

Senate Resolution 1

Sponsored by Senators DEMBROW, THOMSEN, MONNES ANDERSON

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.

SENATE 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 curfew authorized under Executive Order 9066 by
24 walking the streets of Portland, Oregon, during the curfew hours and then turned himself in to the
25 Portland police so that he could test the constitutionality of such discriminatory regulations; and

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

31 Whereas President Gerald Ford formally rescinded Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1976,

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 in his “An American Promise” proclamation, in which he called upon the American people to “re-
2 solve that this kind of action shall never again be repeated”; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

40 **Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Oregon:**

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

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

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

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

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