

Two Influential U.S. Senators Assure PGMA of Early Passage of Filipino Veterans Equity Bill - MabuhayRa

Written by Philippine Embassy Press Office

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Two senior members of the United States Senate have vowed to push the early passage of the Filipino Veterans Equity Bill that would increase the benefits of some 18,000 surviving Filipino World War II veterans.

US Senators Daniel Inouye and Theodore Stevens made this known during their courtesy call on President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo this afternoon in Malacañang.

"Thank you for what you have done for the Filipino people," the President said.

Among those present were Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro, Foreign Affairs Acting Secretary Francisco Benedicto, Armed Forces Chief of Staff Hermogenes Esperon, US Ambassador Kristie Kenney, and US Deputy Chief of Mission Paul Jones

"Thank you. Senators Inouye and Stevens, for what you have done for the Filipino people," the President said.

Senator Inouye, himself a WWII veteran, sponsored the Filipino Veterans Equity Bill to acknowledge the significant contributions of Filipino veterans who helped ensured the victory of US forces in the Pacific during World War II.

Senator Stevens, a senior member of Alaska's congressional delegation and the longest-serving senator in the history of the Republican Party, is the chief Republican supporter of the Equity Bill in the US Senate.

As co-chairman of the Senate Defense Committee, Stevens has been instrumental in increasing financial aid to the Philippines.

"They just informed the President on the Veterans Equity Bill and its status on the US Congress especially in the Senate. Senator Stevens and Senator Inouye, who are both senior senators in the Committee of Defense in the United States, promised to help push for the approval of that bill into a law so that the Filipino veterans will benefit from that Equity Bill," Ermita said.

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After the courtesy call, the President also conferred the Order of the Golden Heart with the Rank of Grand Cross on Senator Stevens for rendering distinguished services and assistance "for the amelioration and improvement of the moral, social, and economic conditions of the Filipino people."

The two senators, who arrived today, will visit various RP-US programs of cooperation in Minda
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