

SENATE RESOLUTION

8677

By Senator Hasegawa

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 ten
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, the 442nd Regimental Combat
21 Team, most of whom reported for military duty from the concentration
22 camps in which they and their families were held as prisoners
23 surrounded by barbed wire and armed guards; and

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

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

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

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

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

30 WHEREAS, Vowing *Nidoto Nai Yoni* - Let it Not Happen Again, the
31 Japanese-American community now wields the lessons of this experience
32 to fight for equity and justice in solidarity with all Americans who
33 seek to protect and preserve the civil liberties we are guaranteed;

34 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate
35 pause to acknowledge the 82nd anniversary of the signing of Executive
36 Order 9066; to recognize and remember Japanese-American veterans,
37 incarcerated, and civil rights activists from the State of Washington,
38 and to reflect on, and honor the lessons, blessings, and
39 responsibilities of the phrase, "...with liberty and justice for
40 all"; and

1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
2 immediately transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to the Nisei
3 Veterans Committee, Densho, the Japanese-American Citizens League,
4 the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Washington State, and
5 the Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience.

--- END ---