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[Press Release] Filipino Freethinkers File Verified Opposition vs. Ang Prolife Partylist at COMELEC

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(June 18, 2012) — The Filipino Freethinkers (FF) are waiting for the results of a verified opposition they filed a week ago against the partylist accreditation of Ang Prolife. On May 31, FF, together with representatives of Catholics for Reproductive Health (C4RH), attended the COMELEC partylist hearing for Ang Prolife.

During the hearing, Ang Prolife representative Eric Manalang claimed that he was representing “the structure of families in the Philippines and the youth that belong to them, and more particularly the OFW families who are the most dysfunctional part of the family structure of Philippines,” even denying at first that their group had any specific plans regarding the RH Bill.

“Eric Manalang lied under oath,” said Red Tani, president of FF. “He did this to hide the fact that Ang Prolife represents conservative anti-choice advocates affiliated with the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP). They are neither marginalized nor underrepresented, which is why Manalang had to commit perjury, claiming that they would represent ‘the family structure,’ which is not even a concrete constituency.”

COMELEC gave potential oppositors 10 days to file their opposition, so last Monday (June 11), FF filed their verified opposition (posted below). Its Final Word summarizes FF’s opposition:

[Filipino Freethinkers] protest Ang Prolife’s party-list petition on the ground that its accreditation would make a mockery of the party-list system. Ang Prolife and its members are neither marginalized nor underrepresented. They are closely affiliated with the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines and the leadership of the Philippine Roman Catholic Church, which already has more social and political clout than it deserves. Together, the CBCP and so-called prolife groups hold enough power over the government

that politicians routinely pander to one church at the expense of all others, and of those with no church at all. There are already numerous blatant violations of secularism, and should Ang Prolife get a seat in Congress, there is no doubt that there will be even more.

In Ang Bagong Bayani, the Supreme Court describes the role to the Honorable Commission when it comes to registration of party-list organizations in the following manner: “In the end, the role of the Comelec is to see to it that only those Filipinos who are ‘marginalized and underrepresented’ become members of Congress under the party-list system, Filipino-style.” The Oppositors ask the Honorable Commission to heed the words of the Supreme Court.

The oppositors trust that the Honorable Commission would not be so timid so as not to strike down attempts of sectarian groups masquerading as sectoral organizations to make unnecessary and prohibited inroads in what ought to be purely secular political activities. Oppositors ask that Ang Prolife’s petition for registration as party-list organization be dismissed.

The verified opposition, with names and addresses removed for privacy, is posted online at <http://filipinofreethinkers.org/angprolifeopposition>.