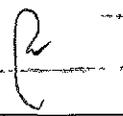


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**SENATE**  
**P.S. RES. NO. 90**

RECEIVED BY: 

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Introduced by Senator Manny B. Villar

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**RESOLUTION**  
**URGING THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS TO CONDUCT AN**  
**INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE STATUS OF THE EFFICACY OF THE**  
**WITNESS PROTECTION PROGRAM UNDER THE REPUBLIC ACT 6981 OTHERWISE**  
**KNOWN AS THE "WITNESS PROTECTION, SECURITY AND BENEFIT ACT" WITH THE**  
**END IN VIEW OF PROVIDING SOLUTIONS, SUCH AS BUT NOT LIMITED TO ITS**  
**EXPANSION AND ALLOCATION OF BIGGER BUDGET, IMPROVING ITS**  
**IMPLEMENTATION AND PLUGGING ITS LOOPHOLES BY RECOMMENDING**  
**APPROPRIATE LEGISLATION**

**Whereas**, Republic Act 6981 otherwise known as "an Act Providing for a Witness Protection, Security and Benefit Program and For other Purposes" has been enacted since 24 April 1991 and has been in existence for almost two (2) decades;

**Whereas**, from the time the enactment of the said "Witness Protection, Security and Benefit Act," several international institutions such as Committee to Protect Journalists, Amnesty International, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, World Bank Funded research of Hills Governance Center, Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), have already expressed concerns as regards the law's need for strengthening;

**Whereas**, studies of these international institutions, and even local institutions, legal luminaries and civic groups alike pinpoints the following as the main problem areas in the Witness Protection Program ("WPP") under the Witness Protection, Security and Benefit Act, these are 1) under funding, 2) failure to provide for an alternative program when the issue involves high profile government officials, 3) slow progress of the cases involved 4) fear of reprisal when the witnesses back out from the program for personal reasons and 5) slow processing of grants under the WPP and strict criteria before one can enter the Program;

**Whereas**, due to underfunding, a number of potential witnesses refuse to come forward considering the meager standard of living offered to them and their families under the WPP as compared to what they are currently enjoying;

**Whereas**, distrust on the WPP abound, especially when the case is against high ranking officials, considering that this is administered by the Department of Justice (DOJ) in corroboration with the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and Philippine National Police (PNP);

**Whereas**, an example of such distrust is apparent when Jun Lozada a witness to the NBN-ZTE scam, allegedly refused to seek shelter under the WPP because of fear that the alleged perpetrator of the crimes involved in his case have allegedly considerable stronghold over the agencies administering the WPP;

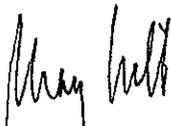
**Whereas**, the resolution of the cases involved takes a lifetime as protected witnesses even die and get old without their cases having been heard or that it took them years before they can eventually testify in court;

**Whereas**, complaints of slow processing of application and/or negotiation to be under the WPP is apparent, a case in point is key witness, Suwaib Upham, of the Maguindanao massacre, who was just recently killed pending his alleged negotiation to be under the WPP;

**Whereas**, established institutions, civic groups, legal luminaries and members of Congress have made suggestions on how to address these unsettling concerns, these proposed solutions include a provisioning for bigger funding, expanding the coverage of the Witness Protection, Security and Benefit Act, providing for an alternative program other than WPP that would offer the same, if not better, protection to key witnesses, establishing special courts to fast-track cases involved and the enactment of a Whistle-blowing law that would cover areas not covered by the Witness Protection, Security and Benefit Act and for the former to potentially provide for incentives to encourage witnesses to come forward and unveil the wrongdoings of public and private individuals;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED**, to urge the committee on Justice and Human Rights to conduct an inquiry in aid of legislation, on the status of the efficacy of the witness protection program under the Republic Act 6981 otherwise known as the "Witness Protection, Security and Benefit Act" with the end in view of providing solutions, such as but not limited to its expansion and allocation of bigger budget, improving its implementation and plugging its loopholes by recommending appropriate legislation.

Adopted.

  
**MANNY VILLAR**