

PRESS STATEMENT
SENATOR M.A. MADRIGAL
21 FEBRUARY 2009

***NO WATERED DOWN VERSION OF THE MAGNA CARTA FOR
WOMEN***

The statement attributed to Senator Pia Cayetano saying that the Magna Carta of Women is being “watered down” by the Bicameral Conference Committee is untrue and unfair. This statement displays Sen Cayetano’s ignorance of the basic intent and provisions of the Magna Carta. It is a pro-life, pro-Filipina, pro-family and pro-women empowerment. It is not a health bill.

The Magna Carta of Women is intended to protect women’s rights, and ensure respect, particularly for the marginalized. In view of the of the recent developments and strong and persistent opposition to the bill, I have taken it upon myself to further discuss the provisions of the Magna Carta of Women, not only with the Senate panel, which includes Sen. Pimentel, but, also with members of the House panel and other concerned groups. My purpose in doing so is not to “water-down” the Magna Carta of Women. On the contrary, I feel that there is a need to further refine the Magna Carta to ensure expeditious approval by the Bicameral Conference Committee without sacrificing content and substance .

Whilst I laud Sen. Pia Cayetano’s public statement to push for more improvement in the quality of the public health system especially with reproductive health services for women in order to bring down maternal mortality rate, I believe that she should have addressed this when she was still the Chairman on the Committee on Health. She had the chance to hear many bills to help reduce maternal mortality but she chose not to until now this bill continue to languish. I hope that the new chairman on the Committee on Health, Sen Loren Legarda will begin to address this matter.

Clearly Sen Caytano is confusing the MCW with health issues that can only be addressed by the committee on Health and not the Committee on Youth, Women and Family Relations, which I chair at the moment.

I wholeheartedly accepted the unenviable position of defending the Magna Carta of Women and have done so ardently to the best of my abilities. Be assured that, despite the obstacles and scorn that I have faced, my commitment in ensuring its approval into law in the form that would fully address the needs of women remains.