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**NFALA URGES PASSAGE OF BIPARTISAN FILIPINO  
VETERANS FAMILY REUNIFICATION ACT OF 2015**

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The NATIONAL FILIPINO AMERICAN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION (NFALA) urged Congress today to pass H.R. 483, the “Filipino Veterans Family Reunification Act of 2015,” authored by Rep. Mark Takai (D-Haw.). The legislation would exempt sons and daughters of Filipino veterans of World War II from existing limitations on immigrant visas. If the bill passes, Filipino veterans who risked their lives for the United States 70 years ago will finally be able to reunite with their immediate family members.

“Congress has the opportunity to address our country’s long-withheld promises to Filipino veterans,” said Rudy Figueroa, NFALA’s president. “Immediate action is critical because by some estimates, there are only 4,000 living veterans left whose sons and daughters are eligible for relief, and those numbers will continue to dwindle,” pleaded Figueroa. When President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued a call-to-arms to the Filipino people in 1941, over 250,000 Filipino soldiers responded. In 1942, as a reward for their service, Congress amended the Nationality Act of 1940 to allow Filipino veterans to become naturalized U.S. citizens—tragically, Congress rescinded that reward in 1946.

More recently, the Immigration Act of 1990 allowed for naturalization of those who honorably served in the United States Armed Forces in the Far East (USAFFE), or within the Philippine Army, the Philippine Scouts, or recognized Guerrilla Units between Sept. 1, 1939, and Dec. 31, 1946. But the 1990 legislation did not provide relief to their children. H.R. 483 would exempt family members of those Filipino World War II veterans from the 7% cap on family visas originating from the Philippines.

Rep. Takai introduced the legislation, which has 12 co-sponsors, including Rep. Joseph Heck (R-Nev.), on January 22, 2015. In explaining why he introduced the bill, Rep. Takai stated two reasons: “First, to make good on our obligation to take care of our Filipino veterans of World War II by helping them to reunite with their children. And second, to make good on my promise to work in a bipartisan manner with my colleagues across the aisle on issues where we find common ground.” H.R. 483 was referred to the Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security on February 19, 2015.

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*The National Filipino American Lawyers Association (NFALA) is a national association of Filipino-American attorneys, judges, law professors, and law students dedicated to promoting the professional development, interests, and success of Filipino-American legal professionals*

*nationwide. NFALA represents over 1,000 attorneys and various state and local Filipino-American bar associations. NFALA is the voice for the national Filipino-American legal community and strives to fight for equal opportunity and the rights of underserved minority groups.*