



SENATE

P. S. Res. No 966

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

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RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND DEMOGRAPHY TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE REPORTED PANDEMIC POTENTIAL OF MEASLES THAT HAS CAUSED DEATHS AND INFECTIONS IN SOME PARTS OF THE PHILIPPINES, WITH THE END VIEW OF CRAFTING NECESSARY MEASURES TO PREVENT THE FATAL EFFECTS OF A MEASLES OUTBREAK

1 WHEREAS, Section 15, Article II of the 1987 Constitution states that “[t]he
2 State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health
3 consciousness among them”;

4 WHEREAS, Section 11, Article XIII of the same posits that, “[t]he Sate shall
5 adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development which shall
6 endeavor to make essential goods, health and other social services available to all the
7 people at affordable cost. There shall be priority for the needs of the underprivileged,
8 sick, elderly, disabled, women and children”;

9 WHEREAS, measles is a highly-contagious airborne viral disease which can
10 instigate severe diarrhea, pneumonia and vision loss.¹ Measles used to be an epidemic
11 until a vaccine was developed in 1963²;

12 WHEREAS, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported a total of 17,298
13 measles cases this year. This constitutes 367% upsurge from 2017’s measles cases
14 report of 3,706³;

¹ Presse-France, Agence. Rappler. *Measles cases rise 30% worldwide – WHO*. 30 November 2018. Retrieved from https://www.rappler.com/science-nature/life-health/217920-measles-cases-rise-worldwide#cxrecs_s

² De Guzman, Luchi. CNN Philippines. *Measles cases in the Philippines increase by more than 350% - WHO*. 28 November 2018. Retrieved from <http://cnnphilippines.com/news/2018/11/28/measles-outbreak-philippines-world-health-organization-2018.html>

³ *Ibid.*

1 WHEREAS, last 29 November 2018, the Department of Health (DOH) stated
2 that they are monitoring a suspected outbreak in Sarangani after 18 Lumad children
3 were reported to have possibly died from measles. The DOH said that, as of November
4 28, 2018, it recorded 84 other suspected measles cases, with ages ranging from 4
5 months old to 40 years old, majority of whom are female⁴;

6 WHEREAS, prior to the reported measles outbreak in Sarangani, it was likewise
7 declared in Negros Oriental, Zamboanga City, Davao Region, Davao City and a
8 barangay in Taguig City⁵;

9 WHEREAS, a year after the Dengvaxia controversy transpired, many people are
10 still scared of the government's free vaccines and still refuse to be injected. The dire
11 consequence is an apparent low vaccination coverage in most regions in the country.
12 The DOH National Immunization Program Manager Maria Silva considers this as "one
13 of the challenges that is putting the country down"⁶;

14 WHEREAS, in February 2018, Health Undersecretary Enrique Domingo stated
15 that DOH has not reached its vaccination rate target of 85 to 90% because 60% of
16 Filipino children are not getting their scheduled vaccines due to the continuous
17 dramatic increase in the refusal rate of Filipino parents in having their children
18 vaccinated⁷;

19 WHEREAS, unvaccinated individuals, especially the children and pregnant
20 women, have the highest risk of acquiring measles which could result to long-term
21 complications, and worse, death⁸;

22 WHEREAS, WHO advised that parents should already bring their child to the
23 nearest health centers which offer anti-measles vaccination⁹ not only for protecting
24 them from the complications of the disease and other threats of epidemics spreading,
25 but specifically because it is every child's right to be protected against vaccine
26 preventable diseases;

⁴ Tomacruz, Sofia. Rappler. *DOH monitoring suspected measles outbreak in Sarangani town*. 29 November 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/nation/217785-doh-monitoring-suspected-measles-outbreak-sarangani-town-november-2018>

⁵ Tomacruz, Sofia, et al. Rappler. *At least 18 Lumad children die from suspected measles in Sarangani town*. 28 November 2018. Retrieved from https://www.rappler.com/nation/217668-death-toll-suspected-measles-sarangani-town-november-2018#cxrecs_s

⁶ Tomacruz, Sofia. Rappler. *Parents still scared of govt's free vaccines a year after Dengvaxia scare*. 27 September 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/nation/212927-child-vaccination-rate-philippines-as-of-september-2018>

⁷ *Ibid*

⁸ *Supra Note 1*

⁹ ABS-CBN News. *World Health Organization: Measles case in PH up 367 percent*. 28 November 2018. Retrieved from <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/11/28/18/world-health-organization-measles-cases-in-ph-up-367-percent>

1 WHEREAS, according to the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF),
2 “[v]accines protect children against disease and death, saving up three million lives
3 every year. For the Philippines, vaccines also make economic sense. Vaccines prevent
4 illness, freeing up precious resources to invest in strong health system. Vaccination
5 can also promote a stronger workforce and prevent losses in productivity”¹⁰;

6 WHEREAS, it is incumbent upon the government to guarantee and uphold the
7 general welfare of its people by ensuring that the Filipinos are rightly and adequately
8 informed about the benefits of immunization from preventable diseases and be duly
9 educated and aware about its importance especially to the Filipino youth;

10 WHEREAS, DOH should institute measures to insulate our immunization
11 program from the purported controversy surrounding the Dengvaxia program to
12 prevent politically charged issues from affecting the health of our fellow Filipinos,
13 particularly those who depend on our government programs for immunization;

14 WHEREAS, in order to prepare for the threats and fatal effects of the possible
15 pandemic impact of measles and other infectious diseases, the government must not
16 only ensure that proper health care is delivered, but at the same time, relieve the
17 general public from unwarranted fears of vaccination and lead them back into trusting
18 government efforts in promoting and protecting the health of every Filipino;

19 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE, to direct the
20 Committee on Health and Demography to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, into
21 the reported pandemic potential of measles that has caused deaths and infections in
22 some parts of the Philippines, with the end view of crafting measures to prevent the
23 fatal effects of measles outbreak.

Adopted,


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¹⁰ Philstar.com. *UNICEF: Philippines’ immunization coverage decreasing*. 30 April 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.philstar.com/lifestyle/health-and-family/2018/04/30/1810905/unicef-philippines-immunization-coverage-decreasing>