



Razor's Edge

By
Joe Mari Mercader
Executive Editor
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Let's Put an End to Frivolous Candidacies

NEW YORK, NY May 31 (PinoyGlobal) - Should it be comforting for constituents that incumbent congressmen and senators are free to frivolously run for elective offices without relinquishing their seats? Of course not! What makes them special to deserve the extraordinary privilege prejudicial to local officials who have to forfeit their positions before running for another office? This practice smacks of unfairness!

Sen. Manny Villar is a case in point: after being overwhelmingly repudiated by the people in the last elections, still he is senator. This leaves a bad taste in the mouth. Merely because other democracies subscribe to this unfair practice must we also ape them?

Villar went for the highest office of the land and lost. He must suffer the consequences of his defeat and observe common decency by not accepting other positions at the moment until he is vindicated in a subsequent election. The wounds of his defeat are still very fresh he must let them heal first.

But despite the mishap of his presidential ran, he is even groomed by his cabal in the Upper House to go for the Senate presidency when Congress convenes in June. If silence is a barometer of his intention then clearly he will make a run for it: his demure façade is unconvincing. The gauge to his mind is evident in his brazen bravado of sending signals to Sen. President Enrile of the possibility of them sharing the presidency of the incoming Senate. This was done before between the late Senator Rene Cayetano and Senator Francis Drilon.

The outrageous exploitation of one's edge can only happen because the system condones the abuse. And if we are to

believe Sen. Miriam Santiago, his (Villar) election is a fait accompli because they have the numbers. I did not know her semantics needs vocabulary transfusion. By numbers she actually means money that Villar can use to subvert the principles of colleagues to grab the coveted Senate presidency and not because he is indispensable for the position. In fact, his track record as erstwhile Senate President leaves a lot to be desired, integrity wise.

Let us explore possibilities. For instance, what do you think Villar will do once he is Senate president? Surely, you don't believe he will be an armchair general complacently folding his arms and let the Committee of the Whole that found him guilty of palpable corruption recommend his prosecution. That would be unrealistic. Quite the contrary, he might ask to have his case reinvestigated, if that is still possible, after he packs the committee with colleagues loyal to him. And you will be surprised dear readers; they are cheaper by the dozen in the Senate.

In hindsight, Sen. Loren Legarda proved this possibility shortly before becoming Villar's vice presidential candidate. She shamelessly peddled a resolution which acquitted Manny of corruption before the Committee of the Whole even made the decision based on evidence and testimonies of unimpeachable witnesses. Need I draw a picture that our so-called lawmakers are for sale, or for that matter almost every politician back home has a tag price?

It goes without saying this practice that impairs the principle of equal opportunities, persists. What happens if the senator or congressman, who runs for president, vice president, governor or mayor wins and his seat becomes vacant? Needless to say, his constituents will be left without someone

taking care of their varied interests, in Congress. If I recall right it was the late Pres. Diosdado Macapagal Sr., who liberally quoted in his speeches, the saying: "Taxation without representation is tyranny."

To avoid this unseemly episode repeating, incumbent candidates must first tender their resignations if they aspire for another position. They cannot paddle on two canoes if they want to be consistent with the doctrine of equal opportunities. Let us do away with this unfair practice so that in the future incumbent officials must search their conscience instead of frivolously running for office knowing he has to forfeit his congressional seat. That would level the battle ground.

If they opt to run then other candidates can aspire for the vacancies they leave behind thereby preventing a vacuum in Congress. Under no circumstance should the people be shortchanged by the absence of proper representation in the lawmaking body because of the selfish ambition of incumbents.

By resigning the candidate proves genuine concern for his constituents. I hope this argument is not abstruse but lucid for those alluded to.

Still about election, it seems the uproar regarding cheating is overkill. Imagine the losers accusing Smartmatic officials as conspiring to deliberately commit frauds when that will be disastrous, analogously speaking, for their business. What will the firm gain when they should be apolitical in the foreign country they do business? I do not agree that there was massive cheating in the polls by people who manipulated the PCOS machines. If rigging and fraud were committed they could not have been in full scale.

Automated machines are new to us. It is too hi-tech for anybody to possibly learn all the intricacies involved to monkey around with them in such a short time. More importantly, it could not have been so easy to "cheat" in massive proportions, to boot, for that would be giving our humble people too much credit to handle and change the cards with pre-programmed PCs and computer chips in the millions. This simply staggers the imagination. Man power alone, not to mention time element, makes the suspicion hard to believe. But losers can never be appeased. Some do it to save face, others hope to destroy the credibility of the automated machines to return to the manual count where cheating is not only possible but boldly done in public view.

The losing candidates and their political parties instigating this supposed outrage fail to see that their scheme could boomerang smack on their faces or candidacies, in the near future. Their griping will really never end.

That is why we must put an end to frivolous candidacies or erase the perennial black-eye on our electoral process. Remember, a stitch in time saves nine.