

City and County of San Francisco
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION



Sheryl Evans Davis
Executive Director

Edwin M. Lee
Mayor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 16, 2017
Media contact: Rebecca Oyama
415-252-2500

COMMISSIONERS

Susan Belinda Christian
Chair
Richard Pio Roda
Vice-Chair

Melanie Ampon
Eva Chan
Theodore Ellington
Hala Hijazi
Mark Kelleher
Andrea Nill Sanchez
Michael Pappas
Abby Porth
Michael Sweet

San Francisco Human Rights Commission Marks the 75th Anniversary of Executive Order 9066; Denounces Prohibition on Immigration From Seven Muslim-Majority Countries

On February 19, 2017, the San Francisco Human Rights Commission (SF-HRC) joins the Japanese-American community and civil rights advocates in marking the 75th anniversary of Executive Order 9066, which was issued by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and led to the forced removal and incarceration of more than 110,000 people of Japanese ancestry, two-thirds of whom were U.S. citizens.

Remembering the use of an Executive Order that targeted an ethnicity and denied constitutional due process is particularly relevant in light of current legal issues presented by the recent Executive Order prohibiting the entry of immigrants from seven Muslim countries into the U.S. The SF-HRC joins Mayor Ed Lee in proclaiming, "In San Francisco, we stand shoulder to shoulder with our Muslim and immigrant communities."

The travel ban issued on January 27, 2017 does not make specific reference to people of Muslim faith; similarly, Executive Order 9066 never used the word "Japanese." Yet it was the catalyst for discrimination against Japanese Americans, who were stripped of their liberty, property and livelihoods. Nearly a half century later, through passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, Congress recognized the internment of Japanese Americans as a grave injustice "motivated by racial prejudice, war hysteria, and the failure of political leadership." In 1991, President George H.W. Bush issued letters of formal apology and compensation to all living survivors of the internment.

"The Human Rights Commission embraces the progress we have made as a nation since 1942 in protecting civil liberties. We are committed to ensuring that history does not repeat itself," said Sheryl Davis, Executive Director.

Susan Belinda Christian, Chair of the SF-HRC, further assured residents that, "The City and County of San Francisco celebrates the diversity of its people, including the multitude of religions, ethnicities, and national origins, which bring vibrancy to our city. The SF-HRC will vigilantly safeguard the human and civil rights guaranteed within our Sanctuary City to ensure that an experience such as that marked today remains a fixture of the past."

“The anniversary of Executive Order 9066 is an important time to reflect on history that was particularly concentrated in San Francisco and California and had nationwide impacts. Today, I hope people will honor the resilience and patriotism of the individuals and families interned during World War II. I also hope that all citizens think about the collective responsibility we have to protect human rights for all.” stated HRC Commissioner Hala Hijazi.

Since 1964, the HRC has worked to provide leadership and advocacy to secure, protect and promote human rights for all people. The HRC is charged with investigating and mediating complaints of discrimination and non-compliance in employment, housing and public accommodation, as prescribed by City policy and jurisdiction. It also works closely with other governmental agencies, community organizations and members of the public to address a wide range of human rights and social justice issues in San Francisco.