

and contributions of this brave group. I urge passage of the bill.

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I, too, have no further speakers.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HUIZENGA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2992.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### FILIPINO VETERANS OF WORLD WAR II CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL ACT OF 2015

Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 1555) to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the Filipino veterans of World War II, in recognition of the dedicated service of the veterans during World War II.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 1555

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Filipino Veterans of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2015”.

#### SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) The First Philippine Republic was founded as a result of the Spanish-American War in which Filipino revolutionaries and the United States Armed Forces fought to overthrow Spanish colonial rule. On June 12, 1898, Filipinos declared the Philippines to be an independent and sovereign nation. The Treaty of Paris negotiated between the United States and Spain ignored this declaration of independence, and the United States paid Spain \$20,000,000 to cede control of the Philippines to the United States. Filipino nationalists who sought independence rather than a change in colonial rulers clashed with forces of the United States in the Islands. The Philippine-American War, which officially lasted for 3 years from 1899 to 1902, led to the establishment of the United States civil government in the Philippines.

(2) In 1901, units of Filipino soldiers who fought for the United States against the nationalist insurrection were formally incorporated into the United States Army as the Philippine Scouts.

(3) In 1934, the Philippine Independence Act (Public Law 73-127; 48 Stat. 456) established a timetable for ending colonial rule of the United States. Between 1934 and Philippine independence in 1946, the United States retained sovereignty over Philippine foreign policy and reserved the right to call Filipinos into the service of the United States Armed Forces.

(4) On December 21 1935, President of the Philippine Commonwealth, Manuel Quezon,

signed the National Defense Act, passed by the Philippine Assembly. General Douglas MacArthur set upon the task of creating an independent army in the Philippines, consisting of a small regular force, the Philippine Constabulary, a police force created during the colonial period of the United States, and reservists. By July 1941, the Philippine army had 130,000 reservists and 6,000 officers.

(5) On July 26, 1941, as tensions with Japan rose in the Pacific, President Franklin D. Roosevelt used his authority vested in the Constitution of the United States and the Philippine Independence Act to “call into service of the United States . . . all of the organized military forces of the Government of the Philippines.” On July 27th, 1941, in accordance with a War Department directive received a day earlier, the United States Forces in the Far East (USAFEF) was established, and Manila was designated as the command headquarters. Commander of the USAFFE, General Douglas MacArthur, planned to absorb the entire Philippine army into the USAFFE in phases. The first phase, which began on September 1, 1941, included 25,000 men and 4,000 officers.

(6) Filipinos who served in the USAFFE included—

(A) the Philippine Scouts, who comprised half of the 22,532 soldiers in the Philippine Department, or United States Army garrison stationed in the Islands at the start of the war;

(B) the Philippine Commonwealth Army;

(C) the new Philippine Scouts, or Filipinos who volunteered to serve with the United States Army when the United States Armed Forces returned to the island;

(D) Filipino civilians who volunteered to serve in the United States Armed Forces in 1945 and 1946, and who became “attached” to various units of the United States Army; and

(E) the “Guerrilla Services” who had fought behind enemy lines throughout the war.

(7) Even after hostilities ceased, wartime service of the new Philippine Scouts continued as a matter of law until the end of 1946, and the force gradually disbanded until it was disestablished in 1950.

(8) On December 8th, 1941, not even 24 hours after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Japanese Imperial forces attacked bases of the United States Army in the Philippines.

(9) In the spring of 1942, the Japanese 14th Army overran the Bataan Peninsula, and, after a heroic but futile defense, more than 78,000 members of the United States Armed Forces were captured, specifically 66,000 Filipinos and 12,000 service members from the United States. The Japanese transferred the captured soldiers from Bataan to Camp O’Donnell, in what is now known as the infamous Bataan Death March. Forced to march the 70-mile distance in 1 week, without adequate food, water, or medicine, nearly 700 members of the United States Armed Forces and an estimated 6,000 to 10,000 Filipinos perished during the journey.

(10) After the fall of the Bataan Peninsula, the Japanese Army turned its sights on Corregidor. The estimated forces in defense of Corregidor totaled 13,000, and were comprised of members of the United States Armed Forces and Filipino troops. Of this number, 800 were killed, 1,000 were wounded, and 11,000 were captured and forced to march through the city of Manila, after which the captured troops were distributed to various POW camps. The rest of the captured troops escaped to organize or join an underground guerrilla army.

(11) Even before the fall of Corregidor, Philippine resistance, in the form of guerrilla armies, began to wage warfare on the

Japanese invaders. Guerrilla armies, from Northern Luzon to Mindanao—

(A) raided Japanese camps, stealing weapons and supplies;

(B) sabotaged and ambushed Japanese troops on the move; and

(C) with little weaponry, and severely outnumbered in numbers, began to extract victories.

(12) Japanese intelligence reports reveal that from the time the Japanese invaded until the return of the United States Armed Forces in the summer of 1944, an estimated 300,000 Filipinos continued to fight against Japanese forces. Filipino resistance against the Japanese was so strong that, in 1942, the Imperial Army formed the Morista Butai, a unit designated to suppress guerrillas.

(13) Because Philippine guerrillas worked to restore communication with United States forces in the Pacific, General MacArthur was able to use the guerrillas in advance of a conventional operation and provided the headquarters of General MacArthur with valuable information. Guerrillas captured and transmitted to the headquarters of General MacArthur Japanese naval plans for the Central Pacific, including defense plans for the Mariana Islands. Intelligence derived from guerrillas relating to aircraft, ship, and troop movements allowed for Allied forces to attack Japanese supply lines and guerrillas and even directed United States submarines where to land agents and cargo on the Philippine coast.

(14) On December 20, 1941, President Roosevelt signed the Selective Training and Service Amendments Act (Public Law 77-360; 55 Stat. 844) which, among other things, allowed Filipinos in the United States to enlist in the United States Armed Forces. In February 1942, President Roosevelt issued the Second War Powers Act (Public Law 77-507; 56 Stat. 176), promising a simplified naturalization process for Filipinos who served in the United States Armed Forces. Subsequently, 16,000 Filipinos in California alone decided to enlist.

(15) The mobilization of forces included the activation and assumption of command of the First Filipino Infantry Battalion on April 1, 1942, at Camp San Luis Obispo, California. Orders were issued to activate the First Filipino Infantry Regiment and Band at Salinas, California, effective July 13, 1942. The activation of the Second Filipino Infantry Regiment occurred at Fort Ord, California, on November 21, 1942. Nearly 9,000 Filipinos and Filipino Americans fought in the United States Army 1st and 2nd Filipino Infantry Regiments.

(16) Soldiers of the 1st and 2nd Infantry Regiments participated in the bloody combat and mop-up operations at New Guinea, Leyte, Samar, Luzon, and the Southern Philippines. In 1943, 800 men were selected from the 1st and 2nd Regiments and shipped to Australia to receive training in intelligence gathering, sabotage, and demolition. Reorganized as part of the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, this group was sent to the Philippines to coordinate with major guerrilla armies in the Islands. Members of the 1st Regiment were also attached to the United States 6th Army “Alamo Scouts”, a reconnaissance group that traveled 30 miles behind enemy lines to free Allied prisoners from the Cabanatuan death camp on January 30, 1945. In addition, in 1945, according to the 41st Counter Intelligence Unit of the United States Armed Forces, Philippine guerrillas provided “very important information and sketches of enemy positions and installations” for the liberation of the Santo Tomas prisoner of war camp, an event that made front page news across the United States.

(17) In March 1944, members of the 2nd Filipino Infantry Regiment were selected for

special assignments, including intelligence missions, and reorganized as the 2nd Filipino Infantry Battalion (Separate). The 2nd Filipino Infantry Battalion (Separate) contributed to mop-up operations as a civil affairs unit.

(18) Filipinos participated in the war out of national pride, as well as out of a commitment to the Allied forces struggle against fascism. 57,000 Filipinos in uniform died in the war effort. Estimates of civilian deaths range from 700,000 to upwards of 1,000,000, or between 4.38 to 6.25 percent of the prewar population of 16,000,000.

(19) Because Filipinos who served in the Commonwealth Army of the Philippines were originally considered a part of the Allied struggle, the military order issued by President Roosevelt on July 26, 1941, stated that Filipinos who served in the Commonwealth Army of the Philippines were entitled to full veterans benefits. The guarantee to pay back the service of Filipinos through veterans benefits was reversed by the Rescission Acts of 1946 (Public Laws 79-301 and 79-391; 60 Stat. 6 and 60 Stat. 221), which deemed that the wartime service of the Commonwealth Army of the Philippines and the new Philippine Scouts was not considered active and, therefore, did not qualify for benefits.

(20) The loyal and valiant Filipino Veterans of World War II fought, suffered, and, in many instances, died in the same manner and under the same commander as other members of the United States Armed Forces during World War II.

(21) The Filipino Veterans of World War II fought alongside, and as an integral part of, the United States Armed Forces. The Philippines remained a territory of the United States for the duration of the war and, accordingly, the United States maintained sovereignty over Philippine foreign relations, including Philippine laws enacted by the Philippine Government. Filipinos who fought in the Philippines were not only defending or fighting for the Philippines, but also defending, and ultimately liberating, sovereign territory held by the United States Government.

(22) The United States remains forever indebted to the bravery, valor, and dedication that the Filipino Veterans of World War II displayed. Their commitment and sacrifice demonstrates a highly uncommon and commendable sense of patriotism and honor.

### SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act—

(a) the term “Filipino Veterans of World War II” includes any individual who served—

(1) honorably at any time during the period beginning on July 26, 1941, and ending on December 31, 1946;

(2) in an active-duty status under the command of the United States Armed Forces in the Far East; and

(3)(A) within the Philippine Commonwealth Army, the Philippine Scouts, the Philippine Constabulary, Recognized Guerilla units, the New Philippine Scouts, the First Filipino Infantry Regiment, the Second Filipino Infantry Battalion (Separate), or the First Reconnaissance Battalion; or

(B) commanding or serving in a unit described in paragraph (3)(A) as a United States military officer or enlisted soldier; and

(b) the term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Treasury.

### SEC. 4. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

(a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall make appropriate arrangements for the award, on behalf of Congress, of a single gold medal of appropriate design to the Filipino Veterans of World War II in recognition of the dedicated service of the veterans during World War II.

(b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes of the award referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary shall strike the Gold Medal with suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Secretary.

(c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the gold medal in honor of the Filipino Veterans of World War II, the gold medal shall be given to the Smithsonian Institution, where it will be available for display as appropriate and made available for research.

(2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the Smithsonian Institution should make the gold medal received under paragraph (1) available for display elsewhere, particularly at other appropriate locations associated with the Filipino Veterans of World War II.

(d) DUPLICATE MEDALS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Under regulations that the Secretary may promulgate, the Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck under this Act, at a price sufficient to cover the costs of the medals, including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

(2) SALE OF DUPLICATE MEDALS.—The amounts received from the sale of duplicate medals under paragraph (1) shall be deposited in the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund.

### SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.

(a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—Medals struck under this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United States Code.

(b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HUIZENGA) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. FOSTER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this is a special one for me, personally. I rise today in support of S. 1555, the Filipino Veterans of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2015, introduced by Senator HIRONO.

□ 1700

This bill, which was passed in the Senate on July 13, has companion legislation here in the House, H.R. 2737, introduced by our colleague, Representative GABBARD, which has 312 House cosponsors.

The reason why it is a special one to me is I have spent significant time in the Philippines and have many close Filipino friends, and know the dedication of the Philippines collectively,

and those families who paid an ultimate sacrifice during World War II. I have actually visited our World War II cemetery in Manila, and have seen the headstones and gravestones of many Filipinos who were there fighting alongside of us as well. That is why it is a special opportunity for me, as chair of the subcommittee that has jurisdiction over this, to be involved.

So this bill authorizes the striking and awarding of a single Congressional Gold Medal of appropriate design to the Filipino Veterans of World War II in recognition of their heroic and dedicated service. Following the award, the medal will be given to the Smithsonian Institution, where it will be available for display as appropriate, or available for display elsewhere, particularly at other locations associated with the Filipino Veterans of World War II.

The Treasury Secretary is authorized to make and offer for sale bronze replicas of the medal at a price that will help defray the design and production costs of the actual medal.

Mr. Speaker, Japanese Imperial forces attacked the Philippines the day after bombing the U.S. base at Pearl Harbor almost exactly 75 years ago on December 7, 1941. At that point, the Philippines still were a United States colony, though the process that led to its independence in 1946 actually began in 1934.

Fortunately, the Philippines formed its own armed forces. Four months before the Pearl Harbor attack, President Roosevelt brought the 136,000 members of the force into a full state of readiness to defend the U.S. and its territories and colonies.

I will leave it to the House sponsor of the companion bill to describe the heroism of those soldiers and the sacrifices that they made in defense of the United States and their homeland; but suffice it to say that it was a difficult and costly defense that they waged.

I will note that our embassy sits right on the bay in Manila today and overlooks Corregidor and so many other places there in the Philippines that were witness to those battles, including my own uncle who, at the time, served in the Navy and helped deliver goods and services throughout the Pacific and into the Philippines as well.

Mr. Speaker, Congress has authorized Congressional Gold Medals in recognition of the heroic efforts of Japanese Americans, Native Americans, and Puerto Rican soldiers, among others, in defense of this country during World War II and in other conflicts. This recognition of Filipino veterans of World War II is long overdue, and I urge immediate passage of the bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION,  
Washington, DC, November 30, 2016.

Hon. JEB HENSARLING,  
Chairman, Committee on Financial Services,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I write to you regarding S. 1555. As you know, the bill was received in the House of Representatives on

July 17, 2016 and referred to the Committee on Financial Services and in addition to the Committee on House Administration. The bill seeks to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the Filipino veterans of World War II, in recognition of the dedicated service of the veterans during World War II. S. 1555 passed the Senate without amendment by unanimous consent on July 13, 2016.

I realize that discharging the Committee on House Administration from further consideration of S. 1555 will serve in the best interest of the House of Representatives and agree to do so. It is the understanding of the Committee on House Administration that forgoing action on S. 1555 will not prejudice the Committee with respect to appointment of conferees or any future jurisdictional claim. I request that this letter and any response be included in the Congressional Record.

Sincerely,

CANDICE S. MILLER,  
*Chairman.*

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES,  
Washington, DC, November 30, 2016.

Hon. CANDICE MILLER,  
*Chairman, Committee on House Administration,*  
*Washington, DC.*

DEAR CHAIRMAN MILLER: Thank you for your November 30th letter regarding S. 1555, the "Filipino Veterans of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2015."

I am most appreciative of your decision to forego action on S. 1555 so that it may move expeditiously to the House floor. I acknowledge that although you are waiving action on the bill, the Committee on House Administration is in no way waiving its jurisdictional interest in this or similar legislation. In addition, if a conference is necessary on this legislation, I will support any request that your committee be represented therein.

Finally, I shall be pleased to include your letter and this letter on S. 1555 in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the same.

Sincerely,

JEB HENSARLING,  
*Chairman.*

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in strong support of S. 1555, legislation to award a Congressional Gold Medal collectively to the Filipino Veterans of World War II in recognition of their service and sacrifice and their role in defeating the Imperial Japanese Army.

While we are taking up the Senate-passed version of the Filipino Veterans of World War II Congressional Medal Act today, I want to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the gentlewoman from Hawaii, Representative TULSI GABBARD, who has led the effort to move this same legislation across the finish line here in the House. Since introducing the legislation, Representative GABBARD has garnered the support of more than 300 House cosponsors, and I am proud to be among them.

In 1934, the United States began a 10-year period of bringing its colonial rule to an end. During that time, the U.S. retained control over Philippine foreign policy and maintained the right to call Filipinos into the service of the United States Armed Forces.

As tensions with Japan began to rise in 1941, President Franklin Roosevelt

invoked his authority to call all organized military forces of the Government of the Philippines into the service of the United States. Responding to his call to arms, more than 200,000 Filipinos fought on behalf of the U.S. as part of the United States Armed Forces in the Far East.

The force included the Philippine Scouts, the Philippine Commonwealth Army, the new Philippine Scouts, Filipino civilians who served on a voluntary basis, and the Guerrilla Services who fought behind enemy lines throughout the war.

Over the course of the war, an estimated 57,000 Filipinos in uniform perished, and many more Filipino civilian lives were lost. Despite this loyalty and tremendous sacrifice, and the U.S. commitment to provide Filipinos who served as part of the Allied struggle with full veterans benefits, this promise was shamefully withdrawn by the Rescission Act of 1946 at the close of the war.

While a number of benefits have since been made available to the Filipino veterans, we must continue to work to ensure that those who risked their lives to defend the United States and the free world are provided with the full benefits, honor, and respect that they deserve.

This legislation has the support of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Disabled American Veterans, the American Legion, the National Federation of Filipino American Associations, and many other distinguished organizations.

I urge Members to pass this legislation, which takes a modest but welcome step to recognize the contributions of Filipino veterans of World War II.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE), the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support here for the Filipino Veterans of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act, and I am one of the proud cosponsors, along with my colleagues here, of this act.

I have had an opportunity over the last couple of years to travel twice to the Philippines. One of them was right after the cyclone hit Tacloban, and we took a delegation there.

As you travel across the islands of the Philippines, it is a constant reminder of the enormity of the sacrifice as you see those battle sites, the enormity of the sacrifice made by this unsung group of heroes who fought so courageously for the defense of our country, during what is really one of the most perilous moments of American history, and their valor and their patriotism is deserving of this recognition from Congress.

I don't think many Americans understand how quickly the reaction across

the Philippines, in terms of Pearl Harbor, more than 250,000 Filipino soldiers responded to President Roosevelt's call to arms to fit under the American flag.

In addition to that, just in my State of California, we had 16,000 Filipino Americans that went forward and enlisted, where the U.S. Army then formed the 1st and 2nd Filipino American Infantry Regiments. That is where those regiments were organized.

On December 8, 1941—and this was not 24 hours after the bombing of Pearl Harbor—it was at that moment in time that the Japanese Imperial forces attacked the U.S. bases in the Philippines. Filipinos and Filipino Americans fought valiantly in the push to regain the Philippines from Imperial Japanese forces.

Mr. Speaker, 57,000 Filipinos in uniform died in the war effort. More than that, among the casualties of those who struggled against Japan, but 50,000 Filipinos in uniform, and they gave their lives in battles such as Bataan and Corregidor; and their sacrifice was absolutely instrumental in disrupting the enemy's advancement in the Pacific.

As President Harry Truman made clear: "They fought as American nationals under the American flag and under the direction of our military leaders. They fought with gallantry and courage under the most difficult conditions. . . ."

So I am honored to rise today in support of recognizing these great heroes. The contributions of the Filipino World War II veterans are a very important part of American military history, and their accomplishments deserve the recognition of the Congressional Gold Medal.

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Ms. GABBARD), the lead sponsor of the House version of this bill.

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege of representing the Second Congressional District in Hawaii, a State that has deep cultural roots and ties to the contributions that Filipino Americans have made to our Nation throughout history, from driving Hawaii's plantation-based economy in the early 20th Century, serving in our Armed Forces, to becoming leaders in every industry and sector in our State and across the country.

It is an honor to stand here today as a voice for the more than 200,000 Filipino and Filipino American soldiers that served our country during World War II. These loyal and courageous soldiers suffered, sacrificed, fought, and gave their lives alongside their American counterparts throughout the war.

We have waited far too long to recognize these heroes, who deserve this honor, in standing alongside units like the Tuskegee Airmen and Hawaii's own 442nd/100th Infantry Battalion with being awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, our Nation's highest civilian honor.

With just 18,000 of these Filipino World War II veterans still alive and

with us today, we cannot afford to wait any longer.

I would like to thank the 312 House Members, Republicans and Democrats, and 71 Senators that cosponsored this bipartisan legislation, representing nearly every State and territory in our country.

I also want to say a special mahalo nui loa to my colleagues, Congressman JOE HECK, who is the Republican lead on this legislation; Congresswoman JUDY CHU; and Congressman MIKE HONDA, for working with me to push this bill through the House; and my colleague, Senator MAZIE HIRONO, who is here today; as well as Senator DEAN HELLER, for championing this bill in the Senate; all of our staff; and both Democrat and Republican leadership for their efforts, commitment, and support to passing this legislation.

I would also like to recognize Major General Antonio Taguba, who joins us today in the gallery, and the Filipino Veterans Recognition and Education Project for their years of commitment to this historic effort and for continuing to fight to ensure we remember and recognize the legacy of our Filipino World War II veterans as a critical part of our American history.

Major General Taguba's father, Staff Sergeant Tomas Taguba, was a soldier in the 45th Infantry Regiment Philippine Division that served alongside the U.S. Army during the war, where he fought in the Battle of Bataan. He survived the Bataan Death March.

This legislation is a testament to Staff Sergeant Tomas Taguba, and the hundreds of thousands of Filipino World War II veterans who deserve a place of recognition amongst our greatest generation. Thank you very much to all of you: "Miraming salamat sa inyong lahat."

I urge my colleagues to join me in voting to pass this long overdue legislation today. Time is of the essence. We must honor these courageous men while they are still among us and recognize their dedicated service to our Nation and our history.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded not to reference guests in the gallery.

Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, with that admonishment, I won't say Ma-Bu-Hi and welcome to our Filipino friends in the gallery; but I will yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HECK), the lead sponsor on the Republican side.

Mr. HECK of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, during my time here in the House of Representatives, each Congressional Session I have introduced the World War II Filipino Veterans Recognition Act in an attempt to restore the benefits that were promised to these brave soldiers by Franklin Delano Roosevelt when they were incorporated into the United States Armed Forces Far East during World War II, but then had those benefits denied by the Rescission Act of 1946.

These soldiers served side by side with American troops. They served under American officers. They bled, fought, and died to protect their homeland on behalf of the United States.

I have had the honor to get to know six of these gentlemen who lived in southern Nevada: Francisco Cedulla; Romeo Barreras; Silverio Cuaresma; Augusto Opus; Bataan Death March survivor, Jesse Baltazar; and Edilberto Briones. Unfortunately, over the last 6 years, five of them have passed on, never receiving the recognition that they justly deserve. That is why this bill is so important.

While it does not justly compensate these brave soldiers for the service that they gave to this country, this bill, S. 1555, and the companion introduced by my good friend, the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Ms. GABBARD), and of which I am the lead cosponsor, is in some small way a recognition of the service rendered by these brave patriots.

□ 1715

It is for that reason that I rise in strong support and urge all of my colleagues to vote in support of S. 1555, so that we can finally pay some level of recognition to those who served side by side with American soldiers under American command.

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT), who is the ranking member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 1555, the Filipino Veterans of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2015.

Filipino Americans have contributed to American life and culture in countless ways, and one of the most noble is through military service. Over 200,000 Filipino soldiers and guerrilla fighters served with the United States Armed Forces during World War II. Their invaluable service helped provide the necessary support to defeat the Japanese in the Pacific.

For over 60 years, Filipino veterans and community advocates have fought to obtain benefits and recognition that they were promised. In 2009, Congress created the Filipino Veterans Equity Compensation Fund, where eligible veterans who are U.S. citizens could receive a one-time payment of \$15,000; eligible veterans who are not U.S. citizens could receive a one-time payment of \$9,000. While this fund has allowed many of them to receive some compensation, in Congress we are still working to make sure these families get all of the benefits they earned, they deserved and were promised.

Another way that we can recognize these heroes is by awarding them the Congressional Gold Medal. The Senate unanimously passed the Filipino World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act in July. Mr. Speaker, as a cosponsor of the House version of the bill and co-

chair of the U.S.-Philippines Friendship Caucus, I urge my colleagues to support the legislation so that approximately 18,000 surviving Filipino veterans of World War II may be recognized for their service to our Nation. We are forever indebted to these brave soldiers, and it is important that we appropriately express our gratitude for that service.

Mr. Speaker, I therefore urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. JUDY CHU), who is a member of the Judiciary Committee and the chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus.

Ms. JUDY CHU of California. Mr. Speaker, over 70 years ago, more than 200,000 brave Filipino and Filipino American soldiers answered the call to fight alongside American servicemembers during World War II. These soldiers served on the front lines and played a critical role in ultimately helping the United States to achieve victory in the Pacific. It is because of their courage that we were able to protect Americans at home while defending democracy abroad. Many of these veterans are now in their twilight years, and it is long past time that we honor them for their sacrifice and service to our Nation.

While we can never fully repay the debt that we owe these veterans, today we have the opportunity to award them with our Nation's highest civilian honor by passing the Filipino Veterans of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act. I urge my colleagues to join me in voting to pass this critical legislation to honor our Filipino World War II veterans with the recognition they have earned.

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. HONDA), who is a member of the Appropriations Committee and chair emeritus of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus.

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, Mr. FOSTER, and on the other side, Congressman HUIZENGA of Michigan, for bringing this up. It is an issue that has been a long time in coming forward. I thank Mr. HECK of Nevada, also, for the gentleman's comments regarding the Filipino veterans' history in World War II.

Prior to this, we talked about the merchant marines. I think that the merchant marines are a long time past in being recognized for their bravery and their willingness to forge through the oceans to bring materiel and artillery to fight fascism in Europe.

Today we stand here in 2016 to ask for support for the bravery, patriotism, and sacrifice of nearly 250,000 Filipinos and Filipino Americans to whom our Nation owes much. I ask this Chamber to show its commitment to those who have bled for our Nation's principles at a time of great adversity by honoring these brave souls with the Congressional Gold Medal.

The Congressional Gold Medal is a symbol of our recognition of their service, but it does very little to recognize the sacrifice and patience that they had to endure since World War II, when, as it was mentioned earlier, this Congress passed two rescission bills in the Appropriations in 1946 removing the Filipino veterans from veterans' benefits and the kinds of promises that President Roosevelt and MacArthur had given to the Filipino veterans.

The story of these proud veterans begins more than 70 years ago when President Roosevelt did ask Filipino and Filipino American soldiers to serve under U.S. authority during World War II. Under our flag, we drafted them and we asked for volunteers. We got both from them.

The people of the Philippines valiantly stepped up to the challenge and played a vital role in securing a victory for the U.S. and its Allies in the Pacific theater. Historians have long since concluded that these valiant efforts by the Filipino and Filipino American soldiers in Bataan helped keep Midway and the coral islands in America's hands at a crucial time during World War II.

Over 60,000 Filipino soldiers, alongside 15,000 American brothers in arms, were captured and forced to walk over 65 miles to the prison camps, which was called the infamous Bataan March—the infamous Bataan Death March—to the ships that would take them to Japan, where they became POWs.

Several thousand Filipinos and Americans died along the way making the ultimate sacrifice in our mutual struggle against fascism and for the promise of democracy and self-determination. A lot of these Filipinos had interceded during the march to the ships, endangering themselves of being beheaded or losing their arms or their lives because they were going to offer water as sustenance to our POWs who were being marched to the ships. We have forgotten that. Hopefully, today, this Congressional Medal of Honor will help us remember the kinds of things that they have sacrificed.

Congress shamefully passed the Rescission Act of 1946, as was mentioned earlier, betraying the promise of full eligibility of rights to Filipino soldiers turning their backs on these valiant souls. We did this consciously twice. In February of 2009, we were here in Congress and at long last passed legislation that included benefits for Filipino and World War II veterans.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, this bitter-sweet victory comes at the end of a 50-year legislative battle which has seen thousands of veterans lose their lives due to the passage of time. This year we must send a clear message to the surviving 18,000 Filipino and Filipino

American World War II veterans that we are honored by their spirit and moved by the heroism and their patience—the spirit that remained hopeful for many, many years that the American people, through their Representatives in this Congress, would do the right thing.

This is the right thing to do. Join me in honoring all of the Filipino World War II veterans with the Congressional Gold Medal.

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Ms. HANABUSA), who is a member of the Armed Services Committee.

Ms. HANABUSA. Mr. Speaker, I just returned to the 114th Congress, and I would like to have everyone remember that when I first came here in the 112th Congress is when we gave the Congressional Gold Medals to the Japanese Americans who fought in World War II. I remember how much pride they all had to receive that Gold Medal. That is why I introduced, in a subsequent Congress, the first attempt to get the Gold Medal for the Filipino war veterans.

In 7 days, Mr. Speaker, we will be commemorating, in Hawaii, the attack on Pearl Harbor—the 75th anniversary. Imagine, 75 years, and we have still not kept our promise to the Filipino war veterans. Many of them are in both Congresswoman GABBARD's and my district. I must tell you, all that they have asked for is a recognition by this country that we will keep our promises to them.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that it is with such pride that I stand here to see that, across the aisle, we have been able to have this piece of legislation hopefully pass and to also know the hard work of my colleagues, especially Senator HIRONO in the Senate and, of course, Congresswoman GABBARD.

There are two gentlemen that I also want us all to remember, and that is former Senator Daniel K. Inouye and Senator Daniel K. Akaka. The reason why is because they both said that the greatest regret they had was that we could not—they could not—change that act in 1946 and keep their word to the Filipino veterans that they would have full benefits, that they could not reunite them with their families as they had all promised.

But, Mr. Speaker, this act, the act of this Gold Medal, will make things somewhat right. It will at least say that this great country recognizes the promises that we have made and this great country will not forget the sacrifices that they have made for us.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all my colleagues vote in favor of this bill.

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I, too, urge passage of this bill by my colleagues and thank the Filipino people for their support and friendship for the many, many years.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HUIZENGA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 1555.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL ACT

Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 2234) to award the Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the members of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in recognition of their superior service and major contributions during World War II.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 2234

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Office of Strategic Services Congressional Gold Medal Act”.

#### SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds the following:

(1) The Office of Strategic Services (OSS) was America's first effort to implement a system of strategic intelligence during World War II and provided the basis for the modern-day American intelligence and special operations communities. The U.S. Special Operations Command and the National Clandestine Service chose the OSS spearhead as their insignias.

(2) OSS founder General William J. Donovan is the only person in American history to receive our Nation's four highest decorations, including the Medal of Honor. Upon learning of his death in 1959, President Eisenhower called General Donovan the “last hero”. In addition to founding and leading the OSS, General Donovan was also selected by President Roosevelt, who called him his “secret legs”, as an emissary to Great Britain and continental Europe before the United States entered World War II.

(3) All the military branches during World War II contributed personnel to the OSS. The present-day Special Operations Forces trace their lineage to the OSS. Its Maritime Unit was a precursor to the U.S. Navy SEALs. The OSS Operational Groups and Jedburghs were forerunners to U.S. Army Special Forces. The 801st/492nd Bombardment Group (“Carpetbaggers”) were progenitors to the Air Force Special Operations Command. The Marines who served in the OSS, including the actor Sterling Hayden (a Silver Star recipient), Col. William Eddy (a Distinguished Service Cross recipient who was described as the “nearest thing the United States has had to a Lawrence of Arabia”), and Col. Peter Ortiz (a two-time Navy Cross recipient), were predecessors to the Marine Special Operations Command. U.S. Coast Guard personnel were recruited for the Maritime Unit and its Operational Swimmer Group.

(4) The OSS organized, trained, supplied, and fought with resistance organizations