

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC
OF THE PHILIPPINES
First Regular Session



Senate
Office of the Secretary

13 SEP -3 AIO :34

SENATE

Senate Bill No. 1466

RECEIVED BY: *Jei*

INTRODUCED BY SEN. JINGGOY EJERCITO ESTRADA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Constitution explicitly states the Government's policy to "provide immediate and adequate care, benefits and other forms of assistance to war veterans and veterans of military campaigns, their surviving spouses and orphans". This is to be done in order to uphold and secure the well-being of these unsung heroes who played significant yet unrecognized roles in our struggle for independence of our country.

Statutes and other measures have been issued and enacted to provide the mechanism that would help our very own war veterans achieve socio-economic security. The Philippine Veterans Affairs Office, the Veterans Memorial Medical Center and the Philippine Veterans Bank were established to provide for the various needs of these war veterans, their spouses, and/or their dependents. Republic Act No. 6948, as amended by RA 7696, was enacted to standardize and upgrade the benefits for military veterans and their dependents.

Although these war veterans have yet to see the full benefits of the implementation of such laws, they still have one aspiration they would like to pursue. It is the claims of Filipino veterans of World War II on the full restoration of their rights, privileges and benefits from the United States government. These benefits were scrapped with the passage of the US Recision Act of 1946 which did not recognize services in the organized military forces of the Philippine Commonwealth government as services to the US military or naval forces.

Hence this bill is being proposed. This measure seeks to establish and maintain an Office of Veterans Affairs in the Philippine Embassy in the United States of American government and other agencies and entities which can enhance the favorable consideration of the claims of Filipino war veterans.

Since most of these veterans are in their twilight years already, and are diminishing in number, the urgent approval of this measure is hereby earnestly sought.


JINGGOY EJERCITO ESTRADA
Senator

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
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Senate
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'13 SEP -3 A10 :34

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AN ACT

TO ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN THE OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS IN THE PHILIPPINE EMBASSY IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, PRESCRIBING ITS FUNCTIONS, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. Declaration of policy. - It is hereby declared the policy of the Government to pursue the claims of Filipino veterans of World War II and work for the full restoration of their rights, privileges and benefits from the United States government.

SEC. 2. Establishment of the Office of Veterans Affairs. - For the attainment of this goal, there is hereby created an Office of Veterans Affairs in the Philippine Embassy in the United States of America mandated with the task of making formal representations, consultations and negotiations or otherwise cause the conduct of sustained and effective lobbying with appropriate office of the legislative and executive branches of the United States government and other agencies and entities which can enhance the favorable consideration of the claims of Filipino veterans. The office shall be in existence for five (5) years from the date of approval of this Act or until the Filipino veterans shall have availed of their legitimate claims, time of which shall not exceed another five (5) years.

SEC. 3. Staffing. - The Office of Veterans Affairs shall have a staff consisting of a head appointed by the President of the Philippines, two (2) administrative assistants assigned by the Secretary of the Department of National Defense a special presidential representative who shall have a comparable diplomatic rank.

SEC. 4. Appropriations. - The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations for the operational requirements of the Veterans Affairs Office in Washington D.C. authorized under the budget of the Department of Foreign Affairs. Thereafter, the amount necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 5. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved,