



**For Immediate Release**

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**NFALA Opposes the Termination of the Filipino World War II Veterans Parole Program**

Chicago, IL — On December 28, 2020, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) invited the public to comment on its plan to terminate the Filipino World War II Veterans Parole (FWVP) Program. Accordingly, NFALA submitted a comment reflecting its opposition to ending the FWVP Program, which was created to honor the service of Filipino World War II veterans and enable them to have their family members join them in the United States. Estimates indicate that there are approximately 6,000 living Filipino American World War II veterans in the United States, many of whom require the care and assistance of their families and greatly desire to have their family members in the United States during their final days.

In 1941, more than 260,000 Filipino soldiers responded to President Roosevelt's call-to-arms and enlisted to fight for the United States during World War II. Many made the ultimate sacrifice as soldiers in the U.S. Armed Forces in the Far East and as guerilla fighters during the Imperial Japanese occupation of the Philippines. Approximately 26,000 brave Filipino soldiers who fought under the American flag became proud U.S. citizens. As U.S. citizens, these individuals can petition for their family members to come to the United States. Unfortunately, due to statutory visa caps, many individuals wait for years or even decades to be reunited with their family members.

Parole is an avenue provided under the Immigration and Nationality Act that allows individuals to temporarily come to the United States on a case-by-case basis for urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit. In 2016, USCIS implemented the FWVP Program in recognition of the contributions and sacrifices of Filipino veterans who fought for the United States during World War II. Under this program, certain family members of Filipino-American veterans may be granted parole to come to the United States to provide support and care to their Filipino veteran family members who are U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents. In all cases, whether to parole a particular individual under this policy is a discretionary determination that is made on a case-by-case basis. Since the FWVP Program was created, nearly 300 Filipino families have been reunited in America.

"USCIS's plan to terminate the FWVP Program is gravely concerning to the Filipino American community," said NFALA President Kristy Gonowon. "USCIS's rationale that the FWVP program is inconsistent with the narrow exercise of DHS's parole authority in making determinations of significant public benefit not only contradicts the agency's own reasoning for setting up the program just five years ago, but it desecrates the contributions and sacrifices made by Filipino World War II veterans. Therefore, we oppose this action and urge the USCIS to maintain the FWVP Program."

*NFALA is the national voice for the Filipino American legal profession. It advocates for justice, civil rights, and equal opportunity for the Filipino American community. It cultivates high standards of integrity and professionalism among its members and strives for the advancement and success of Filipino Americans within the profession. NFALA is a family, comprised of members throughout the United States, with the shared goal of increasing its national growth, impact, and visibility while also celebrating its members' cultural heritage.*

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