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SENATE

P.S. Res. No. 366

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by **SENATOR LEILA M. DE LIMA**

RESOLUTION
HONORING THE LATE FORMER SENATOR HEHERSON "SONNY"
ALVAREZ AND CELEBRATE HIS PROFOUND LEGACY AS A
STATESMAN AND A CHAMPION OF OUR DEMOCRACY,
ENVIRONMENT AND THE RULE OF LAW

1 WHEREAS, the Senate of the Philippines has, on many occasions, commended
2 and honored iconic Filipinos for their triumphs and excellence in their respective fields,
3 which have indubitably influenced the country's development throughout history;

4 WHEREAS, on 20 April 2020, former Philippine Senator and political activist
5 Heherson "Sonny" Alvarez, succumbed to the COVID-19 virus around three weeks
6 after it was first announced that he and his wife, former Executive Director of the
7 National Commission on Culture and the Arts, Cecile Guidote-Alvarez, had both tested
8 positive and were in critical condition;¹

9 WHEREAS, Heherson Turingan Alvarez was born on 26 October 1939, in
10 Santiago, Isabela to parents Capt. Marcelo Alvarez and Juanita Turingan;²

11 WHEREAS, he studied Liberal Arts and Law at the University of the Philippines
12 and held a Masters in Economics and Public Administration degree from Harvard
13 University;³

¹ Ranada, P. (2020, April 20). Former senator, activist Heherson Alvarez dies from coronavirus. Retrieved April 22, 2020, from <https://www.rappler.com/nation/258470-former-senator-activist-heherson-alvarez-dies-coronavirus>

² Lirio, G. (2020, April 20). Heherson 'Sonny' Alvarez: Keeper of the flame. Retrieved April 22, 2020, from <https://news.abs-cbn.com/spotlight/04/20/20/heherson-sonny-alvarez-keeper-of-the-flame>

³ [Heherson T. Alvarez Curriculum Vitae]. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.hehersonalvarez.com/index.php/profile/curriculum-vitae>

1 WHEREAS, as an activist, he was one of the youngest delegates to the
2 Constitutional Commission in 1971, where he was also one of a few who opposed
3 President Ferdinand Marcos and refused to sign the Marcos-dictated Constitution;⁴

4 WHEREAS, as a member of the opposition when Martial Law was declared in
5 1972, he was forced to go underground and flee to the United States where he helped
6 organize the opposition Movement for a Free Philippines;⁵

7 WHEREAS, he shared the same causes of upholding the rule of law and
8 accountability of various abuses during the Martial Law regime with the late Benigno
9 “Ninoy” Aquino Jr., who was then, assassinated on an airport tarmac in 1983 upon
10 returning to the Philippines from exile in the United States. After the said
11 assassination, he founded the Ninoy Aquino Movement (NAM), the opposition
12 movement that lobbied to cut military and economic aid to the Marcos dictatorship.
13 NAM also led the search and exposé of the hidden Marcos wealth in the US;⁶

14 WHEREAS, after the fall of the Marcos regime, Alvarez served in the Cabinet of
15 then President Corazon Aquino as Secretary of the Department of Agrarian Reform
16 from 1986 to 1987;⁷

17 WHEREAS, he was elected to the Philippine Senate in 1987 and was
18 subsequently re-elected for another six-year term in 1992. As a lawmaker, he
19 distinguished himself as an ardent environmentalist, economist, and social reformer
20 thereby earning the moniker, “Mr. Environment”;⁸

21 WHEREAS, from 1998 to 2001, he served as a member of the House of
22 Representatives having been elected as the representative of the fourth district of his
23 home province of Isabela. As a member of Congress in 2001, he became the principal

⁴ Garcia, B. A. (2020, April 22). [OPINION] Heherson Alvarez writes 30. Retrieved April 22, 2020, from <https://www.rappler.com/views/imho/258567-opinion-heherson-alvarez-writes-30>

⁵ Lirio, G. (2020, April 20). Heherson 'Sonny' Alvarez: Keeper of the flame. Retrieved April 22, 2020, from <https://news.abs-cbn.com/spotlight/04/20/20/heherson-sonny-alvarez-keeper-of-the-flame>

⁶ Garcia, B. A. (2020, April 22). [OPINION] Heherson Alvarez writes 30. Retrieved April 22, 2020, from <https://www.rappler.com/views/imho/258567-opinion-heherson-alvarez-writes-30>

⁷ CNN Philippines Staff. (2020, April 20). Former Senator Heherson 'Sonny' Alvarez succumbs to COVID-19. Retrieved April 22, 2020, from <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/4/20/Former-Senator-Heherson-Alvarez-die-COVID-19-.html>

⁸ [Heherson Alvarez Senate Profile]. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.senate.gov.ph/senators/former_senators/heherson_alvarez.htm

1 complainant in an impeachment case against then President Joseph Estrada, who was
2 later removed in a military-backed popular revolt over corruption charges;⁹

3 WHEREAS, as an environmentalist legislator, he authored many landmark
4 laws related to environmental protection and conservation, chief among of which are
5 the following: Clean Air Act of 1999, National Integrated Protected Areas System
6 (NIPAS) Act, Solid Waste Management Act, Northern Sierra Madre Protected Area Act,
7 and the Strategic Environmental Plan (SEP) for Palawan Act;¹⁰

8 WHEREAS, having served in both Houses of Congress he also helped spur
9 socio-economic and political growth which are integral to a comprehensive program
10 to promote sustainable development by authoring the following laws: Comprehensive
11 Agrarian Reform Law (CARL), Cooperative Development Authority (CDA),
12 Department of Energy Law, Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act, Cooperative
13 Code of the Philippines, National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) Law,
14 and the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA), among others;¹¹

15 WHEREAS, from 2001 to 2002, he once again served in the Cabinet as then
16 President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's Environment Secretary. He later served as
17 presidential adviser on overseas Filipino communities in 2003, on agrarian reform
18 from 2005 to 2007, and on global warming and climate change from 2009 to 2010;¹²

19 WHEREAS, he was also the chairman and chief executive officer of the
20 Philippine Mining Development Corporation from 2007 to 2008 and was a Climate
21 Change commissioner and vice-chair of the Climate Change Commission from 2010 to
22 2015;¹³

23 WHEREAS, he has garnered several awards for excellence in the many decades
24 he has worked in service of the Filipino people. For his opposition to the Marcos
25 dictatorship, he became a recipient of the Outstanding Human Rights Award by the

⁹ Garcia, B. A. (2020, April 22). [OPINION] Heherson Alvarez writes 30. Retrieved April 22, 2020, from <https://www.rappler.com/views/imho/258567-opinion-heherson-alvarez-writes-30>

¹⁰ [Heherson T. Alvarez Curriculum Vitae]. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.hehersonalvarez.com/index.php/profile/curriculum-vitae>

¹¹ [Heherson T. Alvarez Curriculum Vitae]. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.hehersonalvarez.com/index.php/profile/curriculum-vitae>

¹² CNN Philippines Staff. (2020, April 20). Former Senator Heherson 'Sonny' Alvarez succumbs to COVID-19. Retrieved April 22, 2020, from <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/4/20/Former-Senator-Heherson-Alvarez-die-COVID-19-.html>

¹³ Salaverria, L. B. (2020, April 21). Remembering the late former Sen. Heherson Alvarez. Retrieved April 22, 2020, from <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1261936/remembering-former-sen-heherson-alvarez>

1 Fund for Free Expression in New York. In 1972, he was declared one of the Ten Most
2 Outstanding Leaders of the North along with other senior political figures like Gen.
3 Carlos P. Romulo of Tarlac and Quintin Paredes of Abra. Over the years that he was in
4 the Senate, he was consistently adjudged Outstanding Senator by the different print
5 and multi-media award giving bodies. He was also the first Asian to be honored with
6 the Outstanding Public Policy Achievement Award from the prestigious Washington-
7 based Climate Institute;¹⁴

8 WHEREAS, Senator Alvarez's passion and dedication as a public servant can
9 never be adequately captured by the number of positions and titles he has held, nor
10 can it be summarized by the number of bills he has managed to author and shepherd
11 into laws. Rather, his legacy endures as one of the pillars of Philippine democracy and
12 a champion of human rights, social justice, environmental protection and the rule of
13 law;

14 WHEREAS, he has more than earned his place in the annals of Philippine
15 history and it is only proper to recognize and commemorate his contributions to the
16 historical development of the Filipino nation and his tireless devotion to a lifetime of
17 public service for the Filipino people. He is, and will always be, an exemplary and
18 towering figure, who has helped shape the very foundations of Philippine democracy
19 and lead the Filipino people towards the path of sustainable and equitable
20 development;

21 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, BY
22 THE SENATE to honor the late Senator Heherson "Sonny" Alvarez and celebrate his
23 profound legacy as a statesman and a champion of our democracy, environment and
24 the rule of law.

Adopted,


LEILA M. DE LIMA

¹⁴ [Heherson Alvarez Senate Profile]. (n.d.). Retrieved from
https://www.senate.gov.ph/senators/former_senators/heherson_alvarez.htm