

# Philippine Business Groups and Joint Foreign Chambers of the Philippines

American Chamber of Commerce of the Phils., Inc. ♦ Australian-New Zealand Chamber of Commerce (Phils.), Inc.  
 Canadian Chamber of Commerce of the Phils., Inc. ♦ Information Technology and Business Process Association of the  
 Philippines ♦ Employers' Confederation of the Philippines ♦ European Chamber of Commerce of the Phils., Inc. ♦ Japanese  
 Chamber of Commerce & Industry of the Phils., Inc. ♦ Korean Chamber of Commerce of the Phils., Inc. ♦ Makati Business  
 Club ♦ Management Association of the Philippines ♦ Philippine Association of Multinational Companies Regional  
 Headquarters, Inc. ♦ Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry ♦ Philippine Exporters Confederation, Inc.  
 ♦ Semiconductor and Electronics Industries in the Philippines Foundation, Inc.



**AMCHAM  
PHILIPPINES**

AMERICAN

May 24, 2017

**Sen. Francis Escudero**

Chairman

Committee on Education, Arts and Culture

Philippine Senate

Pasay City

Dear Senator Escudero:

This pertains to the public hearing called by the Committee on Education, Arts and Culture on Senate Bill 1430 (by Sen. Vicente Sotto) and House Bill 5241 (Rep. Rodolfo Fariñas, et. al), Declaring December 8 of every year a special non-working holiday in the entire country to commemorate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary.

We write to convey the concerns of the undersigned Philippine Business Groups and Joint Foreign Chambers on the negative repercussions of declaring an additional non-working holiday.

The number of paid holidays imposed by government on the private sector cost of doing business and discouraged investment and job creation for highly cost-sensitive manufacturers, which regrettably prefer to locate in Vietnam and elsewhere in the region. A good example is Nike, whose footwear and clothing manufacturers employ 320,000 workers in Vietnam but few in the Philippines.

As we have put forward before, the Philippines has one of the highest number of non-working holidays in the region, with 20 declared holidays.

Following is a comparison of the number of 2016 holidays in the Philippines and a few select countries.

COUNTRY	Number of Holidays	Rank
UNITED STATES	9	1
SINGAPORE	12	2
VIETNAM	14	3
KOREA	15	4



AUSTRALIAN-NEW ZEALAND



CANADIAN



ECOP



EUROPEAN



JAPANESE



KOREAN

COUNTRY	Number of Holidays	Rank
MALAYSIA	15	4
INDONESIA	16	6
TAIWAN	17	7
JAPAN	17	7
THAILAND	18	9
PHILIPPINES	22	10
CHINA	24	11
CAMBODIA	27	12

Source: FedEx International Holiday Schedule  
 <<http://www.fedex.com/holiday/schedule/?noRedirect=true>>

We are very concerned that enactment of the Senate and House bills for the proposed additional non-working holiday under your committee’s consideration will create increased and completely unnecessary costs to doing business and will discourage foreign investment and job creation.

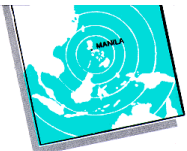
In the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Congresses, the JFC supported a House Bill filed by your late father, Rep. Salvador Escudero, rationalizing the number of non-working holidays. This was a bold measure to improve national competitiveness. It proposed that certain national holidays are commemorated through appropriate programs in schools and government offices and the celebration of local holidays as working holidays.

While said bill has remained pending in committee, the previous Congresses have started the policy of commemorating holidays but declaring them as special working holidays (i.e. RA 10556 – Araw ng Pagbasa; RA 10669 – Jesse Robredo Day; RA 10743 – National Teachers Day, etc.) in recognition of the adverse implications of an additional non-working holiday on business. The current Congress is continuing this policy with respect to some bills (i.e. HB 477 – First Philippine Republic Day) but not observing the same policy to commemorate the Feast of Immaculate Conception as a special working holiday.

Thus, we strongly urge that the Committee not approve SB 1430 in its present form and amend it to be a working holiday, as was the policy followed by previous Congresses.

Thank you very much for considering our views.

Regards,



PAMURI



**BRUCE WINTON**  
President

American Chamber of Commerce  
of the Philippines Inc.

**TOM GREALY**  
President

Australian-New Zealand Chamber  
of Commerce of the Philippines Inc.



**JULIAN PAYNE**  
President  
Canadian Chamber of  
Commerce of the Philippines



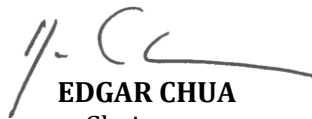
**AMB. DONALD DEE**  
President  
Employers' Confederation  
of the Philippines



**GUENTER TAUS**  
President  
European Chamber of  
Commerce of the Philippines



**IKE AMIGO**  
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Confederation, Inc.



**DR. DANILO LACHICA**  
President  
Semiconductor and  
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in the Philippines Foundation, Inc.

cc: **Senate President Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel**  
**Senator Vicente Sotto III**  
**Rep. Rodolfo Fariñas**  
**PLLO Secretary Adelino Sitoy**