

4232 NE Couch St
Portland OR 97213

February 14, 2022

Dear Chair Grayber and Members of the House Committee on Veterans:

We write in support of SB 1509, which would designate Highway 35 as the Oregon Nisei Veterans World War II Memorial Highway.

This designation honors all of Oregon's WW II Nisei veterans, and especially the 57 Nisei veterans from the mid-Columbia River region. The honor is well deserved and overdue.

The valor of the Nisei veterans has recently (and finally!) been nationally recognized with a US postage stamp and a national best-selling book, "Facing the Mountain," by Daniel James Brown.

Now is the perfect time for Oregon to create this special honor for these heroic Oregon soldiers. And Highway 35 is the perfect place, significant because the families of many of Oregon's Nisei veterans owned or worked on fruit orchards along the highway until they were forcibly removed during World War II.

Designating Highway 35 as the Oregon Nisei Veterans World War II Memorial Highway doesn't erase the injustices wrought on those families. It does, however, establish that Oregon recognizes both the soldiers' citizenship and their brave service to our nation.

We honor these soldiers. We hope that highway signs noting "Oregon Nisei Veterans World War II Memorial Highway" will encourage others, especially youth, to learn their history and honor them, too.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,



Ted Kulongoski
Governor of Oregon (2003-2011)



Mary Oberst
First Lady of Oregon (2003-2011)