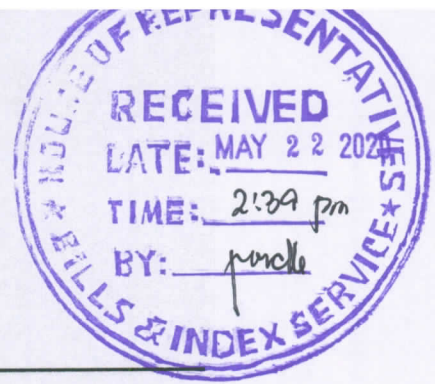


HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Resolution No. 898



Introduced by Honorable Tyrone D Agabas

RESOLUTION

STRONGLY URGING THE INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE ON EMERGING INFECTIOUS DISEASES (IATF) TO MODIFY ITS RESTRICTIONS ON THE CONDUCT OF RELIGIOUS GATHERINGS UNDER THE MODIFIED ENHANCED COMMUNITY QUARANTINE (MECQ) AND GENERAL COMMUNITY QUARANTINE (GCQ)

WHEREAS, Section 5, Article III of the 1987 Philippine Constitution provides, "(n)o law shall be made respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. The free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference, shall forever be allowed..."

WHEREAS, the national government, in its quest to defeat the COVID-19 pandemic, has consistently recognized, protected, and provided for the basic essential needs of Filipinos through viable and sustainable programs responsive to their economic needs and physical nourishment ;

WHEREAS, taking into consideration the free exercise and enjoyment of religious worship, the government must equally address the spiritual nourishment of the Filipino faithful from various religious denominations and congregations in the country;

WHEREAS, the restrictions on the conduct of religious gatherings, during this pandemic, have considerably caused distress on the mental and spiritual health of the faithful especially those who routinely frequented churches, temples and other places of religious worship for their eternal and spiritual comfort in this time of crisis;

WHEREAS, each place of religious worship is integral and essential to the spiritual needs and nourishment of the Filipino people. In the Book of Matthew 4:4, it states: "(i)t is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God", a biblical verse central to humanity's very existence;

WHEREAS, under the Omnibus Guidelines on the Implementation of Quarantine in the Philippines, the IATF has allowed the opening of malls, hotels, BPOs, and other business establishments and operations. On a sad note however, religious gatherings remained prohibitive and restrictive. In municipalities, cities, and provinces under ECQ, religious gatherings remained prohibited. Religious gatherings are also restricted to not more than five (5) persons to those under MECQ, and to not more than ten (10) persons to those under GCQ;


WHEREAS, the Omnibus Guidelines on individual restrictions generated clamors from various religious congregations and denominations for the IATF to modify the restrictions on the number of persons allowed to enter and/or attend religious services or functions in places of religious worships;

WHEREAS, to eliminate any false perception that religion is discriminated against, there is a need to delimit the restrictions on the number of participants or attendees in said places of religious worship subject to strict observance of physical distancing and wearing of face mask protocols;

WHEREAS, allowing the faithful to fully exercise their religious beliefs in places of religious worship, subject to physical distancing and wearing of face mask, is the best option to undertake as it will considerably advance the physical and spiritual nourishment of the Filipino people;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the IATF is being strongly urged to modify its guidelines on religious gatherings and lift its restrictions on the number of individuals allowed to participate in religious gatherings subject to strict compliance with physical distancing and wearing of mask protocols, or in the alternative, limit the number of persons to not more than fifty percent (50%) of its venue or seating capacity.

Adopted,



ATTY. TYRONE D AGABAS

Representative, 6th District of Pangasinan