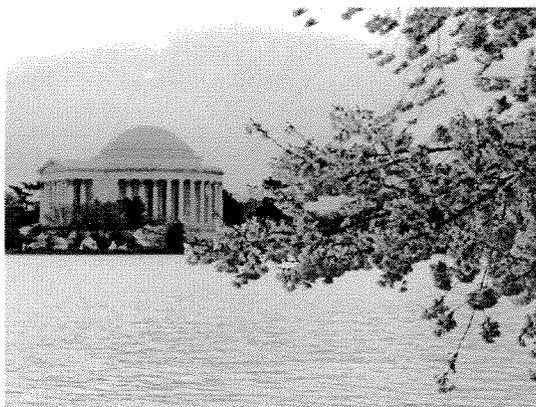


Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

**What do cherry blossoms and
Japanese Latin Americans have in common?**



April 3, 2007

Dear Colleague:

What do cherry blossoms and Japanese Latin Americans have in common? Not only are they related to Japan, but they have been both uprooted from a foreign country to be in the U.S. The difference, however, is that cherry blossom trees were given to our country by Japan to symbolize the friendship between the two countries, while Japanese Latin Americans were uprooted from their homes in Latin America and forced into internment camps.

Official files reveal that during World War II, the U.S. government was involved in the abduction and internment of an estimated 2,300 people of Japanese descent who lived in 13 Latin American countries. Uprooted and forcibly transported to the United States, these civilians were robbed of their freedom as they were removed from nations not directly involved in the war. The 1981 Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians acknowledged the federal actions in detaining and interning Latin Americans of Japanese ancestry. This eventually led to the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 that gave redress to Japanese Americans. However, Japanese Latin Americans were not included in the redress. Ten years later, after a class-action lawsuit, the U.S. government offered \$5,000 for each internee (instead of the \$20,000 compensated to interned Japanese Americans) and a letter of regret. About 800 accepted the settlement, but the remaining internees never learned of it or refused to accept this inequitable redress.

We urge you to join us in cosponsoring the **Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Latin Americans of Japanese Descent Act**. The commission would investigate the relocation, internment, and deportation of Japanese Latin Americans and

recommend appropriate actions. We urge you to join us in this important effort to shed light on this injustice.

To cosponsor this legislation or for more information, please contact Christine Oh (Becerra) at 5-6235 or Karin Moore (Lungren) at 5-5716.

Sincerely,



XAVIER BECERRA
Member of Congress



DAN LUNGREN
Member of Congress