

Dr. Arthur A. Hansen
17551 Cerro Vista Drive
Yorba Linda, CA 93402

February 16, 2022

To Members of the House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Management:

This letter of my wholehearted support for SB 1509 promoting signs be posted along Highway 35 from the Columbia River to Mt. Hood honoring all Oregon Nisei World War II veterans for their wartime valor and postwar resilience is your attention and consideration. Such a measure, if passed, would serve as a powerful reminder to Oregon's youth of the heroism of these Nisei veterans. It would do so by stimulating them to both ask questions about this topic and, in so doing, learn an invaluable lesson as to how the American citizens of Japanese ancestry demonstrated nationalistic pride in the face of unjust prejudice. I support this far-reaching measure in my capacity as an emeritus professor of history at California State University, Fullerton, and as a teaching and research scholar who for half a century has been committed to writing books, articles, and reviews, as well as conducting oral history interviews, focused on the World War II Japanese American experience.

In reflecting on SB 1509, I encourage you to keep in mind the fact that during World War II 33,000 Japanese American soldiers served our country with honor and distinction while many of their family members were incarcerated in American-style concentration camps. One unit of these Nisei soldiers, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, is the most decorated unit in our country's military history for its size and length of service. Still, those in the ranks of that unit nonetheless faced intimidating and relentless discrimination when they returned to their homes in Oregon as well as other West Coast states.

In the interest of reminding travelers of Highway 35 of how soldiers of color consigned to a segregated army during World War II overcame unremitting prejudice to assist our country in defeating the forces of fascism and thus salvaging democracy, I implore you to pass Senate Bill 1509.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Arthur A. Hansen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Arthur A. Hansen