



KONSULADO PANLAHAT NG PILIPINAS

CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE PHILIPPINES

AGANA, GUAM

AMBASSADOR GAA WELCOMES PASSAGE OF AMENDMENT TO PHILIPPINE LAW ON MILITARY VETERANS BENEFITS

Philippine Ambassador to the United States of America Willy C. Gaa welcomed news received today from the Philippines stating that President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will sign into law on 09 April 2008 a bill that would ensure that Filipino World War II veterans will continue to receive Philippine Government pensions and benefits even if the U.S. government eventually passes legislation that would finally recognize the services of these veterans and provide them with just compensation and benefits.

Commenting on this development, Ambassador Gaa said, "This is welcome news for all the Filipino World War II veterans and for their supporters. This law will amend a provision in Republic Act (R.A.) 6498, also known as "An Act Standardizing and Upgrading the Benefits for Military Veterans and their Dependents," that stipulates that benefits being provided by the Philippine Government to Filipino World War II veterans will be withdrawn if the U.S. government grants similar benefits. This amendment will now ensure that despite the passage of a U.S. Filipino World War II Veterans Equity Bill, our veterans will continue to receive benefits from the Philippine Government in addition to the benefits that will be provided by the U.S. government. Given the sacrifices and services that these brave veterans have made on behalf of all of us, it is the least we could do to help them in their time of need."

Ambassador Gaa likewise expressed his appreciation to Philippine Senator Richard Gordon, who was instrumental in proposing this amendment and its swift passage into law. It was during meetings with U.S. legislators in Washington D.C. in the middle of 2007 that Senator Richard Gordon and Ambassador Gaa were informed that it would be helpful to the Filipino veterans cause to pass an equity bill in the U.S. Congress if the Philippine Government could show that it would continue to share this obligation to the Filipino veterans with the U.S. government by continuing to provide them with benefits they currently receive. Ambassador Gaa said, "I recall that in those meetings last year, Senator Richard Gordon assured our friends and supporters in the U.S. Congress that he would make sure that the Philippine Government will continue to honor its commitment to support the veterans and will file the appropriate legislation. I commend Senator Gordon's dedication and commitment to the cause of our Filipino World War II veterans as exhibited by his actions to have this amendment to R.A. 6498 passed as soon as possible." END.