

Dear Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus Members:

As a coalition of Filipino and Asian Pacific Islander organizations, we are calling for the Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus members to denounce the recently passed Anti-Terror Bill in the Philippines and pass a resolution in support of the Philippine Human Rights Act.

Since 2016, the United States has continued to support the administration of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte, whose brutal drug war and other campaigns have claimed over 30,000 lives from the urban poor, farmers, peasants, indigenous, environmental activists, and government critics. Local elected officials, journalists, and Catholic bishops critical of the Duterte government have also been killed. For instance, in 2019, Brandon Lee, a Chinese American environmental advocate born and raised in San Francisco, became the victim of an attempted assassination by the Philippine military after being harrassed and surveiled for years for his environmental justice work against corporate mining in the area.

In May 2020, the United States settled a \$1.5 billion arms deal with the Philippines, despite these ongoing human rights abuses including a [report from the United National Human Rights Council](#) highlighting “widespread violations and persistent impunity.” These violations have been exacerbated with the signing of the Philippines Anti-Terror Bill which replaces the Human Security Act of 2007 and broadens definitions of “terrorism” that infringe on the rights and freedoms of dissenters against the Duterte administration. This bill also intends to include Filipinos and others outside the Philippines. Amnesty International has called on the Philippine government to [reject](#) this legislation that contains dangerous provisions and risks further undermining human rights in the country.

In response to the country’s mass human rights violations, advocates and community organizations across the country are calling for a **Philippine Human Rights Act** which would:

- Suspend security assistance to Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and Philippines National Police (PNP).
- Compel US representatives of multilateral development banks to veto loans to Philippine military and police.
- Compel the US State Department and US Department of Defense to jointly submit a report to the Congressional Appropriations Committee specifying (1) all security assistance from the US to the AFP and PNP, (2) reports from the Philippine recipients on usage of said aid, and (3) all misuses of said aid by the recipients, including but not limited to extrajudicial killings, intimidation, illegal sales, and misappropriation.

Organizational sponsors and endorsers have included AFL-CIO, the Malaya Movement, the United Methodist Church General Board of Church and Society (GBCS), Communication Workers of America (CWA), the U.S. Network of the International Coalition for Human Rights, and the Western Methodist Justice Movement, with over 3000 individuals signing on. Additionally, governments bodies like the San Francisco County Board of Supervisors have passed [resolutions](#) denouncing the country’s human rights abuses.

Currently, California’s Filipino community stands as one of the largest Asian Pacific Islander groups in the state. At a population of 2.8 million in the United States, 45% of the Filipino diaspora reside in California. As 6,000 Filipinos leave the Philippines every day due to joblessness, environmental disasters, and human rights abuses, California continues to be a key site of migration. Our community holds close ties to our homeland in the Philippines with many families sending remittances and other sources of support to loved ones back home.

As the COVID-19 pandemic has ravaged our community as well as the ongoing systemic racial violence, we see the Philippine Human Rights Act as a way to divest from arms sales that lead to mass human rights violations towards our loved ones, and instead, invest in governmental assistance and basic

services for Black, Indigenous, and immigrant communities needed during this difficult time, such as PPEs, hazard pay, unemployment assistance, and COVID-19 testing.

We call on you as state leaders to support our community during this difficult time as our communities in both the Philippines and California experience the multiple crises of human rights violations, a global pandemic, and racial and economic injustice.

Signed,

Little Manila Rising

LEAD Filipino

Filipino Association of Educators of California

Northern California Pilipinx American Student Alliance

Southern California Pilipinx American Student Alliance

University of California Davis, Bulosan Center for Filipino Studies

Filipino Advocates for Justice

Pilipino American Los Angeles Democrats

Historic Filipinotown Coalition

Migrante Napa Solano

Philippine National Day Association

Kumare Culture

Asian Solidarity Collective

South of Market Community Action Network

SOMA Pilipinas

Asian Pacific Islander Community Action

AdvancED Consulting, LLC

Samahang Pilipino at University of California Los Angeles

Improving Dreams Equality Access and Success at University of California Los Angeles

Philippine-U.S. Solidarity Organization Southern California

BAYAN-USA

GABRIELA-USA

Anakbayan-USA

Migrante-USA

Malaya Movement

Kabataan Alliance

International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines