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SENATE
P.S. Res. No. 643

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Introduced by SENATOR RISA HONTIVEROS

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN, CHILDREN, FAMILY RELATIONS AND GENDER EQUALITY TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE CEASE AND DESIST ORDER ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT (DSWD) AGAINST GENTLE HANDS, INCORPORATED (GHI) ORPHANAGE THAT RESULTED IN THE PULLING OUT OF THE WARDS OF GHI FROM ITS FACILITY WITH THE END IN VIEW OF REVIEWING CURRENT POLICIES ON ORPHANAGES AND CHILD RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES IN THE PHILIPPINES TO ENSURE ADHERENCE TO THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD

WHEREAS, Republic Act No. 11642 requires the State to establish alternative care standards to ensure that the quality of life and living conditions are conducive to the child's development;

WHEREAS, in the morning of May 23, 149 girls and boys of varying ages in the care of Gentle Hands, Inc.. a residential facility in Quezon City were taken away by employees of the Department of Social Welfare and Development and transferred to state-run facilities in Mandaluyong, Quezon City and Muntinlupa City;

WHEREAS, the removal of the children from the facility stemmed from a cease and desist order against GHI issued by the DSWD, in which the latter stated that GHI failed to comply with the Department's minimum standards for residential facilities for children;

WHEREAS, social workers from the DSWD conducted a spot inspection on the facility and flagged areas of concern such as overcrowding, ventilation and fire safety;

WHEREAS, according to GHI, the actions of the DSWD were traumatizing for the children, many of whom already suffer from the wounds of abandonment and abuse;

WHEREAS, many of these children also have specific needs, including some who require medical attention and psycho-social counselling;

WHEREAS, while the safety and adequacy of living standards are important concerns, it is also important to determine whether or not the correct processes were followed in the removal of the children from a child care facility subject to a CDO, and whether or not these processes are informed by the best interests of the child doctrine;

WHEREAS, especially since Republic Act No. 11642 is a recent piece of legislation, it is imperative for the Senate to exercise the necessary oversight to check adherence to State policies and most importantly, to ensure that the best interests of the child are always upheld;

NOW BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, TO DIRECT THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN, CHILDREN, FAMILY RELATIONS AND GENDER EQUALITY TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, , INTO THE CEASE AND DESIST ORDER ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT (DSWD) AGAINST GENTLE HANDS, INCORPORATED (GHI) ORPHANAGE THAT RESULTED IN THE PULLING OUT OF THE WARDS OF GHI FROM ITS FACILITY WITH THE END IN VIEW OF REVIEWING CURRENT POLICIES ON ORPHANAGES AND CHILD RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES IN THE PHILIPPINES TO ENSURE ADHERENCE TO THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD.

Adopted,


RISA HONTIVEROS