



COLORADO

Governor Jared Polis

February 17, 2021

Mr. Dylan Mori
President
Mile High Japanese American Citizens League
P.O. Box 13061
Denver, CO 80201

Dear Mr. Mori,

I appreciate the opportunity to join you in marking and observing this important annual day of remembrance. While I know we all wish this day of community, reflection and future vision could be held in person, I'm heartened that the momentum of efforts to bring attention to these events, and the resolve of all gathered today, has carried it forward virtually.

The inexcusable incarceration of over 120,000 Japanese Americans is undoubtedly one of the darkest injustices in our nation's history, and the Amache site makes this injustice a deeply personal part of Colorado's history. Amache was a unique site for many reasons, with the distinction of having the most Japanese Americans volunteer to enlist in the military, and in having a rare voice of opposition to the concentration camp in former Governor Ralph L. Carr. Few leaders during that period had the courage to speak out against this atrocity. As the governor of Colorado at the time, Carr stood alone among Western political leaders by taking a strong and public stand against the mass incarceration.

These unconstitutional atrocities must never be forgotten, and in many instances their unfortunate legacy continues today. It is tragic that many first-generation survivors of the incarceration camps died before receiving reparations. We know that societal injustices can reverberate through generations, which is why Amache and this day of remembrance aren't simply vestiges of the past, but have a valuable role in the present day and on into the future. Because of this, I look forward to working with the incoming Biden administration to designate Amache as a National Park site for the education, healing and growth of generations to come.

In Colorado, we are fortunate to have twelve national park units that we cherish for their natural, historic, cultural, and economic significance. In the spirit of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion, preserving and protecting the Amache site presents a valuable opportunity to achieve the critical goal of enhancing the NPS mission to interpret and interrogate our past, and tell a more complete story of our state and our nation.

Great nations can make terrible mistakes, but it is only through the acknowledgement of their terrible mistakes -- the learning from, and rectification of those mistakes -- that nations can achieve true greatness. By preserving Amache and similar sites, we promote healing and reconciliation on not only a national level, but on personal and community levels as well. I look forward to joining all of you as we work not only to mark the past of Amache, but also to chart its invaluable future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jared Polis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jared Polis
Governor