

Submitter: James Iwasaki

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Veterans and Emergency Preparedness

Measure: SB1509

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I support Senate Bill 1509 to rename Highway 35, the Oregon Nisei WWII Memorial Highway.

My name is James (Jim) Iwasaki. I am a third generation Japanese descendent. During World War II, Akira (Ike) and Arthur (Art) Iwasaki, two of my paternal uncles were members of the 100th Battalion, 442nd Regimental Combat Team. They served with distinction and valor in Europe, while my dad (George), Grandfather B.Y. (Billy), Grandmother (Ito) and 5 young sisters were interned. To their credit, they were part of what sociologists refer to as the "silent generation". They did not speak of the internment at the Portland Stock Yards nor the following camps.

It was not until 15 - 16 years after WWII that they began to share their experiences. Upon return to Portland in 1945, Art Iwasaki went to the Federal Building to reclaim his shot gun and an AM radio which were surrendered when he entered the US Army. Art was in his US Army uniform, but the clerk berated him, his service, his ethnicity and told him in no uncertain terms that he would not, should not expect anything returned! As Art was walking away, another clerk ran up and stopped Art and said.... "I want to apologize to you.... I heard what you just went through.... and I want to thank you for your service".... This is what this designation of Hwy 35 means. Thank you for your sacrifice and service. Thank you for changing the negative bias of Hood River to one of honor and remembrance.

Jim Iwasaki