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Oregon Senate Rules Committee

Dear Distinguished Committee Members:

Our country is built on our many accomplishments, but we've also admitted to our mistakes as well. We can learn from those mistakes if – *together* – we vow to build an America committed to “justice for all.”

My mother was incarcerated in a concentration camp on our *own* soil during World War II. Mom had broken no laws, she'd never been to Japan; she was a loyal American citizen. Her father, my grandfather, had lived and worked in the U.S. for more than 40 years. And Grandma was the treasurer for a war bond effort among Japanese immigrants – so they could support their new homeland. They were all uprooted from their homes and placed under armed guard, surrounded by barbed wire. Just because they looked like the enemy.

Six days after Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, my father volunteered for our country's armed forces. He told me, “That was no dilemma for me. I figured I was an American citizen. That's my duty to volunteer.” In the army, he too bought \$10 war bonds when he could – a big chunk of his \$21 monthly salary.

When Dad and Mom returned to their hometown in Oregon after the war, the names of Japanese American World War II veterans had been blotted from a community honor

roll of GIs; and more than 1,800 residents signed petitions telling my parents and others of Japanese descent that “No Japs are Wanted in Hood River.”*

So I worry about how we treat “others” – as well as the consequences of racism and hysteria. Most of us are descendants of immigrants to this country. (And actually we’ve mistreated those who were already here, our Native American predecessors.)

With the passage of Senate Concurrent Resolution 14, Oregonians will have reason to reflect on lessons from our past with a commitment to protect our liberties today.

I wholeheartedly endorse the passage of Oregon Senate Resolution 14. It’s a promise for our future – and a declaration of hope for our youth.

Sincerely,

Linda Tamura
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*Please note that in 2011 my hometown dedicated a monument inscribed with names of *all* Japanese American veterans in the county, not just those whose names had been removed in 1944. That was a positive step with hope for our future. Let us take another one.