



Senate Approves Bill to Extend World War II War Crimes Records Disclosure Act

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Washington, DC – The U.S. Senate has approved legislation, sponsored by U.S. Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Mike DeWine (R-Ohio), to extend the Nazi War Crimes Records Disclosure Act and the Japanese Imperial Army Disclosure Act for an additional two years.

“With the ranks of our brave American World War II veterans thinning fast, it is all the more imperative that the truth about World War II-era war crimes comes out sooner, not later,” Senator Feinstein said. **“Especially for those that were the victims of war crimes, there should be a full accounting of what happened so that old wounds have a chance to heal.”**

Until the late 1990s, many records and documents regarding the wartime activities of Germany and Japan were classified and hidden in U.S. government archives and repositories. According to some scholars, some of these records were being inadvertently destroyed.

In 1998, Congress responded by passing the Nazi War Crimes Records Disclosure Act to ensure that the records of our national security and intelligence agencies related to the criminal activities of the Nazi regime could, after more than half a century, become public. During the 106th Congress, Senator Feinstein introduced and the President signed into law, the Japanese Imperial Army Disclosure Act which expanded the scope of the 1998 Disclosure Act to cover war crimes that occurred in the Pacific Theater.

The Acts authorized the creation of an Interagency Working Group to ensure that appropriate documents relating to war crimes be declassified and that the process occur in an expeditious manner. However, the Working Group has run into numerous delays and has been unable to complete its work within the timetable that the legislation allowed.

The legislation, approved late Wednesday, would give the Interagency Working Group two additional years to complete its work.

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