

SENATE RESOLUTION

8620

By Senators Hasegawa, Hobbs, Brown, Wellman, Kuderer, Darneille, Das, Hunt, Salomon, Schoesler, Lovelett, Wilson, C., Billig, Saldaña, Zeiger, Frockt, and Palumbo

1 WHEREAS, Seventy-seven years ago, on February 19, 1942, during
2 World War II, persons of Japanese, Korean, and Taiwanese ancestry,
3 including United States citizens, were ordered to live in
4 concentration camps and subject to a strict curfew; and

5 WHEREAS, Over 120,000 United States citizens and permanent
6 residents of Japanese ancestry were required to leave their homes on
7 the West Coast and submit to imprisonment based solely on their
8 ancestry. This was required by Civilian Exclusion Order 34 which was
9 authorized by President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066;
10 and

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

21 WHEREAS, This drastic course of action allegedly aimed to prevent
22 acts of espionage and sabotage by Japanese Americans who were deemed

1 untrustworthy and disloyal to the United States even though no
2 evidence was ever presented to support such distrust; and

3 WHEREAS, On March 23, 1943, the War Department organized a
4 segregated unit of Japanese Americans; and, from within those
5 American concentration camps where they and their families were
6 incarcerated, surrounded by barbed wire and armed guards,
7 thousands responded to questions of their loyalty and patriotism
8 by volunteering to serve in the segregated Army unit known as
9 the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, which went on to amass a
10 battle record unmatched in United States military history
11 earning 7 Presidential Unit Citations, 21 Medals of Honor, 29
12 Distinguished Service Crosses, a Distinguished Service Medal,
13 588 Silver Stars, more than 4,000 Bronze Stars, 22 Legion of
14 Merit Medals, 15 Soldier's Medals, 9,486 Purple Hearts, and a
15 total of 16 decorations from the governments of France and
16 Italy; and

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

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

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

1 WHEREAS, In 1979, newly elected Washington State Congressman
2 Mike Lowry introduced H.R. 5977: The Civil Liberties Act of
3 1988, which was signed 10 years later by President Ronald Reagan
4 who said, "So what is most important in this bill has less to do
5 with property than with honor, for here, we admit a wrong. Here
6 we reaffirm our commitment as a nation to equal justice under
7 the law."; and

8 WHEREAS, In 2010, the United States Congress recognized the
9 unparalleled record of Nisei soldiers by awarding the
10 Congressional Gold Medal to the 100th Infantry Battalion, the
11 442nd Regimental Combat Team, and the Military Intelligence
12 Service (MIS) of the United States Army who fought in the
13 Pacific Theater as interpreters and code breakers; and

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

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

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

34 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
35 immediately transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to the
36 Nisei Veterans Committee, the Military Intelligence Service-
37 Northwest Association, the Japanese American Citizens League
38 National and Seattle Chapter, the Japanese Cultural and

1 Community Center of Washington State, the Japanese American
2 National Museum, and the Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific
3 American Experience.

4 I, Brad Hendrickson, Secretary of the Senate,
5 do hereby certify that this is a true and
6 correct copy of Senate Resolution 8620,
7 adopted by the Senate
8 February 19, 2019

9 BRAD HENDRICKSON
10 Secretary of the Senate