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SENATE  
P. S. R. No. 274

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

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RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE SPEED AND QUALITY OF THE RESPONSE OF THE GOVERNMENT IN ADDRESSING THE CAUSES OF THE ALLEGED DECLINE OF DEMOCRACY IN THE COUNTRY AS REPORTED BY THE RESULTS OF THE FREEDOM IN THE WORLD 2008 SURVEY

WHEREAS, the Philippines received a “partly free” rating from the Freedom in the World 2008 Survey of the New York-based Freedom House, a private democracy watchdog organization;

WHEREAS, according to the survey findings, the “decline in freedom” was due to high-level corruption allegations and the spate of extrajudicial killings in the country last year;

WHEREAS, the survey also reported that the world was less free for the second consecutive year, representing the first two-year set back in the last 15 years;

WHEREAS, the designation of the categories in the surveys are as follows:

- A Free country is one where there is broad scope for open political competition, a climate of respect for civil liberties, significant independent civic life, and independent media;
- A Partly Free country is one in which there is limited respect for political rights and civil liberties. Partly Free states frequently suffer from an environment of corruption, weak rule of law, ethnic and religious strife, and often a setting in which a single political party enjoys dominance despite the façade of limited pluralism; and
- A Not Free country is one where basic political rights are absent, and basic civil liberties are widely and systematically denied;

WHEREAS, the survey used a questionnaire that evaluates electoral process, political pluralism and participation, government functions, political rights, freedom of expression and belief, associational and organizational rights, rule of law, and personal autonomy and individual rights;

WHEREAS, the survey also reported that the developments of last year excluded the Philippines from the list of electoral democracies, albeit the fact that the country was previously regarded as an important addition to the democratic world and a model for Asia;

WHEREAS, the results of the survey imply that the Philippine government must intensify and strengthen its efforts in ensuring the quality of democracy in the country;

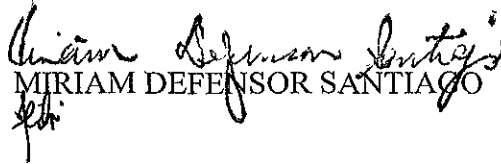
WHEREAS, the demotion of the Philippines from the list of free electoral democracies is a set-back in the country's image, and may affect the influx of foreign investments and various sectors such as tourism;

WHEREAS, the results of the survey must be taken as an evaluation and motivation in the government's efforts in curbing graft and corruption, solving the cases of extrajudicial killings, securing free and honest elections, investigating human rights violations, and safeguarding civil liberties;

WHEREAS, the Philippines must cooperate with its neighbors and allies to ensure the high quality of democracy following the trend of declining democracies across the globe;

WHEREFORE, be it hereby resolved in the Philippine Senate, to direct the proper Senate committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the speed and quality of the response of the government in addressing the causes of the alleged decline of democracy in the country as reported by the results of the Freedom in the World 2008 Survey.

Adopted,

  
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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