

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Resolution No. 505



Introduced by **HON. ELPIDIO F. BARZAGA, JR.**

RESOLUTION
DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH AND SPORTS
DEVELOPMENT OR THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE
THE NECESSARY SUPPORT TO OUR NATIONAL ATHLETES AND A
REVIEW OF THE EXISTING LAWS RELEVANT THERETO.

WHEREAS, Republic Act No. 6847 otherwise known as , "An Act Creating and Establishing the Philippine Sports Commission Defining its Powers, Functions and Responsibilities, Appropriating Funds Therefor, and for Other Purposes" states to wit, that:

"It is the policy of the State to promote physical education, encourage and sustain the development of sports in the country to foster physical fitness, self-discipline, teamwork and excellence for the development of a healthy and alert citizenry through a unified national sports promotion and development program, and that the establishment and creation of a single, unified and integrated sports policy making body shall further this objective."

WHEREAS, in order to motivate our country's national athletes, our Filipino national athletes are entitled to a monthly allowance. In an interview at the Philippine Sportswriters Association Forum published at spin.ph, William Ramirez, chairman of the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) news article said that, to wit:

"From a regular annual budget of P300 million, the PSC, following a directive from Malacanang, has spent thrice as much so far this year making sure the athletes are well-trained and highly-motivated.

'We went beyond that [old budget]. As of September this year, the PSC has spent P1billion for our athletes,' said Ramirez, the bulk of which is being spent on foreign exposure and equipment.

The PSC also increased the daily and meal allowances of the athletes (651 male and 462 female) and coaches (346), and worked on upgrading their living quarters and training facilities.”

WHEREAS, on 3 April 2019, the PSC has enacted a new classification scheme for monthly allowances of athletes wherein under the revised scheme, Olympic and world champions will be under Platinum classification and will be receiving P45,000.00. Olympic qualifiers, Youth Olympic Games and Paralympic Games medalists will get P43,000 under the Priority A classification; Asian Games, Asian Paragames, Asian Winter Games, and Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games gold medalists will take P36,000 under Priority B; and Asian Games, Asian Paragames, and Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games silver and bronze medalists, and Asian Beach Games gold medalists will get P33,000 under Priority C. Asian Beach Games silver and bronze medalists and World and Asian level qualifiers will be under Class A and will receive P30,000, while Southeast Asian Games, Asean Paragames, Olympic qualifiers via universality, and chess Grandmaster will be under class B and will get P27,000. SEA Games and Asean Paragames silver and bronze medalists will be under Class C and will be receiving P24,000 every month. Team sports medalists will be receiving P17,000, while training pool members including team sports will have P10,000.¹

WHEREAS, despite the apparent financial support, our national athletes still plea that it is not enough or sadly, becomes lost in the midst of powerplay. Just recently, Chess GrandMaster Wesley So, who was born in Bacoar, Cavite and whose mother was an accountant of De La Salle University Hospital in our City of Dasmariñas, Cavite, shocked the world when he toppled World No. 1 Magnus Carlsen to win the inaugural World Fishcer Chess Championship ² under the US flag due to disappointments over the system in Philippine sports. In a news article as far back as 13 July 2017, it was reported that, to wit:

“xxx So himself was certain he wouldn’t have left had it not been for the politics that has permeated every single aspect of Philippine society, sports included.

‘I was thinking about it for a while but unconvinced I should do it,’ So told SPIN.ph when asked what prompted the decision to switch allegiance to the US chess federation in an email interview through Lotis Key, a former actress who now stands as So’s adoptive mother in the US.

‘But it was almost impossible to get ahead in the Philippines. So I thought I should just use my chess to get an education in the States and maybe find another job,’ So added.

To be fair, So wasn’t entirely deprived of support during his years in the Philippines, receiving backing from the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC), the

¹ Retrieved from <https://www.spin.ph/multisport/philippine-sports-commission-psc-athletes-medalists-monthly-allowances-a79520190403>.

² Retrieved from <https://sports.inquirer.net/372104/wesley-so-wins-world-chess-title-topples-no-1-magnus-carlsen>

National Chess Federation of the Philippines (NCFP) headed by Rep. Prospero Pichay, and chess patrons like Reginald Tee, who took So under his wings.

The NCFP, in fact, insisted that So still received a monthly allowance reserved for elite national athletes from the PSC even after moving to the US on the invitation of former women's world champion Susan Polgar ("Polgar") to play for Webster University in Missouri.

Yet there was no question about the disenchantment over the system that So bottled up inside for so long until it reached breaking point after one incident where, in his own words, he got caught in the middle of a feud among the kings of the sports bodies.

That happened back in 2013 after So's gold medal from the World Universiade Games in Kazan, Russian had some quarters raising the possibility of a seven-figure incentive from the government. He got none.

In denying So a P1 million bonanza, the PSC explained the Universiade wasn't among the international events where gold medalists are guaranteed monetary incentives from the government under the old RA No.9644, otherwise known as the Athletes' Incentives Act.

It didn't help that So's cause never received backing from the Philippine Olympic Committee which, in the first place, refused to sanction the Universiade trip since the delegation was sent by a group whose members had previously clashed with the POC over the long-drawn basketball leadership row.

Amid the power play, So was left holding an empty bag.

"To be poor and unconnected in the Philippines is to be trash for rich people to step on," So said.

'Because of a quarrel between the kings of the sports bodies, not only did the country refuse to acknowledge my efforts, they refused to give me the P1 million promised to athletes who bring home a gold medal.'³

WHEREAS, in an article written by Polgar she said that So was reluctant to switch federations but was forced by circumstances, to wit:

"Now if only National Chess Federation of the Philippines (NCFP) didn't give a non-answer similar to a "no" to Wesley's requests he wouldn't have sat out for a year. NCFP was even demanding a compensation fee of about 50,000 Euros.

This was Wesley's own decision to join and switch federations in order to become a top ten player in the world. He stated that he will not pay any compensation fee to the NCFP.

Because of this request, the NCFP even cut his allowance.

³ Retrieved from <https://www.spin.ph/chess/how-the-philippines-managed-to-lose-a-potential-world-chess-champion-like-wesley-so>

At first glance it would feel like he's trying to leave our own to represent others and this would make him look like a traitor but someone who has given so much to the country and yet receive so little in return is more like the real story.”⁴

WHEREAS, the sorry flight of our national athletes still persist. On 04 June 2019, Olympic silver medalist Hidilyn Diaz asked for financial support for her Tokyo 2020 Olympics bid. In a Rappler news report, it said that Diaz, despite training for Tokyo 2020 still runs side businesses, HD Cleaning Services and Komida Foods. On the other hand, according to a statement by the PSC, “Diaz received one of the highest allowances in the national pool. The government’s sports agency said it has given Diaz P4.5 million for her foreign trainings in Hainan and Guangxi, China as well as approving her 6 world qualifying circuit competitions. Subsequently, after her two-month training camp, Diaz copped 3 silvers in the Asian Weightlifting Championships.”⁵

WHEREAS, on 26 March 2019, in another news report, 2 Philippine paralympic athletes claimed that they have not received their allowance for 2 years since they joined the national training pool 2 years ago. The same news report state that, to wit:

“The monthly basic allowance of an athlete starts at P15,000, which already includes their meal allowance – a considerably low amount for someone who leaves school or work to compete for the country.

Para athletes Edwin Villanueva and Adrian Asul trained with the national team in 2017. Since then, they have been recommended to the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) to receive allowance but have yet to get approval, according to the team’s coaches Tony Ong and Marjorie Palumbarit.

‘Ako, as a new athlete for swimming, bago palang, hindi pa nagkaka-allowance,’ lamented Villanueva, a fourth placer at the 3rd Asian Para Games last year, ‘as in wala po, zero po talaga.’

Villanueva and Asul are currently staying at the PhilSports Arena in Pasig City where free meals are being served.

‘Yung mga atleta natin, full of potential pero wala silang food [allowance] man lang, at yung kanilang tutulungan, mahihirapan pa sila. Paano ka makakapag-training nang maayos?’ said Ong.”

In the same news report, it continued, to wit:

⁴ <http://web.chessdailynews.com/wasted-opportunity-due-to-incompetence-and-ugly-chess-politics/>

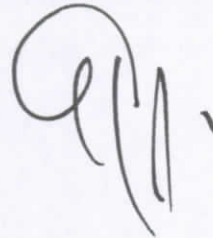
⁵ Retrieved from <https://www.google.com.ph/amp/s/amp.rappler.com/sports/by-sport/other-sports/232256-hidilyn-diaz-asks-financial-support-tokyo-olympics-2020-bid>.

"PSC Commissioner Ramon Fernandez said an athlete should receive allowance immediately after joining the national training pool. That is subject for increase if an athlete wins a medal.

The agency is receiving roughly P1.2 billion annually or 2.5 percent of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation's (PAGCOR) gross income since the time of former President Fidel Ramos notwithstanding the mandate of the Republic Act 6847 that PSC should receive 5-percent share.

Around P6million of the budget go to different national sports associations for the allowance of the athletes. The body also gets sponsorship from private sectors for additional funds."⁶

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Committee on Youth and Sports Development or the appropriate committee to conduct an investigation, in aid of legislation, into the necessary support to our national athletes and a review of the existing laws relevant thereto.



HON. ELPIDIO F. BARZAGA, JR.
Representative
Lone District of the City of Dasmarinas, Cavite

⁶ Retrieved from <https://news.abs-cbn.com/sports/03/26/19/still-no-allowance-for-2-philippine-paralympic-athletes-after-2-years>.