



Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Intramuros, Manila

EN BANC

**IN THE MATTER OF THE
ACCREDITATION OF THE
CITIZENS' ARM OF THE
COMMISSION,**

**PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL FOR
RESPONSIBLE VOTING (PPCRV),**
Petitioner.

x-----x

PER CURIAM:

SPP NO. 08-012

Present:

Melo, J. A. R., Chairman
Sarmiento, R. V., *Commissioner*
Ferrer, N. T., *Commissioner*
Leonida, L. L., *Commissioner*
Tagle, L. N., *Commissioner*
Velasco, A. C., *Commissioner*

Promulgated: February 19, 2009

R E S O L U T I O N

For consideration is a petition for accreditation as citizens' arm of this Commission filed by **PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL FOR RESPONSIBLE VOTING (PPCRV)** on November 25, 2008 for purposes of the resumption of the system of Continuing Registration and the succeeding Continuing Registrations.

The petition states:

x x x

x x x

x x x

3. On 22 May 1997, PPCRV filed a Petition for Accreditation as a citizens' arm with this Honorable Commission for purposes of the General and Continuing Registration and other related activities under Republic Act 8189. Consequently, on 3 June 1997, the Honorable Commission issued a Resolution granting PPCRV's petition, the dispositive portion of which reads as follows:

“WHEREFORE, considering the participation of the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) in the past elections, the Commission en Banc RESOLVED to ACCREDIT the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) as citizens’ arm of the Commission, pursuant to Section 2 (5) of Article IX of the Constitution, and Section 52 (k) of the Omnibus Election Code, as amended, and other elections laws under the Commission’s direct and immediate control and supervision, in connection with the forthcoming 1997 General and Continuing Registration.”

A copy of the said resolution is herein attached and marked as Annex “A” and made integral part hereof.

4. By reason of the said Resolution, PPCRV seeks to continue to serve as citizen’s arm of the Honorable Commission for the forthcoming Continuing Registrations and the succeeding Continuing Registrations. For this purpose, PPCRV reiterates its previous commitments that:

4.1. It is not supporting any candidate, political party, organization or coalition of political parties involved in the forthcoming activities of Republic Act 8189;

4.2. It shall remain strictly non-partisan and impartial during the entire period fixed for the holding of the aforesaid activities;

4.3. It does not seek to achieve its objectives, goals or programs through violence or other unlawful means, nor aim to propagate any ideology opposed to the principles of a republican and democratic government and that it will undertake to police its ranks and prevent infiltration of persons or groups of persons who may, directly or indirectly, destroy its character of non-partisanship and impartiality.

5. In aid of its performance of its duties and functions as citizens’ arm of this Honorable Commission, PPCRV prays this Honorable Commission that:

5.1. It be provided a copy/ies of the permanent list of votes per precinct in each city and/or municipality consisting of all registered voters residing within the territorial jurisdiction of every precinct indicated by the precinct maps, the national central file under the custody of the Commission Manila consisting of the third copies of all approved voter registration records in each city and/or municipality, the list of deactivated, reactivated and/or cancelled voters, the certified list of voters before any regular or special election, a list/s of all election officers before any regular or special election to ensure proper coordination with said officers, free of any charge or access fee;

5.2. It be assisted by all national and/or local elections officers by ensuring free and easy access to all of said documents and/or records mentioned in paragraph 5.1 hereof;

5.3. It be assisted by law enforcement agencies in the performance of its duties and functions as said citizens' arm.

x x x

x xx

x x x

Acting on the petition, the Commission En Banc issued on December 2, 2008 an Order directing the petitioner to cause the publication of the petition together with the notice of hearing in a newspaper of general circulation at its own expense. Hearing on the petition was set on December 15, 2008.

The petition and notice, however, were not published in time for the December 15, 2008 hearing. Thus, the hearing on the petition was set on January 15, 2009.

During the hearing held on January 15, 2009, no one appeared to oppose the petition. The PPCRV, through counsel, appeared and presented the following documents to establish the jurisdictional requirements:

- Exh. "A" - Affidavit of Publication of Business Mirror newspaper dated December 13, 2008;
- Exh. "A-1" - Newspaper clippings of order of the Commission dated December 2, 2008;
- Exh "B" - Copy of the Business Mirror newspaper itself published on December 12-13, 2008;
- Exh. "B-1" - The date of the newspaper Business Mirror, which is December 12-13, 2008;
- Exh. "B-2" - Page A2 of Business Mirror newspaper where the Order of the Commission dated December 2, 2008 appeared;
- Exh. "B-3" - Particular portion in page A2 where the published Order of the Commission can be found;

- Exh. "C" – "C-3" - Resolution of the Commission dated June 3, 1997 granting PPCRV accreditation as citizens' arm;
- Exh. "D" - Affidavit of Publication of Business Mirror newspaper dated January 12, 2009;
- Exh. "D-1" - Newspaper clipping of the published petition;
- Exh. "E" - Copy of the Business Mirror newspaper itself published on January 7, 2009;
- Exh. "E-1" - Date of newspaper which is January 7, 2009;
- Exh. "E-2" - Page A4 of Business Mirror newspaper dated January 7, 2009 where the petition can be found; and
- Exh. "E-3" - Particular portion in page A4 where the published petition can be found.

After the above documents were admitted, the case was deemed submitted for resolution.

Section 1, Rule 33 of the COMELEC Rules of Procedure provides:

Sec. 1. Who May Be Accredited as Citizens' Arms of the Commission. - Any bona fide non partisan group, association or organization from the civic, youth, professional, educational, business or labor sectors with identifiable leadership, membership and structure, and **with demonstrated capacity to promote the public interest and assist the Commission in the performance of its functions and activities as mandated by the Constitution and by law**, may be accredited as citizens' arms of the Commission.

Considering that the PPCRV has participated in the past electoral exercises where it has ably demonstrated its capacity to promote the public interest and to assist the Commission in the performance of its functions and activities, there is no reason to withhold accreditation to the said entity as a citizens' arm for purposes of the resumption of the general registration of voters under Republic Act No. 8189 as implemented by Comelec Resolution No. 8514¹ promulgated on November 12, 2008. As such it is charged with the following duties and responsibilities:

¹ Rules and Regulations on the Resumption of the System of Continuing Registration of Voters in the Non-ARMM Areas.

1. To act as watchers during the registration; and
2. To assist the Commission in forming the civic conscience of the Filipino Voters and in their education campaign concerning registration.

This accreditation for purposes of the Continuing Registration, however, shall be effective only until the end of the election period of the May 2010 elections in accordance with Section 11, Rule 33 of the Omnibus Election Code.²

The Commission, however, is constrained to hold in abeyance its action on the request of the petitioner to be provided free of charge with copies of the permanent list of voters in each city and municipality, the third copy of the approved voter registration records in each city and municipality, the list of deactivated, reactivated and/or cancelled voters and other related documents mentioned in paragraphs 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 of the petition pending the determination by the Commission of the legal, administrative and financial implications if the said request would be granted.

WHEREFORE, premises considered, the instant petition for accreditation is hereby **GRANTED**, subject to the following conditions, that:

- a) The PPCRV shall be subject to the direct and immediate control of the Commission and shall comply with all lawful orders of the Commission in the performance of its specific functions and activities as provided in Section 52 (k) of the Omnibus Election

² Sec. 11. *Expiration of Accreditation.* - The accreditation shall automatically lapse at the end of the election period of the political exercise for which the petitioner was accredited as citizens' arm.

Code, and such other functions and activities which the Commission may assign to it;

- b) It shall be non-partisan and impartial during the registration period;
- c) It shall not be under the influence whatsoever of any foreign government corporation or entity and shall not solicit or receive, directly or indirectly, any contribution or aid of whatever form or nature from any foreign government, corporation or entity, and that neither shall said organization nor any of its members seek to achieve its objectives or programs through violence, or aim to propagate any ideology opposed to the principles of a republican and democratic government;
- d) It shall undertake to police its ranks and prevent infiltration by persons or group of persons who may, directly or indirectly, destroy its character of impartiality;
- e) It shall submit to the Commission a list of its responsible officials and other officers constituting its board and there shall be no changes therein without the approval of the Commission;
- f) It shall make available to the Commission its personnel, facilities, equipment, papers and effects and coordinate its activity with other accredited citizens' arm of the Commission;
- g) It shall submit a monthly written report of its operation during the period of its accreditation; and
- h) This accreditation shall automatically lapse at the end of the election period of the May 2010 elections. It shall likewise be deemed automatically revoked in case the PPCRV violates any of the conditions herein set forth.

The Executive Director of the Commission in coordination with the Clerk of the Commission shall implement this Resolution immediately upon its promulgation, furnishing copies hereof to all field officers nationwide including the candidates and the political parties or coalition of political parties.

The Education and Information Department shall cause the publication of this Resolution in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

SO ORDERED.

(sgd.) **ARMANDO C. VELASCO**
Commissioner

(sgd.) **LUCENITO N. TAGLE**
Commissioner

(sgd.) **LEONARDO L. LEONIDA**
Commissioner

(sgd.) **NICODEMO T. FERRER**
Commissioner

(sgd.) **RENE V. SARMIENTO**
Commissioner

(sgd.) **JOSE A. R. MELO**
Chairman

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C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I hereby certify that the conclusions in the foregoing resolution were reached in consultation among the members of the Commission before the case was assigned to the writer of the opinion of the Commission En Banc.

(sgd.) **JOSE A. R. MELO**
Chairman