

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



Senate
Office of the Secretary

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SENATE
P. S. R. No. 125

RECEIVED BY: *Ji*

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT THERE SHOULD BE AN OFFICIAL UNIFORM FOR MEMBERS OF BOTH HOUSES OF CONGRESS ATTENDING THE ANNUAL STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS EVENT IN KEEPING WITH THE CONSTITUTIONAL DIRECTIVE FOR PUBLIC OFFICIALS TO LIVE MODESTLY

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 7, Section 23 provides: "The President shall address the Congress at the opening of its regular session. He may also appear before it at any other time";

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 6, Section 15 provides: "The Congress shall convene once every year on the fourth Monday of July for its regular session, unless a different date is fixed by law, and shall continue to be in session for such number of days as it may determine until thirty days before the opening of its next regular session, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays. The President may call a special session at any time";

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 11, Section 1 provides: "Public office is a public trust. Public officers and employees must at all times be accountable to the people, serve them with utmost responsibility, integrity, loyalty, and efficiency, act with patriotism and justice, and lead modest lives";

WHEREAS, the State of the Nation Address (SONA) is the annual address of the President of the Philippines before the joint session of Congress;

WHEREAS, the SONA is attended by the vice president, the members of both Houses of Congress, the Supreme Court, members of the diplomatic corps, members of the cabinet, and other high officials of the government; it is extensively covered by traditional and social media;

WHEREAS, during the SONA, the President traditionally gives a report on the accomplishments of his or her administration and the policy directions he or she wants legislators to pursue during the new Congress;

WHEREAS, unfortunately, in recent years, the SONA event has become less about the President and the state of the country, and has become more of a red carpet event where government officials and their spouses display expensive designer garb and flashy jewelry;

WHEREAS, our law frowns upon this embarrassing display of conspicuous consumption or "obsession to bling"; the Civil Code, Article 25 provides: "Thoughtless

extravagance in expenses for pleasure or display during a period of acute public want or emergency may be stopped by order of the courts at the instance of any government or private charitable institution”;

WHEREAS, amidst the ostentation and crass display of wealth during the recent SONA event, the country is suffering from acute public want, because of a high unemployment rate of 7.5% and a high underemployment rate of 19.2%;

WHEREAS, the country also faces an emergency, because of our territorial disputes with China and Taiwan;

WHEREAS, while our Filipino designers are world-class, the SONA is not the proper venue for their talents;

WHEREAS, instead of wearing clothes from high-end designers, lawmakers should wear a uniform to indicate membership in the Senate and the House of Representatives, to separate them from those who are not members;

WHEREAS, the wearing of an official uniform for members of Congress attending the SONA event is in keeping with the Constitutional directive for public officials to live modestly;

WHEREAS, women legislators could wear a short pencil skirt, paired with a simple short-sleeved barong blouse, with jewelry being limited to a single strand of Philippine pearls; male legislators could wear a plain long-sleeved barong; both men and women could wear a ceremonial ribbon with the Congress logo; the audience in the gallery could wear office attire;

WHEREAS, a historian with a sense of duty, such as Gemma Cruz Araneta, should act as consultant for the SONA and other joint session events in Congress to place these events in the proper historical context and in keeping with traditional Filipino values;

WHEREFORE, be it hereby resolved by the Philippine Senate, to express the sense of the Senate that there should be an official uniform for members of both Houses of Congress attending the annual State of the Nation Address event in keeping with the Constitutional directive for public officials to live modestly.

Adopted,

Miriam Defensor Santiago
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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