

Head: NCCR says: Write to Reagan Now

2nd: Redress bill may go to Reagan as soon as early November

By: John Ota

The National Coalition for Redress/Reparations (NCCR) is calling on redress supporters to send thousands of letters to President Reagan urging him to sign the redress bill passed in the House of Representatives on Sept. 17.

"If Reagan vetoes the bill and Congress fails to override that veto with a two-thirds vote, redress forces will have to start the legislative process all over again," says Bert Nakano, NCCR National Spokesperson.

The task of writing the President, adds Nakano, "is all the more urgent since the bill may be sent to Reagan as soon as early November." Sen. Matsunaga's and Rep. Mineta's offices have told NCCR that they intend to get the bill to the President 2-3 weeks after the Senate votes on it. Up until now, the bill was not expected to get to Reagan until January.

The Senate is expected to vote on the bill any day now. With 76 out of 100 Senators cosponsoring the bill, redress forces are optimistic about the outcome. Once he gets it, Reagan will have 10 days to sign the bill.

"The greatest danger is taking it for granted that Reagan will or will not sign the bill and that therefore, it is not going to make a difference whether we write to him or not. We should not be overly pessimistic or overly optimistic. The best way to ensure that Reagan signs the bill is show him the massive support for the redress bill," says Nakano.

The NCCR believes that letter writing to members of Congress plus direct lobbying by redress forces and supporters in Congress were responsible for the 243-141 vote in the House of Representatives on Sept. 17. More recently, broad, well-organized opposition to Supreme Court nominee Robert Bork has ensured his defeat in the Senate.

How to Write to Reagan

NCRR chapters are already busy collecting letters to Reagan. Those interested in obtaining a sample or form letter can contact the NCRR.

Or you may want to write your own letter, for example:

Dear Mr. President,

I urge you to sign the Civil Liberties Act of 1987 in this bicentennial year of the Constitution. This bill, including the token compensation to those interned, would demonstrate to the nation and the world that we take very seriously the principle that Constitutional rights apply equally to all regardless of race, creed or color.

Letters should be sent to: President Reagan, The White House, Washington, D.C. 20500.

Redress supporters are encouraged to xerox such letters and get friends and relatives to sign them as well. In contrast to the letter writing to members of Congress, the NCRR believes that in writing to the President, the total number will be more important than the content of the letters. When the White House receives thousands of letters, it becomes impossible to do much more than glance at the letters and toss them into the appropriate pile. The piles are then weighed, rather than counted.

Letters should be mailed as soon as possible to ensure arrival in time to be effective. Allow a week for letters from the West Coast.

Phone Calls and Mailgrams

Messages can be left for the President by calling the White House political opinion line at (202) 456-7639 from 9 am to 5 pm Eastern Standard Time. Toll charges are about 20-40 cents per minute from the West Coast.

Mailgrams can also be sent through the NCRR's National Redress Mailgram Hotline by calling 1-800-257-4900 (Operator 9225). Callers can choose between two pre-set messages (\$4.50 each) or dictate a message of your own (50 words,

including sender's and receiver's addresses, for \$5.45, 100 words for \$7.70).

These mailgrams are guaranteed for next day delivery if called in before 12 midnight and should be emphasized when it becomes too late to send letters. Western Union operators are available 24 hours a day to take mailgram orders.

Want to Do More?

The NCRR encourages those who want to do more to write to individuals such as Reagan's Chief of Staff Howard Baker, Republican Party Chair Frank Fahrenkopf, Nancy Reagan, Vice President George Bush and Sen. Robert Dole -- who may be able to influence Reagan to sign the redress bill.

Republicans especially are encouraged to write such letters, mentioning their political affiliation and financial contributions to Republicans, if any.

Letters to these individuals can stress: the importance of the redress issue to the rapidly growing Asian American population of 6.5 million; the concentration of Asian Americans in California, a key electoral state; the potential effect on Reagan's and the Republican's historical reputation if the President vetoes the bill; and the potential benefits to Reagan if he chooses the "high road" of supporting this bill; and the support for the bill by prominent Republicans such as Reps. Henry Hyde and Michael DeWine, and Senators Robert Dole, Warren Rudman, Alan Simpson and Orrin Hatch.

The address for ^{Howard Baker,} Nancy Reagan and George Bush is the same as Reagan's. Fahrenkopf's address is: Republican National Comm., 301 First St., S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003. Dole's address is: U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510.

Mailgrams can also be sent. Call the toll-free number listed above. Use pre-set message no. 3, which asks the recipient to urge Reagan to sign the bill.

NCRR, 244 So. San Pedro St., Rm. 406, Los Angeles, CA 90012 or 1911 Bush St., #1-G, San Francisco, CA 94115.