

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



HOUSE RESOLUTION No. 498

Introduced by
ACT Teachers Party-List Rep. FRANCE L. CASTRO,
GABRIELA Women's Party Rep. ARLENE D. BROSAS,
and **KABATAAN Party-List Rep. RAOUL DANNIEL A. MANUEL**

RESOLUTION
CONDEMNING THE HISTORICAL DISTORTION AND WHITEWASHING
OF THE MARTIAL LAW ERA AND DISINFORMATION VIA THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND ITS SCHOOL MODULES AND
URGING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND HOUSE
COMMITTEE BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE TO CONDUCT AN
INVESTIGATION IN AID OF LEGISLATION INTO THE SAME

WHEREAS, there are reports of “whitewashing” or “rebranding” of Martial Law era during the late dictator Pres. Ferdinand Marcos as “Period of New Society” or “Bagong Lipunan” on school modules;

WHEREAS, while on October 13, 2022, the Department of Education (DepEd) denied the claims that it plans to rebrand the teaching of Martial Law as “Bagong Lipunan” in the basic education curriculum, the actual modules being used were revised towards such rebranding;

WHEREAS, one example is a learning module for 21st Century Literature subject, entitled “Geographic, Linguistic and Ethnic Dimensions of Philippine Literary History from Pre-Colonial to the Contemporary” for Senior High School. Aside from the typographical errors long noted by citizens and critics on learning materials of DepEd, the module denigrates progressive social movements and critical voices (1986-1999: “the so-called People Power,” “The now crony newspapers that enjoyed an overnight increase in circulation were THE INQUIRER, MALAYA, and the PEOPLE’S JOURNAL”); youth activism and demand for change in government in 1970-1972

“manifested in the bloody demonstrations”). Several citizens report that this module has been used at least in Marinduque, Iloilo, and Quezon City since last year;¹

WHEREAS, the whitewashing begins from the production of the materials, as teachers who were made to draft them report a certain amount of pressure to make the revisions. A module writer who cited the 1986 EDSA Revolution as an example of freedom of expression was asked to “use a different article” or give another example. Says a teacher, “There are proofreaders who will say, ‘wait, apply the brakes here, or let’s weaken this or soften the blow’. x x x Even though they won’t directly tell us to change or rebrand the term of martial law as New Society or Bagong Lipunan, there is x x x avoidance of the issue”;²

WHEREAS, other reports claim that a DepEd “consultation” on the revision of the K to 12 curriculum is in the works, with a social media user alleging that a professor from the University of the Philippines “was invited by the DepEd to discuss changes that will happen in the new curriculum.” One of the plans, per these reports, are the replacement of all references to martial law and the period of the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos to “Bagong Lipunan” or “New Society” and the erasure of any recognition of the excesses, abuses, and fascism suffered by the people under the hands of Marcos, his family, cronies, and the military;

WHEREAS, it is the mandate of the DepEd to formulate, implement, and coordinate policies, plans, programs and projects in the areas of formal and non-formal basic education. It supervises all elementary and secondary education institutions, including alternative learning systems, both public and private; and provides for the establishment and maintenance of a complete, adequate, and integrated system of basic education relevant to the goals of national development. As such, it is the eventual authority on what materials are to be used in teaching of all subjects;

WHEREAS, while Pres. Ferdinand Marcos, Jr., son and namesake of the dictator, has claimed that “there’s no reason to revise history,” the Marcos family also repeats that they will only “share [their] side of the story.”³ The Marcos 2022 campaign machinery even rebranded the bloody martial law era not just as the “Bagong Lipunan” but also the “Golden Era”—both terms were foisted by the Marcoses since the dictator’s term. Most notable is the Marcos family’s refusal to apologize for any of the abuses under Martial Law. The historical distortion and disinformation via the DepEd and its learning materials therefore appears to be consistent with the acts and statements of President Marcos and his family;

¹ Hernando-Malipot, Merlina. “LOOK: A learning module calls the Martial Law period as New Society, teachers react.” *Manila Bulletin*, 20 October 2022, <https://mb.com.ph/2022/10/20/look-a-learning-module-calls-the-martial-law-period-as-new-society-teachers-react/>

² Bautista, Jane. “Teachers question DepEd module for ‘sugarcoating’ martial law.” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 22 October 2022, https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1683485/teachers-question-deped-module-for-sugarcoating-martial-law?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Twitter#Echobox=1666394880-1

³ Domingo, Katrina. “‘No reason to revise history,’ Marcos Jr. says.” *ABS-CBN News*, 14 September 2022, <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/09/14/22/no-reason-to-revise-history-marcos-jr-says>

WHEREAS, contrary to the claims that the Martial Law era is the “Golden Age” of the Philippines, official data and documents attesting to the “conjugal dictatorship,” crony capitalism, kleptocracy, graft, corruption, extrajudicial killings, suppression of the media and critics, and many others, show otherwise. Even the economic successes claimed by the Marcoses have been proven to be false;

WHEREAS, this is also the legal truth, as evident in several landmark decisions of the Supreme Court including *Lawyers League of the Philippines and/or Oliver Lozano v. President Corazon Aquino* (G.R. No. 73748, May 22, 1986) and companion cases, which upheld the legitimacy of the Aquino-Laurel government—and consequently, the illegitimacy of that of Marcos—and *Presidential Commission on Good Government v. Peña* (GR No. L-77663, April 12, 1988) and companion cases, which detail how the Marcos family and cronies became a “well-entrenched plundering regime of twenty years”;

WHEREAS, the historical distortion and disinformation via learning modules are blatant violations of Republic Act 10368 or the *Human Rights Victims Reparation and Recognition Act of 2013*, by which the State recognizes the heroism and sacrifices of all Filipinos who were victims of summary execution, torture, enforced or involuntary disappearances and other gross human rights violations committed during the regime of the late dictator Marcos, from September 21, 1972 to February 25, 1986. The law also made the restoration of the victims’ honor and dignity a State policy. Furthermore, it acknowledges its moral and legal obligation to recognize and/or provide reparation to said victims and/or their families for the deaths, injuries, sufferings, deprivations and damages they suffered under the Marcos regime;

WHEREAS, there were thousands of victims were summarily executed, tortured and suffered other forms human rights violations under the dictatorship of Pres. Ferdinand Marcos. As a matter of fact, there are at least 11,103 victims who received reparation and are recognized by the Human Rights Violations Victims’ Memorial Commission. Many more of the victims have not filed their claims due to overwhelming legal procedures and requirements. Some claims are also “unjustly” disqualified or denied on the basis of technicality;

WHEREAS, amid the martial rule in 1972-1986, the Filipino people experienced one of the worst economic downturns in Philippine history. The country’s economy plunged into recession in 1984 and 1985 wherein the gross domestic product shrank by 7.3%. It took 21 years, dubbed as the “lost decades of development” to recover the pernicious impacts of the Marcos regime on the economic lives of the people.⁴

⁴ “Was martial law good for the Philippine economy?” *Human Rights Violations Victims’ Memorial Commission*, 14 July, 2021, <https://hrvmmemcom.gov.ph/was-martial-law-good-for-the-philippine-economy-2/>

Moreover, unemployment rate reached as high as 12.6% in 1985. Meanwhile, inflation rate (1984) and poverty incidence rate (1985) reached 49.5%⁵ and 59%,⁶ respectively;

WHEREAS, as duly elected representatives of the people, it is our duty to protect the honor and dignity of the Filipino people who sacrificed their lives to restore the democratic rule in the country. It does not only violate the intent of the RA 10368 to recognize the victims and suffering of the people during the martial law and dictatorship of Pres. Ferdinand Marcos—the darkest era of the country—whitewashing, rebranding, revisioning, and/or distorting historical facts bring more injustice to the Filipino people who suffered under the Marcos regime;

WHEREAS, Congress must also ensure that the entire machinery of the State, most especially the education system of which the DepEd is at the helm, must never be used to produce new generations of Marcos legatees and apologists, or those who would be blindfolded to the excesses of public officials and abuses of corrupt and fascist regimes, both past and present. Education must shine a light on—not whitewash—the darkness and horror cast on the people when power is concentrated on a person, his family, and cabal of economic elite. Rather, education must be the tool that will bring about critical thinkers and nationalists who have the brains to think and the hearts to feel for the masses;

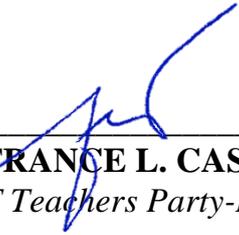
NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives condemn the historical distortion and whitewashing of Martial Law era via the Department of Education and its school modules.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the House Committee on Human Rights and House Committee on Education conduct an investigation in aid of legislation into the same.

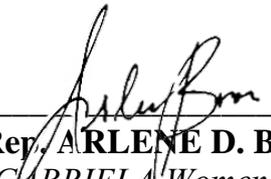
⁵ “Year-on-Year Changes of the Consumer Price Index in Percent for All Items (2018=100): January 1958 - December 1994 (Backcasted Values).” *Philippine Statistics Authority*, 12 April 2022, https://openstat.psa.gov.ph/PXWeb/pxweb/en/DB/DB_2M_PI_CPI_2018/0012M4ACP14.px/table/tableViewLayout1/?rxid=a0f38a1c-757a-41a3-a596-8b0e288db8d5

⁶ “The Final Report of the Fact-Finding Commission (Pursuant to R.A. No. 6832).” *Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines*, Bookmark, Inc., 3 Oct. 1990, p. 80, <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/1990/10/03/the-final-report-of-the-fact-finding-commission-october-1990/>

Adopted,



Rep. FRANCE L. CASTRO
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GABRIELA Women's Party



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