

ARTISTS ON CHACHA

We, the undersigned, wish to convey to this Committee and the Honourable Senators present here today of our concerns as Artists with regards to the proposed amendments which currently has three (3) versions: RBH8, PDP-Laban and CRNo.9 but which barely differ at all in intent.

Much as we want to state our concerns over the political and economic amendments such as the President having oversight powers over all branches of government; of changing government structure to federalism in the absence of an Anti-Dynasty Law; on the inserted clause “unless otherwise provided by law” on the 60% Filipino capital but entirely deleted in the PDP-Laban version and other economic sections deleted tantamount to allowing 100% foreign ownership of any business venture such as public transport, fisheries and even of mass media which are at present exclusive to Filipinos, we choose not to do so for now.

But whatever is the final outcome of our CONSTITUTION, first and foremost, citizens must be guaranteed their BILL OF RIGHTS. As artists, this is our primary concern. However, in two versions, even that is no longer guaranteed with the insertion of the term RESPONSIBLE.

*Article III Bill of Rights Sec. 4 No law shall be passed abridging the **responsible** exercise of the freedom of speech, of expression, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and petition the Government for redress of grievances.*

Dear Senators That is our right as citizens. Why should government define how we exercise our right? Of what is and what is not responsible?

As artists we exercise varied and creative ways of expression especially when we support advocacies we feel strongly about. Criticisms are often not liked by government but OUR government must be able to deepen its tolerance towards us and the rest of its 100M citizens because that is what this Bill of Rights is all about. The right to FREE EXPRESSION.

Thus, we want it known to this committee that we are against the insertion of the term RESPONSIBLE; and that we assert that the original text be preserved.

Second, we are greatly disturbed by the many deletions of words with such deep meaning and relevance to us, as Filipinos, still emerging from a dictatorship and with vestiges of our colonial past, specifically in the PDP-Laban version. Independence, Truth, Freedom, Love-- in the Preamble. Entire sections with mention of Nationalism and Patriotism DELETED:

Article II Sec. 17 The State shall give priority to education, science and technology, arts, culture, and sports to foster patriotism and nationalism, accelerate social progress, and promote total human liberation and development.

Article XIV Education Sec. 3 (2) They shall inculcate patriotism and nationalism, foster love of humanity, respect for human rights, appreciation of the role of national heroes in the historical development of the country, teach the rights and duties of citizenship, strengthen ethical and spiritual values, develop moral character and personal discipline, encourage critical and creative thinking, broaden scientific and technological knowledge, and promote vocational efficiency.

Article XVIII General Provisions Sec. 5 (2) The State shall strengthen the patriotic spirit and nationalist consciousness of the military, and respect for people's rights in the performance of their duty.

What kind of youth - future leaders (president, senators, legislators), judges, economists, scientists, agriculturists, teachers, artists do you want to mold? What kind of soldiers do you want them to become? *Di bale nang hindi makabayan basta responsable?* Isn't it that our first and foremost responsibility is to love our motherland, by being patriotic and nationalistic?

Therefore, we want to let this Committee know that we are against the deletion of all the above-mentioned provisions; and that all these should remain in its original text.

Therefore on the question – Is there a need to amend or revise the Constitution? Our answer is a resounding NO. Why? Because the very spirit of the 1987 Constitution was the result of asserting our basic rights against the dictatorship. But we would also like to answer question 3: Should the amendments or revision be proposed by a Constitutional Convention or by Congress itself acting as a constituent assembly? Of course it should be by a Constitutional Convention because this is the most democratic and most participative way of crafting our new Constitution, our future, the future of our children, of our cherished motherland. This was how we crafted the 1987 Constitution, thru a Constitutional Convention wherein artists chose freedom fighter Director Lino Brocka, a National Artist, as our representative. It was Lino Brocka who had the word EXPRESSION included in our Bill of Rights which expanded the meaning of this provision. A word so encompassing it benefits all of you, all of us, here today and the rest of the Filipino people, lest we forget.

It is our hope and prayer that this Committee and the good Senators take heed of our position on this urgent national matter.

Thank you.

SIGNED 15 March 2018:

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