



NFALA

NATIONAL FILIPINO AMERICAN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

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NFALA URGES DHS TO GRANT IMMEDIATE RELIEF TO FILIPINO WW II VETERANS

NEW YORK — The NATIONAL FILIPINO AMERICAN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION (NFALA) today urged the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to expedite the creation of a parole program allowing certain family members of Filipino-American World War II veterans to come to the United States and provide support and care to the aging veterans. The Obama administration called for such action by DHS in a Visa Modernization Task Force report last month.

“Now that DHS has received the green light from President Obama, it should not delay a minute longer,” said Rudy Figueroa, NFALA’s president. He continued, “Immediate action is critical because by some estimates, there are only 4,000 living veterans left who could benefit from the parole program, and those numbers will continue to dwindle.”

During World War II, more than a quarter million Filipino soldiers fought for the United States and were promised citizenship and benefits in honor of their service. After finally being granted eligibility for citizenship decades after their wartime service, these veterans were able to petition for family members to immigrate to the United States. However, family visa backlogs have kept many of these families separated for more than 20 years. In its report, the Obama administration stated that the impetus for the parole program is that many of the veterans today “require the care and assistance of their families and greatly desire to have their family members in the United States during their final days.”

Parole is an avenue provided under U.S. law that allows individuals to come to the United States on a case-by-case basis for a temporary period based upon urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit. “We understand that implementing parole requires a process, but time is of the essence, and the program should be formally launched before the end of 2015,” concluded Figueroa.

The National Filipino American Lawyers Association (NFALA) is a national association of Filipino-American attorneys, judges, law professors, and law students dedicated to promoting the professional development, interests, and success of Filipino-American legal professionals nationwide. NFALA represents over 1,000 attorneys and various state and local Filipino-American bar associations. NFALA is the voice for the national Filipino-American legal community and strives to fight for equal opportunity and the rights of underserved minority groups.