

SENATE RESOLUTION

8618

By Senators Hasegawa, Conway, Kuderer, Saldaña, Salomon, Short, Torres, and Wagoner

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

6 WHEREAS, The first civilian evacuation order gave Japanese
7 Americans from Bainbridge Island, Washington less than one week to
8 leave behind homes, personal belongings, farms, businesses, friends,
9 and family and report to detention centers like Camp Harmony on the
10 grounds of the Washington State Fair in Puyallup, where hastily
11 converted horse stables housed the evacuated families; and

12 WHEREAS, These detention centers were temporary quarters for the
13 evacuees while the United States military department constructed 10
14 mass incarceration sites for Japanese Americans located in remote
15 inland areas of the United States; and

16 WHEREAS, This drastic policy of removal and relocation allegedly
17 aimed to prevent acts of espionage and sabotage by Japanese Americans
18 who were deemed untrustworthy and disloyal to the United States; and

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

1 WHEREAS, More than 12,000 volunteers responded to questions
2 about their loyalty and patriotism by amassing a battle record
3 unparalleled in United States military history with a casualty
4 rate of 314% and earning a collective 7 Presidential Unit
5 Citations, 21 Medals of Honor, 29 Distinguished Service Crosses,
6 1 Distinguished Service Medal, 588 Silver Stars, more than 4,000
7 Bronze Stars, 22 Legion of Merit Medals, 145 Soldier's Medals,
8 9,486 Purple Hearts, 16 decorations from France and Italy, and,
9 in 2010, the Congressional Gold Medal; and

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

16 WHEREAS, In 1982, the Congressional commission on wartime
17 relocation and internment of civilians found "no military or
18 security reason for the internment" of persons of Japanese
19 ancestry, but determined the cause of the incarceration as
20 "racial prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political
21 leadership"; and

22 WHEREAS, Through this travesty of justice, Japanese
23 Americans suffered immense economic loss of property and assets;
24 experienced immeasurable physical and psychological harm as
25 individuals and collectively as a community; and were deprived
26 of their constitutional liberties without due process of law;
27 and

28 WHEREAS, In 1979, Washington State Congressman Mike Lowry
29 introduced H.R. 5977 to provide reparations and an apology to
30 the Japanese American incarcerated, thus initiating a 10-year
31 legislative quest that ended when President Ronald Reagan signed
32 the Civil Liberties Act of 1988; and

33 WHEREAS, Throughout Washington State, the last remaining
34 survivors of the European and Asian Pacific battlefields of
35 World War II and of American incarceration camps live their
36 golden years in quiet contrast to their extraordinary acts of
37 conscience and valor while all of America continues to benefit
38 from their heroic patriotism;

1 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State
2 Senate pause to acknowledge the 81st anniversary of the signing
3 of Executive Order 9066; to recognize and remember Japanese
4 American veterans, incarcerated, and civil rights activists from
5 the State of Washington; and to reflect on, and honor, the
6 lessons, blessings, and responsibilities of the phrase
7 ". . .with liberty and justice for all"; and

8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
9 immediately transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to the
10 Nisei Veterans Committee, Densho, the Japanese American Citizens
11 League, the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Washington
12 State, and the Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American
13 Experience.

14 I, Sarah Bannister, Secretary of the Senate,
15 do hereby certify that this is a true and
16 correct copy of Senate Resolution 8618,
17 adopted by the Senate
18 February 20, 2023

19 SARAH BANNISTER
20 Secretary of the Senate