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SENATE
P.S. Res 414

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Introduced by Senator Poe

RESOLUTION
RECOMMENDING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND
RELEVANT OFFICE/S TO STUDY AND TO CONSIDER FOR POSSIBLE
ADHERENCE AND ACQUIESCENCE THE OPTIONAL PROTOCOL TO THE
INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND CULTURAL
RIGHTS (ICESCR), AS A STRONG AND UNEQUIVOCAL STATEMENT
ABOUT THE VALUE OF ALL HUMAN RIGHTS

WHEREAS, the Philippine Government is one of the 184 member States of the United Nations (UN) that ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) on June 7, 1974;

WHEREAS, the ICESCR not only identifies a range of economic, social, and cultural rights, but it also requires all peoples to enjoy these rights without discrimination such as the right to work and to have just favorable conditions of work, social security, protection of the family, adequate standards of living (food, clothing, and shelter), education, benefits to scientific progress and culture;

WHEREAS, the Optional Protocols to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Convention on the Elimination and Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) have been ratified by the Philippine government,

WHEREAS, we all know deep in our hearts the universality, indivisibility, interdependence, and interrelatedness of all human rights and fundamental freedoms;

WHEREAS, the Optional Protocol makes a “strong and unequivocal statement about the equal value and importance of all human rights and the need for strengthened legal protection of economic, social, and cultural rights;

WHEREAS, people’s susceptibility to civil and political rights violations are heightened by their vulnerable economic, social, and cultural status, i.e. poor access to employment, education, health assistance, food security, social security, etc.;

WHEREAS, the poverty incidence in the Philippines between 2009 and 2012 only marginally decreased by 0.6% from 22.9% to 22.3% and higher incidence rates were recorded in the Mindanao region: ARMM (46.9%), Region 12 (37.5%), Region 9 (36.9%), Region 10 (35.6%), and Caraga (34.1%);

WHEREAS, the UN Human Development Report 2013 ranked the Philippines 144 out of 186 countries in the Human Development Index, and emphasized the need for “pro-poor policies and significant investments in people’s capabilities—through a focus on

education, nutrition and health, and employment skills” so as to “expand access to decent work and provide for sustained progress”;

WHEREAS, the Optional Protocol can help create an enabling law, as well as strengthen the existing laws that address several economic, social, and cultural rights, i.e. work, indigenous peoples, education, health, social security, environmental well-being, etc.,

WHEREAS, the Optional Protocol can help or guide the government in realigning the national budget to progressively realize the rights to education, health, employment, food security, balanced ecology, etc., in dire need of investment to spur sustainable economic and human development progress that shall, consequently, uphold and protect the value of each person’s life and dignity—not only for those living today, but also for the generations to come;

WHEREAS, the Optional Protocol will ultimately serve as a strong support to the present government’s effort for a clean government, as the more effective alignment of the national budget shall make every Filipino’s welfare a top priority and eliminate channels that lead to corruption and improper use of the people’s money.

WHEREAS, the Optional Protocol will strengthen the capacity of the majority of Filipinos who are poor and marginalized, referred to by President Benigno Aquino III as his bosses, to improve their economic and social wellbeing, in the process contributing to the country’s unprecedented economic growth and development;

WHEREAS, it is a fundamental truth that every government’s strength lies in its people;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, that the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and relevant Office/s to study and consider for possible adherence and acquiesce in the optional protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), as a strong and unequivocal statement about the value of all human rights.


GRACE POE