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Senator Angara: An executive order can take the place of FOI law

ROUCHELLE R. DINGLASAN, GMA News February 2, 2013 5:04pm

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Since the Freedom of Information bill has a "very slim" chance of being passed in Congress, Senator Edgardo Angara on Saturday said President Benigno Aquino III could issue an executive order as an alternative.

"[The chances of FOI to be passed is] very slim. There's only five working days left before adjournment. As you know, the Senate always passes that but [it is] harder to pass in the other House," Angara said on Saturday.

"We don't have a need for a [freedom of information] law... of course, a law is a legal framework when we encounter some obstacles, but an executive order [may be okay]," Angara told reporters at the press conference of the recently concluded meeting of the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC).

Angara was [elected as the first Asian chairman of the GOPAC](#) at the meeting held in Pasay City in southern Metro Manila.

The FOI bill seeks to promote transparency in government transactions, by making public documents and contracts accessible to the public.

In the 14th Congress, the FOI bill was stalled after the House failed to vote on the bicameral conference committee report due to lack of quorum.

Last Thursday, the [measure finally moved to the plenary session at the House](#) after the Senate unanimously passed its counter-part bill last December.

Review anti-corruption laws

Meanwhile, Angara reiterated that the country should audit its anti-corruption measures as required by the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), which the Philippine Senate ratified in 2006.

The call was likewise highlighted in GOPAC's "Manila Declaration."

"Commit to an annual local review of the UNCAC and ensure the results thereof are recognized and shared with the citizenry in an open and transparent manner," the Manila Declaration said.

Meanwhile, Angara said: "[An] effective campaign [against corruption] can begin with the simplest: an audit of outdated laws, rules and regulations and their repeal. Such a regulatory audit will uproot a rampant source of corruption."

Earlier in the conference, Huguette Labelle, chairperson of Transparency International, noted that anti-corruption oversight should be intensified in the areas of political campaign finances, infrastructure, natural resources, and defense.

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Angara agreed with Labelle and said: "We must single out political campaign contributions that hold some of us hostage to vested interests, compromising our efforts at good policy-making and structural reform."

Society's fight against corruption

For GOPAC chief executive officer and founder John Williams, corruption can be addressed by planting fear in erring individuals or officials.

"There are two things necessary to stop corruption: one, people who are corrupt need to think that they likely can be caught... and, two, when they are caught, they will not like the prize," Williams said at Saturday's press conference.

"That has to be conveyed to people in business who give bribes, to the people in government or parliament who accept bribes, that we are going to stop [you]. We're gonna find you and we will prosecute you... that is the message that we must convey," he said.

Also the Manila Declaration urges governments to "Seek widespread adoption of legal instruments that obligates states to cooperate against corruption and enable the international community to prosecute perpetrators."

Meanwhile, Angara also stressed the responsibility of the private sector. "Corruption has grown in scale and sophistication. This is true in private business as well... the principles of good governance should equally apply to the private sector."

Likewise, the GOPAC declaration urges governments to "Encourage broader participation from all segments of society in the fight against corruption." — **LBG, GMA News**

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doctorjulius • 9 days ago

That's true Senator Angara. Hindi lang sa politics laganap ang corruption but pati sa mga private business din. Sana makagawa ng way ang govt para ma stop yung corruption sa govt and sa private sectors din.

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PabloEsscobar → doctorjulius • 9 days ago

korek! di lang kasi sila exposed but sna nga magkaron din sila system para mahuli yung mga nandadaya sa private business

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Rose • 9 days ago

Medyo mabigat nga naman ang bill na to. Pwede nga siguro if we take it one step at a time. Start muna tau sa regulatory Audit sabi nga ni Senator Ed..

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Dawn • 9 days ago

"We don't have a need for a [freedom of information] law" like we don't have a need for the senate.

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morejustice009 • 8 days ago

CORRUPTION MUST BE STOP, PASS THE FOI BILL., PROSECUTE THE CORRUPTORS. Wala kasing pakialam tong mga nasa pwesto., Dapat wag ng iboto ulit tong mga kontra sa FOI bill., alam kasi nila na mabubuko na ang mga ilegal at demonyong activities nila., ang magnakaw ng milyon or bilyon., saan patutungo ang kaunlaran para sa pilipinas at sa mga pilipino., Nagbabayad ng tamang buwis ang karaniwang mamamayan., tapos anong nangyayari, instead na mapunta sa kabutihan, at magamit sa tamang paraan., napupunta lang sa mga bank accounts nila., MAG-ISIP NA TAYONG LAHAT, SUGPUIN ANG CORRUPTION SA PINAS.

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free view • 9 days ago

ASA ka pa Sen Angara, can't you see Pnoy does not want that FOI bill before elections. So why expect he would make an EO

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Ricky070 • 9 days ago

All talk but no quick action. Just pass the damn bill, damn it!
Where is the Catholic Church when you need them?
Anyone out there please identify those people in congress who are against any sort of anti-corruption laws like FOI Bill and have their names published to be targeted in a shame campaign by the public

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noonyan • 9 days ago

Passing the FOI from lower house to the senate is like GINIGISA SILA SA SARILI

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