

8/7/92

NCRR Reacts to Senate Committee Vote

By JOHN OTA

Leaders of the National Coalition for Redress and Reparations (NCRR) welcomed the unanimous consent vote in the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee on Aug. 5 to approve S. 2553, the supplemental redress bill with minor changes.

"We see the vote as a positive and hopeful development," commented David Monkawa, Los Angeles NCRR organizer.

NCRR is asking concerned members of the community to send letters to President Bush urging him to sign the supplementary redress measure into law after it passes the House and Senate.

"Pressure in the form of thousands of letters and lobbying persuaded Senator Seymour, a member of the committee, to change his mind and vote for the bill, and we have shifted our focus to having the same kind of impact with President

Bush," Monkawa stated.

"It is critical that we all keep up the pressure until the bill is signed into law. The OMB (Office of Management and Budget) has still not withdrawn its objections to the redress bill and those objections remain the biggest obstacle to the bill. But the OMB reports directly to President Bush and we will continue to hold Bush accountable for the OMB's actions," Monkawa added.

"Time is running out," warned Monkawa. "If the bill is not passed by both the full Senate and House, and signed into law by President Bush before the end of the year, we will have to start from scratch all over again next year."

Sources in Washington, D.C. have said that because of a temporary "window of opportunity" that has opened, there is a possibility that S. 2553 may be scheduled for a vote in the full Senate next week and H.R. 2551 for a vote on the

House floor shortly after Labor Day.

"It is even more important to support the redress bill now that the ORA (Office of Redress Administration) has reported that there are at least 77,700 and possibly up to 80,000 persons eligible for redress. This means that some 18,000—and possibly up to 20,000—people may be denied redress payments unless the redress bill is passed," noted Marlene Tonai, San Francisco NCRR chair.

(NCRR will have letters to President Bush available this weekend at the NCRR table at JACCC Plaza, 244 S. San Pedro St. in Little Tokyo. For more information contact NCRR at (213) 680-3484.)

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