

# D R A F T

## SUMMARY

Designates March 28 of each year as Minoru Yasui Day.  
Declares emergency, effective on passage.

## A BILL FOR AN ACT

Relating to a day to honor Minoru Yasui; and declaring an emergency.

Whereas 100 years ago, in 1916, Minoru Yasui was born in Hood River, Oregon, to Masuo and Shidzuyo Yasui, Japanese immigrants, making him a second generation Japanese American, or *Nisei*; and

Whereas in 1933, Minoru Yasui graduated salutatorian from Hood River High School, and in 1937 graduated Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Oregon and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the United States Army; and

Whereas in 1939, Minoru Yasui became the first Japanese American graduate of the University of Oregon School of Law and the first Japanese American member of the Oregon State Bar; and

Whereas on March 28, 1942, Minoru Yasui violated a military curfew imposed under Executive Order 9066—the order that led to the incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II; and

Whereas Minoru Yasui deliberately challenged that curfew by walking the streets of Portland, Oregon, and then turned himself in to the Portland police so that he could test the constitutionality of such discriminatory regulations; and

Whereas Minoru Yasui lost his case in the United States District Court for the District of Oregon and spent nine months in solitary confinement in

1 a six-foot-by-eight-foot cell in the Multnomah County Jail awaiting his ap-  
2 peal to the United States Supreme Court; and

3 Whereas the United States Supreme Court ruled against Minoru Yasui in  
4 regard to the military curfew, and he was released from jail only to be  
5 incarcerated in the Minidoka War Relocation Center in Idaho; and

6 Whereas after his release from Minidoka in 1944, Minoru Yasui settled  
7 in Denver, Colorado, where he practiced law and helped found and partic-  
8 ipated in many organizations, including the Urban League of Metropolitan  
9 Denver, the Latin American Research and Service Agency, Denver Native  
10 Americans United and various War on Poverty programs; and

11 Whereas Minoru Yasui was appointed to the Denver Commission on  
12 Community Relations, for which he served as vice-chair, chair and executive  
13 director, and as such was an active advocate for civil and human rights  
14 whose efforts cut across ethnic and religious lines and addressed the con-  
15 cerns of all minorities and marginalized people; and

16 Whereas Minoru Yasui was an active member of the Japanese American  
17 Citizens League (JACL) throughout his life, taking on leadership roles at  
18 both the local and national level, and was a founding member of the Mile  
19 High Chapter of JACL in Colorado and the Mid-Columbia Chapter of JACL  
20 in Hood River, Oregon; and

21 Whereas Minoru Yasui reopened his World War II Supreme Court case  
22 in 1983 under a writ of error *coram nobis* in the United States District Court  
23 for the District of Oregon; and

24 Whereas as chair of the JACL National Redress Committee, Minoru  
25 Yasui helped build and lead the movement seeking an official apology and  
26 reparations for the injustices perpetrated against Japanese Americans during  
27 World War II, actions that led to passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988  
28 two years after his death; and

29 Whereas Minoru Yasui is buried in his beloved hometown of Hood River,  
30 Oregon, despite his many years based in Denver; and

31 Whereas President Barack Obama awarded Minoru Yasui the Presidential

1 Medal of Freedom on November 24, 2015, for devoting his life “to fighting  
2 for basic human rights and the fair and equal treatment of every  
3 American”; and

4 Whereas when presenting the medal, President Obama said, “Min’s legacy  
5 has never been more important. It is a call to our national conscience, a  
6 reminder of our enduring obligation to be the land of the free and the home  
7 of the brave, an America worthy of his sacrifices”; now, therefore,

8 **Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:**

9 **SECTION 1. March 28 of each year is designated as Minoru Yasui**  
10 **Day.**

11 **SECTION 2. This 2016 Act being necessary for the immediate pres-**  
12 **ervation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is de-**  
13 **clared to exist, and this 2016 Act takes effect on its passage.**

14

---