

Supporting Bill H 7326, introduced January 26, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of the proposed replacement of "Victory Day," the name of the Rhode Island holiday observed on the second Monday of August, with the title "Peace and Remembrance Day."

I support this change because I believe that words matter, and that the declared visions of our traditions matter. And while I am in favor of celebrating the end of any war, the use of the word 'victory' actually feels like an erasure of the lives lost amidst the fight. I doubt that the 2,340 Rhode Islanders killed during WW2 felt victorious as they perished, and the idea of referring to the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as anything other than absolute tragedy sends the signal that Rhode Island does not value the lives of the Japanese civilians who were lost on those days. As it stands, there are years when this holiday falls on August 9th, the anniversary of the bombing of Nagasaki, and I can only imagine the pain this creates in the hearts of Japanese-American Rhode Islanders. I believe that calling this a 'victory' is a grave mistake, one that can thankfully be corrected now.

In much the same way that the hand signal we now know as the 'peace sign' was originally used to summon the idea of victory during World War 2, and was modified by peace protesters during the Vietnam War, we can now do our own part to acknowledge that the best way to honor those lost to war and violence is to remember their sacrifice and rededicate ourselves to the pursuit of peace. I look forward to commemorating Peace and Remembrance Day in August.

Thank you,

Amanda Nazarian

Providence, Rhode Island

February 25, 2024