

# “...Congress Apologizes on Behalf of the Nation”



On August 10, 1988, the Civil Liberties Act was signed into law by President Ronald Reagan. The law provides \$20,000 in restitution to individuals of Japanese ancestry who were interned during World War II and to those who may also be determined as eligible according to the federal regulations which will define eligibility. These regulations will be released early in 1989.

The law also provides for an apology by Congress on behalf of the people of the United States. This apology is an acknowledgement of the injustice of the wartime incarceration of Japanese Americans. It is a recognition and affirmation of the findings of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians that “a grave injustice was done to both citizens and permanent resident aliens of Japanese ancestry by the evacuation, relocation, and internment of civilians during World War II.”

## JACL and LEC

These actions by Congress and the President were momentous and historic. They were not easily achieved. The Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) and its Legislative Education Committee (LEC) were at the forefront of leadership throughout this legislative campaign acting in a focused and purposeful way to pass the redress bill.

Beginning in 1979, the JACL advocated for the establishment of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians in the belief that an extensive and thorough report by such a commission would be an important and persuasive means for convincing the public and the members of Congress of the rightness of our case for redress.

*(See Congress Apologizes, page 7)*

Japanese American Citizens League

With participation by

U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Redress Administration

## ELIGIBILITY FOR PAYMENTS

Individuals eligible to receive payments under the Civil Liberties Act include those of Japanese ancestry who were evacuated or relocated from their homes on the West Coast or Hawaii and interned during World War II, and who were living on August 10, 1988, the date the Civil Liberties Act became law. Eligible individuals are those persons of Japanese ancestry...who, during the evacuation, relocation, and internment period was a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident alien; and was confined, held in custody, relocated, or otherwise deprived of liberty or property as a result of—

- Executive Order 9066, dated February 19, 1942;
- The Act entitled, "An Act to provide a penalty for violation of restrictions or orders with respect to persons entering, remaining in, leaving, or committing any act in military areas or zones, approved March 21, 1942; or,
- Any other Executive Order, Presidential proclamation, law of the United States, directive of the Armed Forces of the United States, or other action taken by or on behalf of the United States or its agents, representatives, officers, or employees, respecting the evacuation, relocation, or internment of individuals solely on the basis of Japanese ancestry; or
- Was enrolled on the records of the United States Government during the period beginning on December 7, 1941, and ending on June 30, 1946, as being in a prohibited military zone..."

Thus, eligible individuals include those who were confined in one of the Assembly Centers — Portland, Puyallup, Marysville, Sacramento, Tanforan, Stockton, Turlock, Merced, Pinedale, Salinas, Fresno, Tulare, Santa Anita, Pomona, Mayer, or one of the ten War Relocation Authority camps — Manzanar, Tule Lake, Poston, Gila

River, Minidoka, Heart Mountain, Granada, Topaz, Rohwer, Jerome.

Eligible "voluntary evacuees" are those citizens and permanent resident aliens of Japanese ancestry who left the West Coast voluntarily as a result of military orders prior to the mandatory removal and internment process. This includes individuals who were ordered to leave Terminal Island and Bainbridge Island. It also includes those individuals who left the West Coast between March 2 to 27, 1942, and filed a "Change of Residence" card with the Wartime Civil Control Administration.

The Justice Department is also accepting comment from any individuals or organizations on the following related to eligibility:

- Are Peruvian Japanese who were brought to the United States during World War II eligible?
- Are minors who were repatriated to Japan during World War II eligible?
- How can voluntary evacuees who may be eligible, but did not complete "Change of Residence" cards, be verified?

Comments may be sent to Valerie O'Brien, Office of Redress Administration, Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice, 10th and Constitution Avenue, Washington, D.C. 20530.

If you are aware of any other special situations not clearly defined in this Eligibility section, please comment separately and send it with the following form and we will make this situation known to the Justice Department.

If you already completed the Voluntary Information Form, please send the copy in this pamphlet to a friend or relative.

Please complete the following form so that we can send you special information should the occasion arise. Also, you may complete the Voluntary Information Form and mail it with the coupon to the JACL. We will make certain that your form reaches the Office of Redress Administration.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE: (     ) \_\_\_\_\_  
FIRST MIDDLE LAST

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

RETURN FORM TO: JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE  
1765 SUTTER STREET, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94115

## Message From U.S. Department of Justice Office of Redress Administration

The Office of Redress Administration has been established to identify and locate those who are eligible for payment under the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. Our task is enormous, but we have made significant progress toward achieving it.

We have engaged a bilingual staff, and established a toll free telephone number and post office box to receive information from the public. Through these means, we have obtained current information on 22,000 people as this statement is being prepared. To assist those who wish to contact us by mail, we have developed a Voluntary Information Form. Because the National Archives has made its records available to us, it is not necessary to obtain verification from there. However, those who have received verification from the Archives can expedite their eligibility determination by submitting that verification with the Voluntary Information Form to our office.

In addition to the information collected from public outreach, we are also gathering information from federal and state government agencies. Initially, we are making a computer tape of historic records, such as those maintained by the Archives. Then we will compare our computerized records to those of other agencies, including the Social Security Administration, and state departments of vital statistics and motor vehicles.

As we continue collecting information, we are also preparing the regulation, which will specify eligibility criteria, notification procedures, and appeal processes. We plan to publish the proposed regulation



Robert Bratt, Administrator, U.S. Department of Justice Office of Redress Administration and Cressey Nakagawa, J.A.C.I. National President

in the *Federal Register* in February, 1989, when review and approval within the Department of Justice will have been completed. After a thirty-day public comment period, we will consider those comments, and aim to finalize the regulation by the end of March.

The success of our public outreach effort would not have been possible without the support of many Japanese American individuals, organizations, and community leaders. We are grateful for this assistance, and hope it will continue. We believe that a special effort may be needed to reach those who are isolated, by geography or infirmity, from the Japanese American community. Please encourage your relatives, friends, and associates who may be eligible to contact us at 1-800-228-8375 (TDD: 1-800-548-0279). You may obtain copies of our literature in both Japanese and English language versions.

(Congress Apologizes, cont'd. from page 1)

The Commission provided a comprehensive federal review into the facts and circumstances surrounding the internment of persons of Japanese and Aleutian ancestry during World War II. The Commission report, entitled PERSONAL JUSTICE DENIED, concluded that "The promulgation of Executive Order 9066 was not justified by military necessity, and the decisions which followed from it — detention, ending detention, and ending exclusion — were not driven by analysis of military conditions. The broad historical causes which shaped these decisions were race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership."

### Passage of the Redress Bill

The Commission report of findings and recommendations became the framework for the legislation which was introduced in consecutive sessions of Congress beginning in 1983. With the realization that an extensive legislative campaign would be required to pass the redress bill, the JACL activated its lobbying component, the JACL/LEC. This concerted effort led to the passage of legislation in the House of

Representatives on September 17, 1987, followed by passage in the Senate on April 20, 1988. The JACL/LEC also worked diligently in the last important phase of this process — the effort to secure the signature of the President on the redress legislation.

Throughout this decade long struggle, the JACL committed a major portion of its time, energy, and financial resources to this important undertaking.

### JACL and the Office of Redress Administration

There are major tasks yet to be completed. The process of identifying all eligible individuals must take place in a timely manner and Congress must also make appropriations for redress payments. The JACL and the JACL/LEC are committed to completing the work remaining on redress. The JACL and the JACL/LEC are now working with the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Redress Administration to assist in identifying and locating all eligible individuals. The JACL/LEC will monitor and lobby the appropriations process to insure the timely distribution of redress payments.

## 日系損害賠償法案

レーガン米国大統領は1988年8月10日に市民自由法令(日系賠償法)に署名した。

この法案の通過により該当者に対して\$2万ドル支払われる事になり、これに関する規則は1989年に発表される予定である。

### 全米日系市民協会 (JACL)

この法令に才2次大戦中不法に抑留された日系人に対して米国国家に代わり、米国国会より正式な謝罪も含まれるという重大な意義がある。

この法案通過の裏には市民協会のリーダーシップによる全国組織、推進運動の寄与がある。

### 市民協会と賠償管理事務所

JACLと賠償管理事務所は協力して該当者を探し、毎年計上される国家予算、又、出来るだけ円満かつ早急に賠償金が各該当者に支払われるよう見守ります。

(JACL)

1765 SUTTER STREET

SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94115