

women who serve in the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office. Their efforts, made on behalf of the citizens of Fairfax County, are selfless acts of heroism and truly merit our highest praise. I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding this group of remarkable citizens.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF AMERICAN HEART MONTH

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Ms. JACKSON-LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 52, to support the goals and ideals of American Heart Month. The leading cause of death in the United States is not murder or gang violence or any other violent crime; it is heart disease. The statistics are staggering. One-third of adult Americans have 1 or more of the following heart diseases: high blood pressure, coronary heart disease, congestive heart failure, stroke, and congenital heart defects. While some of the major risk factors of heart disease like advanced age, gender, and heredity cannot be changed, minorities are at a greater risk than whites to die from heart disease and die at higher rates. Heart disease also is devastating to women. In 2003 a total of 685,089 people died of heart disease; 51 percent of these victims were women. Nearly twice as many women in the United States die of heart disease and stroke as from all forms of cancer, including breast cancer.

Turning to African Americans, the numbers are even more shocking. Out of the five largest U.S. racial/ethnic groups, the death rate of 300 per 100,000 population for African Americans is the highest.

It is essential for all Americans to be aware of the risk factors associated with heart disease and to take the necessary precautions to reduce those risks. Fortunately, there are things Americans can do to reduce the risk of heart disease. They can reduce stress, increase physical activity, consume alcoholic beverages in moderation, refrain from using illegal drugs or smoking or hormone replacement therapy.

Mr. Speaker, I support H. Con. Res. 52 because we need to take the steps necessary to encourage Americans to fight the causes of heart disease and to take to heart the four simple "healthy life, healthy heart goals" identified by the Healthier US initiative of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:

Regular exercise regularly and maintain a healthy weight; good eating habits; avoidance of tobacco, drugs and excessive alcohol; and regular checkups and screenings.

Mr. Speaker, we must not allow heart disease to become a silent killer. Let us support the goals and ideals of American Heart Month. I thank my colleague, Representative MILLENDER-MCDONALD for introducing this important legislation. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H. Con. Res. 52.

THE REINTRODUCTION OF THE FILIPINO VETERANS FAMILY REUNIFICATION ACT

HON. MAZIE K. HIRONO

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 1, 2007

Ms. HIRONO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to reintroduce the Filipino Veterans Family Reunification Act, a companion to Senator AKAKA's bill of the same name, which will provide for the expedited reunification of the families of our Filipino World War II veterans. I am pleased to be joined in this legislation by Representatives NEIL ABERCROMBIE, BOB FILNER, MICHAEL HONDA, MADELEINE BORDALLO, ROBERT "BOBBY" SCOTT, JIM MCDERMOTT, DARRELL ISSA, SAM FARR, AL GREEN, RAÚL GRIJALVA, and PHIL HARE.

As you know, Filipino veterans are those that honorably answered the call of President Franklin D. Roosevelt and served alongside our armed forces during World War II. They fought shoulder to shoulder with American servicemen; they sacrificed for the same just cause. We made a promise to provide full veterans' benefits to those who served with our troops. And while we have recently made appreciable progress toward fulfilling that long-ignored promise, we have not yet achieved the full equity that the Filipino veterans deserve.

In 1990, the Congress recognized the courage and commitment of the Filipino World War II veterans by providing them with a waiver from certain naturalization requirements. Many veterans thereafter became proud United States citizens and residents of our country. However, allowances were not made for their children and many have been waiting decades for petition approval.

The Filipino Veterans Family Reunification Act would allow for the further recognition of the service of the veterans by granting their children a special immigration status that would allow them to immigrate to the United States and be reunified with their aging parents. It is important to note that the Filipino soldiers who fought under the command of General Douglas MacArthur at this critical time in our Nation's history represent a unique category. These soldiers were members of the United States Armed Forces of the Far East. They were led to believe that at the end of the conflict they would be treated the same as American soldiers. It took more than 60 years to begin to make good on our commitment. The Filipino Veterans Family Reunification Act recognizes the special circumstances of this group of soldiers.

I would like to submit into the record an editorial from the Honolulu Advertiser that supports the expedited reunification of these families as a meaningful way to make amends for the injustice experienced by these brave soldiers. As the editorial frankly states, "Reuniting these men with their children is not only the fair thing for the U.S. government to do, it's the least it could do."

Last year, my home State of Hawaii celebrated the 100th anniversary of the first Filipino immigrants to arrive on U.S. soil. We are exceptionally proud of the accomplishments of our Filipino community and confident that the next 100 years will be as successful. It is unfortunate that prospective family-based immigration applicants from the Philippines face

substantial, often decades-long, waits for visas.

In Honolulu, I recently had a meeting with a group of Filipino veterans from my district. I listened to many heartbreaking stories of sons and daughters waiting patiently in the Philippines with the hope that one day they will be able to come to the United States to care for their aging parents. The need to complete these families of our veterans is great.

As our Filipino veterans are entering the sunset years of their lives, Congress is running out of time to fulfill our obligations to them. I look forward to working with my colleagues by providing for the reunification of our Filipino World War II veterans with their families.

[From the Honolulu Advertiser, Feb. 25, 2007]

FILIPINO VETS' FAMILIES DESERVE SPECIAL STATUS

Filipino veterans, who fought alongside U.S. troops during World War II, have waited far too long—more than 60 years—to get what's due them.

While they still seek full pension benefits from Congress, another key measure would give them something that could be more important in their senior years: family reunification.

Senate Bill 671, recently introduced by U.S. Sens. Dan Akaka and Daniel Inouye, grants special immigrant status to the children of naturalized Filipino veterans, enabling them to move up in the visa backlog that has had some family members waiting for entry to the U.S. for nearly 20 years.

Indeed, this solution is not a simple one. In the aftermath of Sept. 11, visa policies were rightly revamped and strictly enforced. To expedite the process for these family members and not others merits concern.

But let's look at the bigger picture: An estimated 200,000 Filipinos were drafted in 1941 to fight under Gen. Douglas MacArthur when war broke out. The men were promised citizenship and benefits by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. But Congress reneged on the promise with the Rescission Act of 1946.

Not until 1990 did the Immigration Act allow these men citizenship. But they have yet to receive the same benefits as their GI counterparts, and the change in immigration law did not extend the same rights to the veterans' sons and daughters.

Today, there are an estimated 5,000 Filipino veterans in Hawai'i and the Mainland, according to the American Coalition for Filipino Veterans, but most are well into their 80s and 90s—and their number is quickly dwindling.

Reuniting these men with their children is not only the fair thing for the U.S. government to do, it's the least it could do.

And Congress shouldn't stop there. The aging veterans deserve to see the final piece in their struggle for equity: the granting of full pension benefits that could mean \$200 a month per veteran.

For these men, it's more than just a paycheck—it's a promise.

RECOGNIZING MR. ERIC BRANSBY'S 90TH BIRTHDAY

HON. DOUG LAMBORN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 1, 2007

Mr. LAMBORN. Madam Speaker, I rise in recognition of Mr. Eric Bransby on his 90th birthday and the tremendous contributions he