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SENATE  
P. S. R. No. 1453

RECEIVED BY 

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

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RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY,  
IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTED NEED TO UPGRADE THE  
LAOAG CITY GENERAL HOSPITAL, AND OTHER HOSPITALS IN THE  
PROVINCES IN ORDER TO CATER TO THE NEEDS OF PATIENTS RESIDING IN  
RURAL AREAS

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 2, Section 15 provides: "The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them";

WHEREAS, an article by Neal Cruz published in the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* last 23 October 2009 claimed that Gov. Michael Keon and the Ilocos Norte Provincial Board are blocking Laoag Mayor Michael F. Fariñas from upgrading the Laoag City General Hospital (LCGH);

WHEREAS, the article reported that the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office donates ambulances to local government units; however, these ambulances are allegedly used by politicians and their families for their own benefit;

WHEREAS, it was also reported that it is not just the misuse of the ambulances that is the problem, but the fact that there are no well-equipped hospitals nearby;

WHEREAS, the article cited in particular the LCGH, which has been undergoing upgrading since 2002 as part of Laoag's Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP), approved by the City Council, reviewed and approved by the provincial board, and approved by the Department of Health (DOH);

WHEREAS, it was reported that the Laoag city government has allocated P24 million for upgrading the hospital and has secured a P350-million loan from two government banks and an international aid agency during the governorship of Ferdinand Marcos Jr.; however, today, the improvement of the LCGH is being blocked by Gov. Michael Keon and the provincial board;

WHEREAS, Keon reportedly claimed that there was no need to improve the LCGH because it is only 10 minutes away from the provincial hospital; he further claimed that the proximity of the two hospitals to one another will result in 'cut-throat' competition as both compete for the same market share of patients;

WHEREAS, the article claimed that the provincial board disapproved a resolution of the Laoag City Council giving Fariñas authority to secure loans from government banks; as a result, Sec. Francisco Duque has changed his mind about his endorsement of the upgrading of the LCGH and even wrote the Development Bank of the Philippines to discourage it from giving the LCGH a loan

WHEREAS, due to the disapproval of the provincial board and Sec. Duque, Fariñas wrote Sec. Duque a letter explaining that the LCGH has a difficult time accommodating patients due to lack of space, which is similar to that experienced by two other hospitals—the Governor Roque Ablan Sr. Medical Hospital (GRASMH) and the Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital (MMMh)—where some patients have to stay in alleys and corridors of the hospital in order to be treated;

WHEREAS, the article claimed that Duque replied that the LCGH should remain a level 2 general 50-bed hospital (not a tertiary hospital) subject to review by the DOH;

WHEREAS, the article challenged the reason for disapproval by the provincial board claiming that the proximity of two hospitals to each other is not sufficient reason to deprive one of them from being developed;

WHEREAS, it was further claimed that provincial board had no authority to review and disapprove the project; its authority, according to R.A. No. 7160 or the Local Government Code of 1991, Sec. 56(a) is limited to reviewing ordinances and resolutions approving local development plans and public investment programs;

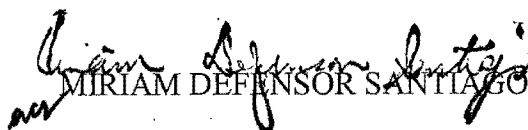
WHEREAS, considering that patients from the province have to travel all the way to Metro Manila just to get treatment is more than enough reason to upgrade and develop the facilities and equipment of hospitals in the province;

WHEREAS, it is possible that other provinces are experiencing the same difficulty with regard to developing new hospitals or upgrading the facilities of current ones in order to address the health care needs of its constituents;

WHEREAS, it is incumbent upon the State to provide adequate health care facilities and equipment for its people; hence, those who block or oppose such moves should be penalized for such actions;

WHEREFORE, be it hereby resolved by the Philippine Senate, to direct the proper Senate Committee to conduct an inquiry in aid of legislation, on the reported need to upgrade the Laoag City General Hospital and other hospitals in the provinces in order to cater to the needs of patients residing in rural areas.

Adopted,

  
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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