

February 15, 1990

Mr. Gerry Enomoto, Chairperson
c/o Japanese American Citizens League
Legislative Education Committee
1730 Rhode Island Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Mr. Enomoto:

After reading and re-reading the redress rules published in the Pacific Citizen last summer in order to figure out if I am eligible for redress, I am writing this letter to several members of the Japanese American JACL-LEC community in the hope that I can be directed to someone who can give me correct, up-to-date information regarding how I can find out for certain whether or not I am eligible.

I have called the ORA, but feel a lack of confidence due to the inconsistency in their responses. The first time I called the 800 number in late 1988, the person I spoke to said rather emphatically I was not eligible and offered no information regarding the possibility that my situation could be judged on an individual basis, as I later found out in the Pacific Citizen. A few months later, after reading various P.C. articles, I worked up the courage to call again and spoke to someone who took my name, date and place of birth and other information and said it would be recorded in their records.

In July, 1989, I called and wrote the Department of Justice, thanks again to an article in the P.C. regarding comments from the public on the finalized version of redress rules and was told over the phone I was not eligible. I received a thank you letter in reply to my letter, but no response to my case in particular.

My situation is as follows:

I was born in Chicago, Illinois on June 15, 1944. My mother was 5 to 6 months pregnant when she left camp in Jerome, Arkansas to go to Chicago. My father had already gone on ahead of her because he had a job lined up there. Of course, my mother could have stayed in camp and given birth there, but she was very adamant about not wanting her child born in what she considered to be a prison camp, and therefore braved traveling to Chicago by herself at a time when persons of Japanese descent were subject to hostility on the basis of their skin color by Americans of the "right" skin color. I don't think I could have been as brave. I have included a statement from my mother and a copy of her I.D. card from those days.

This letter also sent to JoAnne Kagiwada, Executive Director and Mr. Grant Ujifusa, Strategy Chair

Mr. Ujifusa called, said I was not eligible due to wording of Civil Liberties Act of 1988.

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I feel I am eligible for redress when considering the intent of the Civil Liberties Act, but may be/may already have been disqualified due to a technicality - my mother left camp 3 to 4 months prior to my birth; therefore, I was not actually born in a camp. However, even though my parents left camp prior to my birth, it's not as though they were free to pursue their lives. They couldn't just "pick up and go home" to Los Angeles. My mother tells me they had to get permission to leave camp and could only go to certain areas, Chicago being one of them, under the terms and conditions of the enclosed Citizen's Indefinite Leave issued by the U.S. War Relocation Authority.

At any rate, I have stated the facts to the best of my knowledge, and honestly feel I am eligible for redress. I would appreciate any information you can give me with respect to whom to contact or what to do to find out for certain regarding my status, or perhaps this letter could be forwarded to the appropriate person/agency..

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter, and for the efforts of you and everyone at JACL-LEC on behalf of the Japanese American community. Without LEC and the Pacific Citizen, I would truly be lost!

Yours truly,

Sharon Marie Tanihara
11025 Sherman Avenue
Garden Grove, CA 92643
(714) 530-1715
SSE 556-62-3100
DOB 6/15/44

Enclosures

Statement of Sharon Marie Tanihara

I was born on June 15, 1944 in Chicago, Illinois to Frances Tsuyuko and Robert Haruo Tanihara. My mother was 5 months pregnant when she left camp in Jerome, Arkansas to go to Chicago. My father had already gone on ahead of her because he had a job lined up there. Of course, my mother could have stayed in camp and given birth there, but she was very adamant about not wanting her child born in what she considered to be a prison camp, and therefore braved traveling to Chicago by herself at a time when persons of Japanese descent were subject to hostility on the basis of their skin color by Americans of the "right" skin color. I don't think I could have been as brave. I have included a statement from my mother and a copy of my parents' Citizen's Indefinite Leave cards, granting them, United States citizens, permission to leave the Jerome, Arkansas camp and travel to Chicago, Illinois.

Even though my parents left camp prior to my birth, it's not as though they were free to pursue their lives. They couldn't just "pick up and go home" to Los Angeles. My mother tells me they had to get permission to leave camp and could only go to certain areas, Chicago being one of them, under the rules and regulations of the United States War Relocation Authority. In order to leave camp, they were required to carry the previously-mentioned Citizen's Indefinite Leave card authorizing them to travel to Chicago.

In light of the above facts, I feel I am eligible for redress when considering the intent of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, but have been disqualified due to a technicality - my mother left camp 4 months prior to my birth, therefore I was not actually born in a camp - not because Executive Order 9066 was rescinded, but because my mother did not want her child to carry the stigma of having been born in an American concentration camp.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the facts stated above regarding my case are true and correct and have been stated to the best of my knowledge.

Sharon Marie Tanihara
11025 Sherman Avenue
Garden Grove, California 92643
(714) 530-1715
SS# 556-62-3100 DOB 6-15-44

I was born Isayuka Marada
on July 1, 1918 in Factoria, Wash.
On Nov. 8, 1941 I married Warner
Tanikawa. Few months later we
were ordered to evacuate to Santa
Anita Racetrack in Calif. From
there we were shipped out to
Jerome, Ark. where we lived
for 3 years. In Jan. 1944 my
husband got permission to leave
for Chicago where he worked
making rail road tracks.

Although I was 5 months
pregnant at the time I decided
to leave camp as I did not
want my child born incarcerated
in a concentration camp. My
daughter, Sharon Maru Tanikawa
was born on June 15, 1944 in
Chicago, Ill.

I declare under penalty of
perjury that the foregoing is
true & correct.

Isayuka Tanikawa
Feb 17, 1990



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EDITORIAL OF THE PACIFIC CITIZEN:

Redress Reg Review

THE DEPARTMENT of Justice has released a massive document establishing standards and procedures for carrying out the Redress program. Like most legal documents involving money and government, it is long and detailed.

However, acknowledging possible shortcomings in the rules, the Justice Department is asking for comments. These must be filed within 30 days of publication of the document, which was June 14, 1989.

On the whole, the regulations seem to meet the goals of the JACL Legislative Education Committee which spearheaded the Redress battle. It appears that all living persons of Japanese ancestry who left their West Coast homes, voluntarily or involuntarily, under provisions of Executive Order 9066 will be entitled to receive the \$20,000 voted by Congress. For eligible persons who have died since the law was signed Aug. 10, 1988, payment will be made to heirs.

Some sticky issues involving Japanese Americans inducted into military service before Evacuation, and South Americans of Japanese ancestry interned in the U.S., seem to have been delineated in the regulations.

But there are other points requiring clarification. For example, the regulations say one must submit an *original* birth certificate, not a copy, to establish date of birth. Most persons have only a certified copy. That should be sufficient and the language needs to be made clear.

There also is room for argument over the status of children born to evacuees who moved directly into a "free" zone or after leaving a WRA camp. The regulations state such children are not eligible for Redress payment. However, the regulations also state that Redress is due persons "deprived of liberty" as a result of E.O. 9066, and it can be contended that these children were so deprived in that they, like their parents, were denied the freedom to live where they wished.

As the regulations have been drafted, there is a particular irony for those born to parents who relocated from the WRA centers because they did not want the unborn child to carry the stigma of birth in a concentration camp. The act of having sought freedom now penalizes those persons.

Presumably, oversights will be corrected and the regulations be made as fair as possible following the comment period. Yet, such a document will be meaningless unless Congress appropriates the funds necessary for completing the process of Redress. That must be done without further delay.