Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Eighteenth Congress
Third Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 2335

Introduced by Representative Lorenz R. Defensor

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, at the age of 57, the preeminent social reformer, human rights defender and peace advocate, Honorable Jose Luis Martin C. Gascon, passed away on October 9, 2021;

WHEREAS, “Chito,” as Honorable Jose Luis Martin Gascon was fondly called by his family, friends and colleagues, was born in Iloilo City on May 26, 1964, to parents Ramon Rojas Gascon and Cecilia Cosgayon Gascon;

WHEREAS, Honorable Chito Gascon was survived by his wife Melissa P. Mercado and daughter, Ciara Sophia;

WHEREAS, he completed his primary and secondary education at the Don Bosco Makati; graduated from the University of the Philippines with degrees in Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy in 1988 and Bachelor of Laws 1996; and earned his Master of Law degree in International Law from St. Edmund’s College, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom 1997;
WHEREAS, an active student leader, Honorable Gascon was appointed as Representative of the Youth Sector during the Eighth Congress and served from September 3, 1990 until June 1992;

WHEREAS, among other measures that he filed as a Member of the House of Representatives, Honorable Chito Gascon principally authored the institutionalization of the Sangguniang Kabataan under Republic Act (RA) No. 7160, otherwise known as the “Local Government Code of 1991,” to ensure the meaningful participation of the youth in local governance and nation-building;

WHEREAS, Honorable Chito Gascon likewise co-authored RA 7610, otherwise known as the “Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act,” to provide special protection to children from all forms of abuse, neglect, cruelty exploitation and discrimination and other conditions, prejudicial their development;

WHEREAS, after his brief stint at the legislature, Honorable Chito Gascon served as panel member for peace negotiations with the National Democratic Front in 2001; undersecretary for Legal, Legislative and Special Concerns at the Department of Education in 2002; chairperson of the Government's Human Rights Monitoring Committee within the framework of the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law in 2010; board member of the Bases Conversion Development Authority in 2010; undersecretary for Political Affairs, Office of the President in 2011; government delegation member to the United Nations Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review in 2012; and member of the Human Rights Victims’ Claims Board in 2014;

WHEREAS, with his knowledge and expertise in human rights and conflict resolutions, Honorable Chito Gascon was appointed as chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights in 2015 where he served with genuine compassion, utmost integrity and excellence in defending the rights of every Filipino;

WHEREAS, a principled and competent leader of Commission on Human Rights, Honorable Chito Gascon exemplified courage, integrity, excellence and compassion in investigating human rights abuses and raising public awareness on various human rights issues, including the plight of prisoners and detainees in jails and detention centers, violation of children’s rights, and gender-based violence;

WHEREAS, as a democracy activist and human rights advocate, Honorable Chito Gascon was the first Filipino recipient of Democracy and
Development Fellowship at Stanford University and the prestigious Reagan–Fascell Democracy Fellowship at the International Forum for Democratic Studies of the National Endowment for Democracy;

WHEREAS, Honorable Gascon held the distinction of being the youngest Member of the 1986 Constitutional Commission;

WHEREAS, to his friends and colleagues, Honorable Chito Gascon is a great civil society leader and an exceptional public servant who was eloquent, fearless, unwavering and exuded sincerity, humility and contagious kindness;

WHEREAS, with the untimely passing of Honorable Jose Luis Martin C. Gascon, the country lost a human rights icon and staunch defender of democracy and the rule of law but his legacy will be forever remembered by his family, friends, colleagues and fellow freedom-loving Filipinos whose lives he touched and inspired by his advocacies: Now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, To express its deepest sympathies to the family of Honorable Jose Luis Martin C. Gascon, chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights, former Representative of the Youth Sector during the Eighth Congress, and member of the 1986 Constitutional Commission.

RESOLVED, FURTHER, That a copy of this Resolution be furnished the bereaved family.

Adopted,

LORENZ R. DEFENSOR