

WASHINGTON, DC - Today, Rep Honda published the following statement in an editorial for the Milpitas Post. "As the American people take this weekend to honor our veterans of past and present wars, a dying number of World War II's bravest remain stripped of U.S. veteran status.

"On July 26, 1941, nearly four months before the attacks on Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt ordered the Commonwealth Army of the Philippines into service. Under the flag and direction of U.S. military leaders, the Commonwealth Army fought honorably alongside U.S. Armed Forces throughout World War II. At the tail end of the war, Congress authorized the further recruitment of 50,000 "new" Philippine Scouts, promising that all who responded to military service would be treated as U.S. veterans with full benefits.

"Only a year after our victory in the Pacific, Congress rescinded its promise, turning its back on the approximately 250,000 brave Filipino veterans who fought with the United States to rid the world of tyranny and fascism. These rescission bills contained specific provisions that denied recognition of the service that the soldiers of the Commonwealth Army and the New Philippine Scouts valiantly gave the United States. While some Filipino veterans have recovered their full benefits, there are thousands of others who are still waiting for Congress to do the right thing: restore the benefits that were promised to them more than half a century ago.

"In order to right this terrible injustice and support our veterans, I am fully committed to getting, the "Filipino Veterans Equity Act" (H.R. 760), passed in Congress. The bill, introduced by my friend and colleague Rep. Bob Filner, D-Chula Vista, would provide crucial benefits to all Filipino veterans who fought in World War II under the American flag. Furthermore, this legislation would eliminate the disparities in benefits between some Filipino veterans and restore the honor and dignity they deserve.

"Earlier this year I testified before the full Committee on Veterans' Affairs in the U.S. House of Representatives. At this important hearing, members of Congress heard moving testimony from many Filipino veterans, former military officers, and community members, all supporting the long overdue reinstatement of benefits to Filipino veterans of World War II. Additionally, I have been meeting with Filipino-American community organizations to maintain the momentum to get H.R. 760 passed.

"Only 22,000 of a quarter million of these brave warriors remain with us today. Now in the twilight of their lives, time and dignity is running out for Congress to fully recognize their service. We should not be just promise makers, but also promise keepers.

"As you spend this weekend honoring the sacrifice of our brave veterans, I urge you to remember the blood spilled by these aging heroes and to keep them in your thoughts and prayers."