

## **DOR 2009 CFJ Redress Update**

Last year, our Nikkei community commemorated the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which was a historic achievement in our struggle for justice. But successful passage of this law followed by the completion of a ten year government redress program did not mark the end of our redress struggle. The U.S. government wants us to believe that redress is over, but proclaiming successful government accountability is premature when we have unfinished redress business and when we see similar government violations being repeated against other communities today.

Our Nikkei community and all people of conscience must not allow this shameful chapter in our country's history to be closed. What would it mean for our understanding of our community's history, for our legacy, for our democracy if we ignore and erase from memory the hundreds of Japanese Americans who have been denied redress, or the hundreds of Issei or Nisei adults who were coerced to participate in the hostage exchange, or the hundreds who were not interned but suffered other violations of their constitutional rights – all denied redress.

**Will our legacy also include the failure to hold the US government accountable for the WWII rendition of over 2,200 Japanese Latin Americans who were kidnapped from 13 countries and interned in the U.S. and many hundreds forced into two hostage exchanges? When will the U.S. government give proper acknowledgment, apology and redress?**

And what about the broken promise of \$45 million in public education and research funding that the U.S. government still owes the American people? The educational mandate of the Civil Liberties Act must not be deemed fulfilled with merely one year of programming. And all of us know that such education is needed now more than ever.

And what about the men, women and children of German and Italian ancestry in the U.S. and from Latin America who were also targeted as “the enemy” during WWII? While they did not endure racist mass incarceration like the Japanese American community, over 15,000 were interned and many thousands more suffered civil liberties and human rights violations. But they have neither received proper acknowledgment nor apology and they are still waiting for their Wartime Treatment Study Act to be passed by Congress.

And what do we really feel about our Nikkei community's redress accomplishments and the lesson that the U.S. government is supposed to have learned when we realize that what happened to our Issei as “enemy aliens” is being repeated today in the Arab, Muslim and South Asian American communities. And, once again, we see the gutting of our Constitution for both immigrants and citizens in the name of “national security.”

**2009 is definitely the year that each one of us can put into action the principles upon which Day of Remembrance was created: remembrance, education and activism for redress and social justice. We need your help to secure redress for Japanese Latin Americans. This is a priority immigrant rights, civil rights and human rights issue.**

***Here's how you can help:***

1) In 2009, let's get passage of the Japanese Latin American Commission bill which has been reintroduced in Congress by Senator Daniel Inouye of Hawaii and Representatives Xavier Becerra of California. This legislation would establish a congressional commission to continue the investigation into the wartime treatment of Japanese Latin Americans started by the 1981 Commission and to make recommendations based on its findings. We want redress for JLAs and the Commission study will help get us there.

Sign the constituent support letter and mail it to your Member for Congress. A copy is in your program handout. Even if you have signed support letters before, please sign this one today because with the start of the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, the JLA Commission bill had to be reintroduced. Adding a personal note will make it stronger. If you give the signed letter to the Campaign For Justice, we will send it to your congressional representative on your behalf.

Tell your friends, relatives and coworkers to also sign the support letter and to send it to their Representatives and Senators. Contacting your family and friends is especially crucial if they live in Arizona, California, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and Wisconsin. We need Republican members from those states who sit on the House Judiciary Committee to support our bill, HR 42. We cannot get this bill passed without Republican support.

2) We also need to get endorsements from key opinion makers and organizations inside the Japanese American community and in other communities. By the end of February, we want to add 50 more organizations to our list of supporters and we want that list to keep growing. We need your help to bring on board religious institutions, labor unions, civic associations, community organizations, and campus groups. Everyone in this room either belongs to such an organization or knows someone who does. Please ask your organization to endorse the Japanese Latin American redress effort.

3) And lastly, we need your financial support. Our organizing work cannot continue if there are no funds. Your financial support will fund materials needed to educate members of Congress and the public and to secure Japanese Latin American redress. Mail in your contribution or donate online at our Campaign For Justice website ([www.campaignforjusticejla.org](http://www.campaignforjusticejla.org)).

Time is truly of the essence. With each passing day we come closer to the point when there will be no one left to tell their personal story and testify. This sordid episode in history will simply be 'disappeared.' Please help now so that we can attain justice for these individuals before it is too late.

Campaign For Justice deeply appreciates your continued support in this ongoing redress struggle. Thank you.