

Bayani Fernando announces 2010 presidential bid

by JOSE RODEL CLAPANO
Philstar.com

METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority Chairman Bayani Fernando declared last May 20 that he will definitely run in the 2010 presidential elections.

Speaking before the new officers of the Confederation of Filipino Consultants, Inc. (CoFilCo), at the Club Filipino in Greenhills, San Juan, Fernando said if elected president he will inculcate to all Filipinos, especially the employees and officials of government, the true essence of "political will."

Fernando said the reason why corruption continuously exists in government is due to the lack of political will in government. "Now I have set my eyes on the presidency, and I hope you will rally behind my cause. I will govern with transparency and hold myself accountable to the people at all times," Fernando said. He said he is confident that he will get the anointment of the Lakas-Kampi party because he was the only one from Lakas who had expressed the intention to seek the presidency in 2010.

"I have the biggest chance of being selected by the Lakas-Kampi coalition because I am the only member of Lakas who has declared to run for president in 2010. Kampi has no candidate for president in 2010. I expect the commitment of the

party to its party members," Fernando said. The MMDA chief said Sen. Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr. is the only member of Lakas who has so far expressed his intention to run for vice president in 2010. "But there are still many possibilities, right now. And I cannot say yet who will be my running mate," Fernando said.

Fernando said if elected president, lazy government employees and officials will definitely lose their jobs.

"If you will not do your work, if you will not work, you will definitely be sacked," Fernando said.

No comment

Fernando refused to comment on reports that Vice President Noli de Castro is the only strong presidential candidate of the administration.

"To our people out there, whose dreams and aspirations have always been thwarted by bad governance, I promise to adopt a different approach to leadership, one that takes into account the longings of the people for a better life," Fernando said.

Fernando said he stands by his record and stand with his position always.

"I stand by my record. I don't split hair as lawyers do, but I will stand my ground and defend my position against any attempt to confuse truth with falsity. I don't talk much, I

would rather solve a problem than talk about it. I am a builder, not a talker," Fernando said. He said Marikina City, Metro Manila and the country are the same when it comes to governance.

"The principle of governance is the same, whether you run a city, a metropolis, or an entire country. The same problems bedevil our towns and cities: Crime, corruption in government, degradation of the environment, unemployment and underemployment, access to education and health care and lack of economic opportunity," Fernando said.

Fernando cited that under his leadership as mayor of Marikina, it progressed from a second-class, sleepy municipality to a city that became the destination of choice for foreign investors. "Its annual tax collection rose from a mere P77 million in 1992 when I took over to P1 billion when I left office," Fernando said. He said he was able to do it through "discipline and civic spirit that I espoused that city residents willingly and enthusiastically embraced."

"Like most of the people here, I, too, am an engineer, and I take pride in my accomplishments as a builder. I think my most important achievement, however, was my success in instilling discipline among the city residents," Fernando said. ■



MMDA Chairman Bayani Fernando

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P13,000 pay hike for teachers, nurses rejected

by JESS DIAZ
Philstar.com

THE House of Representatives has rejected proposals to increase the basic monthly pay of public school teachers and government nurses by P13,000 to P25,000.

House appropriations committee chairman Quirino Rep. Junie Cua told proponents that with the soaring budget deficit, the government cannot afford such a huge increase for teachers and nurses, who comprise the bulk of government workers.

Teachers alone number at least 500,000, Cua stressed.

What teachers and nurses would receive would be a P6,500 increase spread over four years, Cua said.

He said these groups of work-

ers would continue to hold salary grade 11 in the 33-grade pay structure in the bureaucracy.

At present, grade 11 has a corresponding salary rate of about P12,000.

This would be increased to P18,500 under the four-year pay upgrading program the House approved on Wednesday, May 20.

There have been proposals to upgrade the teachers' and nurses' salary grade to 25, which has a corresponding rate of P24,878 under the program.

Among the proponents were Representatives Carlos Padilla of Nueva Vizcaya, Edno Josen of Nueva Ecija, Rufus Rodriguez of Cagayan de Oro City, Luz Ilagan of Gabriela, and Jonathan de la Cruz

of Abakada-Guro.

The upgrading program gives high-ranking and high-salaried officials an increase of more than 100 percent, while it authorizes only a 50-percent adjustment for low-ranking low-salaried personnel.

It would double the salary of the President to P120,000, while the Vice President would receive P103,000. Vice President Noli de Castro's monthly salary is currently about P46,200.

Senators and congressmen would get P90,000. Aside from their basic pay and allowances, they are allocated annual pork barrel funds of P200 million each in the case of senators and P70 million each in the case of members of the House of Representatives.

Other bureaucrats would get to receive more than double what

they are presently getting. Undersecretaries would get P78,946; assistant secretaries, P73,099; and directors, P67,684.

Soldiers will get an additional P4,000, or P1,000 a year.

The adjustments will be paid starting July 1 this year. They are expected to further bloat the budget deficit, which credit ratings agencies expect to hit an unprecedented level of P270 billion.

The increases were supposed to be based on the principle "equal pay for work of equal value."

But proponents of a bigger increase for teachers, nurses and soldiers said it is these groups of state workers who should have been given a 100-percent adjustment.

They work longer hours than high-salaried desk-bound bureaucrats, they pointed out. ■



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