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ACR-126 Day of Remembrance. (2015-2016)

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 126

CHAPTER 16

Relative to a Day of Remembrance.

[Filed with Secretary of State March 17, 2016.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 126, Ting. Day of Remembrance.

This measure would declare February 19, 2016, as a Day of Remembrance in order to increase public awareness of the events surrounding the internment of Americans of Japanese ancestry during World War II.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, under which more than 120,000 Americans and resident aliens of Japanese ancestry were incarcerated in 10 internment camps scattered throughout western states during World War II; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order 9066 deferred the American dream for more than 120,000 Americans and resident aliens of Japanese ancestry by inflicting a great human cost of abandoned homes, businesses, careers, professional advancements, and disruption to family life; and

WHEREAS, Despite their families being incarcerated behind barbed wire in the United States, approximately 33,000 veterans of Japanese ancestry fought bravely for our country during World War II, serving in the 100th Battalion, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, and the 522nd Field Artillery Battalion; and

WHEREAS, On June 21, 2000, President William Jefferson Clinton elevated 20 Japanese Americans who served in the 100th Battalion and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and were among 52 individuals who received the nation's second highest military decoration, the Distinguished Service Cross, to receive the nation's highest military decoration, the Medal of Honor, bringing the total number of Japanese Americans who so received the Medal of Honor to 21; and

WHEREAS, In 2010, President Barack Obama granted the Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the 100th Infantry Battalion and 442nd Regimental Combat Team in recognition of their dedicated service during World War II; and

WHEREAS, Nearly 6,000 veterans of Japanese ancestry served with the Military Intelligence Service and have been credited for shortening the war by two years by translating enemy battle plans, defense maps, tactical orders, intercepted messages and diaries, and interrogating enemy prisoners; and

WHEREAS, Many Japanese American veterans continued a life of public service after the war, including Medal of Honor recipient and United States Senator Daniel Inouye, who passed away in December 2012 while representing his home state of Hawaii; and

WHEREAS, Nearly 40 years after the United States Supreme Court decisions upholding the convictions of Fred Korematsu, Min Yasui, and Gordon Hirabayashi for violations of curfew and Executive Order 9066, it was discovered that officials from the United States Department of War and the United States Department of Justice had altered and destroyed evidence regarding the loyalty of Americans and resident aliens of Japanese ancestry and withheld information from the United States Supreme Court; and

WHEREAS, Dale Minami, Peggy Nagae, Dennis Hayashi, Rod Kawakami, and many attorneys and interns contributed innumerable hours to win a reversal of the original convictions of Korematsu, Yasui, and Hirabayashi in 1983 by filing a petition for writ of error coram nobis on the grounds that fundamental errors and injustice occurred; and

WHEREAS, On August 10, 1988, President Ronald Wilson Reagan signed into law the federal Civil Liberties Act of 1988, finding that Executive Order 9066 was not justified by military necessity and, hence, was caused by racial prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership; and

WHEREAS, The federal Civil Liberties Act of 1988 apologized on behalf of the people of the United States for the evacuation, internment, and relocation of Americans and permanent resident aliens of Japanese ancestry during World War II. The act also provided for restitution to those individuals of Japanese ancestry who were interned; and

WHEREAS, February 19, 2016, marks 74 years since the signing of Executive Order 9066 and a policy of grave injustice against American citizens and resident aliens of Japanese ancestry; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature of the State of California declares February 19, 2016, as a Day of Remembrance in this state to increase public awareness of the events surrounding the internment of Americans of Japanese ancestry during World War II; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the Governor, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the State Library, and the California State Archives.