

Rescind Prior Action by the Board of Supervisors which Supported the Internment of Japanese Americans

Seventy years ago, on January 27, 1942, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, falsely invoking the cause of national security, acted to diminish the rights of United States citizens. The Board adopted a resolution urging the federal government to use its force and means to evacuate Los Angeles residents of Japanese ancestry from their homes, to be held involuntarily in remote parts of their nation.

The motion passed as the California Congressional delegation and federal officials were weighing the merits and legality of detaining West Coast residents without criminal charges. The affirmative resolution from the Board of Supervisors, which governed the nation's largest population of Japanese Americans, gave aid and comfort to a decision-making process clouded by hysteria and bigotry.

The Supervisors claimed, with no evidence that local residents of Japanese ancestry "would constitute a potentially dangerous fifth column enemy" by siding with Japanese troops in the event of an invasion.

- MORE -

MOTION

MOLINA _____

RIDLEY-THOMAS _____

KNABE _____

ANTONOVICH _____

YAROSLAVSKY _____

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

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California officials including Governor Earl Warren, the future Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, hastily urged the federal government to detain Japanese Americans as swiftly as possible, including nearly 37,000 Los Angeles County residents, of whom two-thirds were United States citizens.

Decades later, in 1977, Warren said he “deeply regretted” supporting the internment, which he said was “not in keeping with our American concept of freedom and the rights of citizens.” Warren said his wartime position was produced “when fear, get-tough military psychology, propaganda and racial antagonism combine with one’s responsibility for public security to produce such acts.”

The Board of Supervisors must also in turn acknowledge its predecessor’s grave error of January 27, 1942, when it urged federal authorities to forcibly evacuate Japanese Americans.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

Rescind and revoke the Resolution of the Board of Supervisors dated January 27, 1942 which supported the relocation of Americans of Japanese ancestry from their homes and businesses.

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