



SC urged to disqualify Ang Kasangga party-list nominees

Progressive groups have filed a petition for certiorari with the Supreme Court (SC) against Ang Kasangga party-list nominees Teodorico Haresco and Eugenio Lacson and the Commission on Elections (Comelec). Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN), Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT), Migrante, and the Confederation for the Unity, Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees (Courage), represented by their officers Renato Reyes Jr., Benjamin Valbuena, Gary Martinez and Ferdinand Gaité respectively, are seeking a reversal of the September 20, 2010 resolution of the Comelec en banc in their petition for disqualification against the two Ang Kasangga party-list nominees. In the assailed resolution, the Comelec granted Haresco and Lacson's motion for reconsideration on a First Division resolution that disqualified the 2 nominees on the basis that "they do not belong to the marginalized and underrepresented, the former being irrefutably prominent in the business sector and the latter an incumbent three-term mayor." Petitioners maintained that Haresco and Lacson did not fall under any of the categories that would qualify them to represent any party-list group because "respondent Haresco is a big businessman primarily known for his involvement in the bridge program of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo." Petitioners also noted that "Haresco has extensive dealings with big foreign firms." As for Lacson, petitioners held that he "is a three-time mayor of San Carlos City, Negros Occidental and a member of the Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC) – United Negros Alliance (UNA), a local chapter of NPC and Lakas-Kampi in Negros Occidental. Respondent Lacson is part of the ruling coalition and dominant majority party." Ang Kasangga states that it is "a non-stock, non-profit civic and service oriented corporation that serves as vehicle for an advocacy to propagate develop and promote micro-entrepreneurship as the backbone of the economy."

NAMFREL E Newsletter Volume 1 Issue No. 44 reported that even the retired SC Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban demanded for the amendment of the Party List System Act to reconcile inconsistencies in deciding cases concerning party list representatives. It was also discussed that there are two major issues that are ambiguous in the Party list System Act that should be clarified and amended by Congress, these are matters on representation and transparency and accountability. The Comelec should make a resolution mandating nominees to be part of the party list he/she is representing as a bonafide member from 90 days to three years. Proofs and track records of active participation by nominees should be enumerated by the Comelec and should be judged by means of a defined criteria. This would enable concerned parties to evaluate and assess the validity of a nomination and make the process transparent.

Pimentel asked Angara to inhibit himself from poll protest case vs Zubiri

Former Sen. Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr. on December 2 urged Sen. Edgardo Angara to inhibit himself from taking part in the deliberations of the Senate Electoral Tribunal (SET) in connection with the the electoral protest filed by his son Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III against Sen. Juan Miguel Zubiri. The elder Pimentel claimed that Angara was a "beneficiary" of the alleged fraud in the province of Maguindanao in 2007 which supposedly ushered Zubiri into the 12th senatorial spot because Angara garnered 193,990 votes in Maguindanao while Zubiri received 195,823 votes and Luis Singson 194,241 votes. Sen. Pimentel said that considerations of camaraderie or even friendship must be set aside so that justice may be accorded to those who have been victimized by oppressive and powerful forces. In June, Pimentel III filed a manifestation with a motion for the disqualification of Senators Angara, Loren Legarda, and Lito Lapid from sitting as members of the SET. However, the three senators returned to the SET after it was reorganized in July. The other members of the tribunal are Senators Francis Pangilinan, Gregorio Honasan, and Pia Cayetano. Pimentel III ranked 13th in the 2007 senatorial elections with 10,987,347 votes while Zubiri clinched the 12th spot with 11,005,866 votes. Pimentel III contested the win and the SET ruled in 2008 that he may proceed with his protest. Zubiri, however, filed a counter protest and claimed that he was cheated in more than 73,000 precincts all over the country. Last June 4, the SET, voting 7-2, allowed Zubiri to proceed with the revision of the results.

The counter protest has made the SET ordered the scrutiny of the remaining 75% of the election results being protested by Zubiri. Official SET documents showed Pimentel recovered more than 257,000 votes from more than 2,600 precincts in Maguindanao, Lanao del Norte and Sur, Shariff Kabunsuan, Sultan Kudarat, Sulu and Basilan. Seven of the 9 SET members voted in favor of proceeding with Zubiri's protest. They are Richard Gordon, Loren Legarda, Lito Lapid, Francis Pangilinan, Supreme Court Associate Justices Presbitero Velasco Jr., Teresita de Castro including Senator Ed Angara. This was the time where many senators expressed their intent to be nominated and win the position as Senate President thus created factions in the senate. Angara and Zubiri that time both claim to be part of a Senate bloc as Angara was vying for the position of senate president. Even as Zubiri insists that the race for the Senate presidency and the protests at the SET are separate matters, Pimentel III believes, he is a victim of politicking in Senate that time..

NAMFREL Consultation Meeting in CDO

NAMFREL initiated a "Consultation Meeting" at the Northern Mindanao Medical Center (NMMC) and the CHD for Northern Mindanao in Cagayan de Oro City, Misamis Oriental on November 30, 2010. The meeting was participated in by the Chief of Hospital, Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) members, Supply and Pharmacy Officer, as well as the Chairperson of the Integrity Development Committee (IDC). During the discussion, the hospital officials agreed to furnish NAMFREL procurement observers' copies of the pertinent documents needed in monitoring the process of the procurement, delivery and inventory of medicines supplies. Volunteers would be allowed to hold a quarterly storage and warehouse monitoring to ascertain medicines are disbursed properly.

The regular meetings went with participating hospitals and CHDs is one of the MMP2 project activities to increase commitment and support in the project. NAMFREL observer-volunteer in Xavier University assured hospital official that he will be actively participated in the hospitals public bidding as BAC and procurement observer.

[Abs cbn news, GMA news, NAMFREL data]