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Title: Thomas T. Noguchi Interview
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Interviewer: Naoko Wake
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<Begin Segment 7>

NW: Could you please tell me a little bit about your relationship with this Congressman Roybal?

TN: Uh . . . Congressman Roybal, Roybal has been a congressman for a long time. He is well-known for uh . . . health-related legislations. He authored a kidney dialysis act that went through prior to that because there is a number of people who need dialysis but lacking the funds. Uh . . . he actually authored and I was aware. So I went to see him. He was very supportive. He drafted the bills. Uh . . . I think that . . . I'm not too sure how far he went. The bill was not moving and then, but uh . . . his support is very encouraging to us. Once Roybal supports, there's one more powerful congressman so that many uh, getting by [?] legislators were willing to support that.

NW: Mm. Why do you think that Congressman Roybal was willing to support Japanese American survivors?

TN: Why? Uh . . . I'm sure he got the research and left the [?] emotion in the past. Why should we help the Japanese who were former enemies? But we really convinced them they are not enemies. They are Americans.

NW: Mhm.

TN: And happened to be trapped during the war. They are small, high school, maybe even grade school students. They were sent by parents for their education. And uh, so for them [?]. So why? I think Ed Roybal . . . his interest to do any health-related legislation. So, he was willing and was great.

NW: I see. So I know that there are other politicians in California of this time such as Mervyn Dymally. Bill Green. And later on, the Mayor, Tom Bradley was . . . they were supportive of U.S. survivors as well. And I can't help but thinking that all those politicians are politicians of color. So they are not Caucasian, White Americans. They are Mexican Americans or African Americans. I just wonder if you can kind of comment on that, if you have any insights into that?

TN: Jokingly, I did not know . . . uh, no, Mervyn Dymally is a black. I'm joking.

NW: [laughs]

TN: I guess I'm not too clear in . . . color. I never thought about that. Mervyn Dymally is a friend of mine. Of course, a county department as an activist. I . . . mean things . . . what

relationship with City Council, LA or Tom Bradley was a city councilman, and he actually came to support me for county job. A personal friend. We had lunch together regularly. And some of them think that legislators done up their in several months regularly I often fly into Sacramento just by all business that is at all related to a death investigation. But when it come to it I was taught by Mervyn Dymally. He was a personal friend. And stopped by to say hello. And hello, and by the way, this and that. He'd say, yeah I'll help you. That kind of a friendship. Uh . . . and more of the people went, even though I might not have the statute to back up the public education, public information to the general public. I thought this was very important.

NW: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. So, who else—who oth—I mean there—are there any other politicians or people who were friends of yours at that time who were supportive of Japanese American survivors of the bomb?

TN: Well, as you know politicians sometimes can decide to support because politically and maybe uh . . . beneficial to them. Uh . . . but city, city council. Many of the survivors who were living in the city and the county board of supervisors also had a number of resolutions supporting the atomic bomb survivors. And you have some kind of a pre-senatorial type hearing and the other county board of supervisors, all destroyed [?] them. And we were allowed to put a literature about [?] pre-survey . . . in fact, maybe during a hearing we were able to use a large . . . all those programs over time [?]. That's why we share anyone's help.

NW: Mm.

TN: So all the cooperations, I didn't think anybody will pull them. Uh . . . We were determined to succeed.

NW: Uh-huh. Now, my understanding however, is that U.S. government never offered any support officially to U.S. survivors. And it's great that U.S. survivors, you know, thanks to the effort of people such as yourself, are able to get biannual checkups. But they are paid by the Japanese government and in some cases, Hiroshima prefecture. And there are some local level of American collaboration that help that biannual checkup out. But nevertheless, it's not something that's officially recognized by the U.S. government. Do you have any reaction to that? Do you have any opinions about that?

TN: Uh . . . No right or wrong. Uh . . . In a way, public health, with respect of atomic radiation, pretty much killed in a . . . much better organized than Japan. And uh . . . here they don't have the . . . we people in the Pacific area may have sympathy. But many East, Christian faith people are probably—they're not [elect??]. They still hate Japan. I don't know. Uh . . . legislators, Congressmen, U.S. Senators, were not until the cry-all-see, I believe. It's okay. We . . . we took care of the most important area . . . isolation. And someone, the survivors here. Someone will listen to them might like. So I think that a big accomplishment is that—and we wanted to do it—is done.

NW: Mm. I see.

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