HOUSE RESOLUTION

URGING THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO EXPEDITE PAYMENT OF WAR BENEFITS TO FILIPINO VETERANS WHO FOUGHT IN WORLD WAR II BUT WERE SUBSEQUENTLY DENIED THEIR ENTITLED BENEFITS.

WHEREAS, during World War II, the Philippines was a United States commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, in 1941, 250,000 Filipino soldiers volunteered their services after being promised full veterans benefits to volunteer to fight for the United States against the potential threat of Japan; and

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

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

WHEREAS, on April 9, 1942, the United States retreated from the Philippines, and during the Bataan Death March, thousands of American and Filipino prisoners of war died as they traveled to Japanese prisoners of war camps; and

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

WHEREAS, in February 1946, Congress enacted the Recission Act, denying World War II Filipino veterans rights to veterans benefits like healthcare, disability pensions, and burial expenses; and
WHEREAS, over the years, Congress has considered legislation to restore the benefits denied to Filipino veterans and even received encouraging words from Presidents George W. Bush and Bill Clinton to fulfill the broken promises made by the United States government; and

WHEREAS, more than 60 years later, in 2009, President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), and a provision tucked inside this stimulus bill finally called for releasing $198,000,000 for lump sum payments to Filipino veterans in lieu of pensions; and

WHEREAS, one year later, although today only about 11,000 veterans now in their 80s and 90s are still alive to collect these payments, some Filipino veterans are still waiting for the promised checks; and

WHEREAS, in Hawaii, there are about 400 Filipino veterans qualified for payments under ARRA, and about 15 percent are still waiting for their checks and about 20 percent have claims that are still pending; and

WHEREAS, according to Senator Daniel Inouye, it is "a matter of honor" to correct this injustice to Filipino veterans who served our nation so courageously, so many of whom have died waiting for what was promised them; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-fifth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2010, that the President of the United States and United States Congress are urged to expedite the processing of all claims for payment, and the distribution of checks to Filipino veterans under ARRA, which are already long overdue; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that even payment of these claims does not correct the injustice and discrimination done 60 years ago but is a small step in making reparations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, President pro tempore of the United States Senate, Speaker of...
the United States House of Representatives, each member of
Hawaii's Congressional Delegation, the Director of the United
States Department of Veterans Affairs, the Director of the
Hawaii Office of Veterans Services, and the President of the
Philippines.

OFFERED BY:

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