

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

# NV Senator Ensign not inclined to support...

**PAGE A1** ◀  
not inclined to support a move to increase the federal benefits of these former soldiers.

"If they got the same amount of money as veterans here, we would basically allow them to live at a much higher level of standard of living than any veterans that we provide for in the United States," Ensign said.

The senator spoke during a monthly luncheon of the Asian Chamber of Commerce at the Palace Station Hotel, Las Vegas, last Friday, May 29.

Rozita Lee, vice chair of the National Federation of Filipino American Associations, had asked Sen. Ensign what he would do with regard to the campaign for full equity for Filipino World War II veterans living in the Philippines.

In a separate interview, Lee said the Filipino community is disappointed over disparate compensations for veterans based on where they currently reside.

"Why should there be different compensations made to veterans because of where they live?" she told the *Asian Journal*.

"They fought in the same war side by side with American soldiers, caught the same bullets the enemy fired, fought and died for America. They were promised by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt that they would be

accorded the same benefits as American soldiers," she added.

It will be recalled that during deliberations in Congress early this year, Sen. Ensign voted against giving these war veterans the same amount as those living in the United States.

As a result, the US government authorized one-time lump sum payments of \$15,000 each to Filipino World War II veterans who are US citizens as well as those residing in the United States. Veterans who fought in the same war, but are currently living in the Philippines were given a smaller amount of only \$9,000.

The financial compensation package was part of the Obama administration's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act which was signed into law last February.

Filipino-American groups questioned the vote of the Nevada Republican senator whose paternal grandfather was born in the Philippines and is half-Filipino. This makes Ensign one-eighth Filipino.

At the luncheon last Friday, May 29, Sen. Ensign asked members of the Asian Chamber of Commerce to understand his vote.

"I just didn't think it was right. That is why I voted against it. I hope you understand," he said. He added, "I didn't think that

the money we were giving veterans living in the Philippines was right because the standard of living is a lot less there."

It was almost 60 years ago when US President Franklin Roosevelt promised Filipinos military benefits if they fight as soldiers with the American military against the invading Japanese during World War II. However, in 1946, the US Congress passed the Rescission Act which stripped Filipinos of the benefits they were promised. Of the 66 countries allied with the United States during the war, only Filipinos were denied military benefits.

Since then, several bills have been introduced in Congress in an attempt to give full equity to these Filipino war veterans.

It was only last February that the US government finally set aside \$198 million for benefits of Filipino veterans. Of the over 200,000 Filipinos who fought alongside American soldiers 60 years ago, fewer than 18,000 are alive today.

But several Filipino-American groups are still working to give full equity to these veterans and their families. The National Alliance for Filipino Veterans Equity is spearheading the campaign. (Dymphna Calica-LaPutt)

# Chiz, Loren, Noli top vice presidential poll

**PAGE 1** ◀

(two percent), Isabela Gov. Grace Padaca (one percent), and Finance Secretary Margarito Teves (one percent).

Pulse Asia said less than one in 10 Filipinos (six percent) is not inclined to vote for any of the possible vice presidential bets listed in this survey.

The survey found that Escudero topped the list of vice presidential bets in Metro Manila (36 percent) and Class ABC (30 percent).

In Luzon and Classes D and E, the top candidates are Escudero, Legarda and De Castro.

In the Visayas, these three individuals along with Pangilinan and Binay registered practically the same double-digit voter preferences (11 percent to 21 percent).

In Mindanao, around the same percentages (13 percent to 23 percent) expressed support for the vice presidential bids of De Castro, Escudero, Legarda and Pangilinan.

"Between February and May 2009, there are no significant changes in the voter preferences of all individuals included in the vice presidential probe," the survey firm said.

"Nonetheless, marginal improvements are registered by Binay (+4 percentage points) and De Castro (+3 percentage points) while there is a slight decline (-3 percentage points) in Sen. Estrada's overall voter preference," Pulse Asia said.

**Senatorial preferences**

Meanwhile, 14 out of the 65 personalities included in the survey for senatorial candidates have a "statistical chance" of winning in the May 2010 senatorial elections if the elections were held last June 3, the Pulse Asia survey showed.

Leading the list of "senatoriables" was Sen. Manuel Roxas II whose overall voter preference (49.5 percent) translates to a statistical ranking of 1st to 2nd places, the pollster said.

Roxas was followed by Estrada (46 percent),

Sen. Pia Cayetano (43.5 percent), Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago (43.1 percent), Senator Revilla (41.4 percent), Sen. Jamby Madrigal (40.9 percent), former Senate president Franklin Drilon (38.7 percent), National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Secretary-General Ralph Recto (36.2 percent), Atty. Aquilino Pimentel III (31.9 percent), Binay (30.5 percent), Dangerous Drugs Board head Vicente Sotto III (29.8 percent), former senator Sergio Osmeña III (29.4 percent), Gordon (25.4 percent), and Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile (25.1 percent).

Pulse Asia said almost all Filipinos have at least one favored senatorial candidate. Only 4.1 percent were not inclined to vote for any of the individuals included in this survey's senatorial probe.

Pulse Asia said public interest in the May 2010 senatorial race continues to be high with Filipinos, naming a mean of nine and a median of 11 (out of a maximum of 12) of their preferred candidates for the Senate.

"Mean figures range from eight to 10 while median figures vary from eight to 12 across the survey's geographic areas and socio-demographic groupings. At least 48 percent of those surveyed already have a full senatorial ticket in mind at this time, identifying 12 names for the 12 available Senate positions," Pulse Asia explained.

The other personalities that were included in the survey were: Optical Media Board chairman Edu Manzano (21.4 percent), news anchor Ted Failon (20.4 percent), former senator and health secretary Juan Flavio (20.4 percent), Sen. Manuel Lapid (19.8 percent), Bukidnon Rep. Teofisto Guingona III (17.5 percent), Muntinlupa Rep. Rozzano Biazon (15.7 percent), former senator Ernesto Maceda (15.4 percent), Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) chairman Manuel Pangilinan (14.4 percent). ■

# Villar tops SWS survey; No TRO vs ethics probe

**PAGE 1** ◀

third place with 14 percent each. They were followed by Sen. Loren Legarda at 10 percent; Sen. Mar Roxas, nine percent; Sen. Panfilo Lacson, six percent; Makati City Mayor Jejomar Binay, two percent; and Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chairman Bayani Fernando, one percent.

Three percent of the respondents were undecided on their choice.

The SWS survey was different from the report made by Pulse Asia last Monday, June 1 that showed De Castro as the top pick with 18 percent of votes culled from 1,200 respondents.

"We are nonetheless elated at the results," NP spokesman Gilbert Remulla said.

Remulla defended the SWS survey, pointing out that it has a higher number of respondents at 7,000, or four times the usual 1,500 respondents used by other survey firms.

He said the NP remains confident of the accuracy of the SWS survey.

**'We get used to it'**

Villar is facing a complaint stemming from allegations made by Lacson, who accused the former Senate president of double insertion in the 2008 national budget to finance a road project that would benefit the housing projects in Las Piñas and Parañaque City that he owns.

Villar has remained firm in his decision not to attend the proceedings while reserving his right to defend himself.

He said it would be pointless to attend the hearing since he would not get a fair trial from the committee of his peers, composed mostly of presidential wannabes keen on easing him out of contention in the 2010 presidential elections.

Las Piñas Rep. Cynthia Villar said most senators are ganging up on her husband because they know he is a strong contender.

At the same time, Mrs. Villar lamented the dip in the latest Pulse Asia survey.

She said the survey was not really fair, adding the ongoing probe on her husband somehow influenced the pollsters.

The Las Piñas lawmaker went on to accuse Sen. Jamby Madrigal of lying in her allegations against her husband.

Madrigal discussed before the Senate committee of how Villar's real estate corporations supposedly benefited in the millions from the road right-of-way acquisition along two key areas at the C-5 Road extension project.

Allies of Villar in the minority, led by Sen. Aquilino Pimentel, have clashed with their colleagues over the Senate ethics committee hearing the accusations against Villar. The minority senators pointed

out their grievances and concerns over the membership of the ethics committee led by Senator Lacson.

The committee, however, proceeded with the hearing and found the complaint of Madrigal against Villar credible and substantial to proceed with the hearings and receive evidence of the parties involved.

This prompted Pimentel to file a petition before the Supreme Court (SC) questioning the legality of the rules and procedures of the committee of the whole to investigate Villar.

Pimentel urged the SC to issue a temporary restraining order (TRO) against the Senate and halt the investigation until the issues are threshed out.

The High Court, however, ordered members of the committee of the whole to comment on the petition of Pimentel.

**No TRO yet**

SC spokesman Jose Midas Marquez said the High Court has not issued a temporary restraining order (TRO) to grant Pimentel's petition.

He said the SC's decision not to issue the TRO means that it "has not seen the urgency of the petition."

Marquez stressed the SC saw the need to first resolve "significant issues" that have been raised but were not discussed in the petition.

The High Court has ordered Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile and the other senators comprising the committee of the whole to submit their comment on the petition filed by Pimentel within 10 days from last June 3.

Enrile promptly submitted a 38-page comment, saying there was no grave abuse of discretion on the part of the Senate to proceed with its investigation against an erring member.

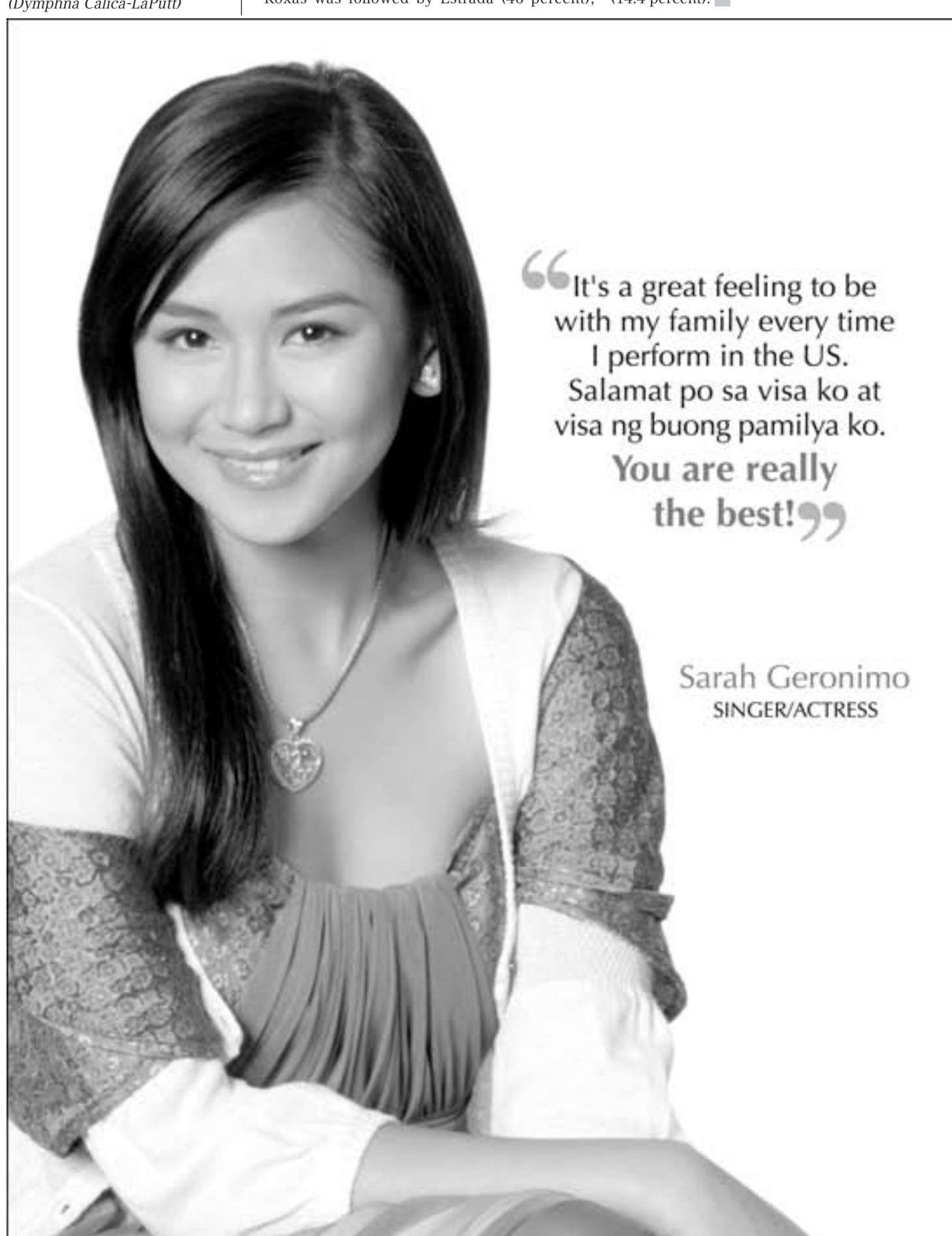
Enrile argued the Senate with its internal rules and procedures should not be subject to judicial review under the principle of separation of powers of the three branches of government.

Marquez, however, clarified there still is a possibility that a TRO would be issued, depending on the answers and arguments presented before the court.

He added the SC was aware that the Senate proceeded with its investigation on Villar notwithstanding the filing of the petition.

Pimentel filed the petition before the SC on May 28 along with Senators Joker Arroyo, Francis Pangilinan, Pia Cayetano and Alan Peter Cayetano.

They argued the transfer of the complaint filed by Sen. Madrigal from the ethics committee to the committee of the whole on vote by 12 senators violated Villar's constitutional right to equal protection of the law. ■



“It's a great feeling to be with my family every time I perform in the US. Salamat po sa visa ko at visa ng buong pamilya ko. You are really the best!”

Sarah Geronimo  
SINGER/ACTRESS

To schedule a phone or in-person consultation, call

Toll free 1 (866) 487-3465

1 (866) GURFINKEL

MICHAEL  
**GURFINKEL**  
LAW OFFICES

A Full Service Immigration Law Firm

www.gurfinkel.com

LOS ANGELES • SAN FRANCISCO • NEW YORK • PHILIPPINES

Michael J. Gurfinkel is licensed, and an active member of the State Bar of California and New York. All immigration services are provided by, or under the supervision of an active member of the State Bar of California. Each case is different. The information contained herein, including testimonials, "Success Stories" or endorsements are of general nature, and not intended to apply to any particular case, and do not constitute a prediction, warranty, guarantee or legal advice regarding the outcome of your legal matter. No attorney-client relationship is, or shall be, established hereby.