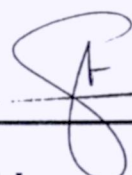


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SENATE
P.S. Res. No. 301

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Juan Miguel "Migz" F. Zubiri

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY ON THE PREPAREDNESS OF THE CONCERNED GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, PARTICULARLY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (DOH), IN THE EVENT THAT THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (2019-nCoV) SPREAD IN THE PHILIPPINES AND BECOME AN EPIDEMIC, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF UPDATING AND INFORMING THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC

WHEREAS, a new strain of virus, manifesting in cases of viral pneumonia in Wuhan City in the Province of Hubei, China, was identified on 7 January 2020 to be a coronavirus stemming from the family of viruses that cause Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), which had alarming global outbreaks in 2003 (for SARS) and 2012 and 2015 (for MERS);

WHEREAS, there have been, as of this filing, 3,000 confirmed cases of the 2019-nCoV in China, with at least 80 fatalities, while Thailand, Hong Kong, Macau, Australia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, France, South Korea, Taiwan, the United States, Vietnam, and Nepal have also confirmed cases in their territories;

WHEREAS, the medical and scientific community still has a lot to learn about 2019-nCoV, several medical experts have expressed in social media that this is a very virulent virus and that the transmission rate is very high;

WHEREAS, with tourism being a major economic driver for the nation, the Philippines welcomed over two million foreign tourists in just the first three months of 2019, with South Korea and China ranking as the nation's top tourist markets, the latter's 463,804 visitors signaling a 24.87% increase from the same period in 2018;

WHEREAS, there has also been a surge in the number of Chinese nationals working in the Philippines, with Chinese holders of Alien Employment Permits (AEPs) growing from 1,370 individuals in 2005 to 33,516 in 2018—more than half of the overall number of AEP holders across all nationalities;

WHEREAS, while there have been no confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus in the Philippines as of this filing, the Department of Health is currently monitoring eleven suspected cases of the coronavirus in the country, all of whom are foreign nationals;

WHEREAS, a local outbreak of the 2019-nCoV is highly likely given the tourism and labor situation of the Philippines, and as such, relevant government agencies must have preparedness and containment protocols in place, particularly the Department of Health, as well as the Department of Tourism, the Department of Transportation, and the Office of Civil Defense, among others;

WHEREAS, in the spirit of transparency and to better inform and prepare the public on the government's preparation and protocols in place in the event of a 2019-nCoV outbreak in the country, the aforementioned relevant government agencies must enlighten the Senate of the Philippines and the general public on their preparedness and containment strategies;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, to direct the appropriate Senate Committees to conduct an inquiry on the preparedness of the concerned government agencies, particularly the Department of Health, in the event that the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) spread in the Philippines and become an epidemic, with the end in view of updating and informing the Senate of the Philippines and the general public.

Adopted,



JUAN MIGUEL F. ZUBIRI
Senator