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SENATE

P.S. Resolution No. 18

RECEIVED BY



INTRODUCED BY SEN. JINGGOY EJERCITO ESTRADA

RESOLUTION

CALLING ON THE PROPER COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT'S (DSWD'S) PLAN TO COMPLETELY TRANSFER THE GOLDEN ACRES TO TANAY, RIZAL AND CLOSE THE RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITY THAT HAS BEEN OPERATING IN METRO MANILA FOR 39 YEARS, AND RECOMMEND MEASURES TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS AND WELFARE OF THE RESIDENT-CLIENTS AND THE STAFF MEMBERS OF THE EXISTING FACILITY

WHEREAS, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) is the national government agency mandated to protect and promote the rights and welfare of the poor, marginalized and disadvantaged sector in our society;

WHEREAS, the elderly aged 60 years old and above is among the sectors that the DSWD should provide utmost service, care and assistance as provided in their mandate;

WHEREAS, the Golden Acres is a residential care facility located in Misamis St., Bago Bantay, Quezon City, and is presently managed by the DSWD-National Capital Region (NCR). The facility was established by virtue of Proclamation No. 380 and has been providing services and care for 39 years now to the abandoned and neglected senior citizens, 60 years old and above. As of May 6, 2009, the Golden Acres provides care to 220 elderlies (167 lolas and 63 lolos) who are mostly residents of Metro Manila;

WHEREAS, on September 2007, the DSWD management made public its plan to transfer the Golden Acres from Quezon City to Tanay, Rizal. Among the reasons presented by the management are as follows: overcrowding of residents in the present location which made them susceptible to ailments, polluted and noisy environment, and the need to transform the institution into a Center of Excellence;

WHEREAS, in a position paper, the Social Welfare Employees Association of the Philippines (SWEAP), the existing association of the DSWD employees, said that they support the construction of additional facilities for abandoned elders, but opposes the total transfer of the Golden Acres to Tanay, Rizal and the subsequent closure of the existing facility in Metro Manila. SWEAP believes that there is a need to rehabilitate and develop the facility in Quezon City, but there is no sound reason to close and sell the existing residential care facility;

WHEREAS, the new haven for the elderly that is currently under construction in Tanay, Rizal is situated beside Camp Capinpin, the home of the Philippine Army's 2nd Infantry Division. Instead of providing a healthy and secure environment to the elders, SWEAP fears of possible accidents that may happen to the elderly, such as being hit by stray bullets resulting from military trainings and exercises in the surrounding areas. In addition, the noises created by artilleries used in military exercises may cause undue stress to the elders – the same reason put forward by the DSWD management to effect the transfer of the residential care facility;

WHEREAS, the elders whose illnesses are age-related will be isolated from hospitals and other health-related services that are available only in the NCR;

WHEREAS, the transfer of the Golden Acres will affect, not only the clients whose frequent visitors are Metro Manila residents, but also the staff members of DSWD-NCR. At present, the institution has a staff complement of 50 employees and 26 MOA workers who are mostly Metro Manila residents;

WHEREAS, SWEAP believes that transfer of the Golden Acres will not only displace the current staff members, but will also deprive the institution of additional services currently provided by student volunteers. At present, most of the volunteers that augment the insufficient manpower of the Department are students from and residents of Metro Manila;

WHEREAS, apart from the construction of additional facilities in other areas, SWEAP believes that with the increasing number of elders in the NCR, there is a need to retain the existing facility to cater to the needs of the growing population of poor and abandoned senior citizens;

WHEREAS, the government should rethink its plan of selling an asset strategically located in the urban center. Likewise, the existing facility of the Golden Acres in Quezon City should be utilized and developed rather than closed;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED by the **Senate**, to direct the proper Senate committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the Department of Social Welfare and Development's (DSWD's) plan to completely transfer the Golden Acres to Tanay, Rizal and close the residential care facility that has been operating in Metro Manila for 39 years, and recommend measures to protect the rights and welfare of the resident-clients and the staff members of the existing facility.

Adopted,


JINGGOY EJERCITO ESTRADA
Senator