Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila



THIRTEENTH CONGRESS
FIRST REGULAR SESSION

HOUSE BILL NO. 680

INTRODUCED BY: HONORABLE ALIPIO CIRILO V. BADELLES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This is the fourth re-filing of this legislative initiative. The measure was known in the Tenth Congress as House Bill No. 6531 introduced by then Congressman Mariano Ll. Badelles, Sr. co-authored by Representatives Raul V. del Mar, Leandro B. Verceles, Jr. and Miguel L. Romero. In the Eleventh Congress it was known as House Bill No. 997 introduced by this representation and likewise, was co-sponsored by one hundred twenty eight Members. In addition, a counterpart measure was introduced by Senators Ramon B. Magsaysay, Jr. and Raul S. Roco in the Philippine Senate registered as Senate Bill Nos. 622 and 550, respectively. In the Twelfth Congress, this legislative proposal was passed by the House of Representatives as House Bill No. 4844 (originally enrolled as HB No. 50 authored by this representation, HB No. 784 authored by Congresswoman Cynthia Villar) and transmitted to the Philippine Senate on September 3, 2002.

This Bill seeks to formally institutionalize the Office of Veterans Affairs in the Philippine Embassy in Washington, D. C. that was established in June 21, 1990 by the Department of Foreign Affairs. The *ad hoc* Office was established to organize and coordinate all efforts by both the Philippine government and the veterans' organizations in the Philippines and the United States to pursue the claims Filipino Veterans of World War II with the US government. The measure also includes the fixing of the length of existence of this special Office and provides appropriate funds for its administration and operation.

This legislative measure is being refiled again because of our firm belief that our veterans who fought valiantly and with honor along side the Americans Forces during World War II should given adequate support in their battle for legitimate claims with the United States government.

With the onset of a new administration both in the Philippines and in the United States, it is hoped these legitimate claims of our aging veterans will be vigorously pursued with the establishment of this Office and perhaps, finally convince the United States government to address the unresolved claims conclusively.

Thus, this proposed measure is being re-filed for the fourth time with a prayer for its immediate approval by the Members of the Thirteenth Congress.

ALIPIO CIRILO V. BADELLES

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HOUSE BILL NO. 680

INTRODUCED BY: HONORABLE ALIPIO CIRILO V. BADELLES

AN ACT
TO ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN AN OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS IN THE PHILIPPINE EMBASSY IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, PRESCRIBING ITS FUNCTIONS, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the government to pursue the claims of Filipino veterans of World War II and work for the full restoration of their rights, privileges and benefits from the United States government.

SEC. 2. *Establishment of an Office of Veterans Affairs.* – For the attainment of this goal, there is hereby created an Office of Veterans Affairs in the Philippine Embassy in the United States of America mandated with the task of making formal representations, consultations and negotiations or otherwise cause the conduct of sustained and effective lobbying with appropriate offices of the legislative and executive branches of the United States government and other agencies and entities which can enhance the favorable consideration of the claims of Filipino veterans. The office shall be in existence for five (5) years from date of approval or until the Filipino veterans shall have availed of their legitimate claims.

SEC. 3. *Staffing.* – The Office of the Veterans Affairs shall have a staff consisting of a head of office appointed by the President of the Philippines, two (2) administrative assistants assigned by the Secretary of National Defense, and such other locally-hired personnel as the head of office may find necessary. The Secretary of National Defense in consultation with the Committee on Veterans Affairs of the House of Representatives and Senate shall submit a list of five (5) nominees from which the President of the Republic of the Philippines shall choose the head of office to be appointed as a Special Representative with comparable diplomatic rank.

SEC. 4. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations for the operational requirements of the *Ad Hoc* Veterans Affairs Office in Washington D.C. authorized under the budget of the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the Annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 5. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved,