

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



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SENATE
P.S.R No. 584

RECEIVED BY: f

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTED HIGH LEVELS OF MERCURY VAPORS DETECTED IN DENTAL SCHOOLS, STORES, AND INSTITUTIONS IN THE COUNTRY, ACCORDING TO A STUDY CONDUCTED BY ENVIRONMENTALIST GROUP BAN TOXICS

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

WHEREAS, mercury is a toxic substance that causes adverse effects on a person's neurologic, gastrointestinal, and renal systems;

WHEREAS, the *Philippine Star*, in an article in its 28 February 2014 issue, reported that a study from environmentalist group Ban Toxics found high levels of mercury vapor in several dental schools and institutions around the country due to their use of dental amalgams, pertaining to the silver filling used in restoring teeth with cavities;

WHEREAS, Ban Toxics officials reportedly said that dental amalgam is composed of an alloy of mercury (50 percent), silver (22-32 percent), tin (14 percent), copper (8 percent), and other trace materials;

WHEREAS, it was reported that the study's findings raises concerns about its ill effects on dental workers, students, and patients;

WHEREAS, it was reported that the study showed the mercury vapor in the dental schools, stores, and institutions had exceeded the standard reference levels set by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA), regardless of precautions taken;

WHEREAS, the study reportedly showed the continued use of dental amalgam, especially in schools where this type of restoration is required to be undertaken by dental students, increases the risk of mercury hazard not only for students, dental practitioners and school administration but also for the general population;

WHEREAS, Ban Toxics officials said that their study found that the mercury concentration values varied from 967 nanogram per cubic meter (ng/m) to a high of 35,617

ng/m, the majority of which were levels beyond recommended reference standards such as the United States' Agency for Toxic Substandards and Disease Registry action level of 1,000 ng/m;

WHEREAS, in a press statement, Ban Toxic officials claimed that some of the areas they studied posted a concentration of more than 10,000ng/m, considered as the evacuation alert level by the US EPA;

WHEREAS, the study was reportedly conducted in five dental schools nationwide, two in Metro Manila, one in the Cordillera Autonomous Region, Central Visayas and Zamboanga and in three dental stores in Metro Manila from June to July 2013, in partnership with the International Association of Oral and Medical Toxicologists-Philippines, World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry and Asia Center for Environmental Health;

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 high levels of mercury vapors detected in dental schools, stores, and institutions in the country, according to a study conducted by environmentalist group Ban Toxics.

Adopted,

act 
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

/RJD