

Arroyo spends day in Palace

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"They've been saying that for the last three years," he said, laughing. "There's no reason for the President to worry."
 Puno said the rally was premature because lawmakers had yet to file the resolution seeking to convene the Senate and the House into a constituent assembly to amend the 1987 Charter.
 "Before it becomes a justiciable issue, Congress has to implement voting. A resolution has yet to be filed," he said, but added that he respected the people's right to mount such a rally.
 Besides, he added, the Executive Branch has not advocated amending the Charter or even canceling the May 2010 elections.
 "All this talk of extending the term of the President, these are all speculations. The important thing is not to imagine ghosts where there are none," he said.
 When asked why Arroyo wouldn't tell her allies in the House to stop their Charter-change drive, he said: "Her position is not to interfere. Why should they resent that?"
 Puno distanced himself from the resolution calling for a constituent assembly authored by Kambi president, Camarines Sur Representative Luis Villafuerte.

"I wasn't involved in it. I've not attended any of their meetings. I'm not a legislator," he said of Villafuerte's group that has been reported to be gathering 197 signatures to back the resolution.

In the end, the Supreme Court has to step in to decide whether the House or the Senate should vote jointly or separately after convening themselves into a constituent assembly, Puno said.

"The fact that they're [Senate and the House] arguing, and there's ambiguity [in the provision of the Constitution], this should be clarified by the Supreme Court," he said. ■

A3PCON launches foreclosure assistance program

by JOSEPH PIMENTEL
 AJPress

LOS ANGELES—The Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council (A3PCON) launched a foreclosure prevention, outreach and assistance program to provide services for Asian-Americans who may be facing the grim possibility of losing their homes to foreclosure.

"With the holidays approaching, we want people to know that there is hope," said Dennis Arguelles, Director of Community Economic Development of the Search to Involve Pilipino Americans (SIPA). "There are services available to them so they can keep their home."

Now more than ever, people

are losing their homes due to the current housing crisis and the US economic downturn. Many have been laid off or can't afford a mortgage that suddenly flipped over. During the second quarter of this year, more than 63,000 people lost their homes to foreclosure.

According to Lori Gay of the

Los Angeles Neighborhood Housing Service, every 15 minutes a family loses their home due to foreclosure in Los Angeles County. In the state, every two minutes someone is losing a home.

"This is a disaster of unforgotten depth, mass, width, height this is beyond everything we have dealt with in our lifetime," said Gay during a press conference at SIPA.

"Far too many lenders gave loans without proper documentation of income or without the proper debt to income ratio," added Dr. Judy Chu, the chair of the State Board of Equalization. "They played fast and loose and now we are facing the serious consequences. When the housing bubble burst, the housing industry reached a 20-year high [foreclosures] in the sec-

ond quarter, an increase of 261 percent of a year earlier. The 63,000 families that lost their homes are true victims. Many of them are immigrants. They face the grim prospect of losing everything. That's why we need this assistance."

The A3PCON foreclosure program received a \$50,000 grant to fund the program. The program will include Chinese, Tagalog, Korean, Vietnamese, Thai and Japanese translators to assist immigrants in danger of losing their homes in contacting the bank or their mortgage handlers.

A3PCON is a coalition of 35 community-based organizations in the Greater Los Angeles area. The coalition serves as a voice and provides services to the large Asian-American community. ■



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