

A RESOLUTION OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE TO SUPPORT THE "POWER OF WORDS" PROPOSAL WHICH RELATES TO EUPHEMISMS AND MISNOMERS IN REFERENCE TO THE WORLD WAR II EXPERIENCE OF JAPANESE AMERICANS

WHEREAS, in the United States of America, nearly 120,000 men, women and children of Japanese ancestry— two-thirds of whom were United States citizens – were deprived of their rights guaranteed under the 14th Amendment of the United States Constitution; and

WHEREAS, historical accuracy as it relates to the Japanese American experience during World War II is an ongoing priority for the organization; and

WHEREAS, an examination of the historic experience of Japanese American’s provides a basis for understanding contemporary civil and human rights issues; and

WHEREAS, the use of euphemistic terms and perpetuation of misnomers to describe the World War II experience of the Issei and Nisei misrepresents and diminishes that traumatic event in American history; and

WHEREAS, words such as "*evacuation*", "*relocation*," and "*internment camp*" do not accurately portray the conditions under which Japanese Americans were denied their civil rights during World War II; and

WHEREAS, such words as "*evacuation*" and "*relocation*" denote the movement and placement of people to keep them from harm’s way; and

WHEREAS, the term "*internment*" does not correctly describe the forced removal and incarceration of Japanese Americans; and

WHEREAS, the preferred terminology should be "*forced removal*" instead of "*evacuation*" and "*incarceration*" instead of "*internment*;" and

WHEREAS, the preferred and more accurate reference to the confinement sites administered by the War Relocation Authority could include "*American concentration camps*," incarceration camps, illegal detention centers, or other appropriate descriptors rather than terms like "*relocation centers, assembly centers or internment camps*;" and

WHEREAS, the use of these preferred terms should be consistently articulated by JACL leaders so that such words would become ingrained in the vernacular describing the World War II experience of Japanese Americans; and

WHEREAS, the proposal "*The Power of Words*" outlines for the National JACL and its chapters, proper and accurate terminology to describe the World War II experience of Japanese Americans; and

WHEREAS, implementation of a plan to carry out the proposal is necessary in order to ensure the success and effectiveness of this policy; and

WHEREAS, the forced removal and incarceration was racially motivated;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the National Council of the Japanese American Citizens League shall adopt this resolution and authorize an ad hoc committee of the national organization to develop and implement a plan to promote and support the use of correct terminology as it relates to the World War II experience of Japanese Americans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that adoption of this resolution shall empower the ad hoc committee to take appropriate steps to assist in efforts to promote the substitution of the new terminology in all published documents in future publications and in teacher trainings; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the ad hoc committee develop an implementation plan and report on its progress to the National Board and provide a summary report to the National Council in 2011.

Motion to adopt the resolution made by Dawn Rego, Seattle chapter delegate and seconded by Toshi Abe, Seabrook chapter delegate.

The resolution was amended and adopted by the National Council with 80 yea's, 2 nay's and 0 split votes.