



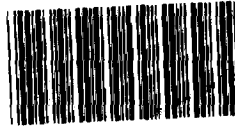
COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

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MARCH 28, 1979

The Honorable Charles H. Percy *Sen*  
Ranking Minority Member  
Committee on Governmental Affairs  
United States Senate

06600

Dear Senator Percy:

As requested by your letter of October 30, 1978, we reviewed the efforts of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM)--formerly the Civil Service Commission--to implement Public Law 95-382, enacted on September 22, 1978. This law granted civil service retirement credit to those Japanese-Americans who were confined in U.S. internment camps during World War II and later became Federal employees. The service credit is available to civil service employees, retirees, and survivors of retirees for any time spent in the internment camps after age 18 for any period from December 7, 1941, to December 31, 1946.

DLG 01305

Shortly after the law was enacted, the Japanese-American Citizens League, the Committee on Internment Credit (a group established to seek passage of the legislation), and Congressman Norman Mineta issued press releases informing their constituents of the law and its requirements. These press releases produced about 120 requests for retirement recomputations before OPM had taken any action to publicize the law's passage.

DLG 01304

The law required OPM to insure that all eligible Japanese-Americans be informed of their legal rights. The number of persons eligible for the credit is not known, but the Committee on Internment Credit has estimated that from 500 to 1,000 persons may be involved.

To reach eligible retirees and survivors, OPM considered a direct-mail notice to all civil service annuitants but rejected it because of an estimated cost of \$67,000 and concern that a direct mailing

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might result in a number of ineligible requests thus delaying the processing of eligible claims. Instead, OPM issued a press release on December 5, 1978--over 2 months after the law was signed--describing the law and outlining qualifications and information needed to receive a recomputation of retirement benefits. OPM considered this release to be a reminder rather than an initial notice because of the efforts made by the other groups.

*Bureau of the Census*

OPM also identified, from Census Bureau information, geographic areas having large Japanese-American populations. OPM regional offices covering these areas were asked to create additional publicity for the law so that as many eligible internees as possible could be reached. A letter was also sent on December 29, 1978, to heads of departments and independent establishments publicizing the provisions of the law.

OPM is responsible for assisting eligible employees and annuitants in preparing the documentation necessary to receive the retirement credit. This involves obtaining a National Archives <sup>and Social Security</sup> certification of the time spent in internment camps and coordinating with the Social Security Administration. Social Security is responsible for a similar law (Public Law 92-603; 42 U.S.C. 431) which granted social security benefits for periods of internment and prohibited receiving internment retirement credits under both Social Security and a Federal retirement system. OPM notifies Social Security when it recomputes an annuity. Social Security must then remove any internment credit it had granted and reduce the social security benefit accordingly.

As of February 26, 1979, all publicity efforts by OPM and others had resulted in a total of 242 requests for service credits. Of these, increased annuities were being paid to 113 persons, and processing had been completed for 33 others. The remaining 96 were in various stages of processing. Additional requests for credit are expected as eligible employees reach retirement age.

OPM estimates that the total additional retirement benefits that will be paid to each eligible individual will average about \$13,500 to \$21,700, depending on the length of time spent in the internment camps.

Based on the above, we believe that OPM is implementing the law appropriately and that eligible persons are learning about and receiving the benefits provided by the law. The efforts of the various interested groups and apparent communication among individuals eligible for the credit have contributed greatly to achieving increased awareness of the legislation.

We informally discussed this letter with OPM and considered their views as appropriate. As arranged with your office, distribution will be made on request.

We trust this information will satisfy your request.

Sincerely yours,



DEPUTY Comptroller General  
of the United States