



SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

'17 MAR 30 P6:02

RECEIVED BY:

SENATE

P. S. RES. NO. 339

Introduced by **SENATOR LEILA M. DE LIMA**

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL REFORMS AND PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE PROPOSAL OF THE PRESIDENT TO POSTPONE THE 2017 BARANGAY AND SANGGUNIANG KABATAAN ELECTIONS AND FOR THE PRESIDENT TO APPOINT BARANGAY OFFICIALS OR OFFICERS-IN-CHARGE ONCE THE TERM OF THE INCUMBENTS EXPIRE

WHEREAS, the Preamble to the Constitution states that "We, the sovereign Filipino people ... secure to ourselves and our posterity, the blessings of independence and democracy under the rule of law";

WHEREAS, Article II, Section 1 of the Constitution further states that "The Philippines is a democratic and republican State" and that "[s]overeignty resides in the people and all government authority emanates from them";

WHEREAS, on March 14, 2017, President Rodrigo Duterte announced that he wanted to once again postpone the 2017 Barangay Elections;

WHEREAS, in his speech before the first general assembly of the League of Municipalities of the Philippines (LMP) at the Manila Hotel on said date, the President said he did not want the barangay elections held this year, allegedly because of the purported influence of drug money in the elections if it were to be held as scheduled;¹

WHEREAS, Cebu Daily News quoted the President as saying, "When can we expect to have clean elections, free of the corrupting influence of the money from drugs? This year? I told Senate President (Aquilino Pimentel III) and (House Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez) to tell legislators that if we hold the barangay elections now ... *patay* (we're dead)"²;

¹ Duterte mulls postponement of barangay elections anew: *Cebu Daily News* (March 15, 2017) Retrieved from: <http://cebudailynews.inquirer.net/126248/duterte-mulls-postponement-barangay-elections-anew>.

² *Ibid.*

WHEREAS, election watchdog groups are not in favor of again postponing the October 23, 2017 Barangay polls, saying electoral exercises must be held regularly and periodically³;

WHEREAS, Eric Alvia, Secretary General of the National Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL), during an interview with the media, said that “[e]lections should have regularity and should push through. Postponing elections undermine a democratic process instituted to ensure every individual citizen’s right to choose their leaders and make them accountable”⁴;

WHEREAS, in the same news report, Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) Chairman, Rene Sarmiento, said that “[t]here is no substitute to periodic elections in a democracy to check the accountability of elected officials, to get fresh mandate. That includes barangay elections and elective barangay officials”⁵;

WHEREAS, on March 26, 2017, former Senate President Aquilino “Nene” Pimentel, Jr. was quoted as saying that appointing barangay officials, instead of pushing through with this year’s local elections, will reduce the country’s democracy;⁶

WHEREAS, he likewise pointed out that President Rodrigo Duterte’s plan was also done during the dictatorial rule of late President Ferdinand E. Marcos⁷;

WHEREAS, the last barangay election was held last October 2013 because the October 2016 barangay election was set aside through the enactment of R.A. No. 10923, also known as the “*Act Postponing the Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan Elections*”;

WHEREAS, Commission on Election (COMELEC) Spokesperson, Atty. James Jimenez, in a media interview, said that they have yet to study the possible effects of another postponement of election in the community level and to our electoral system⁸;

WHEREAS, on the same occasion, Atty. Jimenez also stated that poll officials are opting not to comment on the constitutionality of just appointing barangay officers-in-charge (OICs) since they “are still studying the consequence of a postponement”⁹;

³ Election watchdog groups oppose Barangay election postponement: *Manila Bulletin* (March 24, 2017) Retrieved from: <http://news.mb.com.ph/2017/03/24/election-watchdog-groups-oppose-barangay-election-postponement/>.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Nene Pimentel: Replacing barangay officials without polls reduces democracy: *GMA News Online* (March 26, 2017) Retrieved from: <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/604696/news/nation/nene-pimentel-replacing-barangay-officials-without-polls-reduces-democracy>

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Comelec studies effect of possible Barangay polls postponement: *Manila Bulletin* (March 25, 2017) Retrieved from: <http://news.mb.com.ph/2017/03/25/comelec-studies-effect-of-possible-barangay-polls-postponement/>

⁹ *Ibid.*

WHEREAS, postponing the barangay election and appointing barangay officials would undermine our democracy by depriving our people of the right to elect their leaders;

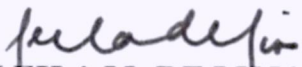
WHEREAS, the President's pronouncement that only those who are in the drug list would win the barangay election appears to have no factual basis and apparently only seeks to discredit duly elected officials;

WHEREAS, there is a need to investigate the veracity of the allegation of the President;

WHEREAS, there is likewise a need to determine the level of preparedness of the COMELEC to conduct barangay elections this year;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, for the Committee on Electoral Reforms and People's Participation to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, into the proposal of the President to postpone the 2017 Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan elections and for the President to appoint Barangay officials or Officers-in-Charge once the term of the incumbents expire.

Adopted,


LEILA M. DE LIMA