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SENATE

P.S. RES. NO 1035

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INTRODUCED BY SENATOR PIA S. CAYETANO

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**A RESOLUTION**

**DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE/S TO INQUIRE, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE IMPACT MADE BY THE BOTIKA NG BARANGAY (BNB) PROGRAM IN MAKING DRUGS AFFORDABLE, AVAILABLE AND ACCESSIBLE TO THE FILIPINOS**

**WHEREAS**, Article 2, Section 15 of the Constitution states that "the State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them;"

**WHEREAS**, studies show that the price of medicines in the country is considered one of the highest in Asia and that only half of the population has access to affordable and essential drugs and medicines;<sup>1</sup>

**WHEREAS**, efforts to provide a solution to this problem has been taken by the Executive Department. In 2001, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, during her State of the Nation Address, proposed a program to reduce the cost of medicines commonly bought by the poor and make them available nationwide through a distribution network to be determined by the Department of Health (DOH), in coordination with the Philippine International Trading Corporation (PITC);

**WHEREAS**, among the programs initiated by the DOH pursuant to the SONA pledge of the President was the Botika ng Barangay (BnB) which aims to promote equity in health by ensuring the availability and accessibility of affordable, safe and effective, quality, essential drugs to all, with priority for marginalized, undeserved, critical and hard to reach areas;

**WHEREAS**, news reports based on the thesis of two senior journalism students of the University of the Philippines, show that the program suffers from poor implementation thereby resulting in wastage of government resources while denying health care services to the poor areas;

**WHEREAS**, the 2007 BnB list shows that among the forty (40) poorest towns in the country, there are about fifteen (15) towns that have no BnB outlets;

**WHEREAS**, it is further noted that not all necessary and essential drugs that are commonly and regularly needed are available at the BnB outlets;

**WHEREAS**, medicines for serious illnesses such as malaria and tuberculosis, considered the leading causes of mortality and morbidity in the country, as well as drugs for filariasis and schistosomiasis, the two leading diseases in some poor communities in the Philippines, are not sold and available in the BnB outlets;

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<sup>1</sup> based on the Philippine National Health Accounts.

**WHEREAS**, there are also findings of irregularities in the procurement of medicines by some BnB operators which result in the relatively high prices of the drugs purchased by DOH;

**WHEREAS**, based on the analysis of the DOH price list and the World Health Organization price reference, DOH drug purchases are, on the average, two times higher than the international price index, an indication of government's inefficiency in drug procurement.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED**, that the appropriate Senate Committee/s inquire, in aid of legislation, on the alleged wastage of government resources in the implementation of the Botika ng Barangay Program of the DOH.

*Adopted,*

  
PIA S. CAYETANO