

We the People

of the United States, in order to form a
insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure
and our Posterity, We ordain and establish this Constitution
of America.

Bill At Last!
Suck

96TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 5977

To provide for payments to certain individuals of Japanese ancestry who were interned, detained, or forcibly relocated by the United States during World War II.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 28, 1979

Mr. LOWRY introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To provide for payments to certain individuals of Japanese ancestry who were interned, detained, or forcibly relocated by the United States during World War II.

1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
2 tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SHORT TITLE

3 SECTION 1. This Act may be cited as the "World War
4 II Japanese-American Human Rights Violations Redress
5 Act".

PURPOSE

6 SEC. 2. The purpose of this Act is—
7
8

[Faint handwritten notes and bleed-through text from the reverse side of the page, including phrases like "Article 1", "The House of Representatives", and "The Senate".]

[Faint handwritten notes and bleed-through text from the reverse side of the page, including phrases like "The President", "The Judiciary", and "The Committee".]

1 (1) to recognize and redress the injustices and vio-
2 lations of human rights perpetrated during the World
3 War II internment period against individuals of Japa-
4 nese ancestry by the United States;

5 (2) to discourage similar injustices and violations
6 of human rights in the future; and

7 (3) to make more credible and sincere any decla-
8 rations of concern by the United States over violations
9 of human rights committed by other nations.

10 DEFINITIONS

11 SEC. 3. For purposes of this Act—

12 (1) the term “eligible individual” means any indi-
13 vidual of Japanese ancestry who was interned or de-
14 tained or forcibly relocated by the United States at any
15 time during the World War II internment period;

16 (2) the term “interned or detained” means con-
17 fined or held in custody by the United States pursuant
18 to—

19 (A) Executive Order 9066, dated February
20 1942;

21 (B) Executive Order 9489, dated October
22 18, 1944;

23 (C) section 67 of the Act entitled “An Act to
24 provide a government for the Territory of Ha-
25 waii”, approved April 30, 1900 (31 Stat. 153);

1 (D) sections 4067 through 4070 of the Re-
2 vised Statutes of the United States; or

3 (E) any other statute, rule, regulation, or
4 order;

5 (3) the term "World War II internment period"
6 means the period beginning on December 7, 1941, and
7 ending on December 31, 1952.

8 PAYMENTS

9 SEC. 4. (a)(1) The Attorney General shall locate, as
10 soon as practicable after the date of the enactment of this
11 Act, each eligible individual and shall pay to each such indi-
12 vidual the sum of \$15,000 plus an amount equal to \$15 mul-
13 tiplied by the number of days, if any, during which such indi-
14 vidual was interned or detained during the World War II
15 internment period, as determined by the Attorney General by
16 a preponderance of the evidence.

17 (2) If an eligible individual is deceased or can not be
18 located by the Attorney General, the Attorney General shall
19 locate, as soon as practicable after the date of the enactment
20 of this Act, and shall pay the sum of \$15,000 plus an amount
21 equal to \$15 multiplied by the number of days, if any, during
22 which such individual was interned or detained during the
23 World War II internment period, as determined by the At-
24 torney General by a preponderance of the evidence, to the
25 following individuals—

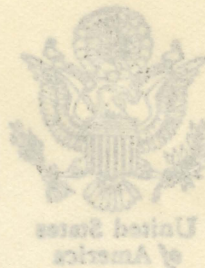
1 (A) any legal spouse of such individual on the
2 date the Attorney General determines that such indi-
3 vidual died or can not be located;

4 (B) any sons and daughters of such individual who
5 are legal heirs of the individual, in equal shares, if the
6 Attorney General determines that such spouse is de-
7 ceased, can not be located, or that the individual had
8 no such spouse;

9 (C) the parents of such individual who are legal
10 heirs of the individual, in equal shares, if the Attorney
11 General determines that such legal spouse, sons, and
12 daughters are deceased, can not be located, or that the
13 individual had no such spouse, sons, or daughters; or

14 (D) the brothers and sisters of such individual who
15 are legal heirs of the individual, in equal shares, if the
16 Attorney General determines that such legal spouse,
17 sons, daughters, and parents are deceased, can not be
18 located, or that the individual had no such spouse,
19 sons, daughters, or parents.

20 (b) In determining for purposes of subsection (a) the
21 number of days that an eligible individual was interned or
22 detained or forcibly relocated, the Secretary shall use any
23 available records from the Wartime Civil Control Adminis-
24 tration and the War Relocation Authority and shall obtain, if



1 the Attorney General determines it is necessary, affidavits
2 from eligible individuals and witnesses.

3 (c) In finding eligible individuals and their legal heirs
4 residing in nations other than the United States, the Attor-
5 ney General may use any available facilities or resources of
6 the International Committee of the Red Cross and shall pay
7 to the International Committee of the Red Cross for each
8 such individual or heir located with the assistance of such
9 committee an amount equal to 2 per centum of the payment
10 made to such individual or heir.

11 (d) No individual shall be denied a payment made pursu-
12 ant to subsection (a) because of the residence or citizenship of
13 the individual.

14 (e) Any payment made pursuant to subsection (a) shall
15 not be considered income or receipts for purposes of any Fed-
16 eral taxes or for purposes of determining the eligibility for or
17 the amount of any benefits or assistance provided under any
18 Federal program or under any State or local program fi-
19 nanced in whole or part with Federal funds.

20 AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS

21 SEC. 5. Effective October 1, 1980, there are authorized
22 to be appropriated to the Attorney General such sums as
23 may be necessary to carry out this Act.





United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 96th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 125

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 1979

No. 167

THE WORLD WAR II JAPANESE-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION REDRESS ACT

HON. MIKE LOWRY

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 28, 1979

● Mr. LOWRY. Mr. Speaker, on February 19, 1942, soon after the United States entered World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066. By doing so, the U.S. Government violated the constitutionally guaranteed rights of 110,000 Americans. This Executive order and other related administrative, congressional, and judicial orders forced Americans of Japanese ancestry residing on the Pacific coast to submit to relocation and confinement in detention camps. No concern was shown for the basic rights to due process. Individuals were torn from jobs and had educations interrupted. Homes, farms, and businesses were abandoned in compliance with relocation directives. In the camps, internees were crammed into barrack-like living quarters, their time and activities severely regimented and restricted. Freedom of movement was dictated by the barbed-wire fences that surrounded the compounds. For those Japanese-Americans who were interned, normal business, family and community life ceased to exist.

This total disregard for due process was supported by a belief at the time that the U.S. security was threatened from within. Fundamental legal procedures and principles were swept aside by all levels and branches of government. The voice of reason was not heard. Racial prejudice fueled by wartime hysteria allowed Japanese-Americans to be singled out and persecuted. Their loyalty to the United States was held suspect and questioned before the world. Over two-thirds of those interned were American citizens, and the vast majority of the others were resident aliens—legal guests in our country. There were never any direct accusations against individuals, no formal arrests, no trials.

Not a single person was ever convicted of any crime in connection with his or her internment. The average internment period was about 3 years. This was truly an inglorious chapter in the history of our country.

Over the years, a general acknowledgment has emerged from the American Government and the American people that a greivous injustice had been perpetuated against Japanese-American citizens and others of Japanese ancestry during World War II. Numerous Government officials, private organizations, and individuals have come forth to acknowledge this gross violation of civil rights, and to resolve that such an act must never be allowed to reoccur. While those admissions and acknowledgments of wrongdoing do serve to bring visibility to the injustice of internment, I believe that stronger measures are necessary to provide fair redress and to insure the continued integrity of constitutional rights and procedures. Significant compensation to those interned for material and personal losses must be made.

To this end, I am introducing the World War II Japanese-American Human Rights Violations Redress Act. Its purpose is to first, assure that this Nation will never again allow the mass violation of civil liberties of citizens and legal residents of the United States; and second, make a direct financial reimbursement to the people who were interned as a minimal repayment for their losses incurred.

The serious abuse of governmental power that caused the unfair imprisonment of 110,000 Americans must be condemned in the strongest possible manner. We must clearly admit our mistake and make redress to the people who were harmed. America cannot afford to do less. ●



National Council for Japanese American Redress

925 West Diversey Parkway, Chicago, Illinois 60614

December 25, 1979

Now is the day announced when I will grant you equal reparation.

Zechariah 9:12

Dear Friends,

Merry Christmas! Happy New Year!

At last it's happened. We have a redress bill in Congress!

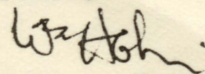
Of course, introducing a bill is a long, long, long way from passing it. But why not savor the moment? It took six months just to get this far. The bill was originally authored by Shosuke Sasaki and friends of Seattle. In May, 1979, Shosuke wrote the bill and then, with friends, asked Mike Lowry to introduce it. Lowry agreed. The bill then became the responsibility of the congressman. He would have to make changes as he saw fit. But significant portions of Shosuke's words remain, most notably in the short title and in the statement of purpose. These words stand in beautiful contrast to the neutered terminology of the JACL's Commission Bill, which fails to use the terms "Japanese" or "redress" anywhere and which proposes to conduct a study "to determine whether a wrong was committed," and whose objective is a report. The Lowry Bill identifies us as Japanese-Americans, proposes redress for injustices and human rights violations, and has the objective of making payments to the victims.

We need to express a word of thanks to the many people who have joined us with their contributions. It is heartening to know that about half of you are not Japanese Americans and most are folks of ordinary means. We continue with fund raising because our tasks grow greater. But we could not have come this far without your support. Thanks a lot.

The next task is Congress.

We need your help here to write letters and postcards to your representatives and senators urging their support for H.R.5977. Take the first step. Write. Then persist. Press for a commitment. Be prepared to become pen pals. Remember that though this is a national issue it's a small one. The total number of letters received will be small. Yours will count a great deal. And ask for a copy of the bill. It's an historic document.

Peace!


William Hohri

NATIONAL COUNCIL for
JAPANESE AMERICAN REDRESS
925 West Diversey Parkway
Chicago, Illinois 60614



925 West Diversey Parkway, Chicago, Illinois 60614

December 25, 1979

Now is the day announced when I will grant you equal reputation.

Secretary's Office

Dear Friends,

Merry Christmas! Happy New Year!

At last it's happened. We have a redress bill in Congress!

Of course, introducing a bill is a long, long, long way from passing it. But why not savor the moment? It took six months just to get this far. The bill was originally authored by Shosuke Sasaki and friends of Seattle. In May, 1979, Shosuke wrote the bill and then, with friends, asked Mike Lowry to introduce it. Lowry agreed. The bill then became the responsibility of the congressman. He would have to make changes as he saw fit. But significant portions of Shosuke's words remain, most notably in the short title and in the statement of purpose. These words stand in beautiful contrast to the neutered terminology of the JACL's Commission Bill, which fails to use the terms "Japanese" or "redress" anywhere and which proposes to conduct a study "to determine whether a wrong was committed," and whose objective is a report. The Lowry Bill identifies us as Japanese-Americans, proposes redress for injustices and human rights violations, and has the objective of making payments to the victims.

Writing a Letter to Congress

An effective letter to a Representative or Senator is brief and informative. Each correspondence should deal with only one issue. State the topic clearly in the first paragraph so the letter can be assigned to the appropriate legislative assistant for handling. If possible, give the bill's title, number and sponsor. Remember that thousands of bills are introduced in each session of Congress.

Try to make the letter as supportive as possible, even if you do not agree on the issue at hand. If you supported the Congressperson in the previous election, let him or her know. If you have any areas of agreement, state them. It is good to let them know they at least have a chance for your support and should take your views seriously.

Stress your ties with the ACLU or any other organization. This is particularly important in writing to a Congressperson who does not represent you. He or she should be aware of any influential positions you hold.

If time is short before an important vote, don't forget Western Union's "Personal Opinion Messages." For \$2 you can send a 15-word message which will be received within two hours. Telegrams are also frequently given preferential treatment in legislative offices.

CORRECT FORMS OF ADDRESS

Senators:

The Honorable _____
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510
Dear Senator _____
Telephone: 202/224-3121.

Members of the House of Representatives:

The Honorable _____
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515
Dear Mr., Ms. _____
Telephone: 202/224-3121