

05 July 2018

REPRESENTATIVE BERNADETTE HERRERA-DY

Chairperson
Committee on Women and Gender Equality
House of Representatives
Quezon City

Dear **Chairperson Herrera-Dy**:

This refers to the request of your Committee for our Department's supplemental position paper on House Bill No. 6595 or An Act Recognizing the Civil Partnership of Couples, Providing for their Rights and Obligations particularly on Section 12 – Adoption Rights.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development reiterates its support for initiatives that safeguard the equality of all individuals regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity as well as the right of children to have a loving, safe and secure home environment.

As indicated in our position paper dated 12 February 2018, DSWD allows lesbians and gays to adopt as single individuals as long as they pass the regular assessment of our social workers with regard to eligibility and motivation to provide parental care. We see this as an initial step to equality and a recognition that there are emerging familial set-ups aside from the traditional ones.

For practical and reasonable purposes, may we present these proposals to protect same sex couples under civil partnership and the children under their care and guardianship:

1. On Section 9 - Benefits and Protection of Civil Partnerships: On top of the list, we hope that this section confer the "next-of-kin" status which will grant automatic spousal benefits to individuals under civil partnerships similar to those granted to their married counterparts under existing laws.
2. On Section 12 – Adoption Rights: This section may be re-titled to "Alternative Child Placement" to highlight that, aside from adoption, other alternative parental care arrangements for children such as foster care and legal guardianship may be availed of subject to existing laws.

Lastly, may we recommend that the bill solely focus on same sex couples since inclusion of heterosexual couples may further complicate the implementation of the Act and dilute the essence why recognition of civil partnership is being pushed in the first place.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "VIRGINIA N. OROGO". The signature is stylized with a prominent vertical stroke on the left and several sharp peaks on the right.

VIRGINIA N. OROGO
Acting Secretary