



2019 AG REQUEST LEGISLATION

FRED KOREMATSU & GORDON HIRABAYASHI DAY

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

During WWII, Japanese-Americans and Japanese immigrants were incarcerated under federal exclusion and incarceration orders. Fred Korematsu and Gordon Hirabayashi refused to comply with orders they believed were unconstitutional. Both were arrested—Hirabayashi in Washington, Korematsu in California. Their legal challenges were unsuccessful, and the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the incarceration orders. In the 1980s, Korematsu’s and Hirabayashi’s convictions were overturned by federal courts. Korematsu and Hirabayashi should be celebrated for their courage to stand up to injustice.

WHY IS THIS CHANGE NECESSARY?

A day of recognition would honor their legacies and the thousands of incarcerated Issei, Nisei, and Sansei, civil rights defenders, and WWII veterans from Washington. It would honor Hirabayashi, a born-and-raised Washingtonian and alumnus of the University of Washington. This day of recognition will augment the state’s existing “Civil Liberties Day of Remembrance,” which is observed every February 19 and also commemorates the struggles against incarceration.

KEY
STAT

60 PERCENT

As many as 14,000 Washingtonians of Japanese, Korean, and Taiwanese ancestry were imprisoned during the Second World War; 60% were American citizens.

AROUND THE U.S.:

Since 2010, a number of other states including California, Hawai’i, Virginia, Utah, Georgia, Illinois, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Michigan and Florida, as well as numerous municipalities, have commemorated January 30 as “Fred Korematsu Day” in celebration of civil liberties and the Constitution, but no state has yet named a day for Gordon Hirabayashi.

WHAT’S THE SOLUTION?

This legislation would create an annual day of remembrance to honor Fred Korematsu and Washington native Gordon Hirabayashi to remind us of the importance of defending individual rights.

Key Support:

TBD

Prime Sponsors:

Sen. Hasegawa: D

Rep. Santos: D

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1: Andy Hobbs, “75 years ago, Japanese internment sparked economic and cultural fears in Puget Sound,” *The News Tribune*, February 19, 2017.