

Mayor Bloomberg of New York courts Asian voters

by MOMAR G. VISAYA
AJPress

FLUSHING, NY—A group of diverse and prominent business owners and community leaders announced Monday, April 13, that they have come together to form Asians for Bloomberg.

This group, which includes Filipina businesswoman and philanthropist Loida Nicolas Lewis (who was not present in the launch), cited Mayor Michael Bloomberg's record on crime, education, and expanding opportunities to all New Yorkers as major reasons for backing his reelection.

Bloomberg attended the launch at a restaurant in Flushing, Queens, where there is a significant Asian American population. He was welcomed with chants of "four more years" and "we want Mike" by a large crowd of Chinese, Filipino, Korean and Indian community and business leaders.

The SRO crowd also waved red-and-yellow signs that read,

"Asians for Mike Bloomberg" and blue placards that read "Queens for Bloomberg."

The Asians for Bloomberg coalition includes Robin Mui, CEO of the Singtao Daily; Yong Hwa Ha, incoming President, Korean American Association of Greater New York and Inderjit Singh, Executive Chair of the South Asian Community Council; Peter Koo, President of the Flushing Chinese Business Association, among others, a veritable who's who in the Asian American community.

"I am honored to have such strong support in the Asian Community, and thank you for putting the future of our City first," said Mayor Bloomberg. "This election is about leadership, not partisanship. It's about creating good jobs, helping small businesses and building more affordable housing for working families. It's about every community: from Flushing to Sunset Park and from Jackson Heights to China-

town." Bloomberg said that the diverse group could be "the broadest coalition in New York City history." The mayor also acknowledged the current economic situation not only in the city but also in the entire country.

"We all know that these tough economic times are and will continue to affect us all. But by investing in a five borough economic opportunity plan, we can bring our city through this economic crisis and keep New York strong and working. That's the vision that all of us here share. It's a vision that will require all of us to work as New Yorkers, together," he said.

"This is the year of the ox, and the ox celebrates hard work and persistence," the mayor said during the announcement. "These are the values that are going to help get us through this year and they are the values that our administration is taking to heart."

Bloomberg highlighted the is-

ues that matter: the grants and other incentives the city is offering to small-business owners, its success in reducing crime and his efforts to improve the quality of public schools.

"We are doing everything we can to support small business owners. We are offering loans to keep their doors open, we are offering entrepreneurs to launch small businesses by providing training and education classes. Small businesses are the backbone of our city," he stated.

For Filipino American community leader Myrna Littlewort, supporting Bloomberg for his third term is a no-brainer. "I believe in what he has done to New York City and I believe he is one of the best mayors this city has ever seen," Littlewort said.

"He keeps everyone safe in the city. If you noticed, he doesn't authorize any raids for undocumented aliens. He also doesn't discriminate because anyone who gets sick can just go to

our clinics and hospitals, Mayor Bloomberg endorses them to be taken cared of instead of getting them arrested," she added.

Antonio Rodriguez agrees. "I

voted for him the last two times, and I am voting for him. *Maganda naman ang nagawa niya doon sa two terms niya eh, saka walang kalaban,*" he said. ■



New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg acknowledges the support of the Asian community during the launching of Asians for Bloomberg held Monday, Apr. 13 as Filipino American community leader Myrna Littlewort (left) and Meilin Tan, (center) President of the Small Business Owners of Greater New York listen to his speech.

AJPress Photo by Momar G. Visaya

Bro. Eddie Villanueva...

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said that he would not run "if I could not see the possibility of winning. I do not want to run like Don Quixote," Villanueva informed some 150 members and pastors of JIL churches in Southern California during a forum on Easter Sunday at a JIL church in Azusa. "So I have to see that the Filipino people are ready for change. If the Filipino people are not ready for change, I think I can find an excuse to God for me not to accept the challenge," he said.

"If I cannot see the Filipino people, especially the people of God, are willing to obey the Lord...because it's very clear to the prophecy, it cannot be done; it cannot be implemented by me alone. It requires a generation of "Davids," so I do hope it is a fair consideration," Villanueva explained.

In March this year, a Christian church prophet, Dr. Cindy Jacobs, had prophesied that

Villanueva would be elected the next President of the Philippines during a ceremony held at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines in Manila. But Villanueva said that Dr. Jacob's prophecy was not the only reason he would consider if he ran. He said his decision to run would be based on "my understanding and my knowledge of the miserable conditions in the nation today."

He said as a former "political animal" and social activist, he fully understands the horrible conditions of millions of Filipinos. "That the number one driving force for me to take the cudgels for the Filipino masses," Villanueva told the congregants. "Because when I was an activist, I did not believe in God; I was imprisoned twice during Marcos' time. I think for justice, and now I believe in God and I know the principle (by which) to change the nation," he revealed.

When a congregant asked who was being considered a vice presidential candidate in the event he pursued his presidential candidacy, Villanueva responded that several names were suggested, including Pampanga Governor Ed Panlillo, Isabela Governor Rесе Padaca, and Senator Francisco "Kiko" Pangilinan. "He is really all out to run for Vice President as independent," Villanueva said about Sen. Pangilinan. "If Mar Roxas (of the Liberal Party) does not increase his rating in spite of a media blitz, he could be willing to settle for a VP post, and also for Jun Magsaysay who could run for Senator again or VP," Villanueva said.

Villanueva also mentioned Edward Hagedorn a possible VP candidate for "his amazing accomplishments as Mayor of Puerto Princesa, Palawan. "At the same time, we are trying to complete the senatorial lineup, and the chapters of Bangon Pilipinas are also searching for candidates for governors, congressmen and mayors in Luzon,

Visaya and Mindanao. In other words, the Bangon Pilipinas Party is really all out in presenting to the people a complete reformist team," he said.

The JIL head also enumerated a seven-point road map to national change: empower, emancipate, and educate the people; elevate the living standards, energize the economy, eradicate bad governance, and establish peace in the land.

"I emphasize to the people that the Bagong Pilipino Movement is much bigger than the coming elections," Villanueva said. "This movement will continue in producing a new generation of leaders who are righteous, confident and who are the future players in the much-awaited transformation of the Philippines," Villanueva added.

JIL members and other supporters who wish to donate to Bro. Eddie's anticipated run for President can now log on to www.broeddie.ph to make an online contribution with their credit cards. ■

US to pay off all Pinoy World War II veterans within a year

by JOSE KATIGBAK
Philstar.com

WASHINGTON—The United States is in a rush to pay off by February 2010 all Filipino veterans who can rightfully claim they served Uncle Sam during World War II, a senior Veterans Administration official said.

Retired US Army Maj. Gen. Antonio Taguba last Wednesday, April 15, awarded the first lump-sum payment of \$15,000 to 98-year-old Alberto Bacani in recognition of his military service and said the amount, while modest, carried with it "our deepest gratitude for your faithful service to the nation."

"I'm happy we have at last won our fight for recognition," said Bacani in a tremulous voice. "What is more important

is not the amount of money we receive but the recognition we have gained."

Although called to serve in the military at a time when the Philippines was still a territory of the US, Filipinos who fought under the command of Gen. Douglas MacArthur were stripped of their recognition as US veterans for purposes of VA benefits under the 1946 Rescission Act.

Taguba, the son of a Filipino veteran himself, authored the investigative report about the abuse of Iraqi prisoners held by US forces at the Abu Ghraib prison in 2004.

In the presence of Ambassador Willy Gaa, he presented checks to Bacani and Adela

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