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**Bipartisan and Bicameral Group Introduce Legislation to Award Congressional Gold Medal to WWII Filipino Veterans***Bill will recognize dedicated service of Filipino Veterans during World War II***WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Today, Senators Dean Heller (R-NV), Mazie K. Hirono (D-HI), Harry Reid (D-NV), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Brian Schatz (D-HI) as well as U.S. Representatives Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI), Joe Heck (R-NV), Juan Vargas (D-CA), Mark Takai (D-HI), Jackie Speier (D-CA), and Mike Thompson (D-CA) announced the introduction of legislation awarding the Congressional Gold Medal to Filipino Veterans of World War II. “Filipino and Filipino-American veterans made tremendous sacrifices during World War II and played a big part in our victory. As such, they should be awarded the Congressional Gold Medal,” said **Senator Dean Heller**. “Nevada is home to many Filipino veterans – some of whom I have had the pleasure of getting to know over the years. These heroes answered the call to duty without question, and I am proud this legislation will finally ensure they receive recognition from Congress and the nation for their valiant acts of military service.”“Filipino veterans fought bravely alongside American forces during World War II, and our recognition of their service and sacrifice is long overdue,” **said Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard**. “Our nation owes these individuals our deepest and sincere gratitude. I am pleased to join my colleagues in a bipartisan and bicameral effort to honor these veterans with the Congressional Gold Medal, a well-earned tribute for their service.”“The Filipino veterans of World War II have faced many challenges in their fight for compensation, family reunification, and verification of wartime service. Awarding the Congressional Gold Medal would go a long way toward making sure that their story is never forgotten,” **said Senator Mazie K. Hirono**. “I have been an advocate for Filipino veterans since I first learned their stories— fighting to reunify Filipino veterans with their families and to ensure that every Filipino veteran who sacrificed for us during World War II can receive the benefits they have earned. Time is running out for the diminishing number of Filipino World War II veterans and I call on my colleagues in the Senate award these brave soldiers the Congressional Gold Medal, giving them the honor and recognition they earned.”“I am pleased to be a lead sponsor of this bipartisan legislation recognizing the courage of hundreds of thousands of Filipino Veterans who fought in World War II,” said **Senator Harry Reid**. “Throughout my career I have been a fierce advocate for the Filipino community, which is why I made sure the Recovery Act of 2009 created a compensation fund for Filipino veterans who fought in World War II but have been denied the benefits they deserve. I have pushed for legislation to right the wrongs of the past by easing the process for Filipino veterans and their families to reunite.  We can never fully repay the debt we owe the Filipino World War II veterans who bravely served and sacrificed alongside American forces. However, with this Congressional Gold Medal, Congress can finally take a long overdue step in correcting past wrongs. This medal will stand as a testament to the sacrifice of these heroes and to the patriotism of their community.”"Filipino soldiers helped ensure Allied victory in the Pacific," **Congressman Joe Heck said**. "Bestowing this honor upon them is past due, but I am pleased to join in this bipartisan, bicameral effort to award these friends of the United States the Congressional Gold Medal. We must also acknowledge all of those who have not had their service formally recognized by the United States. While this Gold Medal is an important and necessary step, I will continue the fight to have the Denied Filipino Veterans recognized."“Virginia is lucky to have such a strong Filipino-American community, largely as a result of the community’s military ties in the Hampton Roads area, home of the largest Naval base in the world,” **said Senator Tim Kaine**. “This is a cause that is just. It’s long past time Filipino veterans of World War II receive the recognition they deserve and I’m proud to be a part of this effort to grant them the Congressional Gold Medal.”“More than 200,000 Filipinos who fought alongside American soldiers during World War II have still not been properly recognized for their courageous service,” **said Senator Brian Schatz**. “Today, far too many have not received the basic veterans’ rights they earned.  While we continue to work in Congress to give Filipino veterans and their families the benefits they deserve, awarding them with the Congressional Gold Medal will honor them for their heroic service and patriotism.”“I’m excited to be a part of the movement to obtain national recognition for Filipino and Filipino-American Veterans,” said **Congressman Juan Vargas**. “It is tremendously important that we honor the people who fought so valiantly against the crushing expansionism of Imperial Japan—some of whom made the ultimate sacrifice. Introducing this bill is the first step toward officially recognizing these veterans with our nation’s highest expression of appreciation.”“I am pleased to see the Filipino veterans of World War II finally receive the recognition they deserve. Approximately two hundred and fifty thousand Filipino soldiers fought alongside U.S. forces, it is long overdue that they be honored for their service. It is the moral obligation of the United States to provide recognition to the Philippine Army veterans who served alongside our troops in the Pacific.  The awarding of the Congressional Gold Medal will hopefully begin the process of repaying our debt to the brave soldiers of the Philippines,” said **Congressman Mark Takai.** This effort is part of a movement to obtain national recognition for Filipino and Filipino-American World War II soldiers across the United States and Philippines for their instrumental wartime service to the United States and strategic role in the Allied victory over the Empire of Japan.The legislation acknowledges over 260,000 Filipino and Filipino-American soldiers who responded to President Roosevelt’s call-to-duty and fought under the American flag against the Imperial Forces of Japan during World War II.###http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/vendor/_skins/heller/images/newsletter/icon_fb.png http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/vendor/_skins/heller/images/newsletter/icon_tw.png http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/vendor/_skins/heller/images/newsletter/icon_yt.png |