

# HAWAII FILIPINO CHRONICLE

HAWAII'S #1 FILIPINO NEWSPAPER

◆ AUGUST 4, 2012 ◆

## AWAKENING A POTENTIAL POWER BLOC

### WHY THE FILIPINO VOTE SHOULD MATTER

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## EDITORIALS

## Awakening the Filipino Vote

**F**ilipinos and part-Filipinos, according to the 2010 U.S. Census, comprise the largest minority ethnic group in Hawaii. A closer look at the numbers shows that Hawaii's *pinoy* population increased by an astonishing 24 percent from the 2000 Census.

With such large numbers, candidates for public office typically reach out to the Filipino community in an obvious play for votes, especially during election years. But despite a sizeable population, Filipinos as a community have yet to wield the kind of political power that influences public decision-making, particularly in politics, government or other institutional settings.

Because we live in a democratic society, electoral processes such as voting, campaigns, debates, and other types of intellectual engagements become the major mechanisms for the acquisition and retention of political power. In this context, the notion of citizenship plays a key role in the shaping of a powerful and influential community largely through the instrument of electoral politics. We can only hope that as Filipinos with permanent visas arrive in the state, they will apply in greater numbers to become U.S. citizens. And once they have become citizens, they should endeavor to register as voters, and to actually vote when elections come around.

In years past, a popular metaphor used to describe the Filipino community was a "sleeping giant." In a sense, Filipinos have awakened to a renewed sense of purpose and vitality. We elected the nation's first governor of Filipino ancestry and celebrated 100 years of history in Hawaii.

Yet, the consensus among Filipino leaders is that Filipinos are not yet at the stage where we can turn out massive numbers for citizenship, registration and voting purposes. Consequently, we are still not in a position to claim that we have become a real political power in the state. We are getting close, but are not yet there. We have to accelerate the processes mentioned above to get to that stage of real empowerment.

There is certainly the potential for a fully-awakened sleeping giant but it will only materialize through public policies that promote greater political engagement and the concerted efforts of a myriad of community-based organizations. A positive sign for Filipinos is that 12 percent of the total number of candidates statewide for elective office are of part- or full Filipino ancestry. An increase in the numbers of Filipino candidates seeking and serving in public office certainly bodes well.

At the same time, let's also continue to promote naturalization and engage new voters by focusing on issues that are most important to them. The work begins now.

## Restoring City Bus Service

**L**ast June, City transportation officials began service changes for TheBus. A total of 21 routes were reconfigured and two routes were canceled. The changes were meant to balance service with demand to make better use of resources and more importantly, to save money and avoid having to raise bus fares.

Transportation officials went out of their way to inform riders ahead of the changes and even set up a hotline and email for the public to submit complaints and offer suggestions. They insisted that the proposed tweaks were not set in stone and were willing to work with the public.

The cuts exacted a heavy toll on many riders, particularly the elderly, visually impaired and handicapped. In addition to longer waits, riders boarded buses that were packed, which forced them to stand for longer periods. Also hard hit were those with long rides to and from rural areas and others who must make one or more

## FROM THE PUBLISHER

**A**

loha! We've received a lot of positive comments from our readers regarding last week's jam-packed issue which contained the Chronicle's Election Poll and Primary Election 2012 Supplement. If you missed it, be sure to pick up a



copy at one of the many outlets around town. Please take time to read the various articles in last week's special edition. We also encourage you to be a smart voter and familiarize yourself with the candidates and their stance on the various issues.

We've continued our election coverage in this latest issue, which includes a closer look at the Filipino community as a potential power bloc and why the Filipino vote should matter. Written by Fiedes Doctor, the article examines the growing numbers of Filipinos in Hawaii and how these numbers could translate into greater political influence. It is unknown how many of the 342,095 Filipinos in Hawaii are naturalized citizens and possibly registered voters. However, the potential is certainly there for Filipinos to influence the outcome of close elections, especially as a voting bloc or the "swing vote." Please read more on the Filipino vote beginning on page 4.

Speaking of voting, the Office of the City Clerk has opened several early voting sites at Honolulu Hale, Kapolei Hale and Pali Golf Course. If you live or work near these areas and if your schedule allows it, you may want to consider dropping by during your lunch hour to cast your votes. By law, employers are required to allow their employees two hours to vote. Just be sure to bring a picture ID and to retain your ballot stub as proof of voting. Turn to page 7 for more information on early voting.

Lastly, we once again encourage all of our readers to get out and vote on August 11. If you want lasting change that positively shapes the lives of your children and future generations, then vote for leaders who share your same values and ideals. If you don't, then someone else will. By casting your ballot, you can elect the right people to lead our great state and city forward. The power is in your hands.

In closing, we again would like to thank you for faithfully supporting the Hawaii Filipino Chronicle. Our staff is dedicated to providing our readers with informative and timely stories in each and every issue. Please feel free to contact us at: [filiplinochronicle@gmail.com](mailto:filiplinochronicle@gmail.com) if you have ideas, concerns or questions regarding Hawaii's vibrant Filipino community.

Until next time... *aloha and mabuhay!*

*Chona A. Montesines-Sonido*

transfers. Weekend riders were also impacted, with many waiting well over an hour for their bus to arrive. Some unhappy riders, particularly those from East Honolulu, have circulated petitions asking that service be restored.

Relief may also be on the way in the form of a resolution recently passed by the City Council's Budget Committee which asks the city administration to restore cuts made to bus system. The full Council votes on the measure on August 15, 2012.

To the City's credit, public feedback has been incorporated and some routes restored but more needs to be done. One thing is certain—raising fares isn't the answer particularly in the midst of the sluggish economy. With another round of bus service tweaks scheduled for mid-August, we hope that the City will move quickly to find the necessary funds to restore bus service. Suggestions as to where to find the \$6 million or more needed include unused City transportation funds and vacant funded positions. Another possible source is federal funds in the form of a Community Development Block Grant.

It's disheartening to see how rising operating costs have negatively impacted TheBus—which is often referred to as the best bus system in the nation. We hope that the Carlisle administration will see it fit to restore bus service for the vast majority of its riders who depend on a reliable and efficient bus system.

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## OPINION

# A Global Boycott for China to Act Like a Civilized Nation

**NO LIMITATION**  
By Ted Laguatan

**F**ormer Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, now charged with plunder, election malfeasance and other high crimes – opened the door for the fox to enter the chicken coop when she entered into a controversial secret agreement allowing Chinese research vessels to extensively explore Philippine waters for oil and natural gas.

Having confirmed that the territorial waters of the Philippines hold vast deposits of energy resources, China's officials, like those in the Japanese and German governments in World War II – have decided on a similar reckless immoral condemnable course of action: They seek to invade the territories of smaller helpless countries and take over their resources.

The small armies of the Philippines and surrounding smaller countries are boy scouts compared to China's formidable 2.3 million strong army with its considerable arsenal of war ships, jet planes, conventional and nuclear weapons. Given this disparity, China flaunts its military muscles and in true bully fashion shows little respect for the territorial and property rights of its smaller neighbors.

In World War II, the bad guys in the Japanese and German governments caused enormous pain and suffering to millions of people including their own – with their bullying territory grabbing ways leading America and its allies to eventually declare war on the two villain countries. China is now risking a similar situation with its invading actions in the Philippines.

Adding insult to injury, China's officials have invented a convenient fiction to justify their continuous escalating intrusion into Philippine territory.

They claim that everything under or above the waters of the entire South China Sea also

known as West Philippine Sea – belongs to them – that supposedly a 2000 year old Han Dynasty map indicates that all these territories were once part of the Chinese empire and that therefore, it is theirs.

Anyone with a modicum of intelligence recognizes the absurdity of this argument. It is doubtful that such a map exists but even if for the sake of argument, let's assume that it does, did the people in these territories recognize the legitimacy of the Han Dynasty's rule over their waters and land 2000 years ago?

And even if we assume that they did, China's argument is about as ludicrous as the Italian government claiming that the whole of Europe and parts of Africa and Asia belong to them because these were once a part of the Roman Empire. The pygmy Aetas, who arrived and settled in the Philippines some 40,000 years ago from the Andaman Islands would then have a more legitimate claim if this first in time arguments are seriously considered.

Over time, governments rise and fall, new countries are formed and national boundaries shift. Of course, China's officials are aware of these realities. And never mind that they are signatories to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) which declares that anything within two hundred miles from a country's baseline belongs to that country and is part of its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

And so what if the Philippines and other smaller nations files a complaint to the United Nations International Tribunal for the Law of the Seas (ITLOS) which has jurisdiction over disputes concerning the (UNCLOS). China's officialdom indicates that it is not interested in involving ITLOS.

The hungry dragon's thinking goes this way: "We need a continuous supply of energy to sustain our fabulous economic growth. We import 70% of our energy supplies from Russia. The Philippines and other smaller countries have tremendous unexploited reserves of oil

and natural gas. Their pathetic armies are no match for ours. Let's invent a reason on why it is justifiable for us to invade and take their resources – and then let's just do it. Who can stop us?"

In line with their scheme, they insist on a bilateral resolution of the marine territorial dispute that they instigated – not involving ITLOS but only a one on one resolution as say, between China and the Philippines or China and Vietnam. Under such a negotiation environment, the Philippines, Vietnam or other small countries do not have the leverage to bargain.

With a mighty army, big guns, economic power and goon mentality, China's officials will make an offer that the Philippines or another small country cannot possibly refuse.

The United States knows China's game plan and the unequal bargaining power involved in a one on one bilateral negotiation arrangement. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and the Philippines maintain that a multilateral resolution involving other nations should be the proper way to resolve territorial disputes between China and

smaller nations.

Playing mind games, and in line with their grand scheme to possess the Philippines' energy resources, it is now China's officials accusing Filipino fishermen of trespassing when they fish in their traditional fishing spots which are well within the Philippines' 200 mile EEZ.

Escalating their presence in Philippine territory, China has engaged in defiant activities meant to test the Philippines' resolve in defending against China's intrusion and also to elicit a test reaction from its giant ally, the United States.

Fleets of Chinese fishing vessels escorted by gun boats now blatantly enter into Philippine waters taking rare turtles, lobsters, fishes and live corral. The Philippines cannot stop them because it has no matching gunboats of its own.

A few weeks ago, the Philippine government reported that "a small Philippine fishing boat was accidentally rammed by a Chinese transport vessel which according to a Philippine government report resulted in one fisherman dead and four missing."

Understandably, avoiding a

one sided military confrontation, the incident was downplayed by the Philippine government. The fact is that it is practically impossible for two boats to collide in the wide open sea, especially so because Chinese transport vessels are equipped with modern sonar navigational equipment which can easily detect nearby boats.

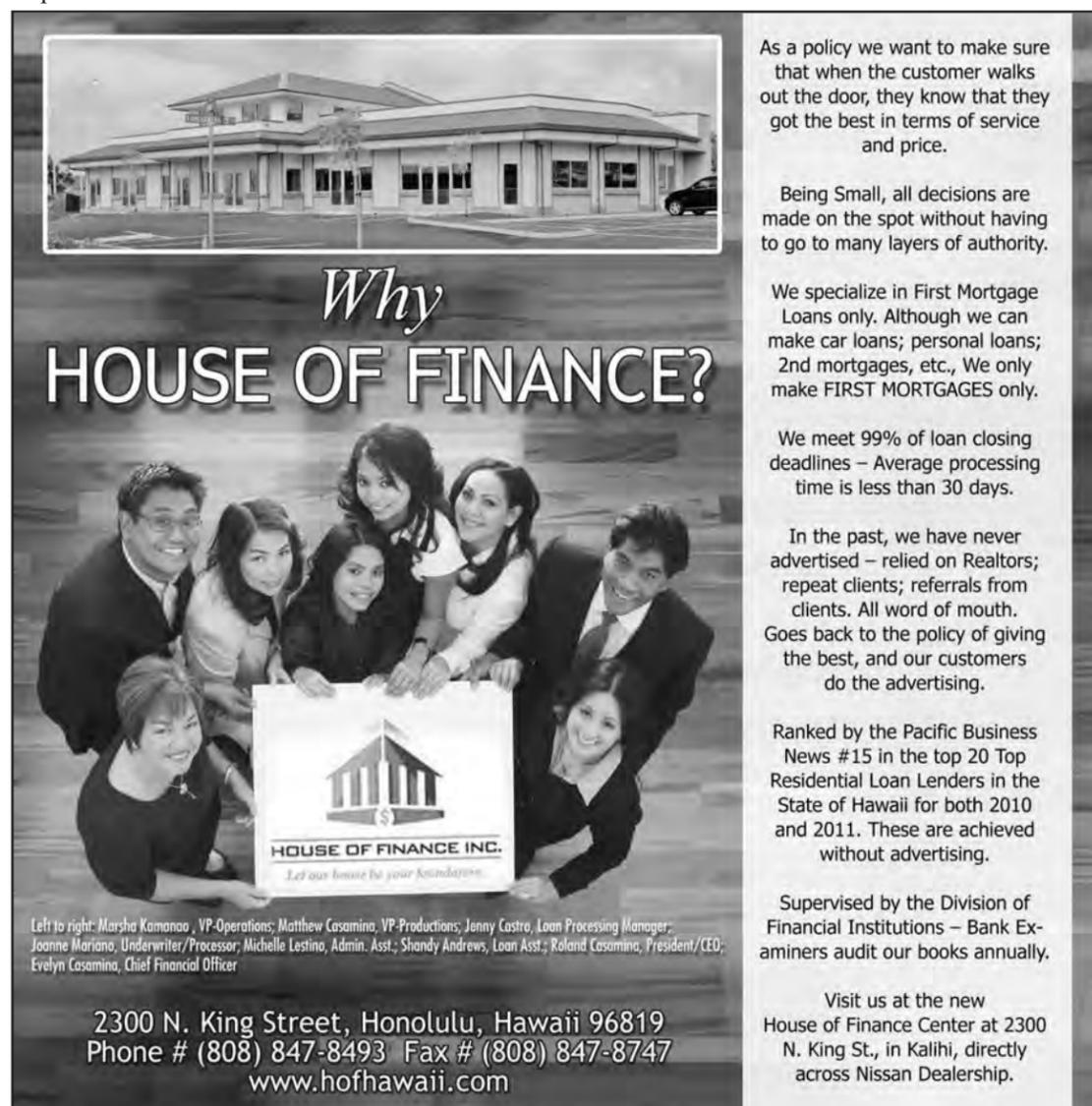
The Chinese boat also did not stop to help the fishermen which suggests that this incident was not accidental. The four missing Filipino fishermen were never found. That means not one dead fisherman but five.

China also has recently unilaterally established "Three Sands City" and announced that Panatag or Scarborough Shoals are part of this city's territory which it will manage.

China appears to be arrogantly thumbing its nose at the United Nations and the world by ignoring international law and instead has simply decided to play by its own rules based on Mao Zedong's Little Red Book philosophy of "Power comes from the barrel of the gun."

China's officials are leading the good Chinese people towards a very dangerous course of action. Other countries of the

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## COVER STORY

# Elections 2012: The Potential of the Filipino Vote, the Power of the Filipino Voice

By Fiedes Doctor

**M**ember of Second Largest Asian Community in the U.S. This is the title every single person among the 3.4 million Filipinos in the U.S. is carrying, whether immigrant or naturalized citizen, full or of mixed ancestry.

After the Chinese, Filipinos have bulked up the Asian population in the country, which has been speedily growing for the past decade, according to the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau. This means more political power—and by extension, better lives—if Filipinos exercise their right to vote.

“The more people you have from the minorities, the more there are citizens who will have the power to make a political impact by voting,” says Dr. Belinda Aquino, an avid observer of Filipino culture and behavior and current Professor Emeritus at the School of Pacific and Asian Studies at the University of Hawaii-Manoa. “The potential as a political power bloc would be high.”

Candidates from the Honolulu City Council to the U.S. presidency recognize the importance of this “potential political power” as they woo votes this 2012. At the national level, President Barack Obama and opponent Mitt Romney are trying to gain Hispanic and Asian voters whose numbers have the capacity to swing the results in favor of one party over the other. The promise to amend policies that help both demographics achieve the American Dream is being

served and is out for the taking.

Locally, candidates are making a similar appeal as they present themselves as the best-qualified to be the people’s voice at City Hall, State Capitol or Washington, DC. At times, candidates use their ethnic background to appeal to voters.

“Aside from being able to communicate with constituents in our native tongue, I can use my experience and knowledge to help them,” says Romy Cachola, a bona fide Filipino and candidate for State House District 30. “It certainly helps to get support from the Filipino community.”

First-time District 27 candidate Takashi Ohno, a non-Filipino, says he bridges the cultural gap by speaking essential Filipino words. “I use as much Tagalog and Ilocano as I can,” he says. “For example, simple pleasantries like *“salamat”* and *“auntie.”*”

The question is, if the candidates know our political power, do we?

## Inclined to Disincline

“Generally, Filipinos have not been heavily involved in electoral campaigns because of work responsibilities and because politics has been equated

as something outside their realm,” says Aquino. “They are working not only one but two or three jobs and they don’t have the time and probably inclination to get involved in politics and electoral campaigns, which are time-consuming.”

Much of this non-involvement or “disinclination” from actively participating in politics may also be due to Filipinos’ understanding of politics, she says, which has been “identified with negative things like corruption, insincerity, dishonesty, fraud, *‘balimbing’* (a favorite observation of some who regard politicians as turncoats) and all kinds of unfavorable comments.”

“I have been surprised at the number of people, even highly-trained professionals, who say that they’d rather be non-partisan,” she says.

For the younger generation, disinterest comes from distractions brought by the modern world such as computers, the internet, video games and parties, which are more interesting than standing in line at the polls to cast a ballot or filling out a piece of paper for absentee voting. House Bill 1755, which would allow voters to register online, tries to counter this election ap-

athy but the process won’t be ready until 2016.

Specifically for Filipinos, a large chunk of voting non-participants is dissuaded by the electoral process, especially the confusion of two elections (the Primary and the General) because the Philippines holds only one election.

Here in the U.S., a primary election narrows the field of candidates before the general election. It gives the electorate the power of nominating candidates for their party of choice, whether Democrat or Republican, instead of from just a few party leaders. The general election puts whoever gets the majority vote in office.

Statewide, primary elections have generally shown a lower turnout compared to general elections. State Office of Elections data from 2002 to 2010 show an average of 40.66 percent voter turnout in the primary, compared to a 59.75 percent turnout in the general.

“I am always appalled at some people who say they only vote once—in the general election,” says Aquino, who emphasizes the need to educate Filipinos and suggests re-introducing civics or the study of government from grade school and up. “In that way, every generation understands the relationship between government, politics and public affairs to their personal lives.

“It is up to the leadership in the Filipino community to undertake measures to develop a better understanding of the political system in the U.S. in hopes of creating a literate electorate that can participate actively in public affairs.”

In the meantime, to improve

voter registration turnout, the Elections Office is doing its best to make all election materials available to the public, some of which has been translated into Ilocano, Japanese and Chinese to cater to those with limited English proficiency.

“People have various reasons for not participating in the electoral process and that is something outside of our realm,” says Rex Quidilla, spokesman for the State Office of Elections. “What we can do is to make sure materials are available for the voters.”

## The Power of the Filipino Vote

The Filipino population in Hawaii continues to grow with 3,500 individuals immigrating yearly, making us a formidable force in our own right. This influx has placed Filipinos (full and mixed) as the largest ethnic group in the State, representing a 25.1 percent chunk of Hawaii’s overall population of more than 1.3 million, according to the 2010 Census. In other words, out of four people in any random group, one would be Filipino.

Within only a decade since the 2000 Census when the Japanese populate (296,674) outranked Filipinos (275,728), our community has thrived and flourished in the State.

Here are several more facts from the Migration Information Source (2008 data) that puts Filipinos on the map of significance, not just for Hawaii but the nation:

- Two in five immigrants in Hawaii are Filipino
- 70 percent of Filipino immigrants reported being English proficient compared to only 50 percent among other

(continued on page 5)





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## COVER STORY

(from page 4, ELECTIONS 2012...)

- immigrants
- Over three-quarters of Filipino adult immigrants have some college education or higher
- Filipino immigrants were far less likely (14 percent) to live at the poverty level than other immigrant groups (37.9 percent)
- Filipino immigrants are more likely to be naturalized citizens (63.1 percent) than other foreign-born immigrants (43 percent)

A staunch activist for naturalization, Aquino underscores the role of citizenship in becoming a stronger ethnic group.

“Since we are growing in numbers, we must see to it that it is exponential, parallel in the growth of population and parallel to the citizenship,” Aquino says. “It is only in the citizens that we can draw the pool of registered voters and from them we can become more powerful that way.”

Although there are no numbers that show how many among the 342,095 Filipinos in Hawaii are naturalized citizens and therefore possibly registered voters, the potential to make an influence exists, especially as a voting bloc or the “swing vote,” as in the case with close elections.

History has shown a landmark vote for Ben Cayetano, a bona fide Kalihi-bred Filipino, who eventually became the first Filipino-American governor in Hawaii and who served two terms in 1994 and 1998. Although his win was not merely from the so-called Filipino vote but from other ethnic groups as well, his election victories show that the Filipinos have gained recognition as a voting group.

Presently a candidate for Honolulu mayor, Cayetano continues to receive the Filipino community’s support according to a recent poll conducted by HFC with 40 percent picking him over Kirk Caldwell (3.1 percent) and Peter Carlisle (8.7 percent). A large group at 48.2 percent is still undecided.

The late Frank Fasi also enjoyed the Filipino community’s endorsement, particularly in 1984 when the Filipino vote swung in his favor. He was a colorful personality whom Filipinos could relate with, especially with those born and raised in the Philippines. Fasi was a champion for the “little guy.” Serving as mayor from 1968 to 1980 and

again from 1984 to 1994, Fasi’s lasting impact upon the Filipino community was in appointing more Filipinos to his administration which led to a greater position of influence in the State.

This shows that generally, when we see a qualified candidate who can be a strong ally and advocate, we rally behind in support of that public servant regardless of ethnic background. This is where our political power lies.

“We Filipinos have the potential to form a cohesive and effective voting bloc given our growing numbers and our strong identification with our ethnicity and culture that bind us as a people,” says Ron Menor, candidate for Honolulu City Council District 9. “Our growing numbers could translate into greater political influence for Filipinos in the future.”

#### More Candidates, Better for the Community

This year, roughly 12 percent of the total number of candidates statewide are of part or full Filipino ancestry. Some were born and raised in the Philippines, while others connect to the country through parental lineage. That is at least 36 out of the more than 300 other potential candidates to fill 120 positions in government.

So far, Filipinos have represented an average of 12 seats at the City Council, the House and the Senate from 2002 to 2010. Eight seats were occupied in both election years 2002 and 2004. This year, we have 12 Filipinos occupying public positions. In 2008, there were 15 seats and in 2010 there were 13 seats. The largest number of elected Filipino officials was in 2006 with 16 candidates being elected. Adding more council members, representatives, senators and public officials is possible in 2012 if Filipino voters see Filipino candidates as best-qualified to represent them in government and turn their preference into votes.

“If a district has a large Filipino voting base, those Filipino voters may support a candidate who they feel is closer to their opinions and values,” says Will Espero, incumbent candidate for State Senate District 20.

A veteran in public service, Cachola says it is understandable for Filipinos to lean towards a candidate who has a similar ethnic background, especially vot-

ers who were born and raised in the Philippines.

“They are more likely to vote for candidates they are familiar with,” Cachola says.

Proof of this is the consistent support of Filipino candidates from districts with a large concentration of Filipino residents, such as House District 9 (Kahului, Wailuku, Puunene, Spreckelsville, Paia); District 29 (Sand Island, Mokauea, Kalihi Kai, Kapalama); District 35 (Pearl City, Waipahu); District 42 (Waipahu, Honouliuli, West Loch, Ewa); District 43 (Ewa Beach, Iroquis Point, Puuloa) and Senate District 14 (Moanalua, Aiea, Fort Shafter, Kalihi Valley, Halawa Valley); and District 20 (Ewa Beach, Ewa by Gentry, Ocean Pointe, Ewa Villages, West Loch, Honouliuli, Lower Waipahu).

“If you have more people from your group who are elected to office—and they have the most important duty in society which is to make public policy that is important to all—then you have more people in your group who would represent your interest and make public policy in all aspects of human endeavor,” says Aquino.

“It is not only good, but also important that Filipinos become involved in politics and government,” says Espero. “Public officials can be role models for our youth and advocates for issues that are of interest to fellow Filipinos. Examples of these include immigration, tourism, and WWII veterans’ benefits.”

This steady increase in Filipino candidates seeking public office and actually being in office, positively upholds Aquino’s observation in 2000 regarding the Filipino community’s growing political sophistication and coming of age in Hawaii.

“As the Filipino-American population grows in Hawaii, there’s bound to be more of them who are or feel qualified for public office,” she notes in an article about Filipinos coming of age politically. “People run for office for all kinds of reasons but mainly because they believe they can contribute to the community life through politics. Politics is a worthy profession and the fact that more Filipinos are seeking public office is a good sign.”

#### In the End, How Does One Vote?

“Voting is an opportunity, a part of democracy where citizens

can select leaders who can affect their daily lives,” says Quidilla, who encourages everyone to exercise this right not just in the general elections but the primary as well.

“It is your right as well as duty to vote in those elections,” Aquino says. “Those who are already citizens and registered to vote should go out to vote at the polls and exercise their duty in the Primary on August 11 and again in the General election on November 6.”

Aquino mentions a few qualifications that are worthy to note: A candidate has to be familiar with issues of the day that concern people and run on the basis of which issues best resonate with the public or general

interest. These broader issues include the economy, people’s quality of life, trust in government, integrity, the ability to handle and manage crisis, and performance, which is measured by how he or she delivers on the promises they have made.

“It’s important to be aware of the process of selection and not just the personality of candidates themselves,” Aquino says. She emphasizes that judgment must not be made on the basis of a single criterion alone. “Who deserves the people’s support at the highest level based on their informed and wise judgment should be the ultimate test.”

Every vote is a voice. If the qualified candidate happens to be Filipino, so be it.

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## OPINION

*(from page 3, A GLOBAL...)*

world are beginning to be aware of, concerned and angered by China's war baiting and energy resource grabbing actions. In June 2011, The United States Senate passed a resolution condemning China's use of force against smaller nations in the West Philippine Sea and affirmed the use of its military might against Chinese aggression.

Aside from the United States, the rest of the world including influential countries such as Russia, France, UK, Italy, Brazil, Japan, India, Israel, the Middle East nations, etc. – will soon realize that it serves their interests and the interest of the world – to restrain

China from its blatant abuse of power.

Her rapid rise to become the second largest economy in the world is the result of international corporations successfully outsourcing their manufacturing activities to China. By doing so, companies simplify their operations, avoid labor problems and lower overhead costs. They are then able to focus on marketing activities.

While this overall business model has resulted in tremendous profits for many companies, it has also resulted in massive layoffs in their home countries. The United States and other industrialized countries are now faced with hundreds of thousands of jobless people who

are dependent on welfare payments for their survival. This situation cannot and should not be allowed to continue.

Well-meaning citizens of the world should rightly be happy about the new found prosperity of the Chinese people. For so long, they have wallowed in poverty.

However, China's government must recognize that with great power and wealth comes the responsibility of dealing fairly and in a friendly manner with other nations – including smaller countries like the Philippines and Vietnam. If it is to gain the respect and friendship of other nations – China should not act like a neighborhood bully using goon tactics stealing property that belongs to others.

But militarist elements within China's government are intent on rattling their sabers – amassing war ships, equipment and armaments with their new wealth. They are also calling to “punish the Philippines militarily” for daring to challenge China's territorial claim on the whole South China Sea.

Resorting to a military might based policy meant to coerce and intimidate less powerful nations and forcing them to give up their valuable resources – which is the policy now being used by China on the Philippines, Vietnam, Taiwan and other surrounding countries – is now building up so much global antipathy and anger against China. Justifiably so.

Shortsighted military minded Chinese leaders who think that oppressing smaller nations and stealing their resources – will not have serious long term consequences – should learn from the lessons of history. By continuing with this irresponsible reckless policy, China is surely channeling itself towards an inevitable deadly confrontation with a powerful grouping of nations including the United States and its powerful allies.

China's government's best move to serve the interest of its people is to behave like a civilized nation: Stop bullying smaller nations. Honor international laws. Respect territorial and property rights. Help poorer nations, promote world peace and help create a better world. If she does all these, then China will truly become a great nation – honored and respected by the citizens of the world.

Meanwhile, while she is still in a grab and take mode, in self-defense, the Philippines, Vietnam, Taiwan and other smaller bullied countries – must ask for help from the world's community of nations.

In his State of the Nation, President Simeon Benigno Aquino in no uncertain terms – condemned China's blatant intrusion in Philippine territory. He affirmed the resolve of Filipinos to fight for what is theirs. However, he gave no indication of what specific actions must be undertaken to stop the hungry dragon from devouring the Philippines' marine and energy resources. He stated that it was a difficult problem and his government is looking for solutions.

What should smaller nations do against China's bullying grab of its marine territories and energy resources?

Here's my take on this:

1. The governments of these small countries must reach out towards one another and together file in the ITLOS complaints against China's intrusion into its territories. China may refuse to submit itself to the ITLOS' jurisdiction but that by itself is an admission to the world that it is engaged in wrongful intrusion and resource grabbing actions. World opinion will turn against China leading to serious sanctions from the global community.
2. These smaller countries should be aggressively involved in lobbying with the different countries of the world through its ambassadors and through state visits in condemning China's actions and not be shy in asking for some financial or military equipment aid – to defend against China's aggression.
3. Support the worldwide boycott China products campaign endorsed by environmentalists, peace advocates, food safety adherents, labor unions and other groups – which will put pressure on China to stop bullying and claiming other nation's resources.

A boycott by the Philippines alone or by smaller countries will hardly dent China's economic armor. But if the world is made aware of its immoral bullying ways and how

massive outsourcing of corporate manufacturing operations has led to the starvation of families of millions of workers all over the world – well-meaning citizens of the world will support this important campaign.

They will look to buy locally made or equivalent products from other countries. The less the world buys from China, the less funds it has to build up and maintain its army. The less effective it can be in carrying out its aggressive militarist tendencies.

The world's corporations must bear their heavy responsibility to humanity of looking out for our future and not be governed solely by the profit motive. More than any other factor, their outsourcing strategy is responsible for China's rapid rise as an economic and military power. They must now play an important role in influencing the future of the world and humanity by removing their manufacturing operations in China and returning these to their home countries or relocating elsewhere.

China's militaristic elements are a danger not only to the Philippines and other smaller countries but also to the whole world – and a danger to its own good people.

The citizens of the world love so many things Chinese including its great food, its marvelous art and its great philosophers like Lao Tzu, Confucius and others. They also love the Chinese people. It is China's nationalistic military oriented officials who espouse policies based on conquering other nations by force and grabbing valuable resources – that ought to be condemned. These are the blood thirsty cold hearted types – Chinese or otherwise – who bring so much suffering to the world and to their own people.

*(Note: The author is a human rights and immigration lawyer in the United States. He is the Spokesperson and Legal Counsel for the U.S. Pinoy for Good Governance (USP4GG), an influential organization of Filipino Americans composed of doctors, lawyers, academicians, businesspersons and other professionals. USP4GG has recently launched the worldwide Boycott China Products Initiative in the United States which was received with enthusiasm in various sectors and has now gained much momentum. “Any global citizen who supports the boycott China products campaign is an automatic member. No dues or registration are required. This is a people's campaign. Just stop buying products from China and tell people why this is necessary for the good of all.”)*

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## IMMIGRATION GUIDE

# Can Fiancée Get a Green Card Through Another Petitioner?



By Atty. Emmanuel Samonte Tipon

**T**he only French word that most aliens know besides Chevrolet is fiancé (male) or fiancée (female). They know that being a fiancée (we will extol the women) is the fastest way to come to America and get a green card. Can the alien fiancée obtain a green card through a petitioner other than the one who filed the fiancée visa petition?

## Petitioner dies before fiancée arrives

Lubelyn of Banna, Ilocos Norte was petitioned as a fiancée by a U.S. citizen. When Lubelyn arrived in America, her petitioner did not meet her. He was killed before she arrived. Instead of a wedding, she attended a funeral. She married another man. The husband filed a relative visa petition for her and she filed an application for adjustment of status (AOS). The couple had a child. INS denied her application because she had no status on arrival. She was no longer a fiancée as her petitioner had died before her arrival. She fought all the way to

the Court of Appeals. The CA affirmed the denial. She went back to the Philippines. We met Lubelyn's daughter a few years ago. We said that her mother could have been saved from deportation if she had simply gotten a new fiancé and returned to the Philippines to await a fiancée visa petition or to marry the guy and then return to the Philippines to await a relative visa petition. *Caddali v. INS*, 975 F.2d 1428 (9th Cir. 1992).

## Petitioner does not marry fiancée

In some cases, the petitioner changes his mind and refuses to marry the fiancée upon arrival. What now, my love? The fiancée could continue to use friendly persuasion to get the petitioner to the altar. Meanwhile, the fiancée should earnestly be looking around for another man, instead of bemoaning her misfortune. When she finds another man, they should get married, and return to the home land to await the visa petition by the husband, or instead of marrying the new man, become fiancé-fiancée, return to her native land to await a fiancée visa petition. The fiancée should not remain in the United States beyond the period of time given by immigration authorities.

## USCIS denies Adjustment of status

If the fiancé-fiancée marry within the 90-day period, file an AOS application, but USCIS denies the AOS, what then? The couple may file another AOS application immediately instead of waiting for the inevitable deportation proceedings against the fiancée. It is possible but unlikely that a motion for reconsideration or reopening will succeed, unless there is new solid evidence to warrant it.

A fiancé married his petitioner and filed an AOS application. USCIS denied it on the mistaken ground that USCIS had not adjudicated the application within 2 years of the marriage. The couple divorced. He was placed in removal proceedings. He married another USC who filed a relative visa petition for him. At the hearing, he conceded that he could not use the visa petition by his second wife as a basis for obtaining a green card. The IJ ordered his deportation.

The Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) held that a fiancé visa holder can only adjust status based on

the marriage to the fiancée visa petitioner. BIA said that he could renew his AOS application based on his marriage to the fiancée petitioner (his first wife). *Matter of Sesay*, 25 I&N Dec. 431 (BIA 2011).

## USCIS terminates conditional residence

A fiance married his petitioner and adjusted his status to that of a conditional lawful permanent resident. The couple divorced. He filed a petition to remove the conditions on his residency, seeking a waiver of the joint filing requirement on the basis that he had entered into a good faith marriage. DHS denied the request because he failed to prove the bona fides of the marriage. Removal proceedings commenced. His USC daughter filed a visa petition for him which was approved. He filed an AOS application. The court held that a fiancé is not eligible to adjust his status to law-

ful permanent resident on any basis other than marriage to his fiancé petitioner (his ex-wife). *Caraballo-Tavera v. Holder*, No. 11-2517-ag, 06 18 12 (2nd Cir. 2012).

## RECOMMENDATION:

Hire an excellent lawyer who knows what to do at the first sign of trouble with your fiance/fiancée petitioner.

(ATTY. TIPON has a Master of Laws degree from Yale Law School and a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of the Philippines. Office: 800 Bethel St., Suite 402, Honolulu, HI 96813. Tel. (808) 225-2645. E-Mail: [filamlaw@yahoo.com](mailto:filamlaw@yahoo.com). Websites: [www.MilitaryandCriminalLaw.com](http://www.MilitaryandCriminalLaw.com), and [www.ImmigrationServiceUSA.com](http://www.ImmigrationServiceUSA.com). Listen to the most witty, interesting, and informative radio program in Hawaii on KNDI at 1270, AM dial every Thursday at 7:30 a.m., rebroadcast at [www.iluko.com](http://www.iluko.com).

## HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

# City Clerk Opens Early Voting Sites

The Office of the City Clerk has opened several early voting sites for the public to cast its ballots for the Primary Election.

The following sites are available and open to the public from 8 am 4 pm, Monday through Saturday until August 9, 2012:

- Honolulu Hale Courtyard
- Kapolei Hale – Conference Room A
- Pali Golf Course – Banquet Hall, 2nd Floor

Both paper and electronic ballots are available at the Honolulu Hale Courtyard. However, only electronic

voting machines are available at Kapolei Hale and the Pali Golf Course.

Elections officials are reminding voters to bring a picture ID when voting absentee.



In other election news, Department of Parks & Recreation officials have canceled the Open Market at Kalihi Valley District Park on Primary Election Day, Saturday, August 11, 2012. Kaewai Elementary, which is located next to the

open market, will be used as a polling site for voters.

DPR will reopen the Kalihi Valley District Park open market the following Saturday, August 18, 2012. All other open markets will operate on a regular scheduled.

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# Recipes from the Neelys

(Photos courtesy of Food Network Asia)



MANILA, Philippines - Gina and Pat Neely, hosts of Food Network Asia's popular cooking program "Down Home with the Neelys", are set to visit the Philippines next week. The Neelys own and operate some of Tennessee's best – and most devilishly delicious – BBQ restaurants.

Here, they share recipes of some of their well-loved dishes.

Their show is set to premiere on August 7 at 8 pm on Channel 102 of Cignal

Digital TV. ([www.philstar.com](http://www.philstar.com))

## SMOKED PAPRIKA POTATO SALAD

- 4 large potatoes, cubed (about 3 pounds)
- 2 ribs celery, finely chopped
- 1/2 large sweet onion, finely chopped
- 3/4 cup mayonnaise
- 2 heaping tablespoons sweet pickle relish
- 2 tablespoons yellow mustard
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 2 teaspoons smoked paprika
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper



Add potatoes to a large saucepan of cold water. Bring up to a boil, add a nice handful of salt, and reduce to a simmer. Cook until tender, about 20 minutes. Drain and cool.

In a large bowl add potatoes, celery, and onion. In a separate bowl, whisk together mayonnaise, relish, mustard, sugar, smoked paprika, salt and pepper. Fold in the dressing to the potatoes. Cover with plastic wrap and place in the fridge for at least three hours so the flavors can marry together.

Yield: 6 servings

Prep time: 10 minutes

Inactive prep time: 3 hours

Cook time: 20 minutes

## HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

### Application Deadline for City Lights Display is August 31

Although Christmas is still several months away, City officials are advising non-profit organizations who may be interested in creating a display during the annual Honolulu City Lights exhibition to submit applications by 4:30 pm on August 31, 2012.

The City will issue permits for five display sites via a lot-

tery scheduled for September 10, 2012. The lottery will be held at 10 am in the Mission Memorial Hearings Conference Room at 550 South King Street. Applicants need not be present to be selected.

A lottery was started several years ago in response to requests from private groups interested in erecting displays for the Honolulu City Lights

exhibits. Organizations that receive permits will be responsible for the set-up, maintenance and removal of its displays.

Applicants must be non-profit organizations under HRS Chapter 414D or a charitable organization formed pursuant to HRS Chapter 467B or under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Proof of this designation must be submitted with the application by the August 31st deadline.

### State DOT Adds New Lane on H-1 West-Bound

Quietly, quickly and effectively, the Hawaii State Department of Transportation (HDOT) officials have added a full lane of traffic on the west-bound H-1 Freeway from Punahou Street to the Pali Highway.

The new lane starts as an extension to the auxiliary freeway lane between the Punahou Street on-ramp and the Lunalilo Street off off-ramp. The added lane continues onto the viaduct that

now has four instead of three lanes.

"This is a whopping 25 percent to 30 percent capacity addition," says Panos Prevedouros, University of Hawaii-Manoa civil engineering professor.

HDOT officials created the extra lane by making the lanes narrower—from 12 feet wide with 4-foot wide shoulders on either side, to 10 feet wide, with 2-3 foot wide shoulders.

According to Prevedouros, the new lane is working quite well.

"Vehicles fit well on the narrower lanes and after multiple passes, I did not notice any slow downs because of the tighter lanes," he says.

Prevedouros says that the additional lane was the result of many months of work by his UH Traffic and Transportation Lab, R. M. Towill Corporation, the HDOT's Planning, Traffic and Design Section, and others.

"Kudos to the HDOT! I look forward to a similar lane addition on the east-bound side," he says.

## GRILLED PORTOBELLO PANINI

- 2 large portobello mushrooms, stems removed, gills scraped out, and sliced horizontally into 2 thin pieces
- 1 small red pepper, seeds and ribs removed and quartered
- Olive oil
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- ½ cup baby arugula
- Herbed cream cheese spread, recipe below
- 1 loaf Ciabatta bread
- Heat a grill pan to medium high heat.



Add mushrooms and red pepper to a sheet tray and drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Toss to coat. Grill portobellos for 3 minutes per side, 6 minutes total. Grill the red peppers for 5 minutes per side, 10 minutes total. Remove from grill and set aside until cool enough to handle.

Slice 2 (4 inch) pieces of Ciabatta bread, then slice in half lengthwise. Spread the herbed cream cheese spread on each piece of bread and pile on the grilled portobellos, red peppers, and arugula on 2 slices of the bread and close the sandwiches.

Place sandwiches on top of hot grill pan and place a cast iron skillet on top to press. Cook for 3-4 minutes then flip and cook 3-4 more minutes on the remaining side. Slice on a diagonal and serve.

## Herbed Cream Cheese Spread:

- 4 ounces low fat cream cheese, room temperature
- 1 garlic clove, peeled and smashed
- 2 tablespoons chopped basil
- 2 tablespoons chopped chives
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Add all the ingredients to a bowl of a food processor and pulse until smooth and combined.

Yields: ½ cup

Yield: 2 servings

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cook time: 10-15 minutes

Ease of Preparation: Easy

## ANGEL FOOD CAKE AND BERRY TRIFLE

22 ounces fresh strawberries (about 5 cups), hulled and sliced

1 (6 ounce) container raspberries

1 (6 ounce) container blueberries

¼ cup granulated sugar

Juice of half an orange

4 cups low fat Greek yogurt (2 %)

¼ cup honey

1 (17 ounce) store bought angel food cake



Reserve a few of the strawberries for garnish. Add berries to a bowl along with the sugar and orange juice. Let sit at room temperature for 15-20 minutes, until juicy.

Meanwhile, prepare the other ingredients. Add yogurt to a bowl and add honey. Give the yogurt a stir with a spoon to mix the honey and so it smoothes out and will be more spreadable.

Using a serrated knife, cut the angel food cake into large chunks and add about a third to the bottom of a medium sized trifle dish. Add a layer of the syrupy berries then a layer of yogurt. Repeat the layers until you have no more remaining ingredients. Finish the top with a few spoonfuls of yogurt in the center and the fresh strawberries.

Cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate until chilled, at least 1 hour and up to overnight.

Yield: 8 servings

Prep time: 20 minutes

Inactive prep time: 1 hour, 20 minutes

Ease of Preparation: Easy

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**PHILIPPINE NEWS**

**DOE Bares 4 Oil Exploration Projects in West Phl Sea**

by Neil Jerome Morales  
Wednesday, August 1, 2012

**M**ANILA, Philippines - The Department of Energy (DOE) received four bids for three petroleum blocks in the resource-rich northwestern Palawan near the disputed Spratly Islands in the West Philippine Sea.

The second and final leg of bid opening capped the Philippine Energy Contracting Round (PECR) 4, which attracted a total of 24 offers for 15 petroleum projects.

"We have four bids in three areas composed of six companies. It is a good indication, especially for PECR 4," said DOE Undersecretary Jose Layug Jr.

Local firm Helios Petroleum and Gas Corp. submitted the lone bid for Area 3 (600,000 hectares). Bidders for Area 4 (616,000 hectares) were Helios Petroleum and the consortium of Philippine National Oil Co.-Exploration Corp., Philex Petroleum Corp. and PetroEnergy Resources Corp.

The consortium of Pitkin Petroleum Plc and listed energy firm Philodrill Corp. submitted an offer for Area 5 (424,000 hectares).



All bids were qualified for technical evaluation by the DOE.

"You do not anticipate too many bids from many companies because of the huge capital expenses for these projects," Layug said.

"Normally, bids come from medium-sized companies, what usually happens is after the seismic studies, the big boys come in," Layug said.

In July last year, the DOE launched PECR 4, offering 15 new petroleum exploration areas nationwide that would require around \$7.5 billion in investments.

*(continued on page 11)*

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"--District 31 (Fort Shafter-Moanalua Gardens-Aliamanu): Republican incumbent Rep. Aaron Ling Johanson, unopposed in the primary, will face the winner of this three-way Democratic race. Danny Villaruz, 61, is the Star-Advertiser's pick here. He touts his experience as senior tax auditor in the state Department of Taxation's compliance division among his skills, and is an active volunteer for agencies such as the Institute for Human Services and the Hawaii Food Bank. Public education improvements and job creation policies are on top of his list of concerns and priorities.

(Nabayadan babaen iti Friends of Danny Villaruz Committee, P.O. Box 29912 Honolulu, Hawaii 96820 \*Tel: 808-778-00233, e-mail: villaruzd001@hawaii.rr.com)

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## PHILIPPINE NEWS

# GMA Returns to Work

by Paolo Romero  
Wednesday, August 1, 2012

**M**ANILA, Philippines - After more than a year of absence, former President and now Pampanga Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo attended session at the House of Representatives yesterday and listened briefly to the plenary discussions.

Arroyo looked thin and wore a neck and back brace over a cream suit as she entered the plenary hall at around 4 p.m. escorted by her son, Ang Galing Pinoy party-list Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo.

She listened to the debates on the Reproductive Health (RH) bill as she greeted well-wishers. She left after 25 minutes and before the secretariat called the roll.

The 65-year-old former leader was freed on P1-million bail last week by the Pasay regional trial court, which found no strong evidence to keep her detained at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center (VMMC) for alleged electoral sabotage.

Arroyo said she has to regain her strength to participate in legislative sessions, including the vote on whether to terminate the debates on the RH bill next week.

"I'll see everyday how I'll go," she told reporters.

Earlier in the day, Arroyo attended a physical therapy session at the VMMC.



Former President and now Pampanga Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

Arroyo said she has difficulty eating and follows a soft diet. "Crispy (food) is better than hard. I cut it into small pieces. Then I have to turn left so that the food would go to my right. It's a complicated procedure," she said.

She said she suffers shooting pain in the legs and back and is long overdue for another surgery. But she said she is "not physically and emotionally ready for surgery" and has to make do with intensive physical therapy.

House Minority Leader and Quezon Rep. Danilo Suarez said Arroyo was eager to come back but gets tired after walking even a short distance.

"We hope she can (regularly attend sessions) because she will be an asset to the minority, especially on budget deliberations because that's her expertise... economics and finance, but looking at her fragile

condition, I really have my doubt whether she can participate," Suarez said.

Arroyo's children tried to stop her from attending the session, her spokesperson Elena Bautista-Horn said.

#### Arroyo's challenger

Meanwhile, reports that Arroyo will seek reelection next year have fueled a search for her opponent.

Adonis Simpao, the official candidate of the Liberal Party (LP) against Arroyo in the 2010 election, said he would not run again, but vowed to help search for Arroyo's opponent.

"We are not short of qualified Kapampangans, although as of the moment, there is no one person we can yet name," Simpao said.

Simpao said he would remain active in the civil society concerns of the Kapampangan Manalakaran Inc. (KMI), which

he helped found with former Pampanga governor Eddie Panlilio.

The KMI, which advocates good governance and responsible citizenship in Pampanga, backed charges against Arroyo.

Journalist Randy David, who said he would challenge Arroyo in the 2010 poll only to back out, told The STAR in a text message that he has no plan to run in next year's election.

"I have no plan to run in Pampanga or to embark on a political career. Politics is not my vocation," he said.

David, a native of Barangay Betis in Guagua town, said he thought of challenging Arroyo to send the message that it was

not right or fair for a sitting president to seek lower office after her term.

"Pampanga deserves and needs the infusion of new and young blood. Mrs. Arroyo should step aside now, graciously retire and let the younger generation have a chance at public service," he added.

Ex-priest and former Pampanga governor Ed Panlilio could not be reached for comment. His brother Gerry said the former priest is no longer interested to run for public office.

Panlilio was named LP chairman in Pampanga when he ran in the 2010 gubernatorial election. ([www.philstar.com](http://www.philstar.com))

(from page 10, DOE...)

The DOE received on April 16 bids for nine of the first 12 areas up for offer.

The DOE accepted 13 bids for technical evaluation, which includes checking the proposed work program.

Layug still saw robust investor participation despite Chinese claims on the resource-rich but disputed Spratly Islands that is close to Areas 3 and 4.

China maintains that the waters around the Spratlys have been a traditional Chinese fishing ground.

The Philippines insists that the Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal is within its 200-nautical mile exclusive economic zone based on the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

"I think we have sufficiently attracted investors to come to the Philippines and explore for oil and gas," Layug said.

In the past three PECRs, the DOE received only 12 total bids, lower than the 20 for PECR 4.

Layug attributed the private sector interest on high oil prices and government transparency.

To date, there are 27 petroleum service contracts in the Philippines involving Shell Philippines Exploration, Nido Petroleum, Galoc Production Co. and BHP Billiton.

"The Philippines is relatively under-explored compared with our neighbors," Layug said.

If awarded, the 11 petroleum areas that received bids might require around \$4 billion for exploration alone, Layug said.

Awarding of the first batch of service contracts is expected in the next 60 days.

Layug said the DOE would assist the service contractors in securing local permits and licenses to fast-track exploration works.

Moving forward, the DOE will conduct a new PECR for other petroleum blocks.

"We need to enhance our data to make sure interested parties will have a better idea on what is available in the area," Layug said.

The DOE is pursuing energy independence and sustainability through the development of indigenous energy resources like coal, petroleum and natural gas.

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# Thailand's Minimum Wage: Some Lessons for Us

**CROSSROADS (Toward Philippine Economic and Social Progress) by Gerardo P. Sicat**

There are many economic lessons we can learn from other countries. Thailand's labor market policies present themselves as having grown toward greater maturity as economic development and sustained progress brought greater social and economic security for its citizens.

"Market-based labor policies." In the beginning of its modern rise as an economy, Thailand's was more concerned with promoting jobs and industries. Its people were poorer than us. The government put its focus on inducing economic activity to develop and grow. Businessmen who put up businesses did not have much to worry about excessive government regulations.

In 1967, the newly established Asian Development Bank sent its first economic mission to a member country in preparation for the first country loan it would ever give. (This turned out to be the Industrial Financial Corporation of Thailand, an institution that re-lent resources to the private sector.) I was an economist on this pioneering mission. Part of my job was to contribute to the analysis of the country's economic prospects in industry.

One of the things that struck me was the absence of labor laws regulating wages, among others. Philippine minimum wages were then already set in 1952. At that time, the Philippine minimum wage rate was P4 per day in industry,

then the equivalent of \$2 per day.

"Thailand's minimum wages are legislated." The minimum wage first established in 1972 was confined mainly to the Bangkok metropolitan area. Soon after, the government decided to cover the entire country. The level of average wages compared to what workers aspired for was very disparate but it was only a fraction of Philippine minimum wages.

When an economic and financial crisis struck Thailand in 1998, the government broadened protection of the labor market with a Labor Protection Act. By then, Thailand had grown to a point at which its economy had already surpassed ours in per capita terms.

The Thailand law gave regional dimension to the minimum wage. As the policy evolved, by 2004, 14 minimum wages were in effect. In 2011, there were about 32 minimum wages. The implementation of the law was designed to "reduce disparities that exist in the country and alleviate the burden on lower-income wage earners."

"Criteria for adjusting the minimum wage." The wage adjustments undertaken by Thailand's wage committee, in recommending changes in the minimum wage level, take into account many factors: (1) cost of living; (2) inflation rate; (3) "subsistence" standard; (4) production cost; (5) goods and services prices; (6) business



Busy flea market in Chiang Mai, Thailand

ability to pay; (7) labor productivity; (8) gross domestic product (GDP); and (9) economic and social conditions.

Many of these are contradictory criteria. But the government did not go to the extent of dictating the use of a "living wage" – a welfare criterion subject to subjective manipulations. Instead, it was based on the ability of business to shoulder the wage adjustment. Factors (6), (7) and (8) were considerations that grounded the committee to economic realities.

The World Bank recently estimated the level of the minimum wage in effect in some countries and calculated the yearly measures of minimum wages of different countries as a percent of the total value added per person. The yearly minimum wage income was taken as a ratio to the country's GDP per head.

Of 42 countries, the Philippine minimum wage turned out to be the highest relative to its income position. It is at 70 percent of the GDP per head. That of Thailand is relatively mod-

erate, at 17 percent of GDP per head.

Think of it this way. Thailand's GDP per head (\$4,420) is twice as much now as that of Philippine GDP per head (\$2210). So, in fact, 70 percent for the Philippines, compared to 17 percent for Thailand, of GDP per head is 4.5 times higher! That's how high the minimum wage in the country has been set relative to Thailand's.

"Institutional aspects." Minimum wage setting in Thailand follows the tripartite method promoted by the International Labor Organization (ILO). Since the early 1960s, the Philippine wage setting process has been based on this pattern.

The process of wage setting is in two-parts. First a national committee sets some guidelines for the provincial setting wage committees. A regional determination by various wage committees takes place through negotiation. A second wage committee at the national level sets the pattern for the national minimum wage which applies to the high wage, which is used as the reference rate that sets the limit.

There are many types of workers that are explicitly not covered by the minimum wage. These are farm workers (except wage workers in agricultural firms), government (both at national and state levels) employees, employees of state owned corporations, domestic help, and workers in non-profit organizations.

"Impact of minimum wage on poverty alleviation." The same World Bank technical

study on minimum wage tried to establish a connection on whether the presence of the minimum wage helped to reduce poverty in Thailand.

The results are very inconclusive on this count. (These are statistical studies in which the impact of the imposition of the additional minimum wage rates was measured against the income incidence {as proxy for poverty levels} of workers.) Thus, the proposition that raising the minimum wage reduces poverty was not proven. In fact, some results showed that it worsened the income position of some groups, especially the unskilled workers.

The strong reduction of poverty in Thailand has been due to the high rate of growth which provided jobs and the rise of productivity of labor.

"Impact of minimum wages on skills and on educational attainment." The same study addressed another question. What is the impact of a rise in minimum wages on labor, on the employment of the young, of women, and of workers with different levels of skills?

A rise in minimum wages reduces employment. There was a robust answer to the question. The rise in the minimum wage reduces the employment of women and of the young irrespective of gender. The employment of those with very little education, those with only elementary level education, and those with lower secondary education suffers the most.

In short, wage increases tend to harm skilled workers less (those with higher secondary education and with collegiate education) but do more harm to the unskilled.

"Implications on the Philippines." Many aspects of labor policies that we observe for Thailand should help policy-makers appreciate the need to reform our labor market policies. Our labor policies helped to drive many industries to locate in Thailand and our neighbors and not to us.

My email is: [gpsicat@gmail.com](mailto:gpsicat@gmail.com). Visit this site for more information, feedback and commentary: <http://econ.upd.edu.ph/gpsicat/> ([www.philstar.com](http://www.philstar.com))

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## LEGAL NOTES



By Reuben S. Seguritan

## Bill Lifting Visa Caps Advances

**T**he immigration bill easing the wait for green card for nationals of some countries will be introduced in the Senate soon. Republican Senator Chuck Grassley, who last year blocked the Fairness for High-Skilled Immigrants Act (H.R. 3012) which was overwhelmingly passed by the House of Representatives, has finally lifted his hold on the bill.

Senator Grassley put a hold on the bill because he believed the law did not protect high-skilled American workers. He has introduced legislation to reform the H-1B and L-1 visa programs.

A compromise was recently

struck between him and Democratic Senator Chuck Schumer of New York. The bill would provide for increased oversight of the H-1B visa program. The Department of Labor would be able to better review labor condition applications and investigate fraud and misrepresentation by employers. There would also be annual compliance audits of employers who bring in H-1B workers.

H.R. 3012 eliminates per-country caps for the employment-based categories but not increase the over-all number of available immigrant visas or green cards. Its effect would be to shorten the waiting time of applicants from China and India, some of whom face waits of up to 70 years.

The bill would also adjust upward the per country limit on visas in the family-based preferences, from the current 7% limit to 15%. This would benefit nationals of the Philippines

and Mexico who are waiting for a family-based green card.

The current visa system places an annual cap of 140,000 visas for employment based categories, and 226,000 for family-based categories. No more than 7% of that number is allowed to be allocated to any one country. Family members of the green card applicant are counted towards the number of available visas.

This current system is criticized for being unfair and arbitrary because it discriminates against nationals of countries where the demand for green cards is high and where many high-skilled immigrants come from. For the supporters of H.R. 3012, a first-come-first-served system in the employment preferences is the fair solution to the visa backlog.

However, since the bill would only redistribute existing visas and not add new ones, the elimination of the country caps

would result in longer wait times for other countries.

For example, because of the most recent visa retrogression visa numbers in the EB-2 category (advanced degree holders and persons of exceptional ability) have become unavailable for nationals of China and India, and in July 2012 a cut-off date of January 1, 2009 was created for the Philippines, Mexico and other countries. Assuming that the retrogression continues, the two-year backlog faced by nationals of the Philippines, Mexico and other countries would increase as more immigrant visas are reallocated to China and India because of the operation of H.R. 3012. It is expected that by 2015, there would be a backlog for all countries in the employment-based categories as a result of the bill.

On the other hand, nationals of Mexico and the Philippines, the two most

oversubscribed countries in the family-based categories, would face shorter waiting times for a green card, especially siblings and children of U.S. citizens.

H.R. 3012 passed in November 2011 with the support of 96% of the House of Representatives, a rare showing of cooperation in today's deeply divided Congress. Businesses in the science and technology fields are ardent supporters of the bill.

Pending debate in the Senate, the fate of the bill is uncertain but, if the bipartisanship in Congress is any indication, it will likely be passed soon. President Obama endorsed the bill last year. GOP candidate Mitt Romney has expressed support for high-skilled immigration reform in general.

**REUBEN S. SEGURITAN** has been practicing law for over 30 years. For further information, you may call him at (212) 695 5281 or log on to his website at [www.seguritan.com](http://www.seguritan.com)

## MAINLAND NEWS

## Presidential Campaigns Meet with Asian-Americans at Town Hall Forum

**T**he Obama and Romney presidential campaigns made their case to hundreds of Asian-American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) voters

on Saturday, August 4, 2012 at a town hall forum at George Mason University in Northern Virginia.

Hundreds more gathered at over 36 simulcast events across the country to participate. The

forum, sponsored by APIAVote, followed the release of a major poll of how AAPIs, the nation's fastest growing racial group according to recent Census figures, will vote this year and their views on several important issues.

MS-NBC anchor Richard Lui moderated the forum, with Democratic National Committee Vice Chair Rep. Mike Honda representing Obama and former U.S. Rep. Tom Davis representing Romney.

North Carolina, Ohio, Texas and Virginia.

APIAVote executive director Christine Chen urged political leaders across the country to pay attention to the demographic with increasing political clout.

"Asian-American and Pacific Islander voters are still largely untapped by presidential candidates and their parties even though they are expected to vote in record numbers this fall," says Chen. "We want to hear directly from the candidates. Candidates and parties who ignore Asian-American voters do so at their own peril."

## Fil-Ams Gear Up for World Hepatitis Day Campaign

**A**BS CBN Foundation International recently launched its newest project "Juan B Free," a campaign in partnership with Quest Laboratory, Las Vegas Gastroenterology, Gilead and the National Federation for Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA) to promote Hepatitis B screening and education among Fil-Am communities across the U.S.

The project joins the global fight against Hepatitis B and commemorates World Hepatitis Day on July 28, 2012. Hepatitis B is a liver disease that affects 1 in 10 Asians and is marked by the inflammation of the liver. Anyone can get Hepatitis B, but some people are at higher risk,

including those who were born to a mother with Hepatitis B, live with someone who has Hepatitis B, have lived in parts of the world where Hepatitis B is common, are exposed to blood or bodily fluids at work, are on hemodialysis, have had more than one sexual partner in the last six months, have a history of sexually transmitted disease or are injection drug users.

Hepatitis B usually shows no symptoms. Adults and children ages five and older sometimes have one or more of the following symptoms—yellowish eyes and skin (jaundice), a longer than usual amount of time for bleeding to stop, swollen stomach or ankles, easy bruising, tiredness, upset stomach, fever, loss of appetite and others.

The disease can be controlled through screening, diag-

nosis and treatment. The Juan B Free campaign provides free and confidential screening. Insurance and a physician's request form are not necessary. On July 28, Filipino-Americans in the Las Vegas area will be provided

(continued on page 15)

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MAINLAND NEWS

# US Home Prices Show Sign of Stabilization

NEW YORK (Xinhua) - US home prices continued to rise in May, showing signs of stabilization in the housing market, the latest report showed Tuesday.

The S&P/Case-Shiller Home price index, the leading measure of US home prices, showed that on average home prices increased by 2.2 percent in May over April for both the 10- and 20- City Composites.

The 10- and 20-City Composites recorded respective annual rates of decline of 1.0 percent and 0.7 percent, compared to May 2011. While still negative, these annual changes are the best in at least 18 months.

"With May's data, we saw a continuing trend of rising home prices for the spring," said David M. Blitzer, Chairman of the Index Committee at



S&P Dow Jones Indices.

"We have observed two consecutive months of increasing home prices and overall improvements in monthly and annual returns; however, we

need to remember that spring and early summer are seasonally strong buying months so this trend must continue throughout the summer and into the fall," he said.

"June data for existing home sales, new home sales, housing starts and mortgage default rates were a bit mixed, but all are better than their year-ago levels," Blitzer added. "The housing market seems to

be stabilizing, but we are definitely in a wait-and-see mode for the next few months."

The S&P/Case-Shiller home price index tracks monthly changes in the value of residential real estate in 20 metropolitan regions across the United States, which is seen by the markets as measuring changes in existing home prices and is based on single-family home re-sales. (www.philstar.com)

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GLOBAL NEWS

# Deutsche Bank to Cut 1,900 Jobs as Profits Drop

FRANKFURT (AP) — Deutsche Bank said yesterday it plans to cut about 1,900 jobs, most of them outside Germany, as Europe's debt crisis hurt profits at its investment banking business.

Germany's largest bank, which employs nearly 101,000 people, said second quarter earnings slid 46 percent to €661 million from €1.233 billion in the same three months a year ago.

Market turbulence and subdued client activity due to Europe's problems with too much

government debt were behind the decline, with revenues down 6 percent to €8.0 billion.

At its investment banking division, for example, income fell as fewer companies came to the bank requesting its services to issue shares, or for advice on buying or merging with other companies. Those activities can earn lucrative fees for banks.

Revenue from trading debt securities — one of the investment categories most affected by the crisis — was also down. The company said that was partly due to the company taking "deliberately lower levels of risk" due to subdued trading volumes. It said it would continue shedding risky assets in the months ahead.

Overall, Deutsche Bank's corporate banking and securities division, where share underwriting and debt trading are located, saw revenues fall by €451 million to €3.5 billion.

"The European sovereign debt crisis continues to weigh on investor confidence and client activity across the bank," the bank said.

European governments such as Spain and Italy are struggling with high levels of debt, and the prospect they might default or need bailouts has unnerved markets. The debt crisis has made companies and consumers reluctant to borrow, spend and invest.

The bank said about 1,500 of the job cuts will be in the investment banking business and in related infrastructure areas. The cutback will contribute some €350 million to an overall target of €3 billion (\$3.8 billion) in savings.

Shares in the bank were up

0.4 percent at €24.94 in late afternoon trading in Europe.

The earnings statement was the first reported under new co-CEOs Anshu Jain and Juergen Fitschen, who took over from Josef Ackermann in May.

Jain, who had run the investment banking unit before taking over as CEO, said during a conference call with stock market analysts that the debt crisis had developed "more towards our more grim scenario than our good scenario."

The bank said it was looking to change its ethics policy and compensation practices to meet the expectations of regulators, government and the public. Discussing the conduct policy, Jain said the bank would "make sure that the tone at the top is crystal clear."

The bank is facing uncertain consequences from an investigation into the alleged rigging of benchmark interest rates known as Libor, or London Interbank Offered Rate, by employees of different banks. Deutsche Bank has said it is cooperating with investigations from authorities including the US Department of Justice and the Securities and Exchange Commission, the US financial market regulator.

Bank officials did not take questions about the Libor investigation during the conference call. Chief Financial Officer Stefan Krause said the bank has found the questionable activities were limited "to a small group of individuals who were acting on their own initiative" and have already been sanctioned. The bank has said that one trader left the firm last year. (www.philstar.com)

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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## GLOBAL NEWS

# Cambodia Receives Phil Protest

by Pia Lee-Brago  
Wednesday, August 1, 2012

**M**ANILA, Philippines - After failing to get an "indisposed" Cambodian ambassador to personally explain yesterday his accusation of "dirty politics" in the Philippines' stand on the West Philippine Sea issue with China, the Department of Foreign Affairs said it will continue to summon the envoy "until he is able to come to the DFA."

"We summoned the ambassador but he remains indisposed. We hope he will come when he is no longer indisposed," DFA spokesperson Raul Hernandez said, referring to Cambodian Ambassador Hos Sereythonh.

The ambassador was originally summoned to appear at the DFA on Monday to receive a note verbale and explain his accusation, but he begged off for health reasons. Instead, Hos sent Cambodian embassy Second Secretary Tan Chandaravuth to represent him.

Hernandez said the DFA, through Undersecretary Erlinda Basilio, handed the note verbale to Tan.

Hernandez said they also want Hos to authorize the release of all records of what transpired during the recent 45th ministerial meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in Phnom Penh to disprove his accusation that the Philippines and Vietnam engaged in "dirty politics" in pressing for their "inflexible and non-negotiable" position on the inclusion of the West Philippine Sea issue in the conference's agenda.

Hos raised his accusations in his letter to The STAR.

Cambodia had opposed the two countries' proposal that the grouping come out with a joint communiqué on the West Philippine Sea issue.

"We wanted to ask the ambassador if they could authorize the release to



DFA spokesperson Raul Hernandez

the public of evidence which should end all speculations on what really happened in Phnom Penh as a matter of courtesy to our Cambodian friends," Hernandez said.

"We hope to receive a reply. For now he is indisposed but we will keep on summoning him until he is able to come to the DFA," he said.

He emphasized that unlike Hos, Basilio was present in all the meetings in Phnom Penh.

"We try to find out what exactly is the meaning of this statement because these are rather strong accusations that we are playing dirty politics," he added.

When asked if the ambassador could be declared persona non grata, Hernandez said: "We are not going there yet."

What is important is for him to explain to us what he meant by the statement that he released or wrote in that letter-to-the-editor in The Philippine STAR."

The DFA defended Basilio from Hos' accusation that she had tried to manipulate, distort and exaggerate developments in the West Philippine Sea involving China in order to make her case.

Hos had also claimed that Basilio's article "What happened in Phnom Penh?" represented the country's official position.

Basilio, Hernandez said, is "a professional diplomat with an unblem-

ished record of nearly 50 years of service to the country."

"Her statements were objective, factual and true. More importantly, Undersecretary Basilio was present in all the meetings in Phnom Penh. The Cambodian ambassador was not," he said.

Cambodia, which hosted the recent ASEAN meeting, opposed the discussion of the Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal issue and its inclusion in the grouping's joint communiqué.

The Philippines and other ASEAN members deplored the non-issuance of a joint communiqué, which was unprecedented in the regional bloc's 45-year history.

Hernandez said that strangely, Cambodia appointed a committee, which included the Philippines and Vietnam, to form consensus on a final draft for an ASEAN stand.

"Upon a series of many negotiations, at least five final drafts achieved a consensus. Notwithstanding authority granted the committee, all final drafts were disapproved by the chair," he said.

The DFA said "as a matter of courtesy to our Cambodian friends," Hos would be asked to reveal where he got the information on the events he narrated in his letter, since his accounts were inconsistent with the records of the ASEAN meetings.

"We also intend to show the Cambodian ambassador why the ASEAN chair was being viewed as unduly advancing a non-ASEAN country's interest, with a clear prejudice to positions of the Philippines and Vietnam, members of ASEAN," Hernandez said.

Hos claimed in his letter that both the Philippines and Vietnam continued to insist from the start of the meeting until its end on July 13 to include their national bilateral disputes with China in the joint communiqué. ([www.philstar.com](http://www.philstar.com))

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## MAINLAND NEWS

(from page 13, FIL-AMS GEAR UP...)

with free screenings courtesy of Quest Labs.

"It is important for us to protect our families and community by being aware of how we can stay healthy," says Rozita Lee, community liaison and commissioner for the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. "By educating our families about the danger of Hepatitis B, we ensure that our communities stay informed, healthy and vibrant."

According to ABS CBN President J. Robbie Fabian, the Juan B Free campaign ensures that there will be no more barriers to the nation's collective efforts to triumph over Hepatitis B.

"When we take control of our health and well-being, we are better equipped to be of service to those around us and provide care for our families," Fabian says.

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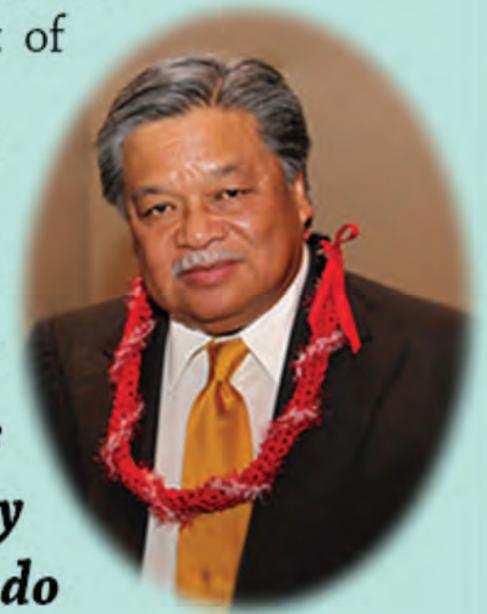
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The Declaration of Independence (July 4, 1776, Philadelphia, PA.)

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