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February 6, 2008

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the Berkeley, California Chapter of the Japanese American Citizen's League, the nation's oldest Asian American civil rights organization, we write to express our strong support of HR 662 and S 381 "Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Latin Americans of Japanese Descent Act." The Bill would establish a nine-member commission to investigate the World War II-era relocation, internment, and deportation of Japanese Latin Americans by the U.S. government and recommend appropriate remedies.

The U.S. government uprooted approximately 2,300 men, women and children of Japanese descent from their homes in thirteen Latin American countries and detained them in internment camps in the United States. Over 800 of these individuals were deported to Japan in prisoner exchanges. While the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 honorably addressed the plight of Japanese Americans and provided compensation payments to former internees pursuant to Executive Order 9066, it did not bring relief for Japanese Latin Americans who were abducted and unlawfully interned in the United States.

This chapter in our history needs to be fully and properly investigated. Congress and the American people must know what happened so we can prevent these grave injustices from ever occurring again. This Bill would be an important step to close this regrettable chapter in American history. We believe that this Bill deserves your support and urge you to work for its enactment.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Alison Satake
Civil Rights Committee Chair
Berkeley JACL