

Senate Concurrent Resolution 14

Sponsored by Senators DEMBROW, MONNES ANDERSON, THOMSEN, Representative CLEM; Representative JOHNSON

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**.

Acknowledges 75th anniversary of Japanese American internment during World War II and recognizes national Day of Remembrance.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1
2 Whereas on February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066,
3 authorizing the military to forcibly remove and place into incarceration camps more than 120,000
4 Japanese Americans and legal resident aliens from the west coast of the United States, including
5 more than 4,000 persons of Japanese ancestry from Oregon; and

6 Whereas as a result of this reprehensible injustice, Japanese Americans suffered an immense
7 economic loss of property and other assets, as well as immeasurable physical and psychological
8 harm, and were deprived of their constitutional liberties without due process of law; and

9 Whereas this drastic course of action allegedly aimed to prevent acts of espionage and sabotage
10 by Japanese Americans, who were deemed untrustworthy and disloyal to the United States; and

11 Whereas more than 12,000 Japanese Americans responded to this unfounded mistrust of their
12 loyalty and patriotism by volunteering for service in the United States Armed Forces, amassing a
13 battle record unparalleled in United States military history that, according to General Douglas
14 MacArthur's chief of military intelligence, "saved a million lives and shortened the war by two
15 years"; and

16 Whereas the Nisei veterans of World War II were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal on
17 November 2, 2011, and then-Speaker of the House John Boehner read from the medal, which states
18 that the "United States remains forever indebted to the bravery, valor and dedication to country
19 that these men faced while fighting a two-front battle of discrimination at home and fascism
20 abroad"; and

21 Whereas equally loyal and patriotic Japanese Americans struggled to protect our constitutional
22 rights and liberties through dissent and civil disobedience, including Oregon attorney Minoru Yasui,
23 who on March 28, 1942, deliberately defied the military curfew authorized under Executive Order
24 9066 by walking the streets of Portland, Oregon, during the curfew hours and then turned himself
25 in to the Portland police so that he could test the constitutionality of such discriminatory re-
26 strictions; and

27 Whereas despite clear evidence each year of World War II that Japanese Americans had proven
28 themselves to be loyal Americans, in Oregon the House of Representatives of the Forty-third Leg-
29 islative Assembly introduced House Joint Memorial 9 in February 1945, urging President Roosevelt
30 to "prevent the return of said Japanese aliens and said citizens of Japanese extraction to the west
31 coast states for the duration of the present war with Japan"; and

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 Whereas President Gerald Ford formally rescinded Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1976,
2 in his “An American Promise” proclamation, in which he called upon the American people to “re-
3 solve that this kind of action shall never again be repeated”; and

4 Whereas Congress adopted legislation, signed by President Jimmy Carter on July 31, 1980, es-
5 tablishing the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians to investigate the
6 claim that the incarceration of Japanese Americans and legal resident aliens during World War II
7 was justified by military necessity; and

8 Whereas the commission held 20 days of hearings, heard from more than 750 witnesses on this
9 matter and published its findings in its report “Personal Justice Denied”; and

10 Whereas the conclusion of the commission was that the promulgation of Executive Order 9066
11 was not justified by military necessity and that the decision to issue the order was shaped by “race
12 prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership”; and

13 Whereas Congress enacted the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, in which it apologized on behalf of
14 the nation for “fundamental violations of the basic civil liberties and constitutional rights of these
15 individuals of Japanese ancestry”; and

16 Whereas President Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 into law on August 10,
17 1988, and proclaimed it a “great day for America”; and

18 Whereas the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 established the Civil Liberties Public Education Fund,
19 the purpose of which is “to sponsor research and public educational activities, and to publish and
20 distribute the hearings, findings, and recommendations of the Commission, so that the events sur-
21 rounding the evacuation, relocation, and internment of United States citizens and permanent resi-
22 dent aliens of Japanese ancestry will be remembered, and so that the causes and circumstances of
23 this and similar events may be illuminated and understood”; and

24 Whereas in 2016 the Legislative Assembly passed, and Governor Kate Brown signed, House Bill
25 4009, recognizing the loyalty and brave resistance of Minoru Yasui and designating March 28 of
26 each year as Minoru Yasui Day; and

27 Whereas when awarding Minoru Yasui the Presidential Medal of Freedom on November 24,
28 2015, President Barack Obama described Minoru Yasui’s legacy as “a call to our national con-
29 science, a reminder of our enduring obligation to be the ‘land of the free and the home of the
30 brave’ — an America worthy of his sacrifice”; and

31 Whereas across the country the Japanese American community observes the Day of
32 Remembrance on February 19 of each year to educate the public about the lessons learned from the
33 incarceration in order to ensure that it never happens again; and

34 Whereas the Day of Remembrance provides an opportunity for all people to reflect on the im-
35 portance of political leadership and vigilance and on the value of justice and civil rights during
36 times of uncertainty and emergency; and

37 Whereas at this time in history it is especially important that Oregonians recognize and cherish
38 those who have come to Oregon as immigrants and refugees to pursue the American Dream for
39 themselves and their families and to contribute to the economic and social vitality of this great
40 state; now, therefore,

41 **Be It Resolved by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon:**

42 That we, the members of the Senate of the Seventy-ninth Legislative Assembly, recognize the
43 historical significance of February 19, 1942, the date President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Exec-
44 utive Order 9066, restricting the freedom of Japanese Americans and other legal resident aliens
45 through required identification cards, travel restrictions, seizure of personal property and

1 incarceration; and be it further

2 Resolved, That we support the goals of the Japanese American community in recognizing the
3 national Day of Remembrance to increase public awareness of these actions; and be it further

4 Resolved, That we, along with the people of Oregon, in order to recognize and honor the
5 heroism, sacrifice, patience and loyalty of the Japanese American World War II veterans and
6 internees and to remember the lessons and blessings of liberty and justice for all, acknowledge the
7 75th anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 9066; and be it further

8 Resolved, That we, along with the people of Oregon, pause to reflect upon the lessons learned
9 from the Japanese American incarceration experience, appreciate the contributions that immigrants
10 and refugees bring to our nation and commit to valuing all Americans, irrespective of their
11 ethnicity, religion or country of origin.

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