

**Introduced by Senator Costa**

**(Principal coauthor: Senator Johnston)**

(Principal coauthors: Assembly Members Honda and Takasugi)

**(Coauthors: Senators Alpert, Burton, Hughes, Karnette, Kopp, Lee, Lewis, Lockyer, Monteith, O’Connell, Polanco, Rosenthal, Solis, Vasconcellos, Watson, and Wright)**

(Coauthors: Assembly Members Alquist, Aroner, Ashburn, Baca, Bowen, Caldera, Campbell, Cunneen, Gallegos, Granlund, Havice, Knox, Kuehl, Kuykendall, Lempert, Margett, Morrissey, Ortiz, Pacheco, Papan, Perata, Richter, Shelley, Strom-Martin, and Wayne)

July 1, 1997

---

---

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 51—Relative to the Nisei Baseball Leagues.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

SCR 51, as introduced, Costa. Nisei baseball: hall of fame.

This measure would request that the Nisei Baseball Leagues be honored with a permanent exhibit at the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, The sport of baseball, universally known as  
2 America’s national pastime, is rich with stories, legends,  
3 history, and culture; and

4 WHEREAS, Although not widely-known in this  
5 country until recent years, the Japanese American  
6 community has contributed a significant chapter to the

1 history of baseball that parallels its rich contributions to  
2 the heritage of American society and the foundations on  
3 which this country stands; and

4 WHEREAS, Beginning at the turn of the 20th century,  
5 “Issei”, or first-generation Japanese Americans,  
6 cultivated a love for the game of baseball that eventually  
7 led to the development of an extensive, highly-regarded  
8 network of separate, Japanese American leagues  
9 throughout the United States that competed in both this  
10 country and abroad; and

11 WHEREAS, By the 1920’s, more than 100 teams had  
12 been formed, consisting primarily of talented “Nisei,” or  
13 second-generation Japanese Americans, who proudly  
14 continued the passionate baseball tradition of their Issei  
15 forefathers; and

16 WHEREAS, Though the world-class Nisei teams, like  
17 the teams in the Negro Leagues and in the All-American  
18 Girls Professional Baseball Leagues, played mostly  
19 against each other in response to the discrimination and  
20 segregation they faced in their daily lives, they also  
21 successfully competed against high school, college, and  
22 semi-professional teams from white America, teams from  
23 the Negro Leagues, and even barnstorming teams led by  
24 professional baseball legends like Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig,  
25 Ted Williams, Jackie Robinson, and Joe DiMaggio; and

26 WHEREAS, In 1937, all-star teams consisting of Nisei  
27 players from Central and Northern California traveled to  
28 Japan, Korea, and Manchuria, as ambassadors of good will,  
29 where they impressed audiences with their competitive  
30 spirit, sportsmanship, and talented, aggressive style of  
31 fast-paced American baseball; and

32 WHEREAS, Later, during the days of internment  
33 during World War II, the passion of these skillful Japanese  
34 American players kept the national pastime alive,  
35 poignantly evidenced by the fact that Gila River, one of  
36 10 internment camps, had 3 divisions and 28 teams; and

37 WHEREAS, After World War II, many Nisei players  
38 pursued their dreams of professional baseball in Japan,  
39 and in so doing, helped to promote cultural exchanges



1 and visits of American major league teams and players;  
2 and

3 WHEREAS, In spite of this rich tradition and history,  
4 the popularity of the Nisei Baseball Leagues gradually  
5 faded as discrimination and segregated sports eased in  
6 American society, until the Leagues almost disappeared  
7 altogether in the early 1970's; and

8 WHEREAS, That rich history has, in recent years,  
9 fortunately been rediscovered for the benefit of all  
10 Americans, through, among other things, historical  
11 exhibits like "Diamonds in the Rough: Japanese  
12 Americans in Baseball," a project jointly curated by the  
13 Nisei Baseball Research Project, the National Japanese  
14 American Historical Society, the California State Capitol  
15 Museum, and the Japanese Cultural and Community  
16 Center of Northern California, on tour through the  
17 United States and currently on display at the California  
18 State Capitol Museum; and

19 WHEREAS, This fascinating exhibit includes rare  
20 photographs, personal artifacts, and historical documents  
21 about the history of Japanese Americans in the sport of  
22 baseball, and celebrates the legacy of the great Nisei  
23 players and the development of the Nisei Baseball  
24 Leagues in the face of discrimination and hardship during  
25 that time; and

26 WHEREAS, In honor of their contribution to baseball,  
27 the Nisei Baseball Leagues should rightfully have a  
28 permanent exhibit at the National Baseball Hall of Fame  
29 in Cooperstown, New York, a proposal supported by,  
30 among others, the San Francisco Giants, Los Angeles  
31 Dodgers, and San Diego Padres; now, therefore, be it

32 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the*  
33 *Assembly thereof concurring,* That the Nisei Baseball  
34 Leagues should be recognized and rightfully honored for  
35 their contribution to the game of baseball by having a  
36 permanent exhibit on display at the National Baseball  
37 Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York; and be it further

38 *Resolved,* That the Secretary of the Senate transmit  
39 forthwith copies of this resolution to the President of the



- 1 National Baseball Hall of Fame and the Commissioner of
- 2 Baseball.

O

