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# California declares October as Filipino-American History Month

*Senator Yee authors resolution to recognize accomplishments of Filipino-Americans*

SACRAMENTO—The California State Legislature has unanimously approved legislation to officially recognize the accomplishments of Filipino Americans. Senate Concurrent Resolution 48, authored by Senator Leland Yee (D-San Francisco/San Mateo), declares October as Filipino-American History Month.

"It is imperative that we continue efforts to promote the accomplishments of Filipino-Americans," said Yee, whose district includes one of the largest Filipino communities outside of the Philippines. "For far too long the role of Filipinos in our national history has been ignored. Through SCR 48, we help ensure that our children learn about this important history."

The earliest documented proof of Filipino presence in the continental United States was the date of October 18, 1587, when the first *Luzones Indios* set foot in Morro Bay, California. The Filipino American National Historical Society recognizes the year of 1763 as the date of the first permanent Filipino settlement in the United States in St. Malo Parish, Louisiana. Today, California is home to over half of the Filipino population in the United States.

In 2007, Yee successfully passed Senate Joint

Resolution 5, urging Congress to pass the Filipino Veterans Equity Act and to fully restore benefits stripped from Filipino WWII veterans by the 1946 Rescission Act.

Senator Yee has long advocated for the Filipino veterans. In 2004, then Assemblyman Yee led the effort to prevent Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger (R-Los Angeles) from eliminating the California Veterans Cash Benefit Program from the State budget. While the Governor proposed cutting the \$226 per month benefit, Yee successfully fought to make sure the Veterans Program was reauthorized in the budget approved by the Legislature. Yee has also authored legislation to add the role of Filipinos in WWII to the high school social studies curriculum.

This year, Yee is authoring SB 242 to protect language as a civil right. In addition to authoring several bills regarding language access, Yee has consistently fought for the Filipino community and helped recognize the accomplishments of Filipino-Americans.

In March 2006, Yee honored the contributions of Larry Iltiong at a ceremony in San Francisco. Iltiong, along with Cesar Chavez and Dolores

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## US to facilitate...

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Veterans Memorial Medical Center (VMMC) amounting to \$5.5 million since 2003 inclusive of the MRI equipment valued at \$1M the delivery of which Shinseki assured next year.

Teodoro offered to Shinseki the conduct of a joint DND-DVA assessment of VMMC's existing capabilities under the Philippine Defense Reform program to institutionalize best practices in providing medical care and services and transform VMMC into a model medical institution. Shinseki accepted Teodoro's offer.

### Building on success

During his call on Filner, Teodoro said the Philippines and the US "should now build on the success of the Filipino veterans' campaign and bring the relationship to something beyond it."

One other area of cooperation, Teodoro said, is Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), a non-traditional security initiative that has increasingly become more important as a result of climate change and natural disasters.

Acknowledging Teodoro's comments, Filner said he is



COMMERCIATING WITH CABALEN. President Macapagal-Arroyo makes a visit to Guagua, Pampanga, inspecting from a police truck the flooded areas in her province after attending Thursday's meeting of the National Disaster Coordinating Council. Inquirer.net photo by OPS-NIB

bringing to the Philippines a trade mission from San Diego in November this year during which Filner, also the chair of the Philippines-United States Friendship Caucus in the US House of Representatives, will meet with Filipino veterans groups.

At the meeting with Sen.

Webb, Teodoro expressed his appreciation for US assistance in building schools and infrastructure in areas prone to conflict particularly in Mindanao. Despite recent clashes with the Abu Sayyaf, the Philippine government has significantly weakened this terrorist group, he said. (Inquirer.net)

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