

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HJM 4005

As Passed House:

February 18, 2009

Brief Description: Requesting the Postal Service to issue a postage stamp commemorating Nisei veterans.

Sponsors: Representatives Santos, Hasegawa, McCune, Hurst, Campbell, Pedersen, Hunter, Rodne, Warnick, Smith, Anderson, Ross, Angel, Walsh, Bailey, Roach, Shea, Upthegrove, Morrell, Ormsby, Hudgins, Conway, Rolfes, Kelley and Kenney.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Affairs: 2/13/09 [DP].

Floor Activity

Passed House: 2/18/09, 94-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Petitions the President of the United States, the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives to ensure that the U.S. Postal Service issue a postage stamp to commemorate the service of Nisei veterans in the U.S. Armed Forces during World War II.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL AFFAIRS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Hunt, Chair; Appleton, Vice Chair; Armstrong, Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Flannigan, Hurst and Miloscia.

Staff: Tracey O'Brien (786-7196)

Background:

Japanese Americans have special terminology for family, based on the Japanese language of their heritage. "Nisei" means "second generation," referring to the children of those who came from Japan. The Nisei are American citizens by birth. During World War II, Nisei men and women served in the United States Army in the 100th Infantry Battalion, 442nd

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Regimental Combat Team, Military Intelligence Service, and the Women's Army Corps. The Japanese American soldiers earned over 14,000 awards during World War II, including 21 Medals of Honor, nine Presidential Unit Citations, and 9,486 Purple Hearts.

The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) has a stamp selection body: the 15-member Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee (Committee). The Committee members are appointed by the Postmaster General and are tasked with evaluating the merits of all stamp proposals. The Committee's primary goal is to select subject of broad national interest for recommendation to the Postmaster General that are both interesting and educational. In addition, the Committee must consider 12 major criteria that guide subject selection. For example, no living person may be honored on U.S. postage and no stamp can be considered for issuance if the same subject has been honored within the past 50 years.

It is the general policy that United States postage stamps and stationery primarily will feature American or American-related subjects. The Committee meets four times yearly to review all eligible proposals that have been received since the previous meeting. At the meeting, the Committee considers all new proposals and takes one of two actions: it may reject the new proposal or it may set it aside for consideration for future issuance. Although the USPS relies heavily on the Committee for its advice, it has the exclusive and final authority to determine both the subject matter and the designs for United States postal stamps and postal stationery.

Summary of Bill:

The Washington State House of Representatives and Senate prays that the USPS issue a postage stamp in commemoration of the Nisei veterans' service in the United States Armed Forces during the Second World War.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Japanese Americans defended America despite the fact that their families and friends were held in concentration camps in this country. The performance of these Nisei veterans is legendary. The 442nd Battalion was the most decorated battalion in the history of the U.S. Army. Also, Nisei in the Military Intelligence Service played an integral role in shortening the war in the Pacific and saving the lives of millions of soldiers. The Postmaster General originally indicated that the Nisei stamp met the required criteria for selection. However, approval was later rescinded. The Postmaster General is now reviewing the application. Many other states have passed similar memorials. These American men and women fought prejudice and won and this stamp is a way of saying "thank you" to them in their twilight years.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Santos, prime sponsor; Representative Hasegawa; and Dale Kaku, Seattle Nisei Veterans Coalition.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.