

Head: Redress Bill Expected Out of Conference Committee in Late July

2nd: Reagan Expected to Sign, But Don't Take It for Granted, Says NCRR

By: John Ota

According to National Coalition for Redress and Reparation (NCRR) sources in Washington as of July 14, the Japanese American and Aleut reparations bill should be reported out of the House-Senate conference committee on or after July 25, the date Congress reconvenes after the Democratic Convention. After quick re-votes in the House and Senate, it is expected to go to Reagan in late July or early August.

"While the word from Washington is that President Reagan is likely to sign the bill, we should not take this for granted. We should continue to send mailgrams and letters to Reagan until he actually signs it, especially since groups opposed to reparations are also mounting their own efforts," said Bert Nakano, NCRR National Spokesperson.

"If Reagan signs the bill, it will be mainly because of the tens of thousands of people who are urging him to support the bill. Especially with Bush trailing Dukakis in California, and after the recent defeat of Dan Lungren here, Reagan and his advisers know that a veto could really hurt Bush's chances in November. Each and every mailgram, letter and phone call counts. Now is not the time to let up in our efforts," added Nakano.

#### Mailgram Hotlines

NCRR's Mailgram Hotline is still in operation. For \$5.65, you can order a mailgram to President Reagan (messages #1 or 2) by calling 800-257-4900 and asking for Operator 9225. Form letters are available from the NCRR, or you can write your own letter and send it to Reagan at: The White House, Washington, D.C. 20500.

The JACL also has a mailgram hotline with no charge for mailgrams until a \$20,000 fund is used up. For more information, contact a local JACL chapter.



### Conference Committee

The conference committee has finished the final draft of the bill and is in the process of circulating that draft to committee members. Once all members have signed off on the draft, it can be reported out of committee.

"As far as we can tell from what we've heard," said Nakano, "it appears that the conference committee has done a good job of preserving the provisions in the bill on eligibility and the \$20,000 payments to former internees. However, we still need to carefully review the final text of the bill when it is available."

Although the White House had indicated interest in reducing the number of people eligible for the \$20,000 payments, according to NCRR's Washington sources, those changes were not made. One reported change that was made would spread out the appropriations for the payments over a 3-10 year period, with a \$500 million ceiling in any one year. This replaces the 5-year appropriations period with set amounts in each year in the Senate bill passed April 20. Payments would apparently still go to the oldest first on a lump-sum basis.

The San Jose Mercury News recently mistakenly reported that former internees must be alive in January 1990 to be eligible for the payments. However, Nakano said that "a staff person on the conference committee told us that that is not the case. Our understanding is that former internees alive on the date the bill is signed into law will be eligible."

### Local Celebrations

In the event Reagan signs the bill as expected, NCRR will be holding local celebrations in several cities, including Los Angeles, San Francisco and San Jose. Donations of food, beverages or money in advance or at the celebrations are welcome. Contact NCRR for more information.

NCRR: 244 So. San Pedro, Rm. 406, Los Angeles, CA 90012; 1911 Bush St., #1-G, San Francisco, CA 94115 (415) 922-1534.