

## **Philippine Embassy**

### **News Release**

**14 February 2009**

Statement of President Gloria M. Arroyo on the Approval by the U.S. Congress of Benefits for Filipino World War II Veterans, 14 February 2009

Equity for the Philippine veterans of World War II is at hand.

Yesterday, the House of Representatives and the Senate of the United States passed a bill that contains provisions that recognize their service and grant benefits to them.

Despite America's economic challenges, the U.S. Congress voted to correct a historic wrong and incorporate the lump-sum benefit for our veterans in Section 1002, Title X of the stimulus bill known as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

It is fitting that they honored the past as they build for the future.

The passage of the bill in Congress culminates the many years of struggle that we have waged.

When Franklin Delano Roosevelt called on Filipinos to serve in the U.S. Armed Forces after Pearl Harbor, our fathers of that greatest generation heeded the call.

The President of the United States was our Commander-in-Chief. Filipinos served as U.S. soldiers, fought side by side with Americans, and died under the banner of the Stars and Stripes.

They suffered through some of the most brutal acts of World War II, including the notorious Bataan Death March. Yet they prevailed. Together, we vanquished the enemy and brought freedom and human dignity back to Asia and the world.

Today, that history is about to be completed. History is being set on its proper course and justice is being done to the greatest generation.

We greatly appreciate the leadership of Sen. Daniel K. Inouye for making

this moment possible. His crucial role will always be honored and remembered.

Our special thanks also goes to Sen. Daniel Akaka and Rep. Bob Filner who have consistently worked so hard to promote the interests of Filipino veterans of World War II with their colleagues in the U.S. Congress.

We thank Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Sen. Harry Reid, Sen. Richard Lugar, former Senator Ted Stevens, Rep. Darrell Issa and Rep. Mike Honda and every single one of the other U.S. legislators who kept the faith.

We also owe the success of our efforts to both Filipino and American supporters who have patiently and tirelessly lobbied the U.S. Congress for years.

We look forward to the signing of the stimulus bill by President Barack Obama who has also been a strong supporter of the Filipino Veterans Bill.

And to our veterans, thank you for your love of country, for defending our nation, for your sacrifice and for inspiring all of us to carry on the fight for justice.