

2024 NRASLI Representative Assembly Special Resolution  
“NRASLI Calls for a Society Free of Eugenics and Victory of Plaintiffs in the  
Lawsuits Against Eugenic Protection Law”

With regard to what is called lawsuits against the Eugenic Protection Law in which persons with disabilities and others who were forced to undergo sterilization surgery under Japan’s defunct Eugenic Protection Law are seeking compensation from the government, the Supreme Court Grand Bench has decided to hold a hearing on May 29, 2024, to hear arguments from the parties. The Supreme Court is expected to hand down a unified ruling this summer.

Among the plaintiffs in the lawsuit are the Deaf, and there are NRASLI branches and colleagues who are engaged in support activities including sign language interpretation. We would like to express our heartfelt respect for the efforts of those involved in the lawsuits.

NRASLI, which will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2024, has always taken a stance to “protect the lives and rights of deaf people” since its inception and has stood in solidarity with the deaf movement in coordination with the Japanese Federation of the Deaf. Our fundamental position lies in learning sign language from the lives of the Deaf and practice of sign language interpretation from the perspective of guaranteeing the rights of the Deaf.

When we learn sign language, we not only become aware of the difficulties in the lives of the Deaf through deepening interaction with the Deaf but also learn that the causes lie not with the Deaf themselves but with the inadequacy of legal systems and insufficient understanding in society. The doubts, distrust, anger, and other emotions that we feel at that time form the basis of the activities of NRASLI.

The demands of the plaintiffs in the lawsuits against the Eugenic Protection Law and the government's response thus far have evoked similar emotions in us. We cannot help but feel strong doubts, deep sadness, and anger at the loss of their reproductive capacity regardless of their will and the prolonged existence of the legal system that justified it.

The law on lump-sum compensation enacted by the government in 2019, as evidenced by the lawsuits filed nationwide, does not recompense the suffering and hardship endured by the plaintiffs.

What must not be overlooked is that there is a mindset in society that supported the enactment of the Eugenic Protection Law and allowed (did not deny) the continuation of the law and related systems, in other words, a mindset that

endorsed deterring or denying birth (or existence) or excluding persons with disabilities from society as inferior beings (= eugenics toward the disabled). Incidents and cases occurring in facilities for persons with disabilities across the country in recent years show that eugenics toward persons with disabilities still exists in society. Furthermore, the definition of eugenics as “the attempt to preserve genetically superior traits” (*Daijirin Dictionary*) may apply to a wide range of fields, including race and ethnicity, as well as disabilities, contributing to conflicts worldwide.

Needless to say, these ideas are irreconcilable with the philosophy of NRASLI, which views sign language interpretation from the perspective of guaranteeing rights.

Therefore, NRASLI calls for a society free of eugenics and strongly urges the plaintiffs in the lawsuits against Eugenic Protection Law to win, from the standpoint of believing in the need to guarantee the fundamental human rights of all people.

May 26, 2024

Attendees of the 2024 Representative Assembly of the National Research Association for Sign Language Interpretation (NRASLI)