

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)



SENATE

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 618

Introduced by Senator FRANCIS N. PANGILINAN

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE RISING FOOD PRICES, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF DETERMINING THE NECESSARY INTERVENTIONS TO STABILIZE THE PRICES AND ENSURE THAT EVERY FILIPINO CONSUMER HAS ACCESS TO ADEQUATE AND AFFORDABLE FOOD

WHEREAS, in October 2020, the Philippine Statistics Authority reported that the country's inflation rate accelerated to 2.5 percent, as inflation for food index at the national level increased at 2.1 percent during the month, after five consecutive months of deceleration. The PSA noted that the higher inflation in the country's food index was primarily caused by the spike in the inflation of the meat and fish indices. Meat prices went up 4.7 percent in October from 2.9 percent in September, while fish prices climbed 3.7 percent from 2.6 percent in the same period;

WHEREAS, in November and December 2020, the country's inflation rate continued to rise. The vegetables index registered a double-digit annual increment of 14.6 percent in November after posting an annual drop of -0.5 percent in October. Prices of meat, fish, and fruits were also higher. In December 2020, an inflation of 10 percent in meat and 19.7 percent in vegetables were observed;

WHEREAS, according to the price monitoring of the Department of Agriculture (DA) as of 18 January 2021, prices per kilogram of selected agri-fishery commodities can go as high as P400 and P450 for pork *kasim* and *liempo*, respectively; P180 for whole chicken; P240 for *bangus*; P280 for local *galunggong*; P140 for red onion; P120 for garlic; P1,000 for *siling labuyo*; P100 for calamansi; P230 for cabbage; P140 for Baguio beans; P150 for *sitao*; P200 for eggplant; and P130 for tomato, among others;

WHEREAS, according to the World Bank, agricultural prices are expected to rise slightly in 2021 following a projected 3 percent increase in 2020. Food price increases are noted in several countries, particularly in South and East Asia. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations also reported that world food prices increased for the seventh consecutive month in December 2020, as prices of meat and dairy products rose by 1.7 percent and 3.2 percent, respectively;

WHEREAS, the DA reported that food prices increased as the African Swine Fever (ASF) affected pork supply, while the onslaught of typhoons negatively impacted the supply and prices of vegetables and other agricultural commodities. Also, many broiler

raisers went bankrupt the previous year due to the pandemic which contributed to the supply issues and rise in chicken prices;

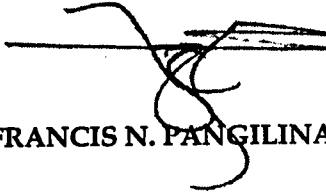
WHEREAS, to stabilize the supply and price of pork, the DA is looking to increase shipments of hogs from Visayas, Mindanao, and other ASF-free areas or "green zones" in Luzon, while also encouraging pork imports from ASF-free countries;

WHEREAS, on 15 January 2021, the President signed Executive Order No. 123 retaining the tariff rate of imported mechanically deboned meat of chicken and turkey at 5 percent until end of 2022 to ensure the continued supply at stable prices of canned and processed meat products;

WHEREAS, increases in food prices have a major impact on the living standards of low-income households which generally spend most of their income on food. The pandemic has also worsened the livelihoods of many Filipinos through job losses and reduced incomes. Hence, it is imperative to determine and implement immediate measures to stabilize food prices and ensure adequate supply of essential food products;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, to direct the appropriate Senate committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the rising food prices, with the end in view of determining the necessary interventions to stabilize the prices and ensure that every Filipino consumer has access to adequate and affordable food.

Adopted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Francis N. Pangilinan', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive.

FRANCIS N. PANGILINAN