

1998 SESSION

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 222

Offered January 26, 1998

Memorializing Congress to approve the Filipino Veterans Equity Bill.

Patrons—Wagner, Albo, Croshaw, Drake, Hamilton, McDonnell, Purkey, Tata and Wardrup; Senator: Forbes

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, on July 26, 1941, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt drafted 140,000 Filipino soldiers into military service; and

WHEREAS, these Filipino soldiers were then considered U.S. nationals and were to defend the American flag in the Philippines, under the command of General Douglas MacArthur; and

WHEREAS, during World War II, the Filipino soldiers fought with great courage and sacrifice beside their American comrades in the battles for Bataan and Corregidor, in the Death March following surrender, in the guerrilla encounters, and in the ensuing campaign for the liberation of the Philippines; and

WHEREAS, on February 8, 1946, the U.S. Congress passed the Rescission Act, which singled out and excluded Filipino World War II soldiers from full U.S. veterans benefits, which had been promised to them by General Douglas MacArthur and President Harry Truman; and

WHEREAS, in 1990, the U.S. Congress passed legislation that allowed Filipino World War II veterans who could prove their military service to become naturalized U.S. citizens; and

WHEREAS, the majority of the 28,000 surviving Filipino World War II veterans who are now U.S. citizens live in poverty, receive minimum Social Security and Medicaid benefits, and live without the honor accorded American veterans; and

WHEREAS, the majority of these Filipino veterans are currently being denied Veterans Administration medical care, burial benefits, and total disability pensions by the U.S. Veterans Affairs Department—benefits that are available to their American World War II comrades; and

WHEREAS, a bill before the Congress, known as the Filipino Veterans Equity Bill (H.R. 836, S. 623) would rectify the gross inequities visited upon Filipino World War II veterans for more than 50 years; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby urge the Congress to approve the Filipino Veterans Equity Bill (H.R. 836, S. 623) to afford Filipino World War II veterans the benefits they so clearly have earned; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit copies of this resolution to the President of the United States, the Secretary of the United States Veterans Affairs Department, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the President of the United States Senate, and the members of the Virginia Congressional delegation so that they may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia.

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