

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

NV Senator Ensign not inclined to support Filipino...

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In a separate interview, Lee said the Filipino community is disappointed over disparate compensations for veterans based on where they currently reside. "Why should there be different compensations made to veterans because of where they live?" she told the *Asian Journal*. "They fought in the same war side by side with American sol-

diers, caught the same bullets the enemy fired, fought and died for America. They were promised by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt that they would be accorded the same benefits as American soldiers," she added. It will be recalled that during deliberations in Congress early this year, Sen. Ensign voted against giving these war veterans the same amount as those living in

the United States. As a result, the US government authorized one-time lump sum payments of \$15,000 each to Filipino World War II veterans who are US citizens as well as those residing in the United States. Veterans who fought in the same war, but are currently living in the Philippines were given a smaller amount of only \$9,000. The financial compensation package was part of the Obama administration's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act which was signed into law last February.

Filipino-American groups questioned the vote of the Nevada Republican senator whose paternal grandfather was born in the Philippines and is half-Filipino. This makes Ensign one-eighth Filipino. At the luncheon last Friday, May 29, Sen. Ensign asked members of the Asian Chamber of Commerce to understand his vote. "I just didn't think it was right. That is why I voted against it. I hope you understand," he said. He added, "I didn't think that the money we were giving veterans living in the Philippines was right because the standard of living is a lot less there."

It was almost 60 years ago when US President Franklin Roosevelt promised Filipinos military benefits if they fight as soldiers with the American military against the invading Japanese during World War II. However, in 1946, the US Congress passed the Rescission Act which stripped Filipinos of the benefits they were promised. Of the 66 countries allied with the United States during the war, only Filipinos were denied military benefits. Since then, several bills have been introduced in Congress in an attempt to give full equity to these Filipino war veterans. It was only last February that the US government finally set aside \$198 million for benefits of Filipino veterans. Of the over 200,000 Filipinos who fought alongside American soldiers 60 years ago, fewer than 18,000 are alive today. But several Filipino-American groups are still working to give full equity to these veterans and their families. The National Alliance for Filipino Veterans Equity is spearheading the campaign. (Dymphna Calica-Putt)

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