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S. 1009 AMENDMENT SEEKS 5-YEAR REDRESS SCHEDULE

WASHINGTON.—The Senate bill to compensate Americans of Japanese descent who were imprisoned in U.S. concentration camps during World War II, which was unanimously passed by voice vote yesterday in the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, will include an amendment to spread the \$20,000 individual payments over a five-year period in order to ease the strain on the federal budget.

The Senate redress legislation, S. 1009, was introduced by Senator Spark M. Matsunaga (D-Hawaii) on April 10 in the 100th Congress, with 70 senators as co-sponsors. The bill, which will next go to the full Senate for vote, proposes to accept the findings and to implement the recommendations of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians.

The subcommittee on Federal Service, Post Office and Civil Service, chaired by Senator David Pryor (D-Arkansas), held a hearing on June 17.

Presiding at yesterday's markup session was former astronaut John Glenn (D-Ohio). Other senators present were Lawton Chiles (D-Florida), Jim Sasser (D-Tennessee), David Pryor (D-Arkansas), Jeff Bingamon (D-New Mexico), Bill Roth (R-Delaware), ranking minority member, Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) and John Heinz (R-Pennsylvania).

Glenn gave a brief history of the relocation and internment of Japanese Americans and Aleuts, and also summarized the work and findings of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians.

Glenn then introduced Senator Matsunaga who stated that 10 members of the committee are co-sponsors of the redress bill and the remaining four can come on the bill, reported Grayce Uyehara, director of the Japanese American Citizens League's Legislative Education Committee.

The Hawaii lawmaker stressed the need for Congress to remove the one blot on the U.S. Constitution which resulted from the relocation and internment.

"Congress would honor the bicentennial of the Constitution by

passing redress legislation," Matsunaga declared.

David Pryor spoke next as chairman of the subcommittee which held the hearing in June. Pryor gave a brief history of the relocation and commented that there were two such camps for Nikkei in his state of Arkansas—in Rohwer and in Jerome—where 20,000 people were kept for many years.

He called it a "bleak and bizarre period."

The Arkansas Democrat stated that the June 17 hearings were the most sincerely presented and emotionally charged hearings he had attended in the Senate.

Pryor noted that S. 1009 contains an "extinguishment" clause, which states that any person accepting payment from the trust fund established by the bill may not take part in any further legal action against the United States government relating to the relocation and internment. The people will have to make a choice if they wish to pursue their case with the courts. The purpose of the clause is to prevent a person from receiving redress payments twice.

Ted Stevens of Alaska spoke of his observation that when he lived in California during the World War II evacuation period, many of his high school classmates of Japanese ancestry disappeared. He recalled the hearing held in Los Angeles in 1984. He discussed specific details of the provisions of the bill which offer compensation to the Aleutian Islanders who were interned in abandoned canneries during world War II.

Stevens stressed his opinion that monetary compensation was important, but that the most important part of S. 1009 is the apology offered to the people who lost their constitutional protection.

William Roth of Delaware then detailed his proposed amendment stretching out the \$20,000 individual payments over a period of five years, which would help ease the strain on the federal budget.

Of the \$1.3 billion authorized in the legislation, \$500 million would be allocated in 1989, \$400 million in 1990, \$200 million in 1991 and \$100 million in each of the next two years. The payment

schedule would apply to Aleuts and Japanese Americans eligible for compensation.

Several senators noted that there was some opposition to the bill in the Senate, but that the opposition was initially based on financial concerns.

Glenn said in summation, "I was in the war. I thought it (the internment) was unfair."

He noted the contributions of the 442nd Regiment to the war effort and recognized the irony that many Japanese Americans served while their families were behind barbed wire. "They wanted to prove to the country, they were loyal. This bill is long overdue."

The Roth amendment, spreading out individual payments over five years, passed unanimously in the committee on a voice vote by the eight senators present.

Subsequently, S. 1009 passed, as amended, on a unanimous voice vote by the eight senators present.

The JAAC's Uyehara, in checking with staff later, found that Senator Carl Levin (D-Michigan), who arrived after the vote on S. 1009, registered his "aye" vote.

Uyehara and Mike Masaoka, who testified in support of S. 1009 at the June 17 subcommittee hearing, were elated with the Roth amendment and the unanimous voice vote on passage of the bill in the Governmental Affairs Committee.

"Since Senator Roth has never been a co-sponsor, his amendment on the payment of \$20,000 to the individuals who lost their freedom shows that the support for S. 1009 is strong in the Senate," Uyehara observed.

Also present at the hearing was Grant Ujifusa, JAAC-LEC legislative chair, who has been working with Uyehara on lobbying strategy. Many Nikkei and others who have worked on the redress bills were present, along with the representatives from the Aleuts.

"The members of the Governmental Affairs Committee and the Nikkei community working on redress, are especially appreciative of the outstanding leadership and personal effort given to the passage of S. 1009 in this committee by Senator Spark Matsunaga," noted Uyehara.