

Redress funding bill needs support, staff says

Unfinished business is always part of an agenda. And for the 32nd JACL Biennial Convention, redress, so much a part of the organization's struggle in the past decade or so, is still on the minds of many.

That's because Senate Bill S. 2553, which would provide the additional funding to make payments in the final round of the program, still needs to be passed by Congress.

It was reported by Dennis Hayashi, JACL national director, at the convention that S.2553 recently passed out of the Governmental Affairs Committee where it had been stalled. The national staff issued an action alert at the convention on S. 2553 and its companion H.R. 4551, calling for member support. "These are critical days for both measures," Hayashi said.

The national director was giving the Washington, D.C., report Aug. 3, during the national council sessions, for JACL Washington, D.C., representative Karen Narasaki.



DENNIS HAYASHI
Redress concerns

Hayashi reported that both bills are expected to be voted upon soon. At convention time, H.R. 4551 was in the Judiciary Committee. He said that there were some indications that the bill would be considered and voted upon in that committee (See story below).

In the action alert, Hayashi urged the national council members to call, write or fax their

congressmen in support of the two bills and to urge others to do the same.

The additional funding is particularly of concern because there are now many more eligible redress recipients. Paul Suddes, director of the Office of Redress Administration, told the national council Aug. 3 that there were approximately 77,800 confirmed individuals eligible for redress payments, significantly higher than the 60,000 noted in the original 1988 estimate.

Suddes added that the ORA estimates would eventually reach the figure of 80,000. The oversight was attributed to a lack of actuarial data on Japanese Americans.

The ORA director estimated that 12,500 redress checks should go out in October to those born before March, 1935.

At the awards and recognition banquet held the same night, John Dunne, assistant attorney general, Department of Justice, promised complete payment to all those eligible for redress.

Redress amendments passed out of House Judiciary Committee

Washington, D.C.—The House Judiciary Committee passed H.R. 4551, "The Civil Liberties Act Amendments of 1992", on a voice vote Aug. 11. The bill would authorize the additional funding necessary to fulfill the commitment of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which provides redress to the Japanese Americans interned in concentration camps during World War II by the U.S. government.

Congressman Barney Frank (D-MA) introduced three amendments. One incorporated the substance of H.R. 4553 which was introduced earlier this year by Congressman Robert Matsui (D-CA) to clarify that payments under the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 are not counted as income when determining veterans pensions.

The second amendment raised the amount of additional authorization from \$320 million to \$400 million in response to the announcement by the Department of Justice of its final estimate of 80,000 potentially



KAREN NARASAKI
Collective effort aids cause

eligible claimants. The final amendment concerned a technical correction requested by the Department of Justice. All three amendments passed on a voice vote.

Congressman Hamilton Fish (R-NY) noted the support of the Administration and the Republican members of the Subcommittee on Administrative Law and Governmental Relations,

which had unanimously passed the bill in March. Congressman Don Edwards (D-CA) also voiced his support for the bill.

Dennis Hayashi, JACL national director, stated "We are heartened by the bipartisan support the legislation has received and hope that it will hasten final passage. It is imperative that the government fulfill its promise to redress the wrong committed 50 years ago."

Karen Narasaki, JACL Washington, D.C. Representative, noted that the extraordinary efforts of Congressman Norman Mineta (D-CA) and Robert Matsui (D-CA), as well as the community grassroots efforts led by JACL and the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations, have been instrumental in moving H.R. 4551 through Congress.

"However, we still face many obstacles in getting the final passage. Continued grassroots efforts will be even more crucial as we move into the next lobbying phase," said Narasaki.