Stevens Argues For U.S. Veterans' Status For Filipino WWII Vets

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Stevens Says It's A Matter Of Honor

Senator Ted Stevens is ramping up efforts to restore U.S. veterans’ status to all Filipino World War II veterans.

During floor debate on the Veterans’ Benefits Enhancement Act Tuesday, Stevens gave an impassioned speech about the need to recognize Filipinos who served the United States during World War II. He said the issue is one of honor.

(Filipino Vets 1 :40s “…almost to the death.”)

Stevens went on to say that the Filipino forces played an important role in delaying the Japanese, who had recently attacked American forces at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii.

(Filipino Vets 2 :15s “…December 7th of 1941.”)

Filipino World War II veterans were considered to be veterans of the US Military immediately after the war, until an act of Congress in 1946 stripped them of that honor unless they moved the United States.

Without veterans’ status, those who fought for the United States, but chose to remain in the Philippines have gone without benefits, including a reduced flat-rate pension. Stevens wants to restore those benefits to the veterans as well. As a veteran of the Second World War himself, Stevens says it’s important to him.

(Filipino Vets 3 :28s “…with my co-sponsorship.”)

The Embassy of the Philippines says there were 470-thousand Filipino World War II veterans after the war. Today only about 18-thousand of them survive. The act that would restore benefits to them is still being debated by the Senate.

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