

NCCR Holds Public Discussion on Recent Changes

A community meeting to discuss the proposed changes in regulations on redress payments will be on May 16.

The public is invited to a community discussion on the most recent proposal for changes in redress regulations on Thursday, May 16, at 6:30 p.m. at the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center in Little Tokyo.

The meeting, sponsored by the National Coalition for Redress and Reparations (NCCR), will be held to clarify amendments currently proposed by the Justice Department to the Civil Liberties Act of 1988.

Specifically, under the proposed guidelines, the children of "voluntary" evacuees and camp internees that settled outside the military exclusion zone will be eligible to apply for the \$20,000 redress and Presidential apology, only if they were born prior to Jan. 3, 1945. These people were previously denied redress.

"NCCR would like to hear from the community regarding the eligibility birthday of Jan. 2, 1945," said Jan Yen of NCCR. "Former evacuees that we have talked with feel strongly that the eligibility date should be extended to later in the year, after the war with Japan was officially over, or at least to June 30—the date used in the Civil Liberties Act.

"Although the WRA [War Relocation Authority] had the addresses of those that left the camps on definite leave at that time, the government made no attempts to contact them regarding the rescission of the military orders which opened up the West Coast to persons of Japanese ancestry. Most were either unaware of the rescission or they felt it was too dangerous to return in early 1945."

Sumi Seo, who was one of the first to return to Los Angeles fol-

lowing the end of the war explained, "When I found out that Japan had surrendered, I went right to the WRA office in Chicago to tell them I was going back. This was at the end of August, 1945. I got my ticket and went back home, but it was terrible for us Japanese ... there was still a lot of prejudice and no place to stay."

"NCCR is asking anyone that has recollections of the conditions during that time, any documents or ideas on legal arguments supporting the extension of the eligibility date, to bring them and come to the meeting," urged Richard Katsuda, NCCR president. "The June 6, 1996 deadline for submitting comments

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—Jan Yen of NCCR

to the ORA [Office of Redress Administration] is fast approaching. We've had to call this meeting with very short notice. But we hope many will attend."

For information, call NCCR at (213) 680-3484. Leave a message and individuals will be called back.