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Workplace romance needs guidelines, labor group says

By **LESLIE ANN G. AQUINO**

For a labor group, falling in love with your boss is okay.

The Associated Labor Unions-Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (ALU-TUCP) said there is no government policy governing workplace romance in the country and none that prevents an employee from falling in love with his or her boss either.

And since there is no government policy governing workplace romance between co-employees or between a rank-and-file employee falling in love with her boss or vice versa, ALU-TUCP Spokesperson Alan Tanjusay said the matter of "workplace romance" issue is controlled by company's management prerogative.

He added some employers even use or create such prerogative to lay off, demote, or transfer their employees.

That is why the ALU-TUCP said they are calling on the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) to step in and issue guidelines on inter- and intra-office workplace romance policy to prevent abusive employers from such oppressive management prerogatives.

"The law is vague and subject to many interpretations. Therefore, many employers tend to demote,

transfer, or lay off their employee on the basis of having a relationship with their boss or with their co-employee—particularly those who are not unionized," Tanjusay said in a statement.

"Though judicial jurisprudences had always been in favor of complainant workers, the DOLE regulation can help minimize employees and management from strained relations and physical, financial and emotional exasperation of going to the courts for those felt injustice," he added.

In its policy engagement with the DOLE, the ALU-TUCP maintained that the company policy should allow and not prevent workplace romance.

Tanjusay stressed that workplace romance should not be the cause for dismissal, demotion, transfer, or diminution of wages and benefits.

"The management prerogative's policy on intra-office workplace romance should not be restrictive. While we respect such prerogative, the most extreme the policy can do is transfer an employee to another division or department," he said.

The ALU-TUCP also maintained that workplace romance company policy only covers the couple's professional relationship from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. office hour period.

* DEPT. OF LABOR & EMPLOYMENT