

Senate Bill 1509

Sponsored by Senator THOMSEN (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**.

Provides that Oregon Route 35 shall also be known as Oregon Nisei Veterans World War II Historic Highway.

Takes effect on 91st day following adjournment sine die.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

1
2 Relating to Nisei veterans; creating new provisions; amending ORS 366.924; and prescribing an ef-
3 fective date.

4 Whereas our country and state are committed to ideals of "freedom, equality and justice" to
5 dismantle injustices in our past; and

6 Whereas 57 Nisei (second-generation Japanese Americans) from the Mid-Columbia area
7 (Columbia River region north of Mt. Hood) and a total of 120 Nisei from the State of Oregon served
8 in our country's Armed Forces during World War II and the post-war occupation of Japan, even as
9 their families were incarcerated on American soil after President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed
10 Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942; and

11 Whereas these Nisei soldiers were among 33,000 Nisei who served our country in the 100th
12 Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team in Europe and as linguists in the Military Intelligence
13 Service in the South Pacific and the post-war occupation of Japan; and

14 Whereas the 442nd Regimental Combat Team is the most decorated unit for its size and length
15 of service in the U.S. military's history; and

16 Whereas 16 Nisei soldiers' names were blacked out from an honor roll of 1,600 local Armed
17 Forces members on wall plaques at the Hood River County Courthouse on November 29, 1944,
18 bringing national notoriety to the valley; and

19 Whereas the Nisei soldiers' names were restored 13 weeks later on April 9, 1945, following
20 pressure from the American Legion National Commander against "bigotry and race hatred"; and

21 Whereas the Oregon House of Representatives passed Joint Memorial 9 on February 28, 1945,
22 calling on President Roosevelt to prevent the return of Japanese Americans "for the duration of the
23 present war with Japan"; and

24 Whereas Hood River citizens have since recognized Nisei World War II veterans in an "ac-
25 knowledgement of wrongs" by dedicating a memorial brick "in honor of all Nisei veterans" at
26 Overlook Memorial Park on Veterans Day 2001, and a marble monument inscribed with names of
27 all Japanese American veterans at Idlewilde Cemetery on Memorial Day 2011; and

28 Whereas three years after the end of World War II, President Harry S. Truman signed Executive
29 Order 9981 committing the federal government to integrate the segregated military after 170 years
30 of discrimination; and

31 Whereas the State of Oregon, through the Bend Heroes Foundation, has honored nearly a half

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 million Oregon war veterans with eight border-to-border veteran highways; and

2 Whereas Oregon has not named a highway to honor World War II Nisei veterans; and

3 Whereas Oregon Route 35 has significance for Nisei veterans, as many of their families owned
4 or worked on fruit orchards along the highway until they were forcibly removed during World War
5 II; and

6 Whereas designating Oregon Route 35 as the Oregon Nisei Veterans World War II Historic
7 Highway will honor Nisei veterans not only in the Columbia Gorge but all 120 Nisei World War II
8 Veterans in Oregon; and

9 Whereas designating the 41-mile long Oregon Route 35 as the Oregon Nisei Veterans World War
10 II Historic Highway will not change any existing names of Oregon Route 35; and

11 Whereas Oregon’s veterans and community members have offered to finance the creation and
12 installation of special highway markers for the Oregon Nisei Veterans World War II Historic
13 Highway; now, therefore,

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

15 **SECTION 1.** ORS 366.924 is amended to read:

16 366.924. (1) The portion of U.S. Highway 395, crossing the State of Oregon, beginning at the
17 California state line and ending at the Washington state line, shall also be known as the World War
18 I Veterans Memorial Highway.

19 (2) The portion of Interstate 5, crossing the State of Oregon, beginning at the California state
20 line and ending at the Washington state line, shall also be known as the Korean War Veterans
21 Memorial Highway, and as the Purple Heart Trail.

22 (3) The portion of Interstate 5, beginning in Albany and ending in Salem, shall also be known
23 as the Atomic Veterans and Atomic Cleanup Veterans Memorial Highway.

24 (4) The portion of U.S. Highway 101, crossing the State of Oregon, beginning at the California
25 state line and ending at the Washington state line, shall also be known as the Persian Gulf,
26 Afghanistan and Iraq Veterans Memorial Highway.

27 (5) The portion of U.S. Highway 26, beginning where the highway intersects with U.S. Highway
28 101 and ending at the Idaho state line, shall also be known as the POW/MIA Memorial Highway.

29 **(6) Oregon Route 35 shall also be known as the Oregon Nisei Veterans World War II**
30 **Historic Highway.**

31 [(6)] (7) The Department of Transportation shall place and maintain suitable markers along each
32 highway described in this section to indicate the designation of each highway.

33 [(7)(a)] **(8)(a)** The department may accept moneys from and may enter into agreements with
34 veterans groups to create, install and maintain the markers.

35 (b) The department may not use public funds for the installation and maintenance of the mark-
36 ers.

37 **SECTION 2. The amendments to ORS 366.924 by section 1 of this 2022 Act apply to new**
38 **highway markers erected on Oregon Route 35 on or after the effective date of this 2022 Act.**

39 **SECTION 3. This 2022 Act takes effect on the 91st day after the date on which the 2022**
40 **regular session of the Eighty-first Legislative Assembly adjourns sine die.**