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SENATE

P. S. RES. NO. 475

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

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**RESOLUTION**

**DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE ALARMING RISE OF HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS (HIV) AND ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME (AIDS) INCIDENCE AMONG FILIPINO YOUTH, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF INTENSIFYING PUBLIC AWARENESS AND STRENGTHENING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8504, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "PHILIPPINE AIDS PREVENTION AND CONTROL ACT OF 1998"**

*WHEREAS*, Article II, Section 15 of the Constitution states that, "[t]he State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them";

*WHEREAS*, Article II, Section 13 of the Constitution provides in part that, "[t]he State recognizes the vital role of the youth in nation-building and shall promote their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual and social well-being...";

*WHEREAS*, Article II, Section 24 of the same provides that, "[t]he State recognizes the vital role of communication and information in nation-building";

*WHEREAS*, Section 2(a) of Republic Act No. 8504 (R.A. 8504) or the "Philippine AIDS Prevention and Control Act of 1998" provides that "[t]he State shall promote public awareness about the causes, modes of transmission, consequences, means of prevention and control of HIV/AIDS through a comprehensive nationwide educational and information campaign organized and conducted by the State";

*WHEREAS*, the recent figures of the Department of Health (DOH) shows that "[i]n May 2017, there were 1,098 new HIV antibody sero-positive individuals reported to the HIV/AIDS & ART Registry of the Philippines (HARP)," which is "48% higher compared to the same period last year";<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Health. (10 August 2016). Stat of the Month. Retrieved from: [http://www.doh.gov.ph/stat\\_of\\_the\\_month](http://www.doh.gov.ph/stat_of_the_month). Accessed 14 August 2017.

*WHEREAS*, in December 2016, HARP also highlighted that “the age group with the biggest proportion of cases has become younger: between 2001-2005, it was 35-39; starting 2006, age proportion shifted to 25-34”;<sup>2</sup>

*WHEREAS*, in the same report, HARP said that “[t]he proportion of HIV positive cases in the 15-24 age group increased from 25% in 2006-2010 to 28% in 2011-2016”;<sup>3</sup>

*WHEREAS*, Rappler, on 02 July 2017, revealed that, according to a Department of Health (DOH) report, “[o]ut of the 42,283 HIV-positive recorded individuals in the country as of March 2017, 11,550 are from the 15-24 age group in the country,” which refers to “8<sup>th</sup> graders, high schoolers, and college students”;<sup>4</sup>

*WHEREAS*, CNN Philippines, on 26 June 2017, reported that DOH recorded 629 newly HIV-diagnosed persons in April 2017 alone, 513 of which are millennials or those belonging to the 15 to 34 age group;<sup>5</sup>

*WHEREAS*, the same Rappler report showed that, based on the Philippine AIDS Epidemiology Model, the Philippines is said to be diagnosing only around 23-50% of the affected Filipinos belonging to the 15 to 24 age group, wherein the majority is living with the virus without their knowledge, without adequate treatment, and without proper guidance;<sup>6</sup>

*WHEREAS*, Philippine Star, on 04 August 2017, reported that, [i]n March of this year, the Commission on Population disclosed that various regional studies it conducted through the University of the Philippines Population Institute (UPPI) and Demographic Research and Development Foundation (DRDF) using the data from the 2013 Young Adult Fertility and Sexuality (YAFS 4) study revealed that millennials were engaging in early sex or before 18 years old for variety of reasons,” of which “[a]ccess to internet and social media as well as new information technologies were among the most prominent factors facilitating early sexual engagement among young people”;<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See figure 5 of HIV/AIDS & ART Registry of the Philippines Report. December 2016. Retrieved from: [http://www.doh.gov.ph/sites/default/files/statistics/EB\\_HIV\\_December-AIDSreg2016\\_0.pdf](http://www.doh.gov.ph/sites/default/files/statistics/EB_HIV_December-AIDSreg2016_0.pdf). Accessed 14 August 2017.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> Rappler. (1 July 2017). Orgies and Tinder: Millennials are having sex, some with a deadly price. Retrieved from: [http://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/173761-orgy-tinder-social-media-sex-hiv-aids-youth-philippines?utm\\_source=twitter&utm\\_medium=referral](http://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/173761-orgy-tinder-social-media-sex-hiv-aids-youth-philippines?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=referral). Accessed 18 July 2017.

<sup>5</sup> CNN Philippines. (26 June 2017). DOH: More millennials diagnosed with HIV. Retrieved from: <http://cnnphilippines.com/news/2017/06/26/DOH-More-millennials-diagnosed-with-HIV.html>. Accessed on 28 June 2017.

<sup>6</sup> *Supra*, footnote #4.

<sup>7</sup> Philippine Star. (04 August 2017). “HIV rise being facilitated by technology”. Retrieved from: <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2017/08/04/1724656/hiv-rise-being-facilitated-technology/> Accessed 14 August 2017.

*WHEREAS*, according to Rappler, “[w]ith technology so readily available, finding sexual partners is as easy as a swipe to the right, clicking a follow button, or sending suggestive pictures and messages to strangers”;<sup>8</sup>

*WHEREAS*, it is important to note that, as reported by Philippine Star on 12 August 2017, an editorial of *The Lancet*, a global medical journal, said that “‘stigma’ undoubtedly remains one of the major reasons for the spread of HIV in the Philippines,” and that “[t]he Philippines must act today,” such as by facilitating “[e]arly testing, access to reproductive health, sex education and anti-retroviral treatment,” or it “risk[s] losing the fight against HIV”;<sup>9</sup>

*WHEREAS*, especially considering that the legal framework and mechanisms are in place, government should immediately address this “youth epidemic”;

*WHEREAS*, with the numbers of HIV-diagnosed persons aged 15 to 34 rising, government, in cooperation with civil society organizations (CSOs), private sector and international organizations, should expand its information campaign against HIV/AIDS in schools and health facilities etc., and include social media and other new media to intensify its reach and to effectively target the youth;

*WHEREAS*, there is a need for the implementing agencies, notably the DOH, Department of Education (DepEd), and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to evaluate and to re-engineer its information dissemination mechanisms, and to ensure that it is still responsive to the present-day circumstances, especially since Congress is currently deliberating its amendments to R.A. 8504;

***NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED***, as it is hereby resolved, directing the appropriate Senate Committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, into the alarming rise of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) incidence among Filipino youth, with the end in view of intensifying public awareness and strengthening Republic Act No. 8504, otherwise known as the “Philippine Aids Prevention and Control Act of 1998”.

*Adopted,*

  
LEILA M. DE LIMA

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<sup>8</sup> *Supra*, footnote #4.

<sup>9</sup> Philippine Star. (12 August 2017). “Philippines facing unprecedented HIV crisis”. Retrieved from: <http://m.philstar.com/314191/show/49d6aa974db3f3508d09d86064cefa40/>. Accessed 14 August 2017.