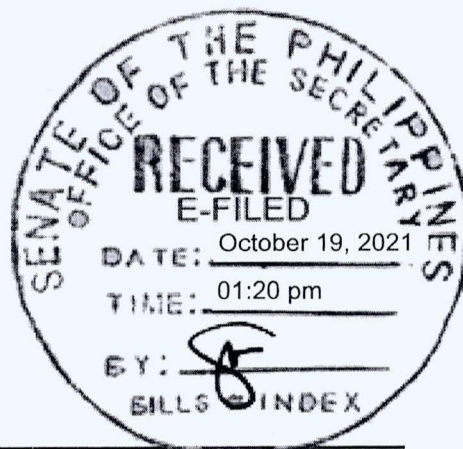


EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Third Regular Session)



SENATE

P.S. Res. No. 933

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

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTED REMOVAL OF BOOKS, PAMPHLETS, RESEARCH WORK OR ANY READING MATERIAL CONSIDERED BY THE GOVERNMENT AS ‘SUBVERSIVE’ FROM THE LIBRARIES OF STATE UNIVERSITIES THEREBY PREVENTING THE FREE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS AND CURTAILING OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING

1 WHEREAS, Article II, Section 13 of the 1987 Constitution states that “[t]he
2 State recognizes the vital role of the youth in nation-building and shall promote and
3 protect their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being. It shall
4 inculcate in the youth patriotism and nationalism, and encourage their involvement
5 in public and civic affairs”;

6 WHEREAS, Article II, Section 17 of the 1987 Constitution states that “[t]he
7 State shall give priority to education, science and technology, arts, culture, and sports
8 to foster patriotism and nationalism, accelerate social progress, and promote total
9 human liberation and development”;

10 WHEREAS, Article XIV, Section 5 (2) of the 1987 Constitution declares that
11 “[a]cademic freedom shall be enjoyed in all institutions of higher learning”;

12 WHEREAS, it was recently reported that the government had embarked on a
13 mission, as part of their counterinsurgency program, to “remove all books,
14 pamphlets, research work or any reading material that has reference to communism,

1 socialism or Philippine communist rebels who have been waging a guerrilla war for
2 more than 50 years” from the libraries of selected state universities;¹

3 WHEREAS, in September 2021, books and other reading materials about
4 peace negotiations between the government and National Democratic Front of the
5 Philippines (NDFP) and other topics deemed anti-government by the military were
6 removed from the libraries in three educational institutions—Kalinga State
7 University (KSU), Isabela State University (ISU), Aklan State University (ASU);²

8 WHEREAS, the books removed from the libraries of the aforementioned state
9 universities include the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights
10 and International Humanitarian Law (CARHIHL); NDFP Declaration and
11 Program of Action for the Rights, Protection, and Welfare of Children; and the
12 Government of the Philippines-NDFP Peace Negotiations Major Arguments³;

13 WHEREAS, these kinds of materials and books were reportedly considered as
14 “subversive” by the government’s anti-insurgency task force. However, the University
15 of the Philippines (UP)-Visayas, through a post by their Chancellor, Dr. Clement
16 Camposano, has refused the call to remove allegedly subversive reading materials
17 and books from their libraries⁴;

18 WHEREAS, this action is eerily reminiscent of what the former German
19 dictator, Nazi leader, and the orchestrator of the largest mass genocide, Adolf Hitler,
20 did in Germany in which the Nazi purged all books that contain ideas and
21 philosophies contrary to the Nazi ideology;⁵

22 WHEREAS, the prohibition, while symbolic, is practically as useless as it is
23 misplaced, as these books are reportedly available online and easily accessible.

¹ Dela Peña, K. (2021). *Purge of ‘subversive’ PH books draws images of Nazi book-burning orgies*. Retrieved on 9 October 2021 from: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1496689/purge-of-subversive-ph-books-draws-images-of-nazi-book-burning-orgies>

² *Ibid.*

³ Baron, G. (2021). ‘Hands off our libraries’: *Educator laments removal of NDFP books from university libraries*. Retrieved on 9 October 2021 from: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/09/29/hands-off-our-libraries-educator-laments-removal-of-ndfp-books-from-university-libraries/>

⁴ Burgos Jr., N. (2021). *UP Visayas won’t ditch ‘subversive’ materials*. Retrieved on 9 October 2021 from: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1494350/up-visayas-wont-ditch-subversive-materials>

⁵ Dela Peña, K. (2021). *Purge of ‘subversive’ PH books draws images of Nazi book-burning orgies*. Retrieved on 9 October 2021 from: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1496689/purge-of-subversive-ph-books-draws-images-of-nazi-book-burning-orgies>

1 Moreover, the ban on such reading materials makes them that much more
2 interesting to the youth;⁶

3 WHEREAS, to paraphrase the U.S. case of *Keyishan v. Board of Regents*⁷,
4 the vigilant protection of constitutional freedoms is nowhere more vital than in
5 the community of schools. The classroom is peculiarly the “marketplace of ideas.”
6 Our country's future depends upon leaders trained through wide exposure to that
7 robust exchange of ideas which discovers truth “out of a multitude of tongues,
8 [rather] than through any kind of authoritative selection”;

9 WHEREAS, censorship runs counter to the peace process as it is the free
10 exchange of ideas that discourages violence as mode to redefining our
11 government. In another U.S. Supreme Court case⁸, it was declared that “[t]he
12 greater the importance of safeguarding the community from incitements to the
13 overthrow of our institutions by force and violence, the more imperative is the
14 need to preserve inviolate the constitutional rights of free speech, free press and
15 free assembly in order to maintain the opportunity for free political discussion, to
16 the end that government may be responsive to the will of the people and that
17 changes, if desired, may be obtained by peaceful means. Therein lies the security
18 of the Republic, the very foundation of constitutional government”;

19 WHEREAS, instead of investing a significant amount of time and
20 resources needlessly censoring libraries, the government should reflect on its
21 policies and instead develop and implement strategic and long-term solutions to
22 the decades-old Communist insurgency;

23 WHEREAS, freedom of thought is a cornerstone of academic freedom and
24 a central pillar of any functioning democracy. Institutions of higher learning
25 should foster an environment conducive to the free exchange of ideas and the
26 development of critical minds;

27 WHEREAS, the goal of education should be to train and sharpen the
28 minds of learners and expose them to the widest range of knowledge and
29 ideologies possible in order to produce critical thinkers and not blind followers
30 or sycophants;

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ 385 U.S. 589 (1967)

⁸ *De Jonge v. Oregon*, 299 U.S. 353 (1937)

1 WHEREAS, if anything, UP-Visayas should be lauded for protecting our
2 academic freedoms against the attempts at insurgency by this government;

3 WHEREAS, the removal of books from the libraries of state universities is a
4 direct and blatant attack on academic freedom enshrined in the 1987 Constitution of
5 the Philippines;

6 WHEREAS, these actions by the government's anti-insurgency task force not
7 only directly contravene the duty of the State to protect and promote the moral and
8 intellectual well-being of the people, but actually run completely against the road to
9 peace;

10 WHEREAS, there is need to examine the policies formulated by our law
11 enforcement agencies that seek to censor books from our academic institutions to
12 ensure that none of said policies violate our democratic values;

13 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE, directing the
14 appropriate Senate Committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the
15 reported removal of books, pamphlets, research work or any reading material
16 considered by the government as 'subversive' from the libraries of state universities
17 thereby preventing the free exchange of ideas and curtailing of academic freedom in
18 institutions of higher learning.

Adopted,


LEILA M. DE LIMA