

Senator Pimentel Urges the Philippine Government to Help More the Distressed Filipino Nurses In NY - M

Written by Press Office of Senator Nene Pimentel

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Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Q. Pimentel, Jr. (PDP-Laban) continues to prod the government to extend more assistance to 28 Filipino nurses who were sued by an American recruitment company. The nurses were sued after they staged a protest over non-compliance with the terms of their employment contracts.

Senator Pimentel said that he was informed that the criminal complaint against the nurses would be tried by a New York district court in April. The civil suit against them will be tried separately.

Editor's Note: For the record, this editor was probably the first to inform Senator Pimentel that the earlier press release of his press office about the 28 Filipino nurses in New York was wrong in regard to the supposed conviction of six of them.

This is contrary to an earlier report furnished to the senator that some of the nurses, who were hired by the Sentosa Recruitment Agency (SRA), have been convicted by the court.

The nurses walked out of their hospital duties to protest the alleged failure of SRA to grant the salary rates and benefits stipulated under their employment contracts in 2006. The recruitment firm said the walk-out allegedly endangered the lives of the patients.

Among the complaining nurses was 2004 medical-board exam topnotcher Elmer Jacinto. Upon the advice of their lawyer, they sued the SRA for breach of employment contract.

They also filed a formal complaint with the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, which led to the suspension of the recruitment license of the SRA,

Senator Pimentel said the distressed nurses should be assisted by the government by way of extending legal services to them.

"I think that we owe it to our compatriots in New York who are placed in that situation to assist them in whatever way," Pimentel said.

When the plight of the 28 nurses was first brought to the attention of the Philippine government, Senator Pimentel acted by delivering a privilege speech in which he urged Malacañang, labor and foreign-affairs authorities to attend to their problem.

Following Senator Pimentel's speech, the Senate Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources and the Committee of Foreign Relations conducted public hearings on the plight of the nurses. # # #

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