
HOUSE RESOLUTION

URGING CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO SUPPORT THE PASSAGE OF S. 1337, THE FILIPINO VETERANS FAMILY REUNIFICATION ACT OF 2009, OR SIMILAR 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

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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

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12 WHEREAS, during the dark days of World War II, nearly
13 100,000 soldiers of the Philippine Commonwealth Army provided a
14 ray of hope in the Pacific as they fought alongside United
15 States and Allied forces for four long years to defend and
16 reclaim the Philippine Islands from Japanese aggression; and

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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

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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

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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 WHEREAS, Filipino troops fought side by side with American
2 forces to secure their islands as the strategic base from which
3 the final effort to defeat Japan was launched; and
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5 WHEREAS, in February of 1946, Congress enacted the 1946
6 Rescission Act, which denied World War II Filipino veterans
7 rights to veterans benefits equal to those enjoyed by other
8 veterans and soldiers of more than sixty-six other countries who
9 were similarly inducted into the United States military; and
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11 WHEREAS the Rescission Act discriminated against Filipinos,
12 making them the only national group singled out for denial of
13 full United States veterans status and benefits, including
14 rights of immigration and naturalization; and
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16 WHEREAS, decades later, in recognition of the courage and
17 loyalty of the Filipino troops who fought alongside our armed
18 forces in the Pacific during World War II, the United States
19 Congress enacted legislation in 1990 that provided a waiver from
20 certain immigration and naturalization requirements for these
21 Filipino veterans; and
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23 WHEREAS, as a result of that legislation, many of those
24 Filipino veterans have become proud citizens and residents of
25 this country; and
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27 WHEREAS, despite the granting of citizenship, these World
28 War II Filipino veterans are still denied equal treatment and
29 status as American veterans by the Rescission Act; and
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31 WHEREAS, the 1990 legislation did not go far enough in
32 extending those immigration and naturalization benefits to the
33 children of those veterans, resulting in years of long
34 separation between the veterans and their children remaining in
35 the Philippines awaiting the issuance of immigrant visas; and
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37 WHEREAS, President William J. Clinton proclaimed October
38 20, 1996, as a day honoring the Filipino Veterans of World War
39 II, recalling the courage, sacrifice, and loyalty of Filipino
40 veterans of World War II in defense of democracy and liberty;
41 and
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43 WHEREAS, on April 1, 2008, the Hawaii State Legislature
44 adopted House Resolution No. 91 requesting Congress and the



1 President of the United States to enact the Filipino Veterans
2 Equity Act to provide veterans benefits to Filipino veterans who
3 served our nation during World War II; and
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5 WHEREAS, on February 17, 2009, Senator Daniel Akaka, along
6 with Senator Daniel Inouye and others, introduced S. 671, the
7 Filipino Veterans Family Reunification Act, to amend the
8 Immigration and Naturalization Act to exempt children of certain
9 Filipino World War II veterans from the numerical limitation on
10 immigrant visas; and
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12 WHEREAS, Representative Mazie Hirono, Representative Neil
13 Abercrombie, and others have expressed an interest or intent to
14 introduce or co-sponsor a House companion bill to S. 671 to
15 facilitate family reunification of certain Filipino veterans of
16 World War II; and
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18 WHEREAS, H.R. 1, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act
19 of 2009, was signed into law, among many other things, to
20 formally recognize and set the historical record straight by
21 declaring the service of Filipino World War II veterans as
22 active United States military service in the Armed Forces for
23 purposes of this law; and
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25 WHEREAS, decades after their heroic service under the
26 command of their leaders and General Douglas MacArthur, men and
27 women of Filipino-American national heritage are still being
28 denied the benefits and privileges provided to their American
29 compatriots who fought side by side with them; and
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31 WHEREAS, the World War II Filipino veterans that survive,
32 are now in their 70s and 80s, and many are permanently disabled
33 and would, except for the Rescission Act, be eligible for full
34 federal veterans benefits and services; and
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36 WHEREAS, correction of this injustice to the Filipino
37 veterans who served our nation courageously in the fight for
38 freedom and democracy during World War II is long overdue; now,
39 therefore,
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41 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
42 Twenty-fifth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
43 of 2010, that the President of the United States and United
44 States Congress are urged to support the passage of S. 1337, The



1 Filipino Veterans Family Reunification Act of 2009, or similar
2 legislation, to expedite family reunification for certain
3 Filipino veterans of World War II; and
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5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
6 Resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States,
7 President of the Republic of the Philippines, Majority Leader of
8 the United States Senate, Speaker of the United States House of
9 Representatives, Chair of the Committee on the Judiciary of the
10 United States Senate, Chair of the Committee on the Judiciary of
11 the United States House of Representatives, Director of the
12 Bureau of United States Citizenship and Immigration Services,
13 United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs, each member of
14 Hawaii's congressional delegation, the respective Chairs of the
15 Senate Committee on Human Services, the House Committee on Human
16 Services, the Senate Committee on Tourism, and the House
17 Committee on Tourism, Culture, and International Affairs of the
18 Hawaii State Legislature.
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OFFERED BY:

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