

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



Senate
Office of the Secretary

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SENATE
P. S. R. No. 613

RECEIVED BY: *[Signature]*

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN
INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORT THAT LEAD PAINT
USED ON RELIGIOUS SCULPTURES POSE SERIOUS HEALTH RISKS

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 11, Section 14 provides: "The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them";

WHEREAS, in a press release last 13 April 2014, environmentalist group EcoWaste Coalition has reportedly detected lead, a neurotoxic chemical impinging on brain function and development, in some religious sculptures with paint coatings sold by sidewalk vendors in the vicinity of the Quiapo Church in Manila;

WHEREAS, using an X-Ray Fluorescence (XRF) analytical device, the group reportedly screened the paint coatings on six religious statues for lead, a toxic substance used as pigment in some enamel paints;

WHEREAS, according to World Health Organization (WHO), lead, at high levels of exposure, attacks the brain and central nervous system to cause coma, convulsions, and even death; WHO also reportedly said that children who survive severe lead poisoning may be left with mental retardation and behavioral disruption;

WHEREAS, it was reported that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources last December 2013 issued a chemical control order (CCO) for lead and lead compounds setting a threshold limit of 90 parts per million (ppm) for lead in paints, and has further established a phaseout period by 2016 for leaded decorative paints and 2019 for leaded industrial paints;

WHEREAS, the images, all made of fiberglass and with decorative coatings, are reportedly sold from ₱200 to ₱400 each;

WHEREAS, EcoWaste officials said that the frequent kissing or touching of revered statues or wiping them with handkerchiefs or towels may cause their paint coatings to be disturbed and to come off in time; chipping paint raises a health concern, particularly if the paint contains lead and contaminates the dust that

humans, especially young children, pregnant and nursing women, may ingest or inhale as they kiss or touch the sculpture”;

WHEREAS, as per XRF screening, the following religious statues were reportedly found to contain excessive levels of lead:

1. An 11-inch Santo Niño de la Pera worth P250 had 33,300 ppm of lead
2. A 5-inch Familia Sagrada worth P200 had 8,785 ppm of lead
3. An 11-inch St. Joseph worth P250 had 8,774 ppm of lead
4. An 8-inch St. Therese of Lisieux worth P200 had 7,880 ppm of lead
5. A 16-inch San Roque worth P400 had 7,257 ppm of lead
6. A 9-inch Blessed Pope John Paul II worth P200 had 1,146 ppm of lead

WHEREAS, given the dangers of everyday exposure to toxic chemicals found in the religious sculpture, EcoWaste reportedly urged the Catholic Church to employ its moral authority to persuade manufacturers to create and sell only lead-safe religious items for public health and safety;

WHEREAS, the environmentalist group also reportedly asked for the cooperation of statue makers to help in minimizing lead hazards in a child’s environment from a highly preventable source;

WHEREAS, EcoWaste officials reportedly suggested that only lead-safe paints should be used in church-run facilities, including the interiors and exteriors of churches, hospitals and schools, as an essential measure to prevent lead exposure;

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 lead paint used on religious sculptures pose serious health risks.

Adopted,


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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