

Senate shelves federalism...

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 chay voiced the same concern.
 "Why is it that nobody was complaining when Pimentel proposed federalism," Pichay asked in Filipino.
 Pichay, now head of the Local Water Utilities Administration, said the opposition "failed miserably in their duty to fiscalize."
 "Their role is to come out with a counter-proposal. They have not really come up with a counter-proposal," Pichay said.
 "Some of the people who are instigating these protests are the very same people who are staunchly defending Charter change when they were the ones who were still in power," Nograles said.
 The Speaker said he would use the congressional recess to exchange thoughts with key leaders of the House and the Senate as he admitted that he is still at a loss as to what to do next with the controversial HR 1109.
 "I am not going to convene anything. We need the period for consultations with House

and Senate leaders and other sectors to get a clear picture of what to do next. Frankly, we are still in a legal disagreement as to the procedures to follow after approval of Resolution 1109. I therefore need to clear the air as to the legal procedure," he clarified.
 In Angeles City, Lakas-KampikMD stalwart Nueva Ecija Rep. Rodolfo Antonino urged congress critics to support plans for a joint resolution petitioning the Supreme Court to clarify once and for all a hazy constitutional provision on how to amend the Charter.
 "I am calling on all sectors to support this joint resolution. Once it lands in the Supreme Court, I would enjoin all to keep silent on the issue of Charter change and for even the con-ass to suspend any activity until the High Court comes out with a verdict," Antonino told The STAR in a telephone interview.
 For his part, Pampanga Rep. Carmelo Lazatin said he preferred a constitutional convention approach to Charter

change.
 "I had proposed it in 2007, and now I have amended it so that elections for a Con-con could be held in time with the elections next year," he said.
Big push
 Meanwhile, former Senate president Franklin Drilon said the House is gearing up for a "big push" for Cha-cha after the congressional recess.
 "Yes, there would be a big push when Congress opens. There will be a push to immediately convene the constituent assembly," Drilon said.
 "I think the cat is out of the bag now. It is clear that President Arroyo would want to amend our Constitution so that it would be converted into a parliamentary system," Drilon told the weekly Kapihan sa Manila Hotel media forum.
 Drilon also urged the Supreme Court to issue a temporary restraining order on HR 1109.
 "I do hope and I pray that the SC will issue a TR0, otherwise they might become a moot court," he said. ■

FROM DECEMBER 2008 TO MARCH 2009 1M new voters enlist for 2010 polls – Comelec

MANILA -- At least one million new voters registered from December 2008 to March 2009 for the 2010 elections, an official at the Commission on Elections said.
 "There were 1.056 million new or first time voters who registered for the 2010 polls -- 191,872 were listed in December and 857,971 from January to March. This is about half of the projected new voters turnout for 2010 and we expect the numbers to rise in the months to come," Comelec Elections and Barangay Affairs Department (EBAD) director Teopisto Elnas said.
 Although only 44,008 million are registered voters as of March -- down from 48 million voters in the 2007 elections-- Elnas told Inquirer.net that the Comelec was still "on track" to meet its goal of having about 50 million on its list for the 2010.
 Aside from the new registered voters, the Comelec is also moving to reactivate the records of previous ones, Elnas said.
 Overall, the Election Registration Board (ERB) approved 1.337 million applications for registration, including 46,300 applications for reactivation of voters' records from December to March, said Elnas.
 Elnas said that the figure for reactivation seemed to a "bit low", but "we hope to see this increase as the registration deadline on October draws near."

"We are also stepping up registration efforts through satellite registration and registration on Saturdays and holidays that fall on weekdays that our Filipino citizens must take advantage of to avoid long lines toward the deadline."
 As with previous voter turnout, Elnas noted the National Capital Region and Southern Tagalog-Calabarzon had the highest from December to March at 169, 500 and 154,689 new voters, while the Cordillera Administrative Region had the smallest at 8,825.
 Aside from new voters and reactivation of records, the approved applications include reinstatement or transfer of records and change or correction of entries.
 Meanwhile, a voter's record could be deactivated if he or she failed to cast ballots in the past two elections, was excluded from voting as ordered, was sentenced after having committed a crime vs national security, lost his or her Filipino citizenship or died.
 A voter with deactivated registration records cannot vote in the next elections and must apply for reactivation of records first, said Elnas.
 Deadline for voters' registration is October 31 to give Comelec enough time to prepare the voters' list, voter distribution per precinct and special paper ballots for the 2010 automated elections. (Inquirer.net)

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