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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 360

Offered January 8, 2003

Prefiled January 8, 2003

Designating April 9, 2002, as the Bataan Day of Valor and supporting legislation to assist Filipino veterans of World War II.

Patron—Wagner

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, on July 26, 1941, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt called into military service 140,000 Filipino soldiers to serve under the command of American officers and defend the U.S. 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 U.S. 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 U.S. soldiers and 250,000 Filipino soldiers and civilians died; and

WHEREAS, on February 18, 1946, the U.S. Congress passed the Recission Act, which withdrew from Filipino World War II soldiers their status as U.S. veterans and their eligibility for veterans' benefits, which were promised them by President Harry Truman 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 U.S. 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 U.S. veterans; and

WHEREAS, Congressmen Benjamin Gilman and Bob Filner have sponsored the Filipino Veterans Equity Act (H.R. 491), and Senator Daniel Inouye has introduced the Filipino Veterans Benefits Improvement Act (S. 1042) to restore full official recognition to surviving Filipino World War II veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby designate April 9, 2002, the 60th anniversary of the fall of Bataan, as the Bataan Day of Valor; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the General Assembly urge the Congress of the United States to assist Filipino World War II veterans by acting promptly and favorably on H.R. 491 and S. 1042; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the members of the Virginia congressional delegation so that they may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly.

INTRODUCED

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