

Assembly Joint Resolution

No. 2

Introduced by Assembly Member Evans

December 6, 2004

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 2— Relative to the full benefits of Filipino–American veterans of the United States Armed Forces.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

AJR 2, as introduced, Evans. Full benefits of Filipino veterans of the United States Armed Forces.

This measure would memorialize the President and the Congress of the United States to honor the contributions of Filipino-American war veterans and direct the federal government to immediately pay promised veterans’ benefits as the first order of business of the 109th Congress.

Fiscal committee: yes.

1 WHEREAS, On July 26, 1941, when the Philippines were
2 under the sovereignty of the United States, President Franklin D.
3 Roosevelt, pursuant to the Philippines’ Independence Act, issued
4 an executive order that called all organized military forces of the
5 Philippines into the service of the United States; and
6 WHEREAS, President Roosevelt’s executive order enabled
7 over 200,000 Filipino soldiers to be inducted into the United
8 States Armed Forces in the Far East (USAFFE); and
9 WHEREAS, On December 8, 1941, just 10 hours after Japan
10 attacked the United States at Pearl Harbor, Japan bombed United
11 States military bases located in the Philippines and consequently
12 brought the Filipino people into World War II; and

1 WHEREAS, On March 27, 1942, the United States Congress
2 passed Title 8 of the Second War Powers Act, which granted
3 noncitizens who served in the United States Armed Forces during
4 the war United States citizenship status and subsequently
5 provided every member of the USAFFE, certain individuals who
6 served in the Commonwealth Army of the Philippines, and
7 certain Philippine Scouts equal treatment under the law as
8 provided by the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States
9 Constitution; and

10 WHEREAS, On April 9, 1942, the United States surrendered
11 the Philippines to Japan which led 75,000 USAFFE,
12 Commonwealth Army of the Philippines, Philippine scouts, and
13 other soldiers on the Bataan Death March, whereby nearly
14 10,000 Filipino soldiers perished in route to internment; and

15 WHEREAS, On September 2, 1945, Japan surrendered the
16 Philippines back to the United States and effectively ended
17 World War II on the islands of the Philippines; and

18 WHEREAS, Despite the promise to provide citizenship status
19 and equal protection under the Fourteenth Amendment, in
20 November 1945, the United States State Department and the
21 United States Immigration and Naturalization Services placed a
22 moratorium on all applications for naturalization by Filipino war
23 veterans; and

24 WHEREAS, One month after the start of the moratorium,
25 Congress passed the Rescissions Act of 1946, which proclaimed
26 that the service of the Filipino veterans in World War II who
27 served under President Roosevelt's Executive Order were no
28 longer deemed to have been active military, naval, or air service
29 for the purposes of any law of the United States; and

30 WHEREAS, In October 1990, nearly 45 years after the
31 passage of the Rescissions Act, the Congress passed and
32 President George H.W. Bush signed into law, the 1990
33 Immigration and Naturalization Act which finally granted United
34 States citizenship status to all Filipino veterans; and

35 WHEREAS, Despite being granted citizenship status,
36 surviving Filipino-American veterans have not been provided
37 equal treatment, recognition, or benefits for their service; and

38 WHEREAS, As of September 2004, the number of surviving
39 Filipino-American veterans was approximately 28,000 (8,000 of
40 whom live in the United States) with a large population living in

1 California; however, this total is less than one-half of
2 Filipino-American veterans estimated to be living just four years
3 ago and the numbers continue to decline rapidly as nearly all of
4 the veterans are in their 70s and 80s; and

5 WHEREAS, Many of these veterans are disabled, low income,
6 and in desperate need of existing services available to other
7 veterans and that were promised to them approximately 60 years
8 ago; and

9 WHEREAS, These Filipino-American veterans served the
10 United States during World War II and came to our aid in a time
11 of need and the failure to pay these benefits reflects poorly on the
12 honor of our country; now, therefore, be it

13 *Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of*
14 *California, jointly,* That the Legislature of the State of California
15 memorializes the President and the Congress of the United States
16 to honor the contributions of our Filipino-American veterans and
17 direct the federal government to immediately pay them the
18 veteran's benefits as promised as the first order of business when
19 the 190th Congress convenes in January 2005; and be it further

20 *Resolved,* That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit
21 copies of this resolution to the President of the United States, to
22 the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and to
23 each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress
24 of the United States.