



MIDWEST REGIONAL OFFICE

## Japanese American Citizens League

MEMORANDUM

**TO:** MDC Chapter Presidents  
MDC Redress Representatives  
Interested Individuals

**DATE:** August 10, 1979

**FROM:** Bill Yoshino

**SUBJECT:** Commission on Wartime  
Relocation and Internment  
of Civilians Act, S. 1647

Enclosed is a copy of the remarks of the principal sponsors, as well as the text of the bill. National Headquarters has been advised to prepare the information packet on the commission bill and will be mailing same to the respective governors and chapters.

The introduction of the Commission bill marks an important first step in the long overdue review of the Wartime Relocation of Japanese Americans and others under Executive Order 9066, and related federal acts.

Through the Washington Office and National Headquarters, I will keep you informed on the timing and type of support this bill must have to pass the Congress of the United States.



United States  
of America

# No. 109—Part II Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 96<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

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By Mr. INOUE (for himself, Mr. MATSUNAGA, Mr. HAYAKAWA, Mr. CRANSTON, Mr. McCLURE, and Mr. CHURCH):

S. 1647. A bill to establish a commission to gather facts to determine whether any wrong was committed against those American citizens and permanent resident aliens affected by Executive Order 9066, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

COMMISSION ON WARTIME RELOCATION AND INTERNMENT OF CIVILIANS ACT

Mr. INOUE. Mr. President, I am introducing legislation today on behalf of Senator MATSUNAGA, Senator HAYAKAWA, Senator CRANSTON, Senator McCLURE, Senator CHURCH, and myself which would establish a Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians.

The purpose of the Commission would be to gather facts to determine whether a wrong was done to those American citizens and permanent resident aliens affected by Executive Order 9066 and/or other associated acts of the Federal Government. In addition, if the Commission determines that a wrong was done and if it decides that any remedy is appropriate at this time, it would then recommend the form and extent of such remedy.

On February 19, 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066. This order authorized the military commander to exclude any and all persons from areas that he considered militarily sensitive, as well as granting the military commander authority to house those evacuated.

Gen. John DeWitt of the Western Defense Command issued a public proclamation on March 2, 1942. Those affected by this order were compelled to leave the western half of California, Oregon, and Washington, as well as the southern half of Arizona. They were given a short period in which they could comply with the evacuation order voluntarily. Shortly after this, DeWitt announced that the eastern half of the west coast States would be evacuated as well, and that no further voluntary relocation would be allowed.

Simultaneously, the War Relocation Authority was formed to establish a program for the removal, relocation, maintenance, and supervision of those evacuated.

These American citizens and permanent resident aliens were first placed in temporary relocation centers located throughout Arizona, California, Oregon, and Washington. Finally, 10 mass relocation centers were erected in Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Idaho, Utah, and Wyoming. Similar centers were established in the territory of Hawaii. Approximately 120,000 American citizens and permanent resident aliens spent an average of 2½ to 3 years in these camps.

I expect that one question which the Commission may contend with is whether Executive Order 9066 and associated acts of the Government can be justified as measures that were necessary for the security of our Nation.

A second question the Commission might consider is whether relocation and internment were required to protect those affected against wartime hysteria.

A third question that may come to the attention of the Commission is whether the loss and pain (if any), experienced by those affected merits remedy at this time.

I believe that a Presidential Commission should reckon fully with this matter.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of this bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 1647  
*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SHORT TITLE

SECTION 1. This Act may be cited as the "Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians Act".

#### FINDINGS AND PURPOSE

SEC. 2. (a) The Congress finds that—

- (1) approximately 120,000 civilians were relocated and detained in internment camps pursuant to Executive Order 9066, dated February 19, 1942, and other associated acts of the Federal Government; and
- (2) no inquiry into this matter has been made.

(b) It is the purpose of this Act to establish a factfinding commission to determine whether a wrong was committed against those American citizens and permanent resident aliens relocated and/or interned as a result of Executive Order 9066 and other associated acts of the Federal Government, and to recommend appropriate remedies.

#### ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMISSION

SEC. 3. (a) There is established the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (hereinafter referred to as the "Commission").

(b) The Commission shall be composed of fifteen members, who shall be appointed as follows:

- (1) Eleven members shall be appointed by the President.
- (2) Two Members of the House of Representatives shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.
- (3) Two Members of the Senate shall be appointed by the President pro tempore of the Senate.

(c) The term of office for members shall be for the life of the Commission. A vacancy in the Commission shall not affect its powers, and shall be filled in the same manner in which the original appointment was made.

(d) The first meeting of the Commission

shall be called by the President within sixty days following the date of enactment of this Act.

(e) Eight members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum, but a lesser number may hold hearings.

(f) The Commission shall elect a Chairman and Vice Chairman from among its members. The term of office of each shall be for the life of the Commission.

(g) Each member of the Commission who is not otherwise employed by the United States Government shall receive compensation at a rate equal to the daily rate prescribed for GS-18 under the General Schedule contained in section 5332 of title 5, United States Code, including traveltime, for each day he or she is engaged in the actual performance of his or her duties as a member of the Commission. A member of the Commission who is an officer or employee of the United States Government shall serve without additional compensation. All members of the Commission shall be reimbursed for travel, subsistence, and other necessary expenses incurred by them in the performance of their duties.

#### DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION

SEC. 4. (a) It shall be the duty of the Commission to gather facts to determine whether a wrong was committed against those American citizens and permanent resident aliens who were subjected to relocation and/or internment by the issuance of Executive Order 9066 and other associated acts of the Federal Government.

(b) The Commission shall hold public hearings in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Fresno, California; Portland, Oregon; Seattle, Washington; Phoenix, Arizona; Salt Lake City, Utah; Denver, Colorado; Chicago, Illinois; New York, New York, Washington, D.C.; and any other city that the Commission deems necessary and proper.

(c) The Commission shall submit a written record of its findings and recommendations to Congress not later than eighteen months after the date of the enactment of this Act.

#### POWERS OF THE COMMISSION

Sec. 5. (a) The Commission or, on the authorization of the Commission, any subcommittee or member thereof, may, for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this Act, hold such hearings and sit and act at such times and places, and request the attendance and testimony of such witnesses and the production of such books, records, correspondence, memoranda, papers, and documents as the Commission or such subcommittee or member may deem advisable.

(b) The Commission may acquire directly from the head of any department, agency, independent instrumentality, or other authority of the executive branch of the Government, available information which the Commission considers useful in the discharge of its duties. All departments, agencies, and independent instrumentalities, or other authorities of the executive branch of the Government shall cooperate with the Commission and furnish all information requested by the Commission to the extent permitted by law.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

Sec. 6. The Commission is authorized to—

(1) appoint and fix the compensation of such personnel as may be necessary, without regard to the provisions of title 5, United States Code, governing appointments in the competitive service, and without regard to the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of such title relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates;

(2) obtain the services of experts and consultants in accordance with the provisions of section 3109 of title 5, United States Code;

(3) enter into agreements with the General Services Administration for procurement of necessary financial and administrative services, for which payment shall be made by reimbursement from funds of the Commission in such amounts as may be agreed upon by the Chairman and the Administrator of General Services;

(4) procure supplies, services, and property, and make contracts, without regard to the laws and procedures applicable to Federal agencies; and

(5) enter into contracts with Federal or State agencies, private firms, institutions, and agencies for the conduct of research or surveys, the preparation of reports, and other activities necessary to the discharge of its duties.

#### REPORT AND TERMINATION

Sec. 7. (a) The Commissioner shall, within eighteen months from the date of enactment of this Act, transmit a final report to the President and the Congress concerning its actions and its findings and recommendations.

(b) The Commission shall cease to exist on the date six months from the date it transmits the final report unless extended by a subsequent Act of Congress.

#### AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS

Sec. 8. There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

Mr. MATSUNAGA. Mr. President, I am happy to join the senior senator from Hawaii, Mr. INOUYE, in introducing today legislation which provides for the creation of a commission to study and report on the internment of more than 110,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry and their families during World War II.

Although historians and many Americans have long recognized the internment of the Japanese Americans as a black page in American history, the Federal Government itself has yet to acknowledge the wrong which was committed in complete disregard of due process of law.

The proposed legislation is not a "redress" bill. It merely provides for an objective, unbiased study, to be conducted by a commission of fair-minded Americans to determine whether or not redress is warranted. In the event that the proposed study commission determines that some form of compensation is owed to Japanese Americans who were interned during World War II, the Congress would still have an opportunity to review the Commission's findings and to establish the amount of compensation which should be paid, if any.

Mr. President, a Federal review of the Internment, during World War II, of Japanese Americans under Executive Order 9066, is long overdue. Although many of the Issei—first generation Japanese Americans—have died since the end of the war, the mass imprisonment of innocent Japanese Americans, who were guilty of no crime, remains the single most dramatic and disturbing experience in the lives of many Nisei—second generation Americans of Japanese ancestry.

More importantly, their children, the Sansei, have started to ask questions about the internment of their parents and grandparents in "American-style concentration camps," complete with barb-wire fences, watch towers and armed guards. Why did they not "protest" when the U.S. Government herded

them into concentration camps? If the Government was wrong, why has not the wrong been admitted and laid to rest forever? Why do not our parents talk about what happened to them during World War II? Did they commit any crimes they are ashamed to talk about?

Mr. President, answers to these questions have never been provided by the Government which committed the act against the Japanese Americans, now being recognized as being a mistake, if not wrongful. The proposed study commission would be mandated to look into these questions and provide answers. Whether or not "redress" is ever provided, I believe that the findings of the proposed study Commission will be valuable in and of themselves. I therefore urge the Senate to give early, favorable consideration to the resolution which we have introduced today.

Mr. McCLURE. Mr. President, I congratulate my colleague from Hawaii on the statement he has just made and the initiative he has undertaken.

Mr. President, I cannot help but think of the perhaps, coincidental events the comments by my colleague have brought to mind. In less than 3 weeks, in Idaho, we will be dedicating a memorial at the Minidoka Relocation Center, reminding the people of Idaho and, hopefully, of the Nation of the injustice that was done to some of the finest citizens of this country in the emotional aftermath of the beginning of World War II and the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The Minidoka Relocation Center was one of those centers in which Japanese citizens, as well as people of Japanese ancestry who were not citizens, were interned by our

Government for a period of time. In spite of that injustice on the part of our country, on the part of some of our people toward some others of our people, the Japanese people remain loyal. They never lost their faith in this country. They remain among some of the best citizens that we have.

I commend my friend from Hawaii for this legislation and for the comments he has just made.

Mr. MATSUNAGA. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Idaho for his most generous remarks. I appreciate his calling to the attention of the Senate the fact that the State of Idaho is putting up a memorial to the Japanese Americans who were interned at Minidoka.

Mr. HAYAKAWA. Mr. President, I am joining my colleagues from Hawaii, Senators INOUYE and MATSUNAGA, in the introduction of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians Act. This legislation will establish a Presidential commission to gather facts in order to determine whether any wrong was committed by our Government against those American citizens and permanent residents who were relocated during World War II as a result of Executive Order 9066.

Executive Order 9066 was issued in February of 1942 and permitted the Federal Government to relocate those Japanese-American citizens and residents living on our west coast. They were removed to relocation camps to insure that they could not aid our wartime enemy, Japan.

During recent months there has been a great deal of discussion about a proposal to provide reparations payments to those people who were interned in the relocation camps—a proposal which has generated a large amount of controversy. It has focused our attention again on a subject which has been sensitive to the people of the United States.

My colleagues and I are calling for the establishment of a fact-finding commission in order to carefully investigate the question of wrongdoing by the Federal Government, and to make recommendations on the possible need for remedies. Nearly 40 years have passed since Executive Order 9066 was issued and a thorough look at the facts is long overdue.

Our legislation calls for the appointment of a 15-member commission. Eleven members will be appointed by the President, and the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House will each appoint two members. The Commission will be given the duty to gather facts to determine whether a wrong was committed against those American citizens and resident aliens who were relocated and interned as a result of Executive Order 9066 and other associated acts of the Federal Government. A final report of the Commission's findings and recommendations will be transmitted to the President and the Congress within 18 months of the enactment of this legislation.

I urge my colleagues to join us in this effort and enact the Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians Act promptly.