

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 15

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVES LEDOUX, Thomas, Coghill, Lynn, Foster, Roses, Harris, Johnson, Johansen, Ramras, Fairclough, Dahlstrom, Kerttula, Kawasaki, Buch, Guttenberg, Nelson, Wilson, Gruenberg, Doll, Holmes

Introduced: 3/29/07

Referred: House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs, State Affairs

A RESOLUTION

1 **Supporting the passage of a Filipino Veterans Equity Act and a Filipino Veterans**
2 **Family Reunification Act.**

3 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

4 **WHEREAS**, during World War II, President Franklin Roosevelt conscripted the
5 military forces of the Philippines into service under the command of American officers in the
6 United States armed forces in the Far East to fight against the Japanese invasion; and

7 **WHEREAS** Filipino soldiers fought with American soldiers in the bloodiest battles of
8 World War II, including the battle at Corregidor; and

9 **WHEREAS** thousands of Filipino prisoners of war died during the 65-mile Bataan
10 Death March, and those who survived were imprisoned under inhuman conditions; and

11 **WHEREAS** Filipino World War II veterans were promised military benefits, but,
12 after World War II, the United States Congress passed the Supplemental Surplus
13 Appropriation Rescission Act of 1946, which considered service of the Filipino World War II
14 veterans not to be active service, and which had the effect of denying Filipino World War II
15 veterans the rights, privileges, and benefits that American World War II veterans received;
16 and

1 **WHEREAS** there are approximately 60,000 remaining Filipino World War II
2 veterans currently residing in the United States and the Philippines out of the 120,000 Filipino
3 soldiers who served under United States command during World War II; and

4 **WHEREAS** the United States Department of Veterans Affairs reports that the Filipino
5 World War II veteran population is expected to decrease to approximately 20,000 by 2010;
6 and

7 **WHEREAS** there are approximately 5,000 Filipino World War II veterans living in
8 poverty in the United States and 15,000 living in poverty in the Philippines; and

9 **WHEREAS**, in 2000, the surviving Filipino World War II veterans were provided
10 with burial benefits in United States national cemeteries, and, in 2003, they were provided
11 long overdue medical and nursing home care from the United States Department of Veterans
12 Affairs; and

13 **WHEREAS** the United States Department of Veterans Affairs does not provide
14 nonservice disability pension benefits to low-income Filipino World War II veterans, but
15 these benefits are available to 200,000 of their American comrades; and

16 **WHEREAS** Representative Bob Filner has sponsored H.R. 760, and Senator Daniel
17 K. Inouye has sponsored S. 57, which are both called the Filipino Veterans Equity Act of
18 2007, to remedy the inequity experienced by Filipino World War II veterans and to provide
19 that certain service in the organized military forces of the Philippines and the Philippine
20 Scouts will be considered active service in order to qualify for benefits under programs
21 administered by the United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs; and

22 **WHEREAS** Senator Daniel K. Akaka has sponsored S. 671, and Representative
23 Mazie K. Hirono has sponsored H.R. 1287, which are both called the Filipino Veterans
24 Family Reunification Act, to provide immediate relief to the children of Filipino World War
25 II veterans whose immigration petitions have been pending for more than a decade;

26 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests that the
27 United States Congress pass

28 (1) a Filipino Veterans Equity Act of 2007 proposed by H.R. 760 or S. 57 in
29 order to allow Filipino World War II veterans to receive the United States veterans' benefits to
30 which they are entitled under the programs administered by the United States Secretary of
31 Veterans Affairs; and

1 (2) a Filipino Veterans Family Reunification Act proposed by S. 671 or H.R.
2 1287 to exempt children of certain Filipino World War II veterans from the numerical
3 limitations on immigrant visas.

4 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to and to the Honorable Ted Stevens and the
5 Honorable Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S.
6 Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.