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SENATE
P. S. R. No. 1559

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION
DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE
TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION,
ON THE UNITED STATES HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT THAT AN OUTDATED AND
INEFFICIENT LAND ADMINISTRATION SYSTEM HAS RESULTED IN FRAUDULENT
LAND TITLES AND WIDESPREAD LAND GRABBING IN THE PHILIPPINES

1 WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 3, Section 1, provides: "No person shall be
2 deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law, nor shall any person be denied
3 the equal protection of the laws";

4 WHEREAS, the *Philippine Star* on 23 August 2015 reported that an outdated and
5 inefficient land administration system has resulted in fraudulent, overlapping, and duplicative
6 land titles, and widespread land grabbing in the Philippines;

7 WHEREAS, the *Star* was quoting U.S. Representative Ed Royce, chairman of the
8 Committee on Foreign Affairs, who said during a U.S. House of Representatives hearing on
9 property rights and development in Southeast Asia that perpetrators in land-grabbing cases are
10 usually local politicians, foreign investors, and well-connected people;

11 WHEREAS, the news also cited a committee report of the U.S. House of Representative
12 saying that land administration in the Philippines is governed by over 60 laws and regulations,
13 some of which date back more than 100 years, thereby creating the potential for conflict and vast
14 opportunities for corruption;

15 WHEREAS, the *Star* also quoted U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
16 Assistant Administrator Jonathan Stivers, who said that protecting land rights was key to
17 promoting growth in the rural and urban areas of the Philippines;

18 WHEREAS, according to the USAID assessment report, the high cost of property
19 registration and the lengthy court processes required for land registry procedures, such as
20 correcting clerical mistakes, issuing lost titles, and weeding out fraudulent certificates, are
21 among the constraints to secure property rights;

22 WHEREAS, the report also said that 90 percent of land cases handled by the Supreme
23 Court in 2012 took more than 20 years to make their way through the system of hearings and
24 appeals;

1 WHEREAS, among those who testified was Joey Quinto, publisher of the California
2 Journal for Filipino Americans, who claimed that a retired general was preventing his family
3 from accessing two properties they owned in Antipolo, Rizal and that appeals to government
4 agencies have done nothing to prevent the general from blocking the access road to their
5 property;

6 WHEREAS, Zosimo Laurel Contreras, another Filipino American witness, said his
7 family's property in Tagaytay had been seized by a land grabber and there was nothing they
8 could do about it;

9 WHEREAS, the State should respond to the challenge of strengthening the laws and
10 systems governing land rights, land registration, and land disputes;

11 WHEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE PHILIPPINE SENATE to direct
12 the proper Senate committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the United States
13 House Committee report that an outdated and inefficient land administration system has resulted
14 in fraudulent land titles and widespread land grabbing in the Philippines.

Adopted,


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO
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