

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS OF
THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
Third Regular Session

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7 JUN -6 2007

SENATE

RECEIVED BY: 

P.S. Res. No. 648

INTRODUCED BY THE HONORABLE MAR ROXAS

A RESOLUTION
COMMENDING ELECTION VOLUNTEERS OF THE VFORCE COALITION
FOR THEIR VIGILANCE IN PROTECTING THE INTEGRITY OF THE
NATIONAL MID-TERM ELECTIONS ON 14 MAY 2007

WHEREAS, members of civil society have had a long tradition of personal involvement to ensure that the Filipino citizens' right of suffrage is upheld and respected;

WHEREAS, this tradition evolved into nationwide citizens' movement known as the Volunteers for Clean Elections or "VforCE Coalition" comprised of volunteer lawyers, law students, teachers, religious groups, anti-corruption watchdogs, and business organizations that offered a range of services from voters' education to quick counts and safeguarding the canvassing of votes from the precinct to the national levels;

WHEREAS, these volunteers formed the non-partisan VforCE Coalition to help protect the integrity of this year's midterm elections and prevent a repeat of still unresolved issues related to the May 2004 national elections;

WHEREAS, the VforCE Coalition is composed of individuals in organizations such as the National Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel), the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV), Pinoy Bantay Bayan, the Bantay Eleksyon '07-People's Coalition to Monitor 2007 Election, the Makati Business Club (MBC), the Legal Network for Truthful Elections (LENTE), the National Secretariat for Social Action (NASSA) of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), the Simbahang Lingkod ng Bayan (SLB), One Voice Para sa Tunay na Pagbabago, the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP), and the movement Pera't Pulitika;

WHEREAS, members of the VforCE Coalition provided unwavering legal and paralegal support during the elections held last 14 May 2007, in order to prevent irregularities and fraudulent election activities, thereby risking their own lives in order to protect the sanctity and secrecy of the ballot;

WHEREAS, members of the VforCE Coalition, particularly in Maguindanao, have been instrumental in exposing election fraud even in the face of grave danger, including an instance where a teacher reported that she was forced to fill in blank ballots with the names of certain senatorial candidates;

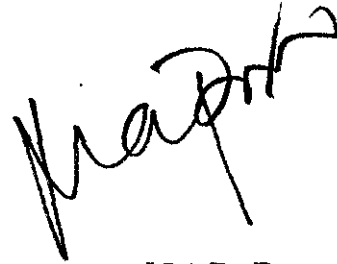
WHEREAS, massive poll fraud and cheating in Lanao del Sur in various forms such as vote-buying, voter substitution, voter coaching, voting by minors and flying voters, and the preparation of home-worked ballots were uncovered by members of the VforCE Coalition, willingly putting their lives in harm's way at all costs;

WHEREAS, members of the VforCE Coalition undertook these responsibilities, regardless of the risks involved, fueled only by their sense of nationality and dignity and not by any remuneration or other monetary consideration;

WHEREAS, individual members of the VforCE Coalition as well as vigilant members of the media should be recognized for their hard work, and the inspiration they continue to give the Filipino people through their courage and persistent determination in ensuring clean, honest and orderly elections;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Senate commend election volunteers and various electoral watchdogs of the VforCE Coalition for their vigilance to protect the sanctity of the ballot, thereby proving that the most important unit in our democracy is a vigilant and responsible citizen.

Adopted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mar Roxas', with a stylized flourish at the end.

M A R Roxas
Senator