


14 DEC -1 P5:00

SENATE

RECEIVED BY: 

P.S. Resolution No. 1046

Introduced by Senator Cynthia A. Villar

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, TO LOOK INTO THE STATE OF SOCIAL WELFARE OR REHABILITATION CENTERS FOR STREET CHILDREN AND ITS FACILITIES WITH THE END IN VIEW OF PROTECTING THE BASIC RIGHTS OF THESE CHILDREN AND ENSURING THAT ALL THEIR BASIC NECESSITIES ARE PROVIDED.

WHEREAS, Article XV, Section 3 (2) of the Philippine Constitution states that, "The State shall defend the right of children to assistance, including proper care and nutrition, and special protection from all forms of neglect, abuse, cruelty, exploitation and other conditions prejudicial to their development";

WHEREAS, under Section 3 (a) of Executive Order No. 221 s. 2003 amending Executive Order No. 15 s. 1998, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) has the power and function to "set standards, accredit and provide consultative services to public and private institutions, organizations and persons engaged in social welfare activities, and monitor, performance and compliance to standards by institutions, organizations and persons engaged in social welfare activities, both public and private";

WHEREAS, on 16 November 2014, news¹ of abuse and neglect on street children were reported to have been committed in Manila Reception and Action Center (RAC), a thirty year old social welfare center in Manila;

WHEREAS, one highlighted report in particular was of a boy who has been in the center for seven (7) months and during which time, has not been reunited with his family nor were there any investigation done to search for his family, and worse, was so neglected that he was reduced to almost skin and bones;

WHEREAS, due to such treatment, news reports compared the operation of the Manila RAC by the Manila Social Welfare Department (MSWD) to a concentration camp—rather than rehabilitating the children and ensuring that they are cared for before release, the children held in custody suffer different forms of abuse, neglect, and are exposed to conditions that are prejudicial to their development, contrary to the policy that the State espouses;

WHEREAS, in January 2008, in a study² conducted in cooperation with a charity group called Bahay Tuluyan on the "Indiscriminate Rescue of Street Children in Manila", Manila RAC was initially built to cater to street children, vagrants, and beggars referred to them by the MSWD and can accommodate up to thirty (30) street children;

¹ <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/650927/manila-shelter-for-street-kids-run-like-concentration-camp>

²

http://www.bahaytuluyan.org/news/indiscriminate_rescue_of_street_children_in_the_city_of_manila_28_january_2008.pdf

WHEREAS, the study showed that Manila RAC is severely lacking in facilities as the volume of street children can lead up to four hundred (400) because the holding of the street children goes beyond the ideal three (3) weeks;


WHEREAS, other than this study, there is little literature and data to be had on centers for children's rehabilitation and reintegration into society, how and where they operate, the facilities these centers have, whether they are accredited by the DSWD, etc.;

WHEREAS, to have a base figure on these centers, it is incumbent upon the DSWD as the lead agency, to know and have data over these centers—how many are established in the Philippines, per city, municipality, and barangay, their capacity, and performance;

WHEREAS, the data gathered and review will serve as basis for future and further legislation concerning these rehabilitation centers for street children, abandoned, and neglected children, to regulate and improve their capacity to nurture and reintegrate the children back into society, and to prevent these and any form of abuse and neglect from happening again;

WHEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved by the Senate of the Philippines to the appropriate Senate committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, to look into the state of social welfare or rehabilitation centers for street children and its facilities with the end in view of protecting the basic rights of these children and ensuring that all their basic necessities are provided.

Adopted,


CYNTHIA A. VILLAR