

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

5 OCT 13 2013

SENATE  
P. S. R. No. 353

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

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RESOLUTION  
DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH, WOMEN AND FAMILY  
RELATIONS TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION  
ON THE INCREASING INCIDENCE OF E-MAIL ORDER BRIDES

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 2, Section 11 states that. "The State values the dignity of every human person and guarantees full respect for human rights";

WHEREAS, Republic Act No 6955, otherwise known as the Anti-Mail Order Bride Law, Section 1 states that: "It is the policy of the State to ensure and guarantee the enjoyment of the people of a decent standard of living Towards this end, the State shall take measures to protect Filipino women from being exploited in utter disregard of human dignity in their pursuit of economic upliftment",

WHEREAS, the Anti-Mail Order Bride Law penalizes any person, natural or juridical, and any association, club, or any other entity from directly or indirectly establishing or carrying on a business which has for its purpose the matching of Filipino women for marriage to foreign nationals on a mail order basis, through personal introduction, or through the use of the postal service;

WHEREAS, anti-trafficking activists say the Internet has effectively bypassed the Anti-Mail Order Bride Law despite a proposed revision of the law in 2003 that sought to ban e-mail order brides,

WHEREAS, an estimated 50,000 to 100,000 Filipinas seeking romance abroad and a ticket out of poverty have signed up in matchmaking websites;

WHEREAS, based on a survey of different matchmaking websites, about 70 percent of women listed in Southeast Asia are Filipinas;

WHEREAS, operators of these matchmaking websites say they are providing harmless matchmaking services; however, the way they market their sites belie this claim; the sites are marketed as "dating sites" with exotic names such as "Asian Beauties", "Filipina Passion", and "Pacific Romance"; some sites even have feature links titled "Order Now", "Check Out", or "Shopping Cart," which generally cast women in negative stereotypes,

WHEREAS, these websites charge users two to five US dollars to access the profile of a woman who catches their fancy, for an extra 30 to 50 US dollars, they can become full-fledged members and be able to contact the women featured on the sites;

WHEREAS, in a recent report of the US Immigration and Naturalization Services, the number of marriages between Filipinas and American men through Internet services has doubled in the past decade, now totaling nearly 6,000 annually;

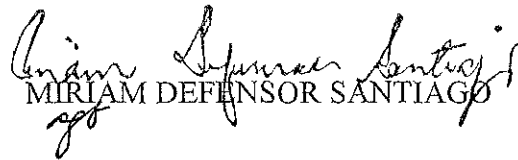
WHEREAS, according to Mary Soledad Perpiñan of the Third World Movement Against the Exploitation of Women, although many mail-order marriages are successful, some are unhappy or even abusive, often as a result of language or culture barriers;

WHEREAS, according to the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW), the very process of allowing men to hand-pick their partners from a sea of faces and measurements commoditizes and exploits women,

WHEREAS, it is the duty of the State to ensure that women's rights and welfare are protected from new forms of exploitation brought about by advances in technology;

WHEREFORE, be it resolved, as it is hereby resolved by the Philippine Senate, to direct the Senate Committee on Youth, Women and Family Relations to conduct an inquiry in aid of legislation on the increasing incidence of e-mail order brides.

Adopted,

  
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

/gac