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HAWAII'S #1 FILIPINO NEWSPAPER

◆ FEBRUARY 25, 2017 ◆

# TRUMP'S TRAVEL BAN FACES FIERY OPPOSITION

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## EDITORIALS

# Immigrants Beware: Trump Just Signed One of the Most Dangerous Executive Orders

**T**he implementation of anti-immigrant policies has begun just one week after President Donald Trump took office.

If you are legally in the United States with a green card -- as many legal residents are who are either awaiting residency requirements or just have chosen not to go through the citizen naturalization process -- it's time that you take that last step to become a U.S. citizen.

In the current anti-immigrant political climate under the Trump administration, it's possible in time that no one is truly safe from being deported or kept out of the U.S. unless you are a U.S. citizen or naturalized U.S. citizen, even if you have been legally living in the U.S. for years as a law-abiding permanent legal resident green card holder.

Why the urgency?

Already legal permanent resident U.S. green card holders, legal temporary U.S. visa and student U.S. visa carriers from seven countries have been sent back to their countries of origin and denied entry back into the U.S. How is this possible? President Donald Trump recently signed an executive order that prohibited these foreign nationals from entering because of their country of origin.

## Trump Dangerous Anti-immigrant Executive Order

Trump's executive order suspends immigration from seven predominantly Muslim countries: Syria, Yemen, Sudan, Somalia, Iraq, Iran and Libya for 90 days; and suspends Syrian refugees indefinitely.

The caveat that has immigrant advocates worried is: today Trump will ban people from entering from these seven countries, what about tomorrow, which country is next to be added on this list? Mexico - because Trump believes there are too many criminals from that country entering the U.S.; North Korea - because it is a communist country; or even perhaps, the Philippines - because its current president is antagonistic toward the U.S. The possibility of who gets banned under this executive order could potentially be too open-ended and capricious under Trump's leadership.

The executive order was created with little to no legal review or feedback from departments and already is being widely condemned by immigration experts, academics, Democrats, and religious and business groups. Already more than a dozen legal suits have been filed against the executive order and several federal judges across the nation had filed a stay on the temporary ban.

The executive order is unprecedented in that it targets specific countries' citizens from entering just because of their national origin, which is unconstitutional to many legal experts.

The state of Washington filed a lawsuit against the executive order claiming: "to protect the state against illegal actions of the president and the federal government." The complaint states the executive order is "separating Washington families, harming thousands of Washington residents, damaging Washington's economy, hurting Washington-based companies and undermining Washington's sovereign interest in remaining a welcoming place for immigrants and refugees." About 16 states, Hawaii included, either have already filed suit or are in the process to

## FROM THE PUBLISHER



Valentine's Day passed by so swiftly and we hope you had a wonderful celebration with your loved ones. Time flies so fast and before we know it, it's Holy Week and

Easter.

Thousands in our immigrant communities now live in fear and panic due to the Trump Administration's unjust and harsh immigration policies. The new Administration is hiring 10,000 new personnel who will hunt down undocumented individuals and seek their immediate deportation. The Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) throughout the United States are currently conducting raids making churches as temporary refuge centers and with the labor shortage, leaving farm crops unharvested rotting in the fields.

For this issue's cover story, Associate Editor Edwin Quinabo writes about the widespread and fiery opposition to President Trump's Travel Ban Executive Order (EO) enacted on January 27, 2017. Trump claims national security as the reason behind his EO. However, experts believe the travel ban is unjust and flawed, and violates the constitutional rights of individuals. States such as Hawaii, New York, Massachusetts, Virginia, Minnesota and Washington filed lawsuits to block the implementation of the EO. On February 3, 2017, Federal Judge James Robart in Washington state ordered the nationwide suspension of it. Subsequently, the federal 9th Circuit Court of Appeals unanimously upheld his decision.

Related to the cover story and in response to President Trump's travel ban, Rebecca Gardner, a Fil-Am attorney and resident of Hawaii, submitted an OP-ED advocating our Filipino Community to publicly support making Hawaii an official sanctuary. According to her, contrary to what the Trump administration would want you to believe that sanctuary policies promote lawlessness, a nationwide study by Center for American Progress indicates that crime rates are actually lower, on average, in sanctuary jurisdictions. Thus, she believes it is imperative that we offer sanctuary to our undocumented immigrants through legislation and Hawaii's Filipinos have a key role in that legislative action.

Also in this issue, contributing writer Emil Guillermo writes an interesting story about the investigation into President's Trump's Filipino partner, Jose E.B. Antonio, who is one of the richest men in the Philippines. He is the Chair of the Century Properties Group and he's building the Trump Tower Century City, a \$150 M, 57-stories high rise in Makati.

In local news, HB1278 and SB1161 are making their way through this year's Legislature. These bills were introduced in the House and Senate intended to stop UH tuition increases until 2027. Please read more on this bill on page 12.

As usual, there are many more interesting articles to read in this issue, particularly Hawaii Filipino News (page 7), Legal Notes (page 13) and Philippine News (page 15).

Until next issue, *aloha* and *mabuhay!*

*Chona A. Montesines-Sonido*

file suit. The issue is bound to be decided in the U.S. Supreme Court.

Legal permanent U.S. residents with green cards have been detained at airports and sent back to their country of origin (of

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The Hawaii Filipino Chronicle is published weekly by The Hawaii Filipino Chronicle Inc. and is located at 94-356 Waipahu Depot, Waipahu, HI 96797. Telephone (808) 678-8930 Facsimile (808) 678-1829. E-mail filipinochronicle@gmail.com. Website: [www.thefilipinochronicle.com](http://www.thefilipinochronicle.com). Opinions expressed by the columnists and contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the Hawaii Filipino Chronicle management. Reproduction of the contents in whole or in part is prohibited without written permission from the management. All rights reserved. Printed in the U.S.A.

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OP-ED

# Our Filipino Community Should Publicly Support Making Hawaii an Official Sanctuary

by Rebecca Gardner

**N**early 400 jurisdictions across the country - cities, counties, and states - themselves as “sanctuaries” for unauthorized immigrants. Even if not an official “sanctuary”, over 500 jurisdictions have instituted policies and practices that are consistent with this basic principle: local law-enforcement resources will not be used to enforce federal immigration laws.

As the nation’s most diverse state, with as many as 21,000 undocumented immigrants - a significant proportion being Filipino, why haven’t we yet declared our state or counties “sanctuaries”?

Contrary to what the Trump administration would have you believe - that sanctuary policies promote lawless-

ness - a nationwide study of counties by the Center for American Progress indicates that crime rates are actually lower, on average, in sanctuary jurisdictions. Why? Because undocumented immigrants, their families, friends, and communities can feel safe knowing that reporting a crime or otherwise interacting with or assisting local police will not result in someone’s deportation. This allows our local public safety officers to better prevent and solve crime because it will have the trust and respect of all the communities it serves.

This study also found that the economies of sanctuary counties are much stronger than non-sanctuary jurisdictions, with higher median household income and rates of employment; and lower rates of poverty and reliance on public assistance.

To be clear, being a sanc-

tuary will not insulate undocumented immigrants from federal enforcement. It merely means that they can live here without a pall of fear when interacting with local police. Our local police share the ethnicities of our immigrant communities, and have dedicated their lives to protecting and making our communities safe from crime – not to become Trump’s henchmen.

It’s important to understand that there is no legal obligation – for a city, county, or state – to assist the federal government with their immigration enforcement. This is at the discretion of our local decision-makers. It is important now, more than ever, that we look critically at the Trump Administration’s exclusionary immigration policies, and decide whether the targeting of immigrants, based on race, religion, and national origin, is something we want our local

government to enable. These policies are being challenged by the State of Hawaii, along with several other states and the ACLU as baldly unconstitutional. But we also need affirmative policies.

There is fear that should Hawaii designate itself as a “sanctuary”, it will face financial retribution from the Trump administration, as threatened by his January 25, 2017 Executive Order. However, this order is already being legally challenged, and jurisdictions and legal watchdogs are well-poised to argue the unconstitutionality of such threats as the “commandeering” state and local officials to enforce federal law, among many other other legal challenges.

More and more jurisdictions are calling Trump’s bluff. In strong statements of unity and compassion, many cities, like New York City, Boston,

Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, Denver, New Haven, Jersey City, Ithaca, etc. are either publicly renewing their sanctuary status, or officially designating themselves as such in spite of Trump’s threats.

Given the demographic make-up of Hawaii, and Honolulu in particular, it’s imperative that we offer sanctuary to our undocumented immigrants through legislative action. Hawaii’s Filipino community has a key role in that. If being the “Aloha State” means anything, Hawaii should be leading this charge.

**REBECCA (BECKY) GARDNER** is a licensed attorney in the states of Hawaii and New York. She currently works for the State of Hawaii’s Office of Language Access as its Legal Analyst, and serves on the Board of Directors of the Hawaii Filipino Lawyers Association. She was born to a Filipino mother and has proudly called Hawaii home since 2002.

**EDITORIALS (from page 2, IMMIGRANTS...)**

these seven countries, for now). Some of them have been coerced into signing a Form I-407 which document relinquishes legal permanent U.S. residency.

The American Immigration Council and several reputable immigrant rights groups filed a nationwide class action lawsuit specifically on behalf of U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents who have filed visa petition for their immediate family members who are nationals of the seven countries. It states: “since the executive order, federal government officials are blocking family members from entering, suspending or revoking all visa applications.” This is particularly unjust because these applicants have already gone through vetting and a long, rigorous application and screening process.

**Trump’s Executive Order Must Be Ruled Unconstitutional**

Trump’s executive order is clearly a test to see how far he can push his anti-immigrant policies. If it is not met with immense anger and civil and legal repudiation, the substance of this executive order could be expanded to other countries. Worse yet, the legal mechanism -- of targeting countries’ citizens and denying them U.S. entry based only on national origin -- could become codified into more permanent, long term law should the Republican-led Congress take this issue up, or even if Trump decides to extend the 90-day suspension.

The most disturbing aspect of this executive order is that it also targets permanent U.S. residents with green cards. This population in the millions are all in jeopardy should Trump with the stroke of his pen include their country of origin not listed in this original seven. This green card carrying population are mostly spouses and immediate fami-

lies of U.S. Citizens. Many of them -- who already had been vetted prior to receiving their legal status -- have been living in the U.S. for years, even decades as green card holders. They are tax payers and practically citizens.

During Trump’s campaign, he had expressed his support of taking away citizenship of people whose parents have come into the U.S. illegally. Now with this controversial executive order, he is going after legal permanent U.S resident green card holders. Is this just the beginning? Who’s next?

Trump’s train of xenophobia must stop here with this executive order. You personally may not be effected by this executive order, but what about tomorrow, months down, or years later, should your country of origin be called into question. Lose one battle now, and the door becomes wide open to all kinds of injustice.

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## COVER STORY

# Trump's Travel Ban Faces Fiery Opposition

By Edwin Quinabo

**D**elivering on his campaign rhetoric, President Donald Trump began his crusade against immigrants and Muslims shortly after being inaugurated into office.

Trump signed an executive order (EO) called "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States," late afternoon on Friday, Jan. 27. Immediately the following day, chaos erupted as hundreds of travelers were detained by customs agents enforcing the new EO at U.S. airports. The detainees -- many of whom had a legal right to enter the U.S. as green card holders, or student and workers with U.S. visas -- were either deported back to their country of origin or rescued by immigration attorneys rushing to intervene in the questionable holding.

The controversial EO or travel ban ignited a firestorm of protests in major cities across the U.S. as thousands flocked to airports almost as quickly as customs agents started the sus-

pect roundup. Protestors chanted feverishly for the detainees' release and held pro-immigration placards. One sign read: "Immigrants Make America Great Again," - a jab at Trump's campaign slogan, "Make America Great Again." At the Portland International Airport, protestors chanted, "Say it loud, say it clear, refugees are welcome here. No Ban, no wall, America is for us all."

From New York City to Chicago, down south in Dallas to the upper northwest Seattle, the immediate response to the travel ban that mushroomed organically in the streets showed that a new battle has begun: Americans, moderates and the political left will push back hard against whatever anti-immigration policy Trump brews.

The travel ban prohibits



Hawai'i human rights advocates welcomed immigrants and refugees to America at Honolulu International Airport on Jan. 29, 2017. They were among thousands across the country to protest President Trump's executive order to ban immigrants and refugees from seven Muslim-majority nations. Photo courtesy of Charlene Cuaresma

admission to the U.S. all non-U.S. citizens from seven predominantly Muslim countries -- Iraq, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen for 90 days; and all refugees from anywhere in the world for 120 days, and places an indefinite ban on refugees from Syria. For now, Trump lists seven countries; the worry is how much will he expand the ban and for how long.

Trump claims national security as the reason behind his EO, assuring the public that it is not a ban on Muslims.

"This is not about religion — this is about terror and keeping our country safe," he said. Supporters of Trump argue that if this was a Muslim ban, there would be other Muslim-majority countries on the list.

But detractors are dubious over his motivation since he had repeatedly called for a ban of Muslims during his presidential campaign. Even more suspect, close adviser to Trump, former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, admitted to the press that he was asked by Trump on how to enact a "Muslim ban" to pass the legal test. The finished product was created to focus on danger and geography, rather than religion.

In either case, experts believe the travel ban is flawed and susceptible to legal challenge.

Hawaii Attorney General Chin cited several complaints, including that the EO is unconstitutional because it favors one

religion over another in violation of the First Amendment, and that it denies equal protection of the law by discriminating based on national origin. Hawaii is among several other states that filed suit against Trump's EO.

"Hawaii is an island state. This illegal order affects our state in a unique way. Under this order, an Iraqi permanent resident on the mainland U.S. cannot leave the country without the risk of never being allowed to return, but he still can travel throughout the continental United States. That same person here cannot so much as visit another island within our state for fear of being detained by federal agents at the airport. In the past, the people of this state experienced discrimination by the federal government based on national origin. We must speak up and not let this happen again," said Atty. Gen. Chin.

Hawaii resident Dr. Arnold Villafuerte agrees that the EO doesn't pass the Constitutional test.

"I believe that Trump's EO ran afoul of the Constitution in that it intentionally discriminates against Muslims. It is an 'arbitrary and discriminatory order,' and should be rescinded. (Lawmakers should) come up with a real, bipartisan plan to keep us safe," said Dr. Villafuerte.

A coalition of Hawaii organizations that includes among others the ACLU

Hawaii chapter, Filipino American Advocacy Network, and Filipino American Citizens League, issued a joint statement rejecting the EO.

"There is no place in Hawaii and our nation for racist, discriminatory and ill-advised national policies as put forth by the Trump Administration. The EO is based on the misguided idea that certain religious and ethnic populations are more prone to violence and are incompatible with American values. The Trump Administration's executive orders are an un-American and mean spirited ban on Muslims, issued under the guise of protecting our country."

From coast-to-coast, hundreds of corporations, from tech-giants to Fortune 500 companies, and business associations, joined the organized solidarity, issuing public dissent over the ban. Following the lead of states and other civic organizations, Amazon and Expedia filed legal motions to overturn the EO.

U.S. politicians and international leaders waded into the fray making it clear which side of the battle line they stand. Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) said Democrats would introduce legislation to overturn Trump's order, which he said revealed "the incompetence of this administration."

A few prominent Republican senators criticized how the

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COVER STORY

(from page 4, TRUMP'S...)

ban was hastily conceived and pushed forward with almost no collaboration with Congress. Sens. John McCain (R-Arizona) and Lindsey Graham (R-South Carolina) said in a joint statement the ban may “become a self-inflicted wound in the fight against terrorism.”

Another Republican, Sen. Lamar Alexander, said “This vetting proposal itself needed more vetting.”

German Chancellor Angela Merkel and British Prime Minister Theresa May are among other foreign leaders questioning the wisdom of Trump’s ban.

**Not just a threat to Muslims or Middle Easterners**

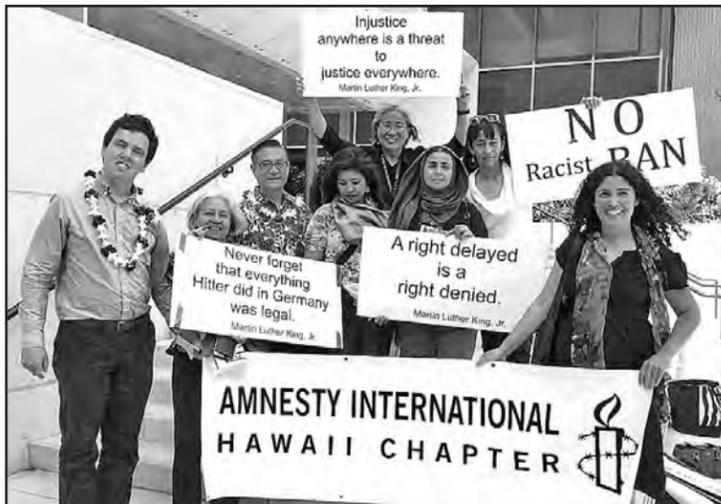
Like many who oppose the ban, University of Hawaii professor Patricio Abinales worries about the scope of what the EO could turn into.

“I know the EO only targets selected countries. But this could easily be expanded (to include other countries), and broadly interpreted,” said Abinales.

Already of concern is the impact on legal U.S. green card holders, many of whom have been living in the U.S. for years. Abinales makes the point: “(being) a legal U.S. (green card) resident means that you now live in this country. They (green card permanent residents) have no intention of going back to their old country. The reasons (for being here) may differ -- work, a loved one, etc. -- but the point is that they have decided to stay here.”

In most cases, a U.S. green card holder is someone already in the process of becoming a full U.S. citizen. To create barriers, or worse yet, deport someone in that process just because of national origin, sends a message that immigrants are not welcomed.

Contrary to the hostility toward immigrants of late, Abinales recalls in awe the welcoming words etched on the statue of liberty plaque: “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tem-



Hawaii’s diverse organizations pledge support of our Muslim community on World Hijab Day, Feb. 1, at the Jonah Kuhio Federal Building during a press conference to call for unity in the face of President Trump’s executive order. Photo courtesy of Charlene Cuaresma

pest-tossed to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”

“This is the United States I know; and hope it will remain this way,” said Abinales.

The anti-immigration political environment takes a toll particularly on family unity.

Charlene Cuaresma, chair of the National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA) Region 12, said: “As a descendant of sakadas (Filipinos recruited to work on the Hawaii plantations in the early 1900s), I support keeping families together and oppose President Trump’s approach to keeping America safe through unconstitutional and discriminatory bans on targeted Muslim-majority nations, where no case of terrorism in the U.S. has occurred from individuals of these nations.”

In addition to the ban, Cuaresma is worried about the fate of student-immigrants under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). Students under this immigration program, started by the Obama administration, may receive a renewable two-year period of deferred action from deportation and be eligible to stay and work in the U.S.

“Now DACA-students are being targeted,” she said. In Hawaii, there are about 2,000 youths who are eligible for DACA.

Another Hawaii resident, Clement Bautista, believes the travel ban is an attempt to appease his voters who support tough anti-immigration policies.

“It seems the EO uses the national security rationale to promote American nativism.

This not only appeals to his diehard supporters but is also in line with his ‘America First’ inauguration speech. Since Trump has defined his presidency with this slogan, he will not step back from pushing policies that may be vague, ill-conceived, erroneous, racist or even unconstitutional. Trump is on a PR crusade to save America from itself and from outsiders -- or so he says.”

**Latest legal status**

Less than a week after the signing of the travel ban, Federal judges in several states have issued orders blocking the government from deporting some detainees. U.S. District Court Judge James Robart issued a temporary restraining order on the travel ban. The Trump administration in response filed for a stay to allow continued enforcement of his EO. The federal 9th Circuit

Court of Appeals heard arguments for a stay, but the court voted unanimously 3-0 to deny lifting the previous U.S. District Court ruling, which puts on hold further detainment from happening.

Hawaii Atty. General Chin called the 3-0 decision by the 9th Circuit Court a victory for Americans.

“Hawaii’s interests in stopping actions that discriminate against persons strictly based upon national origin and religion are protected for now, but this case is not over,” Chin said.

The president’s next option is to file another motion in a higher Federal court or revise the substance of his original EO and create a new one. A part of contention that the administration is thinking about removing is the ban on immigrants who already have a U.S. green card or visa. This new version would be more narrow and suspend only refugee admissions and the issuance of new visas.

This might be more acceptable to some people who are on the fence with this issue. Ewa Beach resident Jo Farina expressed mixed feelings toward the current ban as it is. Farina said while she believes President Trump’s motivation for the ban is, as he says, about national security and protection, she is not in favor of keeping out legal U.S. immigrants.

“Legal U.S. immigrants

with green cards who travel out of the U.S. should be allowed back into the country, and not be deported,” said Farina.

There are other problems that the ban poses. Sen. Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii) has procedural and budgetary concerns.

“There is a lack of information about the steps the agencies are taking to implement the orders and how much funding they need to carry out those steps,” said Sen. Schatz, who is requesting a review of the actions and costs associated with Trump’s EO to the Government Accountability Office (GAO).

Sen. Schatz said “the purported purposes of these orders are to bolster national security and public safety, but we are deeply concerned that the orders will not only fail to meet these objectives but will actively work against our national security and public safety.”

Unfolding developments on the travel ban is moving quickly. While deportations from the travel ban are suspended for now, immigration advocates remain vigilant of what other questionable policies Trump pushes forward. Civil rights groups, immigration organizations, and the institutional left secured a first round victory, that at the very least, reverberated loud enough to rattle the president’s tone deafness on the issue of immigration. This fight over the travel ban is far from over.

HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

**Preservationists Appeal to USPS to Save Historic Building**

Lihu’e, Hawaii--A group of historic preservation groups and business associations launched a campaign to keep the Spanish-Mission style post office open after USPS announced its plan to close the historic building. The grassroots campaign is led by the local Lihu’e community, the Historic Hawaii Foundation, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The opposition comes in the midst of efforts to revital-

ize downtown Lihu’e as a gathering place and a more livable community.

Preservation groups are encouraging like-minded

individuals to join the effort and participate in door-to-door canvassing, social media, and postcard writing to save the historic Spanish-



Mission style post office. For more information, call 808-523-2900 or email at outreach@historichawaii.org.

## OPINION

# Support the GRP-NDFP Peace Talks!

by Jessica Antonio, BAYAN-USA Secretary General

**A**fter months of painstaking progress made by the movement for peace in the Philippines, President Duterte has taken a wrong turn by irrationally calling for the termination of peace negotiations between the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP). The President has even gone a step further in the wrong direction by threatening to arrest the NDFP peace consultants in the country as well as report those out of the country to international police. Despite the fact that Duterte's pronouncements violate both the spirit and the letter of the agreements forged by both parties in the negotiations, NDFP representative from Mindanao Ariel Arbitario was held at a military checkpoint and arrested on February 6.

BAYAN USA calls for the immediate release of Ariel Arbitario, who, since the time of his release in August 2016, had been working diligently to help the NDFP develop its program for the social and economic reforms needed to address the country's chronic problems of hunger and poverty. Arbitario's arrest violates the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG), an agreement between the NDFP and GRP which was originally signed in 1995 and reaffirmed by the two parties just this past August 2016. We also call on President Duterte to release all political prisoners as he promised before and during the NDFP-GRP engagement in peace negotiations. Like Arbitario, these prisoners are being held on trumped up charges and should never have been arrested in the first place. Their release is a matter of justice as well as a matter of compliance with the JASIG and the Com-



prehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL).

We call for the continuation of the peace talks between the NDFP and the GRP, which can not be terminated by a mere statement by the President without a formal written termination per the JASIG agreement. We also call on the Duterte government to uphold all previously signed agreements and to rein in the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), which has continued to forcibly occupy communities and kill activists defending their land and livelihood. The

AFP's trampling of the people's fundamental human rights is reminiscent of the bloody counterinsurgency campaigns Oplan Batay Laya and Oplan Bayanihan. The impunity continues now under Oplan Kapayapaan, exposing how the AFP was never serious about abiding by its ceasefire with the New People's Army much less working for genuine peace. Instead, the AFP tried to take advantage of the situation to launch more attacks against the people and as a pacification campaign against the NPA.

In the latest round of peace negotiations, the main topic on the table was agreements on

socio-economic reforms, the "meat of the peace talks." These would begin to address the semi-feudal semi-colonial problems that have plagued the Philippines and riddled it with growing poverty rooted in widespread landlessness and inadequate food production to feed the starving people, lack of jobs in the country with wages high enough to survive, and lack of development of national industries. Forging a path that leads to the solution of these problems so that the Filipino people can thrive in their homeland and not have to flee the country to survive—this is the most compelling reason to continue the peace talks, not terminate them.

*BAYAN-USA is an alliance of 20 progressive Filipino organizations in the U.S. representing youth, students, women, workers, artists, and human rights advocates. As the oldest and largest overseas chapter of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN-Philippines), BAYAN-USA serves as an information bureau for the national democratic movement of the Philippines and as a center for educating, organizing, and mobilizing anti-imperialist Filipinos in the U.S.*

## HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

### Kailua-Kona Library Celebrates 25th Anniversary

The Kailua-Kona Public Library will celebrate its 25th Anniversary from Feb. 22 – Mar. 2. Everyone is invited to join in the celebration at 75-138 Hualalai Rd., Kailua-Kona in the Big Island.

"The Kailua-Kona Public Library began serving patrons in 1972," said Branch Manager Denise Stromberg.

"After four moves in 20 years, the library finally settled into its permanent home when the new 10,500 square foot building was completed and opened in a leap year – on Feb. 29, 1992. Our branch is the second largest and second busiest library on the Big Island. We are proud to offer a variety of materials, quality programs, and great services

to the diverse population of the Kona community."

Retired librarian Irene Horvath, who opened the new library, said, "The community was so happy to finally have a new library building with access to expanded services and collections. Their patience was certainly rewarded!"

The library will highlight these Hawaii State Public Li-

brary System digital resources at 2 p.m. on the following days. Staff will conduct demonstrations; bring your personal devices to learn and follow along:

- Feb. 22 – OverDrive Day – eBook, Audiobook
- Feb. 23 – Zinio Day – eMagazine
- Feb. 24 – Mango Languages Day – Learn a foreign language
- Feb. 28 – OneClick Digital Day – Audiobook
- Mar. 1 – New HSPLS

Website Day

- Mar. 2 – HSPLS App Day

On Feb. 25 at 2 p.m., come celebrate the library's 25th Anniversary with a slack key guitar performance by Na Hoku Hanohano Award winner John Keawe.

For more information, click: <http://www.librarieshawaii.org/branch/kailua-kona-public-library/> or call Kailua-Kona Public Library at 327-4327.

### A POPULAR RESTAURANT IS FOR SALE

An authentic Filipino restaurant near the Kahului airport is for sale.

A popular spot for tourists as well as local people.

Owners want to retire.



FOR MORE INFO AND SERIOUS INQUIRIES ONLY, CALL 8082833739

### Celebrate the Life of Luisa Joy Labez

Luisa Joy G. Labez, 62, passed away on January 22, 2017. Her funeral service, "A Celebration of Joy," will be held on Saturday, March 11, 2017, 10 a.m. to 11 a.m., followed by a reception at Ko'olau Ballrooms, Glass Ballroom, 45-550 Kionaole Road, Kaneohe. Inurnment is at 2 p.m. at the Hawaiian Memorial Park Cemetery, 45-425 Kamehameha Highway, Kaneohe.

For more information, call Pat at (917) 817-8839, email: [patmuntz@gmail.com](mailto:patmuntz@gmail.com)

HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

# Prohibition on UH System Tuition Increase

By Sheryll Bonilla, Esq.

I have one reason to be thankful for being old. Tuition at the University of Hawaii, for a full load of 12 or more credits was \$225.00, with \$15.40 in fees, bringing a one semester total to \$240.40 – or annually \$480.80. Masses of students scrambled among department tables in Klum Gym, hoping there were still class cards for our first choices, then stood in line to pay. I know computerized registration is easier, but I wouldn't trade the price I paid for any of today's conveniences.

HB1278 and SB1161, are making their way through this year's Legislature. These identical bills were introduced in the House and Senate to increase the chance that one will get to the governor. HB1278 passed the House Higher Education Committee on February 9 and is en route to the House Finance Committee. SB 1161 passed the Senate Higher Education Committee on February 15 and is on its way to the Senate Ways and Means Com-

mittee. If the money committees pass the bills, the House or Senate will vote on the respective bill during a regular, daily session. If either the House or the Senate passes the bill, it moves to the other chamber to repeat the committee hearing process.

Both bills note the tuition hikes in the last five years:

Academic Year	Tuition Increase
2012-2013	3.1
2013-2014	5.5
2014-2015	7.6
2015-2016	5.1
2016-2017	5.1
2017-2018	0*
2018-2019	1.9
2019-2020	2.0*

(\* testimony by UH Chief Financial Officer Kalbert Young):

HB 1278 / SB1161 intend to stop tuition increases until 2027. The "defective effective date" of July 1, 2050, however, means that tuition won't actually freeze. The Legislature uses far off in the future dates to recognize an important issue and either needs time to figure out the details or to notify the

particular government body to work on the problem. The step up in tuition and whether these increases are helping with facilities repair and maintenance are the two issues in the bills.

Rep. Matt LoPresti, Ewa Beach, says that the university should have the autonomy to set tuition:

As a general principal, I believe that the ability to set tuition ought to remain with a university's leadership, not politicians who control all other aspects of a university's funding. If State funds are not available to adequately fund UH due to the economy, tax revenue shortfalls, etc., then UH needs to have the ability and autonomy to set tuition independent of changing political pressures. The autonomy of institutions of higher education is vital to their ability to continuously provide quality higher education and that autonomy ought not only include curricula, but the costs as well. The university is too important to the future of our state to be left entirely to the year to year funding whims of elected officials. In times past the legisla-

ture has thoroughly underfunded the university; were that situation to arise again, this bill would handcuff the university's ability to sustain itself through times of political turmoil and interference.

A friend of mine has been a university professor on the mainland, Asia, and Australia, and vice provost in Asia. He says "[t]uition should absolutely be set by the university. The university's administration knows the mix of base cost and financial aid that will best serve its student population, as well as its financial needs. A legislature is captive to political considerations that often run counter to those considerations. A classic example: is it better to lower tuition or keep tuition high but increase financial aid? Politically, "lower tuition" always sounds better, but it may actually result in subsidizing well-off students and \*reducing\* access to lower SES applicants." Economics Professor Richard B. McKenzie, University of California at Irvine, makes a similar point in his book "Why Popcorn Costs So

Much at the Movies?". Professor McKenzie said high tuition should not deter students from applying to universities because of the possibility of generous financial aid offers.

Universities may have good reasons to charge different tuitions for different programs. Professional schools such as medicine, dentistry, and law (subscriptions of law books from all 50 states and 11 federal circuits), for example, are more expensive to operate than graduate business programs. These cost complexities, my friend says, are known to university administrators but may not be known to legislators and their staffs.

You can follow either bill on [www.capitol.hawaii.gov](http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov). Enter SB1161 or HB1278 in the bill box. The bill's webpage shows its progress and current status, and links for the hearing notices, testimony submitted for each hearing, committee reports, hearing videotape, and all bill versions. To testify, check when it will be heard and its current version. Submit testimony at least 24 hours before the hearing by clicking "Submit Testimony" to upload your testimony.

# Senators Kim and Inouye Appointed to Leadership Position for National Organization

Two Hawai'i State Senators have been selected to serve in leadership roles for the National Foundation for Women Legislators (NFWL), the nation's oldest non-partisan organization addressing the needs of elected women at the city, county, and state levels of government.

Senator Donna Mercado Kim (Dist. 14 - Kapalama, 'Alewa, Kalihi Valley, Ft. Shafter, Moanalua Gardens & Valley, portions of Halawa and 'Aiea) was recently appointed to serve on the 2017 Policy Committee for the NFWL.

As a member of the Policy Committee, Sen. Kim will contribute to all committee business by developing education policy programs on policy issues, engaging with policy partners, and recommending which areas of policy the Foun-

ation shall focus on. The Committee will focus on shared legislation by encouraging elected women to exchange legislative ideas.

"It's an honor to be asked to serve on the Policy Committee," said Sen. Kim, who has been a member of NFWL since 2015. "This year more than ever, there are timely, pressing issues facing our communities. Hawai'i is not alone in many of these problem areas such as homelessness, the economy, and education. Being on this Committee allows me to collaborate with other women leg-

islators across the country and find creative solutions."

Senator Lorraine Inouye (Dist. 4 - Hilo, Hamakua, Kohala, Waimea, Waikoloa, Kona) was recently appointed to serve as the 2017 State Director for the NFWL.

"I'm proud to serve as the State Director for this distinguished organization," said Sen. Inouye. "The greatest rising force in politics is not a political party, but women. I know that there is much that can be accomplished to help our state and our country by working together as elected women."



Sen. Mercado-Kim



Sen. Inouye

"We are so honored Senators Kim and Inouye have accepted leadership positions in our foundation," shared Minnesota State Senator Carrie

Ruud, NFWL's 2017 Chair. "They will play a crucial role in the continued success of NFWL."



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# WHERE IN THE WORLD IS PYIN OO LWIN?

by Chit U. Juan



**M**ANILA, Philippines - I swear it could have been Baguio. Or I may have

awakened from a dream and found myself in a place very familiar, with strawberry jam being sold by the roadside and coffee trees shaded by tall pines and trees which looked a little foreign yet familiar.

You would think Baguio, correct? Well, it is 1100 meters or some 3535 feet above sea level and this is Pyin Oo Lwin. Located in the center of Myanmar, the city is home to coffee plantations and vineyards.

After just a 40-minute drive up sloping terrain from downtown Mandalay, the temperature drops and becomes a cool 13 degrees. Locals say it sometimes drops to 3 degrees and we were quite ready for this experience as we took along thick jackets and scarves.

Pyin Oo Lwin was the British hill station during colonial times, similar to how Camp John Hay was the R&R station of the American forces in the past. Foreigners know where to get cool climes and this area was developed to cater to visitors with hotels and many restaurants offering western, local as well as Chinese cuisine. And what else is similar to Baguio? They have the National Defense College in Maymyo, Pyin Oo Lwin's other name, as we have the Philippine Military Academy in our Baguio. It was like seeing a parallel universe.

But the similarities end there. Here, the national high-



The coffee berries are sorted.

way leads to China. You can actually drive for about 700-plus kilometers north to get to Yunnan, China. Truckloads of merchandise and other essentials travel to and fro and the highway is very busy. The local markets teem with Chinese and Indian goods, as India is also a neighbor of Myanmar.

But for a bit of history, do you know why many officials then hired not locals, but Nepalese staff? Drivers, guards and bodyguards were recruited from Nepal. They are known to be Buddhists and vegetarians and are believed to have no material attachments, not greedy, making them perfect loyal servants. So up to today you will still see some Nepalese people in Mandalay.

The local cuisine has mixed influences of all the countries I have named – India to the west, Thailand to the east and China to the north. The vegetables, though all locally grown, are cooked in Myanmar style but with spices borrowed from its neighbors. Even a milk dessert served us tasted like a “mestizo” Gulab Jamun – milk balls in a milk curd that is a Nepalese contribution.

The accommodations are aplenty due to many tourists who come for the cool weather,

the historical places, lakes and parks which are all-natural. We stayed in Aureum Palace, bungalows set amidst a vineyard right in front of the governor's house, now more of a museum than a residence. Yes, they have wine, influenced by German and Italian vintners who came to teach the locals how to grow the right grape varieties.

What else to do in Pyin Oo Lwin? Visit a coffee farm like the Sithar Coffee Farm by Lake Sithar. It's just a ten-minute drive from our hotel and the experience during harvest season is unforgettable. It's 40 acres of

Arabica coffee trees planted under Silver Oak shade trees. After a hike around the property you get treated to a nice hand-ground, hand-dripped cup of their single-estate coffee, best taken with homemade cashew cookies.

We were given native baskets which you sling over your shoulder and chest and you just go from one tree to the next, picking only the ripest red coffee fruits or cherries, as they are called at this stage. It is an experience every coffee drinker must try. Once you feel the coffee cherries one by one, and hear them drop in your basket, you will remember not to waste a drop of coffee ever again. It's not easy to fill a basket with the cherries, which will then be washed and pulped, dried in the sun until it's ready for roasting. Quite a long journey before it becomes your morning cup of joe.

After the coffee tour, treat yourself to lunch at Pann Taw Win, a café and restaurant owned by the same family who owns Sithar Farm. They serve local food as well as a filling Chinese hotpot which a group of four or five can enjoy. The

coffee is the star at this café, of course. Sithar's blends are served and coffee beans are also for sale. As well as a coffee supermarket for the third wave or regular coffee enthusiast. There are hand grinders, coffee pots, cold brew paraphernalia. I could stay there all day just checking each piece of equipment for coffee. These guys are serious about spreading the coffee craze. Myanmar is now one of the newest “origins” for Asian coffee and the domestic market has assimilated the coffee culture.

“Today's youth in Myanmar do not go to tea houses anymore,” says Maria, our guide and general manager of Sithar Coffee. So Maria and her boss Tin Tin Win want to make sure they supply the coffee enthusiasts with good coffee and the geekery that every new well-meaning café wants to have. The team is fired up by Thu Zaw and Min Hlaing, the two men who make sure Sithar's strategy of “crop to cup” is well-executed. Give Pyin Oo Lwin a try. Fly to Mandalay from Bangkok and drive up a steady sloping drive to 3,500 feet above sea level. Maymyo? Pyin Oo Lwin? You will think you've been here before. ([www.philstar.com](http://www.philstar.com))

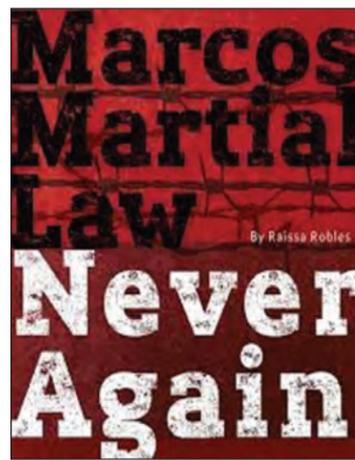
## BOOK REVIEW

# MARCOS MARTIAL LAW — NEVER AGAIN

by Rose Churma

**T**his is a “short and compact introduction to the atrocities and torture committed by the Martial Law regime...and it is needed now more than ever given the appalling amnesia and ignorance about the period.” This is how the author explains what has driven her to write this book.

The amnesia and ignorance was very apparent during the last Philippine election when the son of the dictator almost won the vice presidency, and who asks a foolish question--“what human rights violations during my parents' watch?”



**Marcos Martial Law -- Never Again.** by Raissa Robles, Filipinos for a Better Philippines, Inc., Quezon City. 2016. 268p. Student Edition. Softcover

To those of us who lived through Martial Law in the Philippines what is chronicled in the book is not something new. Then Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile (still very much alive to this day) faked

his own ambush to justify the imposition of Martial Law on September 21, 1972. From then on, there was a systematic crackdown and detention of thousands of Marcos's political opponents and critics. Congress was shut-down and media muzzled as thousands were murdered and tortured. Marcos and his wife, Imelda, plundered the nation's wealth and impoverished millions of Filipinos that encouraged the Communist insurgency and worsened the Muslim rebellion in Mindanao.

The book describes the apparatus of terror that the dictator used against his own people. Aside from torture, women detainees were subjected to sexual abuse and degradation. Even young people were not spared. In fact one

(continued on page 9)

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CANDID PERSPECTIVES

# The Investigation Into Trump's Filipino Partner



By Emil Guillermo

**L**iving in Hawaii, you're already in paradise. But if you're thinking about buying a condo in the Philippines, you're not alone.

Many Filipino communities around the U.S. have been subjected to sales pitches about going home to live out their golden years in the Philippines. Turn your dollars into pesos, right?

But in California, Filipinos are wondering about real estate transactions being initiated by Filipinos on tourist visas, who come here selling retirement condos in Manila as unlicensed sales agents.

It may even be a case of human trafficking.

Since I broke the story in November, the investigation by the California Bureau of Real Estate has officially begun.

And the story is important because of the man whose properties are being sold.

They belong to Jose E.B. Antonio, one of the richest men in the Philippines and prior to the election of Donald Trump, named the Philippines' special envoy to Washington for trade, investment and economic affairs.

Antonio also happens to be a ginormous Asian F.O.T.

That would be "Friend of Trump," but he's actually more than that.

The New York Times' top story headlined "World of Potential Conflict For a Devel-



Jose E. B. Antonio with President Donald Trump

oper President: Many Trump Partners Have Ties to Foreign Governments as Work Spans Globe," actually put Antonio in the lede.

As chair of the Century Properties Group, he's building the \$150 million, 57-story high-rise on the edge of Manila's Makati district, so tall it can be seen for miles around by the predominantly poor masses of the city.

And the symbol of capitalistic opulence is called...Trump Tower Century City, of course, where you can "live above it all."

Yes, the Philippines has been branded by Trump.

Just like America.

While Trump believes he has resolved the ongoing questions of conflicts of interests by saying his children are running the whole show, there remains doubts. He says he's crafted legal documents that take him "completely out of business operations." He even declared his priorities in a tweet: "The Presidency is a far more important task!"

But then why not create a blind trust and be totally above board?

Maybe because all he cares about is to be "visually" ethi-

cal. It's pure showbiz. And all done not to reassure us on his ethics, but to maintain his advantage connected to his private enterprises.

That's our selfless president working 100 percent for America!

Not.

Of course, Trump's minions get their cues from the boss. So what was Kellyanne Conway, the Trump counselor married to a Filipino, to do this week, but to defend the brand. In this latest case, she chastised Nordstroms for dumping the Ivanka Trump clothing line, and then urged viewers on Fox News to buy Ivanka's clothes.

That's a big ethical no-no But in keeping with Trump's low ethical standard.

Now what about Antonio fellow.

### Antonio Sales Tactics in California

The man who would be the Filipino Trump is still the envoy on business and trade to the U.S. for the Philippines.

And Juvenal Castro knows exactly how Antonio conducts business.

Castro, 77, is a retired Navy officer who lives in California.

Last year, Castro helped out a distant relative and three others who were visiting on tourist visas from Manila. The visas were for cultural dance performances to take place in September and October throughout California's Filipino communities.

The performances took place. But the dancers' main job wasn't to move to the music.

It was to sell Antonio's real estate, a violation of their visa.

"Oh yeah, they try to sell me too," Castro told me, though he didn't buy. "[The dancing] looks like a smoke-screen. They were selling properties in the Philippines."

The smallish condos were being sold for anywhere from 10-15 million pesos.

15 million pesos, at 46 pesos per \$US dollar.

That's \$326,000, an alluring price for a middle-class Filipino American looking for a cheap retirement.

"They used my dining room for paperwork," said Castro. "I don't think they understood the law."

They understood sales though. They went to places where Filipinos gathered in malls and restaurants, and Castro said he saw white boards of their activity, amassing a figure near \$124 million pesos in sales---\$2.7 million during their time.

The California Bureau of Real Estate confirmed it is against the law for foreigners to solicit for foreign properties on U.S. soil without a California license.

It's a matter of ethics and consumer protection. And after being alerted to the practice, the bureau officially started its own investigation into the matter.

It may also be a case of human trafficking, says Maria Elizabeth Embry, a Northern California anti-trafficking advocate. She said the visitor visas arranged by Mr. JoJo Quiroz, the dance entrepreneur, and by Antonio's Century Properties brought 16 Filipino citizens to the U.S.,

and they were forced to work long hours by companies seeking to skirt labor laws.

Embry has written an open letter to President Duterte of the Philippines asking for an investigation of Antonio's business practices of deploying Filipinos to sell properties without a license in the U.S.

"The appointment of Mr. Antonio to a position giving him diplomatic immunity is nothing but a disgrace to the local and international diplomatic community," Embry wrote.

President Duterte has not responded.

I attempted to reach both Antonio and Quiroz and have yet to hear back.

While Antonio is the head of Century Properties in the Philippines, Quiroz does appear to be a licensed real estate agent in California.

Still, the initial solicitors brought in from the Philippines on visitor visas were neither authorized to work nor licensed to sell real estate in California. That would be a violation, and if fraud or widespread misrepresentation about the properties were involved, the California Bureau of Real Estate said it could refer the matter to law enforcement for possible criminal action.

For now, Juvenal Castro, who housed four of the sellers in his spare bedroom for a few months, said most of the dancers moved on. Some went to New York and New Jersey, and some have since returned to the Philippines.

He doesn't know if anyone on the east coast, lured by the Trump brand, was sold any properties.

But this is a case of stinky fish--it goes to the head.

That would be Jose E.B. Antonio, who remains the Philippines' big F.O.T.

**EMIL GUILLERMO** is an award-winning journalist and commentator who writes from Northern California. He recently won the 2015 Dr. Suzanne Ahn Award for Civil Rights and Social Justice from the Asian American Journalists Association California.

**BOOK REVIEW** from page 8. **MARCOS** ....)

of the first articles was "The Boy Who Fell from the Sky"--the story of Boyet Mijares, the 16 year old son of Primitivo Mijares, an ex-Marcos propagandist who wrote the book *The Conjugal Dictatorship*. After being tortured, the boy's mangled body was dropped from a military helicopter into the town of Antipolo, Rizal on May 31, 1977 to the horror of

the townspeople.

Although "Martial law was a despicable phase of Philippine history masked by displays of art, culture and infrastructure" majority of Filipinos in Hawaii applaud the Marcos years--not only because Marcos hails from the Ilocos region, but because of the improvements in infrastructure they experienced --

which is equated with good governance.

Thousands of martial law victims survived to tell their harrowing experiences at the hands of the military and constabulary enforcers and some have been interviewed and their stories recounted in this book. For those who didn't survive, their stories are re-told -- and perhaps through

(continued on page 10)

# Chef Margarita Fores' 5 Must-Try Hong Kong Food

by Deni Rose M. Afinidad-Bernardo

**M**ANILA, Philippines — Salted egg in leche flan? Chocolate in adobo? Char-coaled rice (“tutong”) in a gourmet dish?

“Why not?” said celebrity chef Margarita “Gaita” Fores as she recently presented her fusion of Filipino, Hong Kong and Italian favorites at a hotel in Bonifacio Global City, Taguig.

During the lunch she prepared for her launch as Hong Kong Tourism Board’s (HKTB) new Filipina ambassador, Chef Margarita traced her humble beginnings through food.

Before she became Asia’s 50 Best Restaurants’ Best Female Chef for 2016, Fores was first an investment banker in Hong Kong.

A certified public accountant, Fores discovered her passion for cooking in her small Hong Kong apartment and its surrounds. The city was also the first out-of-the-country destination she went to when she was eight.

When she was starting off as a chef, she would often go

back to HK for “the best white truffles in the world” and since it is only a plane ride away from Italy, where she also sources some of her ingredients. She would also try different HK restaurants like those by Michelin-starred Italian chef Umberto Bombana, who has been living in HK for more than 20 years.

To be cast in HKTB’s latest global campaign with Bombana is a great honor for Fores since he is her idol and she considers him “the biggest chef outside Italy.”

Apart from theme parks and shopping centers, Chef Gaita vouches for Hong Kong as a destination for foodies since the biggest food trends, she said, first happen in HK before they spread to the rest of Asia.

For those who want to eat like a local in HK, the chef recommends the following dishes for a start.

## Shanghainese Hairy Crab

The Shanghainese Hairy Crab is one of Fores’ most favorite dishes. The fat of the male crab, she said, is one of the most exciting ingredients in the world.

Inspired by the Shanghainese Hairy Crab, the chef made “Crab Trio Sformato” using Philippine crabs glazed with mixed Chinese black vinegar and Negros Muscovado sugar.

## Dan Dan Mien

Inspired by Dan Dan Mien, a Chinese Sichuan noodle dish she enjoys in the business class of an airline, Fores created an Asian Bolognese out of fresh pasta and minced cured goose liver sausage, among others. She also tossed in roasted Philippine peanuts to give the pasta a little texture.

Who created the noodles? The chef thinks Italian explorer Marco Polo brought it to Italy from China. She believes the Chinese saying that “pasta means long life.”

## Winter Claypot Rice

One of Fores’ favorite HK dishes, the claypot rice is usually eaten to battle the winter cold. The bottom of the rice is intentionally left to burn for a smoky flavor. The rice’s smok-



Best Female Chef for 2016 Margarita Fores cooks up a fusion of Hong Kong and Filipino cuisines.

iness goes well with Fores’ steamed spotted Philippine garoupa. To seal in the flavor, she used a paper box instead of a clay pot.

## Glazed pork spareribs in plum sauce

Chef Gaita’s Philippine version is “Spiced US Angus Short Rib Adobo” with Davao chocolate, Negros cinnamon, and five spices, including a sauce made of mixed Philippine soy and Chinese plum sauce.

Adobo, according to her, is the Philippines’ “national dish” that is actually not a dish, but a way of cooking. Instead of the usual braising, Fores’ adobo was spiced with five Chinese

ingredients.

## Salted egg dishes, mango sago and almond milk

In lieu of the Chinese almond milk, the chef served warm Philippine pili milk. She introduced the unlikely pairing of salted egg and sweet panna cotta and savory red beans with cheesy ensaimada.

Known for fusing her Italian background with Filipino cooking and ingredients, Chef Gaita hails from the Araneta and Roxas families, a reputable political clan from the Philippines that owns the historic Araneta Coliseum. Prior to becoming a chef, she worked with Italian fashion house Valentino. ([www.philstar.com](http://www.philstar.com))

## BOOK REVIEW (from page 9, MARCOS...)

the retelling, adequate warning is given: there is no room for apathy. Vigilance is needed during these times.

The People Power Revolution which culminated on February 22 - 25, 1986 led to the restoration of democracy in the Philippines and the exile of the Marcoses to Hawaii more than 30 years

ago. This book is a must-read for those who still wonder why there was such outrage in the Philippines over the burial of the dictator’s corpse at the Libingan ng mga Bayani—the country’s designated resting place for its heroes. Last September, a protest over the burial was held in several major cities all over the world where

the Filipinos in the Diaspora have settled --except for Honolulu.

This book is timely and should be required reading for all, especially those with roots from the Philippines. Martial law should not happen again!

Those who are interested in getting a copy of the book can email <[kalamansi-books@gmail.com](mailto:kalamansi-books@gmail.com)>.

## HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

# Filipino Veterans Burial Assistance Bill Taken Up at State Legislature

The Hawaii State Legislature heard testimony on HB1420, a bill that seeks burial grants to be given to qualified Filipino veterans, on Feb. 9 at the State Capitol.

Currently, there are no federal funds available to assist Filipino-American veterans of World War II to return their remains and hold funeral

services in the Philippines. HB1420 seeks to establish a state fund \$75,000 for 2017-18 and \$75,000 for 2018-19 to be available for the few remaining veterans for funeral transport and services.

Filipino soldiers fought side-by-side with American soldiers to defend the Philippines during World

War II. Filipino soldiers were denied many of the benefits promised to them by the United States. They eventually received some of those benefits, but assistance to have their remains transported back to their homeland is unavailable.

If approved, the bill will take effect starting July 2017.

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# BOOST YOUR MEMORY NOW, AVOID DEMENTIA LATER

SAVOIR FAIRE by Mayenne Carmona

**M**y siblings and I are fortunate to have “healthy” parents who are in their 90s. They have no caregivers and can function on their own, with a little assistance from their domestic helpers. I give credit to their healthy lifestyle during their younger years for their good physical condition today.

My father played tennis and basketball during his youth, then shifted to golf in his mid- 40s. He didn’t smoke or drink except occasionally, during special occasions. He shunned rich foods and had a simple diet of fish, lean meat, fruits, and vegetables. He is, to this day, still driving his car and playing golf at age 96! He is the chairman emeritus of the Senior Citizens Golfers and leads the group to attend golf tournaments abroad once a year. His mind is still sharp, still manages to text and email on his iPhone but is starting to repeat himself a lot.

On the other hand, my mother started ballroom dancing with a group of friends when it first hit Manila’s scene some 40-plus years ago. This phenomenon gave birth to a new profession — that of being a DI or dance instructor. My mom had her own DI and each of her friends had theirs. They conceptualized special events where they would give exhibition numbers of different ballroom dances such as cha cha, mambo, rumba, boogie, and reggae. They practiced for days on end at our patio. My siblings and I enjoyed watching them and would sometimes try to learn their dances, often giving up because their choreography entailed a lot of intricate steps, which we found difficult to follow. I realize now that years of ballroom dancing kept Mommy physically fit and lengthened her memory span because it is only recently, at age 93 that she has started to be



repetitious and forgetful.

Their doctors assured us that it was normal for people of my parents’ age to be repetitious and forgetful. In short, senility or dementia could set in at their age and even earlier.

Early or late onset of dementia is really sad, and it can happen to any of us. It can hit at an early age (rare cases due to illness) or as late as in the 90s. It could be genetic or it could be a result of an aging brain, a stroke, a brain tumor, and other neurodegenerative factors.

We cannot stop Father Time, but a neurologist friend suggested that we take measures to sharpen our memory as we get older, such as by:

- 1) Learning a new language. This requires memory work and is a good exercise for expanding the brains.
- 2) Playing parlor games. For instance, chess, backgammon, mahjong — these require memory work.
- 3) Learning how to ballroom dance. It’s good for body, mind, and spirit.

In short, as we grow older, we should keep learning something new, never allowing our brains to deteriorate.

However, my neurologist friend also suggested taking supplements to help improve cognitive functions.

“Your brain needs nutrients, especially as you age. It is normal to become somewhat more forgetful as we grow older. Aging takes its toll on the brain, as well as the rest of our body organs. Our body’s capacity to produce the chemicals and nutrients that our brain cells need to maintain mental

wellness and alertness declines over the years.”

The close association of forgetfulness with aging gave birth to the term “senior moments” or instances when our memory fails us.

According to the Harvard Medical School, there are several types of normal memory problems. These include transience, which is the “tendency to forget facts or events over time.” Absentmindedness is forgetting things like where you put your pen or forgetting to do something at a prescribed time like taking your medicine or going to an appointment. Blocking is the “temporary inability to retrieve a memory.” This explains why older adults have trouble remembering names. Misattribution occurs when you “remember something accurately in part, but misattribute some detail, like the time, place, or person involved.” When we age, our memories also grow older and become especially prone to misattribution.

All these give us good reasons why it is important to nourish our brains. What supplements then are recommendable?

When I was in New York last year, I read about some brain supplements which I ordered online. They were pricey and when they arrived here, I was taxed heavily by the post office. So, I decided to look for brain supplements that are found in our local vitamin stores. After some research work, I narrowed down my choices to two: Methyl B-12 sold at Healthy Options and BrainMaster sold

at Mercury Drug.

Methyl B12 is good for brain and nerve function, energy metabolism, red blood cell formation and cardiovascular health. I gave this vitamin to my aunt who reported that her memory has improved and her sleep pattern is no longer dysfunctional.

Brain Master is a 100-percent natural brain supplement. It is the only product on the market that combines proven and time-tested Ayurvedic and herbal science treatment with B-complex vitamins B6 and B12, which are known as brain foods.

Bacopa Monnieri is an Ayurvedic herb that has antioxidant properties and acts as a brain tonic to enhance the brain’s neurotransmitters for memory development, learning, and concentration. Ginkgo biloba also contains antioxidants that neutralize dangerous free radicals. Ginkgo biloba is proven to improve memory and mental alertness.

Recent research on the benefits of vitamin B12 has identified it as being helpful against brain shrinkage due to aging.

Considered among the most important of all B-complex vitamins, vitamin B12 is

essential for the production and regeneration of red blood cells. It keeps the central nervous system functioning properly, improves concentration and memory balance, as well as relieves irritability. Vitamin B12 helps improve stamina, thus reducing fatigue and weakness.

Vitamin B6 is required for the production of serotonin and helps to maintain healthy immune system functions, protect the heart from cholesterol deposits, and prevent kidney stone formation. Vitamin B6 is a coenzyme for the central nervous system. It is used mainly in the body for the breakdown and absorption of amino acids.

The natural nutrients in BrainMaster assist in keeping “senior moments” at bay. “In layman’s terms, BrainMaster works on increasing blood flow to the brain by oxygenating it,” says a senior citizen friend who has been taking it for a year now and boasting of improved cognitive functions, even the ability to remember cell phone numbers.

Methyl B-12, sublingual vitamins come in a small bottle of 100 lozenges (Healthy Options) and BrainMaster comes in 30-capsule bottles. (Mercury Drugstores). Both vitamins claim to have no approved therapeutic claim. ([www.philstar.com](http://www.philstar.com))





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## HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

## Affordable Rental Apartment Complex Now Accepting Applications

**K**ekaulike Courtyards is now accepting applications for rental units. Each application will be processed and placed in a lottery to determine placement on a waitlist. The deadline for submission is March 8, 2017, and it must be mailed in (for date stamp) to Kekaulike Courtyards 1016 Maunakea St., Honolulu, HI 96817.

Applications are available at the location on Maunakea or online at <http://www.mutual-housing.org/kekaulike-courtyards/>

To qualify for the lottery, applicants must earn no more than 50 percent of the U.S. Housing and Urban Develop-

ment's median income for the City and County of Honolulu which are: \$35,200 for 1 person, \$40,000 for 2 persons, \$45,250 for 3 persons, and \$50,250 for 4 persons.

Only one application is accepted per household.

The applicant holding the lowest lottery shall have the first opportunity to be screened for an available unit.

Kekaulike Courtyards has a maximum capacity of four persons per household. It consists of 76 affordable rentals with studios (\$550 to \$615/mo.) and one-bedroom units (\$750 to \$780/mo.) in three, four-story buildings.



## Hawaii Economy Expects Continued Growth

**H**awaii's economy is projected to grow by 1.8 percent for 2017, a tad lower than previously predicted at 1.9 percent, according to the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) first quarter Statistical Economic Report. Despite the slight dip, experts say the economy will continue to expand and remain stable for the year.

"The downward adjustment in Hawaii's economic growth for 2017 was mainly due to the new projection on visitor expenditures for 2017," said Chief State Economist Eugene Tian.

"We expect visitor arrivals will reach more than 9 million

in 2017, about the same as we forecasted in the previous years. However, we now expect visitor days will grow by 1.4 percent in 2017, lower than the 2 percent we forecasted in November 2016. The slower growth in visitor days will lead to slower growth in visitor expenditures," said Tian.

The slightly reduced projection comes after steady growth for 2016.

"Hawaii had a great year in 2016 with 14,000 new payroll jobs created," said DBEDT Director Luis P. Salaveria.

In 2016, job growth was registered in almost every sector with the biggest gains in

the construction, tourism, health care and professional services. Leading the way, construction jobs increased by 4,600; followed by Food Services and Drinking Places at 2,800; Health Care and Social Assistance at 2,500; Accommodations at 1,000; and Professional and Business Services at 900.

The labor force saw historic high levels. Statewide unemployment rate fell to 2.6 percent by the end of 2016. But the unemployment rate is expected to increase in 2017 to 3.4 percent.

Total visitor arrivals increased 3 percent and expenditures increased 4.2 percent, both were higher than projected by DBEDT.

## Hawaii Residents and Businesses Invited to Madrid Fusion Manila

**T**he Philippine Consulate General in Honolulu invites Hawaii residents and businesses to participate in the 3rd Madrid Fusion Manila (MFM) on April 6-8, 2017 at the SMX Convention Center, SM Mall of Asia Complex, Pasay City, Philippines. Some of the most distinguished names in the world of gastronomy will be in attendance.

The event, sponsored by the Philippine Department of Tourism, is an opportunity for participants to learn and appreciate the various agricultural and food products the Philippines has to offer. It also

gives participants a chance to establish business partnerships in trade, tourism and gastronomy.

The theme of the event is called "Towards a Sustainable Gastronomic Plants;" and it will have three main components: 1) Madrid Fusion Manila International Gastronomy Congress, 2) Fusion Manila International Gastronomy Expo, and Month-long Flavors of the Philippines calendar of events.

For more information, visit [www.madridfusion-manila.com](http://www.madridfusion-manila.com) or send an email at [mfm.inquiry@gmail.com](mailto:mfm.inquiry@gmail.com).

## Federal Hiring Freeze Impacts Navy Shipyard Workers

**P**resident Donald Trump's executive order that puts a freeze on hiring federal workers has slowed down the process of new hires at Navy facilities on Oahu. While the Trump's EO does not apply to military personnel or positions considered essential to meet national se-

curity responsibilities, the uncertainty had caused shipyards across the country to suspend hiring or go through lengthy exemption processing.

The result is that positions are taking longer to be filled and the delay impacts fleet readiness in the hiring of positions such as engineers, acqui-

sition workforce personnel, trade mechanics, radiological and emergency personnel regulatory compliance and other support staff.

Sen. Mazie Hirono (D-HI) has called on the Acting Secretary of Navy to clarify the exemption from Trump's freeze for shipyard workers so that hiring can continue at the pace prior to the EO.

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## LEGAL NOTES

*Editor's Note: The Hawaii Filipino Chronicle is committed to bringing you relevant and timely news and articles. Due to the timeliness of the following articles on immigration actions happening nationwide, we have included two articles written by Atty. Seguritan in this issue for your information and reference.*



By Reuben S. Seguritan

## Courts Reject Trump's Travel Ban

have valid student or work visas. Even foreign nationals with immigrant visas cannot enter the United States if they are from the 7 stated countries. This includes Iraqis who worked for the United States government as translators and were issued special immigrant visas. The only exception are citizens of the 7 countries who also have Canadian citizenship. These dual Canadian citizens can enter the United States.

Different protests were held in airports and parks in major cities across the United States to denounce the ban on refugees and immigrants of the 7 countries. The protests were held in New York City, Boston, Washington D.C., San Francisco, Dallas, Detroit and Phoenix. Some lawyers across the country worked pro bono to help the detained foreign nationals at the airports.

Public officials have expressed their dissent to the Executive Order. Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo of New York said that his office would offer legal help to those detained at airports in

New York. Senator John McCain of Arizona said that the order was not properly vetted and that it could be seen as the United States turning its back on Muslims who had risked their lives to serve as interpreters for the country's military and diplomats. Senator Rob Portman of Ohio added that, "In my view, we ought to all take a deep breath and come up with something that makes sense for our national security and again for this notion that America has always been a welcoming home for refugees and immigrants." On January 31, 2017, President Trump fired the acting Attorney General Sally Yates for publicly refusing to defend the Executive Order.

States such as Hawaii, New York, Massachusetts, Virginia and Washington have filed lawsuits to block the implementation of the Executive Order.

On January 28, 2017, Judge Ann Donnelly of the U.S. District Court in Brooklyn granted a request from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) to stop the de-

portations nationwide after determining that the risk of injury to those detained by being returned to their home countries necessitated the decision. On the same day, U.S. District Judge Leonie Brinkema in Virginia, issued a temporary restraining order to block the removal of any green card holders being detained at Dulles International Airport.

On February 3, 2017, Federal Judge James Robart in Washington state ordered the nationwide suspension of the Executive Order. On February 4, 2017, the Department of Homeland Security announced that it was suspending the ban on nationals from the 7 named countries from entering the United States. Furthermore, the visas that were electronically cancelled due to the Executive Order would be reinstated. However, the nationals from the 7 countries whose visas were physically stamped cancelled or taken away would have to reapply for new visas.

In response, President Trump lashed out on his personal twitter account stating

"What is our country coming to when a judge can halt a Homeland Security travel ban and anyone, even with bad intentions, can come into U.S.?" In another tweet he said, "Just cannot believe a judge would put our country in such peril. If something happens blame him and court system. People pouring in. Bad!"

On February 5, 2017, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals denied the Trump administration's petition to resume the implementation of the Executive Order. Hence, Judge Robart's February 3, 2017 order suspending the Executive Order nationwide remains as the status quo.

This Executive Order of President Trump has made a lot of people oppose him. Even some of his allies in the Republican party have come forward to speak against the ban on refugees and immigrants. President Trump has been in office for less than a month but it looks like he will have a lot of protests and dissent to deal with throughout his presidency.

**M**any people around the world have voiced their opposition to the Executive Order issued on January 27, 2017 entitled "Protecting the Nation from Terrorist Attacks by Foreign Nationals" by President Trump.

The Executive Order bans nationals of Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen from entering the United States for 90 days. In addition, all refugees are banned for 120 days. However, Syrian refugees are banned indefinitely. The ban extends to foreign nationals with visas who are already in the United States and wish to travel to one of the 7 named countries. They cannot re-enter the United States if it is within the 90 days or 120 days period, even if they

## Surprise Immigration Raids Cause Panic and Fear

**I**mmigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents have conducted immigration raids in New York and 10 other States. In a memo dated February 11, 2017, ICE stated that 40 foreign nationals were arrested in 5 boroughs of New York City and the surrounding areas. ICE added that 95% of those arrested had criminal convictions. According to ICE, the raids were part of routine and daily targeted enforcement operations to arrest criminal alien nationals.

ICE justified the raids by stating that the arrested individuals were public safety threats, convicted criminals, members of dangerous gangs,

those who have been deported but illegally re-entered the United States, and those who have otherwise violated the United States immigration laws. During the raids, if ICE would encounter other suspects who may be in the United States illegally, ICE may arrest them as well.

In total, 680 people have been arrested in the immigration raids in the United States. Of those arrested, 75 percent were convicted and charged criminal aliens who will be prosecuted. Those not criminally charged will be processed for removal for violation of immigration laws. Alien nationals who have outstanding orders of deportation or who returned illegally after being deported are subject to

immediate removal from the United States. The remaining foreign nationals will be awaiting a hearing before an immigration judge.

On February 12, 2017, President Trump said on twitter, "The crackdown on illegal criminals is merely the keeping of my campaign promise. Gang members, drug dealers & others are being removed!"

In response to the immigration raids, Mayor Bill de Blasio of New York City said, "New Yorkers should rest assured that city officials, including the N.Y.P.D., will never ask about your immigration status, and the N.Y.P.D. will never become immigration enforcement agents." However, this statement has done little to reassure the peo-

ple living in New York of their safety.

On social media, a lot of people have shared information on what they should do if an ICE agent arrives at their door and their rights if they are arrested. The posts state: "If ICE agents show up at your door, stay calm and do not open the door. If ICE agents don't have a warrant signed by a judge, do not let them in your house and ask them to leave any information at your door. The ICE administrative warrant does not allow the agents to enter your home without your consent. If ICE agents force their way into your house, do not resist and remain quiet. If you have a green card, resist any demand to give up your green card to

the ICE officer. If you are arrested, do not sign any document, unless your lawyer is with you. You have the right to demand a hearing with a judge. If you are arrested, you have the right to speak to an attorney and be represented by an attorney."

As a direct reaction to the raids, protests were held in New York City on Friday night. Protests were also held in Los Angeles last Thursday and Friday.

Although the immigration raids were characterized as routine by the government, there are laws and safeguards to ensure that people's rights are not violated. The greatest tool now for people is information and knowing that they always have a right to an attorney.

PHILIPPINE LANGUAGE



**DAYASADAS**  
By Pacita Saludes

# Aldaw Dagiti Puso (Valentine's Day) Naisangsangayan Nga Aldaw Ti Tawen

**A**du dagiti mangur-uray iti daytoy nga aldaw Febrero 14th iti kada tawen. Isu ti ur-urayen a panagiyawat dagiti babbai iti ayatda kadagiti agdatdaton kadakuada. Kunada nga isu ti rumbeng no nakallalagip ti ayan-ayatda ket agtungpal a manayon ken "FOREVER REMEMBERED".

Isu met ti panagplano ti kaaduan a panaglantip ti pusposoda, panagkasarda iti daytoy a bulan (aldaw dagiti puso). Adun dagiti makapaneknek a nasamsamay ken nasayaat ti pagtungpalaan daytoy nga aldaw a panagtipon. Naragsak ken nagasat dagiti agaassawa iti daytoy a bulan. Awan ti naliday ta maitungpal dagiti arapaapda nga awan ti makasingsinga. Maadanda ti naragsak a familia. Patientayo wenna saan ngem isu ti maobserbar dagiti kaaduan.

Kadagiti aglantip iti daytoy a bulan, CONGRATULATIONS!!! Sapay ta maadandaankayo ti narungbo ken naurnos a pamilya. Ngem adda immawag kadakami, nga awan pay makatawenda pimmusayen ti maysa. Awanen, pinanawanen ti kaingungotna, isu a dida kano patient daytoy a padto. Dayta ti makuna a ti APO ti mangikeddeng ti amin para kadayo. Awan ti pudno a makaammo no di ti Mannakabalin. Agkararagtayo ta adu pay dagiti agsasaruno a pasken itoy a bulan.

In-ton Febrero 16-26, 2017 isu ti Filipino Trade Mission ti Filipino Chamber of Commerce a mapan idiay Filipinas tapno papigsaenda dagiti opor-tionidad dagiti "business" ti Hawaii ken ti bisitaenda ti Manila, Davao, Laoag, Vigan, Candon, ken Baguio city. No kayatyo ti maisurot iti daytoy a mission- awaganyo ni Paul Alimbuyao wenna Bernadette Fajardo iti 342-8090. Naragsak ti makakita kadagiti napipintas a disso ti Filipinas.

In-ton Febrero 26, 2017 ma-pankayo iti THE RED CIN-

DERELLA, Dole Ballroom dita Iwilei iti 6:30 pm. Kitaenyo no dakayo ti nagasat a Lady in Red Ball 2017. Naragsak daytoy, awaganyo ni Mimi Gozar iti 312-0778 wenna ni Rose Pedronan iti 392-1228 tapno makaattendarkayo.

In-ton March 10-12, 2017, isu ti 23rd Honolulu Festival Hawaii's Premier Cultural Event. Dagiti aktibidades iti Marso 10 isu ti International Friendship Gala, 6:00 pm iti Hawaii Convention Center. No March 11, 2017 Craft Fair ken Cultural Performances, March 12th isu ti Craft Fair with a Grand Parade on Kalakaua Avenue - kadua ti Philippine Consulate ti Philippine Airlines Visayan Organisation. Philippine Chamber of Commerce ken ti Filcom Center. Agatendartayo!

In-ton March 24, 2017 isu ti Philippine Chamber of Commerce iti Hawaii 23rd Annual Scholarship Golf Tournament, Ewa Beach Golf Club, 91-050 Fort Weaver Road, Ewa Beach. The proceeds will fund the scholarship program.

## NAGTALEK KAMI KENKA

Managpanunotka, managparnuayka Mandita Agtataruptop dagiti di mabilang a parmata Dagiti nabibisked a sagibo ken parnuaymo Awan pay nakapatas ken nakaaramid uray asino

Asino ti nakaiwayat agplano iti pinulpullo a tawen? Nangsakruy a sipapalanas a namsek ken sitatalged Dagiti nasidek nga arapaap a mangbukel panagtalek Narikut a gandat aramid planom a narikut ken namsek

Panangurnosmo kadagiti naayat nga agikurkur-it mannurat Kadagiti pakasaritaan, kabibiag ken kasasaad dagiti nalatak Ilokanos a managpaliw managurnos kadagiti lagip Awan kaaspingna a panangipateg kadagiti gapuanan ken aramid

Maawis rikna dagiti managsintir a Kailokanuan A mangipateg met kadagiti aramid ken tignay Kadardara di pulos maiyaw-awan, maiyalis ken masubang Kapanunotan, makaiwanwan nasayaat a kababalin pakaidayawan

Sika ti sarming ken matalek a pagtuladan Dagiti naanep a patanor ken sumarsaruno a kaputotan A mangurnos, mangiladawan kabibiag mangipararangang Dagiti Ilokanos a mapagpiaran ken natured iti pagilian.

Mandita, aginanakan ngem ituloymo nga iparikna ta pammatim Idaydayawmo, itan-okmo ti nakaitaw-am nga ilim Tuladendaka dagiti Kakailiam ditoy America ILOKANA, MANGIWANWAN NGA INA!!

## MAINLAND NEWS

### Rep. Gabbard's HIRE Vets Act Passes House

Washington, DC-- The HIRE Vets Act (H.R.244) that was introduced by Reps. Tulsi Gabbard (HI-02) and Paul Cook (CA-08) passed the House by a vote of 409-1 and is now in the Senate. The H.R. is a bipartisan legislation that aims to incentivize employers to hire veterans, and recognize employers that provide a supportive work environment to retain veterans. "This legislation is focused on encouraging employers to hire more veterans. We've seen different programs and initiatives in my home state of Hawaii and in states across the country that focus on recruiting and retaining veterans, but the fact is there are still more than 400,000 unemployed veterans across the country. We need to do more," said Rep Gabbard. The HIRE Vets would create an award program recognizing the meaningful, verifiable efforts undertaken by employers – both large and small – to hire and retain veterans. Cook and Gabbard designed the program to be self-funded. Through the U.S. Department of Labor, the HIRE Vets Act would allow businesses to display "HIRE Vets Medallions" on products and marketing materials. These medallions would be awarded as part of a four-tiered system – Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Platinum – associated with specific hiring and retention goals each year.

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**COMMUNITY CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**27TH ANNUAL FILIPINO TRADE MISSION TO THE PHILIPPINES, FILIPINO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF HAWAII** | February 16 - 26, 2017 | TURTLE BAY HILTON | Contact pmahinfo@gmail.com or call 888-674-7624 for further information.

**FILIPINO WOMEN'S CLUB OF HAWAII FOUNDATION ANNUAL TERNO BALL** | April 15, 2017 | 6:00 PM | HIBISCUS ROOM, ALA MOANA HOTEL | Contact Nelly Pongco Liu @ 228-7808, Carlota Ader @ 797-4381 or Mercy Mullins @ 226-1320.

**PMAH MEMORIAL WEEKEND & CME** | May 27 - 29, 2017 | TURTLE BAY HILTON | Contact Nelly Pongco Liu @ 228-7808, Carlota Ader @ 797-4381 or Mercy Mullins @ 226-1320.

**2ND PMAH GOLF TOURNAMENT** | October 18, 2017 | 9:00 am (Registration), 11:00 a.m. (Golf Tournament Begins) and 6:00 p.m. (Awarding of Prizes and Buffet Dinner) | HOAKALEI COUNTRY CLUB | For registration, contact Elmer Baysa, MD @ 689-8315, Ray Romero, MD @680-0554 or Christopher Regala, MD @ 622-2626.

**PHILIPPINE NEWS**

**Ex-Cop: I Killed Broadcaster on Rody's Order**

by Paolo Romero  
Tuesday, February 21, 2017

**M**ANILA, Philippines - Tired of incessant criticism when he was mayor of Davao City, Rodrigo Duterte took out a P3-million contract to kill broadcaster Jun Pala, and then gave a P1-million bonus when the deed was done.

This was the claim made yesterday by one of three policemen who allegedly carried out the still unsolved assassination in 2003, as he came out in public to insist that President Duterte set up death squads in his home city that were responsible for the summary execution of about 1,000 crime suspects.

"Consider the Jun Pala murder case solved. I was one of those who killed Jun Pala," Arthur Lascañas said yesterday, four months after he faced a Senate inquiry and denied the existence of Davao death squads.

Malacañang dismissed Lascañas' story as a "demolition job" orchestrated by staunch Duterte critic Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV, who arranged yesterday's press conference.

Flanked by members of the Free Legal Assistance Group (FLAG), Lascañas narrated: "The first time mayor Duterte sat as mayor of Davao City, we started what we call salvaging of people, criminal and drug suspects in Davao."

"We implement the personal orders of Duterte... in all the killings we do in Davao City - whether burying them or throwing them at sea - we're being paid by mayor Rodrigo Duterte," Lascañas said.

In changing his version of events, Lascañas explained that he was bothered by his conscience.

Duterte in previous interviews had denied having Pala killed, but said the broadcaster deserved his fate and that some journalists invited assassination. The statement drew condemnation from media groups at the start of Duterte's presidency.

**Brothers, pregnant woman**

In tears, Lascañas claimed he even had his two brothers killed for involvement in drugs.

Allegedly on Duterte's order, Lascañas' death squad also executed the suspected mastermind in the kidnapping of a certain Mrs. Abaca, who was freed after ransom was paid.

The kidnapping suspect, a certain Mr. Patasaja, was intercepted in his Ford Fiera in General Santos City. But he was with his wife, who was seven months pregnant; their son who was about five years old; the target's 70-year-old father-in-law and two helpers, a man and a woman.

Lascañas said the five were brought to the Laud quarry in Davao City where Patasaja was taken to a separate structure for interrogation.

A certain Major Macasaet reportedly briefed Duterte about the case and returned later to the quarry with instructions to "erase all." Lascañas said Duterte wanted the killing to be "clean."

Lascañas claimed that he pleaded with his cohorts to spare the boy and take him to a bus station so he could get out of Davao. But Lascañas claimed his cohorts warned that the boy would remember their faces and would get back at them when he grew up and could no longer be recognized by the death squad members.

"Here, evil prevailed," Lascañas said. A silenced .22-caliber pistol was used on the family and their helpers.

**Blind obedience**

Facing the media at the Senate in what he described as a "public confession," Lascañas said he carried out the "salvagings" out of "blind obedience and loyalty" to Duterte.

Death squad members were also paid from P20,000 to P100,000 "depending on the status of the target," he said.

He claimed he also received an allowance from Duterte's office amounting to P100,000. It was not clear if this was a regular monthly payment.

Lascañas has just retired from the Philippine National Police with the rank of special police officer 4. He declined to take questions from reporters.

During the hearing conducted by the Senate committee on justice last year, he was described by self-confessed hitman Edgar Matobato as part of Duterte's inner circle. Matobato claimed he received assassination instructions from Lascañas.

FLAG lawyers Arno Sanidad and Jose Ma. Diokno said Lascañas would tell all under oath in a proper government investigation. In the meantime, Lascañas will be given protection as his life may be in danger.

**Take your time**

Lascañas alleged that an "angry" Duterte put out the P3-million contract to kill Pala. Lascañas said he took the contract together with a certain SPO4 Sonny Buenaventura and SPO1 Jim Tan, who had many "players" or hitmen who are former communist rebels in his stable.

Pala survived two assassination attempts by the group. Lascañas said he apologized for the failed hits when he ran into Duterte at a shopping mall. But the mayor allegedly told him in the Visayan dialect, "Take your time. Don't hurry."

They were able to assassinate Pala outside his house with the help of the victim's bodyguard, who they were able to turn into an informant for P350,000.

Lascañas sought forgiveness from the children of his two brothers whom he had ordered killed, saying it was the first time he had divulged his deeply held secret.

"I call on the PNP... killing is not the solution. This is against the law and against the law of God. We will be haunted by our conscience," Lascañas said. "I may be killed but I'm now contented in fulfilling my promise to God in making this public confession."

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**New EJK probe sought**

During the afternoon session at the Senate, Trillanes sought a reinvestigation into extrajudicial killings.

Sens. Paolo Benigno Aquino IV, Leila de Lima and Risa Hontiveros in separate statements backed the reopening of the inquiry.

Hontiveros described the revelations as a direct stab at the credibility of Duterte, undermining his "moral capacity to lead."

"They strengthen suspicions that the death squads responsible for thousands of unsolved extrajudicial killings are state sanctioned," she said.

De Lima described Lascañas' allegations as "hair-raising."

Senate President Aquilino Pimentel III said while any senator may file a resolution for an investigation based on Lascañas' claims, there is no assurance that it will push through.

Senate Majority Leader Vicente Sotto III said Trillanes' manifestation would be referred to the Senate committee on public order and dangerous drugs, chaired by Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

Sotto said the Senate justice committee, chaired by Sen. Richard Gordon, would also have to be informed of Trillanes' manifestation.

Sanidad and Diokno said it would be up to members of the House of Representatives to decide whether or not to push for Duterte's impeachment.

They said Lascañas' statements and the affidavits he would issue in the coming weeks could be used by concerned government bodies to investigate Duterte. ([www.philstar.com](http://www.philstar.com))

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