



BIJAC

Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community

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www.bijac.org*

January 19, 2022

The Honorable Jay Obernolte
1029 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Japanese American World War II History Network Act

Dear Congressman Obernolte,

The Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community (BIJAC) wholeheartedly supports the Japanese American World War II History Network Act, which will support the effective production and dissemination of educational materials about Japanese American experiences during World War II, including studies related to confinement sites and Department of Justice camps.

Nearly eighty years ago on March 30, 1942, two hundred and twenty-seven men, women, and children of Japanese ancestry - two-thirds of them American citizens, were forcibly removed from their homes on Bainbridge Island as a result of wartime hysteria and the implementation of Executive Order 9066. The abrupt dislocation from the everyday lives of hardworking Bainbridge Island families to life in government sponsored concentration camps caused years of humiliation, pain, and loss of livelihood, not to mention intergenerational trauma for their descendants. This history must be remembered and preserved in order that the sacrifices of our elders be recognized.

Much of the U.S. government’s activities were shrouded in secrecy during the war and in the years following, the realities of the WWII Japanese American experience were not accurately told in history books and in classrooms around the country. The Japanese American WWII History Network will provide opportunities for teachers and visitors to Japanese American confinement sites administered by the National Park Service to access stories and educational materials that reflect the real-life experiences of Japanese Americans during WWII.

The motto of the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial, “Nidoto Nai Yoni” is translated as “Let it not happen again”. Our hope is that programs like the Japanese American WWII History Network will serve to protect and preserve our civil and constitutional rights. Thank you for the opportunity to support this important program.

Sincerely,

President, BIJAC

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