

Resolution on Absentee Voting

Whereas, it is the constitutional and democratic right of Filipino migrants-immigrants to exercise their right to suffrage;

Whereas, Filipino migrants have, time and again, demanded the right to vote. Regrettably, their legitimate demand went unheeded by the past and present administrations;

Whereas, their long denied right is an injustice committed against the migrants;

Whereas, absentee voting is one of the many migrant rights and welfare issues, which the government must have to fully and decisively address;

Whereas, we are aware of the “dagdag-bawas” (add-subtract) electoral practice and violence, which we strongly condemn. We are eager to know what measures were taken by the government to punish the perpetrators of this shameful and immoral practice and what measures are taken to prevent its occurrence. Otherwise, we remain skeptical about the fairness of the coming 2004 national elections.

Whereas, the pending absentee-voting bill be guided by the principle of good governance, transparency, and justice. We oppose and condemn any attempts to politicize it along narrow partisan party politics.

Whereas, relative to the pending absentee-voting bill, we urge, among others that:

1. The right to vote in the 2004 national elections of our undocumented compatriots abroad be recognized and guaranteed.
2. Migrants Electoral Watch Committee, composed of reliable migrant organizations and advocates, be organized and duly recognized. This committee is tasked to ensure that the electoral will of the voting migrants is safeguarded.
3. That the counting of votes be on-site and officially certified before transmittal to the Philippines.
4. In the entire process of registration, authentication, certification and voting, no fees will be collected.