



CITY OF KIRKLAND
CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE
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MEMORANDUM

To: Kurt Triplett, City Manager

From: Jim Lopez, Deputy City Manager of External Affairs
Erika Mascorro, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Manager
Daniel Lazo, Senior Community Engagement Coordinator

Date: December 18, 2025

Subject: **2026 Day of Remembrance of Japanese American Incarceration Proclamation**

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Mayor, on behalf of the City Council, proclaims February 19, 2026, as the Day of Remembrance of Japanese American Incarceration During World War II in Kirkland.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- The Day of Remembrance of Japanese American Incarceration During World War II is an annual commemoration of the forced evacuation and incarceration of over 120,000 Japanese Americans through federal Executive Order 9066.
- Acknowledgment of this past injustice can bring people together around a recommitment to shared values of civil rights and civil liberties.
- This proclamation is part of the City Council's adopted 2026 proclamation schedule.

BACKGROUND:

On February 19, 1942, shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066. The order authorized the forced evacuation and incarceration of thousands of loyal United States citizens because of their Japanese ancestry. Following the order, on May 20, 1942, approximately 60 Japanese American families from Bellevue boarded a train in Kirkland bound for a "relocation center" in Tule Lake in northern California. In all, an estimated 7,390 Americans of Japanese descent from Western Washington and Alaska were forcibly uprooted from their lives and livelihoods and incarcerated in concentration camps, in which they endured miserable conditions and treatment by military guards.

Other countries followed the United States and issued similar orders, including Canada, Mexico, Peru, Brazil, Chile, and Argentina.

Over two and a half years, from 1942 to 1945, the U.S. government removed Japanese Americans from their homes on the West Coast from California, Washington, and Oregon and the Alaska Territory, without a trial or due process, to internment camps across the interior United States, including locations in Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, and other states.

Despite these experiences, thousands of young Japanese American men enlisted in the U.S. armed forces, bravely fighting to defend the nation that was abridging their own freedoms at home. This sacrifice deserves our honor, as does the resilience that made it possible for thousands of Japanese American families to reclaim and rebuild their lives after the war.

On February 19, 1976, President Gerald Ford signed Proclamation 4417, "Confirming the Termination of the Executive Order Authorizing Japanese-American Internment During World War II."

In 1988, the U.S. government admitted that the forced evacuation and incarceration of Japanese American families was based on "race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership." This stain on our history should remind us to always stand up for our fellow Americans. Although perhaps uncomfortable, acknowledgment of past injustices can bring people together around a recommitment to shared values of civil rights and civil liberties.

The President's signing of Executive Order 9066 led to the wrongful incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II. In 2022, the National Park Service hosted an online collaborative event entitled National Day of Remembrance: 80 Years of Reckoning. The event, co-hosted by the National Park Service, the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, and the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation, is rewatchable on the National Park Service's YouTube channel.¹

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

This proclamation aligns with Kirkland's City values and strong commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB). Council has adopted legislation supporting these values, including:

- **Resolution R-5240** (2017) declaring Kirkland a safe, inclusive, and welcoming community for all people;
- **Resolution R-5434** (2020) expressing commitments to improving the safety and respect of Black people and approving the framework to create a community committed to examining and dismantling interpersonal, institutional, and structural racism in Kirkland;
- **Resolution R – 5548** (2022) adopting the City's DEIB 5-Year Roadmap;
- **Resolution R-5686** (2025) declaring Kirkland as a welcoming, inclusive, and safe city for the Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual Plus (2SLGBTQIA+) people and recognizing their human rights and well-being; and
- **Resolution R-5693** (2025) reaffirming the City's commitment to being a safe, inclusive, and welcoming community where all people belong.

NEXT STEPS:

Staff is working with stakeholders to identify who will accept the proclamation at the Council meeting.

¹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=on_DKBf-SoQ

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 – 2026 Day of Remembrance of Japanese American Incarceration During World War II Proclamation



A PROCLAMATION OF THE CITY OF KIRKLAND

Day of Remembrance of Japanese American Incarceration During World War II February 19, 2026

WHEREAS, on February 19, 1942, shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which authorized the forced evacuation and incarceration of thousands of loyal United States citizens because of their Japanese ancestry; and

WHEREAS, on May 20, 1942, approximately 60 Japanese American families from Bellevue boarded a train in Kirkland bound for a “relocation center” in Tule Lake in northern California; and

WHEREAS, over two and a half years from 1942 to 1945, the U.S. government removed Japanese Americans from their homes on the West Coast from the states of California, Washington, and Oregon and the Alaska Territory – without a trial or due process, and many unable to inform their families – forcing them into internment camps in unfamiliar lands in the states of Montana, New Mexico, and North Dakota; and

WHEREAS, approximately 7,390 Americans of Japanese descent from Western Washington and Alaska, and approximately 120,000 from the West Coast were forcibly relocated and incarcerated in concentration camps, enduring miserable conditions and treatment by military guards; and

WHEREAS, despite these experiences, thousands of young Japanese American men enlisted in the U.S. armed forces, bravely fighting to defend the nation that was abridging their own freedoms at home; and

WHEREAS, President Gerald Ford terminated the Order on February 19, 1976, and the U.S. government in 1988 admitted that the forced evacuation and incarceration of Japanese American families was based on “race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership”; and

WHEREAS, this stain on our history should remind us that we should always stand up for our fellow Americans and that acknowledgment of past injustices can help bring people together around a recommitment to the shared values in our country of civil rights and civil liberties.

NOW, THEREFORE, Mayor Kelli Curtis, on behalf of the City Council, does hereby proclaim February 19, 2026, as the Day of Remembrance of Japanese American Incarceration During World War II in Kirkland and calls upon the Kirkland community to join in solemn remembrance of the issuance of Executive Order 9066 in 1942 and to commemorate the rescission of that same order on February 19, 1976.

Signed this 17th day of February, 2026

Kelli Curtis, Mayor