

'Tax revolt' vs TRAIN in public markets set

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Militant groups will hold a "tax revolt" in different public markets all over Metro Manila today to protest against the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) Act.

Simultaneous protests

In a statement, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) said the protest would start at 10 a.m. at Trabajo Market in Sampaloc, Manila.

At 4 p.m., simultaneous rallies will be held at Edsa-Muñoz Market in Quezon City; Alabang Public Market in Muntinlupa City; Pasig Palengke in Pasig City; Marikina Public Market in Marikina City; Plaza Salamanca in Kalaw, Manila; and Tala and Pajo Markets in Caloocan City.

"Simultaneous protests will be held in different public markets all over Metro Manila to register their rage against tax-hikes, which are already burdening the shoulders of poor Filipinos. The protests [today] will mark the start of the series of protest ac-

tions against TRAIN," Bayan said.

Lack of quorum

This developed as House of Representatives Deputy Speaker Fredenil Castro on Sunday downplayed the Makabayan bloc's Supreme Court petition against the TRAIN Act on the ground of lack of quorum and proper voting during its Dec. 13 ratification.

"That is a very flimsy excuse. That is a very shallow reason," Castro said.

In an interview on Sunday with radio station dzBB, Castro said the petitioners—ACT

Teachers Rep. Antonio Tinio, Bayan Muna Rep. Carlos Isagani Zarate and Anakpawis Rep. Ariel Casilao—would have the burden of proof to show that there was really no quorum at the time.

Although the live video feed of the Dec. 13 session seemed to show a lack of warm bodies and a hasty approval of the bill, Castro said the minutes of the House proceedings would still show the validity of the ratification of the bicameral report.

"The best evidence that may be accepted there on whether or not there was a quorum is the

roll call result itself, what we call the minutes of our proceedings at the House of Representatives," he said.

Minutes of the proceedings

"They could not just run and shout and say there is no quorum. Let us consult the minutes of the proceedings and that will be determinative of whether or not there was quorum," he added.

Although Castro admitted the Supreme Court could look into the possible violation of the House's internal rules even if it was a co-equal branch of government, he

said the court would "always refer to the minutes of the proceeding."

"If the plenary had no ruling if the quorum was properly questioned or not ... there is always a presumption of regularity in the exercise of official function. Unless, however, that you present a contrary evidence," he said.

Tinio had claimed that there were barely 10 people on the floor when Deputy Speaker Raneo Abu, who presided over the session, approved the motion of Deputy Majority Leader Arthur Defensor Jr. to ratify the bicameral conference committee report. INQ

* TAX REFORM FOR ACCELERATION
AND INCLUSION (TRAIN)

* TAXATION