

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

SENATE
P. S. R. No. 315

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE, TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORT THAT EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND ITS 19 ATTACHED AGENCIES, HAVE NOT RECEIVED A SINGLE PESO OF THEIR MAGNA CARTA BENEFITS SINCE MAY 2012

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 2, Section 16 provides: "The State affirms labor as a primary social economic force. It shall protect the rights of workers and promote their welfare";

WHEREAS, gmanetwork.com in its 10 December 2012 article reported that Filipino scientists have yet to receive the benefits due to them under Republic Act No. 8439 or the Philippine Magna Carta for Scientists;

WHEREAS, according to the report, employees of the Department of Science and Technology and its 19 attached agencies, have not received a single peso of their Magna Carta benefits since May of this year;

WHEREAS, according to R.A. No. 8439 all of the government's science and technology (S&T) workers are entitled to subsistence allowance, longevity pay, and hazard pay; in particular, all S&T employees are entitled to a subsistence allowance equivalent to P150 for three meals a day and a monthly laundry allowance of not less than P150; every month, all government S&T personnel are also entitled to longevity pay equivalent to 5 percent of their basic salary for every five years spent in government service;

WHEREAS, the law also mandates that all S&T personnel involved in hazardous undertakings or assigned in hazardous workplaces, shall be paid hazard allowances ranging from 10 to 30 percent of their monthly basic salary depending on the nature and extent of the hazard involved;

WHEREAS, the meager pay scientists receive is reportedly not enough to feed their families; some scientists are buried in debt that they have to walk home;

WHEREAS, DOST officials reportedly said that they are doing everything they can to release the suspended benefits, but claim that their hands are tied due to the need to clarify the Magna Carta's implementing guidelines;

WHEREAS, according to Atty. Oswaldo Santos, DOST Assistant Secretary for Finance that this is the first time they had to suspend the Magna Carta benefits for a long period because of a joint resolution in 2009 which required the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) to coordinate with concerned agencies in order to determine the qualifications, conditions and rates in the grant of said benefits;

WHEREAS, according to the report, as of 23 October 2012, the DOST and DBM have already drafted a set of guidelines to determine the qualifications necessary for the suspended benefits;

WHEREAS, however, the report claimed that according to Philippine Nuclear Research Institute director Dr. Alumanda dela Rosa, the agency is still trying to provide at least partial fulfillment of the Magna Carta benefits for their over 200 employees from the agency's savings;

WHEREAS, because of meager compensation, it was reported that the scientists are demoralized; some scientists are seriously considering early retirement and working abroad, while others will study abroad and not return;

WHEREAS, an earlier report noted that the Philippines is already in dire need of S&T workers, according to UNESCO standards;

WHEREAS, one of the reasons R.A. No. 8439 was crafted, was to entice our scientists to stay and work here in the Philippines, rather than look for work elsewhere; however, it is disheartening that the law has yet to be implemented fully;

WHEREAS, the legislature needs to craft measures to prevent the continuing brain drain of scientists in the country;

WHEREAS, in light of this report, the concerned government agencies should act swiftly in reviewing and approving the guidelines on the release of benefits as mandated by law;

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 report that employees of the Department of Science and Technology and its 19 attached agencies, have not received a single Peso of their Magna Carta benefits since May 2012.

Adopted,

Miriam Defensor Santiago
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