



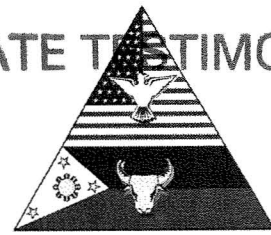
WW II Fil-Am Veterans STATE TESTIMONY

HAWAII CHAPTER

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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HCR 298 & HR270 THE FILIPINO VETERANS FAMILY REUNIFICATION ACT.

EBM – April 7, 2009 - 10:00 a.m. CR 312

To: Rep. Angus L.K. McKelvey, Chair
Rep. Isaac W. Choy, Vice Chair and members of EBM

Chair Mizuno and distinguished members of the EBM committee. My name is Art Caleda, President of the W.W.II Fil-Am Veterans, Hawaii Chapter with almost one thousand five hundred veterans including veterans on the outer islands. On behalf of all the Filipino Veterans of WWII, we wish to testify in support of **HCR298 -& HR270** urging the United States president and senators and congress members to support the passage of legislation to expedite immigrant visas for family reunification of certain Filipino veterans of World War II.

Our own Hawaii Congressional delegation had introduced the FILIPINO VETERANS FAMILY REUNIFICATION ACT related to expediting visa approvals for the sons and daughters of certain Filipino veterans of World War II seeking justice and fairness for WWII Filipino Veterans. The Immigration Act of 1990 provided for U.S. citizenship to each veteran but excluded the veterans' dependants, unfairly requiring that each veteran submit an immigrant petition with supporting affidavits requesting that the veterans' dependents be permitted to live with the veteran.

We respectfully request the support of this distinguished body to help correct and rectify the injustice to WWII Filipino Veterans who fought and died shoulder-to-shoulder with their other American counterparts denying them their U.S. citizenship and just veteran benefits and rights. In fact, the Filipino veterans were bayoneted, gutted and murdered by the Japanese. Filipino Veterans paid a dear price for freedom.

After all, U.S. President William Clinton proclaimed several years ago that what mistakes made by the U.S. in regards to the WWII Filipino Veterans must be corrected by America. Here is a chance for our beloved state to show support and gratitude for the sacrifices made by our very own WWII Filipino Veterans who risked their lives and liberty to keep and preserve democracy and our American way of life.

On October 20, 1996, former President William Clinton and on July 26, 2001, President George W. Bush issued their respective presidential proclamations recognizing and honoring the vital role of the WWII Filipino Veterans in fighting side by side with their American counterparts to turn back the attacking enemy thus defending liberty and preserving democracy and U.S. freedom and way of life.

Finally, in 2009 President Obama signed H.R.1 that recognized of our military World War II service as Active service, since we fought side by side with our American comrades in arms in the Philippines, and would be eligible to receive benefits and rights provided by the U. S. Congress but our U.S. citizenship was not restored to all of us. Our children are not even allowed to visit us on our death bed or to gather our bodies for burial.

These benefits are the same provided to the 116,000 Allied Soldiers from 66 Allied countries who were like the Filipino soldiers drafted and inducted under the same set of rules and who participated in the war efforts to help win the war. How can we recognize and supported some of the WWII Filipino veterans who were active participants of the war, when we do not recognized and supported two third of the 200,000 Filipino soldiers that compose 70% of General Mac Arthur strong joint Armed Forces. The one-third strength that were killed, disabled or maimed were recognized and supported and were given by the US Veterans Administration.

In short it took a Filipino veteran to be disabled, maimed or killed before his service were recognized and be entitled to the benefits under the GI bill for rights and other benefits provided by the U.S. Veterans Administration. Those veterans who survived the Holocaust of war and continued the "fight" with limbs intact are now considered to have rendered service in the U.S. armed force for purposed of any U.S. law granting veterans' rights and privileges. We appeal again before this honorable committee to please review the disparity, the injustice, and help us see our children before we die. Time is no longer on our side as many of us passed away. We hope and pray that the passing of this resolution will assist in rectifying this grave injustice and reunification with our families. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support.

The Following Persons wish to go on record in Support of HCR 298- HR 270

1. ART CALEDA^{Calda} A - President
2. Leon C. Taobanig - Executive Via President
3. Eduardo Sobrepena Sobrepena
4. Matias Dumo
5. Agustin Agudo
6. Salome Calderon^{Calderon} - Vice President Operations
7. Adelina Noces - Vice President Ladies Auxiliary
8. Fausto Manglirong
- ~~Salome Calderon~~

LATE TESTIMONY

1. LEO TABARAC

EXECUTIVE VICE - PRESIDENT

2. SLOAN CROTON

VP OPERATIONS

3. ADRIAN JUANITAS

4. VP LABORATORY

ART CALSON

1. PRESIDENT