

SENATE RESOLUTION

8607

By Senators Hasegawa, Hobbs, Billig, Braun, Brown, Carlyle, Cleveland, Conway, Darneille, Das, Dhingra, Dozier, Ericksen, Fortunato, Frockt, Gildon, Hawkins, Holy, Honeyford, Hunt, Keiser, King, Kuderer, Liias, Lovelett, McCune, Mullet, Muzzall, Nguyen, Nobles, Padden, Pedersen, Randall, Rivers, Robinson, Rolfes, Saldaña, Salomon, Schoesler, Sheldon, Short, Stanford, Van De Wege, Wagoner, Warnick, Wellman, Wilson, C., Wilson, J., and Wilson, L.

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 less than one week to leave behind  
8 homes, personal belongings, farms, businesses, friends, and family  
9 and report to hastily constructed detention centers like Camp Harmony  
10 on the grounds of the Washington State 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 the concentration camps surrounded by barbed wire  
17 in which they and their families were detained; and

18           WHEREAS, More than 12,000 volunteers responded to questions about  
19 their loyalty and patriotism by amassing a battle record unparalleled  
20 in United States military history with a casualty rate of 314% and  
21 earning a collective 7 Presidential Unit Citations, 21 Medals of  
22 Honor, 29 Distinguished Service Crosses, 1 Distinguished Service  
23 Medal, 588 Silver Stars, more than 4,000 Bronze Stars, 22 Legion of

1 Merit Medals, 145 Soldier's Medals, 9,486 Purple Hearts, 16  
2 decorations from France and Italy, and, in 2010, the  
3 Congressional Gold Medal; and

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

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

16 WHEREAS, Through this travesty of justice, Japanese  
17 Americans suffered immense economic loss of property and assets,  
18 immeasurable physical and psychological harm, and were deprived  
19 of their constitutional liberties without due process of law;  
20 and

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

26 WHEREAS, Throughout Washington State, the last remaining  
27 survivors of the European and Asian Pacific battlefields of  
28 World War II and of American incarceration camps live their  
29 golden years in quiet contrast to their extraordinary acts of  
30 conscience and valor while all of America continues to benefit  
31 from their heroic patriotism;

32 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State  
33 Senate pause to acknowledge the seventy-ninth anniversary of the  
34 signing of Executive Order 9066; to recognize and remember  
35 Japanese American veterans, incarcerated, and civil rights  
36 activists from the State of Washington, and to honor the lessons  
37 and blessings of liberty and justice for all; and

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

7 I, Brad Hendrickson, Secretary of the Senate,  
8 do hereby certify that this is a true and  
9 correct copy of Senate Resolution 8607,  
10 adopted by the Senate  
11 February 19, 2021

12 BRAD HENDRICKSON  
13 Secretary of the Senate