



‘Minoru Yasui Day’ Bill Passes Oregon House Unanimously

Bill to honor Oregonian who fought against Japanese American internment

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SALEM, Ore. - A bill honoring the struggle and legacy of an Oregon freedom fighter, Minoru Yasui, was passed unanimously by the Oregon House of Representatives today. The proposed legislation will create Minoru Yasui Day in perpetuity, a day when students will learn about the courageous Oregonian who took a stand against the unfair treatment of Japanese Americans during World War II, and fought all his life for equal treatment for all people.

“It is important that we teach our children about this dark chapter of American history as a preventative to repeating the mistakes of our past,” said Holly Yasui, daughter of Minoru Yasui and cofounder of the [Minoru Yasui Tribute Project](#).

“This bill represents the efforts of many, many people who are carrying on the legacy of Min Yasui both in spirit and in action: to have a day, each year, to remember and reflect upon the struggle for justice and the defense of human and civil rights in the past, present and future.”

On March 28, 1942 in Portland, Minoru Yasui deliberately broke the curfew that was placed on all people of Japanese ancestry. Yasui, a lawyer, brought a challenge against Executive Order 9066, which authorized the forced removal from their homes on the West Coast and incarceration of over 120,000 Japanese Americans. He spent nine months in solitary confinement in Multnomah County Jail for the curfew violation, and then was sent to Minidoka, one of the incarceration centers run by the federal government. He fought his case all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, but they shamefully upheld his conviction. Mr. Yasui went on to lead an illustrious career as an attorney and community leader. In 1983 his conviction was vacated, but his case was not reheard in the Federal Court. Last year, he was posthumously honored with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor in the United States.

“When we hear so much hateful, anti-immigrant rhetoric on the news, it is moving that Oregon legislators have come together across the aisle to support Minoru Yasui Day,” said Kimberly McCullough, ACLU of Oregon’s legislative director. “By accepting prejudice and intolerance, we abandon our core values of freedom and equal treatment for all people and forget what it truly means to be Americans.”

The ACLU helped to draft the bill and has collected over 1,300 signatures in support of Minoru Yasui Day on [their website](#).

This week, advocates from the Minoru Yasui Tribute Project gathered in Salem to support the bill, including George Nakata, who was incarcerated along with Mr. Yasui at Minidoka, and Homer Yasui, who was incarcerated with his mother and sister at Tule Lake.

Mr. Nakata testified in support of the bill saying, “Min Yasui started a walk on March 28, 1942 that he continued all his life.”

Holly Yasui added, “And we, his heirs – not only by blood but by conviction and commitment – continue.”

The bill will move on to the Oregon Senate.

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