

HB18-1273: Protect Colorado Residents from Federal Government Overreach

April 30, 2018

Madam Chair and Committee Members:

I am Dr. Jo Ann Ota Fujioka, representing myself and the 120,000 Japanese Americans unjustly incarcerated in prison camps during WWII.

I wholeheartedly support HB18-1273 to prevent the travesty that the Japanese Americans endured from ever happening again.

Had the protections of this bill been in place, the federal government would have been prevented from creating and maintaining a registry of Japanese Americans which the government utilized to identify and assign numbers to each of us. We were forced to wear tags with the assigned number, 41478, and to label our meager belongings with the number as well.

This bill will prevent this type of physical identification from being placed on a person based on race, ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity or religious affiliation. Never again will the humiliation and stigmatizing of any group be tolerated in this nation.

The state of California was complicit in providing the information to the federal government without determining that this action was for a legal and constitutional purpose. Colorado must not ever fall into the same trap of allowing the rights of its citizens to be violated by the federal government.

I am told that when the Japanese Americans were ordered to report to assembly camps with three days notice, Chinese Americans wore buttons saying, " I am Chinese" so they would not be mistaken for Japanese.

HB18 1273 will , also, prevent the state from aiding or assisting, including using state or local lands or resources, to intern, arrest, or detain a person based on his or her race or other identifiable groupings. The transporting and incarceration of the Japanese Americans involved the US Army and the land and resources of 13 states to build the prison camps.

Colorado must honor the memory and integrity of Governor Ralph Carr who stood as a pillar of justice at the time, being the only state of the 48 states to welcome the Japanese Americans. This principled statesman was rewarded, sadly, by losing a promising career in politics.

Though the conditions in the prison camps were deplorable with non existent medical care, meals of organ meats because the meats designated for the prison camps were sold on the black market, and meager \$29 per month pay for working in the camp, what was most unbearable was the treatment by the armed soldiers who stationed themselves menacingly in guard houses around the barbed wire fences.

We were treated like enemies of our own country. This treatment of citizens of the United States whose sons were fighting and dying in France and Italy was totally unwarranted and must never happen again. Vote YES on HB18-1273. Thank you.