

Jan Schakowsky  
9th District  
Illinois



Member of Congress  
Washington, D.C.  
202-225-2111

April 9, 2019

Dear Friends:

I am pleased to send warm greetings to everyone gathered in Chicago, Illinois, to memorialize the 77<sup>th</sup> Commemoration of "Araw ng Kagitingan" (Day of Valor). This important event is an opportunity to pay homage to the thousands of Filipino and American soldiers who fought ferociously against enormous odds in the Fall of Bataan.

Bataan is remembered for the bravery and sacrifices Filipino and American soldiers experienced during World War II to uphold the ideals of freedom and liberty. Filipinos and Americans gallantly fought side by side to protect our democracy and will always have a precious bond and camaraderie. After the fall of the three-month Battle of Bataan, it is estimated that 24,000 soldiers died as the tired, sick, and starving troops were repeatedly beaten and denied food and water in marches that totaled about 60 miles to an abandoned military outpost. Those who were too frail to walk were bayoneted. Survivors were taken by rail from San Fernando as prisoners of war camps, where another 16,000 Filipinos and at least 1,000 Americans died from disease, mistreatment, and starvation. We will always remember and be grateful to these soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice.

In 2009, the United States Congress awarded compensation to the Filipino soldiers who served before July 1, 1946 in the United States military. More than 100,000 Filipino soldiers dutifully served this country during World War II. I was proud to see our nation honor these brave Filipino veterans in what was long overdue. I fought for years beside all of you to pass this legislation and stood alongside you as we celebrated this huge accomplishment. The Filipino Veterans Recognition and Education Project is identifying and recognizing the surviving Filipino-American WWII soldiers across the country and abroad for their wartime service to the United States and the Philippines from July 1941 to December 1946. I supported the Filipino Veterans of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2015 that honors our Filipino Veterans with Congressional Gold Medals.

Today marks an important milestone in the Filipino and Filipino American communities. We should make sure that our community, and especially the younger generations of Filipino Americans, will always be reminded of the heroism, courage, and sacrifices of our World War II Veterans. It is important for us to hear the stories of these surviving veterans and never forget the story of the Bataan Death March. I would like to thank the Office of the Philippine Consulate General in Chicago, the National Federation of Filipino American Associations, the Filipino American National Historical Society and all the other organizations who worked hard to make today's event successful.

On behalf of the people in the 9<sup>th</sup> Congressional District of Illinois, please accept my utmost appreciation to all our veterans who have served so we can enjoy the freedom we have today.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jan Schakowsky".

Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress