

Once again, it appears that the lobby before the United States Congress for the so-called "full Filipino veterans' equity" is dead in the water. Since 1991 I have been telling Filipino diplomats and the leaders of the so-called Filipino veterans' lobby the truth about the matter. But nobody would listen to me. The Filipino Internet world should know what my views are in regard to the lobby for our Filipino veterans. The lobby once again is becoming an exercise in futility.

To read the entire news item, please copy and paste to your browser: <http://the.honoluluadvertiser.com/article/2007/Apr/11/br/br7249185036.html>

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VA opposes giving WWII Filipino veterans full benefits

By DENNIS CAMIRE Gannett News Service

WASHINGTON — Legislation that would give full veterans benefits to many Filipinos who fought in the U.S. Army against the Japanese during World War II would cost too much, the Bush administration said today.

Ronald R. Aument, deputy under secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs, told the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee paying even a portion of those benefits would cost at least \$4 billion over a decade. In addition, veterans who live in the Philippines and receive full benefits would have a much higher standard of living compared with the rest of country's population, Aument said.

"VA benefits paid to beneficiaries living in the United States, such as U.S. veterans, do not enable those beneficiaries to live higher than the general U.S. population," he said. "We do not support the bill because it would disproportionately favor Filipino veterans over U.S. veterans."

The Truth About the Veterans' Lobby (Part One) - MabuhayRadio

Written by Bobby Reyes

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The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office has said providing full benefits for Filipino veterans would cost about \$1 billion over 10 years.

Filipino veterans, who laid a wreath Tuesday at the National World War II Memorial in Washington, told the VA committee about their wartime experiences and struggle to get benefits they believe they are owed. "We served with honor and loyalty," said Benito Valdez, 83, of Seattle. "Today — 63 years later — that loyalty and sense of duty has not faded away. Many of us aging Filipino war veterans believe that it is our American allies who have forgotten us."

Sen. Dan Akaka, the Hawai'i Democrat who chairs the Senate panel, said the Filipinos deserve the benefits they were promised when they fought alongside U.S. soldiers. Denial "means they are not officially acknowledged by the United States government as true veterans," Akaka said.

Sen. Larry Craig of Idaho, the top Republican on the committee, said he supports giving Filipinos full benefits but added he's worried about the cost and the standard-of-living issues. "The same benefit paid to veterans in the Philippines would provide income that is almost four times the average household income in that country," he said. (Snipped)

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