

SENATE RESOLUTION
8687

By Senators Hasegawa, Hobbs, McCoy, Dammeier, Nelson, McAuliffe, Chase, Brown, Kline, Hill, Kohl-Welles, Rolfes, Benton, Mullet, Eide, Schoesler, Becker, Litzow, Roach, Angel, Billig, Braun, Tom, Frockt, Dansel, Ranker, Hatfield, Keiser, Conway, Pedersen, Hargrove, Hewitt, Holmquist Newbry, King, Lias, Fain, Honeyford, Fraser, Bailey, Cleveland, Parlette, Ericksen, Pearson, O'Ban, Darneille, Rivers, and Padden

WHEREAS, Seventy-two years ago, on February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, which authorized the forced removal, exclusion, and internment of approximately 13,000 Japanese-Americans (American citizens of Japanese descent) residing in the state of Washington; and

WHEREAS, The order for forced removal and detention at Camp Harmony on the Puyallup Fairgrounds in Puyallup, Washington, prior to the exclusion and subsequent incarceration, caused Japanese-American citizens 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 by our government, from committing acts of espionage and sabotage against the United States during the period of its involvement in World War II; and

WHEREAS, In 1943, an overwhelming number of Japanese-Americans from the state of Washington responded to challenges of their loyalty and patriotism by volunteering from within barbed wire and armed guarded camps to serve in the United States Army, organizing into the famed 442nd Regimental Combat Team, and amassing a battle record that is unmatched in United States military history with 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, and a total of 16 decorations from France and Italy; and

WHEREAS, A few equally patriotic Japanese-Americans, like Minoru Yasui, Fred Korematsu, and University of Washington student Gordon Hirabayashi, were willing to face imprisonment to seek justice by challenging the constitutionality of the exclusion and incarceration orders. Korematsu and Hirabayashi were eventually awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom for their principled actions and sacrifices; and

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

WHEREAS, In 1976 President Gerald Ford formally rescinded Executive Order 9066 saying, "I call upon the American people to affirm with me this American Promise--that we have learned from the tragedy of that long-ago experience forever to treasure liberty and justice for each individual American, and resolve that this kind of action shall never again be repeated"; 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 incarcerates, thus initiating a ten-year legislative quest that ended when President Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988; and

WHEREAS, In 1988, President Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act apologizing to the survivors of American incarceration camps saying, "what is most important in this bill has less to do with property than with honor. For here we admit a wrong; here we reaffirm our commitment as a nation to equal justice under the law."; and

WHEREAS, In 2010, the United States Congress recognized the unparalleled record of Nisei soldiers by authorizing the creation of "a single gold medal of appropriate design to the 100th Infantry Battalion, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, and the Military Intelligence Service,

United States Army," and in November 2011, President Barack Obama bestowed this highest civilian honor on these units collectively; and

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

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate, along with the people of Washington State, pause to acknowledge and reflect on the significance of Executive Order 9066 and its effect in denying constitutional freedoms and protections, our democracy's greatness in recognizing and correcting this failing, the need for constant vigilance to protect our constitutional rights and freedoms, and to recognize the Japanese-American internees and World War II veterans from the state of Washington, to honor their patience, heroism, sacrifice, and loyalty, and to remember the lessons, rights, and responsibilities that come with the phrase, "liberty and justice for all"; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be immediately transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to the Nisei Veterans Committee, the Military Intelligence Service - Northwest Association, the Japanese-American Citizens League National and Seattle Chapter, the Japanese Cultural & Community Center of Washington State, and the Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience.

I, Hunter G. Goodman, Secretary of the Senate,
do hereby certify that this is a true and
correct copy of Senate Resolution 8687,
adopted by the Senate
February 19, 2014

HUNTER G. GOODMAN
Secretary of the Senate