



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 256

Resolution, on the 60th anniversary of the fall of Bataan, urging President George W. Bush and the United States Congress to support U.S. House of Representatives bill HR-491 and U.S. Senate bill S-1042.

By Council Members Liu, Barron, Comrie, DeBlasio, Foster, Gerson, Nelson, Perkins, Reyna, Rivera, Sanders, Vann, Quinn, Stewart and Jackson

WHEREAS, President Franklin D. Roosevelt on July 26, 1941 called into military service 140,000 Filipino-American soldiers to serve under the command of American officers to defend a United States territory, the Philippine Islands; and

WHEREAS, Americans and Filipino-American forces under the command of Lt. Gen. Douglas MacArthur fought valiantly with great sacrifice against overwhelming Japanese invading forces, delaying the invaders' timetable by four months, thus allowing the United States to regain its military strength after the Pearl Harbor attack; and

WHEREAS, Americans and Filipino-American forces surrendered after the Battle for Bataan and Corregidor on April 9 and May 6, 1942 and suffered a horrible number of casualties in the Bataan Death March, in the prisoner-of-war camps, and in the liberation campaign where 10,000 American soldiers perished and 250,000 Asian-American soldiers and civilians died; and

WHEREAS, On February 18, 1946, the United States Congress passed the "Rescission Act" that withdrew the U.S. veterans' status of WWII Filipino-American soldiers and their eligibility for veteran benefits that were promised to them by President Harry S. Truman and Gen. Douglas MacArthur; and

WHEREAS, In 1990, Congress passed legislation that allowed Filipino-American WWII Veterans who proved their honorable military service to become naturalized U.S. citizens; and

WHEREAS, The majority of the 12,000 surviving Filipino-American veterans who are U.S. citizens live in poverty and receive minimum benefits (SSI and Medicaid), and die at a rate 57 percent higher than their American comrades because of the lack of access to the VA medical care facilities; and

WHEREAS, The majority of Filipino-American Veterans are denied eligibility for VA medical care and disability pensions provided by the VA to their fellow U.S. comrades; and

WHEREAS, Rep Benjamin Gilman (R-NY) and Rep Bob Filner (D-CA) have sponsored HR-491 and Senator Inouye has introduced S-1042 that would restore full official recognition of surviving Filipino-American WWII Veterans from the Philippines; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the New York City Council, on the 60th anniversary of the fall of Bataan, urges President George W. Bush and the United States Congress to support U.S. House of Representatives bill HR-491 and U.S. Senate bill S-1042.