

Senator Jani Iwamoto proposes the following substitute bill:

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE TOPAZ INTERNMENT CAMP

2018 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Jani Iwamoto

House Sponsor: Merrill F. Nelson

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This concurrent resolution recognizes the achievement of establishing the Topaz Museum and Education Center to preserve the Topaz Relocation Center site and educate the public about Japanese American internment history.

Highlighted Provisions:

This resolution:

- ▶ recognizes the achievements of Jane Beckwith, founder and current president of the Topaz Museum Board, the past and present members of the Topaz Museum Board, and other groups and individuals in bringing the vision of the Topaz Museum and Education Center to reality and providing a place where residents of and visitors to the state can learn valuable lessons regarding civil rights.

Special Clauses:

None

Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor concurring therein:

WHEREAS, during World War II, as described in the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, "race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership" led to over 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry, two-thirds of whom were American citizens, being forced from their homes



26 in west coast states and incarcerated in camps such as the Topaz Relocation Center near Delta,
27 Utah;

28 WHEREAS, the Topaz Museum Board, a 501(c)(3) organization, was established in
29 1996 after raising money to restore a portion of an original Topaz recreation hall that had been
30 used as the Boy Scouts meeting place during the period of incarceration;

31 WHEREAS, the Topaz Museum Board, under the direction of its founder and current
32 president, Jane Beckwith, consists of people committed to a mission of: preserving the Topaz
33 site; telling the history of incarceration during World War II; honoring the internees;
34 interpreting the impact of the experience on the internees, their families, and the residents of
35 Millard County; and educating the public in order to prevent a similar denial of American civil
36 rights from recurring;

37 WHEREAS, since its founding, the Topaz Museum Board has purchased 633 acres of
38 the original site of the Topaz Relocation Center, conducted teacher workshops, held
39 pilgrimages, and raised awareness of the history of Topaz;

40 WHEREAS, the Secretary of the Interior designated the Topaz site as a National
41 Historic Landmark in 2007;

42 WHEREAS, the Topaz Museum Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization, has recently
43 completed an ambitious campaign that raised approximately \$3,000,000 to create the
44 long-awaited and much-needed Topaz Museum and Education Center to tell the story of
45 Topaz;

46 WHEREAS, the Topaz Museum and Education Center is the crowning jewel of a
47 preservation program that began in 1991 to ensure the story of Japanese American internment
48 during World War II is remembered and the site of the Topaz camp is preserved;

49 WHEREAS, the museum received many donations, including \$300,000 from the state
50 of Utah and \$1,200,000 from the National Park Service through the Japanese American
51 Confinement Sites grant program, allowing the Topaz Museum Board to complete this project;

52 WHEREAS, the Friends of Topaz, an organization created to support the Topaz
53 Museum Foundation by engaging with communities, constituents, and individuals, has played
54 an important role in promoting the mission, vitality, and success of the museum;

55 WHEREAS, the Topaz Museum Foundation has maintained a strong relationship with
56 over 3,000 people, including many former internees, who have financially supported the

57 foundation's programs and whose help was essential in the completion of each of the
58 foundation's projects;

59 WHEREAS, the exhibits for the Topaz Museum and Education Center highlight the
60 personal sacrifices and contributions of more than 11,000 people incarcerated at the desolate
61 Topaz camp;

62 WHEREAS, the exhibits include a collection of 1,000 artifacts, including 110 original
63 pieces of artwork created by internees during their incarceration, over 35 video interviews, and
64 a restored recreation hall;

65 WHEREAS, the Topaz Museum and Education Center has become the official
66 repository for teaching, exploring, and interpreting the history of this troubled period of
67 America's past and the impact that still resonates today;

68 WHEREAS, the museum stands as a memorial to the resilient internees who tried to
69 make camp life as normal as possible and as a witness for the history of the incarceration of
70 people of Japanese ancestry during World War II;

71 WHEREAS, the installations and exhibits use cutting-edge technology combined with
72 historic perspectives to engage and educate the public about the United States Constitution and
73 civil rights;

74 WHEREAS, the Topaz Museum and Education Center will continue to collect and
75 safeguard artifacts, artwork, and video interviews, making them accessible to future
76 generations, and ensuring this period in American history will never be forgotten;

77 WHEREAS, the Topaz Museum Foundation also protects 633 acres of the original
78 Topaz site, which is replete with evidence of gardens, walkways, concrete foundations, and
79 artifacts, giving evidence of Japanese Americans who lived there from September 11, 1942,
80 until October 31, 1945;

81 WHEREAS, visitors can learn this complex history, including information about the
82 four Supreme Court test case appellants—Min Yasui, Gordon Hirabayashi, and Topaz
83 internees Fred Korematsu and Mitsuye Endo—by reading exhibit panels, by seeing artifacts
84 and an original recreation hall, and then by visiting the actual camp site;

85 WHEREAS, this total experience produces an understanding of the stark reality of what
86 happened in America to people of Japanese ancestry, the majority of whom were American
87 citizens;

88 WHEREAS, the completion of the Topaz Museum and Education Center allows
89 students, families, educators, historians, former internees, and their families to learn from the
90 artwork, artifacts, oral histories, diaries, and interpretive exhibits, and then travel 16 miles to
91 where the history occurred;

92 WHEREAS, museum docents greet visitors and answer questions beyond the scope of
93 the exhibits allowing visitors to question and contemplate poignant and significant aspects of
94 civil rights and race relations;

95 WHEREAS, in 2007, Governor Jon Huntsman Jr. spoke at the dedication of the Topaz
96 site as a National Historic Landmark;

97 WHEREAS, in 2009, the Utah State Legislature passed a resolution supporting the
98 construction of the Topaz Museum and Education Center;

99 WHEREAS, on January 18, 2013, Governor Gary Herbert proclaimed January 30,
100 2013, "Fred Korematsu Day" in Utah, honoring Mr. Korematsu on what would have been his
101 94th birthday for his lifelong efforts to assure civil liberties for all Americans, following his
102 imprisonment at Topaz and landmark Supreme Court case;

103 WHEREAS, Topaz art has been shown in five major galleries in California and Utah,
104 and in 2018 the Utah Museum of Fine Arts will host a retrospective show of the art of Chiura
105 Obata, who started the art school at Topaz;

106 WHEREAS, over 250 teachers have learned about Topaz in the Summer Field School
107 hosted by the Topaz Museum Foundation and the Utah State Office of Education and countless
108 students have visited the Topaz Museum;

109 WHEREAS, the Topaz Museum website and social media accounts confirm that 5,000
110 people per month are reading about Topaz and downloading information about visiting the site;
111 and

112 WHEREAS, the grand opening of the Topaz Museum and Education Center took place
113 on July 7 and 8, 2017, and featured speeches by Senator Orrin Hatch, Representative Rob
114 Bishop, Jill Remington Love, executive director, Utah Department of Heritage and Arts, and
115 Don Tamaki, whose parents were in Topaz, a koto performance by Shirley Muramoto, a flag
116 presentation by the Latinos in Action, a presentation by Kimi Kodani Hill, a book signing by
117 Willie Ito, who was in Topaz, taiko drumming by the Ogden Buddhist Taiko Group, the puppet
118 show "E.O. 9066" by the San Francisco troupe, Lunatique Fantastique, a ribbon cutting, and

119 tours of the museum and site:

120 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the
121 Governor concurring therein, recognizes the achievements of Jane Beckwith and the Topaz
122 Museum Board in bringing the vision of the Topaz Museum and Education Center to reality
123 and providing a place where residents of and visitors to the state can learn valuable lessons
124 regarding civil rights and the nation's commitment to equal justice under the law by
125 championing the resilience of the internees who remained steadfast when their government
126 wavered.

127 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor laud the efforts of
128 all those who contributed to this effort and encourage the residents of and visitors to the state to
129 take advantage of the important educational opportunities available at the Topaz Museum, 55
130 West Main, Delta, Utah.