

Submitter: Christopher Lee

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Veterans and Emergency Management

Measure: SB1509

Members of the House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Management:

Dear Chair Grayber and Committee Members,

My name is Christopher Lee and I am the current Vice- President of Portland JACL. Our chapter is the largest within the national Japanese American Citizens League organization. Many of our members are from Hood River and prior to World War II there were Japanese American families that lived and farmed along Highway 35.

Thirty-three thousand Japanese American (Nisei) soldiers served our country honorably during World War II while many of their families were among 120,000 incarcerated in American concentration camps. They were heroic. One unit, the 442nd Regimental Combat (a segregated Japanese American unit)) is the most decorated unit in our country's military history for its size and length of service. Still, they faced discrimination when they returned home.

I strongly endorse Senate Bill 1509 to dedicate Highway 35 as the Oregon Nisei Veterans World War II Memorial Highway. We can honor these heroes with permanent roadside markers to help visitors, the general public and specifically our youth and next generations ask questions and learn how American citizens demonstrated pride over prejudice.

Christopher Lee
Portland, OR