

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1716

As Passed House:

March 9, 2001

Title: An act relating to income assistance benefits for qualified World War II veterans living in the Republic of the Philippines.

Brief Description: Providing income assistance benefits to qualified World War II veterans living in the Republic of the Philippines.

Sponsors: By Representatives Veloria, Mielke, Buck, O'Brien, Conway, Talcott, Hunt, Crouse, Clements, Murray, Schoesler, Miloscia, Benson, Tokuda, Santos, D. Schmidt, McDermott, Lovick, Cody, Campbell, Haigh, Keiser, Ogden and Dickerson; by request of Governor Locke.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Children & Family Services: 2/14/01, 2/22/01 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/9/01, 94-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- The bill provides a one-time \$1,500 lump sum payment to Filipino veterans of World War II who are recipients of the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) state supplement as of December 14, 1999, and move to the Philippines.
- The lump sum payment is in lieu of the SSI state supplement benefit.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Boldt, Republican Co-Chair; Tokuda, Democratic Co-Chair; Kagi, Democratic Vice Chair; Morell, Republican Vice Chair; Ballasiotes, Campbell, Darneille, Dickerson, Miloscia and Pflug.

Staff: Deborah Frazier (786-7152).

Background:

Subtitle B of the federal Public Law 106-169 of 1999 permits the payment of 75 percent of federal SSI benefits to World War II veterans who live outside the United States.

To be eligible for this benefit, the veteran must have served in the United States Armed Forces, or, served under the command of the Armed Forces of the United States in the military forces of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Philippines, or in organized guerilla forces in the Pacific Area.

Washington pays a state funded supplement to eligible federal SSI beneficiaries. The state supplement monthly benefit varies with the recipients' location and living situations, and ranges from \$3.71 to \$166.10.

Summary of Bill:

The bill provides a one-time lump sum payment of \$1,500 to certain veterans of World War II who are recipients of the SSI state supplement as of December 14, 1999.

The veterans must have been members of the Commonwealth of the Philippines military forces, or a Regular Philippine Scout or Special Philippine Scout, and in the service of the United States on July 26, 1941, or thereafter. The veterans must move to the Philippines and establish and maintain a residence.

The lump sum payment is in lieu of the SSI state supplement benefit.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This bill is a humanitarian measure that acknowledges the sacrifice these veterans made in defense of American interests and could allow these elderly veterans to return home and live out their few remaining years with family and friends. Savings in state supplemental payments will cover the cost of this lump sum payment. Additional medical savings will result for each veteran who chooses the option of returning the Philippines. I served the United States under horrible conditions and did so proudly. Since 1946, I've been fighting to receive the same pension and health care benefits as other veterans who served. This is a small gesture that would recognize our service.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support) Representative Veloria, prime sponsor; Ahndrea Blue, Office of the Governor; Phyllis Lowe, Washington Department of Social and Health Services; Miebeth R. Bustillo-Hutchins, Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs; Bert Caoili, Veterans Crusader; Julio Joaquin, Filipino War Veterans of Washington; Preciliano Credo and Amador Montero, Filipino-American Veterans; and John King, Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs.