Republic of the Philippines  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Quezon City  

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS  
First Regular Session  

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 1023  

Introduced by  
SENIOR CITIZEN Party-List  
Representative FRANCISCO "JUN" GAMBOA-DATOL, JR.

RESOLUTION

CALLING FOR THE EARLY RELEASE OF SENIOR CITIZEN INMATES WHO ARE AGED SEVENTY (70) AND ABOVE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR PAROLE

WHEREAS, according to a study done by the American Civil Liberties Union, inaction to reduce prison population in jails will lead to a significant number of Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) related deaths and infections of prisoners, prison staff, and those persons who live in the surrounding communities of prison systems.¹

WHEREAS, the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime ("UNODC") found that prisoners suffered from a heightened risk from COVID-19 due to the systemic cramped accommodations, poor hygiene, ventilation and nutrition, and insufficient health-care services in prisons which constrain the ability of the prison's management to control the virus and thus significantly increase the risk for infection, amplification and spread of COVID-19.²

WHEREAS, Globally, if the current conditions in prisons continue unmitigated, the estimated 600,000 turnover rate of people who go in and out of prisons can translate into can translate into 10.6 million potential carriers per year. Thus, becoming possible flashpoints for the COVID-19's outbreak and aggravate the spread of the virus to the public.³

WHEREAS, senior citizens aged 70 and above suffer from a COVID-19 fatality rate of almost 14%.

WHEREAS, in the Philippines, the The Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) announced on June 11, 2020 that 745 prisoners and 125 of its personnel have already tested positive for the virus.

WHEREAS, the high incidence of COVID-19 in Philippines prisons coupled with the heightened risk of fatality of COVID-19 due to circumstances inside prisons and the increased vulnerability of senior citizens, puts our senior citizens in disproportionately high risk of contracting and becoming a fatality to COVID-19.

WHEREAS, inaction of the government to protect our incarcerated senior citizens who are aged 70 and above from the threat of COVID-19 would expose them to a level of suffering that is beyond what is unavoidable and inherent in incarceration. Thus, amounting to a violation of their right against cruel, unhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment under Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Article III, Section 19 (1) of the 1987 Philippine Constitution.

WHEREAS, to protect our incarcerated senior citizens and have their rights upheld, our government should facilitate their early release either by parole or pardon, provided that they are not disqualified for parole as provided for by law.

WHEREAS, it is the constitutional and statutory duty of Congress prioritize and safeguard the welfare of incarcerated senior citizens through a humane and responsive program for their early release.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the appropriate committee of the House of Representatives conducts a review and investigation, in aid of legislation, over the possibility of extending pardon or parole to our incarcerated senior citizens aged 70 and above who are eligible for parole under the law.

Adopted,

HON. FRANCISCO R. DATOL
SENIOR-CITIZEN Party-List