

# The Redress Monitor

The National Newsletter of the Japanese American Citizens League - Legislative Education Committee

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September, 1989

## Message from the Chair

**Jerry Enomoto**  
Chairperson, JACL-LEC  
Board

Later this month, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee will take up the issue of redress funding. Senator Inouye has been meeting with his colleagues to urge their support of the maximum appropriation allowed by the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. We are very lucky indeed to have such a highly placed, strong supporter as Daniel Inouye.

But no matter what happens in the Senate Appropriations Committee, the story doesn't end there. The appropriations bill must still pass the full Senate, and after that, it will go to conference committee. The higher the amount approved by the full Senate, the better the chances are of the conference committee approving significantly more than the \$50 million approved by the House. After the bill comes back out of conference, it then goes back again to the full House and Senate for final approval.

I wish we could all "kick back," and let our friends in Washington look after our interests, BUT THEY CAN'T DO IT ALONE. All of us need to keep on working, telling our Senators and Reps how important it is for our country to make good on its promises. Over a year ago, a promise was made to all the survivors of this grievous wrong. Already, for the estimated 2,500 of them who have died, that promise has been broken. We need maximum funding for redress now. We don't need any more broken promises.



Angel Franco/ NYT Pictures

Kinuyo, left, and Masaru George Hokoda with photos of their three sons, who fought in the United States Army while their parents waited behind barbed wire in a World War II internment camp in Gila, Arizona.

## One Year Later, Still No Redress

by SETH MYDANS

LOS ANGELES -- For more than 40 years, Kinuyo Hokoda has waited -- waited for the humiliation of her years in a California detention camp to fade, for some acknowledgment that her adopted country was wrong to confine 112,000 Japanese Americans in World War II.

Today, a year after President Ronald Reagan apologized and Congress voted to pay \$20,000 to each former detainee to compensate for lost freedom, jobs and belongings, Mrs. Hokoda still waits.

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**Message from the Editor**  
**JoAnne H. Kagiwada,**  
**Executive Director, JACL-LEC**

By the time this newsletter reaches you, the appropriations process may have already worked its way through the Senate. The next step will be to send the House bill and the Senate bill to a joint Conference Committee where the two versions will be negotiated into a single set of numbers for 1990 appropriations. That conference report will then be voted on by both the House and the Senate, and sent on to the President for his signature. This must all be done before the first of October when the 1990 fiscal year begins. Otherwise the government will run out of money.

We have already asked you to contact members of the Appropriations Committees of both houses. Now it is time to get in touch with your Senators and Representatives to thank them for their past support of redress. For instance, thanks are due to Representative Neal Smith for his outstanding attempts to get \$250 million included in the 1989 Supplemental Appropriations, and for trying to get the maximum possible appropriations for fiscal year 1990. Even though these efforts on his part were not successful, they helped lay the groundwork for subsequent efforts by others.

Remember that you have the most influence with your own members of Congress. CONTACT THEM NOW. If they are members of either Appropriations Subcommittee, they may be appointed to the conference committee, and are especially important at this time. Even if they are not, the full House and Senate will have to vote for approval of the Conference bill when the Committee finishes its work. Urge your members of Congress to support the highest possible level of funding for 1990 in the conference report. Remind them of your earlier contacts, and if you have supported them politically, be sure to mention that also. Appearing in this newsletter are excerpts from letters and action alerts which discuss the importance of immediate, high levels of funding for redress.

We have gotten permission from the *New York Times* to reprint an article which most of you may not see otherwise. It appeared on their front page a few weeks ago. It captures in a very graphic way how urgent it is for us to work for the highest level of funding possible. The simple faith in the American democratic process expressed by Mrs. Hokoda, an 87 year-old retirement home resident, is powerfully motivating for all of us. She said, "We don't understand...President Reagan promised and the government does not do it." We don't understand either.

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Washington, D.C., 20510

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U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, D.C., 20515



## The Elderly Are Waiting Patiently, But...

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No one has been paid. The promised funds, victims of a tight Federal budget this year, have yet to be appropriated, and the \$20 million being proposed falls far short of the \$1.25 billion that is needed.

"We trust America, but we doubt," Mrs. Hokoda said. "We expect the American Government to give to us, but too long over the years now. We doubt. We doubt. We are not sure now."

Each month, the Justice Department's Office of Redress Administration in Washington said, more than 200 of the elderly survivors of the camps are dying unrecompensed.

"Yes, a lot of people died," said Mrs. Hokoda, who is 87 years old and whose husband, Masaru George Hokoda, a former gardener in Hollywood, is 90. "They all experienced the cruel time, the war time. They tried to forget that miserable time, tried to forget. But lately they have been reminded again."

Under the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, Congress pledged restitution to the 60,000 Americans of Japanese descent who were incarcerated in the war in "relocation camps" and were still alive when the bill was passed. The bulk of those interned were held from 1942 through early 1946.

The payments are to go to the survivors of any internees who die after the passage of the legislation.

The number who die before they are paid could be large. President Bush has asked Congress for only \$20 million in this year's budget, enough to pay just 1,000 of the former detainees. Congress has not yet acted.

The funds, when appropriated, would be paid first to the oldest of the internees. Representative Robert T. Matsui, a California Democrat who was himself con-

fining to a camp, said that under this structure the proposed sum would be enough to pay only those older than 87.

"We don't quite understand that," Mrs. Hokoda said. "President Reagan promised, but the Government does not do it."

Mr. and Mrs. Hokoda are among more than 250 former detainees who make up the majority of the residents of the Japanese Retirement Home and its related building in downtown Los Angeles.

The home's administrator, Edwin Hiroto, who was detained at the age of 15 with his parents, said he sees the roundups of Japanese Americans after the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, as a symptom of wartime hysteria that brought out a shameful side of American society.

He said he is seeing it again in the delay of payments, "a repetition of the same kind of treatment that was accorded to my parents as they tried to be good citizens."

"I guess any group because of race can be picked out, for whatever reason, to be treated as different from the rest of citizens," he said.

People like his parents, and like many of the older residents of the retirement home, he said, reacted passively to their detention because "if you're accustomed to being not quite 100 percent accepted in the first place, it sort of becomes normal."

Mr. Hiroto said he observes a similar passivity now among the old people at the home as they wait for their payments, a sense of "shikata ga nai," an acceptance of one's fate, an understanding that there is nothing to be done.

"It's kind of late, but I'm waiting patiently," said Midori Shimozo, who is 72 years old and who retired four years ago from her work at a florist shop.

"My mother passed away last March, so she died without get-

ting anything." Mrs. Shimozo said. "That's something you can't help. But she did feel badly. She thought we were mistreated. She had nothing to do with the war."

In the camps, surrounded by barbed wire, Mr. Hiroto said, many internees were "traumatized by that idea that we were really so different."

And yet, like others at the retirement home, he said he feels "totally American," even to the point of sharing a national resentment at Japan's current economic aggressiveness.

Henry Ikemoto, a 66-year old volunteer at the retirement home, saw his father lose everything -- home, farm, car, clothing, bed -- and never regain his job or belongings after the war.

Yet Mr. Ikemoto, like a number of other detainees, said he had agreed with the view that the roundup was "a necessity of war" and had volunteered as soon as he could to fight with the American forces in Europe.

"Uncle Sam has been real good to me personally," said Mr. Ikemoto, a retired probation officer, looking back across the years.

Representative Norman Y. Mineta, a California Democrat who was also in a camp in the war, said, "In 1942 the Government put this cloak of disloyalty on the backs of Americans of Japanese ancestry, yet they collectively said, 'Look, in the long run we're going to prove that we are good citizens.'"

In the recreation hall of the retirement home Mr. Hokoda smiled as he rose stiffly from his chair and headed for his room. "Getting old," he said. His wife, bent over her cane, slipped her arm quietly through his and shuffled back with him.

Mr. Hokoda is growing deaf with age, and leaves most of the talking to his wife. But in their small and

*continued on back page*



## JACL-LEC Fundraising Update

On behalf of the JACL-LEC Board, I am very happy to again thank all of you who have given so much of your time and money to JACL-LEC so that we can continue our lobbying efforts. Your response to our appeal for funds in the last REDRESS MONITOR has been tremendous!

Along with the contributions, we have received numerous letters telling us how important this work has been to you. Excerpts from some of your letters, and from Action Alerts of some of our many supporting organizations, are printed in this newsletter. We have been overwhelmed, and humbled, by your generous financial and emotional support. The work is far from done, but, there would be no redress effort if it wasn't for all of you out there.

Mae Takahashi,  
Fundraising Chair  
5795 North First Street  
Fresno, CA 93710

Dear JACL-LEC,

In 1942 my family and I were sent to the detention center for about a month in Santa Anita Race Track. Later, we were sent to the Gila, Arizona camp. We were there for three and a half years.

I am 86 years old and fairly healthy but very weak. My wife passed away some years ago and I am living alone. If I receive the funds from the government, I am planning to donate to certain organizations which have helped many people including myself.

I am making a list of the organizations. My children are helping me in many ways, so I am able to do this.

Yours truly,  
R. Y.

## Statement from Senator Inouye

The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee responsible for considering reparations payments will probably meet in the week of September 11th. At that time, the Subcommittee, chaired by Senator Ernest Hollings, will determine the level of reparations funds for the 1990 fiscal year.

As a member of this Subcommittee, I have contacted my fellow panel members and urged their support for a level of reparations appropriations higher than the \$50 million approved by the House.

Your support in this endeavor is much appreciated.

--Senator Daniel K. Inouye,  
Hawaii



**'DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE ASKING?  
CUTBACKS IN STAR WARS! THE B-2 BOMBER!  
TOBACCO SUBSIDIES!**

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# ORA Explains Eligibility Process

The Office of Redress Administration is in the process of notifying approximately 1,300 individuals of their potential eligibility for compensation under the Civil Liberties Act of 1988.

These individuals, who are aged 90 and above, will be the first to receive eligibility notices from ORA. The first 500 notices were mailed by ORA on Friday, August 25th. The remaining notices in this first group are in the mail.

The ORA outlined a **3-step process** for each person eligible for redress:

-- A letter to the individual identifying him or her as potentially eligible and requesting documentation to verify identity;

-- A postcard following the document review to inform the individual that identity has been verified;

-- A letter of official notification of eligibility, at which time ORA will request the U.S. Treasury to issue payment. **The final letter providing official notification of eligibility is sent only as funds for payment are available.** The number of persons receiving payment each year will be determined by the amount of funds appropriated by Congress for the fiscal year.

An eligible person will be asked to submit the following documentation:

-- A signed Declaration of his or her identity, this form will be furnished by ORA, and;

-- Proof of current name and address, such as a copy of a bank statement or utility bill.

Additional information will be requested in some circumstances such as:

-- Where ORA does not possess an official record of an individ-

ual's date of birth, a birth certificate or other document establishing the person's age will be needed;

-- Where a change of name has occurred, a copy of a marriage license or other record showing the name change must be submitted.

ORA officials emphasized that lack of formal legal documents will not present a problem. If official documents are not available, notarized statements from two people will be accepted. Relatives are the most likely source of personal information.

-- Where a guardianship exists on behalf of the eligible person, a copy of the guardian's power of attorney will be requested. If it is an informal relationship, a notarized statement describing the relationship and the kind of care provided will be sufficient.

In all cases, documentation is used to verify an individual's identity, only. It does not affect a person's eligibility for redress. **ORA stresses, however, that individuals should not submit documentation until they are notified by the office to do so.** Submitted materials will not be returned. **Directions for supplying documentation and a postage-paid envelope for mailing documents will be provided by ORA.**

To provide additional assistance, the office has installed an ORA help-line at (202) 653-8360 (voice) or (202) 786-5986 (TDD), Monday through Friday, 9am-5pm (East Coast time).

ORA is gratified that most people do not seem to need assistance in understanding what they need to do. The office has received

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Dear JACL-LEC,

Even though this contribution is less than I would like to send at this time, I hope this will help.

You and so many are doing such splendid work to make this country wake up being what it should be.

I'm planning to write another letter to President Bush as the ex-chaplain of Go For Broke.

Let us hold together. We must outlast the problem if we are to win!

Gratefully,  
George and Misaki Aki

Dear JACL-LEC,

I have seen the August issue of the Redress Monitor. Virginia and I have written to the 11 senators listed, I have written to Rollie Pfile to suggest that Church & Society give high priority to the matter of funding the redress program. Virginia is working on an article for a publication in Southern California and the LA Times had a strong editorial this morning. You are involved in a worthy cause and "its time has come." God Luck.  
Shalom,  
T.J. Liggett

Dear JACL-LEC,

I'm bitter because the small amount allocated to payments doesn't make sense. Canada passed the redress after us and I hear they are already receiving payments.

We have great Nisei Senators and Congressmen. I hope they can push and try to get enough to pay those over 70 as soon as possible.  
George O.



## Justice Delayed is Justice Denied

Dear President Bush:

In your campaign for the presidency, you stated your wholehearted support of an official apology and redress payments to the surviving Japanese American internees of World War II.

We are fully aware of the huge deficit in the national budget, and sincerely sympathize with the great domestic and international problems that you are facing.

We wish to point out that this is a debt of honor--a solemn promise made by the government of the United States to redress the unconstitutional wrong of evacuation and internment of American citizens and legal residents of Japanese ancestry.

We ask you to carry out the intent of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. We ask you to restore our faith in our democratic form of government. We ask you to see what the government of Canada did in paying off her internees. We ask you to set an example to the rest of the world that our government keeps its promises. Sincerely,  
Fred Y. Hirasuna

This ALERT is being sent to members of the Civil Rights and Religious Liberties network who reside in states with Senators on the Appropriations subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, State and the Judiciary.

1.) Make an appointment during the August recess with your Senator at the local office, urging a vote for the highest possible level of funding for redress.

2.) Write a short, personal letter to your Senator with the same message.

NATIONAL IMPACT

We are all disheartened by the fact that a year has passed since the redress legislation was enacted and no funding has yet been provided for payments of apology. The ORA has estimated that eligible individuals are dying at the rate of 200 per month. This is one of the most persuasive arguments we have with Congress for the need to raise the level of funding substantially.

Statistics are important, but we need to put names on the numbers. We want to present a list of people who passed away before the government's promise to them for redress was kept. Congress intended the internees themselves to be compensated.

In early discussions with Congressional staff, this project was tentatively titled, "The List of Shame," to express how shameful it is for our nation that the delay in implementing the law now compounds the violation of constitutional rights that the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 was intended to redress. After talking with more people, it was decided to change the name to "Justice Denied," using the phrase which has become identified with the redress campaign. It also clearly makes the point that for those whose names are put on the list, justice delayed is indeed justice denied.

The list will be used to help bring home this point with Congress through news releases, speeches, statements in the House and Senate, and information sent to members of Congress about persons in their district. The more complete this list is, the more powerful our statement will be.

If you have any information about persons who have died since August 10, 1988 when the redress law was signed by President Reagan, please use the form on the following page and send it to the JACL-LEC office.

### *Regulations Continued...* from page 5

fewer than 100 phone calls so far. Most of the callers have been worried about not having the official documents requested. ORA has assured them that the examples given for each item are just that--examples. The list is not meant to be exhaustive.

ORA is awaiting funding for redress payments. Until funds are appropriated by Congress, ORA cannot notify anyone of their eligibility. "We have to have money in the bank, so to speak, first," said Bratt, "before we can promise anyone a check by sending them an official letter of eligibility." Eligibility reviews will be conducted by age from eldest to youngest, reflecting the payment order stipulated by the Civil Liberties Act.

ORA was able to accommodate

requests asking that documentation, required by the office to verify a potential recipient's identity, be eased. "We know that the burden is on the government to establish eligibility and we take that responsibility seriously," explained Bob Bratt, Administrator for Redress. "At the same time, we must make absolutely certain that redress payments go to the right person...For that reason, we proposed some pretty stringent documentation requirements to establish identities. But we were persuaded by the comments. We've changed the documentation requirements significantly, and simplified the process."

Under the initially proposed regulations, individuals were required to submit original documents, including photograph identification. Now, individuals are to send notarized photocopies.



# Justice Denied

A MEMORIAL LIST OF THOSE WHO HAVE DIED SINCE  
AUGUST 10, 1988

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name at time of internment: \_\_\_\_\_

City of residence at time of death: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Date of death: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Sex: male / female Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_

Heirs (if known)

Spouse: \_\_\_\_\_

Children: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents: \_\_\_\_\_

-----  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name at time of internment: \_\_\_\_\_

City of residence at time of death: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Date of death: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Sex: male / female Social Security number: \_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_

Heirs (if known)

Spouse: \_\_\_\_\_

Children: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send forms to: JACL-LEC, Washington Office  
1730 Rhode Island N.W. #204  
Washington, D.C. 20036



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"We don't quite understand.... President Reagan promised, but the government does not do it."

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*Redress Continued...*  
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tidy room, it was he who seized and proudly displayed the photographs of their three sons, all in uniform, from the days when they fought with the United States Army while their parents waited behind barbed wire in the Gila, Ariz., relocation camp.

"They're getting old, too," he said, clearly pleased. "Two of them are retired." After the war, one son went on to own a lawn-mower shop, one to work in a chick hatchery and one to become a commercial artist.

"Forty years ago we had a struggle, yes, but we managed it because my husband is a hard-working man," Mrs. Hokoda said. "We had a bitter experience but we are still loyal to the United States, that is sure."

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Dear Senator Lautenberg:

As an American who experienced incarceration from 1942 to 1945, I appreciate your strong support of the authorization bill in the Senate. I am deeply concerned that the House appropriations of \$50 million is woefully inadequate.

Oliver Wendell Holmes said it best, "The power to postpone is the power to negate." I urge you, as a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, to support the highest possible amount for the FY 1990 Senate appropriation for redress so that the conferred amount will be well above the House figure.

Sincerely,  
Thomas Y. Kometani

Dear JACL-LEC,

Thanks for getting us into action on this issue. Enclosed is the alert we got out.

Shalom,  
Jay Lintner  
United Church of Christ  
Office for Church in Society

Dear JACL-LEC,

Gokuro sama deshita.

When I get the \$20,000 reparation, I will donate the \$5000 to your Committee. I've also decided to give \$10,000 to my youngest child who was conceived in Tule Lake and born in Boulder, Colorado in 1943. I will keep \$5000 of it for me to spend the way I like. I would like to go off to Japan for a week and donate the rest to community organizations.

In the meantime, here is a contribution to show good faith in my promise.

Howard

Dear JACL-LEC,

My father, a naturalized American born in Japan, passed on at age 98 in 1980. Because of my father, I have always felt it my duty to assist the JACL, although I know very little about Japanese Americans.

As a disabled American Veteran, I am not able to do very much for anyone; however, please accept my small contribution.  
Sincerely,  
Frank K., Jr.



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Legislative Education Committee**  
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