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House of Representatives

AT LONG LAST: HEALTH CARE FOR FILIPINO WORLD WAR II VETERANS!

HON. BOB FILNER
OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MR. FILNER: Mr. Speaker, and colleagues, I rise today to urge support for H.R. 2357, legislation which includes a provision from my bill, H.R. 664, that would authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide health care to Filipino World War II veterans who legally reside in the United States.

As my colleagues know, I have been working to restore these benefits for many years. By passing this legislation for Filipino World War II veterans, we are providing a giant step forward in our quest to correct the injustice that was inflicted upon them by the 1946 Congress, shortly after World War II ended.

Over 50 years ago, Filipino soldiers were drafted into service by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. They fought side-by-side with soldiers from the United States mainland, exhibiting great courage at the epic battles of Bataan and Corrigidor. Their

participation was critical to the successful outcome of the war in the Far East. It was quite a shock when Congress deprived many of the benefits that they were expecting.

Because these veterans are in their 70s and 80s, their most urgent need is for health care. So I sincerely appreciate the actions of Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Chris Smith and Ranking Member Lane Evans, and Chairman Bob Simmons and Ranking Member Ciro Rodriguez of the VA Health Subcommittee, as well as of VA Secretary Anthony Principi, to restore VA health care benefits to them.

This bill is also about restoring dignity and honor to these proud veterans. Over fifty years of injustice burns in the hearts of the Filipino World War II veterans and in the hearts of their sons and daughters. This bill says that we will begin to remedy this historical injustice. We will make good on the promise of America!