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REDRESS

Community Members Meet With Justice Dept. Officials

Assistant Attorney General Deval Patrick states ORA will make an "expansive interpretation" of the Civil Liberties Act.

RAFU SHIMPO SPECIAL

WASHINGTON.—Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights Deval Patrick and the new administrator for the Office of Redress Administration (ORA), DeDe Greene, met for two hours with representatives from the National Coalition for Redress and Reparations (NCR), the Japanese Peruvian Oral History Project and the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) regarding the eligibility of claimants in the remaining redress cases, reported Miya Iwataki of NCR.

Patrick introduced to the Nikkei representatives his whole team, including Greene, a longtime respected staff person from the Criminal Justice Division who worked with former ORA administrator Bob Bratt in the past.

Stating to the redress advocates that he was determined to take an "expansive interpretation" of the Civil Liberties Act 1988, Patrick noted that the ORA is "open to the production of additional facts" in the disputed cases.

Patrick said the ORA doesn't want to be inflexible, but faced with the realities of Washington and the limitations of the law, they are trying to resolve things by fiscal year 1995, which begins in October.

Patrick and Greene committed to undertake further fact-finding trips to Honolulu in early November to research the Hawaii cases, and are willing to travel to California on other cases.

Patrick also announced that Bratt will be brought on as a consultant to ORA to provide a continuity of relationships, as both he and Greene are new to the redress program.

The assistant attorney general reported that ORA is currently reviewing a number of categories, including Peruvians of Japanese ancestry forcibly removed from Peru and brought to this country to be used as possible hostages.

One category they have completed reviewing is the issue of minor children forced to "repatriate" to Japan with their Issei parents during World War II. "We can expect to have some news soon, in several weeks," Patrick stated.

Among the issues discussed were the possibility of extending the redress eligibility cutoff date of June 30, 1946, to include children born in Department of Justice camps such as Crystal City (Tex.), which were not closed until 1947.

Other categories under discus-

tion status retroactively for claimants who became legal permanent residents after the internment.

Patrick also announced that there will be more regular communications between the ORA and the community, including updates on redress denials and current information on decisions to be made.

"I was impressed with the down-to-earth openness and his genuine interest and concern, and the insightful questions posed by Deval Patrick," stated Iwataki, NCR-Los Angeles' legislative chair, in a telephone interview with *The Rafu Shimpō*.

"We feel very positive about the new ORA team and about our campaign for justice and redress," she added.

Kay Ochi, NCR-Los Angeles president, said, "It was a terrific meeting, very productive. Communications between ORA and the community will be greatly enhanced."

She continued, "I was greatly impressed. The fact that Patrick gave us a two-hour meeting is a reflection of his commitment to redress, that he's willing to meet the community. DeDe Greene has a reputation as a very fine administrator, and we look forward to working with her."

Bill Kaneko, former Honolulu JACL chapter president, stated, "We are very pleased with the assistant attorney general's decision to have ORA meet with the claimants in Hawaii and with his direction that ORA review each case on the totality of the facts."

San Francisco NCR representative Sox Kitashima and San Francisco JACL chapter president Jeff Adachi made an impassioned plea on behalf of the children born in Boulder to the Naval Language School instructors during the war.

Adachi said, "We were pleased with Patrick's willingness to keep an open mind and his understanding of the need to give the act an expansive interpretation."

JACL's Washington representative Karen Narasaki declared, "We are very pleased at the personal interest the assistant attorney general has taken in the redress program and his commitment to working with the JACL and other community leaders to ensure that the intent of the Civil Liberties Act is fully realized. We commended Patrick for the positive steps he has already taken to reverse some of ORA's previous ineligibility deci-

in Department of Justice camps such as Crystal City (Tex.), which were not closed until 1947.

Other categories under discussion were the remaining Hawaii cases; children born in Boulder, Colo., to language instructors at the military language school; children born to Nisei serving in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and other military personnel; the eligibility of Nikkei affected by government restrictions on movement in the Phoenix-Glendale, Ariz., area; children born in concentration camps to "visiting" mothers; and the *Consolo* case, involving children born outside of camps to evacuees.

Patrick informed the group that ORA has been working with the Immigration and Naturalization Service to reclassify the immigra-

fully realized. We commended Patrick for the positive steps he has already taken to reverse some of ORA's previous ineligibility decisions and assured him that JACL will continue to work with the ORA in seeking a satisfactory resolution of these cases."

Other Japanese Americans at the meeting included John Ota, representing NCRR's San Francisco chapter; and Grace Shimizu of San Francisco, member of the Japanese Peruvian Oral History Project.

Department of Justice personnel at the meeting included Stuart Ishimaru, counsel to Patrick and a supporter of redress; Deserene Worsley, former acting director of ORA; Joann Chiedi, director of operations for ORA; and Tink Cooper, counsel for ORA.
