



Senator Feinstein Urges Designation of Tule Lake World War II
Internment Camp as a National Landmark
February 15, 2006

Washington, DC – After failing to get an answer for over three months to a previous request, U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) today once again urged Interior Secretary Gale Norton to designate the World War II Tule Lake Segregation Center as a National Historic Landmark.

Senator Feinstein had previously written to Secretary Norton requesting this designation on October 21, 2005, but aside from an acknowledgement that the letter had been received, the Department of the Interior has not taken action on the request.

In a new letter sent out today, Senator Feinstein urged Secretary Norton to make the designation by February 19, 2006, the anniversary of the date President Franklin Roosevelt authorized the incarceration of over 120,000 Japanese-Americans. February 19th is now recognized as a National Day of Remembrance.

“It is important that we recognize the historical significance of Tule Lake Segregation Center within the lifetimes of the few surviving Japanese-American internees, before many of their stories are lost,” Senator Feinstein wrote.

During World War II, the federal government ordered the evacuation and internment of over 120,000 Japanese-Americans at ten internment camps and other sites across the country. Tule Lake, in Northern California, was the largest and one of the most infamous of the internment camps. Prisoners there held frequent demonstrations and strikes, demanding their rights under the U.S. Constitution. As a result, it was made a "segregation camp," and internees from other camps who had refused to take the loyalty oath or had caused disturbances were sent to Tule Lake. At its peak, Tule Lake held 18,789 internees. Tule Lake was also one of the last camps to be closed, staying open until March 20, 1946.

Following is the text of the letter Senator Feinstein sent to Secretary Norton:

February 14, 2006

The Honorable Gale Norton
Secretary, Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Norton,

I am writing to follow-up on my letter dated October 21, 2005, which expressed my strong support for designation of Tule Lake Segregation Center in Modoc County, California as a National Historic Landmark. I ask you to make the designation by February 19, 2006, the anniversary of the National Day of Remembrance, which marks the date President Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066.

This order, signed on February 19, 1942, authorized the incarceration of over 120,000 Japanese-Americans. Of all the internment camps, Tule Lake was the largest and most infamous, with as many as 18,789 Japanese-Americans interned on its grounds.

It is important that we recognize the historical significance of Tule Lake Segregation Center within the lifetimes of the few surviving Japanese-American internees, before many of their stories are lost.

I look forward to your response on this important subject.

Sincerely,

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

###