

UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



June 7, 2012

EDWARD R. ROYCE
Fortieth District-California

His Excellency Benigno S. Aquino III
President of the Republic of the Philippines
Manila, Philippines

Dear Mr. President:

I write you as an enthusiast for the revived Philippines-United States relationship. Earlier this year, I held a congressional hearing to profile and advance the relationship, the first in years. I have pushed for greater U.S.-Philippine security cooperation, including the U.S. provision of excess military items to your government. I have also been a vocal proponent of the SAVE Act, which promises to mutually benefit our economies.

Looking ahead, a key challenge in furthering our relationship is promoting the rule of law in the Philippines. Your administration has won applause for taking strong actions against corruption and other illegalities. I think you would agree, though, that this is just the beginning of what must be accomplished for the Philippines to prosper.

Several Filipino-Americans have brought to my attention the practice in the Philippines of sole bidding on public land sales. In one case, a prominent land developer reportedly acquired a substantially-sized public property in Antipolo in this manner, effectively surrounding an abutting property owned by a Filipino-American, Mr. Joey Quinto of southern California. Consequently, the developer has been able to deny access to this neighboring property, through physical intimidation, depressing its value. Appeals to authorities have proven fruitless.

Many Filipino-Americans want to help the Philippines develop by investing in your country. However, if property abuses continue, I fear that all foreign investment will subside, harming economic growth, and ultimately, the U.S.-Philippine relationship.

Establishing sound titling and other commercial practices are challenging but critical, for both economic development and social stability. To achieve these goals, as well as justice for Mr. Quinto, I respectfully appeal to you to open an investigation of his case with the intent of nullifying any inappropriate transactions by the land developer. I believe that this would signal that the Philippines is entering a new and welcomed era.

Sincerely,


EDWARD R. ROYCE