

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

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SENATE

P.S. Resolution No. 117

Introduced by SENATOR LUISA "LOI" P. EJERCITO ESTRADA

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND DEMOGRAPHY TO INVESTIGATE, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, THE ALLEGED ANOMALOUS TRANSACTION BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND THE COUPLES FOR CHRIST

WHEREAS, the Constitution provides in Article 2:

Sec. 6. The separation of Church and State shall be inviolable.

Sec. 28. Subject to reasonable conditions prescribed by law, the State adopts and implements a policy of full public disclosure of all its transactions involving public interest.

WHEREAS, the newspaper Malaya, dated 14 October 2004, page 1, in an article entitled "Couples for Christ Got P50M for Birth Control", alleged that during a congressional hearing on the budget, Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit was asked why the Department of Health (DOH) entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Couples for Christ (CFC), a Catholic Church-based organization, using P50 million of government funds to support activities of the CFC that are supposed to propagate the practice of natural family planning among beneficiary couples of the organization's *Gawad Kaginhawaan* project for poverty alleviation;

WHEREAS, the amount of P50 million was reportedly allocated in the 2002 General Appropriations Act for DOH programs for 2003, and that an initial P15 million had already been released, and that the second tranche of P11 million is to follow;

WHEREAS, reports say that the project's budget calls for spending P23 million for training workshops to be attended by 6,840 persons; P10 million for such events as launching of Kagawad projects in 10 regions, the Youth and Singles Chastity Education Congress, and Campus Tours for Chastity Education of the Youth; P8 million for administration; P8 million for media expenses and public relations; and P1 million for "budget for RP and NFP partners";


WHEREAS, it was alleged that the MOA did not go through public bidding after the DOH's Procurement and Logistics Board decided to approve CFC as the bearer of the project through "direct contracting", which is allegedly a violation of Republic Act No. 9184, or the Government Procurement Act;

WHEREAS, it was reported that while admitting the program should have undergone the usual public bidding, the Health secretary said the DOH opted to contract the CFC directly since the movement is a nationwide organization;

WHEREAS, in view of these allegations, there is a need to investigate whether or not the contract promoted a particular religious bias in violation of the constitutional provision on the separation between Church and State, whether it violated the prohibition on government from allocating funds to support a particular religion, and to determine any violation of R.A. No. 9184;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, by the Senate, to direct the Senate Committee on Health and Demography to investigate, in aid of legislation, the alleged anomalous transaction between the Department of Health and the Couples for Christ.

Adopted


LUISA "LOI" P. EJERCITO ESTRADA
Senator