Republic of the Philippines  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Quezon City  
EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS  
Third Regular Session  

HOUSE RESOLUTION No. 1735  

Introduced by  

RESOLUTION  
DIRECTING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, THROUGH THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND INDUSTRY, TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE ALLEGED PREFERENCE OF IMPORTED OVER LOCALLY-MADE PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT  

WHEREAS, amid the economic crisis aggravated by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, Maria Teresita Jocson Agoncillo, executive director of the Confederation of Wearable Exporters of the Philippines (CONWEP), reported that the local garment industry retrenched about 25,400 of its 120,000 workers from June to December 2020 due to the economic downturn. Some 3,500 of these retrenched workers came from three (3) companies that repurposed their factories for the local production of personal protective equipment (PPE);¹  

WHEREAS, Rosette Carillo, associate director of CONWEP, said that, at the height of last year’s rising covid19 cases, her group was called by the government to help fill up the dire need for medical-grade PPE. In response, a group of five (5) local companies formed the Coalition of Philippine Manufacturers of PPE (CPMP) in July, and invested about $35 million (P1.7 billion) to produce medical-grade PPE;²  

WHEREAS, in press conference August 21, 2020, the CPMP appealed to the government to buy the locally-made medical-grade masks and coveralls. Moreover, CPMP claimed that in a single month, the companies are able to provide 57.6 million pieces of medical grade N95, N88, KN95, and surgical masks, as well as 3 million coveralls and gowns and 1.5 million square meters of medical-grade fabric. The group said the amount produced could easily be doubled or tripled if needed. They added that they are ready to invest $36 million more and hire 4,000 additional workers to increase their production capacity;²  

WHEREAS, however, despite encouraging the local production of PPEs, the national government still preferred the procurement of imported PPE, mostly from China. This importation preference, which not only affected our much-needed dollar reserves, also practically...
elbowed out local manufacturers that the government had asked to repurpose their factories for the anticipated increase demand for PPE during the pandemic;

WHEREAS, Article XII, Section 12 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution states that “the State shall promote the preferential use of Filipino labor, domestic materials and locally produced goods, and adopt measures that help make them competitive;”

WHEREAS, Section 4 (t) of the Republic Act No. 11494 or the Bayanihan to Recover as One Act, which is effective until December 19, 2020, stated that preference and incentives shall be given to medical safety products that are locally manufactured;

WHEREAS, the local industry could not compete with foreign PPE manufacturers, which are now flooding the domestic market with low-cost, albeit some were even reported to be substandard, PPEs from China;

WHEREAS, the Procurement Service of the Department of Budget and Management, which now serves as the national government’s procurement arm for PPE and other commodities for the pandemic, and the DOH that provides the technical specifications of the PPE and needed equipment, should be made accountable for this clearly lopsided policy;

WHEREAS, it is the duty of Congress to pass legislative measures to prioritize and allocate the country’s limited resources to effectively address both the worsening health and economic crises the country now face as a result of COVID-19 pandemic rather than aggravating the situation;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the House of Representatives, through the Committee on Trade and Industry, to conduct an investigation, in aid of legislation, on the impact of the national government’s preference of imported over locally-made personal protective equipment (PPEs) amid the still ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
Adopted,

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