

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 4684, by Representatives Stonier, Santos, and Zeiger

WHEREAS, On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 which authorized the military to forcibly remove and incarcerate more than 120,000 persons of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast, including 12,000 Japanese-American residents of Washington State; and

WHEREAS, The first Civilian Evacuation Order gave Japanese-Americans from Bainbridge Island less than one week to leave behind homes, farms, businesses, friends, and family to report to hastily constructed detention centers like Camp Harmony on the grounds of the Western Washington Fair in Puyallup; and

WHEREAS, This drastic course of action allegedly aimed to prevent acts of espionage and sabotage by Japanese-Americans who were deemed untrustworthy and disloyal to the United States; and

WHEREAS, On March 23, 1943, the War Department organized a segregated unit of Japanese-Americans, many of whom reported for military duty from concentration camps surrounded by barbed wire in which they and their families were detained; and

WHEREAS, More than 12,000 volunteers responded to questions of their loyalty and patriotism by amassing a battle record unparalleled in U.S. military history including: Seven Presidential Unit Citations; 21 Medals of Honor; 29 Distinguished Service Crosses; 1 Distinguished Service Medal; 588 Silver Stars; more than 4,000 Bronze Stars; 22 Legion of Merit Medals; 15 Soldier's Medals; 9,486 Purple Hearts; 16 decorations from France and Italy; and a Congressional Gold Medal awarded collectively to the 442nd Regimental Combat Unit, the 100th Infantry Battalion, and the Military Intelligence Service, United States Army; and

WHEREAS, Equally loyal and patriotic Japanese-Americans fought to protect our constitutional rights and liberties through dissent, like University of Washington student Gordon Hirabayashi who was arrested, convicted, and imprisoned for defying the military curfew on select civilians and refusing to evacuate when ordered; and

WHEREAS, In 1982, the Congressional Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians found "no military or security reason for the internment" of persons of Japanese ancestry, but determined it "was caused by racial prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership"; and

WHEREAS, As a result of this travesty of justice, Japanese-Americans suffered immense economic loss of property and assets, immeasurable physical and psychological harm, and were deprived of their constitutional liberties without due process of law; and

WHEREAS, In 1979, newly elected Congressman Mike Lowry of Washington State introduced H.R. 5977 to provide reparations and an apology to former Japanese-American internees, thus initiating a ten-year legislative quest that ended when President Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988; and

WHEREAS, Five years earlier, the Washington State Legislature enacted and Governor John Spellman signed similar legislation sponsored by State Senators George Fleming, Jack Jones, Jim McDermott, Kent Pullen, and Phil Talmadge to provide token compensatory redress to forty state workers who lost their jobs due to the wartime incarceration of Japanese-Americans; and

WHEREAS, Throughout Washington State, Japanese-American survivors of the European and Asian battlefields of World War II and of American concentration camps live their golden years quietly, in unassuming contrast to their extraordinary acts of patriotism and valor;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives, along with the people of Washington, pause to acknowledge the seventy-second anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 9066, to recognize and honor the heroism, sacrifice, patience, and loyalty of the Japanese-American World War II veterans and internees, and to remember the lessons and blessing 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, the Japanese Cultural &

Community Center of Washington State, and the Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience.

I hereby certify this to be a true and correct copy of  
Resolution 4684 adopted by the House of Representatives  
February 19, 2014

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Barbara Baker, Chief Clerk