As we recognize the 20th Anniversary of activism on behalf of the victims who served as ‘comfort women’ for Japanese soldiers, the urgency is still upon all of us to take swift action and to urge the Government of Japan to properly acknowledge responsibility for the plight of these women. Nothing is more important right now than for a democratic country like Japan to apologize for systematic atrocity. The grandmothers are waiting for an appropriate apology.

As someone who was put into an internment camp as an infant during World War II, I know firsthand that we must not be ignorant of the past, and that reconciliation through government actions, to admit error, are the only ones likely to be long lasting.

That’s why the House of Representative unanimously passed my bill H.Res.121 in 2007, expressing the sentiment that Japan should “formally acknowledge, apologize, and accept historical responsibility in a clear and unequivocal manner for its Imperial Armed Force's coercion of young women into sexual slavery”. It is about time they do so.