



January 1988

NCRR BANNER

NATIONAL COALITION FOR REDRESS/REPARATIONS

REDRESS BILL UPDATE

NCRR RESPONDS TO WHITE HOUSE LETTER SENATE VOTE EXPECTED JAN. OR FEB.

By John Ota

The letter-writing campaign to President Reagan continues as NCRR's main priority, since getting Reagan to sign the bill still appears the main obstacle to the bill's enactment into law.

NCRR chapters have collected and sent over 7,000 letters to Reagan or his advisors as of early Jan.

WHITE HOUSE RESPONSE

While there had been some hopeful signs coming out of Washington, the latest indications from the White House are negative. On January 5 the S.F. Hokubei Mainichi printed a letter from Anne Higgins, special assistant to the President and director of correspondence, responding to Ben Takeshita's letter to Reagan.

Higgins raises "concerns" that the 1948 Japanese American Evacuation Claims Act and Gerald Ford's 1975 rescinding of Executive Order 9066 sufficiently redressed the internment. Higgins does not say the President has decided to veto the redress bill, but seems to point in that direction.

(cont'd. page 2)

DAN LUNGREN FOR STATE TREASURER??! DIVERSE GROUPS UNITE TO FIGHT IT

The powerful State Treasurer position stands vacant and Gov. Deukmejian has nominated Congressman Dan Lungren, vocal opponent of individual redress, to fill the opening.

Lungren's dismal voting record on civil rights, fair housing, small business, legal services for the poor, immigrant rights, South Africa sanctions, women's rights, and aid for seniors are a few of the issues that a large cross-section of California's population have found offensive.

Groups including the Sacramento chapters of the NAACP, AFSCME, SEIU, California Teachers Assn., Mexican Amer. Legal Defense & Educ. Fund, Urban League, gays and seniors have joined the Asian American community in voicing their opposition to Lungren.

Join the letter-writing/phone call campaign to oppose Lungren's nomination. The Legislature has until March 1 to act on it.

WRITE House Speaker Willie Brown; Assemblyman Thomas M. Hannigan; & Senator David Roberti at: State Capitol, Sacramento, CA 95814;

COME TO THE CONFIRMATION HEARINGS: Jan. 11, 12, 14 & 15 in Sacramento (State Capitol, Room 4202, 10 am daily). If you want to testify contact the Select Committee at (916) 445-8368.

NCRR: SAN FRANCISCO: 1911 Bush Street, #1G, SF, CA 94115 (415) 922-1534
LOS ANGELES: 244 So. San Pedro St. #411 LA, CA 90012
SAN JOSE: 241 N. 17th Street, SJ, CA 95112

REDRESS BILL UPDATE cont'd.

"These are old arguments which were addressed during the Commission hearings and again last year when the Justice Department raised them in House hearings," said Bert Nakano, NCRR's national spokesperson. "It's disappointing that the White House is raising them again, but we always knew it wasn't going to be easy to get Reagan to sign the bill."

NCRR is putting out a new form letter to the President to address these arguments and will continue its focus on flooding the White House with a massive number of letters from redress supporters. "This still seems the most effective way to support the bill," Nakano said. "Hopefully Reagan will not veto it, but even a veto won't stop us. We need to keep working until the bill becomes law, with or without Reagan." (Contact NCRR for a copy of the new letter to Reagan. If you know of public events where redress form letters can be distributed, contact your local NCRR chapter.)

1948 CLAIMS ACT

As to claims made under the 1948 Claims Act, Nakano pointed out that the government did not even come close to compensating the internees for their actual losses and suffering. Only \$37 million in claims were paid, or an average of \$308 per internee, while the government's own Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians estimated total losses in property and income at between \$810 million and \$2 billion in 1983 dollars. At 5% annual inflation, those 1983 figures would be \$1 billion to \$2.6 billion today.

Nakano added, "The 1948 law also excluded claims for loss of life, injury, lost wages or business

income, interrupted education, and many other losses. And of course, damages for false imprisonment, loss of civil rights, mental suffering and psychological injury were out of the question."

As to Gerald Ford's rescinding of E.O. 9066 in 1975, Nakano said it was positive that Ford called the internment "wrong" and a "setback to fundamental American principles," but that is still far from the formal apology on behalf of the nation called for in the redress bill. "The U.S. government has never apologized to the former internees, never broadly acknowledged that a wrong was even done. Even most opponents of monetary compensation agree the government should officially apologize for the internment."

SENATE RECONVENES JAN. 19

Meanwhile, on Dec. 14 Senator Spark Matsunaga told NCRR that the Senate vote would likely take place in late January or early February. Matsunaga had wanted the vote to occur before the end of 1987, but the Senate was tied up with the federal budget up until its recess.

Congress is set to reconvene January 19. With 75 out of 100 senators cosponsoring the bill, it should pass without major problems, despite threats by some conservatives such as Jesse Helms to filibuster the bill.

MAILGRAMS NEEDED

NCRR recommends redress supporters send mailgrams to Reagan as soon as the Senate passes the bill, as a last-minute push. Mailgrams can be ordered for \$4.50 each by calling 800-257-4900 (Operator 9225) and asking that message "1" or "2" be sent to the White House.

DAY OF REMEMBRANCE 1988

SAN FRANCISCO: Saturday, Feb. 20 2 pm
at JCCCNC, 1840 Sutter
Featured Speaker: Congressman Robert Matsui

SAN JOSE: Sunday, Feb. 21 7 pm
Wesley United Methodist Church
"Reflection, Unity & Victory:
Redress/Reparations in '88"

LOS ANGELES: Saturday, Feb. 20 7 pm
JACCC Theater, Little Tokyo
"Redress/Reparations - Forward to Justice"
Featured Speakers: Robert Matsui, Norman Mineta

BOSTON: Saturday, Feb. 20
Asian American Resource Workshop sponsoring a
showing of Loni Ding's "Color of Honor"
Call (617) 426-5313 for more info.

NCRR RECEIVES AWARD

At a recent luncheon to honor Congressman Jim Wright, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the NCRR was acknowledged for its contributions to the redress effort. NCRR national spokesperson Bert Nakano accepted the plaque presented by Congressmembers Jim Wright and Mervyn Dymally. Last year, as House Majority Leader, Wright was the primary sponsor of HR 442.

IN MEMORY

Makoto Hideshima was 54 when he was killed on November 15 in the crash of Continental Flight 1713 at Denver's Stapleton International Airport. Mr. Hideshima was 9 years old when he and his family were interned in Topaz during WW II. So strong was his feeling that reparations be paid that his family designated the NCRR to be the recipient of memorial contributions. The NCRR wishes to express our condolences to the family of Makoto Hideshima and to thank all of those who have sent contributions to the NCRR in his memory. We pledge to continue our work until justice is realized.

VIDEO OF HOUSE DEBATE AVAILABLE

The NCRR has finished work on a 50-minute edited version of the 9/17/87 House floor debate on Japanese American redress. The video features highlights of the best and worst of the speeches made the day HR 442 passed the House, and is available for \$12 plus postage. Please make your check payable to NCRR & mail it to 1911 Bush, #1G, SF CA 94115, contact your local chapter, or JACL head-quarters.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

If you haven't renewed your NCRR membership for the new year, please rejoin us! \$10 for individual membership, \$25 for organizations, or send whatever possible to your local chapter. Thank you.