SIXTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES Second Regular Session



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SENATE PS Res. No. <u>1367</u>

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RECEIVED BY:

Introduced by SENATOR SONNY ANGARA

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE LABOR COMMITTEE OF THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE FIRE INCIDENT INVOLVING KENTEX MANUFACTURING CORPORATION WHICH RESULTED IN THE DEATH OF SEVENTY-TWO (72) EMPLOYEES THEREOF

WHEREAS, on May 13, 2015, a fire tore through Kentex Manufacturing Corporation, a footwear factory which produced sandals and slippers for the local market, in an industrial district in Valenzuela City, killing at least seventy-two (72) of its workers;

WHEREAS, according to local authorities, a welding job that was being carried out close to inflammable chemicals ignited the fire and trapped workers on the second floor behind steel bar-enclosed windows with no viable fire exit, leaving them to die of suffocation:

WHEREAS, after conducting a mandatory conference, the Department of Labor and Employment discovered that aside from engaging the services of a non-DOLE registered subcontractor, Kentex underpaid its workers, failed to remit their SSS and PhilHealth contributions, and enforced illegal salary deductions;

WHEREAS, the DOLE said it declared Kentex compliant to basic labor regulations and occupational safety and health standards after passing the Labor Law Compliance System in 2014, and has only learned of Kentex' labor violations after the tragic incident;

WHEREAS, the Occupational Safety and Health Standards, which was promulgated in 1978 and amended in 1989, seeks "to protect every workingman against the dangers of injury, sickness or death through safe and healthful working conditions, thereby assuring the conservation of valuable manpower resources and the prevention of loss or damage to lives and properties, consistent with national development goals and with the State's commitment for the total development of every worker as a complete human being";

WHEREAS, a 2006 report by the Occupational Safety and Health Center shows that 90 percent of the Philippine workforce do not enjoy favorable working conditions and are exposed to chemicals and substandard equipment and tools, and unhygienic working environment;

WHEREAS, these violations do not just result in additional statistics involving lack of compliance with occupational safety and other labor laws on employee welfare, but lives of family members earning a living under harsh conditions are untimely taken away from their husbands, wives, children and loved ones;

WHEREAS, in light of accidents in workplaces, most of which have injured and claimed lives of workers, there is a need for Congress to look into the provisions of the Labor Code on safety and health standards in the workplace, for the welfare and protection of Filipino workers;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Committee on Labor of the Senate of the Philippines be directed to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the fire incident last May 13, 2015 involving Kentex Manufacturing Corporation, with the end view of strengthening existing laws, rules and regulations and improving mechanisms for the compliance thereof.

Adopted.

SENATOR SONNY ANGARA