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SENATE

P.S. Res. No. 619

RECEIVED BY: *f*

Introduced by Sen. JINGGOY EJERCITO ESTRADA

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE GOVERNMENT'S ALLEGED POOR PERFORMANCE IN THE AUDIT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION – EUROPEAN MARITIME SAFETY AGENCY (EMSA) IN RELATION TO THE STATUS OF MARITIME INDUSTRY IN THE PHILIPPINES, SPECIFICALLY ON THE MARITIME SAFETY AND EDUCATION STANDARDS

WHEREAS, Section 3, Article XIII of the 1987 Constitution provides that the *“State shall afford full protection to labor, local and overseas, organized and unorganized, and promote full employment and equality of employment opportunities to all.”*;

WHEREAS, the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), an attached agency of the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC), is the principal government agency tasked to integrate the development, promotion and regulation of the maritime industry in the country;

WHEREAS, President Benigno S. Aquino issued Executive Order No. 75 on April 30, 2012, designating the DOTC, through the MARINA, as the single administration responsible for the oversight in the implementation of the 1978 International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STWC Convention);

WHEREAS, the Philippines, a signatory to the STWC Convention, adheres to its principle as a maritime safety instrument providing for the global standard training and certification for seafarers engaged in the international shipping trade and adopted under the auspices of the International Maritime Organization (IMO);

WHEREAS, Republic Act No. 10635 was enacted in March 2014, primarily to authorize MARINA to carry out an effective regulatory framework conducive to the efficiency, transparency and competitiveness of the Philippine seafaring industry;

WHEREAS, a recent news article in the Philippine Star cited the country's failure to comply with the European Union- European Maritime Safety Agency's (EU-EMSA) maritime safety and education standards, specifically on the quality of maritime education, training and competency certificates issued by the government to Filipino seafarers;

WHEREAS, the EMSA, is a regulatory agency which originated in the late 1990s along with a number of other major European maritime safety initiatives. It was established as a major source of support to the Commission and the Member States in the field of maritime safety and prevention of pollution from ships, and subsequent amendments have refined and enlarged its mandate [EMSA website];

WHEREAS, according to Mr. Nelson Ramirez, President of the United Filipino Seafarers (UFS), "the Philippines failed in two audits conducted last year by the EU-EMSA on the education and training certificates issued by the Philippine government to seafarers may soon no longer be honored by EU ship owners and regulators";


WHEREAS, Mr. Ramirez also claimed that MARINA's weak leadership has compromised the livelihood of about 80,000 seafarers currently serving on EU-flagged vessels with the imminent cancellation of their SCTW certificates;

WHEREAS, he also stated that the seafarers have also complained of long lines at the MARINA office when securing their certificates of proficiency, the proliferation of bogus-Marina certificates and the replacement of a seamen's book with a sheet of paper to be presented to maritime authorities abroad;

WHEREAS, in order for our seafarers to enhance their skills and proficiency, maintain their status competitiveness globally, and comply with the international standards set by the EMSA, there is an urgent need for the national government to improve our maritime safety and education standards;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, to direct the appropriate Senate Committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the Philippine government's alleged poor performance in the audit by the European Union – European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) in relation to the quality of maritime education, training and competency certificates with the end of view of adopting a more appropriate and effective polices and guidelines on the maritime safety and education standards.

Adopted,


JINGGOY EJERCITO ESTRADA
Senator