

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 1420, HD1, RELATING TO FILIPINO VETERANS  
BURIAL ASSISTANCE

PRESENTATION TO THE  
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

BY

MR. RONALD P. HAN  
DIRECTOR OF STATE OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES

March 30, 2017  
1:40 p.m.

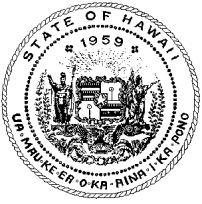
Good afternoon Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Dela Cruz, and members of the Committee:

I'm Ron Han, Director of the State Office of Veterans Services (OVS). I appreciate this opportunity to provide written testimony **in support** of the concepts in House Bill 1420, HD1.

This measure appropriates funds for the burial grants for qualifying Filipino-American veterans to provide funeral and burial services and transportation of their remains to the Philippines.

The OVS supports the concepts and intent expressed in this measure as long as its implementation does not impact or replace the priorities set forth in the Executive Budget.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony on behalf of Hawaii's Veterans and their families.



# HAWAI‘I CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 411 HONOLULU, HI 96813 · PHONE: 586-8636 FAX: 586-8655 TDD: 568-8692

March 30, 2017  
Rm. 211, 1:40 p.m.

To: The Honorable Jill Tokuda, Chair  
and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

From: Linda Hamilton Krieger, Chair  
and Commissioners of the Hawai‘i Civil Rights Commission

Re: H.B. No. 1420, H.D. 1

The Hawai‘i Civil Rights Commission (HCRC) has enforcement jurisdiction over Hawai‘i’s laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and access to state and state funded services. The HCRC carries out the Hawai‘i constitutional mandate that no person shall be discriminated against in the exercise of their civil rights. Art. I, Sec. 5.

H.B. No. 1420 H.D.1 appropriates funds to provide for burial grants for Filipino-American veterans of World War II, to cover funeral and burial costs, including the cost of returning their remains to the Philippines for burial.

The HCRC strongly supports H.B. No. 1420 H.D. 1. This appropriation is one small way that Hawai‘i can join the United States in efforts to pay a debt of gratitude and justice, attempting to remedy a history of injustice, broken promises, and discriminatory treatment suffered by a now dwindling generation of heroic Filipino Veterans who served under US command, were promised citizenship and veteran’s benefits, and to this day continue to suffer the consequences of broken promises and belated remedies.

During WWII, members of the Philippine Armed Forces served in the US Armed Forces in the war against Japan. They were among a broader class of non-citizens serving in the US Armed Forces who were offered naturalization as part of the 1942 enactment of the Second War Powers Act, which waived a number of usual naturalization requirements, including residence in the United States and literacy and education testing in English. The cut-off date for application was set at December 31, 1946.

The US authorized Vice Consul George H. Ennis in August 1945 to naturalize Filipino servicemen pursuant to the law. However, the applicability of the law to Filipino servicemen was questioned, and then Attorney General Tom Clark revoked Ennis' authority to naturalize in September 26, 1945. Eligible Filipino servicemen were then only able to naturalize from August through December, 1946. As a result, only about 4,000 out of more than 250,000 Filipino servicemen applied for and were granted naturalization during those few short months.

With the enactment of the Rescission Act in 1946, these Filipino Veterans who served under US Command were singled out and denied full and equal veterans status and benefits given to others.

This injustice spawned a host of litigated cases on behalf of Filipino Veterans, from the 1960s through the 1980s. Then, in 1990 Congress incorporated provisions for special naturalization for Filipino Veterans in the 1990 Immigration Act, followed by piecemeal legislation providing for limited benefits for Filipino Veterans, but not equity and full veterans benefits.

Many of those Filipino Veterans who naturalized since 1990 have waited for years for relative visas to become available, so their petitions to be reunited with their adult children in the United States can be approved and visas issued. Fewer and fewer remain with us, waiting, as those who fought under US command in WWII are now aged well into their 90s. The HCRC strongly supports H.B. No. 1420 H.D. 1, which provides for those who wish to return to the Philippines to be buried and reunited with their families in death, too late to be reunited in life.

# HB1420, HD1

## RELATING TO FILIPINO VETERANS BURIAL ASSISTANCE

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Submitted by: Jenina Salvador  
Contact Information: [jeninals@hawaii.edu](mailto:jeninals@hawaii.edu)  
Submitted on: March 28, 2017  
Day, Date and Time of Hearing: Thursday, March 30, 2017, 1:40 pm  
Submitted to: Committee on Ways and Means  
**RE: Testimony in support of HB1420**

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Aloha Chair Jill N. Tokuda and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jenina Salvador and I am speaking as a private citizen. I appreciate the opportunity to submit this testimony in strong support for H.B. 1420, HD1, which would provide financial assistance to Filipino American veterans of World War II (WWII) for the cost of transporting remains to the Philippines.

This bill would appropriate \$75,000 in each year of fiscal biennium 2017-2019 for burial grants. With this appropriation of funds and consideration of overseas transportation cost estimated between USD 5,000 and USD 12,000, approximately 6-15 qualified veterans would be honored each year for the next two years.

This measure may never be enough to recognize the invaluable service and sacrifice of WWII Filipino-American veterans for our nation's freedom; nevertheless, the passage of this bill would allow for a more dignified burial that they very much deserved.

Again, thank you for this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Jenina Salvador

**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 28, 2017 2:16 PM  
**To:** WAM Testimony  
**Cc:** mendezj@hawaii.edu  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for HB1420 on Mar 30, 2017 13:40PM\*

**HB1420**

Submitted on: 3/28/2017

Testimony for WAM on Mar 30, 2017 13:40PM in Conference Room 211

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Javier Mendez-Alvarez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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