

## 2003 SESSION

ENROLLED

### HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 759

*Designating April 9, in 2003 and in each succeeding year, as Bataan Day of Valor in Virginia.*

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 17, 2003

Agreed to by the Senate, February 13, 2003

WHEREAS, on July 26, 1941, the President of the United States called into military service 140,000 Filipino soldiers to serve under the command of American officers and defend the United States Territory of the Philippines; and

WHEREAS, American and Filipino forces under the command of General Douglas MacArthur fought valiantly against an overwhelming Japanese invasion force, delaying the invaders' timetable by four months and allowing United States forces to regain strength following Pearl Harbor; and

WHEREAS, following the Battles of Bataan and Corregidor, American and Filipino forces surrendered on April 9 and May 6, 1942; and

WHEREAS, American and Filipino soldiers subsequently suffered horrible casualties in the infamous Bataan Death March, in the prisoner of war camps, and in the liberation campaign, in which 10,000 United States soldiers and 250,000 Filipino soldiers and civilians died; and

WHEREAS, on February 18, 1946, the United States Congress passed the Recission Act, which withdrew from Filipino World War II soldiers their status as United States veterans and their eligibility for veterans' benefits, which were promised them by the President of the United States and General Douglas MacArthur; and

WHEREAS, in 1990, Congress passed legislation that allowed Filipino World War II veterans who proved their honorable military service to become naturalized United States citizens; and

WHEREAS, despite this legislation, the majority of the 12,000 surviving Filipino World War II veterans who are United States citizens live in poverty, receive minimal benefits, and die at a rate 57 percent higher than their American comrades; and

WHEREAS, the majority of Filipino World War II veterans are denied eligibility for Veterans Administration medical care and disability pensions that are provided to United States veterans; and

WHEREAS, Congressmen Benjamin Gilman and Bob Filner sponsored the Filipino Veterans Equity Act (H.R. 491, 2001) and the Health Care for Filipino World War II Veterans Act (H.R. 4904, 2002), respectively, and Senator Daniel Inouye has introduced the Filipino Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2003 (S. 68, 2003) to restore full official recognition to surviving Filipino World War II veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly designate April 9, in 2003 and in each succeeding year, as the Bataan Day of Valor in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit a copy of this resolution to the National Federation of Filipino American Associations, Virginia Chapter and Hampton Roads Chapter, so that members of the Associations, may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates post the designation of this day on the General Assembly's website.

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