

Submitter: Michael Yaguchi  
On Behalf Of: The late Kenji Yaguchi WWII veteran 442 RCT  
Committee: House Committee On Veterans and Emergency Management  
Measure: SB1509

Members of the House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Management. I am Lieutenant Colonel Michael J. Yaguchi, United States Air Force, retired and current commander of the Nisei Veterans Committee, war veterans non-profit located in Seattle, Washington. Five of my uncles served in the US Army as members of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team or Military Intelligence Service. My uncle Frank Yaguchi was a recipient of the Silver Star, the third-highest combat award for valor, and two of my uncles were wounded during combat and are recipients of the Purple Heart. My uncle Kenji Yaguchi, a long-time resident of Oregon, was twice awarded the Purple Heart while serving as a 232nd Combat Engineering Battalion, 442nd Regimental Combat Team.

The significance of Senate Bill 1509 cannot be overstated because, during a time of racial prejudice, fear, and hysteria, Nisei men and women volunteered from within the War Relocation Authority incarceration centers to volunteer to serve in the US military. The US Army's Center of Military History attributes the wartime record of the 442 RCT as the most highly decorated unit for its size and length of service in the history of the US Army. That recognition continues today.

As Oregonians roam this portion of Route 35, the majesty of her scenery would be an eloquent backdrop to this magnificent American story where men and women chose to serve their country of birth even though their country chose to ignore their status as American citizens. The war was going badly, and America needed men, strong men, men with conviction and character, to fight to preserve the principles of the US Constitution. They fought for a better tomorrow. And I know that I stand on their shoulders - All of us, every American, stands on their shoulders. Honoring this legacy and standing up against those who would threaten our Constitution under the conditions they chose to serve is inspiring. It is a legacy to be proud of, and it is a legacy to build on, and SB 1509 does exactly that for all of us. Your support of this Bill is paramount to advancing this great American story further. Thank you. Lt Col Michael J. Yaguchi, USAF (ret) and Commander, Nisei Veterans Committee (Seattle WA)