

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 4669, by Representatives Santos and Hasegawa

WHEREAS, Seventy years ago, on February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, which authorized the forced assembly, evacuation, and internment of approximately 12,000 Japanese-Americans residing in the state of Washington; and

WHEREAS, The order for assembly and detention at Camp Harmony in Puyallup, Washington, prior to evacuation and subsequent internment caused Japanese-Americans from the state of Washington to lose millions of dollars in property and assets, to suffer immeasurable physical and psychological damage, and to be deprived of their constitutional liberties without due process of law; and

WHEREAS, The alleged purpose of this drastic course of action was to prevent Japanese-Americans, all of whom were deemed disloyal and untrustworthy, from committing acts of espionage and sabotage against the United States during the period of its involvement in World War II; and

WHEREAS, An overwhelming number of Japanese-Americans from the state of Washington responded to questions of their loyalty and patriotism by volunteering from within barbed wire camps to serve in the United States Army, amassing a battle record that is unmatched in U.S. military history with seven Presidential Unit Citations, 21 Medals of Honor, 29 Distinguished Service Crosses, 1 Distinguished Service Medal, 588 Silver Stars, more than 4,000 Bronze Stars, 22 Legion of Merit Medals, 15 Soldier's Medals, 9,486 Purple Hearts, and a total of 16 decorations from France and Italy; and

WHEREAS, A few equally patriotic Japanese-Americans, like Minoru Yasui, Fred Korematsu, and University of Washington student Gordon Hirabayashi who passed away on January 2, 2012, were willing to face imprisonment to seek justice by challenging the constitutionality of the evacuation and internment orders; and

WHEREAS, Through the fact-finding work of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, the United States Congress later found "there was no military or security reason for the internment" of individuals of Japanese ancestry but "was caused by racial prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership;" and

WHEREAS, Japanese-American internees from the state of Washington endured economic, physical, and psychological hardship and suffered in silence for more than forty years before the state of Washington provided redress and reparations to municipal and state employees; and

WHEREAS, In 2010, the United States Congress recognized the unparalleled record of Nisei soldiers by authorizing the creation of "a single gold medal of appropriate design to the 100th Infantry Battalion, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, and the Military Intelligence Service, United States Army" and, in November 2011, President Barack Obama bestowed this highest civilian honor on these units collectively; and

WHEREAS, Throughout Washington state, survivors of the European and Asian battlefields of World War II and of American internment camps continue to live their golden years quietly in unassuming contrast to their extraordinary acts of patriotism and valor;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives, along with the people of Washington, pause to acknowledge the seventieth anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 9066, to recognize the Japanese-American internees and World War II veterans from the state of Washington, to honor their patience, heroism, sacrifice, and loyalty, and to remember the lessons and blessings of liberty and justice for all; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be immediately transmitted by the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives to the Nisei Veterans Committee, the Military Intelligence Service - Northwest Association, the Japanese-American Citizens League, the Japanese Cultural & Community Center of Washington State, and the Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience.