



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

July 10, 2017

GOV. MSG. NO. 1206

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi,
President
and Members of the Senate
Twenty-Ninth State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 409
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

The Honorable Scott K. Saiki,
Speaker and Members of the
House of Representatives
Twenty-Ninth State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 431
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear President Kouchi, Speaker Saiki, and Members of the Legislature:

This is to inform you that on July 10, 2017, the following bill was signed into law:

HB1420 HD1 SD1 CD1

RELATING TO FILIPINO VETERANS BURIAL
ASSISTANCE
ACT 105 (17)

Sincerely,

DAVID Y. IGE
Governor, State of Hawai'i

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO FILIPINO VETERANS BURIAL ASSISTANCE.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. During World War II, the Philippines was a
2 commonwealth of the United States. Nearly one hundred thousand
3 soldiers of the Philippine Commonwealth Army fought alongside
4 United States and Allied forces for four long years to defend
5 and reclaim the Philippine islands from foreign aggression.
6 Valiant Filipino soldiers fought, suffered, and died in some of
7 the bloodiest battles of World War II, defending beleaguered
8 Bataan and Corregidor, and thousands of Filipino prisoners of
9 war endured the infamous Bataan Death March and years of
10 captivity.

11 The sacrifices of Filipino soldiers played a vital role in
12 the Allied victory in the Pacific as their numerous guerrilla
13 actions provided United States forces with time to build and
14 prepare for the Allied counterattack. Filipino soldiers fought
15 side-by-side with United States forces to secure their island
16 nation as the strategic base from which the Allied forces
17 launched their final effort to bring an end to World War II.



1 Although Filipino soldiers exhibited tremendous courage and
2 risked their lives to win the war in the Pacific, many of these
3 soldiers were denied full veterans benefits, including burial
4 benefits, which had been promised to them by the United States.

5 While Filipino soldiers meeting specific requirements were
6 eventually provided with burial benefits at national and state
7 veterans cemeteries at no cost, similar to other veterans of the
8 United States Armed Forces, the wish of some Filipino soldiers
9 who were living in Hawaii was that their remains be returned to
10 their homeland. However, this benefit of returning the remains
11 of Filipino soldiers to their homeland for burial was not
12 provided to them.

13 Many Filipino veterans have unsuccessfully petitioned for
14 decades to have their relatives granted residence in Hawaii.
15 These veterans are elderly and, with each passing year, the
16 veterans are dying in Hawaii without the comfort of family
17 members at their side. Furthermore, the cost of transporting
18 their remains for burial in the Philippines increases as time
19 passes. Accordingly, the legislature provided for burial grants
20 to be given to qualifying Filipino veterans to honor their final



1 wishes and assist with the return of their remains to their
2 homeland for burial.

3 The Veterans Administration currently pays the full cost of
4 burial benefits for World War II veterans; however, federal law
5 fails to address the costs of transporting the remains of
6 Filipino veterans to, and burial services in, the Philippines.
7 House Concurrent Resolution No. 23, which was adopted by the
8 legislature in 2016, requested Congress to amend the federal law
9 to cover the costs of transporting the remains of eligible
10 Filipino-American veterans of World War II to the Philippines
11 and for burial services in the Philippines. However, as of this
12 date, Congress has not taken any action in this regard.
13 Although burial grants for Filipino veterans are statutorily
14 established under chapter 363, Hawaii Revised Statutes, the
15 office of veterans services has acknowledged that funding for
16 the provision of these grants has been non-existent. As the
17 number of surviving World War II Filipino veterans continues to
18 dwindle, it is important that their sacrifices be recognized and
19 their final wishes of being buried in their homeland be granted
20 as many of these veterans only have family who reside in the
21 Philippines.



1 The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds to the
2 office of veterans services for the provision of burial grants
3 for Filipino-American veterans of World War II; provided that:

- 4 (1) Federal funds remain unavailable;
- 5 (2) There remain eligible Filipino-American veterans
6 living in the State; and
- 7 (3) The funds are matched on a one-to-one basis with
8 private funds.

9 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
10 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$50,000 or so much
11 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2017-2018 for burial
12 grants for Filipino-American veterans of World War II, which
13 cover funeral and burial costs, including the cost of returning
14 their remains to the Philippines for burial; provided that:

- 15 (1) Federal funding remains unavailable for this purpose;
- 16 (2) There remain eligible Filipino-American veterans
17 living in the State; and
- 18 (3) The appropriation shall be matched on a one-to-one
19 basis from private sources.

20 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the office of
21 veterans services for the purposes of this Act.



1 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2017.

APPROVED this 10 day of JUL , 2017



GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF HAWAII



HB No. 1420, HD 1, SD 1, CD 1

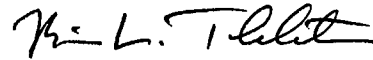
THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF HAWAII

Date: May 2, 2017
Honolulu, Hawaii

We hereby certify that the above-referenced Bill on this day passed Final Reading in the House of Representatives of the Twenty-Ninth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2017.



Joseph M. Souki
Speaker
House of Representatives





Brian L. Takeshita
Chief Clerk
House of Representatives

THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII

Date: May 2, 2017
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

We hereby certify that the foregoing Bill this day passed Final Reading in the
Senate of the Twenty-ninth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2017.


President of the Senate


Clerk of the Senate