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Press Release  
August 14, 2012



## SEN. VICENTE C. SOTTO III Turno en Contra SB 2865

### PART I

I stand up for life, Mr. President, my esteemed colleagues. This chamber, the senate, is an institution that traces its lineage to the political structure of ancient Rome, where matters of policy were debated and decided in a Council of Elders - Senatus Populus Que Romanus/the Senate and the People of Rome. At that time, as now, issues were hotly argued, and sometimes, lives and honors put at risk, and scrutiny.

Our times, our chamber, and our persons, will be defined and judged, not only by the bills that become laws, but also by the bills that are lost and rejected. Past circumstances defined the senate of their time. During the Commonwealth period, this chamber was defined by the issue of Philippine independence when my grandfather and namesake sat as senator, often clashing with then President Manuel Luis Quezon; during the early years of the Republic after the Second World War, this chamber was defined when it favored Parity Rights for Americans, then popular, but which historians later considered a sell-out; during the 1970s, this chamber imploded with the declaration of Martial Law; and after the EDSA Revolution of 1986 and thereafter, this chamber was resurrected and was distinguished by a new-found nationalism with its rejection of American military bases in 1991.

Today, we will define ourselves again, Mr. President, as we decide whether we shall adopt a measure that is dictated by outside cultures, forces and philosophies, or we shall be true to our Filipino reverence for human life, the solidarity of the family, and the right of parents to determine their family size without interference from the state. We have heard these past months the sponsors of Senate Bill No. 2865 entitled An Act Providing for a National Policy on Reproductive Health and Population Development popularly known as the Reproductive Health or the RH Bill.

Ang sabi nila ay ang mga sumusunod:

1. The RH Bill will save the lives of the mother and the unborn;
2. The RH Bill will provide Filipinos with information on reproductive health which they can use to make informed and intelligent decisions;
3. The RH Bill will provide Filipinos with access to health care facilities and skilled health professionals;
4. The RH Bill does not promote or legalize abortion;
5. The RH Bill does not impose one mode of family planning method on every Filipino woman and that every person will be allowed to choose the method suitable to her needs and her religious belief;
6. The RH Bill does not limit the size of the Filipino family;
7. The RH Bill does not promote sexual promiscuity among the Filipino youth. Under Section 75 of the Rules of the Senate, upon the closing of the period of parliamentary interpellation on a measure, a senator can take the floor for or against the bill as part of the period of general debate. I speak now against said bill, Mr. President, which we commonly refer to as Turno en Contra. I will present my opposition to the RH bill in four (4) parts, starting today, August 13. I hope to finish the first portion today and the remaining chapters in the coming days. I seek the kind indulgence of this august chamber to bear with me.

I strongly believe that Senate Bill 2865 is not necessary, not beneficial and not practical for our people. It will not serve the common good and, therefore, should be rejected. Deceptive information, as well as unreliable and distorted statistics, have been for the arguments of the RH bill. My main objections to the Reproductive Health Bill are as follows:

1. The RH Bill violates Philippine sovereignty, the Philippine Constitution and existing penal laws;
2. The RH bill is detrimental to the health of a pregnant mother and puts the life of the unborn on the line;
3. The RH Bill violates our financial independence and the autonomy of local governments; and,
4. The RH Bill transgresses Filipino culture and family values.

### DISCUSSION

Article II, Section 12, of the Philippine Constitution provides: "The state shall EQUALLY protect the life of the mother and THE LIFE OF THE UNBORN FROM CONCEPTION." In the Records of the Constitutional Commission that drafted the 1987 Constitution, Commissioner Bernardo Villegas in his sponsorship speech dated September 12, 1986, on the article mandating the State to equally protect the life of the mother and the life of the unborn from the moment of conception, stated:

"The first question that needs to be answered: is the fertilized ovum alive? Biology categorically says yes, the fertilized ovum is alive."

Malinaw po na napag-usapan sa pagpanday ng ating Konstitusyon kung kailan nagiging tao ang tao. Itong katotohanan na ito ngayon ang binubuwag at nais palitan ng mga nagtutulak ng RH bill. Sa katunayan, ang isa sa mga nagsusulong ng RH bill, ang International Planned Parenthood Federation or IPPF ang nag-atas sa mga medical associations na iayon at palitan ang depinisyon ng pagbubuntis magmula sa tinatawag na konsepsyon at gawing implantasyon. In the book entitled "Deadly Deception" by James Sedlak, it says that to avoid arguments on the issue on whether contraceptives are abortifacients or not, in the late 1960's IPPF and its affiliates got some medical associations to define a pregnancy as beginning at implantation and not conception.

Now let me go back to the deliberations on Article 2 Section 12 of our Constitution. The second question raised was: Is the alive fertilized ovum, human? Again the answer is a categorical yes. Genetics gives an equally strong 'yes.' At the moment of conception, the nuclei of the ovum and the sperm rupture. As this happens 23 chromosomes from the ovum combine with 23 chromosomes of the sperm to form a total of 46 chromosomes. A chromosome count of 46 is found only--and I repeat, only--in a human being. Therefore, the fertilized ovum is a human being."

Biology and neonatal experts have also spoken on the beginning of human life and let me quote a few of them. "Individual human life begins at conception and is progressive, ongoing continuum until natural death. This is a fact so well established that no intellectually honest physician in full command of modern medical knowledge would dare to deny it. There is no authority in medicine or biology who can be cited to refute this concept. (Source: D.J. Moran, M.D., J.D. Gorby, M.D., and T.W. Hilgers, M.D., "Abortion in the Supreme Court: Death Becomes a Way of Life." Abortion and Social Justice, Sheed and Ward, 1974.)

Medical textbook authors have also confirmed that the "formation, maturation and meeting of a male and female sex cell are all preliminary to their actual union into a combined cell, or zygote, which definitely marks the beginning of a new individual." (Source: Lesley Arey. Development Anatomy, 7th Edition, 1974. Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders Publishers.)

"Every time a sperm cell and ovum unite, a new being is created which is alive and will continue to live unless its death is brought about by some specific condition." (Source: E.L. Potter, M.D., and J.M. Craig, M.D. "Pathology of the Fetus and the Infant," 3rd Edition. Chicago: Year Book Medical Publishers, 1975.)

Furthermore, Dr. Oscar Tinio, President of the Philippine Medical Association (PMA), has stated that "life begins at fertilization" and anything that prevents the fertilized ovum from being implanted in the uterus is already considered "abortive".

If you do not completely agree with me and these authorities, and decide to believe in foreign studies sponsored and funded by Allan Guttmacher Research Institute studies, I would advise that why don't we try asking our own conscience as the unborn child speaks to you in this video.

(Show video)

If you think that conception starts at implantation as what the proponents of this bill want us to accept as true, and not from fertilization, then you have just deprived the baby that you saw of its right to be born. Now that it is established when human life begins, let me now go to the question on how these contraceptives act as abortifacients. Several studies and authorities have shown that hormonal contraceptives act as abortifacients. I firmly believe that those who deny the abortifacient properties of the pill and the IUD have unjustifiably transferred the beginning of life from fertilization to implantation.

My point is this, ovulation and fertilization can still occur despite pills intake. They do not prevent ovulation 100% of the time and thus, fertilization can still occur. There are women with abnormal bleeding and test positive in pregnancy tests despite taking the pill.

Unfortunately, the pill-whether oral, patch or injectable- renders the uterus hostile to implantation. When the fertilized ovum is prevented from implanting in the uterus because of the effect of the pill, this ovum is expelled. This is plain and simple abortion. Morning after pills, on the other hand when taken in large doses within 72 hours after sexual intercourse, no longer prevents fertilization but implantation. In the case of the Intra-Uterine Device (IUD), it does not prevent ovulation, and so fertilization may occur several times in the span of time the device is in the womb of the woman. However, most fetuses will not be able to implant themselves because there is an "appliance" in the womb that prevents them from doing so. Isn't it that in science, we have the term, "matter occupies space"? Kung may umookupa na, pano pa makakapasok ang fetus sa bahay nya? Kung tayo nga na malalaki at matatanda na, maraming pa ring naririnig na nag-aagawan ng bahay, may nakatirang informal settlers at meron pang professional squatters na tinatawag... pero tayo, ipinaglalaman pa rin natin ang karapatan nating tumira doon. Itong mga fetus na ito, di sila makalaban sa mga foreign objects na umaagaw ng lugar nila. At ang mga pills na nagrenew ng bahay dapat nila, ginawa itong non-livable.

Ito ang dahilan kung bakit lubos kung tinutulan ang pagpasa ng RH bill. Hindi ko naman yata hahayaan na may maging batas na kikitil lamang sa mga buhay na walang kalaban-laban. Ano ang karapatan natin na isabatas ang pagdidistribute ng mga abortifacient pills at IUDs na ito, para lamang sa sinasabi nating reproductive health? Ito na lang ba ang nakikita nilang sagot o solusyon?

Kung tutuusin, hindi ito nakakatulong sa reproductive health ng mga kababaihan, sa katunayan nakakasira pa nga ito sa kanilang kalusugan. There are numerous side effects of contraceptives which unfortunately are not made known to the general public. Unahin natin ang side-effects ng pills. There are numerous studies showing its carcinogenic properties since the development of the synthetic estrogens in 1938 by Sir Edward Charles Dodds. The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) of the World Health Organization (WHO) announced on July 29, 2005 that after a thorough review of the published scientific literature, it has concluded that combined estrogen -progestogen oral contraceptives (and combined estrogen-progestogen menopausal therapy) are carcinogenic to humans (Group 1 category. This category is used when there is sufficient evidence of carcinogenicity in humans.) The listed major adverse effects of the pill on women are the following: Breast cancer, cervical cancer, liver cancer, premature hypertension and coronary artery disease resulting in heart attacks and strokes, thromboembolism/pulmonary embolism. Other adverse effects are decreased libido, infertility, leg cramps, gallstone formation, nausea, bloatedness, etc.

Next are the side effects of the IUD. Intrauterine devices have been said to have the following effects: Cramps, bleeding between periods, pelvic inflammatory disease, infertility and tear or hole in the uterus.

Even condoms pose a serious health risk. As pointed out by Sen. Lacson, the size of the pores in condoms is 5 microns. What is alarming is that the size of the HIV virus is 0.1 micron. There can still be transmission of the HIV virus even with the use of a condom because 0.1 micron will definitely pass through 5 microns. Even the U.S. government has withdrawn US\$2.6 million worth of grant to study condoms because an unacceptably high number of condom users probably would have been infected in such a study. No one wanted to take part in the study for fear of getting infected by the HIV virus so the U.S. government withdrew the grant.

Given all these harmful effects to women, are we going to allow our government to spend billions of money to purchase condoms, pills and IUDs for the sake of what they call "reproductive health"? Hindi ito ang sagot sa sinasabi nilang 11 mothers die every day, kung totoo man yang 11 mothers die everyday na yan. Kung maiipasa itong RH bill, malamang higit pa sa 11 mothers ang mamatay kada araw. Akala ko ang RH bill ay para sa ating mga kababaihan. Ngunit hindi ko maintindihan bakit sa pamamagitan ng RH bill, tayo pa ang magdagdag ng dahilan para dumami ang sakit nila. Kung magbibigay tayo ng pondo gamit ang buwis na binabayad ng ating mga mamamayan sa mga contraceptives na ito, dapat maglaan din tayo ng pondo para sa mga sakit na pwedeng idulot ng mga ito.

Actually, these contraceptives are not just detrimental to women and the unborn. They are scientifically proven to have damaging effects to children born from mothers who were using contraceptives prior to their pregnancy too. According, to Dr. Natasha Campbell-McBride MD, the use of the pill also causes severe gut dysbiosis. What is worse, drug induced gut imbalance is especially intractable and resistant to treatment either with probiotics or diet change. Gut imbalance brought on through use of the pill negatively impacts the ability to digest food and absorb nutrients. As a result, even if a woman eats spectacularly well during pregnancy, if she has been taking oral contraceptives for a period of time beforehand, it is highly likely that she and her baby are not reaping the full benefits of all this healthy food as the lack of beneficial flora in her gut preclude this from occurring. Pathogenic, opportunistic flora that take hold in the gut when the pill is used constantly produce toxic substances which are the by-products of their metabolism. These toxins leak into the woman's bloodstream and they have the potential to cross the placenta. Therefore, gut dysbiosis exposes the fetus to toxins. Not well known is also the fact that use of the pill depletes zinc in the body. Zinc is called "the intelligence mineral" as it is intimately involved in mental development.

Many could attest to the negative effects of these contraceptives to their children. Senator Lapid revealed during one of the interpellations of this measure that his wife became pregnant despite the use of contraceptives and thus was born their third child who turned out to be a "blue baby." He said that while they were told that the baby would live for many years if it manages to reach age 14, the baby succumbed to a heart attack at age nine. He and his wife attributed the death to the contraceptives that his wife took. Senator Lapid believes that contraceptives cause the increasing number of child abnormalities and genetic disorders such as cleft chin, multiple births, and conjoined or Siamese twins disorder, which were not that many before contraceptives were introduced.

(PERSONAL EXPERIENCE)