

SCR 33/SR 20

Measure Title:

URGING THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE TO ISSUE POSTAL STAMPS HONORING THE WORLD WAR II JAPANESE-AMERICAN NISEI SOLDIERS, OTHER DISTINGUISHED MILITARY UNITS IN UNITED STATES HISTORY, AND AMERICANS WHO FOUGHT AGAINST DISCRIMINATION BASED ON RACE OR NATIONAL ORIGIN.

Report Title:

442nd Go For Broke; Commemorative Stamps



JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE

HONOLULU CHAPTER

P.O. BOX 1291, HONOLULU, HAWAII 96807

PHONE: 523-8464

Working For A Greater America

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SCR 33: Urging The United States Postal Service to Issue Postal Stamps Honoring the World War II Japanese-American Nisei Soldiers, Other Distinguished Military Unites in United States History, and American's Who Fought Against Discrimination Based on Race or National Origin.

Testimony in Support

Hearing: Tuesday, March 3, 2009 at 1:15 p.m. in Conf. Rm 229

To: The Honorable Will Espero, Chair, Public Safety and Military Affairs
The Honorable Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair, Judiciary and Government Operations
Members of the Joint Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs and Judiciary and Government Operations

The JACL Hawai'i, Honolulu Chapter strongly supports SCR 33, urging the U.S. Postal Service to issue postal stamps honoring the World War II Japanese-American Nisei soldiers, other distinguished military unites in U.S. history, and American's who fought against discrimination based on race or national origin.

Founded in 1929, the Japanese American Citizens League is the nation's oldest and largest Asian Pacific American civil rights organization made up of over 20,000 members across the U.S and in Japan. Locally, we are a strong civil rights organization committed to the protection of civil and human rights of all.

On October 24, 2007, the JACL Hawai'i, Honolulu Chapter submitted testimony in support of the City and County Resolution 07-335 (2007), urging the U.S. Postal Service to issue a commemorative stamp honoring the Nisei Soldiers of World War II for their service and commitment to the United States of America. We continue to believe that the creation of a U.S. postage stamp commemorating the Nisei soldiers and all other Americans who fought against discrimination based on race or national origin is warranted.

The exemplary record of the Japanese American soldiers of WWII has been well-documented. Their actions represented the highest level of American patriotism as they fought while many of their families were unjustly incarcerated in internment camps. During WWII, the JACL argued for and won the right of Japanese Americans to serve in the U.S. military, resulting in the creation of the 100th/442nd Regimental Combat Team. Composed of approximately 14,000 Japanese American soldiers, the 100th/442nd fought many battles. One of the most historic was the "Rescue of the Lost Battalion" in October 1944, when the unit led a heroic drive through German lines in the Vosges Mountains to rescue 211 surviving soldiers of the 36th Texas Division. In 1945, the courageous actions of the 100th/442nd were critical in breaking the German "Gothic Line." They liberated towns such as Bruyeres, Biffontaine, and Belvedere. In addition, they helped free Holocaust victims from a Dachau concentration camp. The 100th/442nd became the most decorated unit for its size and length of service in American history. Its awards include eight Presidential Citations and twenty-one Medals of Honor.

Approximately 6,000 Japanese Americans served in the Pacific Theater in the Military Intelligence Service (MIS) of the US Army. These soldiers utilized their knowledge of the Japanese language and culture to defeat the Japanese military in the Pacific. Major General Charles A. Willoughby, General Douglas MacArthur's intelligence chief, estimated that their contributions shortened the war by at least two years and saved countless lives in the process. For this, the MIS was awarded a Presidential Unit Citation. For these reasons, JAACL Hawai'i strongly supports SCR 33. Thank you very much for this opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.

Sincerely,

/s/ Shawn L.M. Benton

Shawn L.M. Benton

President, JAACL Hawai'i, Honolulu Chapter
Japanese American Citizens League



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SR 20: Urging The United States Postal Service to Issue Postal Stamps Honoring the World War II Japanese-American Nisei Soldiers, Other Distinguished Military Unites in United States History, and American's Who Fought Against Discrimination Based on Race or National Origin.

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Sincerely,

/s/ Shawn L.M. Benton

Shawn L.M. Benton

President, JACL Hawai'i, Honolulu Chapter
Japanese American Citizens League

From: Wayne Osako [mailto:wosako@socal.rr.com]
Sent: Tuesday, March 03, 2009 7:37 AM
To: PSM Testimony
Cc: Rep. John Mizuno; Sen. Les Ihara, Jr.
Subject: In support of SCR 20 and SCR 33

Dear Honorable Members of the Committee,

I apologize for the belatedness of this letter of support, but I only found out about this hearing late yesterday.

On behalf of the grassroots coalition campaign in support of the U.S. commemorative postage stamp to honor the Japanese American World War II veterans, I humbly urge you to support SCR 33 and SCR 20. My name is Wayne Osako, Co-chair and National Coordinator for the campaign. Besides the importance of your decision historically to help bring the story to the American public and especially to younger generations with the stamp, your decision is a symbolic one in support of the proud, diverse history of our U.S. Armed Forces which continues today as young Asian Pacific Americans are inspired to serve in our nation's military. It has been well-documented that the Postal Service highly values state resolutions in support of stamp proposals as documentation of prominent, public support. All proposals must meet three main criteria of 1) standing the test of time, 2) being consistent with public opinion, and 3) having broad national interest. Last year, the state legislature of Hawaii lead the nation by being the first state to pass a resolution in support of the stamp, and subsequently, 3 other states have followed your lead (California, Illinois, Washington, and Oregon). This movement has helped the Postal Service to give special attention to our proposal, and continue to review its merits. This second resolution from the Great State of Hawaii would be of tremendous help, and remind the Postal Service that the campaign continues, strong as ever, in support of these historic American veterans.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Wayne Osako
Co-chair and Coordinator
Nisei WWII Veterans Stamp Campaign
Garden Grove, California
(714) 222-6530

Cc: Rep. John Mizuno

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SCR33/SR20

To the Chair of the Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs Will Espero, Vice-Chair Robert Bunda and the Chair of the Committee on Judiciary and Government Operations Brain Taniguchi and Vice-Chair Dwight Takamine, and distinguished committee members:

I support SCR33 & SR20 because this will honor the most famous units, the 100th & 442nd Regimental Combat Teams, known as the "Go for Broke" regiment, for their valor and steadfast commitment to protecting our lives and freedoms by placing their lives in peril. Also, these units were comprised of Nisei Soldiers who were the most decorated units for their size and length of service in American history.

To provide a commemorative stamp honoring the great contributions of the Nisei soldiers who not only fought for America's freedom but also fought against race discrimination, during World War II, is justified.

The United States Postal Service has already recognized military groups with commemorative stamps as follows:

In 1984, the United States Postal Service issued the "Hispanic Americans: A Proud Heritage" stamp to honor Latino men and women who served in the military; and

In 1994, the United States Postal Service issued the "Buffalo Soldiers" stamp which honors the historic African American cavalry of the U.S. Army.

I believe it is time to issue a Commemorative stamp to honor our Nisei Soldiers.

Sincerely,

Josephine Besario
Hawaii Resident