

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JUNE 19, 2007

AMENDED IN SENATE MARCH 19, 2007

Senate Joint Resolution

No. 5

Introduced by Senator Yee

(Coauthors: Senators Aanestad, Ackerman, Alquist, Ashburn, Battin, Cedillo, Cogdill, Correa, Cox, Ducheny, Dutton, Harman, Hollingsworth, Kehoe, Kuehl, Lowenthal, Machado, Maldonado, Margett, McClintock, Migden, Negrete McLeod, Oropeza, Padilla, Perata, Ridley-Thomas, Romero, Runner, Scott, Steinberg, Torlakson, Wiggins, and Wyland)

(Coauthors: Assembly Members Beall, Carter, Cook, Salas, Saldana, and Wolk)

March 5, 2007

Senate Joint Resolution No. 5—Relative to benefits for Filipino Americans who fought in World War II.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SJR 5, as amended, Yee. Filipino veterans: benefits.

This measure would request that the Congress and the President of the United States enact the Filipino Veterans Equity Act of 2007.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, On July 26, 1941, in anticipation of war with Japan,
- 2 President Roosevelt issued an Executive Order calling over 200,000
- 3 Filipino soldiers to serve in the United States Armed Forces in the
- 4 Far East (USAFFE); and
- 5 WHEREAS, Ten hours after Pearl Harbor was attacked, the
- 6 United States military bases in the Phillipines were bombed,
- 7 causing the war to spill onto the Filipino people; and

1 WHEREAS, On March 27, 1942, Congress passed Title 8 of
2 the Second War Powers Act, which provided that noncitizens who
3 served in active duty in the United States Armed Forces during
4 World War II shall be granted United States citizenship, meaning
5 that every USAFFE soldier had the right to equal treatment under
6 the law; and

7 WHEREAS, On April 9, 1942, the United States ~~surrendered~~
8 *retreated from* the Philippines, leaving 75,000 USAFFE and regular
9 soldiers to the Bataan Death March where close to 10,000 died
10 along the drudge to P.O.W. camps; and

11 WHEREAS, Even after the American ~~surrender~~ *retreat*, Filipinos
12 continued to resist, gathering thousands more soldiers and forming
13 guerilla units, who, in coordination with United States command,
14 conducted operations, collected intelligence, and helped prepare
15 for the American return; and

16 WHEREAS, On September 2, 1945, Japanese military command
17 surrendered the Philippines back to American forces ending World
18 War II on the islands, and Philippine nationals who served in the
19 war began filing for naturalization at the United States Embassy
20 in Manila; and

21 WHEREAS, Filipino men and women served courageously in
22 the fight for freedom and democracy during World War II, under
23 the leadership of General Douglas MacArthur; and

24 WHEREAS, After the war, the New Philippine Scouts were
25 formed to help reestablish United States authority in the Pacific,
26 causing thousands more Filipino soldiers to be called to serve the
27 United States; and

28 WHEREAS, In November of 1945, adjudication of applications
29 for naturalization of Filipino veterans were stopped, per order of
30 the United States Department of State and the Commissioner of
31 the Immigration and Naturalization Service; and

32 WHEREAS, In December of 1945, Congress passed legislation
33 amending the immigration and naturalization law, setting a deadline
34 of December 1946 for Filipino veterans applying for citizenship;
35 and

36 WHEREAS, On February 18, 1946, Congress enacted the 1946
37 Rescission Act, which denied World War II Filipino veterans,
38 including the USAFFE, the guerillas, and the New Philippine
39 Scouts equal status as American veterans, which stripped them of
40 equal recognition, compensation, and benefits; and

1 WHEREAS, In October of 1990, the 1990 Immigration Act was
2 passed, granting United States citizenship to Filipino veterans,
3 which allowed 24,000 Filipino World War II veterans, in their 70s
4 and 80s to receive citizenship, but who were still denied equal
5 status as American veterans; and

6 WHEREAS, California has long advocated for veterans,
7 including continuation of the \$226 per month disability benefit
8 provided by the California Veterans Cash Benefit Program, and

9 WHEREAS, The Filipino Veterans Equity Act of 2007 (H.R.
10 No. 760, 110th Cong., 1st Sess., P. 1150 (2007); Sen. No. S. 57,
11 110th Cong., 1st Sess., p. S37, (2007)) would provide benefits for
12 veterans, including healthcare, disability pensions, and burial
13 expenses, which are much needed for many of the 24,000 surviving
14 Filipino veterans and their families; now, therefore, be it

15 *Resolved by the Senate and the Assembly of the State of*
16 *California, jointly,* That the Legislature of the State of California
17 respectfully requests the President and Congress of the United
18 States to enact the Filipino Veterans Equity Act of 2007; *and be*
19 *it further*

20 *Resolved,* That the Secretary of Senate transmit copies of this
21 resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States,
22 to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the Majority
23 Leader of the Senate, and to each Senator and Representative from
24 California in the Congress of the United States.