



September 10, 2019

HONORABLE RISA HONTIVEROS
Chairperson
Committee on Women, Children
Family Relations and Gender Equality
Senate of the Philippines
GSIS Bldg., Financial Center
Diokno Blvd., Pasay City

Dear **Senator Hontiveros**:


This refers to the request of your Committee for the Department's comments on **Senate Bill No. 504** entitled: "**An Act Recognizing the Civil Effects of Church Annulment Decree**", introduced by Senator Pia S. Cayetano, which seeks to recognize the civil effects of church annulment decrees. Also, provides for the determination of the legal status of children of the spouse who have acquired church annulment decrees; mode of liquidation, partition, and distribution of their properties; and the mode of delivery of the presumptive legitime.


In line with this, may we share with you some possible implications of the proposed measure:

1. A Decree of Annulment, whether issued by the state or religious groups would necessarily affect the status, custody and support of common children and the delivery of their presumptive legitimes, among others. Hence, for clarity, the proposed bill should elaborate the specific effects of a Church-Decreed Annulment on the children;
2. The grounds and procedures for a civil annulment may be different from those of a church annulment. The ground for annulment before the courts may not be a ground for annulment before the church. Among others, this may result to forum-shopping, where a spouse would seek recourse before the venue which is more likely to grant the annulment; and
3. Step-by-step procedures to be undertaken prior to, during, and after the dissolution of a Church-Decreed Annulment may be necessary to guide the parties.

For the Committee's consideration.

Very truly yours,


ROLANDO JOSELITO D. BAUTISTA
Secretary
Date: _____

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