

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC )  
OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
First Regular Session )



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SENATE  
P. S. R. No. 505

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

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RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE LATEST REPORT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL AGENCY FOR RESEARCH OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO), WHICH CONCLUDED THAT CELLPHONES ARE POSSIBLY CARCINOGENIC

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 2, Section 15 of the same provides: "The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them";

WHEREAS, various news agencies reported last 31 May 2011 that the International Agency for Research of the World Health Organization (WHO) concluded that cellphones are "possibly carcinogenic," putting the such devices in the same category as certain dry cleaning chemicals and pesticides as a potential threat to human health;

WHEREAS, according to the reports, the WHO panel, consisting of 31 scientists from 14 countries, didn't conduct any new research but reviewed numerous existing studies that focused on the health effects of radio frequency magnetic fields, which are emitted by cellphones;

WHEREAS, the panel's decision to classify cellphones as "possibly carcinogenic" was reportedly based largely on epidemiological data showing an increased risk among heavy cellphone users of a rare type of brain tumor called a glioma, which is relatively rare and thus pose minimal individual risk;

WHEREAS, reports say the WHO panel ruled only that cellphones be classified as Category 2B, meaning they are possibly carcinogenic to humans, a designation the panel has given to 240 other agents, including the pesticide DDT, engine exhaust, lead, and various industrial chemicals.

WHEREAS, on the other hand, most major medical groups, including the American Cancer Society and the National Cancer Institute, reportedly have said the existing data on cellphones and health has been reassuring, saying health effects of cellphones have been largely dismissed because the radio frequency waves emitted from the devices are believed to be benign since cellphones emit nonionizing radiation which are too weak to break chemical bonds or to set off the DNA damage known to cause cancers;

WHEREAS, the reports said that scientists have repeatedly claimed that there is no known biological mechanism to explain how nonionizing radiation might lead to cancer or other health problems;

WHEREAS, the WHO panel, who was tasked to quantify the risk of cancer induced from radiation allegedly said that it looked carefully at the physical phenomena by which exposure to such fields might perturb biological systems and lead to cancers, and added that it found some

threads of evidence about how cancer might occur but have to acknowledge gaps and uncertainties;

WHEREAS, although the panel reportedly did not make specific recommendations to consumers, a WHO representative did note that using a hands-free headset during a conversation or communicating via text message would be options for lowering radio frequency exposure;

WHEREAS, it was also reported that although the panel's recommendation is unlikely to have any immediate effect, it is expected to be used as guidance by the World Health Organization in making recommendations about cellphone safety;

WHEREAS, Congress, in keeping itself abreast on the latest scientific findings as guide to formulate meaningful and useful legislation to protect the health of every Filipino, should look into these findings and consider if more research deems it conclusive to regulate the country's telecommunication industry and the specification of its products sold to Filipino consumers;

WHEREFORE, be it hereby resolved by the Philippine Senate, to direct the proper Senate committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the latest report from the International Agency for Research of the World Health Organization (WHO), which concluded that cellphones are possibly carcinogenic.

Adopted,

  
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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