



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 13-1993, **Version:** 2

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

SUPPORT FOR THE CONGRESSIONAL BENEFITS FAIRNESS FOR FILIPINO VETERANS ACT

WHEREAS, Filipino Americans have served in the U.S. Armed Forces with distinction and honor in all wars and military engagements since World War II and as such are deserving of full veterans benefits; and

WHEREAS, in 1946, Congress passed the Rescission Act which stripped Filipino veterans of full veterans benefits, granting them only half instead, despite their U.S. citizenship and legal permanent residency; and

WHEREAS, In 2001, Congress passed a law granting full veteran benefits to U.S. citizen or U.S. legal permanent resident Filipino veterans who served in World War II, provided they resided in the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, Filipino veterans who served during World War II include units of the Philippine Commonwealth Army under U.S. command, the New Philippine Scouts, and recognized guerrilla forces; and

WHEREAS, The 2001 Congressional authorization did not stipulate a specific residency requirement yet the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) instituted one which resulted in a determination to cut benefits by half if it was not met; and

WHEREAS, Filipino veterans are the only group of veterans subject to the VA residency requirements despite their valiant service to our country, receiving only half their well-earned benefits if they reside outside the U.S. for more than 60 consecutive days or more than 183 days in a calendar year; and

WHEREAS, The benefits which are affected include service-connected disability care, dependency and indemnity compensation, education benefits for their children, survivor benefits, and burial allowance; and

WHEREAS, Filipino veterans must submit documentation of any travel outside the country, including copies of their passport visas and reentry permits with entrance and exit date stamps, to have their benefits reinstated to which they are entitled yet often their case determination is pending in a backlog of cases in the Manila Office of the VA; and

WHEREAS, U.S. citizen and legal permanent resident veterans should not be held to a stricter residency standard in order to receive their benefits when non-veteran legal permanent residents are able to travel outside of the country for a year before it negatively affects their immigration status; and

WHEREAS, The Benefits Fairness for Filipino Veterans Act, introduced by U.S. Senator Dick Durbin as S. 1559 and by U.S. Representatives Luís Gutiérrez, Tammy Duckworth, William Enyart and Cheri Bustos as H.R. 3207, would do away with the restrictive VA residency requirements and instead institute a residency requirement aligned with that for permanent legal residents of one year, affording them equal treatment with the rest of the U.S. population.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Cook County Board of Commissioners joins with the Veterans Assistance Commission of Cook County in encouraging the full Illinois Congressional Delegation, as well as all members of the U.S. Congress, to support H.R. 3207 and S. 1559 to afford Filipino veterans equal treatment and full benefits in honor for their service and sacrifice; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, this text be spread upon the proceedings of this Honorable Body and that a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to each member of the Illinois Congressional Delegation.