

7 March 2007

The Commission on Elections  
Intramuros, Manila

Dear Honorable Commissioners:

I am writing to your good office with regard to Resolution No 7832 of the Commission on Elections dated March 4, 2007 that declared me as a nuisance candidate for the senatorial elections of May 14, 2007.

With all due respect to the Commissioners of the Commission on Elections, I would like to move for the approval of my candidacy for Senator of the Republic of the Philippines because of the reasons stated below:

### **I. Excellent Educational Qualification**

I sent myself to the best universities in the Philippines and abroad on competitive scholarships. I took an A.B. in Interdisciplinary Studies degree at the Ateneo de Manila University on an Association of Southeast Asian Nations Scholarship. I won this scholarship after I was awarded the First Prize in a national essay writing contest on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. I became the Features Editor of *The Guidon*, the college newspaper, and the Editor-in-Chief of *Heights*, the literary journal.

After my studies, I worked for three years as an Editor at the Secretariat of the Batasang Pambansa, or the National Assembly. I edited the transcripts of the plenary sessions and helped produce *The Record* of the Batasan.

I also took my first graduate degree at the Ateneo de Manila University – a Master of Arts in Literature, which I finished on a Robert Southwell Scholarship granted by the Department of English. After this, the Department of English hired me as an Instructor. After my first degree, I received a prestigious British Council Scholarship, which allowed me to take my Masters of Philosophy in Publishing Studies at the University of Stirling in Scotland, the United Kingdom.

After my studies in the U.K., I received offers of Ph.D. scholarships in the United States, but I chose to return to the Philippines to continue teaching at the Ateneo de Manila University. It was just after the December 1989 coup d'etat, and I wanted to return to help rebuild the country. Later, I also received an Ateneo de Manila University Faculty Development grant to take my Ph.D. in English Studies at the University of the Philippines. I took additional graduate-school units at the Department of English of Rutgers University on a highly-vetted Fulbright Scholarship.

Upon my return, I focused on studying the literature of Southeast Asia – our own region – and received two successive research scholarships: the first at the National University of Malaysia, and the second at the National University of Singapore. The research scholarships were awarded by the Asian Scholarship Foundation on a grant from Ford Foundation.

## **II. Productive Work History**

I have been teaching at the Department of English of the Ateneo de Manila University since November of 1986. I am now an Associate Professor teaching Freshman English, World Literature, and Creative Writing.

Aside from being a teacher, I am also a journalist. I have served as an Editor at the Saturday Special section of the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, and as a Senior Editor of the *Sunday Times Magazine* of the *Manila Times*.

I have also published eight books, aside from editing four others. All these books were critical and commercial successes. My literary career has seen me winning prizes from writing contests sponsored by the Cultural Center of the Philippines, National Commission on Culture and the Arts, Palanca Awards, and the *Philippines Free Press*. I wrote two scripts in the year 2001, which won first prizes in the Cultural Center of the Philippines. *The Last Parian* is a film documentary on the 600 years of the Filipino Chinese in the Philippines. *House of the Crescent Moon* is a video documentary on the struggles of the Muslim Filipinos in the South.

I also served as a script consultant and editor of *Jose Rizal*, a film directed by Marilou Diaz-Abaya, which was shown to rave reviews at the Berlin International Film Festival and has won more than 70 awards here and abroad. Moreover, I have won four prizes from writing contests held abroad: one poetry prize from the Procyon Poetry Contest (United States of America, 1993), and three prizes (one short story and two poetry, 1990 and 1991) from the Stirling Arts Council Creative Writing Competition in the United Kingdom.

## **III. Civil Society Involvement**

Aside from my excellent educational qualifications and my productive work history, I am proud to report that I have also been involved in voluntary work for civil society. I have done all of this volunteer work for free. This is unpaid labor that has, nonetheless, enriched me in no small measure. In 1987, I served as the Rapporteur of the Information Committee of the International Conference on Conflict Resolution held at the Ateneo de Manila University. From 1988 to 1996, I also served as a Teaching Volunteer at the Ateneo Center for English Language Teaching. We went to the public schools all over the Philippines and gave free seminar-workshops on English language and literature teaching. From 1988 to the present, I am also a member of the Manila Critics Circle,

which chooses the winners of the National Book Awards every year. In 1989, I also signed up for the Publishers' Group that lobbied for the passage of the National Book Development Act, which mandated the creation of public libraries in all municipalities of the country.

In 1996, I began my work as the Information Chief of Task Force Pride, which holds the annual Pride March of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Filipinos. I have continued this work to this day. When I lived in Singapore in 2004, I also served as a Teaching Volunteer at the Bayanihan Center for Migrant Filipinos, where I taught English to the Filipino domestic helpers in that island-state. In 2003, I became the Chairman of Ang Ladlad, the national organization of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Filipinos, which is committed to the passage of the Anti-Discrimination Bill in Congress, which criminalized acts of discrimination against lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders.

My various involvements in these diverse fields – as a Teaching Volunteer here and in migrant communities abroad, and as an advocate of equal rights for all – have given me a breadth of experience and a sense of national rootedness to see the problems that beset the country up close and personal. In the last 23 years of my professional life, I have honed a sense of country that will be my lodestar and guiding light in my future work as a Senator.

#### **IV. Platform as a Senatorial Candidate**

Following the adage that we should focus on our strengths, my platform as a senatorial candidate will be twofold – a strong public-school system and equal rights for all.

##### **A. Strong Public-School System**

1. Build cheap but sturdy schoolrooms that cost P250,000 maximum;
2. Narrow down the textbook – student ratio from ten to 1 to 1 to 1;
3. Provide a computer with Internet access to every school room in the country;
4. Provide training to update the pedagogical skills of the teachers;
5. Provide scholarships to at least one college student in every Filipino family following the Study Now, Pay Later scheme.

##### **B. Equal Rights for All**

1. Support the passage of the Anti-Discrimination Bill against lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders. This bill criminalizes all acts of discrimination against the LGBTs. It does not include a provision on same-sex marriage and reproductive rights;

2. Repeal the anti-vagrancy law that some authorities use to extort from the people walking at night without I.D. cards;
3. Serve as an oversight committee to make sure that laws protecting the rights of children are implemented;
4. Serve as an oversight committee to make sure that laws protecting the rights of the elderly are implemented; and
5. Serve as an oversight committee to make sure that laws protecting the rights of the physically and mentally disabled are implemented.

My excellent academic preparation, my productive work history, and my civil society involvement have prepared me for the two planks of my platform. Philippine public schools used to be the bulwark of excellence; now they are notable mostly for the mediocre students that they produce. Equal rights for LGBTs, as well as for the weakest links in Philippine society – the children, the elderly, and the physically and mentally disabled – should be accorded to everybody in our society. In this light, the equal-rights provision in our Bill of Rights become alive, and not just remain as dead words on the page.

## **V. Ability to Wage a National Campaign**

I am the Chairman of Ang Ladlad, the national organization of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Filipinos. We are financially capable of launching and sustaining a campaign for the senatorial elections of 2007. To date, the organization has approximately one (1) million and five hundred sixty-four, three hundred and eighty thousand pesos (PhP 1,564,380.00) broken down into the following:

1. PhP 564,380 cash (Bank of the Philippine Islands print-out of bank statement, Annex "A");
2. PhP 500,000 worth of paintings, sculptures, Baccarat crystal, and coffee-table books inventory for auction sale (pictures of the items herein attached as Annex "B");
3. PhP 500,000 in pledges by members and supporters in the form of goods and products – tarpaulins, buttons, streamers, T-shirts, banners, food and drinks for the campaign.

Therefore, all these premises considered, it is respectfully prayed that my candidacy for the position of Senator of the Republic be granted. I believe that the honorable Commissioners of this Commission will give due space to committed, well-educated, and talented Filipinos who want to serve the Republic. I was educated in the best universities in the Philippines and abroad, and have even worked abroad as a Lecturer of English and Literature. But instead of living abroad, I chose to return home and devote the talents that God has given me for the betterment of our beautiful and blessed land.

Please accept my admiration and respect, I remain

Sincerely yours,

Danton R. Remoto

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