
Drug tests in schools should include teachers, too - solon

FIDEL JIMENEZ, GMA News.TV

Article posted January 14, 2009 - 11:18 PM

MANILA, Philippines – Teachers and professors should be included in the random drug testing all schools that was ordered by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, a lawmaker said Wednesday.

In a report in GMA News' "24 Oras", Cavite Rep. Elpidio Barzaga, a member of the House Oversight Committee on Dangerous Drugs, said the random drug test should not be limited only to students.

"It should also include teachers and professors because it is a common knowledge that there are professors and teachers who are also drug dependents," said Barzaga.

Muntinlupa Rep. Rozanno "Ruffy" Biazon, also a member of the committee, expressed doubts that the random drug test for students would solve the country's problem on illegal drugs.

"Drug testing would only catch the user not pusher," Biazon said.

In his text message to GMA News.TV, Biazon said that while government's quick response on the problem on illegal drug is commendable, it is still incomplete to eradicate the social menace.

"The latest action plan addresses the pillars of justice – community, law enforcement, prosecution and the court – but left out what happens after conviction of the accused," the lawmaker said.

Biazon urged the government to address the problem on prison system which he said suffers from inadequate operational budget and low personnel morale due to low pay.

"Bribe money from convicted drug traffickers enables them to live comfortable lives behind bars. And for some, business even goes on. As a result, the panel aspect is rendered diminished," he said.

In her report, Tina Panganiban-Perez said Paranaque Rep. Roilo Golez also expressed reservation on the mandatory drug test on students as it may violate one's right to self-incrimination.

"I understand from some constitutionalists that there maybe some constitutional issue here with respect to right to self incrimination," he said.

For his part, Cebu Rep Antonio Cuenco, vice chairman of the oversight committee, said authorities cannot force student to undergo drug test.

"They should have to get permission of the students to allow a drug test in his body, if the student objects he can't be compelled," the Cebu lawmaker said.

But Aurora Rep. Juan Sonny Angara, a lawyer, believed that President Arroyo's order for mandatory drug test is a valid exercise of the state and does not violate any fundamental constitutional rights. - **GMA News.TV**