

# Honolulu Advertiser

## WWII internment of Japanese-Americans remembered

By Dennis Camire  
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WASHINGTON - U.S. Rep. Mazie Hirono doesn't want the nation to forget the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II, or the prejudice that caused it.

Speaking in advance of the Feb. 19 National Day of Remembrance, the Hawai'i Democrat said this week that during times such as the nation faces now, people should not allow prejudice against people based on race, creed or national origin to shape public policy.

"This National Day of Remembrance reminds us to reflect on our past actions in order to make just decisions, which uphold our Constitution," said Hirono, who was raised as a Buddhist.

Sixty-six years ago on Feb. 19, an executive order was signed that ultimately sent 120,000 Japanese-Americans to internment camps across the country.

In Hawai'i, about 10,000 individuals were investigated and an estimated 1,250 Japanese-Americans were detained in the Islands.

U.S. Rep. Neil Abercrombie, D-Hawai'i, said the government's "shameful action" in stripping an American group of their rights, property and homes because of their ancestry seems like something barely comprehensible today.

"And then we see our fellow citizens rushing to vilify and blame another group because of their ancestry," he said. "It could be that one Day of Remembrance a year is not enough."

The Hawai'i congressional delegation and other lawmakers in the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus recently wrote a letter noting that in the 30 years since the remembrance first started, its message has become more inclusive.

"On this day ... Americans of all walks of life come together to unite against bigotry and extremism that threaten the values and traditions that make America the shining symbol of democracy, freedom and human rights," the letter said.