

Rafu Shimpo 11/25/97

VOX POPULI

Fighting for Justice Feels Good

By DUANE INOUE SANCHEZ

I am writing as someone who just received redress from the federal government. I was part of the *Consolo/Ishida* appeals cases—the children born to the so-called “voluntary” evacuees during World War II who were initially denied redress. Thanks to the Consolo and Ishida court victories, over 900 people received their redress last week.

It has been a long fight to win this apology and compensation from our government, but it's really been worth it.

When I first applied for redress, I didn't know if there was much of a chance of getting it, but I felt I should apply anyway. I strongly felt that my family and I were deprived of our liberty during World War II and that I should get my due justice. But as an individual, I didn't know how to proceed after receiving the government's denial letter.

Then I heard about the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations (NCRR). I went to one of their general meetings, and it was clear to me that they were deeply committed to people who had been denied redress. Although I had not been involved in the Japanese American community prior to this, they made me feel right at home. So I got involved with their redress appeal efforts.

One of the groupings that NCRR was fighting for was the Consolo/Ishida category. I was of course very interested in this particular category, but I also felt strongly about the other groups NCRR was and is still fighting for. They include the Japanese Latin Americans, railroad and mine workers, and those with uncertain immigration status during WW II.

If I hadn't gotten involved with NCRR, I would

have felt helpless in my pursuit of redress. But I've gained a feeling of strength since joining them. That doesn't mean it's been easy. There have been lots of ups and downs, but I've also been part of the victories that we have won. Working together to fight for redress has really made me feel good and given me hope that standing up for justice can help to prevent injustices like the internment in the future.

But there is much more work to be done. I got my redress, but many others have not, and time is running out. The Office of Redress Administration closes its doors on Aug. 10, 1998, so we must make sure that we

make a final big push now to win redress for those who remain denied.

I am asking you out there to support NCRR's efforts during these next months by donating time or money. NCRR is still working on grassroots and political lob-

bying, and is also working with lawyers to encourage people to file lawsuits.

Your contribution to this effort will go a long way toward making sure that everyone deprived of liberty during World War II gets their due redress.

(Duane Inouye Sanchez lives in Van Nuys. Opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of The Rafu Shimpo.)

To donate time or money ...

... to help win redress for those still denied, write to NCRR at 231 E. Third St., Suite G-104, Los Angeles, CA 90013, or leave a message at (213) 680-3484 and your calls will be returned.