Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 3, 2009

Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee
c/o Stamp Development
U.S. Postal Service
1735 North Lynn St., Suite 5013
Arlington, VA 22209-6432

We are writing to recommend that you reconsider a proposal to issue a commemorative postage stamp honoring Japanese American (Nisei) World War II Veterans at your July meeting this year.

It is our understanding that an original request dated January 16, 2008 was rejected by CSAC on the grounds that the proposal violates an internal guideline separate from the 12 major criteria currently guiding subject selection for stamps. Although nothing in the 12 major criteria affected the outcome of the Nisei Vets stamp proposal, this separate internal guideline dictates that "stamps will not be issued to honor individual sub-branches, units or divisions of the military."

We understand the deluge of requests that CSAC receives and must make decisions upon, and that both the 12 major criteria and internal guidelines are in place to ensure that only the most worthwhile proposals come before CSAC, but we strongly believe that the Nisei Vets stamp is a deserving proposal which merits reconsideration.

We do not oppose the internal guideline regarding military sub-branches, units or divisions, however, we must note that the Nisei Veterans were *not* a military sub-branch, unit or division, and thus we do not believe this guideline should apply in this case. Our proposal seeks to honor the more than 20,000 Nisei soldiers who enlisted in the U.S. Army during World War II, who collectively earned 21 Medals of Honor, 52 Distinguished Service Crosses, 559 Silver Stars, 4,000 bronze stars, nine Presidential Unit Citations, and 9,486 Purple Hearts.

Approximately 14,000 of these individuals served in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, including the 100th Infantry Battalion, which became the most decorated unit for its size and length of service in American military history. The 442nd saw the highest percent of casualties of any unit in the Army, earning it the nickname "Purple Heart Battalion." The 442nd is an example which highlights the stellar performance of these Nisei soldiers. But many other Nisei soldiers fought in other military units, and so honoring the Nisei Veterans with a stamp would not be honoring this unit alone.

For example, Japanese Americans also served with great distinction in the Pacific Theater in the U.S. Army's Military Intelligence Service (MIS). Through their command of the Japanese language, they greatly facilitated Allied war efforts and the MIS is credited with shortening the war in the Pacific by at least two years.

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Though many of their families were unjustly incarcerated in internment camps after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Japanese Americans still fought to prove their loyalty to the United States of America and helped pave the way for full racial integration of the Armed Forces.

The unique sacrifice made by Nisei soldiers during World War II—not a particular sub-branch, unit or division, but throughout the United States military—can and should be recognized by USPS according to both your 12 criteria and internal guidelines. These soldiers overcame racial hatred at home, served honorably overseas, and helped change the course of history with their bravery. This postage stamp will commemorate their unparalleled contributions to our country, and we respectfully request for your reconsideration of this extraordinary proposal.

Sincerely,

Michael McHonde

Madeline J. Bordallo

Betty McCollum

Grace F. Napolitano

Susan A. Davis

Mazie K. Hirono

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