

Statement on the Supreme Court's ruling in favor of the Eugenic Protection Law lawsuit

On July 3, 2024, the Supreme Court Grand Bench ruled in favor of the plaintiffs in what we call the Eugenic Protection Law lawsuit, in which disabled people and others who were forced to undergo sterilization under Japan's defunct Eugenic Protection Law are seeking compensation from the government.

In this historic decision, in line with the plaintiff's claims, the Supreme Court explicitly stated that the sterilizations forced under the Eugenic Protection Law were unconstitutional from the outset, saying that "it is clear that the sterilizations were not justified no matter how much the social circumstances at the time of the legislation were taken into consideration," and dismissed the government's claim for statute of limitations as "contrary to good faith" and "an abuse of rights."

We sincerely welcome this outcome, as the decision recognizes the legitimacy of the claims of the victims who have suffered for many years and is a step toward healing.

The plaintiffs in the lawsuit include deaf individuals, and many colleagues, including sign language interpreters, have supported their efforts. We would like to express our heartfelt respect for those involved in the lawsuit and share in their joy over this victorious judgment.

The ruling acknowledges past mistakes by the government and orders sincere apologies and compensation for the victims and their families. While we anticipate apologies and compensation to the victims by the government in the future, these cannot erase the suffering and hardship that the plaintiffs and victims have endured.

Since its founding, NRASLI has taken a stance to "protect the lives and rights of deaf people" and has continued to provide sign language interpretation services to guarantee the rights of the Deaf in association with the Japanese Federation of the Deaf. This year, which marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of the NRASLI, we are deeply moved by the Supreme Court decision that reaffirmed the guarantee of basic human rights for the Deaf and other disabled persons.

Reflecting on our efforts up to the Supreme Court decision, we would like to reexamine our past responses to the difficulties in the lives of people with disabilities resulting from the existence of the Eugenic Protection Law, to oppose the eugenics underlying the enactment of the law, which violates fundamental human rights, and to take responsibility for building a fairer and more inclusive society. We also want to take responsibility for building a more fair and inclusive society.

As NRASLI marks its 50th anniversary, we pledge again to continue our activities towards realizing a society where the human rights of all people are protected, guided by our basic philosophy of understanding the difficulties in the lives of the Deaf, investigating their causes while standing and deepening interaction with them, and addressing them to solve.

July 5, 2024

Board of Directors and Auditors,

National Research Association for Sign Language Interpretation