

State Government

HJM 4002

Brief Description: Asking that the federal government provide veterans' benefits owed to Filipino veterans.

Sponsors: Representatives Veloria, Campbell, Cody, Pennington, Cox, Kessler, Woods, Kenney, Romero, Bush, Keiser, Schoesler, Armstrong, Clements, Delvin, Santos, McIntire, O'Brien, D. Schmidt, Tokuda, Haigh, Edwards, Darneille, Schual-Berke and Talcott.

Brief Summary of Bill

- *Requests that Congress and the President amend the 1946 Rescission Act to restore Filipino veterans full United States veteran status with military benefits.*

Hearing Date: 2/9/01

Staff: Catherine Blinn (786-7114).

Background:

The United States took control of the Philippines from Spain in 1898, and Congress established a territorial government there four years later. By 1916, Congress had indicated its intention to eventually grant the islands their independence. In 1934, Congress passed the Philippine Independence Act, which, pending full independence, authorized the Philippines to adopt a constitution and organize a government. The Philippines did so in 1935 and established the Philippine Army.

The Independence Act contained a provision crucial to the status of approximately 200,000 to 300,000 World War II veterans of the Philippine Army. The Independence Act authorized the United States to maintain armed forces in the Philippines and, upon order of the President, to call all military forces organized by the Philippine government into the service of the United States armed forces. On July 26, 1941, just prior to the beginning of World War II, President Roosevelt exercised this authority by calling the Philippine military forces into the service of American armed forces. After the outbreak of war,

Congress authorized \$269 million to mobilize, train, equip, and pay the Philippine Army, and gave General MacArthur authority to allocate expenditures for these purposes.

Congress passed the First Supplemental Surplus Appropriation Rescission Act on February 18, 1946, shortly after the conclusion of the war but before the Philippines became an independent state on July 4, 1946. The Rescission Act provided an appropriation of \$200 million for the benefit of the postwar Philippine Army, but ordered that service by the Philippine military organizations "shall not be deemed to have been active military, naval, or air service" for purposes of most veterans benefit programs. As a result, most Philippine veterans of World War II are statutorily ineligible for all United States veterans benefits, except for certain service-connected disability and death benefits.

Summary of Bill:

The Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Washington petition the President and Congress of the United States to amend the Rescission Act of 1946 to restore Filipino veterans full United States veteran status with military benefits.

Rulemaking Authority: *No express authority.*

Appropriation: *None.*

Fiscal Note: *Not Requested.*

Effective Date: *Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.*