


MIDWEST REGIONAL OFFICE

## Japanese American Citizens League

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WILLIAM J. YOSHINO  
REGIONAL DIRECTOR

October 1, 1981

Dr. Clifford Uyeda  


Dear Clifford:

Thank you for keeping me informed of your thoughts regarding redress through your periodic memoranda. I share your concern over the current status of the redress fund. If, as you state, \$31,000 is the balance as of September 1, 1981 and based on your figures, the fiscal year balance would translate to approximately \$20,000, then indeed, seriously thought must be given to the expenditure of that remaining fund.

My concern in your scenerio lies in its inability to assume a proactive stance on the issue. It is my belief that simply waiting for the issuance of the report following the hearings would represent a mistake of incalculable proportion. It is true the onus of responsibility in making recommendations lies with the commissioners. It is true to an extent that we must rely on their wisdom and judgement regarding the results of that report. It must also be understood that the commissioners so not operate in a vaccuum, nor does its staff.

It would seem to me that in the interim until the report is filed, a great deal of liaison with the commission and its staff is required to influence the content and recommendations of the report. It is true that the hearing process remains the visible manner in which this is accomplished, however, a continuing relationship with the commission and staff is required to do all that is possible to insure meaningful recommendations.

Simply waiting for the report is not enough. As Senator Inouye said at the Washington, D.C. hearing, and I paraphrase, no President, Congress, or Supreme Court can unwrite the words of the report. I truly believe that whatever leverage is to be applied must be made now. I think it is naive to assume that JAACL or the Japanese American community represents sufficient clout to countermand the recommendations of the commission especially as it regards legislative initiative. After all, the basis of the report will be a composite of input from all who testified including Japanese America, and surely, the report will be viewed in that light by Congress. Merely waiting for the report in the absence of positive liaison and lobbying would be a mistake.

As to the report and recommendations, I believe the commissioners are approaching their task in realistic terms. I believe they will proceed in a manner consistent with the present mood of public thinking. It is for us to now press for a series of recommendations that range from the realistic to the ideal. The JAACL position centers on individual compensation, and with that I agree, however, as you imply in your memo, a bill encompassing individual compensation only, may be a deathknell.

National Headquarters, San Francisco, California

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Meaningful redress will take years, even decades. Human thought and attitude is cyclical. While an educational trust or other set asides may be feasible now, it may be, that future generations will consider our present ideals as realistic.

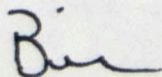
This brings me back to our shared concern over the current redress fund. If I understand your memo correctly, you would propose that redress staff be disbanded for monetary considerations and we revert to a volunteer redress operation. The momentum for the issue is here and now. Should it dissipate, and it can very quickly, then what are we left with -- the prospect of rebuilding that effort which has consumed the past three years? The task of continuing the campaign for public awareness is upon us. We must proceed through proper programming, that campaign which will lead to Congress. The support we require does not begin with the introduction of a bill, it begins now. The true volunteer effort will be upon introduction of legislation. Prior to that we must continue the momentum of the campaign through the JA community and the American public.

I would not make mention of John Tateishi, except for your doing so in your memo. This is not a plea to keep John on board as paid redress staff, for I disagree with Jim Tsujimura in his September 25 column where he states that John is our greatest asset. The issue itself is our greatest asset. No person is ever indispensable to a cause, however, with John's commitment, his relationships, his knowledge of the issue and in the interest of continuity, I believe it would be a mistake to release John if he has a willingness to continue.

I don't have the answer on the money situation, but I do believe if we freeze the current fund in anticipation of the legislative campaign, we will not have seized an opportunity to meaningfully pursue the issue and lay the groundwork necessary for the ultimate success of the campaign.

With warm personal regards,

Sincerely,



Bill Yoshino

WJY/b

cc: Minoru Yasui, Henry Tanaka, John Tateishi

Not for further distribution