

## Standing Up for WWII Veterans

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Statement in Support of Benefits for Filipino Veterans of World War II

Pictured: Congressman Rothman with Filipino WWII veterans and members of the Philippine-American Friendship Committee at a Listening Session in Jersey City on August 21, 2007.

(Jersey City, NJ)—At a Listening Session in Jersey City on August 21, 2007, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ) welcomed Filipino nationals who served under the command of U.S. Armed Forces during World War II and announced his support for the Filipino Veterans Equity Act of 2007 (H.R.760).

After the meeting, Rothman said: "I was so pleased to meet with Filipino veterans of WWII during my Listening Session and I applaud the Philippine-American Friendship Committee, located in Jersey City, for their efforts on behalf of the many Filipino veterans in America. As years go by, World War II and the heroes that led America to victory must not be allowed to fade from our memories or our hearts. Filipinos fought bravely, side-by-side with the U.S. Armed Forces during that war and it is fitting and long past time to properly honor their service and sacrifices.

"Already, some Filipino WWII veterans receive medical and monetary benefits similar to those available to American veterans. However, other Filipino veterans of war, all of whom served admirably, do not. That unequal treatment is unjust and unacceptable, which is why I intend to co-sponsor again and vote in favor of the Filipino Veterans Equity Act. This bill would eliminate the differences in how we treat various groups of Filipino veterans, which result in the denial of Veterans' Administration services for some. All Filipino veterans served bravely on behalf of the U.S. and they all earned the same benefits."

There are four specific groups of Filipino nationals who served under the command of the United States during WWII: Regular, or "Old," Philippine Scouts, Commonwealth Army of the Philippines, Recognized Guerilla Forces, and New Philippine Scouts.

While the "Old" Philippine Scouts are entitled to all benefits administered by the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA), the other three groups are not. Yet, all Filipinos in the latter three groups either: enlisted in the service of the U.S. Armed Services before July 1, 1946; served in resistance units recognized by and cooperating with U.S. Armed Forces between April 1942 and June 1946 (primarily during the Japanese occupation of the Philippine Islands); or were Philippine citizens who served with the U.S. Armed Forces with the consent of the newly independent Philippine government between October 1945 and June 1947.

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