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**NFALA RENEWS ITS CALL FOR THE REPEAL OF THE RESCISSION ACT OF 1946  
ON THE 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE ACT'S PASSAGE**

Chicago, IL – The National Filipino American Lawyers Association (NFALA) renews its call for the immediate repeal of the Rescission Act of 1946 and the proper recognition of the service of all Filipino World War II veterans. The Act effectively stripped thousands of Filipinos of their status as veterans and denied them the benefits they were promised by the United States government for their service.

While under colonial rule of the United States, over 260,000 Filipinos answered the United States' call to arms in World War II. By the conclusion of World War II, there were four groups of Filipino World War II veterans: the Old Philippine Scouts, the Philippine Army, the recognized Philippine Guerilla forces, and the New Scouts. The Philippine Army and guerilla forces suffered immensely during the Japanese occupation of the Philippines. As noted by the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg:

During the Japanese invasion, Philippine soldiers fought bravely alongside other members of the USAFFE. Both Americans and Filipinos suffered the terrible Bataan death march, indeed, Philippine soldiers endured particularly cruel treatment from the Japanese. Philippine guerrilla forces continued to fight during the Japanese occupation; their efforts undoubtedly made American reentry into the Philippines much less costly.<sup>1</sup>

As a foreshadow of what was to come, the Philippine Army and its guerilla forces did not receive wages equal to those paid to the soldiers in the U.S. military and the Old Philippine Scouts.

Sensing that the projected costs to pay Filipino veterans and their widows and children was nearing upwards of \$3 billion, Congress passed the Rescission Act on February 18, 1946. At its core, the Rescission Act of 1946 retroactively annulled the service records of the Philippine Army, Guerilla forces, and the New Scouts - making them ineligible to receive the benefits promised to them for their service.<sup>2</sup> Importantly, of the 66 countries allied with the United States during WWII, the Philippines remains the only country specifically excluded from its soldiers receiving the promised military benefits from the United States. The excluded Filipino Veterans were effectively branded "second class veterans" resulting in these soldiers being disqualified from service benefits established by the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs. These benefits include "old age pensions" and access to free medical care at veterans' hospitals and facilities. It also prevented these wartime veterans from obtaining U.S. citizenship as a member of the United States Armed Forces.

<sup>1</sup> *Quiban v. Veterans Admin.*, 928 F.2de 1154, 1157 (D.C. Cir. 1991), cert. den., 513 U.S. 918 (1994) (internal citations omitted).

<sup>2</sup> Soldiers in the Old Philippine Scouts were not affected by the Rescission Act because Congress incorporated them into the regular U.S. Army at the start of World War II.

On the occasion of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passage of the Rescission Act of 1946, NFALA once again urges the immediate repeal of the Act and the proper recognition of the service of all Filipino World War II veterans. Specifically, NFALA calls upon Congress to:

1. repeal the Rescission Act of 1946;
2. reinstate the service records of all Filipino veterans affected by the Rescission Act of 1946;
3. issue a statement recognizing the service of Filipino World War II veterans affected by the Rescission Act of 1946; and
4. support efforts to extend benefits to and recognize the service of Filipino World War II veterans, including but not limited to supporting the Filipino Veterans Family Reunification Act, Filipino Veterans Fairness Act, and the continuation of the Filipino World War II Veterans Parole Program.

“For seventy-five years, America has turned its back on Filipino veterans affected by the Rescission Act of 1946,” said NFALA President Kristy Gonowon. “It is unconscionable that Filipino veterans never received their rightful benefits and the recognition they deserve for their bravery and service to this country. Repealing the Rescission Act is long overdue, and America must fulfill its contract with these veterans who fought for the United States.”

*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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