

WASHINGTON, DC - Today, members of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) applauded the passage of H.R. 1, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which includes one of CAPAC's top legislative priorities: Compensation for Filipino World War II Veterans.

H.R. 1 includes authorization of one-time compensation to Filipino World War II veterans who fought alongside American soldiers. Funds for the authorization were already appropriated in the 110th Congress. CAPAC members issued the following statements in response to today's vote:

Rep. Mike Honda (CA-15), CAPAC chair: "Today, we've reached a significant milestone in honoring the service of the Filipino World War II veterans. Finally, through this funding, our government gives some recognition and thanks to the Filipino soldiers who fought under the Stars and Stripes and helped rid the world of tyranny and fascism. This token of gratitude for their service is long overdue. I thank Democratic Leadership for their critical efforts in supporting the Filipino veterans."

Sen. Daniel K. Inouye (HI): "Today is a great day for Filipino veterans of World War II. With passage in the House this afternoon, and expected passage in the Senate this evening, the Filipino veterans will receive their long-overdue compensation from the United States government. While I believe that this action should have happened long ago, I hope that these veterans will now know that the people of the United States truly appreciate the great sacrifices that they and their fallen comrades made for our country."

Rep. Eni Faleomavaega (AS), CAPAC vice chair: "The inclusion of this important authorization in H.R. 1 is a triumph for our Filipino Veterans. I have always said that the greatness of American democracy lies in the ability of its people and leaders to correct its mistakes of the past, and I commend Speaker Pelosi, Chairman Filner of the Veterans Committee, Chairman Honda, and our CAPAC Members for taking the lead in ensuring that America honors our past promises to the thousands of Filipino veterans who fought with us during WWII."

Rep. Madeleine Z. Bordallo (GU): “The inclusion of the authorizing language honors the service of our Filipino World War II Veterans. This is a matter of honor, and our Filipino Veterans deserve no less than our best efforts in Congress to bring them justice. This is a matter important to our country and to our Filipino-American community who have stood shoulder-to-shoulder with our Filipino veterans in this cause. We are grateful to Chairman Inouye for his leadership on this issue.”

Rep. Robert C. “Bobby” Scott (VA-03): “I commend Congress for including the forgotten Filipino Veterans of World War II in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. These veterans have waited far too long for the benefits they were promised over sixty years ago.”

Rep. Neil Abercrombie (HI-01): “Keeping a 60 year old promise to the few surviving Filipino veterans who fought alongside the U.S. military in World War II won’t add a cent to the Economic Stimulus bill. The funding was approved last year. This one time payment is less than we promised, but we have the opportunity in this legislation to do something for these brave men.”

Rep. Mazie K. Hirono (HI-02): “This needed recognition of the service of these brave soldiers has been a long time coming and, unfortunately, for many it comes too late. Our Filipino veterans are in the twilight of their lives; of the 250,000 soldiers who fought with us, only 18,000 survive today – of that number, some 2,000 reside in my home state of Hawaii. A measure of justice is being served with this bill.”

Rep. Al Green (TX-09): “I am pleased that we are finally providing some needed benefits for the U.S. Filipino World War II veterans. For over sixty years, they have not received the benefits they have rightfully earned. Although this is one thank you that is long overdue, I am relieved to know that we have begun to honor our commitment to these brave soldiers who have given so much to our country. We must always honor our commitments to those willing to make the ultimate sacrifice for the noble ideal of liberty and justice for all.”

Rep. David Wu (OR-01): “Today Congress corrects a longstanding injustice and fully recognizes the honorable service of the Filipino veterans who served alongside U.S. forces during World War II. I am proud to see that these courageous veterans will finally receive the benefits and recognition that they deserve, and for which they have waited more than 60 years.”

Rep. Anh “Joseph” Cao (LA-02): “As a matter of honor, I think it is time the United States makes good on her word. I would have preferred to not include the authorization language in the Stimulus Bill, but the commitment to our Filipino Vets is more than 60 years overdue. I feel honoring our commitment to our Veterans is of utmost importance while they are still alive. And we have to always be mindful of the way we treat all of our Veterans regardless of background. I am extremely proud of the way American citizens of all ethnic backgrounds have fought for this country and for freedom.”

Rep. Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan (MP): “Senator Inouye and the Congressional Asian and Pacific American Caucus have been working on this for years, because veterans who risked their lives fighting for the United States must not be forgotten. Our country has a debt to pay to those who fought when we needed them. The Filipino vets were there when we needed them, and now at last we are saying thank you.”

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The Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) is a bicameral and bipartisan caucus of Members of Congress of Asian and Pacific Islander descent and Members who have a strong dedication to promoting the well-being of the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. Founded in 1994 by then Congressman Norman Mineta, and currently chaired by Congressman Michael Honda, CAPAC has been addressing the needs of the AAPI community in all areas of American life. For more information on CAPAC, please call (202) 225-2631 or visit <http://www.honda.house.gov/capac> .