

**Congressman Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan**

**Statement for the Record**

Chairman Takano, RM Bost, members of the committee —

Thank you for including on today’s agenda H.R. 3730, the bipartisan bill establishing a VA advisory committee for marginalized veterans living in the Marianas, the other U.S. insular areas, and in the Freely Associated States.

Veterans in my district, especially, and in the other insular areas, too, face barriers to VA services no vet should be forced to endure.

Veterans residing in the insular areas and the Freely Associated States of Palau, the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia face highly distinct situations in the lack of service they face only because of their location. Yet, these areas have some of the highest per capita enlistment percentages in the armed services.

There are many stories and difficulties veterans in these areas face that are the kind of situations that departmental bureaucrats back here in Washington can hardly imagine.

And that is why Congresswoman Radewagen and I introduced the bill establishing a committee to educate the Secretary on the obstacles insular area veterans face, is so important.

Each U.S. insular area and each of the three Freely Associated States would have a seat on the advisory committee.

And each would be able to describe the barriers their veterans face in receiving VA services.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Minority Veterans of America, and the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America support of my bipartisan legislation.

And I urge my colleagues to support this bill and for the committee to report H.R. 3730 favorably.