

Japanese American Citizens League

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TO: Ron Wakabayashi
FROM: Bill Yoshino *BW*
cc: John Tateishi, Carole Hayashino

This is in response to your request for my views on the JACL redress program and its relation to the LEC.

The recommendations I offer deal within the present circumstances of JACL and what I believe to be the manner in which the LEC might operate.

Overview of Program

The current state of the JACL redress program is best described in the three points enumerated in the April 20, Yasuhara memo to Frank Sato. Yasuhara's concerns are not revelations; they have been voiced elsewhere. Denny, however, is the first to place them on the table for discussion.

It is difficult to see any substantive accomplishment in the redress program during this year and, perhaps, even in the previous year. The redress gameplan has been in a constant state of change depending on the latest criticism for a revision. Worse, the program seems to have no adherence to a predetermined strategy which is understood by all. Instead it seems to operate on a day-to-day basis with no thought given to timelines, priorities or any other element usually existent in an organized effort.

Also, there is the question of the staff role in implementing the program. Coordination of this ultimately falls to staff thus requiring the proper administration of the program. Effective administration has not been the hallmark of JACL's redress effort.

A discussion of this subject matter is most constructive in the following areas:

1. Structure
2. Responsibility
3. Coordination

Structure

In his April 20 memo, Yasuhara states that the fundamental issue is the working relationship between the JACL and the LEC. Further, Yasuhara states the need for a working relationship between Yasui, Tateishi, and you. I don't believe that working relationships can be successfully imposed any more than morality can be successfully legislated. I believe the fundamental issue is one of structure and its inherent lines of authority and thus, accountability.

JACL National Redress Committee

The current JACL redress structure in which the volunteer regional coordinators report to and receive direction from the staff redress director can best be described as unique and, in my view, negatively so. It is my guess the regional coordinators, at least those I am in touch with, tolerate it at best. It is less than an ideal situation.

As a recommendation, I would encourage the re-establishment of the JACL National Redress Committee, without delay. The rationale for this is apparent. The current friction between the LEC and JACL is one of personalities between Tateishi and Yasui which, if examined, finds many of its causes in the reporting structure of volunteer to staff and the seeming nonaccountability to the volunteer side by Tateishi with regard to ongoing communication and decision making. Layering in a national redress committee for the purpose of program oversight and policy recommendations makes Tateishi less vulnerable, provides greater direction to the program, and clarifies the staff role of facilitating the implementation of policy. Furthermore, with the establishment of the committee, communication and coordination between the LEC and JACL, hopefully, will be less encumbered since staff roles and volunteer roles are evident. Placing the program back in the committee structure opens the door for, and almost demands greater communication, the lack of which is the source of much of the current criticism.

The existing regional coordinators could easily serve as members to the committee. From among their members a chair could be chosen by Frank Sato. On the selection of a chair, I would recommend the following:

- That the chair come from an area where additional congressional support is sorely needed. The reason ~~for~~ this may be important is that program priorities must take into account those areas of the country where the most work is required. The allocation of resources under the present redress administration clearly does not accomplish this.

- The redress chair should have an established working relationship with the LEC. It will be crucial for the chair to

also be aware of and, if possible, involved in LEC matters. Currently, there are some individuals serving as regional coordinators who also serve as members of the LEC Board. One of these individuals may be ideal.

Washington Office

I understand that LEC would want to set up an office in Washington with a staff person for lobbying purposes. If this should occur my recommendation would be to move Colleen Darling to the LEC operation. Colleen has a number of established contacts in the various congressional offices and clearly her strength and the function of the LEC is lobbying.

Although I am unaware of Tim Gojio's activities I would guess he is still getting acclimated to the Washington situation. I would recommend that Tim, in his capacity as the JACL Washington Rep, continue to monitor those issues of concern to the JACL; that his major role in redress would involve contact and communication with the LEC Washington staff and transmitting lobbying information to the appropriate individuals within JACL. JACL needs a representative in Washington, irrespective of an LEC presence for redress.

Chicago Congressional Database

My role in the redress program has never been clear despite a meaningless designation as Associate Redress Director. Roles have a way of evolving despite formal job descriptions. In my role nothing of substance has evolved nor has the job description been enforced and, currently, I don't consider myself formally attached to the redress program beyond any responsibilities that may accrue as the Midwest Director. Otherwise I maintain, as a contribution to the redress staff effort, the computer data and offer advice when asked on various aspects of the program.

I believe the role of the "clearinghouse" to be an important function in the redress effort because it can coordinate information critical to the effort. I can understand an argument being made to house this function in the LEC because of the need to coordinate lobbying information. My instinct argues, however, that this function should be maintained in JACL as a means of coordinating the grassroots effort and because JACL staff, to the extent it is possible, should limit flipflopping between the JACL and LEC. Ideally, separate staffs would be maintained.

Headquarters

Headquarters redress staff may still run the day-to-day operations of the redress program implemented under the direction and oversight of the redress committee with direct staff accountability to the National Director.

Some thought, however, must be given to re-allocating responsibilities within the current redress staff and perhaps, commandeering the services of JACL staff for special projects or responsibilities as in the case of Tim Otani with the resolutions process. In re-allocating current redress staff responsibilities, there is the need to assess the relative strengths of John Tateishi and Carole Hayashino. In my view, Tateishi can best serve in public promotion of the issue, lobbying, and the development of internal informational material. Carole can best handle overall day-to-day operations, resource development, and public information.

I also believe that the upgrading or downgrading of responsibilities should commensurately affect compensation and that regular JACL staff contributing substantially to the program through assigned responsibilities should be properly compensated, your views to the contrary notwithstanding.

Responsibility/Function

JACL -- The primary responsibility of the JACL is in the area of education or promoting an awareness of the issue to create the proper perceptions of the issue and, further, to provide grassroots resources allowing the LEC to advance in its lobbying effort.

LEC -- The primary responsibility of the LEC is in providing congressional lobbying of the legislation.

Coordination

For proper coordination there must be a clear delineation and understanding of responsibilities of each entity (JACL and LEC). This will avoid duplication of effort and hopefully, too, prevent things from falling through the cracks. Ideally, there would exist an LEC volunteer board and its counterpart, the JACL redress committee with the chair of the JACL redress committee perhaps overlapping onto the LEC. Further, there would exist separate WDC staffing and to the extent possible, a minimization of having staff work for both entities. Staff would have clear responsibilities to the appropriate entity.

I would recommend that JACL fine tune and finalize the most recent gameplan as submitted by Carole Hayashino. In my view it is not a completed document. Moreover, elements of the gameplan must be prioritized and a budget should be developed consistent with the gameplan. I would recommend also that the LEC separately develop their strategy document consistent with their established responsibilities also listing out priorities and budget. This completed, the two documents would then be reviewed for coordination of activities and timelines.

The effort of the LEC will be Washington based and Washington centered in its activity. The LEC possesses no network to have its efforts supplemented in the field. Only JACL can provide this. It seems to me that JACL members can continue to provide support by meeting and attempting to influence their congressmen.

In my mind, JACL must remain actively involved in legislative redress decision-making even though LEC is handling the direct lobbying, i.e., LEC must closely consult with JACL as situations arise congressionally. As an organization, JACL must continue in active leadership on the issue. To do otherwise, would weaken the perception of JACL as a major organization and, I believe, lessen whatever chances there may be to succeed on the issue.