

## D.C. notes



### Redress: a grass roots effort

By KAREN NARASAKI

Washington, D.C. Representative

Among the many individuals who deserve credit for the passage of H.R. 4551 this year are the individual JACL members who participated in the grass roots network. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members formally as part of the network and the countless others who took the time to write, call and visit their members of Congress. In particular, the individuals in states not heavily populated by Japanese Americans, such as Utah, Michigan, Ohio, New Jersey, New York, Wisconsin and Georgia, deserve recognition. Lobbying when you don't have the advantage of numbers takes a special kind of chutzpah.

Also deserving special mention is Cherry Kinoshita who served as JACL redress chairwoman and spent countless hours assisting me in organizing JACL's grass roots efforts. In addition to working with Carol Kamiyama and Tomio Moriguchi to get 100% of the Washington state congressional delegation on board, she helped organize a letter-writing campaign at the Heart Mountain reunion in Seattle. Cherry worked with Gilbert Inaba, Tad and Fran Wada, Bacon Sakatani and Washington Coalition on Redress member, Chiz Omori. The Heart Mountain reunion effort produced close to 500 letters to Senators George Mitchell and John Glenn. In addition, Bill Hosokawa initiated a

resolution which the attendees adopted by acclamation and sent to Senators Mitchell, Glenn, Dole and Simpson.

Jonathan Kaji, Edwin Hiroto and George Oki helped us to work on Republican members and the administration. Countless other individuals helped to get letters to Washington. Mary Tsukamoto reports that the Florin chapter was able to generate more than 1,550 letters alone. JACL-LEC helped to fund the grass roots efforts. The mailings and telephone calls were covered by JACL-LEC, in addition to a new word processing system to help the Washington, D.C. office track the legislation and get materials out to members.

Also deserving of recognition are the members of the Washington D.C., Chapter, JACL, who helped provide support at the Congressional hearings. Joe Ichiji, Pat Okura and Paul and May Ishimoto attended the House Judiciary Committee hearing and Julia Kuroda and Toshio Tsukahira attended the Senate Governmental Affairs hearing. Kuroda and Tsukahira deserve special mention since the Senate hearings were cancelled twice, so they had to take time out of their busy schedules several times.

JACL members also worked to bring other organizations into the redress effort. Teresa Maebori organized a redress information booth at the National Education Association (NEA) convention and persuaded the NEA to renew its support. Rev. Joe Klecha, M.M., alerted the Maryknoll fathers and brothers, who renewed its support for redress and sent letters of support to the Senate. In addition to these organizations and the 36 organizations reported in a previous *Pacific Citizen* article, the Columban Fathers Justice Peace Office also joined the coalition in support of the redress legislation.

Many JACL members have offered me words of encouragement and thanks. I appreciate the support, but recognize that the effort was truly a community effort, sup-

ported not only by the work of thousands of JACL members and the JACL national staff, but other civil and human rights organizations and concerned individuals as well. Without these efforts and the unswerving leadership and personal commitment of our Asian Pacific American members of Congress, we would not be able to bring closure on individual redress for Japanese Americans.

We need your help in ensuring that the approximately 40 eligible individuals not of Japanese descent who followed their Japanese American spouses and children into camp receive their redress payments. The bill authorized payments to them, but did not make these payments an entitlement. Therefore, specific appropriations of approximately \$1 million is necessary. Congress has authorized the Department of Justice to reprogram some of its budget for FY 1993 for this purpose. We need to convince the department to do so. We urge members to write to Attorney General William P. Barr, Department of Justice, 10th St. and Constitution Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C., 20530, and to President Bush, the White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C., 20500.

In addition, the work for the redress education fund is not over. While the bill authorized funding for the education fund, we will need to seek appropriations for the fund next year. Only the individual redress payments to Japanese Americans are an entitlement. I hope that those of you who worked so hard this year to ensure that all eligible individuals would receive their just due, will renew your commitment next year to ensure that the generations of Americans who follow you will be taught the important lessons to be learned from the Japanese American experience. ☐

*Narasaki regularly writes and reports on legislative activities in Washington, D.C.*