

Submitter: Kazuko Ikeda

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Veterans and Emergency Management

Measure: SB1509

Members of the House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Management:

Dear Chair Grayber and Committee Members:

I taught Japanese language and culture at Pacific University for thirty years. When I was teaching, I realized the lack of awareness among students about the thousands of Japanese Americans who actually served the country during WWII.

Thirty-three thousand Japanese American (Nisei) soldiers served our country honorably during World War II while many of their families were among 120,000 incarcerated in American concentration camps. They were heroic. One unit, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team is the most decorated unit in our country's military history for its size and length of service. Still, they faced discrimination when they returned home.

I strongly endorse Senate Bill 1509 to dedicate Highway 35 as the Oregon Nisei Veterans World War II Memorial Highway. We can honor these heroes with permanent roadside markers to help our youth and next generations ask questions and learn how American citizens demonstrated pride over prejudice.

Kazuko Ikeda
Beaverton, Oregon