
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO FILIPINO VETERANS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. During World War II, the Philippines was a
2 Commonwealth of the United States. Nearly 100,000 soldiers of
3 the Philippine Commonwealth Army fought alongside United States
4 and Allied forces for four long years to defend and reclaim the
5 Philippine Islands from foreign aggression. Valiant Filipino
6 soldiers fought, suffered, and died in some of the bloodiest
7 battles of World War II, defending beleaguered Bataan and
8 Corregidor, and thousands of Filipino prisoners of war endured
9 the infamous Bataan Death March and years of captivity.

10 The sacrifices of Filipino soldiers played a vital role in
11 the Allied victory in the Pacific as their numerous guerrilla
12 actions provided United States forces with time to build and
13 prepare for the Allied counterattack. Filipino soldiers fought
14 side-by-side with United States forces to secure their island
15 nation as the strategic base from which the final effort by
16 Allied forces to bring an end to World War II was launched.



1 Although Filipino soldiers exhibited tremendous courage and
2 risked their lives to win the war in the Pacific, many of these
3 soldiers were denied full veterans benefits, including burial
4 benefits, which had been promised to them by the United States.

5 While Filipino soldiers meeting specific requirements were
6 eventually provided with burial benefits at national and state
7 veterans cemeteries at no cost similar to other veterans of the
8 United States Armed Forces, the wish of some Filipino soldiers
9 who were living in Hawaii was that their remains be returned to
10 their homeland. However, this benefit of returning the remains
11 of Filipino soldiers to their homeland for burial was not
12 provided to them. Accordingly, the legislature provided for
13 burial grants to be given to qualifying Filipino veterans to
14 honor the final wishes of these veterans and assist with the
15 return of their remains to their homeland for burial.

16 Although burial grants for Filipino veterans are
17 statutorily established under chapter 363, Hawaii Revised
18 Statutes, the office of veterans services has acknowledged that
19 funding for the provision of these grants has been non-existent.
20 As the number of surviving World War II Filipino veterans
21 continues to dwindle, it is important for their sacrifices to be



H.B. NO. 1119

Report Title:

Filipino Veterans; Burial Grants; Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates funds for burial grants for qualifying Filipino veterans to provide funeral and burial services and transportation of their remains to the Philippines.

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