

SENATE RESOLUTION

8706

By Senators Hasegawa, Hobbs, Brown, Ranker, Billig, Saldaña, Wagoner, Kuderer, Conway, and Takko

1           WHEREAS, Seventy-six 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; and

20 WHEREAS, Korematsu and Hirabayashi were eventually awarded  
21 the Presidential Medal of Freedom for their principled actions  
22 and sacrifices; and

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

29 WHEREAS, In 1976, President Gerald Ford rescinded Executive  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

35 WHEREAS, In 1979, newly elected Washington State Congressman  
36 Mike Lowry introduced H.R. 5977 which would become The Civil  
37 Liberties Act of 1988 when signed 10 years later by President

1 Ronald Reagan who said, "So what is most important in this bill  
2 has less to do with property than with honor, for here, we admit  
3 a wrong. Here we reaffirm our commitment as a nation to equal  
4 justice under the law"; and

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

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

16 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That on this 76th  
17 Anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 9066, the Senate,  
18 along with the people of Washington State, pause to acknowledge  
19 and reflect on the significance of Executive Order 9066 and its  
20 effect in denying constitutional freedoms and protections. We  
21 also reflect on our democracy's greatness in recognizing the  
22 need to correct this failure, and the need for constant  
23 vigilance to protect our constitutional rights and freedoms; and

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Senate recognize the  
25 Japanese-American internees, constitutional protectors, and  
26 World War II veterans from the State of Washington, honor their  
27 patience, heroism, sacrifice, and loyalty, and remember the  
28 lessons, rights, and responsibilities that come with the phrase,  
29 "liberty 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, Brad Hendrickson, Secretary of the Senate,  
2 do hereby certify that this is a true and  
3 correct copy of Senate Resolution 8706,  
4 adopted by the Senate  
5 February 12, 2018

6 BRAD HENDRICKSON  
7 Secretary of the Senate