



Republic of the Philippines  
CONGRESS OF THE PHILIPPINES

## SENATE

Pasay City

**SUBJECT : REPORT ON THE PUBLIC HEARING CONDUCTED BY THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, EMPLOYMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ON SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 70: "RESOLUTION REQUIRING THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, EMPLOYMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION INTO THE PRACTICE OF ESCORT SERVICES" HELD LAST OCTOBER 08, 2004, FRIDAY, 1:00 P. M. AT SEN. PECSON ROOM, SENATE BUILDING, PASAY CITY.**

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### **1.0 PRELIMINARY**

This is the third public hearing of the Senate Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development, joint with the Committee on Youth, Women and Family Relations, on Senate Resolution No. 70, concerning the issue on the proliferation of "Escort Services" as alleged fronts for prostitution in the Philippines.

Among the Senators present during the hearing were the Hon. Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada and the Hon. Juan Ponce Enrile.

Among the resource persons present were Director Gina Gonzales of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD); Director Irma Valiente of the Bureau of Women and Young Workers (BWYW-DOLE); Atty. Rodolfo Dimaisip, Representative of the Permits and Licensing Department of the Office of the City Mayor of Quezon City; Atty. Caesar Poblador, Counsel for Jolly Ting of Pegasus and Catwalk; Mr. Juanito Palma, Managing Partner of Mr. Suave Music Bar and Restaurant; Atty. Leonard Mann, Counsel for Classmate Bar; Atty. Ronnie Rodillas, Counsel for Mr. Hau Kan Sy of Mystique; Atty. Florand Garcia, Counsel for Mr. Lito De Guzman of Hercules 2 KTV Bar; Mr. Louie San Juan, Operation Manager of Mystique Bar; Mr. Fedilito Umali, Operator of Catwalk Cocktail Lounge; Ma. Teresa Aman, Representative of Royal Steves; Mr. Rod Villalobos, Representative of Queen's Castle Bar; Atty. Redentor Viaje, Counsel for Queen's Castle and Mr. Edelberto Quitasol, Operations Manager of Mystique.

### **2.0 HIGHLIGHTS**

The Chairman, Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada, in his opening statement gave a brief summary of the salient points raised during the previous hearings conducted by the Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development on the

issue concerning escort service. He explained that during the first public hearing, the Committee attempted to understand the dynamics of escort service as a profession and uncovered that in many instances, the practice of escort service is being used as fronts for prostitution and the trafficking of women and children. During the second public hearing, movie personalities and models who have been rumored to have engaged in the practice of "escort service" were invited to shed light into what are the activities actually being provided by an escort provider. In the third hearing, the owners and operators of funhouses, night clubs and bars were invited to shed light into the operational practices of funhouses and to determine whether these establishments are employing female minors.

On the query of the Chairman as to the number of women employed by these establishments and their corresponding job descriptions, their various representatives stated the following:

- For Queen's Castle Bar, their representative stated that they are currently employing forty (40) women whose age bracket ranges from eighteen (18) years old and above, whose main job is to perform sexy modeling on stage and entertain their guests;
- For Royal Esteve's, their representative stated that they are currently employing Guest Relation Officers (GRO's) whose age bracket ranges from eighteen (18) to twenty five (25) years old and whose main job is to entertain their guests through singing because they are in the Karaoke Bar business.
- For Catwalk, their representative stated that they are currently employing twelve (12) GROs whose main job is to perform sexy modeling on stage and entertain their guests in their various VIP rooms;
- For Mystique Bar, their representative stated that they are currently employing around fifty (50) to sixty (60) women as Guest Relation Officers (GRO's) whose age bracket ranges from eighteen (18) to twenty five (25) years old and whose main job is to do sexy modeling on stage and entertain their guests in their various VIP rooms;
- For Suave Piano Bar and Restaurant, their representative stated that they are currently employing six (6) women and four (4) men whose age bracket ranges from twenty six (26) to thirty three (33) years old who are serving as waitresses, singers and cooks.

As a standard practice, the GROs are normally required to submit a copy of their authenticated birth certificates, medical certificates, police clearances and working permits upon their application to the establishment.

During the hearing, the Chairman presented to the body a picture of a female, who is a minor, dancing nude on stage allegedly at Queen's Castle. This picture was taken a few days prior to the date of the hearing. In reply, the representative of Queen's Castle stated that the scene presented in the picture is blurred and it cannot be properly established that the nude female dancing on stage was performing at Queen's Castle.

During the course of the discussions, Sen. Enrile inquired as to the mode of hiring these GROs, the basis of their salary rates, remittance of the required SSS contributions by the employers, and the payment of appropriate taxes by the GROs.

The Chairman presented to the panel a picture of a woman engaging in sexual activity with a costumer, allegedly in one of the VIP rooms of Mystique Bar. The

representative from Mystique argued that such sexual activity, as shown in the picture, did not happen in their establishment. The Mystique representative made a categorical statement that should he discover in the future that the said woman in the picture works in their establishment, he would immediately terminate her services for violating the provisions of pertinent penal laws in the country.

Director Valiente from the DOLE informed the Committee that the Department is not remiss in its duty to monitor and notify these establishments to refrain from employing minors as this violates the provisions of the R. A. 9281, otherwise known as the Anti Child Labor Law. She added that DOLE has an inter-agency program called “Sagip Bata Manggagawa” which is tasked to monitor and rescue minors working in night spots, fun houses and related establishments. Director Gonzales of the DSWD remarked that the DSWD is strongly against the employment of minors in night spots and stated that their Department is also a member of the Sagip Manggagawa Program.

On the question of the Chairman as to what is the usual procedure being adopted in issuing business permits to these funhouses, Atty. Dimaisip of the Quezon City Business and Licensing Bureau stated that they normally conduct an ocular inspection to verify the nature of the business being applied for by an applicant and to determine whether they have complied with all the pertinent requirements as provided for by law, rules and regulations. He added that the Quezon City government has at present forty (40) inspectors responsible for monitoring more than 40,000 establishments all over Quezon City.

The Chairman made a follow through inquiry into the status of the Queen’s Castle issue wherein during the previous hearing a picture of female minors who were dancing nude on stage, the evidence of which was submitted to the Office of the Chief of the Business and Licensing Bureau for their immediate action. Atty. Dimaisip informed the body that there is now an on-going surveillance being undertaken on this issue and that proper action will be undertaken once the findings have been finalized and submitted.

Before the hearing was adjourned, the Chairman requested the owners and operators of the various funhouses to submit to the Committee a complete listing of the names of the GROs employed in their establishments, including their authenticated birth certificates and medical certificates.

The hearing was adjourned at 3:41 p.m.

Report submitted by:

**MS. GEMMA GENOVEVA G. TANPIENGCO**

Legislative Committee Secretary

Senate Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development