

SCHAKOWSKY COSPONSORS LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE LONG OVERDUE BENEFITS TO WW II FILIPINO VETERANS

WASHINGTON, D.C. U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) announced that she has cosponsored the bipartisan Filipino Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 1999, HR 1594. The legislation will help end an injustice that has lasted for more than 50 years.

The Philippine Commonwealth Army was called up by President Roosevelt in July of 1941. Under this order, Commonwealth Army forces were eligible for full U.S. veterans' benefits. However, following the war, Congress overturned President Roosevelt's order by passing the Rescissions Act 1946.

HR 1594 contains three major provisions. The first provision would provide sufficient disability compensation to those Filipino veterans residing in the United States. Second, HR 1594 would make all Filipino veterans residing in the United States eligible for VA healthcare. Finally, the bill restores funding to Filipino veterans residing in the Philippines.

"More than 100,000 Filipino soldiers dutifully served this country during World War II and gallantly fought alongside American troops to preserve our democratic ideals. The time has come for our nation to rectify the past and honor the brave Filipino veterans. It is long overdue," Schakowsky said.

Representatives Ben Gilman (R-NY), Chairman of the International Relations Committee, and Bob Filner (D-CA) are the primary sponsors of HR 1594.