve in the United States Military Intelligence Service and the United States Army's 442nd Regimental Combat Team, the latter of which became the most decorated unit of its size in American history with seven Presidential Unit Citations, 21 Congressional Medals of Honor, 52 Distinguished Service Crosses, one Distinguished Service Medal, 588 Silver Stars, 4,000 Bronze Stars, 9,486 Purple Hearts, and a total of 18 decorations from France and Italy; and

WHEREAS, A few equally patriotic Japanese-Americans, such as Gordon Hirabayashi, then a student at the University of Washington, were willing to face imprisonment to seek justice by challenging the constitutionality of the evacuation and internment orders; and

WHEREAS, Through the fact-finding work of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, the United States Congress later found that "there was no military or security reason for the internment" of individuals of Japanese ancestry and that the internment "was caused by racial prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership"; and

WHEREAS, On August 10, 1988, President Ronald Reagan signed H.R. 442, the Civil Liberties Act, which recognized the injustice of the relocation and internment of American citizens of Japanese ancestry and provided token monetary redress; and

WHEREAS, Japanese-American internees from the state of Washington endured economic, physical, and psychological hardship and suffered in silence for more than forty years before the state of Washington provided monetary redress and reparations to municipal and state employees;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives, along with the people of Washington, pause to acknowledge the sixty-eighth anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 9066, to recognize the Japanese-American internees and World War II veterans from the state of Washington, to honor their patience, heroism, sacrifice, and patriotic loyalty, and to remember the lessons and blessings of liberty and justice for all; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be immediately transmitted by the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives to the Nisei Veterans Committee, the Military Intelligence Service - Northwest Association, the Japanese-American Citizens League, and the Japanese-American Cultural & Community Center.

I hereby certify this to be a true and correct copy of  
Resolution 4689 adopted by the House of Representatives  
February 19, 2010

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Barbara Baker, Chief Clerk