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House of Representatives
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Connie Thompson (213) 536-6772 (Los Angeles)
Margaret McCormack (202) 225-1173 (Washington, D.C.)

DYMALLY INTRODUCES REPARATIONS BILLS FOR JAPANESE-AMERICANS

INTERNEED DURING WORLD WAR II

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) Describing "...an injustice that has lasted 40 years too long," Congressman Mervyn M. Dymally (D-Compton, CA) introduces two landmark bills designed to redress the damages and wrongs suffered by 120,000 Japanese-Americans relocated into internment camps during World War II.

Following the signing of Executive Order Number 9066 on February 19, 1942, Japanese-Americans were hastily relocated to internment camps, losing their jobs, property, careers, communities and social networks. "The losses they incurred were enormous," Dymally said. "These bills are the least we can do to restore the actual financial losses, and help restore the communities of these Americans."

The two bills, one providing a community restoration fund, and the other providing outright cash payments to individuals, are being introduced during the current "lame-duck" session. "I am fully aware they have no chance of passage in the Special Session," Dymally indicated. "However, one of the objectives is to create public discussion and an awareness of the injustices. I hope, also, that the staffs of the appropriate committees will study the legislation during the recess, and finally, I want to give the sponsors an opportunity to organize support for passage during the regular session when I plan to re-introduce the bills."

Miya Iwataki, Legislative Committee Chair of the National Coalition for Redress and Reparation (NCRR), which has worked closely with Representative Dymally drafting the legislation said, "These bills culminate years of surveys, forums, and

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hard work at the grassroots level, and clearly represent the unified voice of the Japanese community as can be substantiated by the hours and hours of testimony presented to the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians."

Benefits to individuals would be paid to the actual evacuee, or if deceased, the surviving spouse, or the surviving children in the amount of \$25,000. Evacuees who suffered losses in excess of \$25,000 could appeal for more with documenting evidence of losses.

It is estimated that at least \$3 billion would be needed to cover the losses to individuals evacuated and interned in the relocation camps. The individual reparations bill cites actions which the Federal Government shall pay compensation, including: loss of property and property interests; loss of earnings, earning capacity and vocational opportunity; loss of education opportunity, loss of life; physical or mental disability; severe emotional distress; deprivation of rights secured by the Constitutions of the United States and several States; and all other losses' sounding in contract or in tort' resulting from the implementation of Executive Order 9066.

In its companion bill, the Internment Community Redress Act, a community restoration fund for those communities which sustained loss would be established with eight regional boards. Evacuee communities could apply, under the act's provisions, to one of the regional boards for benefits in the following categories: education and training; business and agricultural development loans; health care for the elderly; mental health, alcoholism, and drug abuse care and treatment; low-income housing; health care; child daycare; cultural maintenance, research and expression; and improvement of communications within the evacuee community.

The appropriation for establishing the Community Fund and the Regional and National Boards would be \$3 billion.

Although about 120,000 Japanese-Americans were relocated from the coastal states

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of California, Oregon, and Washington, and forced to live in relocation centers, the U.S. Government was never able to substantiate the action as a "military necessity," Dymally explained. "Not a single incident of Japanese-American aid to the enemy was ever documented, and scholars and government officials repeatedly talk about the injustice, but there has been no apology, and little action. This injustice has lasted 40 years too long. It is time Congress redresses this grievance." Dymally concluded.