

Testimony For  
Public Hearing and Possible Work Session to consider the motion which  
Provides that Oregon Route 35 shall also be known as Oregon  
Nisei Veterans World War II Historic Highway

Honorable Members of the Oregon Senate Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on the important motion which provides that Oregon Route 35 shall also be known as Oregon Nisei Veterans World War II Historic Highway.

I am a third generation Japanese American. My father was born and raised in Hood River. For my father, his family and more generally the Japanese Americans of Oregon the scars from losing property, dignity, livelihood and in many cases their lives are indelible, yet during WWII the Japanese Americans of Oregon understood that Country came first. They volunteered, fought sacrificed, returned to communities still mired in anti-Japanese-American hate, and were denied recognition of their patriotism with their names literally being removed from commemoratives. After decades, these soldiers were eventually recognized by many (not all) as heroes and not enemies. That was good progress thanks to stakeholders and legislators like yourselves.

Two generations later we are still battling racism. I applaud especially the younger generation, many of whom have taken up the challenge to eradicate racism. But they need help. It is important for us to do the big and the small things to send a message that Oregon is a compassionate and inclusive community. With an alarming increase in hate crimes over the last few years, now more than ever it is important to demonstrate our support of all members of our community.

Honorable Senators, by naming Route 35 the Oregon Nisei Veterans World War II Historic Highway you can make a strong statement to every Oregonian and every tourist visiting this state that Oregon embraces its diversity. Moreover, for the very few WWII veterans who are still alive today, and for their families, you will be extending an honor which hopefully will endure for generations to come.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas Noji". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Thomas" being more prominent than the last name "Noji".

Thomas Noji  
February 2, 2022