

Assembly Bill No. 37

CHAPTER 213

An act to add Section 66020 to the Education Code, relating to public postsecondary education.

[Approved by Governor October 11, 2009. Filed with
Secretary of State October 11, 2009.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 37, Furutani. Public postsecondary education: honorary degrees.

Under existing law, the segments of the public postsecondary education system in the state include the University of California, which is administered by the Regents of the University of California, the California State University, which is administered by the Trustees of the California State University, and the California Community Colleges, which are administered by the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges. Existing law authorizes these educational institutions to award various types of degrees.

This bill would require the Trustees of the California State University and the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, and would request the Regents of the University of California, to work with their respective colleges and universities to confer an honorary degree upon each person, living or deceased, who was forced to leave his or her postsecondary studies as a result of federal Executive Order 9066 which caused the incarceration of individuals of Japanese ancestry during World War II.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. (a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(1) On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, which caused the incarceration of approximately 120,000 Americans and resident aliens of Japanese ancestry in camps scattered throughout the United States during World War II.

(2) Executive Order 9066 put the lives of these individuals, who were forcibly relocated from their homes and communities and unjustly detained by the United States government, on hold.

(3) On August 10, 1988, President Ronald Wilson Reagan signed into law the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, declaring that Executive Order 9066 was not justified by military necessity and hence was caused by racial prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership.

(4) The Civil Liberties Act of 1988 apologized on behalf of the people of the United States for the evacuation, relocation, and incarceration of Americans and permanent resident aliens of Japanese ancestry during World War II and provided for the restitution to those individuals of Japanese ancestry who were incarcerated.

(5) The disruption of over 2,500 students' educational pursuits was among the consequences of the country's wartime policy, which removed students enrolled in California's colleges and universities from their studies.

(b) It is the intent of the Legislature that postsecondary educational institutions confer an honorary degree upon each individual whose studies at a postsecondary educational institution were disrupted by Executive Order 9066, and to allow a representative to accept an honorary degree on behalf of individuals who are deceased.

SEC. 2. Section 66020 is added to the Education Code, to read:

66020. (a) The Trustees of the California State University and the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges shall, and the Regents of the University of California are requested to, work with their respective colleges and universities to confer an honorary degree upon each person, living or deceased, who was forced to leave his or her studies at the public postsecondary educational institution in which that person was enrolled as a result of the issuance of federal Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942, which caused the evacuation, relocation, and incarceration of individuals of Japanese ancestry during World War II.

(b) In cases where an honorary degree is conferred upon a person who is deceased, the person's surviving next of kin, or another representative chosen by the person's surviving next of kin, may accept the honorary degree on the deceased person's behalf.

(c) Independent colleges and universities, as defined in subdivision (b) of Section 66010, are urged to comply with the terms of this section.

(d) This section shall be implemented in a cost-effective manner by incorporating, to the extent practicable, any ceremony for the purpose of conferring honorary degrees with a previously scheduled commencement or graduation activity.