

IN THE SENATE

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 106

BY STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

STATING FINDINGS OF THE LEGISLATURE AND HONORING MINORU YASUI FOR HIS
COURAGE AND HIS COMMITMENT TO LIBERTY AND JUSTICE.

Be It Resolved by the Legislature of the State of Idaho:

WHEREAS, Minoru Yasui was born on October 19, 1916, in Hood River, Oregon, the son of Japanese immigrants; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Yasui excelled academically and, in 1939, graduated with honors from the University of Oregon School of Law; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Yasui was admitted to practice law in September 1939 as the first Japanese American member of the Oregon State Bar; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Yasui, despite his distinguished academic record, was unable to find employment with any law firm in Oregon, and thus accepted a position as a consular attaché with the Consulate General of Japan in Chicago; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Yasui resigned his position with the Japanese consulate immediately following the attack on Pearl Harbor and, as a second lieutenant in the United States Army Reserve, reported for duty at Fort Vancouver, Washington; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Yasui was denied the opportunity to serve our country as a soldier during World War II because of his ancestry; and

WHEREAS, in January 1942, Mr. Yasui opened his own law practice in Portland to assist persons of Japanese ancestry facing political and legal persecution during the war; and

WHEREAS, in March 1942, Public Proclamation No. 3 was issued, imposing a curfew on "all persons of Japanese ancestry," regardless of their citizenship; and

WHEREAS, on March 28, 1942, Mr. Yasui intentionally violated the curfew and volunteered to be arrested so that he could challenge the constitutionality of Public Proclamation No. 3; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Yasui was forced to await trial in the North Portland Livestock Pavilion along with 3,000 other Japanese Americans who had been forcibly removed from their homes; and

WHEREAS, on June 12, 1942, Mr. Yasui went on trial before the United States District Court for the District of Oregon, at which trial his citizenship and loyalty to the United States were unjustly impugned by the prosecution; and

WHEREAS, after his trial, but before the verdict was rendered, Mr. Yasui was transported to the Minidoka Relocation Center, an internment camp in Jerome County, Idaho; and

WHEREAS, in November 1942, Mr. Yasui returned to Portland to hear the verdict in his case; and

WHEREAS, the district court held that the curfew, as applied to American citizens, was unconstitutional, but further held that Mr. Yasui had ef-

1 fectively renounced his citizenship by working for the Japanese consulate,
2 therefore finding him guilty of violating the curfew as a foreign national;
3 and

4 WHEREAS, Mr. Yasui appealed his conviction and the holding on his citi-
5 zenship to the United States Supreme Court; and

6 WHEREAS, Mr. Yasui spent nine months in solitary confinement at the
7 Multnomah County Jail in Portland while awaiting the outcome of his case; and

8 WHEREAS, the Supreme Court issued its opinion on June 21, 1943, recog-
9 nizing Mr. Yasui's citizenship but finding that the curfew could be lawfully
10 applied to him, even as an American citizen, due to "wartime necessity," thus
11 upholding his conviction; and

12 WHEREAS, in August 1943, Mr. Yasui was transported back to the Minidoka
13 internment camp, where he was incarcerated until June 1944; and

14 WHEREAS, following his release from the camp, Mr. Yasui moved to Den-
15 ver, Colorado, where he passed the bar exam but was denied admission to the
16 bar because of his criminal conviction; and

17 WHEREAS, Mr. Yasui appealed to the Colorado Supreme Court and was
18 granted admission to the Colorado State Bar; and

19 WHEREAS, as an attorney, an advocate, and a civil servant, Mr. Yasui
20 spent the next four decades working tirelessly for civil and human rights,
21 not only for persons of Japanese ancestry but also for immigrant communi-
22 ties, African Americans, Native Americans, Hispanics and people with dis-
23 abilities; and

24 WHEREAS, Mr. Yasui was a dedicated community volunteer, serving as a
25 scoutmaster, a mentor for young people, and a sponsor for youth education
26 programs such as Presidential Classroom; and

27 WHEREAS, Mr. Yasui passed away on November 12, 1986, at the age of 70;
28 and

29 WHEREAS, Mr. Yasui was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of
30 Freedom on November 24, 2015, for his defense of Japanese Americans during
31 World War II and for his lifelong work advancing civil and human rights; and

32 WHEREAS, Mr. Yasui serves as an inspiration to those in public life for
33 his courage, his steadfast commitment to improving people's lives, and his
34 belief -- shared by the members of this Legislature -- that "we are born into
35 this world to make a difference."

36 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the members of the First Regular
37 Session of the Sixty-fourth Idaho Legislature, the Senate and the House of
38 Representatives concurring therein, that we honor Minoru Yasui's life, his
39 legacy, and his commitment to liberty and justice for all.