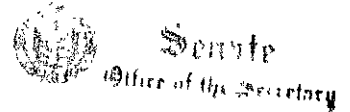


SIXTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC )  
OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
First Regular Session )



13 AUG 29 P5 29

SENATE  
P. S. R. No. 228

RECEIVED BY: *[Signature]*

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

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RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON RULES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF INTERNAL LEGISLATION, ON AMENDING THE SENATE RULES TO INCLUDE A PROVISION DEFINING AND LIMITING THE USE OF THE ELECTRONIC AND MOBILE DEVICES BY MEMBERS OF THE SENATE, AS WELL AS ITS GUESTS, DURING SESSIONS AND COMMITTEE HEARINGS

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 6, Section 16 (3) states that "Each House may determine the rules of its proceedings, punish its Members for disorderly behavior, and, with the concurrence of two-thirds of its Members, suspend or expel a Member";

WHEREAS, the Rules of the Senate, Rule XXIV, Sec. 93, states that "Acts and language which offend a Senator or any public institution shall be deemed unparliamentary";

WHEREAS, considering the advances in portable and mobile electronic devices within the last few years, the Senate should revise and update its Rules on the decorum of its members and guests on their use of such devices during Senate sessions and committee hearings;

WHEREAS, these portable and mobile electronic devices include, but are not limited to, the following: laptop computers, netbooks, tablet computers, smartphones, cellphones, mp3 players;

WHEREAS, legislatures in other countries have revised their rules to take into account the use of electronic devices during the conduct of their duties within their respective legislative chambers, although in varying degrees<sup>1</sup>:

- The French National Assembly allows the use of these devices in their chambers except during debates;
- Irish and Greek legislatures do not allow electronic devices in their plenary hall;
- The Finnish Chamber prohibits the use of laptop computers in their plenary hall;
- Legislative bodies in Canada and New Zealand permits the use of electronic devices in their chambers, provided their use do not cause disorder or distraction, but the New Zealand chamber prohibits the use of mobile phone;

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<sup>1</sup> Use of hand-held electronic devices in the Chamber and committees - Procedure Committee Contents. United Kingdom House of Commons website.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmproc/889/88904.htm>

- The US House of Representatives has a rule that a person in the House floor may not use a mobile electronic device that impairs decorum, but bans their use during closed sessions;
- The Parliament of the United Kingdom recently held that “hand-held electronic devices (not laptops) may be used in the Chamber, provided that they are silent, and used in a way that does not impair decorum; that Members making speeches in the Chamber or in committee may refer to electronic devices in place of paper speaking notes; and that electronic devices, including laptops, may be used silently in committee meetings, including select committees”;

WHEREAS, Sen. Pia Cayetano recently made a manifestation during the 24 July 2013 Senate session for the Chamber to move towards a paperless system in order for the Chamber to be more environmentally friendly, pointing out the amount of paper used to print the order of business, Senate journal, bills and resolutions, and other documents;

WHEREAS, Senate Majority Leader Alan Peter Cayetano encouraged fellow senators to give similar suggestions such as having the Reference of Business e-mailed or projected on a screen on the Senate floor;

WHEREAS, Senate President Franklin Drilon responded by asking for the Reference of Business and other documents sent to him by email which he would read from his laptop during Senate sessions;

WHEREAS, the move towards a “paperless” Senate means an increasingly prevalent use of electronic and mobile devices by members of the Senate during sessions and committee hearings, making it necessary to draw up new Senate rules on the proper decorum of senators in the use of these devices befitting of their stature as public servants;

WHEREAS, the Senate should immediately discuss and recommend amendments in its Rules as to the scope and limitations on the use of electronic and mobile devices by its members, as its abuse and misuse, such as causing disruption and distraction during sessions and committee hearings, can fall under unparliamentary acts as provided by the same Rules;

WHEREFORE, be it hereby resolved by the Philippine Senate, to direct the Senate committee on rules, to conduct an inquiry in aid of internal legislation, on amending the Senate Rules to include a provision defining and limiting the use of the electronic and mobile devices by members of the Senate, as well as its guests, during sessions and committee hearings.

Adopted,

  
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO