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Senator Manuel Roxas II



Senator Loren Legarda



Senator Francis Escudero



Senator Panfilo Lacson

Presidential hopefuls back 'Moral Force'

by CHRISTINE AVENDAÑO
Inquirer.net

MANILA—Four senators widely expected to join the presidential race in 2010 welcomed on Wednesday, April 8, the stated objective of the Moral Force Movement of helping voters choose the country's new leaders.

The movement was initiated by Chief Justice Reynato Puno.

Senators Loren Legarda, Panfilo Lacson, Manuel Roxas II and Francis Escudero all agreed on the need for such a movement.

But Lacson said the Moral Force Movement should not only help people choose the right leaders but also "take the lead in educating the electorate to sidetrack personalities and shallow campaigning to win votes."

"Issues and advocacies must be the main consideration during this critical time in our country's history and that the Moral Force must bear the burden of responsibility to inform our people that we cannot anymore afford another six years of transactional politics that breeds corruption in governance," he said in a text message.

Lacson was particularly concerned about the "D and E social classes" who he said comprise most of the electorate but are the "most vulnerable to exploitation by scheming politicians."

Legarda praised the composition of the eight-member core group of the movement, saying they were "well respected and accomplished individuals whose integrity and patriotism are unquestioned."

"It is truly necessary that civic-spirited, intelligent and

esteemed individuals should guide our people in the selection of officials who should be elected in the 2010 elections," she said in a statement.

"With our people desperately looking for a way out of their misery and poverty, we cannot afford to make a wrong turn as this could mean more social disorder and chaos from which there could be no turning back," Legarda said.

Escudero said Puno's group and "other similarly oriented groups" were welcome to help "guide and enlighten our voters in the coming elections for all elective posts."

"I firmly believe that we need more groups like this at the national and local levels," Escudero said in a text message.

For his part, Roxas hoped the movement would be "strong enough to resist and withstand partisan pressure" in order "to reform our political system and fix it permanently."

"The launch of this new group convened by the Chief Justice has long been overdue, for it gives the public a fresh channel of robust discourse that can enlighten their choice in 2010," Roxas said.

He said he and the Liberal Party, of which he is president, are ready to "openly engage" the group "in the moral dimension of our politics as well as in the overall social, economic and political agenda for the future." ■

Mabuhay Alliance's strong support on Federal crackdown on Loan Modification and Foreclosure scams

Urges US Treasury Secretary Geithner and other DC officials for swift and harsh punishments for offenders

BETWEEN the period of March 10 to 12, the Executive Director of Mabuhay Alliance, Faith Bautista, personally met with Secretary of the Treasury Timothy Geithner, Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke, and FDIC Chairman Bair, urging them for the swift and a harsh punishment of for-profit institutions charging large fees to provide loan modifications that were available for free by local nonprofits and major



financial institutions.

Last Monday, April 6, Secretary Geithner announced that he was

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Ermita, Kenney call on war vets to enlist for pension

THE Arroyo administration and United States Ambassador to the Philippines Kristie Kenney jointly called on the war veterans to enlist so they can be entitled to their pensions, granted under the new US law on veterans' compensation.

The calls were made during the celebration of the *Araw ng Kagitangan* last Monday, April 6, at Mt. Samat in Bataan, where ailing war veterans in their advanced ages, could not make it to the annual celebration.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Er-

mita said retired Gen. Ernesto Carolina, Defense Undersecretary for Veterans Affairs has reported that processing the papers of war veterans numbering 8,000 to 12,000 could not be done fast enough because they depend on the list submitted by the Missouri-based US War Veterans Administration.

"But what we are certain now is there are funds and there is no anomaly in the processing because *nakakaawa naman yung mga* legitimate na veterans na *hindi makatanggap. Tuloy tuloy*

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Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita

Gov. Schwarzenegger discusses California's economic outlook in Inland Empire

GOVERNOR Arnold Schwarzenegger delivered the keynote speech at the Inland Empire's Eleventh Annual Economic Briefing in Ontario last April 8. Speaking to business, government and civic leaders, the Governor cited our state's resiliency, mighty economic advantages and the economic stimulus he fought for in this year's budget while painting a realistic, yet optimistic picture of California's economic future.

"We are all feeling the global recession here in California," said Governor Schwarzenegger. "Recovery is a long journey, but we are seeing some signs that we are on the right path with the federal economic stimulus funds putting

people to work and a state budget that provides the opportunity for meaningful and real reform."

Governor Schwarzenegger and his administration are working around the clock to ensure that California captures every single dollar from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act) to create jobs and get our economy back on track. Already the Governor created the California Recovery Task Force to track, seize and ensure effective, accountable use of stimulus dollars, launched www.recovery.ca.gov to disseminate information and ensure transparency, and appointed a first-in-

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Noel Claudio Cabrera

Noel Cabrera, former press secretary and ambassador, dies

PRESS Secretary and Philippine Ambassador to Myanmar Noel Claudio Cabrera passed away at his home in Quezon City, Philippines at 12:30am on Thursday, April 9. He was 64.

Cabrera served as President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's first Press Secretary and was Press Undersecretary under former President Joseph Estrada. Prior to his assignment in Myanmar, Cabrera was Philippine Ambassador to Romania, with concurrent jurisdiction over Bulgaria and Moldova. Before being appointed as ambassador, Cabrera served

as Chairman and Chief Executive Officer at Coconut Life Assurance Corporation (COCOLIFE).

Before his stint at Malacañang, Cabrera was a veteran journalist with a wide experience as reporter, deskman, editorial writer and editor. He was Editor-in-Chief and Chief Operating Officer of the defunct *Manila Chronicle* from 1993 to 1998. Cabrera started his journalism career as special events reporter of the *Philippines Daily Express* where he later became a deskman, columnist, chief editorial writer, editorial page editor and

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