

STATE OF HAWAII  
OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES  
TESTIMONY ON S.B. No. 626, RELATING TO VETERAN BURIAL GRANTS  
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND MILITARY AFFAIRS  
FEBRUARY 10, 2009

Good afternoon Chair Will Espero, Vice-Chair Robert Bunda, and members of the Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs.

I am Mark Moses, Director of the Office of Veterans Services (OVS). I appreciate this opportunity to comment on SB 626, which requires the office of veterans' services to pay directly to a mortuary for services and to transport the remains of a deceased veteran who joined the New Filipino scouts between 10/06/1945, and 06/30/1947, and died after 06/30/1994, to the Philippines upon submission of an unpaid invoice, as long as its implementation does not impact or replace the priorities set forth in the Executive Biennium Budget for Fiscal Years 2009-2010.

My concern with this measure is that it provides a benefit to this group of veterans that is not provided to any other group of veterans. Filipino veterans who enlisted between 10/06/1945 and 06/30/1947 are presently eligible for burial in either a state or federal veterans cemetery.

Additionally, the family or estate of any deceased veteran must pay for the transportation cost to bury a veteran in a veterans' cemetery even when located in the same state where the veteran passed. For instance, transportation for a veteran from a neighbor island who passes away on Oahu would be the responsibility of their family or estate. Transportation of remains is not a veteran's benefit.

My final concern with this measure is that as written, only individuals with other than honorable service would be eligible for the benefit (see the bottom of the 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph of Section 1.) This would add an extraordinary benefit that no other veteran may receive.

I do not believe that is the intent of this measure.

Thank you for allowing me to present the Veterans' perspective on this issue. I will respond to any questions.