

Submitter: Christi Iwasaki

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Veterans and Emergency Preparedness

Measure: SB1509

I am writing to support the passage of SB1509. My dad, Arthur Iwasaki and several uncles were members of the 442nd RCT and Oregon Nisei Veterans. Growing up my dad never talked much about his service nor did my mother talk much about the internment camps. It wasn't until I was in high school that I asked questions and found out about their experiences during WWII and, at that time, little was written in the history books. Much later in his life, my dad started speaking up about his service, spoke at area high schools around Veteran Days, worked on the Beaverton War Memorial and was interviewed by various historians. I think he found it important to document the past so that future generations, including myself, would remember the sacrifices made for all of us.

I had the honor and privilege of accompanying my dad to several of his reunions of his I Company and met other Nisei veterans and their families. But what struck me was meeting non veterans and their families who wanted to attend and thank these veterans for their service, because if it wasn't for these veterans, they wouldn't be here today. These men were their heroes.

By designating Hwy 35 as the Oregon Nisei Veterans World War II Historic Highway would bring much recognition and tribute to all the Nisei Veterans of WWII. They are the most decorated unit in US Army history for their size and length of service and I believe it is because they had two wars to fight, prejudice on the home front and fighting for their country as American citizens. I believe their contribution to our history as Oregonians and as US citizens will continue to educate and inspire generations to come if we make it visible. We must not let history repeat itself,

Respectfully

Christi Iwasaki