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OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



Senate
Office of the Secretary

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SENATE
P. S. R. No. 556

RECEIVED BY: js

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTED DECLINE OF TOURISM IN PANGASINAN DUE TO THE FALSE REPORT OF A FLESH-EATING DISEASE

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 13, Section 15 provides, "The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them";

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 2, Section 24, states "The State recognizes the vital role of communication and information in nation-building";

WHEREAS, the *Philippine Star* online dated 27 February 2014, reported that the province's tourism sector apparently took a beating, with the cancellation of bookings, following a false report that a supposed flesh-eating disease was spreading in certain places;

WHEREAS, according to Mike Sison, City Tourism Officer of Alaminos, the presentation of the report would really scare you since it referred to a television news report about two persons in the towns of Sta. Barbara and Villasis who supposedly suffered from such flesh-eating disease;

WHEREAS, Sison reportedly said that his office received phone calls from hotel owners after they got booking cancellations from some groups that planned to visit Alaminos to see the world-famous Hundred Islands;

WHEREAS, even the Philippine Adventure Corp. that has scheduled some water sports activities also reportedly backed out;

WHEREAS, it was reported that Mayor Arthur Celeste took immediate action to dispel the report, while Pangasinan third district Rep. Rose Marie Arenas alarmed by the reports, requested the Department of Health to immediately investigate the matter of public health and safety and to give immediate assistance to the victims;

WHEREAS, according to Provincial Health Officer Dr. Anna Maria Teresa de Guzman, the report was unfounded, untrue, and baseless;

WHEREAS, De Guzman claimed that the report, which went viral on social media, caused panic not only among locals but also among Pangasinenses abroad, prompting Gov. Amado Espino Jr. to instruct her and her team to swiftly investigate this issue;

WHEREAS, the state-run Philippine Information Agency quoted De Guzman as saying that the Sta. Barbara patient was suffering from leprosy, a disease that causes skin sores, while the patient from the town of Villasis has a severe case of psoriasis, which causes peeling and red marks on the skin;

WHEREAS, it is therefore vital to strengthen legislation that will 1) ensure the prevention of the occurrence of this disease; 2) create precautionary measures to control or limit the casualties and 3) promote proper health teachings by the provincial health office to the locals;

WHEREAS, responsible media reporting should also be observed to prevent widespread panic and confusion that could be detrimental to the public;

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 decline of tourism in Pangasinan due to the false report of a flesh-eating disease.

Adopted,

Mrs. Miriam Defensor Santiago
SEN. MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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