



PRESS RELEASE

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President Duterte to Certify ROTC Bill as Priority

President Rodrigo Roa Duterte has approved the recommendation of Defense Secretary Delfin N. Lorenzana to certify as priority the bill to implement mandatory Reserved Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) program in Grades 11 and 12 of the country's public and private schools.

The proposal was presented in a cabinet meeting on 07 February 2017 in Malacañang wherein cabinet members discussed it thoroughly, and deliberated on the concerns that led to the abolition of mandatory ROTC in the past as well as the solutions to address those concerns.

"No hazing. Ensure that the persons to be assigned as officers-in-charge of the ROTC program have no record of abuse," President Duterte said after giving his nod. The bill will now be forwarded to the House of Representatives and the Senate by the Office of the President for simultaneous deliberations.

Aimed at producing well-trained and prepared reservists for military and civic services, the proposed program covers Grades 11 and 12 in both public and private schools under the DepEd's K to12 Curriculum to ensure that students who do not proceed to college will still be able to undergo ROTC.

"We made sure that this version of the bill will instill the true essence of love for country with a sense of duty and service while upholding moral and spiritual values, respect for human rights and adherence to the Constitution," Defense Secretary Lorenzana said.

Allaying fears that the program will be used for militarization, Sec. Lorenzana said the revitalized ROTC will adopt a Program of Instruction (POI) that will be jointly designed and formulated by DND, the Department of Education (DepED) and the Technical

Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA). In addition to modules on military education, character development, technical skills development and leadership, humanitarian assistance and disaster response (HADR) will also be given emphasis.

“Once implemented, the Anti-Hazing Law (RA 8049) and Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act (RA 3019) will be strictly implemented, in addition to the strict measures of the AFP. Random and unannounced inspections and audits of ROTC units will be conducted and grievance mechanisms and hotlines for complaints will also be institutionalized,” Sec. Lorenzana added.

The DND also proposes incentives for those who will enroll in the program such as civil service eligibility, free hospitalization and insurance during training, enlistment in the uniformed services, and access to AFP commissaries and facilities nationwide. Funding will be sourced from the budgets of DND, DepEd, and TESDA in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Sec. Lorenzana also underscored the need to uphold the 1987 Constitution which provides that the government may call upon the people to defend the State and citizens may be required, under provisions stated by law, to render personal, military or civil service.

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