

January 29, 2022

Oregon Senate Veterans & Emergency Preparedness Committee:

I wish to make a statement in favor of the Oregon Legislature passing Senate Bill 1509. This bill would make it possible for the state of Oregon to dedicate Oregon Highway 35 as the Oregon Nisei Veterans WWII Memorial Highway.

During World War II, Oregon Nisei men and women served in the Armed Forces of the United States in the same proportion as all other draft eligible citizens, despite the fact that most of them had been forcibly removed from the three West Coast States and Alaska because of deep rooted prejudice against their Japanese ancestry.

The Oregon Nisei served with remarkable honor and bravery in the war against Fascism in Europe and Imperialism in the war against Japan. They knew that their conduct during this conflict would be reflected by what most Americans might think about them as an identifiable people. So, these quiet, unassuming young men and women did the job right, and by so doing, they proved that they and their families were just as good Americans as anybody else.

I think that it would be fitting if the State of Oregon recognized and honored the Oregon Nisei men and women who served during World War II, by a state and a nation who had once largely rejected them.

Homer Yasui