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SENATE

P.S.R. No. 755

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR ALAN PETER "COMPAÑERO" S. CAYETANO

RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND SORROW OF THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES ON THE DEMISE OF MARIA SUSANA "TOOTS" VASQUEZ OPLE, SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF MIGRANT WORKERS AND LIFE-LONG CHAMPION OF THE RIGHTS OF OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS, AND EXTENDING CONDOLENCES AND SYMPATHIES TO HER FAMILY AND FRIENDS

WHEREAS, the demise of Secretary Maria Susana "Toots" Vasquez Ople is a great loss to the country owing to her life-long service to Filipinos and profound impact on the lives of countless Overseas Filipino Workers and their families;

WHEREAS, despite suffering from an illness, she did not hesitate to heed the call of public service, putting fellow Filipinos before herself— a true embodiment of *kapwa bago sarili*;

WHEREAS, Secretary Ople was born on 09 February 1962 in Hagonoy, Bulacan to Blas F. Ople, former senator and considered "*Father of the Labor Code*" and Susana V. Ople, public grade school teacher and homemaker;

WHEREAS, she pursued Communication at the University of Santo Tomas, and, later, Public Administration at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University;

WHEREAS, Secretary Ople served the Filipino people in various official capacities for more than 16 years, including as Undersecretary of the Department of Labor and Employment, Head of Presidential Speechwriting

Group at the Office of the President, and Chief of Staff to then Department of Foreign Affairs Secretary and Senator Blas F. Ople;

WHEREAS, reflecting her passion and commitment to the cause of OFWs, she founded and served as President of the Blas F. Ople Policy Center, a non-profit organization advocating for migrant workers' rights and welfare, for 18 years;

WHEREAS, she worked as a media practitioner and served as a columnist to media entities including Manila Chronicle, Panorama Magazine, Arab News, The Manila Times, CNN Freedom Project, and Rappler.com, and notably authored two books entitled "*Hugs, not Drugs - A Drug Abuse Prevention Manual*" and "*Paalis Ka Na Pala - A Guide for First Time OFWs*";

WHEREAS, Secretary Ople had been characterized by both her peers and subordinates as smart, eloquent and knowledgeable, especially on issues related to OFWs—as well as for her intelligence, industry and strong desire to succeed in life;

WHEREAS, as an anti-human trafficking advocate, she was the first Filipino to have been appointed to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund to Assist Victims of Human Trafficking's Board of Trustees;

WHEREAS, as a testament to her work ethic and compassion, she was conferred by the government of the United States of America the "*Global Trafficking in Persons Hero Award for 2013*" for her persistent and unyielding effort to curb human trafficking; and received a Senate Resolution recognizing her efforts in anti-human trafficking;

WHEREAS, she successfully lobbied to boost the nationwide campaign against online sex trafficking of children and was instrumental in obtaining an increase in the 2018 General Appropriations Act for the operations of the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT);

WHEREAS, she was credited for rekindling the friendship between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) when the Philippines then banned the deployment of Filipino workers to the KSA;

WHEREAS, Secretary Ople was a dedicated public servant who tirelessly championed for the welfare of laborers, made a career in protecting and promoting the rights of OFWs, and fearlessly fought against human trafficking;

WHEREAS, Maria Susan "Toots" V. Ople, a former Secretary of the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW), passed away on 22 August 2023 at the age of 61;

WHEREAS, her unwavering dedication and commitment won the trust and love of fellow public servants, countless laborers, and multitudes of OFWs and their families;

WHEREAS, although short-lived, Secretary Ople lived a full life dedicated entirely to honorable and honest public service - a fitting legacy to the Ople brand of leadership and service;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, by the Senate of the Philippines, expressing the profound sorrow on the demise of Maria Susana "Toots" Vasquez Ople, Secretary of the Department of Migrant Workers and life-long champion of the rights of overseas Filipino workers, and extending condolences and sympathies to her family and friends.

Adopted,


ALAN PETER "COMPAÑERO" S. CAYETANO