

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 5, 2005

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2005—06 REGULAR SESSION

Assembly Joint Resolution

No. 2

Introduced by Assembly Member Evans

(Coauthors: Assembly Members Aghazarian, Arambula, Baca, Bass, Benoit, Berg, Bermudez, Blakeslee, Bogh, Calderon, Canciamilla, Chan, Chavez, Chu, Cogdill, Cohn, Coto, Daucher, De La Torre, DeVore, Dymally, Emmerson, Frommer, Garcia, Goldberg, Hancock, Harman, Shirley Horton, Houston, Huff, Jones, Karnette, Keene, Klehs, Koretz, La Malfa, La Suer, Laird, Leno, Lieber, Liu, Matthews, McCarthy, Montanez, Mountjoy, Mullin, Nakanishi, Nation, Nava, Negrete McLeod, Nunez, Oropeza, Parra, Pavley, Plescia, Richman, Ridley-Thomas, Ruskin, Saldana, Salinas, Spitzer, Strickland, Torrico, Tran, Umberg, Vargas, Villines, Walters, and Yee)

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 amended, 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

13 WHEREAS, On March 27, 1942, the United States Congress
14 passed Title 8 of the Second War Powers Act, which granted
15 noncitizens who served in the United States Armed Forces during
16 the war United States citizenship status and subsequently
17 provided every member of the USAFFE, certain individuals who
18 served in the Commonwealth Army of the Philippines, and
19 certain Philippine Scouts equal treatment under the law as
20 provided by the 14th Amendment to the United States
21 Constitution; and

22 WHEREAS, On April 9, 1942, the United States surrendered
23 the Philippines to Japan which led 75,000 USAFFE,
24 Commonwealth Army of the Philippines, Philippine scouts, and
25 other soldiers on the Bataan Death March, whereby nearly
26 10,000 Filipino soldiers perished in route to internment; and

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

30 WHEREAS, Despite the promise to provide citizenship status
31 and equal protection under the 14th Amendment, in November
32 1945, the United States State Department and the United States
33 Immigration and Naturalization Services placed a moratorium on
34 all applications for naturalization by Filipino war veterans; and

35 WHEREAS, One month after the start of the moratorium,
36 Congress passed the Rescissions Act of 1946, which proclaimed
37 that the service of the Filipino veterans in World War II who
38 served under President Roosevelt's Executive order were no
39 longer deemed to have been active military, naval, or air service
40 for the purposes of any law of the United States; and

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

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

9 WHEREAS, As of September 2004, the number of surviving
10 Filipino-American veterans was approximately 28,000 (8,000 of
11 whom live in the United States) with a large population living in
12 California; however, this total is less than one-half of
13 Filipino-American veterans estimated to be living just four years
14 ago and the numbers continue to decline rapidly as nearly all of
15 the veterans are in their 70s and 80s; and

16 WHEREAS, Many of these veterans are disabled, low income,
17 and in desperate need of existing services available to other
18 veterans and that were promised to them approximately 60 years
19 ago; and

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

24 *Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of*
25 *California, jointly*, That the Legislature of the State of California
26 memorializes the President and the Congress of the United States
27 to honor the contributions of our Filipino-American veterans and
28 direct the federal government to immediately pay them the
29 veteran's benefits as promised as the first order of business when
30 the 190th Congress convenes in January 2005; and be it further

31 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit
32 copies of this resolution to the President of the United States, to
33 the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and to
34 each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress
35 of the United States.

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