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September 21, 1990

Ms. Sharon M. Tanihara
11025 Sherman Avenue
Garden Grove, California 92643

Dear Ms. Tanihara:

Thank you for your recent letter regarding your eligibility for redress payments granted by the Civil Liberties Act of 1988.

As an American of Japanese ancestry who fought for the United States in World War II, I understand the frustration and humiliation of those who were imprisoned in the internment camps. I was eighteen years old at the time I learned that over 120,000 American-Japanese citizens were relocated to designated camps across the country.

For over a decade, Congress debated the issue of redress for Japanese-Americans who were interned in the camps during World War II. On August 10, 1988, President Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act into law. The law was intended to provide an acknowledgement of wrong doing and restitution to those Japanese-Americans who were directly harmed and denied their civil rights as American citizens. The acknowledgement and apology by the federal government to those Japanese-American interned during the war, in and of itself, was a victory.

I assure you that my colleagues and I have worked diligently to authorize and provide funds for the redress payments. As mandated by the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, the payments are distributed by seniority, the oldest survivors being served first. Provided that you were alive on the date of enactment, you or your heirs would be eligible to receive the restitution payments. Furthermore, no more than \$500 million of the \$1.25 billion in authorized funds may be distributed in one fiscal year.

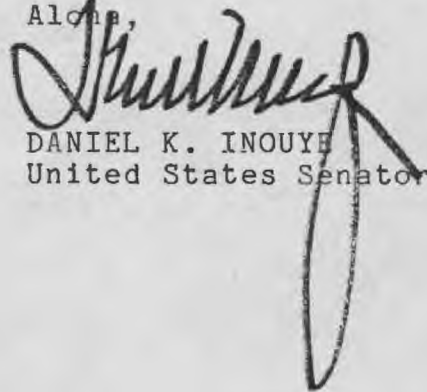
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In your letter, you inquired about the possibility of amending the Act to provide compensation for those, like yourself, that were conceived but not born in the internment camp. The policy rationale behind the redress payments is to apologize for and to provide token compensation for the injury suffered by Japanese-Americans. Accordingly, as an unborn fetus, you did not suffer direct harm from our nation's unjust actions, as did your parents who are eligible for the redress payments.

As one of the drafters and proponents of the Civil Liberties Act, it was necessary to draw the line regarding eligibility for restitution payments. Since there was no direct injury to you because you were not yet born, no right to payment is vested. I hope that you can take solitude in the knowledge that your parents will be receiving compensation for the losses in property and freedom that they suffered.

Once again, thank you for sharing your views with me.

Alone,



DANIEL K. INOUE
United States Senator

DKI:dmh

cc: Grant Ujifusa