

2001 11/11/01
Yakima, Washington 98901
May 25, 1988

President Ronald Reagan
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The other day I came across a faded, crumpled tag issued to my mother, Kiyoko Matsushita, indicating the date of departure and seat assignment on the ancient coach of the train transporting the Japanese American families away from their long-established homes in the Yakima Valley, Washington.

That June 4, 1942 evening was much as it is today - warm and calm. Mt Adams glistered majestically to the west in the last rays of the sun setting slowly behind the hills rimming the farming community of Wapato, my lifetime home.

I shall never forget the look on my father's face as the train pulled away. His hand gripped the arm of the seat - knuckles white. He was saying a silent, sad goodbye to the land he loved so dearly.

Coming to the area in 1905, he had cleared sagebrush from a raw, unrelenting land; experienced back breaking hardships and meagre rewards of a rowcrop farmer.

Throughout the evacuation period his faith in the ultimate justice of his adopted country never wavered. Following the concentration camp and relocation experience, my parents were never able to re-establish themselves. Eventually, they had to accept public assistance. Both died in poverty, but ever-grateful for the little financial security received.

They, together with my husband's parents and his brother are deceased, and will not experience the redeeming act of redress. Incidentally my husband Tak, served in the military from Sept. 1941 to August 1945; Korea 1951-52. Both his deceased brother and a living one were evacuated, and both WWII veterans.

For them, and for many other Japanese Americans like them, I urge you to sign redress bills HR 442 and SB 1009 into law. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Kara Matsushita Kondo

Evacuation Family # 33062

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

July 5, 1988

Dear Ms. Kondo:

Thank you for your message and enclosure to President Reagan concerning H.R. 442/S. 1009, legislation which would implement the recommendations of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians. Your personal concern about this legislation is understood.

There is no question that many loyal Japanese-Americans suffered unwarranted and egregious hardships as a result of the evacuation and internment program that was instituted as part of the United States national defense effort during World War II. We recall today with great admiration and gratitude the thousands of Americans of Japanese descent who fought in the U.S. Armed Forces with honor and courage. Their heroism is all the more poignant against the background of the loss of freedom endured by their friends and relatives as a result of the war.

The Office of Management and Budget expressed concerns about the costs and implications of this legislation when it came before the House and Senate. As you may know, the legislation is currently under consideration by a House and Senate conference committee, and we are hopeful that some of the concerns raised by OMB can be addressed.

Again, I would like to thank you for taking the time to write and provide us with your thoughts on this sensitive issue. It is important that the President be fully informed of all points of view on such an important matter, and your comments will be carefully considered if this legislation reaches the President's desk.

With the President's best wishes,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Anne Higgins".

Anne Higgins
Special Assistant to the President
and Director of Correspondence

Ms. Kara Matsushita Kondo
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Yakima, WA 98901