

SENATE RESOLUTION

8614

By Senators Hasegawa, Brown, Hobbs, Schoesler, Wellman, Chase, Takko, Rivers, Honeyford, Wilson, Hawkins, Padden, Miloscia, Zeiger, Keiser, Fain, Saldaña, Conway, and Darneille

1 WHEREAS, Seventy-five years ago, on February 19, 1942, President
2 Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, which deprived all
3 Japanese-Americans of their constitutional liberties without due
4 process of law, and which authorized the United States military to
5 forcibly remove and incarcerate more than 120,000 persons of Japanese
6 ancestry from the West Coast, including 13,000 Japanese-American
7 residents of Washington State; and

8 WHEREAS, The first civilian evacuation order gave Japanese-
9 Americans from Bainbridge Island less than one week to leave behind
10 homes, personal belongings, farms, businesses, friends, and family;
11 allowed them only two suitcases of personal belongings; and
12 transported them to hastily constructed detention centers, like Camp
13 Harmony located in the horse stalls on the grounds of the Washington
14 State Fair in Puyallup where they were held until more permanent
15 concentration camps could be built in more remote locations, like
16 Hunt, Idaho (Minidoka) and Tule Lake, California, which is where most
17 Japanese-Americans from the Puget Sound region were held; and

18 WHEREAS, This drastic course of action allegedly aimed to prevent
19 acts of espionage and sabotage by Japanese-Americans who were deemed
20 untrustworthy and disloyal to the United States even though no
21 evidence was ever presented to support such distrust; and

22 WHEREAS, On March 23, 1943, the War Department organized a
23 segregated unit of Japanese-Americans; and, from within those

1 American concentration camps where they and their families were
2 incarcerated, surrounded by barbed wire and armed guards,
3 thousands responded to questions of their loyalty and patriotism
4 by volunteering to serve in the segregated Army unit known as
5 the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, which went on to amass a
6 battle record unmatched in United States military history
7 earning 7 Presidential Unit Citations, 21 Medals of Honor, 29
8 Distinguished Service Crosses, a Distinguished Service Medal,
9 588 Silver Stars, more than 4,000 Bronze Stars, 22 Legion of
10 Merit Medals, 15 Soldier's Medals, 9,486 Purple Hearts, and a
11 total of 16 decorations from the governments of France and
12 Italy; and

13 WHEREAS, Equally loyal and patriotic Japanese-Americans
14 fought to protect our constitutional rights and liberties
15 through dissent, like Minoru Yasui; Fred Korematsu; and
16 University of Washington student Gordon Hirabayashi who was
17 arrested, convicted, and imprisoned for defying the military
18 curfew on select civilians and challenging the constitutionality
19 of the exclusion and incarceration orders. Korematsu and
20 Hirabayashi were eventually awarded the Presidential Medal of
21 Freedom for their principled actions and sacrifices; and

22 WHEREAS, In 1982, the Congressional Commission on Wartime
23 Relocation and Internment of Civilians found "no military or
24 security reason for the internment" of persons of Japanese
25 ancestry. Rather, it found the denial of constitutional rights
26 "was caused by racial prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of
27 political leadership"; and

28 WHEREAS, In 1976, President Gerald Ford rescinded Executive
29 Order 9066 saying, "I call upon the American people to affirm
30 with me this American Promise—that we have learned from the
31 tragedy of that long-ago experience forever to treasure liberty
32 and justice for each individual American, and resolve that this
33 kind of action shall never again be repeated"; and

34 WHEREAS, In 1979, newly elected Washington State Congressman
35 Mike Lowry introduced H.R. 5977: The Civil Liberties Act of
36 1988, which was signed 10 years later by President Ronald Reagan
37 who said, "So what is most important in this bill has less to do

1 with property than with honor, for here, we admit a wrong. Here
2 we reaffirm our commitment as a nation to equal justice under
3 the law."; and

4 WHEREAS, In 2010, the United States Congress recognized the
5 unparalleled record of Nisei soldiers by awarding the
6 Congressional Gold Medal to the 100th Infantry Battalion, the
7 442nd Regimental Combat Team, and the Military Intelligence
8 Service (MIS) of the U.S. Army who fought in the Pacific Theater
9 as interpreters and code breakers; and

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

15 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That on this auspicious
16 occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the signing of Executive
17 Order 9066, the Washington State Senate, along with the people
18 of Washington State, pause to acknowledge and reflect on the
19 significance of Executive Order 9066 and its effect in denying
20 constitutional freedoms and protections. We also reflect on our
21 democracy's greatness in recognizing the need to correct this
22 failure, the need for constant vigilance to protect our
23 constitutional rights and freedoms; and

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we recognize the Japanese-
25 American internees, constitutional protectors, and World War II
26 veterans from the state of Washington; honor their patience,
27 heroism, sacrifice, and loyalty; and remember the lessons,
28 rights, and responsibilities that come with the phrase, "liberty
29 and justice for all"; and

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

1 I, Hunter G. Goodman, Secretary of the Senate,
2 do hereby certify that this is a true and
3 correct copy of Senate Resolution 8614,
4 adopted by the Senate
5 February 15, 2017

6 HUNTER G. GOODMAN
7 Secretary of the Senate