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FRIENDS COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL LEGISLATION

... a Quaker lobby in the public interest

February 14, 2008

Dear Representative:

We at the Friends Committee on National Legislation urge you to support H.R. 662, the "Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Latin Americans of Japanese Descent Act." Specifically, we encourage you to support a hearing on H.R. 662 before the House Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties in February to commemorate the Day of Remembrance.

Almost twenty years ago, Congress approved the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which provided an official apology and modest reparations for the World War II internment of 110,000 Japanese Americans by the U.S. government. We at FCNL were pleased to have supported this legislation, following our mandate to "seek a society with equity and justice for all." But the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 did not reach all those of Japanese ancestry who were brought to U.S. internment camps.

According to the findings of the 1982 Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, approximately 2,300 men, women, and children of Japanese descent were uprooted from their homes in 13 Latin American countries and detained in internment camps in the United States, and in some cases, were deported to Japan to enable the United States to conduct prisoner exchanges. We believe that this action of the U.S. government must be acknowledged and addressed by Congress. H.R. 662 would create a nine member commission to investigate and determine facts and circumstances surrounding the relocation, internment, and deportation of Japanese Latin Americans during World War II by the U.S. government.

This year, we commemorate the Day of Remembrance on the anniversary of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's issuance of Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942, which led to the mass internment of persons of Japanese ancestry. We also remember the 20th anniversary of the historical 1988 Civil Liberties Act that recognized the wrongs of our government and granted reparations to Japanese Americans. As we commemorate these two important dates, we ask you to please support a hearing on H.R. 662 and to become a co-sponsor of the "Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Latin Americans of Japanese Descent Act."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ruth Flower".

Ruth Flower
Legislative Director