

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

February 16, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
President of the United States  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

**RECEIVED**

**By ESEC at 4:00 pm, Mar 15, 2021**

Dear President Biden:

We write to request your immediate action to rescind efforts by the Trump administration to terminate the Filipino World War II Veterans Parole (FWVP) Program. In addition to rescinding this executive action, we seek your continued support for passage and enactment of the Filipino Veterans Family Reunification Act. We understand that provisions addressing the plight of Filipino veterans are included in the United States Citizenship Act you sent to Congress. We welcome this recognition of their unique situation and would like to work with you to fully address this issue.

More than 250,000 Filipino soldiers responded to President Roosevelt's call-to-arms in the Philippines and elsewhere and fought for the U.S. during the Second World War. Many of these brave individuals returned from the War only to be denied many of the benefits promised for their service. It was not until President George H.W. Bush signed the Immigration Act of 1990 that these proud and brave Filipino veterans were awarded U.S. citizenship. Today, there are only a few thousand Filipino veterans still alive and residing in the United States. In October 2017, Congress finally awarded them the Congressional Gold Medal to honor their service on behalf of our country in World War II.

However, Filipino veterans who received and accepted U.S. citizenship were separated from their children and family members who were caught in the decades-long backlog of immigration visas. Today, many of these Filipino veterans are still waiting to reunite with their family members as they grow older and require additional care and support.

The Obama Administration created the FWVP Program in 2016 to allow Filipino veterans to petition for humanitarian parole for their children and siblings who have been approved for immigration visas but remain stuck in the backlog. Family members who meet the conditions of the program were issued parole to reside in the U.S. until their immigration visas are available for an adjustment of status. USCIS set the FWVP Program for an initial period of five years, subject to renewal.

In August 2019, the Trump Administration announced its intention to terminate the FWVP program amidst an ongoing review into categorical parole programs administered by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Shortly after, Members from both the House and Senate

wrote letters to then-Acting Director Cuccinelli urging him to rescind that decision due to its negative impacts on Filipino World War II veterans and their families. These letters also highlighted that FWVP is not a categorical parole program. Rather, determinations are discretionary and made on a case-by-case basis, as evidenced by the 32 percent denial rate. Unfortunately, the Trump Administration declined to reverse its decision, and on December 28, 2020, USCIS published a notice in the *Federal Register* announcing the final steps to fully terminate the FWVP Program.

To prevent the continued painful separation of our Filipino veterans from their family members, we request that your administration move swiftly to rescind the December 28, 2020 notice and restore the FWVP Program. We also urge your administration to consider renewing the FWVP Program following a review and evaluation of its impacts and success over the past five years. There is urgency in taking action on this matter as the Department of Homeland Security has estimated that there are fewer than 6,000 surviving Filipino veterans who are now in their 90s. At a time when many families are apart and the elderly are especially vulnerable to this pandemic, restoring and extending the FWVP Program is a fitting way to honor and care for our veterans who have given so much in service to our country.

Removing the threat to terminate the FWVP is an important action and sends the message to this community that we thank them for their service and commitment to our country. In addition, as previously stated, we hope to work with your administration in passing and enacting the Filipino Veterans Family Reunification Act, a bill that has been continually introduced in Congress since 2003. Similar to what we understand is included in your United States Citizenship Act, this bill would exempt children of Filipino World War II veterans from numerical limitations on immigrant visas, providing a sure and swift pathway for those individuals to reunite with their veterans here in the United States. We would like to work together to ensure the enactment of this bill either as an included provision of your proposed immigration reform package or as a stand-alone piece of legislation.

Thank you for your attention and consideration of these requests.

Sincerely,



Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator



Ed Case  
Member of Congress



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



Jackie Speier  
Member of Congress

Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator

/s/

Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress

Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator

Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress

Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator

Al Green  
Member of Congress

Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator

Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress

Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator

Kaiali'i Kahele  
Member of Congress

Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator

Michael F.Q. San Nicolas  
Member of Congress

Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator

Mike Thompson  
Member of Congress

Patty Murray  
United States Senator

Raul Grijalva  
Member of Congress

Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator

Dina Titus  
Member of Congress

Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator

Grace Meng  
Member of Congress

Elaine G. Luria  
Member of Congress

Grace F. Napolitano  
Member of Congress

Steven Horsford  
Member of Congress

Eric Swalwell  
Member of Congress

Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress

Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress

/s/

André Carson  
Member of Congress

Judy Chu  
Member of Congress



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

July 13, 2021

The Honorable Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Hirono:

Thank you for your February 16, 2021 letter to President Joseph R. Biden regarding the Filipino World War II Veterans Parole (FWVP) Program. Your letter was forwarded to the Department of Homeland Security for response.

As you noted in your letter, in August 2019, the Trump Administration announced its intention to terminate the FWVP program amidst an ongoing review of parole programs. On December 28, 2020, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) published a notice in the Federal Register announcing the final steps to fully terminate the FWVP Program. However, the program has not ended, and remains in effect to-date.

USCIS continues to receive and process all applications. Moreover, the steps taken under the previous administration do not affect current FWVP parolees, who will maintain their current period of parole until it expires and may request re-parole under the original terms of the FWVP Program. FWVP parolees may also still apply to adjust status when they become eligible to do so.<sup>1</sup>

USCIS appreciates your concern and recommendation to retain the FWVP program. We are committed to reducing barriers to our legal immigration system and look forward to clarifying and updating the status of this program as soon as it is practicable to do so. We would welcome an opportunity to discuss how USCIS could partner with you on continued outreach on the FWVP program. USCIS has reviewed the draft Filipino Veterans Family Reunification Act. If you have any technical assistance questions for which USCIS can assist, please feel to reach out.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information, see <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/humanitarian-parole/filipino-world-war-ii-veterans-parole-program>.

The Honorable Mazie K. Hirono  
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Thank you again for your letter and interest in this important issue. The cosigners of your letter will receive a separate, identical response. Should you require any additional assistance, please have your staff contact the USCIS Office of Legislative Affairs at (240) 721-3801.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tracy L. Renaud". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "T" and "R".

Tracy L. Renaud  
Acting Director