Republic of the Philippines

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION No. 2290

Introduced by
BAYAN MUNA Representatives EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT,
CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE and FERDINAND R. GAITE,
GABRIELA Women’s Party Representative ARLENE D. BROSAS,
ACT TEACHERS Party-List Representative FRANCE L. CASTRO,
and KABATAAN Party-List Representative SARAH JANE I. ELAGO

RESOLUTION
URGING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, THROUGH THE
COMMITTEES ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND HIGHER AND TECHNICAL
EDUCATION, TO CONDUCT A JOINT INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF
LEGISLATION, ON THE DUBIOUS REMOVAL OF BOOKS AND OTHER
READING MATERIALS FROM STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES FOR
SUPPOSED “SUBVERSIVE” CONTENTS

WHEREAS, on September 1, 2021, a group of police and military personnel barged into and
“inspect” the library of the Kalinga State University (KSU), then afterward forced the removal
therein of alleged “subversive” books and materials;

WHEREAS, on September 20, 2021, Ricmar Aquino, president of the Isabela State University
(ISU), also imposed a ban on “communist” books in the ISU library; he then turned over these
“banned books” to the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (NICA) and the army’s
502nd Infantry Brigade;

WHEREAS, on September 24, 2021, the Aklan State University (ASU) also “surrendered” all
“subversive books and materials”, which were mostly donated to the ASU library, to the Aklan
Police Provincial Office (APPO), after the latter demanded the “turnover” of the said “mentally
unhealthy” reading materials;

WHEREAS, many of the said confiscated, surrendered, or banned books from the said three (3)
state universities (SUCs) are a compilation of materials related to the peace negotiations between
the Philippine government and the National Democratic Front (NDFP). The removal of these
books and materials was generally under the instigation of the National Task Force to End Local
Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC);

WHEREAS, among the books confiscated include copies of the following:

- GRP-NDFP Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International
  Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL)
- Declaration of Understanding
- NDFP Declaration and Program of Action for the Rights, Protection, and Welfare of
  Children
WHEREAS, these actions are reminiscent of what Adolf Hitler did in Germany in the 1930s when he ordered the burning of thousands of books to remove materials with an “un-German spirit” from German institutions. Journalists and freedom-loving people all over the world condemned the said attacks on German intellectual freedom. The book-burning even then became the prelude of more persecutions, which eventually resulted to the mass murder of millions of European Jews and dissidents by the German Nazi regime between 1933 and 1945. As the poet Heinrich Heine predicted a century earlier than Hitler’s regime said, “Where one burns books, one will soon burn people”;

WHEREAS, figuratively, these book confiscation and removal by the government security forces and the said SUCs can also be considered as “book burning”, as the same have the same purposes of the Hitlerian action: of outright censorship and attacking one’s freedom of thought, in pursuit of an oppressive scheme, like the Duterte government’s counter-insurgency program. The removal of these books and materials from the libraries of the SUCs is a clear violation of the people’s right to academic freedom and the government’s attempt to suppress critical thinking amidst the reign of tyranny in our country today. The National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) has absolutely no right to intrude, infringe or dictate upon the country’s state universities and libraries.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the House of Representatives Committees on Human Rights and Higher and Technical Education conduct a joint investigation, in aid of legislation, on the dubious removal of books and materials from the libraries of the state universities of the Philippines for alleged “subversive contents”.
Adopted,

REP. EUPHEMIA C. CULLAMAT
Bayan Muna Partylist

REP. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE
Bayan Muna Partylist

REP. ARLENE D. BROSAS
GABRIELA Women’s Party

REP. SARAH JANE I. ELAGO
Kabataan Partylist

REP. FERDINAND R. GAITE
Bayan Muna Partylist

REP. FRANCE L. CASTRO
ACT Teachers Partylist