

Can You Support the Struggle of A Small Potato? - MabuhayRadio

Written by Vladimir Ramon B. Frivaldo

Saturday, 29 January 2011 13:40 - Last Updated Saturday, 29 January 2011 21:12

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A Privilege Speech of

Sorsogon Provincial Board Member

□ **Vladimir Ramon B. Frivaldo**

January 17, 2011

As

a new devotee of the Black Nazarene, I would like to thank the good Lord for giving me my health back. I can now assume my duties as a doting father to my 3-year-old daughter Alexandra and as a duly-elected Board Member of the 2nd District of Sorsogon. I would also like to thank my family, friends, supporters and colleagues in this august body for their prayers and

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support.

Again, thank you *po*.

When I returned for work last December 15, 2010, I immediately read all letters, communications, solicitations and other concerns of all sectors that piled up in my rusty old desk and leaking room.

One letter I found interest is the letter from our dear Gov. Raul R. Lee dated September 27, 2010 . which raised some concerns.

It is true that Sanguniang Panlalawigan (SP) is the more-accurate repository of approved SP Resolutions relative to loans, existing and previous, entered into by the Provincial Government of Sorsogon.

But what the undersigned is requesting to his office is not only the existing and previous loans of the Provincial Government and their corresponding amount but also the remaining or current amount payables per existing loan of the province, amount being amortized annually by the province per existing individual loan and the remaining period years to pay off or amortize the existing loan.

I would safely assume that Gov. Raul R. Lee is still capable of deductive reasoning that all

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these documents can ONLY be found at the Provincial Budget Office, Provincial Accountant's Office and the Provincial Treasurer's Office.

And may I also remind Gov. Raul R. Lee that under our 1987 Constitution under Article III Bill of Rights,

Section 7,

“The right of the people to information on matters of public concern shall be recognized. Access to official records, and to documents and papers pertaining to official acts, transactions, or decisions, as well as to government research data used as basis for policy development, shall be afforded the citizen, subject to such limitations as may be provided by law.

”

Gov. Raul R. Lee should lead the example in Sorsogon the need for transparency and accountability as cornerstone of good governance and not suppress them.

To answer Gov. Raul R. Lee's curiosity, my intended legislative agenda in relation to my request to his office for all the documents mentioned are the following:

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LOAN MORATORIUM. - To provide a three (3) year loan moratorium considering our province is now becoming famous in Bicol for securing loans totaling to almost to a billion of pesos.

I will be filing a resolution on this matter.

Your Honor, for the record, can we now instruct our Secretary to send a letter requesting Gov. Raul R. Lee and his financial managers provide us the said documents?

ALMOST A BILLION PESOS LOAN BY HUSBAND AND WIFE. - Late last year I received reliable information that Gov. Raul R. Lee is bent on pushing through with another gigantic loan this year in the amount of P350.00-million.

My God - P350-million loan! A big leap from his previous loans and the loan of his wife, former Gov. Sally A. Lee.

If you combine the husband and wife loans it will almost reach a billion pesos! (1)

Wow almost a billion pesos loan of a poor province by a husband and wife team. I wonder where it all went?

To all Sorsoganons do you know where it all went?

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Last Monday we received a letter request from Gov. Raul R. Lee dated January 5, 2011 requesting the Sangguniang Panlalawigan to pass a Resolution authorizing the governor to negotiate for a loan agreement with financial institutions with the intended amount of 350 million pesos, which is higher by 116 percent from the most recent loan in 2009. (2) It did not include any list of projects to be funded. (3)

POSITION OF A TAXPAYER ON THE NEW LOAN. – As a taxpayer and as your representative I will strongly oppose this loan.

In my conscience and in my belief that the new loan is not only immoral but will further burden our province.

I am appealing and begging to my honorable colleagues to cross party lines and stop this new loan. I am also appealing to all Sorsoguenos to show unity and support to please write a letter of appeal to Gov. Raul R. Lee to defer for the meantime his plan for another loan. Availin g loan is good but for heaven's sake let us put some breathing space for our limited resources to recover.

Any additional loans to be made by the Provincial Government may pose threat to the stability of the local finances which may lead to diminution of the ability of the Provincial Government to provide the basic services re: Health, Nutrition and Social Services; and, Economic Services, throwing the province into a "debt trap", depriving the people of Sorsogon of the resources

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needed to secure long-term economic development and build up strong social and physical infrastructures in the future.

The P350.00 million amount to be loaned is 50 percent of the 2011 Proposed Program Expenditure for the province by the office of the Governor which may incur the province in the subsequent years an estimated amount of 21 million of additional debt service amortization from interest alone of which principal amount may account for 127.8 percent of the total MOOA where future amortization will be sourced primarily. (4)

Please take note that because of the previous loans and its programmed amortization for this year, the 61 million budget for debt servicing accounts for 57 percent of the total MOOE budget from Regular General Fund (RGF) amounting to 106 million pesos. We can, therefore, safely estimate an increase in the RGF-MOOE to debt servicing ratio from 43-57 percentage ratio for this year to 23-77 percentage ratio for next year, if additional amortization would only include interest payments based on present interest rates. What would happen more if we pay for additional amortization to reduce the principal? (5) It only means that the supposed to be 57 percent and the estimated 77 percent for 2011 and 2012 could have been for regular operations of our offices and developmental projects – they will all go to debt servicing. Time will come and if we continue this trend the budget for Regular General Fund will be zero or shall be another round of loan just for our local-government institutions to function.

Please take note again that the 4th highest budget out of more or less 60 sub-sectors was allocated for debt servicing if you look at the Actual and Estimated Expenditure Program by Sector of the Annual General Fund Budget. That debt servicing budget could have been an additional 56.4 percent to the province Development Fund. (6)

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Under the Annual General Fund Budget for 2011 submitted by the Office of the Governor only shows a 6.2-percent increase from expected available resources from 2010 to 2011.

The national budget for 2011 submitted by then-President Aquino to the Congress for the information of my dear colleagues registered only an increase of 6.8 percent. But in Sorsogon if we shall combine the receipts or expected receipts and funds from other sources for 2010 and 2011 except grants will give us a budget increase of 25.8-percent or 3.8 times higher than the national budget increase. Granting the Governor an authorization to enter into a loan agreement with such huge amount of 350-million, in our conscience, do you think this is reasonable, rational or moral for us to support?

BANGON SORSOGON! is now called by many as **UTANG SORSOGON!** *Napalitan na ang napagandang sloga*
n. *An*
g dahilan ay ang tuluyan pagkalugmok sa utang ang
Sorsogon.

Will somebody remind Gov. Raul R. Lee that we taxpayers are still paying for the interest and principal of their previous loan?

Nakakaraw-ay!

□

Diri dianis

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Ladies and gentlemen, please ask yourself *kung makatarungan or kaya ng konsiyensya mo umutang muli na ang maging resulta ay maraming maaapektuhan basic services para sa tao ?*

□

Nagtatanong lang po.

Gov. Raul R. Lee *maawa ka naman po sa pobrang Sorsogon.*

IS OUR FINANCIAL MANAGERS SLEEPING ON THEIR JOB? - Why don't we try other sources of funds other than local/provincial loans and borrowings, e.g., national government funds and guaranteed loans and local and international grants that we can tap?

Instead of out-sourcing through loans to meet its needs, the provincial government may increase the tax base even without increasing the tax rate. Or instead securing additional loans, the provincial government should focus on tax collection efficiency and have a more prudent spending.

We have plenty of none performing assets which can also be a possible source of income for the province. I wonder why the Receipt Program for 2011 under the Annual General Fund Budget of the Province, Other Subsidy Income is Zero, Capital/Investment Receipt of the Province is Zero. Instead our Budget for 2011 had shown very high dependence to the National Internal Revenue Taxes amounting to 632 million pesos while our receipts only accounts for 8 million from tax revenue and 34.6 million from non-tax revenue.(7)

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May I know from our dear Governor whether the operation of the mining in Balocawe, Matnog is now contributing the right amount to coffers of the provincial government?

{xtypo_quote} **Editor's Note:** *Our own Chicago-based columnist has written an exposé about an scandalous mining venture in Sorsogon Province in this article, [Joseph Lariosa Takes Up the Cudgels for "Save Matnog, Stop The Iron Project"](#)*
{/xtypo_quote}

May I again ask the good Governor if the operator of Small Town Lottery is religiously remitting the real and true share due for the province? They have been operating last year but none in the annual report on Receipt Program for 2009 to 2011 that the province received any amount of taxes from STL last year. And for this year, the only revenue that the province is expecting to collect is only amounting to 1.7 million? (8)

Your Honor, for the record, may we officially request the governor to instruct his provincial financial managers to provide us a copy if ever they have one the detailed Monthly Production Report of Antones Enterprises and the Monthly Remittances of Oceana Sur Gaming Corporation?

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Is this sound financial management on part of the present administration? - I also wonder, why the 3rd

highest budget per office is allocated under the Office of the Governor amounting to P65.0 million plus.

While the most important offices like the Provincial Agriculture Office, Provincial Cooperative Office, Provincial Nutrition Council, Provincial Social Welfare and Development are only getting P22.0-million, P700,000.00, P500,000.00 and P2.7-million only, respectively.

Support to education and social services to note is only P1.9 million.

Just asking
lang po.

APPEAL OF A SMALL POTATO. - Many believe that my opposition will be futile. Why? Not only Gov. Raul R. Lee has the influence but he also has the majority members in the Provincial Board that can easily give him the authority to enter a loan agreement with any government lending institution.

In this regard, if Gov. Raul R. Lee cannot be stopped because of prevailing circumstances.

I am appealing to my colleagues to please, please please give priority to education, health services and others.

The records will show that these important basic services to our people are **NEGLECTED** like token-or-no funding at all from all loans by the husband-and-wife tandem.

I know most of my colleagues will cross party lines and will prod Gov. Raul R. Lee to give priority to some of my concerns.

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CREATE A COMMITTEE ON DEBT MANAGEMENT. - To my dear colleagues, if we are really serious with our oath to serve the people of Sorsogon, will you please support and pass my proposal to create within the Sangguniang Panlalawigan a Committee on Debt Management or to make it more transparent a Council on Debt Management with the participation from NGOs, private representatives like the professionals, students, media, farmers, religious groups, fishermen and transport sector?

Last year, I filed a resolution allowing the people of Sorsogon to participate in the preparation of the provincial and municipal budget and ordinance. I think this will be a timely measure to pass because it will definitely institutionalize people's participation with regard to how the taxpayer's money is being spent. This way, this is likewise an anti-corruption measure.

Your Honor Becky Aquino, may you please ask our colleagues that I am appealing to them to cross party lines and immediately pass my said resolution allowing the people of Sorsogon to participate in the preparation of provincial and municipal budget and ordinance?

I am also appealing to all Sorsogueños to ask their respective district board members to cross party lines and urge them to support this noble measure.

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PLEASE GIVE PRIORITY TO HEALTH SERVICES. - All Gov. Raul R. Lee and his wife Sally's previous loans have little or no allocation at all for health services. If they still have time to spare, please tell them to go out of their air conditioned room and visit all our government hospital from the Sorsogon Provincial Hospital

,
Gubat
District
Hospital

,
Irosin
District
Hospital

,
Donsol
District
Hospital

,
Vicente
Peralta
Hospital
and
Matnog
Medicare
Hospital
among others.

For the information of everybody, the present improvements of Rural Health Units all over Sorsogon – the repairs and construction of birthing facilities came mostly from the Spanish Government Grant. We owe it more to them and not from this present administration. (9)

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Our poor people are not only complaining but dying due to lack of medicines, supplies, life saving equipment and medicines, dilapidated furnishing and most of all are ran shack hospitals.

To Gov. Raul R. Lee, have pity on our poor, sick and dying constituents.

PLEASE GIVE PRIORITY TO EDUCATION. - Again, all Gov. Raul and his wife Sally Lee's previous loans have also little or no allocation to education.

Again, please tell them to go out of their air conditioned room and visit our schools.

Ask any parents and teachers in far flung areas and most of them will air their grievances on the pity situation of their schools including lack of school textbooks and school chairs.

To Gov. Raul R. Lee, maawa ka tabi sa pobreng kabataan.

Why do I know the situation in most schools and hospitals? I always visited and roamed the barangays during my spare time – a habit I inherited from my old man – Tata Owan Frivaldo.

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PLEASE GIVE PRIORITY TO OUR PROVINCIAL EMPLOYEES. - Gov. Raul R. Lee should also listen to the grievances of his employees.

I sympathize with all our employees. I can feel their situation during this time of crisis and hardship. Why? Because I used to be an a lowly employee like them during the 7th and 8th term of Gov. Frivaldo.

The salary increases and benefits are mostly affected or delayed because of payment of principal and interest of our gargantuan loan.

Please, please, please give priority to their salary increases and other benefits due them.

Consider step increment based on merit and/or length of service.

To Gov. Raul R. Lee, *maawa ka tabi sa ating mga pobrang empleyado.*

AND LASTLY, PLEASE GIVE PRIORITY TO SANGGUNIANG PANLALAWIGAN BUILDING.
- Construction of a new 3- Storey Sangguniang Panlalawigan building.

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The existing Sanggunian Panlalawigan building is no longer conducive to conduct regular session,

committee hearings, study laws, ordinances and other measures relating to issues and concern affecting our lives, our community and our society due to small session hall, limited office spaces and dilapidated structures.

This one is for the Ripley's. In the entire Bicol Region, it is only in Sorsogon wherein you can experience first-hand. That when it rains in the outside, it also rains inside the SP building including the rooms of the vice governor, all board members, secretariat, staff and session hall. Considering Sorsogon is a 2nd class province.

As soon as I assume my role as a Board Member last year I immediately filed a resolution in this August body for the construction of a new 3 Storey SP building. I am praying hard that my colleagues will again cross party lines and support this noble project.

It will also give back the prestige, honor and dignity that our constituent deserves. If this will happen, it will etched Gov. Lee's name in the history of Sorsogon as the pioneer who modernize the SP building on par with other provinces in Bicol region.

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Again, your Honor Becky Aquino, may you please ask our colleagues that I am appealing to them to cross party lines and immediately pass my resolution for us to have a new SP Building?

To Gov. Raul R. Lee, have pity on our Vice Governor, SP Members, secretariat and staff of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan.

If Gov. Raul R. Lee will only stop his political grandstanding and harassing/suppressing opponents/critics to his administration policy, he will definite hear the voices of our small people.

We owe it everything to them.

It is only proper that we serve them as best as we can.

I am not personally against Gov. Raul R. Lee per se but only to some of his policies. If it is for the welfare of the people, I will gladly support him.

As what my good friend from the honorable gentleman from Prieto Diaz Bokal Doma will always say, this small potato from Sta. Magdalena, Bulusan, Irosin, Bulan and now Barcelona will continue to side (with) our poor and suffering people.

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May the good Lord bless our poor Sorsogon.

Thank you. # # #

[1] (1) Annual General Fund Budget (AGFB) for 2011, submitted by the office of the Governor to the Sangguniang Panlalawigan revealed an additional loan received by the Provincial Government in 2009 amounting to 161.9 million under External Sources – Receipts from loans and borrowings.

[2] (2) 116 percent was derived by getting the difference of the most recent loan in 2009 amounting to 161.9 and the new request to be loaned amounting to 350 million which is 188 million, divided by the previous loan and multiplied by 100. This does not include yet previous loans by the province.

[3] (3) The 350 million request was included in the Annual Investment Plan for 2011 but no specific breakdown of projects was presented. Source: AIP. Ref. Code 30-20.23, under Form 4 of the Provincial Annual Investment Plan, Priority Development Projects (Funded by other Sources).

[4] (4) 21 million was derived by applying the lending rate as of January 13, 2011 published by the NSCB - <http://www.nscb.gov.ph/sdds/nsdp.asp> (simply to provide an estimate). Based from Form 3 of the Annual Investment Program for 2011 under Projects Funded under local Fund. Total programmed MOOE for 2011 based from the AGFB for 2011 is 278.9 million. Page 162.

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[5] (5) Based from Form 3 of the Annual Investment Program for 2011 under Projects Funded under local Fund.

[6] (6) Based from the Annual Invest Plan total budget from the 20 percent CDF is 131.5 million.

[7] (7) Based from the AGFB for 2011, page 2.

[8] (8) AGFB for 2011, page 2 – Table 1 Receipts Program.

[9] (9) Based from the Annual Investment Plan for 2011 under Programs and Projects Funded from Other Sources.

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