



Statement on Charter Change

Completely Implement the Constitution Not Charter Change

The Sangguniang Laiko ng Pilipinas perceives the current proposal for Charter Change as a threat to our democratic system and our aspirations as a free and progressive nation. The present Constitution has been said to be the best in the world with its provisions for social justice, human rights, local autonomy, and it being pro-God, pro-people, pro-environment, among others. Therefore, we have always been vigilant that any Charter Change should not compromise our sovereignty and our national patrimony.

In the past, attempts to change the Constitution have been rejected by popular sentiment because it was very obvious, that the object of the exercise is to extend the terms of those occupying the highest position in government.

Today, the manner by which Charter Change is presented to the Filipino people by the Administration, especially the House of Representatives is with undue haste and without much consultation and dialogue. It does not seem to answer the important questions of:

- 1. Is there a real need to change the present constitution to achieve the objectives as outlined by its proponents?*
- 2. Is the Constituent Assembly with both Houses of Congress the best way to have Charter Change, instead of a Constitutional Convention wherein elected by our people which is more representative and non-partisan?*

We are disturbed that this exercise is being viewed by many as something that we cannot freely argue about anymore, because doing so will put the lives and well-being of those resisting this initiative, at risk.

As lay Catholics, we are disturbed by the aggressive stance of this administration to change a constitution that has not been thoroughly understood and studied by 73% of the population, according to a Pulse Asia survey.

We are disturbed that instead of implementing the excellent provisions of the current Constitution, majority of our legislators appear to be in a hurry to supercede these, with an agenda that will disregard the hard-earned gains of the Filipino, such as social justice, human rights and democracy.

We are therefore calling on all people of goodwill, all our brothers and sisters in Christ, to relentlessly search for the truth. It is our duty to let the people know what is happening, help them form their conscience, seek the truth and do what is right.

We enjoin our government leaders, educators and civic society to take the lead in providing the much needed voters' education first, so that the results of any plebiscite for this would truly reflect the sentiments of an informed and responsible citizenry.

On our end, LAIKO recognizes its responsibility to initiate education on the current Constitution and to expose the dangers of a hasty decision to change it.

For the Sangguniang Laiko ng Pilipinas Board of Directors,

MA. JULIETA F. WASAN
President

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