

House Committee On Rural Communities, Land Use and Water

Fiscal: No fiscal impact

Revenue: No Revenue Impact

Action Date: 02/01/16

Action: Do Pass.

Meeting Dates: 02/01

Vote:

Yeas: 7 - Clem, Gilliam, Gomberg, Helm, McLane, Post, Witt

Prepared By: Beth Reiley, Committee Administrator

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Designates March 28 of each year as Minoru Yasui Day. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Minoru Yasui's background
- Lack of education in schools about internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans in the United States
- Minoru Yasui's legacy of fighting for basic human rights and fair and equal treatment of every American

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Minoru Yasui was born in Hood River, Oregon in 1916 to Masuo and Shidzuyo Yasui. He graduated salutatorian from Hood River High School in 1933, Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Oregon in 1937 and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the United States Army. In 1939, Minoru Yasui became the first Japanese American to graduate from the University of Oregon School of Law and to be admitted to the Oregon State Bar.

In February, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 which led to the incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II. On March 28, 1942, Minoru Yasui deliberately challenged a military curfew imposed under the Order by walking the streets of Portland, Oregon, and turning himself in to the police to test the constitutionality of the regulations. Minoru Yasui lost his case in federal court and spent nine months in solitary confinement awaiting his appeal to the United States Supreme Court, which eventually ruled against him. Upon release he was incarcerated in the Minidoka War Relocation Center in Idaho until June, 1944.

In September, 1944, Minoru Yasui moved to Denver, Colorado, where he practiced law and helped found and participated in many organizations. Minoru Yasui helped build and lead the movement seeking an official apology and reparations for the injustices against Japanese Americans during World War II. His efforts led to the passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, two years after his death, which granted a redress of \$20,000 and a formal apology to every person of Japanese ancestry incarcerated during World War II as well as the establishment of the Civil Liberties Public Education Fund.

On November 24, 2015, President Barack Obama awarded Minoru Yasui the Medal of Freedom for devoting his life “to fighting for basic human rights and the fair and equal treatment of every American.”