

Testimony in Support of Oregon Senate Bill 1509
Before Oregon House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Management
Submitted by
Gerald Yamada, President
Japanese American Veterans Association
February 17, 2022

Dear Chair Grayber and Committee Members:

My name is Gerald Yamada. I am president of the Japanese American Veterans Association (JAVA). JAVA is a national veteran organization that promotes the legacy of the Japanese American soldiers who served during World War II.

I appreciate this opportunity to join in supporting passage of SB 1509. The reason why enactment of SB 1509 is important is that this would be the first time that all Japanese American, men and women, who served in defending America during World War II will be honored by Oregon for their service. As travelers enjoy scenic Oregon along Highway 35, from the Columbia River to Mt. Hood, they will see the permanent roadside markers on the Oregon Nisei Veterans WWII Memorial Highway. This would enable travelers' to say "Thank you for your service" and for Oregon to honor the Japanese American WWII soldiers as America's heroes.

Faced with the government's discriminatory actions taken against Japanese Americans and the denial of their constitutional rights, based solely on their ethnicity, after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Japanese American men and women, who answered the call to serve, showed their loyalty to America. Their faith in America was not eroded by the distrust or overt prejudice that they faced. They served with honor and valor, in Europe with the 100th Infantry Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team and in the Pacific with the Military Intelligence Service, in the Women's Army Corp and Nurses' Corp, and in rebuilding Pearl Harbor. Their spirit is the guiding light for all Americans to follow.

I hope that the House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Management embraces this spirit and passes SB 1509. Thank you for the opportunity to express my views in support of this important bill.

Information about JAVA can be found on JAVA's website at JAVA-US.org.