

SENATE RESOLUTION
8617

By Senators Hasegawa, Hobbs, Brown, Dammeier, Roach, and Chase

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

6 WHEREAS, The first Civilian Evacuation Order gave Japanese-
7 Americans from Bainbridge Island less than one week to leave behind
8 homes, farms, businesses, friends, and family and to report to
9 hastily constructed detention centers like Camp Harmony on the
10 grounds of the Western Washington Fair in Puyallup; and

11 WHEREAS, This drastic course of action allegedly aimed to prevent
12 acts of espionage and sabotage by Japanese-Americans who were deemed
13 untrustworthy and disloyal to the United States; and

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

18 WHEREAS, More than 12,000 volunteers responded to unfounded
19 questions of their loyalty and patriotism by amassing a battle record
20 unparalleled in United States military history that, according to
21 General Douglas MacArthur's chief of intelligence, "saved a million
22 lives and shortened the war by two years"; and

1 WHEREAS, Equally loyal and patriotic Japanese-Americans fought to
2 protect our constitutional rights and liberties through dissent and
3 civil disobedience, like University of Washington student Gordon
4 Hirabayashi who was arrested, convicted, and imprisoned for defying
5 the military curfew on select civilians and refusing to evacuate when
6 ordered; and

7 WHEREAS, In 1982, the Congressional Commission on Wartime
8 Relocation and Internment of Civilians found "no military or security
9 reason for the internment" of persons of Japanese ancestry, but
10 determined it "was caused by racial prejudice, war hysteria, and a
11 failure of political leadership"; and

12 WHEREAS, As a result of this travesty of justice, Japanese-
13 Americans suffered immense economic loss of property and assets,
14 immeasurable physical and psychological harm, and were deprived of
15 their constitutional liberties without due process of law; and

16 WHEREAS, President Gerald Ford rescinded Executive Order 9066 in
17 1976, calling upon the American people to "resolve that this kind of
18 action shall never again be repeated"; and

19 WHEREAS, The Washington State Legislature enacted token
20 compensatory redress for forty state workers who lost their jobs due
21 to their incarceration, while Congressman Mike Lowry of Washington
22 State introduced federal legislation to provide reparations and an
23 apology to all living former Japanese-American internees, initiating
24 a ten-year quest that ended when President Ronald Reagan signed the
25 Civil Liberties Act of 1988;

26 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate,
27 along with the people of Washington, pause to acknowledge the
28 seventy-third anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 9066, as
29 well as the seventieth anniversary of the end of World War II, to
30 recognize and honor the heroism, sacrifice, patience, and loyalty of
31 the Japanese-American World War II veterans and internees, and to
32 remember the lessons and blessing of liberty and justice for all; and

33 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
34 immediately transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to the Nisei
35 Veterans Committee, the Military Intelligence Service — Northwest
36 Association, the Japanese American Citizens League, the Japanese
37 Cultural & Community Center of Washington State, and the Wing Luke
38 Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience.

--- END ---