

Date of Hearing: April 26, 2011

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS
Paul J. Cook, Chair
AJR 6 (Ma, et. al.) – As Introduced: February 23, 2011

SUBJECT: Filipino Veterans

SUMMARY: This measure would request that the Congress and the President of the United States enact the Filipino Veterans Fairness Act of 2011 (H.R. 210).

EXISTING LAW: Under United States Code Title 38, Chapter 1, section 107, service before July 1, 1946, in the organized military forces of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Philippines, ... including among such military forces organized guerrilla forces under ... competent authority in the Army of the United States, is not deemed to have been active military, naval, or air service for the purposes of any law of the United States conferring rights, privileges, or benefits upon any person by reason of the service of such person or the service of any other person in the Armed Forces. [Emphasis added.]

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown, however, this bill is a resolution and is not keyed fiscal.

COMMENTS: According to the author:

1. At the time of World War II, Filipinos, who volunteered to fight in the war, were promised full veterans' benefits by the United States Government;
2. More than 250,000 Filipinos signed up to serve in the war in response to this promise; and
3. In 1946, President Truman signed the first Supplemental Surplus Appropriation Rescission ... and the second Supplemental Surplus Appropriation Rescission Act ... known as the Rescission Acts of 1946, [which]... denied almost 250,000 Filipino soldiers the benefits they earned serving to protect the United States; and
4. The "Old" or Regular Filipino Scouts were entitled to all benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, while the military forces of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Philippines, recognized guerilla forces, and the New Philippine Scouts were all denied the same benefits, even though they fought alongside the Regular Filipino Scouts; and
5. Congresswoman Jackie Speier introduced the "Filipino Veterans Fairness Act of 2011" (H.R. 210) to reverse the Rescission Acts of 1946; and
6. H.R. 210 restores the average monthly pension of \$1,500, medical care, burial services, and all other benefits that are as of now deemed available only to United States citizens; and
7. H.R. 210 would allow the widows and widowers of the Filipino veterans, who are deceased, to receive the benefits that their spouses earned; and

8. In 2007, the Legislature unanimously approved Senate Joint Resolution 5 requesting the Congress and the President of the United States to enact the Filipino Veterans Equity Act of 2007; and
9. There is a sense of urgency to pass H.R. 210 because approximately 50,000 Filipino veterans are still alive, and with the passing of each day, more of these brave soldiers will become deceased.

Related Legislation: AB 199 (Ma, Cook) Encourages academic curriculum to include instruction on World War II and the role of Filipinos in that war.

There have been numerous, approximately 15, successful resolutions adopted by the California Legislature, going back over a decade, similar to AJR 6.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

None on file.

Opposition

None on file.

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