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Address WWII Relocation & Internment of Japanese Latin Americans: Support S. 381/H.R. 662

April 24, 2007

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR), the nation's oldest, largest, and most diverse civil and human rights coalition, we write to express our support for S. 381/H.R. 662, the "Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Latin Americans of Japanese Descent Act." S. 381/H.R. 662 would create a commission to investigate the World War II-era relocation, internment, and deportation of Latin Americans of Japanese descent and to recommend appropriate remedies for the manner in which they were treated.

With the enactment of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, Congress honorably addressed the plight of Japanese Americans who were uprooted from their homes within the United States during World War II and confined in internment camps. This law, however, did not address the treatment of persons of Japanese ancestry who lived in 13 Latin American countries and were also subjected to inhumane treatment during the war. During that same era, the U.S. government abducted approximately 2,300 Japanese Latin Americans. It deported 800 of those individuals in prisoner exchanges with Japan, and imprisoned the rest in internment camps.

S. 381/H.R. 662 is an important step in further bringing this regrettable chapter in American history to a close. It would establish a nine-member commission to investigate the relocation, internment and deportation of Japanese Latin Americans, the impact those actions had, and it would make recommendations as appropriate. Within one year, the commission would conclude its work by submitting a written report to Congress.

LCCR believes S. 381/H.R. 662 deserves your support as a modest yet important civil and human rights measure. We urge you to work for its enactment.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Rob Randhava, LCCR Counsel, at 202-466-6058 or at randhava@civilrights.org.

Sincerely,

Wade Henderson
Executive Director

Nancy Zirkin
Deputy Director

"Equality In a Free, Plural, Democratic Society"

Hubert H. Humphrey Civil Rights Award Dinner • May 10, 2007