

LATE TESTIMONY

STATE OF HAWAII

STATE OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES

TESTIMONY ON SCR 91 & SR 44, URGING CONGRESS AND THE
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO SUPPORT THE PASSAGE OF
LEGISLATION TO EXPEDITE FAMILY REUNIFICATION FOR CERTAIN
FILIPINO VETERANS OF WORLD WAR II.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL, AND MILITARY
AFFAIRS

April 7, 2015

Chair Espero, Vice-Chair Baker and Members of the Committee,

I'm Ron Han, Director of the State Office of Veterans Services (OVS) and I appreciate this opportunity to testify in support of SCR 91/SR 44 that urges Congress and the President of the United States to support the passage of legislation to expedite family reunification for certain Filipino Veterans of World War II.

Thousands of Filipino Veterans fought and died courageously in U.S. military units successfully defeating opposing forces in the Pacific during World War II. As a result of years of legislation, many of those Filipino Veterans have become proud citizens and residents of this country. Despite the granting of citizenship, the Rescission Act did not go far enough in extending those immigration and naturalization benefits to the children of these veterans. This has resulted in years of long separation between these veterans and their children remaining in the Philippines while awaiting the issuance of immigrant visas.

The OVS supports the intent expressed in this resolution as long as its implementation does not impact or replace the priorities set forth in the Executive Budget.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak on behalf of Hawaii's Veteran community.



HAWAI'I CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 411 HONOLULU, HI 96813 • PHONE: 586-8636 FAX: 586-8655 TDD: 568-8692

April 7, 2015
Rm. 229, 1:15 p.m.

To: The Honorable Will Espero, Chair
and Members of the Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

From: Linda Hamilton Krieger, Chair
and Commissioners of the Hawai'i Civil Rights Commission

Re: S.C.R. No. 91 / S.R. No. 44

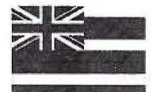
The Hawai'i Civil Rights Commission (HCRC) has enforcement jurisdiction over Hawai'i's laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and access to state and state funded services. The HCRC carries out the Hawai'i constitutional mandate that no person shall be discriminated against in the exercise of their civil rights. Art. I, Sec. 5.

S.C.R. No. 91 and S.R. No. 44 urge the United States Congress and the President of the United States to support legislation to expedite family reunification for US citizen WWII Filipino Veterans and their families.

The HCRC supports S.C.R. No. 91 and S.R. No. 44. With these resolutions, the legislature can join in the call for the United States to remedy a history of injustice, broken promises, and discriminatory treatment by a now dwindling generation of heroic Filipino Veterans who served under US command, were promised citizenship and veteran's benefits, and to this day continue to suffer the consequences of broken promises and belated remedies.

During WWII, members of the Philippine Armed Forces served in the US Armed Forces in the war against Japan. They were among a broader class of non-citizens serving in the US Armed Forces who were offered naturalization as part of the 1942 enactment of the Second War Powers Act, which waived a number of usual naturalization requirements, including residence in the United States and literacy and education testing in English. The cut-off date for application was set at December 31, 1946.

The US authorized Vice Consul George H. Ennis in August 1945 to naturalize Filipino servicemen pursuant to



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Honolulu, Hawaii 96815

LATE TESTIMONY

April 6, 2015

**Testimony in Support of S.C.R. 91/ S.R. 44
Urging Congress and the President of the United States to Support the Passage of Legislation to
Expedite Family reunification for Certain Filipino Veterans of world War II Before the
Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental and Military Affairs
Hearing On Tuesday, April 7, 2015, 1:15 P.M.
In Conference Room 229**

Sen. Espero, Sen. Baker and Committee Members,

The Department of Hawaii, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) represents 3,800 members in 20 Posts located throughout the State of Hawaii. VFW is a federally chartered national association of soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen who have served the United States of America in wars, campaigns, and expeditions on foreign soil or in hostile waters.

S.C.R. 91/S.R. 44 Urging Congress and the President of the United States to support the passage of legislation to expedite family reunification for certain Filipino veterans of World War II.

VFW Hawaii fully supports the passage of the Filipino Veterans Family Reunification Act of 2015 introduced in Congress as S.733 and H.R. 483. This proposed legislation would amend the Immigration and Naturalization Act to exempt from worldwide or numerical limitations on immigrant visas the sons and daughters of Filipino World War II veterans who were naturalized under the Immigration Act of 1990 or other specified federal law.

VFW Hawaii members would appreciate your favorable consideration of this concurrent resolution because it would greatly support the efforts of U.S. Senators Schatz and Hirono in gaining passage of S.733 as well as the efforts of U.S. Representatives Gabbard and Takai in gaining passage of H.R. 483.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of S.C.R. 91/S.R. 44.

Lawrence M.G. Enomoto

Lawrence M.G. Enomoto
VFW Hawaii State Legislative Liaison

the law, but at first the applicability of the law to Filipino servicemen was in question, and then Attorney General Tom Clark revoked Ennis' authority to naturalize in September 26, 1945. As a result, there were only a few months when there was both legal authority and officers authorized to exercise that authority to naturalize those eligible for the naturalization benefit, from August through December, 1946. As a result, only about 4,000 Filipino servicemen applied for and were granted naturalization during this short window, out of more than 250,000.

With the enactment of the Rescission Act in 1946, these Filipino Veterans who served under US Command were singled out and denied full and equal veterans status and benefits given to others.

This injustice spawned a host of litigated cases on behalf of Filipino Veterans, from the 1960s through the 1980s. Then, in 1990 Congress incorporated provisions for special naturalization for Filipino Veterans in the 1990 Immigration Act, followed by piecemeal legislation providing for limited benefits for Filipino Veterans, but not equity and full veterans benefits.

Many of those Filipino Veterans who naturalized since 1990 have waited for years for relative visas to become available, so their petitions to be reunited with their adult children in the United States can be approved and visas issued. Fewer and fewer remain with us, waiting, as those who fought under US command in WWII are now aged well into their 90s. It is time to right this wrong and give them their due.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, April 06, 2015 4:07 PM
To: PSMTestimony
Cc: sonnyfernan@msn.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SCR91 on Apr 7, 2015 13:15PM

LATE TESTIMONY

SCR91

Submitted on: 4/6/2015

Testimony for PSM on Apr 7, 2015 13:15PM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Stanley Y. Fernandez Sr.	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Patriotic Filipinos served the United States Armed Forces and many gave the ultimate sacrifice to the Philippines and to the United States in the battle for freedom. It is only fair that our country and our state that has many of these Filipino veterans that we (Hawaii) honor these heroes. In strong support of SCR91.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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