

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. **313**

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY,
IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE PRESERVATION AND RETROFITTING OF
HISTORICAL LANDMARKS AND BUILDINGS TO PROTECT THEM FROM
NATURAL DISASTERS SUCH AS EARTHQUAKES AND TYPHOONS

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 14, Section 15 of the Constitution provides that "Arts and letters shall enjoy the patronage of the State. The State shall conserve, promote, and popularize the nation's historical and cultural heritage and resources, as well as artistic creations";

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 14, Section 16 provides that "All the country's artistic and historic wealth constitutes the cultural treasure of the nation and shall be under the protection of the State which may regulate its disposition";

WHEREAS, various news agencies have reported on the 7.2-magnitude earthquake that hit Bohol, Cebu, and parts of Mindanao and southern Luzon last 15 October 2013, killing at least 180 people, leaving at least 580 people injured, displacing 676,000 families or almost 3.5 million individuals, causing centuries-old churches and modern buildings to crumble, disrupting power and phone services, and causing an estimated P867 million in infrastructure damage;

WHEREAS, among the earthquake's reported casualties were the churches of Loboc and Baclayon, two of the local churches that were once considered for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage List;

WHEREAS, both churches were built by Jesuit priests, the Loboc Church was originally built in 1602 and reconstructed in 1638; the Baclayon Church, on the other hand was completed in 1727, and is made of coral stones cut into square blocks and piled on top of each other using bamboo tools and cemented using egg whites;

WHEREAS, the Loboc Church, which houses a 19th-century pipe organ, is classified as a baroque church and submitted for inclusion in the world heritage list in 2006;

WHEREAS, government experts on the preservation of historical sites from the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) and the National Historical Commission and the National Museum (NHI) were reportedly sent to affected sites in Cebu and Bohol to assess the damage caused by the quake to determine the severity of

damage, identify properties that need to be secured, prioritize the restoration, and estimate resources for the restoration;

WHEREAS, NCCA officials said that a majority of these structures have been declared National Cultural Treasures, National Historical Landmarks, and Important Cultural Properties, all of which are protected by the Heritage Law;

WHEREAS, President Aquino said that closer coordination between different agencies like the Department of Public Works and Highways and the Department of Science and Technology is needed to preserve, repair, and retrofit the buildings and historical landmarks to withstand earthquakes and typhoons in compliance with the Building Code of 2010 is very important;

WHEREAS, many roads and bridges were reported damaged by the earthquake, but historic churches dating from the Spanish colonial period suffered the most, among them is the country's oldest, the 16th-century Basilica of the Holy Child in Cebu, which lost its bell tower;

WHEREAS, the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council of Bohol also received reports of damage to old churches in Loay, Clarin and Baclayon as well as the belfry in Panglao;

WHEREAS, photos on social media showed extensive damage not only to churches but also to modern buildings, including a university, while major roads had also been torn apart;

WHEREAS, there is a need for Congress to look into the actions taken by the local government units of Bohol and Cebu, as well as the NCCA and the NHI on the preservation and retrofitting of old buildings and landmarks because these are irreplaceable monuments of Philippine history;

WHEREFORE, be it hereby resolved by the Philippine Senate to direct the proper Senate committee conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the preservation and retrofitting of historical landmarks and buildings to protect them from natural disasters such as earthquakes and typhoons.

Adopted,

Miriam Defensor Santiago
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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