

SENATE RESOLUTION

8616

By Senators Hasegawa, Fortunato, Saldaña, Wagoner, and Warnick

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, Washington less than one week to
8 leave behind homes, personal belongings, farms, businesses, friends,
9 and family and report to detention centers like Camp Harmony on the
10 grounds of the Washington State fair in Puyallup, where hastily
11 converted horse stables housed the evacuated families; and

12 WHEREAS, These detention centers were temporary quarters for the
13 evacuees while the U.S. military department constructed mass
14 incarceration sites for Japanese Americans located in remote inland
15 areas of the United States; and

16 WHEREAS, This drastic policy of forced removal allegedly aimed to
17 prevent acts of espionage and sabotage by Japanese Americans who were
18 deemed untrustworthy and disloyal to the United States; and

19 WHEREAS, On March 23, 1943, the War Department organized the
20 442nd Regimental Combat Team, a segregated unit of Japanese
21 Americans, most of whom reported for military duty from the
22 concentration camps in which they and their families were held as
23 prisoners surrounded by barbed wire and armed guards; and

1 WHEREAS, More than 12,000 volunteers responded to questions
2 about their loyalty and patriotism by amassing a battle record
3 unparalleled in United States military history, earning a
4 collective 7 Presidential Unit Citations, 21 Medals of Honor, 29
5 Distinguished Service Crosses, 1 Distinguished Service Medal,
6 588 Silver Stars, more than 4,000 Bronze Stars, 22 Legion of
7 Merit Medals, 145 Soldier's Medals, 9,486 Purple Hearts, 16
8 decorations from France and Italy, and, in 2010, the
9 Congressional Gold Medal; and

10 WHEREAS, Equally loyal and patriotic Japanese Americans
11 fought to protect our constitutional rights and liberties
12 through dissent, like University of Washington student and
13 Auburn native Gordon Hirabayashi who was arrested, convicted,
14 and imprisoned for defying the military curfew on select
15 civilians and refusing to evacuate when ordered; and

16 WHEREAS, In 1982, the congressional commission on wartime
17 relocation and internment of civilians found "no military or
18 security reason" for the incarceration of persons of Japanese
19 ancestry, but determined the cause as "racial prejudice, war
20 hysteria, and a failure of political leadership"; and

21 WHEREAS, Through this travesty of justice, Japanese
22 Americans suffered immense economic loss of property and assets,
23 experienced immeasurable physical and psychological harm as
24 individuals and collectively as a community, and were deprived
25 of their constitutional liberties without due process of law;
26 and

27 WHEREAS, In 1979, Washington State Congressman Mike Lowry
28 introduced H.R. 5977 to provide reparations and an apology to
29 the Japanese American incarcerated, thus initiating a 10-year
30 legislative quest that ended when President Ronald Reagan signed
31 the Civil Liberties Act of 1988; and

32 WHEREAS, With this historical lived experience, the Japanese
33 American community has become an authentic and powerful voice
34 for equity and justice and against racism, bigotry, and hate
35 through the message Nidoto Nai Yoni - Let it Not Happen Again;

36 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State
37 Senate pause to acknowledge the 83rd anniversary of the signing
38 of Executive Order 9066, to recognize and remember Japanese

1 American veterans, incarcerated, and civil rights activists from
2 the State of Washington, and to reflect upon the
3 responsibilities of the phrase "with liberty and justice for
4 all"; and

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

11 I, Sarah Bannister, Secretary of the Senate,
12 do hereby certify that this is a true and
13 correct copy of Senate Resolution 8616,
14 adopted by the Senate
15 February 19, 2025

16 SARAH BANNISTER
17 Secretary of the Senate