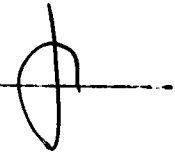


NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE )  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
Second Regular Session )

23 AUG 23 A8:16

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**SENATE**

**P. S. Res. No. 749**

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**Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada**

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**RESOLUTION**

**EXPRESSING PROFOUND SYMPATHY AND SINCEREST CONDOLENCES OF THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES ON THE PASSING OF MARIA SUSANA "TOOTS" OPLE, SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF MIGRANT WORKERS (DMW), STAUNCH ADVOCATE OF WELFARE AND RIGHTS OF OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS (OFWS), AND PUBLIC SERVANT**

1 WHEREAS, the Senate of the Philippines has consistently recognized and  
2 honored distinguished Filipinos for their valuable contribution and positive impact in  
3 the development of our society;

4 WHEREAS, Maria Susana "Toots" Ople, Secretary of the Department of Migrant  
5 Workers (DMW), an advocate of rights and welfare of migrant workers, media  
6 practitioner, professional writer, and respected public servant died on 22 August 2023  
7 at the age of 61;

8 WHEREAS, Ople was the youngest of seven children of the late former Senate  
9 President and former Labor Secretary/Minister Blas F. Ople and public grade school  
10 teacher Susana Vasquez. She was born on 09 February 1962 in Manila;

11 WHEREAS, she finished her degree in Bachelor of Arts in Communication from  
12 the University of Santo Tomas in 1984 and obtained her Master in Public  
13 Administration degree from Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University,  
14 Massachusetts, USA in 1999;

15 WHEREAS, fondly known as "Toots", she is a well-known and multi-awarded  
16 civil society leader who was actively involved in the efforts against human trafficking;

17 WHEREAS, Ople founded Citizens' Drug Watch Foundation in 1989, together  
18 with the late Senator Ernesto "Boy" Herrera and served as its Executive Director. The

1 organization raised funds for the establishment of drug abuse treatment and  
2 rehabilitation facilities around the country;

3 WHEREAS, she began her career in government in the Senate of the Philippines  
4 as Media Relations Officer at the Office of Sen. Herrera from 1987 to 1991, and later  
5 as Chief of Staff at the Office of Sen. Ople from 1992 to 2001. She later served as  
6 Chief of Staff of the Office of the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA)  
7 from 2001 to 2003, as Undersecretary of the Department of Labor and Employment  
8 (DOLE) and as Head of the Presidential Speechwriting Group at the Office of the  
9 President from 2004 to 2006, and Communications Consultant at the Office of the  
10 Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process from 2011 to 2012;

11 WHEREAS, she established and assumed the presidency of the Blas F. Ople  
12 Policy Center and Training Institute or the Ople Center, a non-profit organization that  
13 assists OFWs who became victims of exploitation, abuse, discrimination and/or human  
14 trafficking, and represented the migrant workers sector through extensive  
15 partnerships with various government bodies and organizations, including the Inter-  
16 Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT), Coalition Against Trafficking of OFWs  
17 (CAT-OFWs), and many others;

18 WHEREAS, she was cited as the first Filipino to have been appointed to the  
19 Board of Trustees of the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund to Assist Victims of  
20 Human Trafficking with a term of three (3) years;

21 WHEREAS, Ople was conferred by the Government of the United States of  
22 America the Global Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Hero Award for 2013 as it recognized  
23 individuals who devoted their lives in preventing trafficking, protecting victims and  
24 prosecuting offenders. She was chosen as an awardee from among different nominees  
25 endorsed by various embassies and consulates around the world;

26 WHEREAS, in many Congressional inquiries, Ople was usually seen beside  
27 victims of injustice, giving them comfort, reassurance and voice to the helpless. She  
28 was also instrumental in the crafting and strengthening legislation promoting the  
29 welfare of OFWs;

30 WHEREAS, Ople served as the first Secretary of the newly established  
31 Department of Migrant Workers who was confirmed by the Commission on  
32 Appointments. Under her leadership, OFWs saw better services, including the launch

1 of the OFW Pass which is the digital alternative to the Overseas Employment  
2 Certificate (OEC), and the introduction of social housing program for OFWs;

3 WHEREAS, Toots distinguished herself as a leading figure in the country's fight  
4 against human trafficking and devoted her life to the cause of ending modern slavery;

5 WHEREAS, her lifelong commitment to the cause of assisting distressed migrant  
6 workers and championing the betterment of our "modern day heroes" worldwide  
7 deserves highest commendation from Philippine Senate;

8 WHEREAS, her vast experience and expertise in addressing the scourge of  
9 human trafficking, and her tireless efforts and generous heart toward the upliftment  
10 of quality of lives of the Filipino workers and their families contribute immensely to  
11 the positive development of our society;

12 WHEREAS, her passing is a great loss, not only to her bereaved family, but to  
13 the entire nation as well;

14 NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved by the Senate, to  
15 express profound sympathy and sincerest condolences of the Senate of the Philippines  
16 on the passing of Maria Susana "Toots" Ople, Secretary of the Department of Migrant  
17 Workers (DMW), staunch advocate of welfare and rights of overseas Filipino workers  
18 (OFWs), and public servant.

19 RESOLVED FURTHER, that a copy of this Resolution be furnished to the  
20 bereaved family of the late Maria Susana "Toots" Ople.

*Adopted,*

  
**JINGGOY EJERCITO ESTRADA**