

January 21, 2016

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington DC 20500

The Honorable Jeh Johnson
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear President Obama and Secretary Johnson:

The undersigned Asian American organizations write to you concerning implementation of the parole program for certain family members of Filipino World War II veterans. We are grateful that the White House announced in July 2015 that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) would utilize the parole process to help these families reunite more quickly, but we are disappointed the program has not yet begun.

Advocates submitted detailed policy recommendations to the Administration in August 2015 concerning the program's implementation. We appreciated the opportunity to share our recommendations directly with the White House, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and the State Department in September 2015. At that meeting, we were assured that the Administration was moving quickly to implement the program. Given the advanced age of many veterans, everyone recognizes the urgency of immediate and broad implementation to benefit as many family members as possible.

Aside from an October 2015 announcement from USCIS that it was creating the parole program and warning people that they could not apply at that time, there has been no further public movement on the part of the Administration. Community members are anxious for concrete information about who will be eligible to apply, how to apply, and when families can begin to apply. Many of our organizations regularly receive inquiries about the program and people are frustrated by the lack of information and apparent movement.

Filipino veterans waited decades for their service and courage to be recognized by the United States. They have waited even longer to be reunited with their loved ones. Only about 6,000 veterans remain in the United States. **It is critical that DHS implement the parole program as soon as possible for it to have the maximum benefit for veterans and their families.**

We want to work with you on successful implementation of the program. In that spirit, we respectfully request a meeting the Administration to receive an update on the program's implementation.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent issue. If you have questions or need further information, please contact Erin Oshiro at Asian Americans Advancing Justice-AAJC (eoshiro@advancingjustice-aajc.org).

Sincerely,

Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC
Filipino Advocates for Justice
National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA)
National Council of Asian Pacific Americans
National Federation of Filipino American Associations
National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC)
OCA – Asian Pacific American Advocates
San Francisco Veterans Equity Center
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center

cc: The Honorable Leon Rodriguez, Director, U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services
Cecilia Muñoz, Director, Domestic Policy Council
Esther Olavarria, Deputy Assistant Secretary, DHS