

Kate Brown
Governor



**Oregon Commission on
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"Advocating Equality and Diversity"
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**Testimony in support of SCR 14
February 13, 2017, 1pm, Hearing Room B
Senate Committee on Rules**

Good afternoon Chair Burdick, Vice-Chair Ferrioli and Senators Beyer, Boquist, and Roblan:

My name is Chanpone Sinlapasai-Okamura, chair-elect of the Oregon Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs, also known as OCAPIA. Thank you for this opportunity to speak.

OCAPIA supports SRC 14 because we believe it is ethically and morally the right thing to do. My husband's family, like my fellow Commissioner's family, were Japanese Americans who were forced out of their homes and businesses because of executive order 9066 during World War II. My in-laws lost everything and were torn away from other family members to be incarcerated in the Minidoka Internment Camp in Southern Idaho.

My family and I are refugees who escaped persecution in Laos when I was four years old, and thanks to our American sponsors and the community, I was able to resettle to the United States.

The scars and trauma of incarceration camps and escaping persecution are events that still live in the minds and hearts of every generation of my husband's family and my family that has been touch by it.

Today, we are seeing the same fear and trauma of Executive Order 9066 resurface as a result of the recent Executive Order that banned the immigration of people from seven predominately Muslim countries and the indefinite suspension of Refugees from Syria.

We felt the ripple effects caused by massive panic in our Muslim-American communities from all over the world. Family members witnessed the denial of entry of U.S. citizens, green card holders, and visa waiver holders all because they were of Muslim faith.

At the Portland Airport, we had an Iraqi Muslim, green card holder who took a trip to Iraq to gather his daughter's birth certificate and identification be held for over six hours for questioning, while his wife, young daughter and other family members sat in tears not knowing if he was deported.

Rumors that said ICE/ERO were at the hospital, airports, and court houses retriggered memories of past trauma caused by unlawful incarceration. Victims of crime refused to go to court to testify and family members who were injured refused to get medical treatment,

Senators, please send a message of hope and unity by passing this resolution. Send the message that we in Oregon will never let what happened to the Japanese American happen again to anyone because of their heritage.

**OR Commission on Asian
and Pacific Islander Affairs**

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David Yuen Tam, Vice Chair
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