
HOUSE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO ENACT THE FILIPINO AMERICAN VETERANS EQUITY ACT OF 2007, OR SIMILAR LEGISLATION PROVIDING VETERANS BENEFITS TO FILIPINO VETERANS WHO SERVED OUR NATION IN WORLD WAR II.

1 WHEREAS, President Roosevelt called over 200,000 Filipino
2 soldiers into service in the United States Armed Forces in the
3 Far East (USAFFE) on July 26, 1941, in anticipation of war with
4 Japan; and

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6 WHEREAS, on December 7, 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor
7 and several hours later, on December 8th, bombed the United
8 States military bases in the Philippines; and

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10 WHEREAS, tens of thousands of Filipino men and women risked
11 their lives against the invading Japanese forces and assisted
12 our nation in its efforts to liberate the Philippines; and

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14 WHEREAS, on April 9, 1942, the United States retreated from
15 the Philippines, and during the Bataan Death March, thousands of
16 American and Filipino prisoners of war died as they traveled to
17 Japanese P.O.W. camps; and

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19 WHEREAS, on September 2, 1945, Japan surrendered the
20 Philippines to America; and

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22 WHEREAS, in February of 1946, Congress enacted the 1946
23 Recission Act, which denied World War II Filipino veterans
24 rights to veterans benefits equal to those enjoyed by other
25 veterans; and

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27 WHEREAS, before the Recission Act became law, officials of
28 the federal Department of Veterans Affairs considered that
29 Filipino military service met the statutory definition of a
30 United States veteran, and that World War II Filipino veterans
31 were entitled to veterans benefits that include healthcare,
32 disability pensions, and burial expenses; and

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1 WHEREAS, although citizenship was granted to Filipino
 2 veterans by Congress in October of 1990, these World War II
 3 veterans are still denied equal treatment and status as American
 4 veterans by the Recission Act; and

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 6 WHEREAS, the World War II Filipino veterans that survive,
 7 are now in their 70s and 80s, and many are permanently disabled
 8 and would, except for the Recission Act, be eligible for full
 9 federal veterans benefits and services; and

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 11 WHEREAS, correction of this injustice to the Filipino
 12 veterans who served our nation courageously in the fight for
 13 freedom and democracy during World War II is long overdue; now,
 14 therefore,

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 16 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
 17 Twenty-fourth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
 18 Session of 2008, that the President of the United States and
 19 United States Congress are urged to enact the Filipino Veterans
 20 Equity Act of 2007, or similar legislation that provides World
 21 War II Filipino veterans with full federal veterans benefits;
 22 and

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 24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
 25 Resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States,
 26 Majority Leader of the United States Senate, Speaker of the
 27 United States House of Representatives, and each member of
 28 Hawaii's Congressional Delegation.

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 30 OFFERED BY: John M. McInerney
Karen Awana Greg Hanokana
Michael J. Maguire Blair D. Snow II
James L. ...
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