

MAR 13 2015

SENATE RESOLUTION

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.

1 WHEREAS, on December 8, 1941, thousands of Filipino men and
2 women responded to President Roosevelt's call for help to
3 preserve peace, democracy, and freedom for America and the
4 world; and
5

6 WHEREAS, at that time, the Philippines was a commonwealth
7 associated with the United States and its citizens were
8 nationals of the United States, similar to the status of
9 Hawaii's residents prior to statehood and the current status of
10 American Samoa's residents; and
11

12 WHEREAS, during the dark days of World War II, nearly one
13 hundred thousand soldiers of the Philippine Commonwealth Army
14 provided a ray of hope in the Pacific as they fought alongside
15 United States and Allied forces for four long years to defend
16 and reclaim the Philippine Islands from Japanese aggression; and
17

18 WHEREAS, thousands more Filipinos joined the United States
19 Armed Forces immediately after the war and served in
20 occupational duty throughout the Pacific theater; and
21

22 WHEREAS, valiant Filipino soldiers fought, died, and
23 suffered in some of the bloodiest battles of World War II,
24 defending beleaguered Bataan and Corregidor, and thousands of
25 Filipino prisoners of war endured the infamous Bataan Death
26 March and years of captivity; and
27

28 WHEREAS, their many guerrilla actions slowed the Japanese
29 takeover of the Western Pacific region and allowed United States
30 forces the time to build and prepare for the allied
31 counterattack on Japanese forces; and



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1
2 WHEREAS, Filipino troops fought side by side with American
3 forces to secure their islands as the strategic base from which
4 the final effort to defeat Japan was launched; and
5

6 WHEREAS, in February of 1946, the United States Congress
7 enacted the 1946 Rescission Act, which denied World War II
8 Filipino veterans rights to veterans benefits equal to those
9 enjoyed by other veterans and soldiers of more than sixty-six
10 other countries who were similarly inducted into the United
11 States military; and
12

13 WHEREAS, the Rescission Act discriminated against
14 Filipinos, making them the only national group singled out for
15 denial of full United States veterans status and benefits,
16 including rights of immigration and naturalization; and
17

18 WHEREAS, decades later, in recognition of the courage and
19 loyalty of the Filipino troops who fought alongside our armed
20 forces in the Pacific during World War II, the United States
21 Congress enacted legislation in 1990 that provided a waiver from
22 certain immigration and naturalization requirements for these
23 Filipino veterans; and
24

25 WHEREAS, as a result of that legislation, many of those
26 Filipino veterans have become proud citizens and residents of
27 this country; and
28

29 WHEREAS, despite the granting of citizenship, these World
30 War II Filipino veterans are still denied equal treatment and
31 status as American veterans by the Rescission Act; and
32

33 WHEREAS, the 1990 legislation did not go far enough in
34 extending those immigration and naturalization benefits to the
35 children of those veterans, resulting in years of long
36 separation between the veterans and their children remaining in
37 the Philippines awaiting the issuance of immigrant visas; and
38

39 WHEREAS, President William J. Clinton proclaimed October
40 20, 1996, as a day honoring the Filipino Veterans of World War
41 II, recalling the courage, sacrifice, and loyalty of Filipino



1 veterans of World War II in defense of democracy and liberty;
2 and
3

4 WHEREAS, on February 17, 2009, the American Recovery and
5 Reinvestment Act of 2009 was signed into law and, among many
6 other things, formally recognized and set the historical record
7 straight by declaring the service of Filipino World War II
8 veterans as active United States military service in the Armed
9 Forces for purposes of this law; and
10

11 WHEREAS, decades after their heroic service under the
12 command of their leaders and General Douglas MacArthur, men and
13 women of Filipino-American national heritage are still being
14 denied the benefits and privileges provided to their American
15 compatriots who fought side by side with them; and
16

17 WHEREAS, the World War II Filipino veterans that survive,
18 are now in their seventies and eighties, and many are
19 permanently disabled and would, except for the Rescission Act,
20 be eligible for full federal veterans benefits and services; and
21

22 WHEREAS, correction of this injustice to the Filipino
23 veterans who served our nation courageously in the fight for
24 freedom and democracy during World War II is long overdue; now,
25 therefore,
26

27 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-eighth
28 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2015,
29 that the President of the United States and United States
30 Congress are urged to support legislation to expedite family
31 reunification for certain Filipino veterans of World War II; and
32

33 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
34 Resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States,
35 President of the Republic of the Philippines, Majority Leader of
36 the United States Senate, Speaker of the United States House of
37 Representatives, Chair of the Committee on the Judiciary of the
38 United States Senate, Chair of the Committee on the Judiciary of
39 the United States House of Representatives, Director of the
40 Bureau of United States Citizenship and Immigration Services,
41 United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs, each member of
42 Hawaii's congressional delegation, the respective Chairs of the



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1 Senate Committee on Human Services, the House Committee on Human
 2 Services, the Senate Committee on Tourism, and the House
 3 Committee on Tourism, Culture, and International Affairs of the
 4 Hawaii State Legislature.
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