

Office of Sen. Manny Villar

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NEWS RELEASE

10 February 2011

Villar holds series of forum on Antitrust law

Sen. Manny Villar today hosted the second installment of a series of discussion to better understand the anti-trust law now being studied by the Committee on Trade and Commerce.

“I would like to cover all the bases by conducting public hearings and hosting this series of lecture so we may all understand the intent of the law and its benefits,” Villar said.

The proposed Antitrust law seeks to penalize unfair trade and anti-competitive practices in restraint of trade, unfair competition and abuse of dominant power.

Villar said the law will encourage competition in the market place which will help reduce prices and increase the quality of products or services and gave the assurance that his committee is dead set on passing the bill.

Usec. Zenaida Maglaya of the Department of Trade and Industry gave a presentation expounding on the need for an antitrust law in the country during “Lecture II: Understanding Antitrust” held Thursday morning at the Recto Room.

Maglaya underscored the need to enact a Competition/Antitrust Law to promote investment and facilitate trade among neighboring countries.

Atty. Anthony Abad, managing director, Trade Advisory Services/ Ateneo Center for International Economic Law explained the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Model for Antitrust Law while Atty. Lorna Patajo-Kapunan presented a critique on existing legislations on antitrust.

Abad said it is fortunate that the 15th Congress is prioritizing the Antitrust bill, as this is one piece of legislation that will have a transformative effect on the way business is done in the country.

For her part, Kapunan recognizes that there are antitrust provisions scattered in different laws like the Revised Penal Code, New Civil Code, Consumer Act of the Philippines, etc. but argued that these provisions do not provide for clear-cut guidelines or evidence to determine whether an act constitutes unfair competition, monopolistic behavior or restraint of trade.

Reactions on the presentations were given by Atty. Geronimo Sy, assistant secretary, Department of Justice; Atty. Rod Libunao, legal counsel, Chevron Philippines; Mr. Reiner Aaron Villasenor, student leader, San Beda College; and Atty. Jose Cabrera, governor, Integrated Bar of the Philippines.

Villar said the country needs a comprehensive antitrust law that will complement the prevailing economic conditions and put in place the atmosphere for companies to deliver better goods and services to consumers.

“We need this law because we want to prohibit anti-competitive practices like monopolies and cartels,” he added.

The first forum was held last week where Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, who co-authored with Sens. Ralph Recto and Antonio Trillanes IV Senate Bill No. 1 or the Competition Act of 2010, shared his insights on the matter.

The committee is also tackling related bills on antitrust legislation namely, SB 123 authored by Sen. Sergio Osmeña III, SB 1838 filed by Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago and Senate Proposed Resolution No. 123 urging inquiry on cartels and monopolies sponsored by Villar.