



FEDERATION OF FREE FARMERS

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FFF DECLARES SUPPORT FOR SENATORIAL CANDIDATES

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The Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) is endorsing the senatorial candidacies of Francis “Chiz” Escudero, Richard “Dick” Gordon, Ana Theresia “Risa” Hontiveros, Jose “Sonny” Matula, and Emmanuel “Manny” Pinol.

This was announced by FFF Board Chairman and former Agriculture Secretary Leonardo Q. Montemayor.

Gordon and Hontiveros are incumbent Senators. Escudero, Governor of Sorsogon, is seeking a return to the Senate. Matula is the President of the Federation of Free Workers (FFW). Pinol served as Agriculture Secretary and later as Chairman of the Mindanao Development Authority under President Duterte.

“Our Board’s decision was based on these candidates’ outstanding record of public service and firm support for our agricultural sector, especially on critical concerns like Philippine membership in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) free trade agreement,” Montemayor said.

Over a hundred mass-based organizations of farmers, fishers and workers – including the FFF – are opposing efforts of the Duterte administration and pro-RCEP legislators to secure the Senate’s concurrence in the treaty, despite the generally acknowledged unpreparedness of local producers to compete under RCEP’s free trade regime.

According to Montemayor, “Our senatorial bets have also pledged to work closely with the FFF in setting up honest-to-goodness safety nets and competitiveness-enhancement measures in agriculture and reversing the government’s reliance on food importation instead of domestic production.”

These are among the major policy recommendations earlier sent to candidates by the FFF that will enable agriculture to achieve food security, job creation and equitable growth, he added.

Other groups that adopted the policy paper last October 2021 are Alyansa Agrikultura, Bayanihan sa Agrikultura, Coalition for Agriculture Modernization in the Philippines, and Philippine Chamber of Agriculture and Food, Inc.

Founded in 1953, the FFF has an extensive grassroots presence and membership base of some 200,000 farmers, fishers and other rural workers. It was the principal affiliate of the ABA farmers party-list coalition that served in the 11th and the 12th Congress, and of the ABA-AKO farmers-urban poor coalition in 14th Congress. The FFF is a member-organization of the National Trade Union Center-Philippines.