

House Bill 4009

Sponsored by Representatives CLEM, GILLIAM (Presession filed.)

SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**.

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

A BILL FOR AN ACT

1
2 Relating to a day to honor Minoru Yasui; and declaring an emergency.

3 Whereas 100 years ago, in 1916, Minoru Yasui was born in Hood River, Oregon, to Masuo and
4 Shidzuyo Yasui, Japanese immigrants, making him a second generation Japanese American, or
5 *Nisei*; and

6 Whereas in 1933, Minoru Yasui graduated salutatorian from Hood River High School, and in
7 1937 graduated Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Oregon and was commissioned a Second
8 Lieutenant in the United States Army; and

9 Whereas in 1939, Minoru Yasui became the first Japanese American graduate of the University
10 of Oregon School of Law and the first Japanese American member of the Oregon State Bar; and

11 Whereas on March 28, 1942, Minoru Yasui violated a military curfew imposed under Executive
12 Order 9066—the order that led to the incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans during World
13 War II; and

14 Whereas Minoru Yasui deliberately challenged that curfew by walking the streets of Portland,
15 Oregon, and then turned himself in to the Portland police so that he could test the constitutionality
16 of such discriminatory regulations; and

17 Whereas Minoru Yasui lost his case in the United States District Court for the District of
18 Oregon and spent nine months in solitary confinement in a six-foot-by-eight-foot cell in the
19 Multnomah County Jail awaiting his appeal to the United States Supreme Court; and

20 Whereas the United States Supreme Court ruled against Minoru Yasui in regard to the military
21 curfew, and he was released from jail only to be incarcerated in the Minidoka War Relocation
22 Center in Idaho; and

23 Whereas after his release from Minidoka in 1944, Minoru Yasui settled in Denver, Colorado,
24 where he practiced law and helped found and participated in many organizations, including the Ur-
25 ban League of Metropolitan Denver, the Latin American Research and Service Agency, Denver
26 Native Americans United and various War on Poverty programs; and

27 Whereas Minoru Yasui was appointed to the Denver Commission on Community Relations, for
28 which he served as vice-chair, chair and executive director, and as such was an active advocate for
29 civil and human rights whose efforts cut across ethnic and religious lines and addressed the con-
30 cerns of all minorities and marginalized people; and

31 Whereas Minoru Yasui was an active member of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL)

NOTE: Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter [*italic and bracketed*] is existing law to be omitted.
New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1 throughout his life, taking on leadership roles at both the local and national level, and was a
2 founding member of the Mile High Chapter of JACL in Colorado and the Mid-Columbia Chapter of
3 JACL in Hood River, Oregon; and

4 Whereas Minoru Yasui reopened his World War II Supreme Court case in 1983 under a writ of
5 error *coram nobis* in the United States District Court for the District of Oregon; and

6 Whereas as chair of the JACL National Redress Committee, Minoru Yasui helped build and lead
7 the movement seeking an official apology and reparations for the injustices perpetrated against
8 Japanese Americans during World War II, actions that led to passage of the Civil Liberties Act of
9 1988 two years after his death; and

10 Whereas Minoru Yasui is buried in his beloved hometown of Hood River, Oregon, despite his
11 many years based in Denver; and

12 Whereas President Barack Obama awarded Minoru Yasui the Presidential Medal of Freedom
13 on November 24, 2015, for devoting his life “to fighting for basic human rights and the fair and equal
14 treatment of every American”; and

15 Whereas when presenting the medal, President Obama said, “Min’s legacy has never been more
16 important. It is a call to our national conscience, a reminder of our enduring obligation to be the
17 land of the free and the home of the brave, an America worthy of his sacrifices”; now, therefore,

18 **Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:**

19 **SECTION 1. March 28 of each year is designated as Minoru Yasui Day.**

20 **SECTION 2. This 2016 Act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public**
21 **peace, health and safety, an emergency is declared to exist, and this 2016 Act takes effect**
22 **on its passage.**

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