

45 years later:

Will the Japanese American Internment Be Redressed?

1987 offers the best chance yet to right the wrongs committed in 1942, when the U.S. government put over 120,000 Japanese Americans into concentration camps without charges or hearings. The government claimed military necessity, but a 1981 government commission found that in fact, there was none. It has also been established in federal court that the government deliberately covered up evidence showing that the internment was unnecessary.

U.S. Concentration Camps

The truth is that those put into the camps were victimized solely due to their Japanese ancestry. Two-thirds of the internees were U.S. citizens. Most of the rest were Japanese immigrants barred by law from becoming naturalized U.S. citizens. World War I veterans and uniformed members of the U.S. armed forces were not spared. Anyone on the West Coast who was as little as one-sixteenth Japanese was subject to internment, while Italian-Americans or German-Americans were not touched.

Internees spent an average of 3 years behind barbed wire, watched by armed guards in desolate desert camps. They had been allowed only to bring what they could carry with them. Families, careers, farms and businesses were shattered. The psychological and social scars remain to this day.

The Redress Movement

Since the late 1970s, an unprecedented and powerful movement has swept and united Japanese American communities across the country -- a movement to correct the gross injustice of the concentration camps and ensure that this never again happens to any other group of people.

Former internees, students, lawyers, and Japanese-Americans from all walks of life, joined by justice-minded people of all nationalities, raised their voices in a call to rectify the tremendous wrong committed during World War II. The National Coalition for Redress/Reparations was founded in 1980 and, together with such organizations as the Japanese American Citizens League and the National Council for Japanese American Redress, has helped organize the grassroots movement for redress and reparation.

In 1981 the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians held hearings around the country and studied volumes of materials. It concluded that the camps had been a grave injustice and recommended:

- * An official apology for the camps
- * Payment of \$20,000 to each surviving former internee
- * A community fund for projects related to the camps

Redress Bills in Congress

Since then, bills have been introduced in both houses of Congress, to put into effect the Commission's recommendations. This year, we are making our biggest push yet to ensure that the House of Representatives will pass the redress bill, H.R. 442, and that the Senate passes S. 1009.

Due to the support redress forces have accumulated in the past several years and favorable shifts in Congress, we believe there is a chance for redress and reparations this year. In June, H.R. 442 was approved by the House Judiciary Committee and is scheduled for a full floor vote on September 17, the anniversary of the signing of the Constitution. S. 1009 was approved by the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee in August, and is now on the full floor of the Senate. The final count for cosponsors is 167 cosponsors (out of 440)* for the House bill, and 76 cosponsors (out of 100) for the Senate bill.

To pass these bills, *with the crucial \$20,000 individual payment intact*, and have President Reagan either sign them or override his veto will not be easy. We have about a month before the House vote and we need to make sure that members of Congress know there is support for the redress bills.

*House figures include 5 non-voting delegates.

(See reverse side for what you can do)



NATIONAL COALITION FOR REDRESS/REPARATIONS (N.C.R.R.)

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HOW YOU CAN HELP MAKE REDRESS A REALITY

We must urge members of Congress to support H.R. 442 and S. 1009. If you know people in areas where there are not many Japanese Americans, ask them to write to their representatives. This is very important as there are many districts in the south and midwest where there is not a lot of support for the redress bills. The accompanying lists show the names of representatives and senators who have not cosponsored the bills and the states and districts they represent.

If your Senators or Congressperson supports H.R. 442 and S. 1009, write to them and thank them for their support, and ask them to keep intact the key provision providing \$20,000 payment to former internees. You might also want to urge them to encourage their non-cosponsoring colleagues in Congress to support the bill.

In addition, members of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team are urged to contact Texas representatives since they are honorary Texans (for saving the "Lost Battalion" from Texas during World War II).

MAILGRAMS: You can send a Mailgram to any member of Congress by calling us at (213) 680-3729 or (213) 665-5616 and we can send a Mailgram in your name. You will be billed \$3.50 for each Mailgram you authorize. If you prefer to send your own Mailgram, you can do so by calling BAUD 9600, a Mailgram service, at 1-800-523-7660. Give them your message (up to 100 words), the member of Congress you want the message sent to, and your name, city and phone number.

LETTERS: Personal letters to members of Congress are very effective. Since time is of the essence, you need to write to your representative today!

The address for members of the House of Representatives is:
House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515

The address for members of the Senate is:
United States Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510

MAKE DONATIONS AND GET INVOLVED: In order to make the big push for redress legislation we need funds more than ever. Please send your donations to N.C.R.R. at 244 So. San Pedro St. #410, Los Angeles, CA 90012.

information on redress and reparations.

The more people we have, the more support we can mobilize and the better our chances of winning redress. If you want to help a little or a lot, contact us and we'll let you know what you can do.