



December 22, 2017

## **RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS** the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines is one of the oldest foreign chambers operating in the world, with over a century of experience representing and serving the interests of Filipino and American businesses through the participation of over 800 members in promoting and contributing to the civic and economic development of American interests in the Philippines;

**WHEREAS** for over 115 years, the Philippines has been one of America's strongest of allies, trading and business partners in the Pacific with some 500,000 Americans residing in the Philippines and almost four million Filipinos living in America;

**WHEREAS** history is replete with conquering nations returning artifacts and private property to countries they occupied and fought with as evidenced with the return of the famous Austrian painter Gustav Klimt's Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer as illustrated in the movie Woman in Gold as well as the protection and return of German artifacts as portrayed in the movie Monuments Men - - because it is the right thing to do;

**WHEREAS** over the past several decades, there are many precedents of religious bells and artifacts removed from Japan, Germany and Russia, during periods of conflict, that have been returned to the churches and temples from which they were taken; including bells long held by the United States Naval Academy, the Virginia Military Institute, Harvard University, and many American cities - - because it was the right thing to do;

**WHEREAS** in 2016 the United States Military Academy at West Point returned an 800-pound church bell taken from the Philippines in 1901 that they held on display for over 100 years, to the Church of Saints Peter and Paul in Bauang, La Union - - because it was the right and honorable thing to do;

**WHEREAS** three Catholic church bells were removed by US forces and taken to the US from the Church of San Lorenzo de Martir from the town of Balangiga, Samar after a military encounter between Filipinos fighting for their independence and Company C, 9<sup>th</sup> US Infantry resulting in the death of 48 of the 74 soldiers garrisoned there;

**WHEREAS** there is an existing monument and memorial to those soldiers of Company C who died because of the encounter at Sackets Harbor, New York, the home of the 9th U.S. Infantry at that time of the engagement;

**WHEREAS** the three church bells today are in the custody of the Department of Defense with two on a display stand at Warren Air Force base in Cheyenne, Wyoming and one on display at a US military museum at Camp Red Cloud, Korea



**AMCHAM PHILIPPINES**

The American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, Inc.

**WHEREAS** the President of the Philippines, in his June 2017 State of the Nation Address has formally requested America to return their three church bells;

**WHEREAS** the US Ambassador has pledged to work with the Philippine government to secure the return of the three bells to their rightful owner, the parishioners of the Catholic church of San Lorenzo de Martir who bought and paid for casting and installation of the bells during the 19<sup>th</sup> century;

**WHEREAS** the Philippines is predominately a Catholic nation where church bells play a very important role in the lives of Filipinos as well as reflective of their national patrimony representing the very fabric of their cultural heritage and history and because the bells were bought and paid for by the parishioners of San Lorenzo de Martir - - return of the bells would be the right thing to do and result in national jubilation;

**WHEREAS** US congress passed the 2018 National Defense Authorization Act authorizing the Secretary of Defense to certify return of the bells was in the best national interest of the US;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the American Chamber of Commerce unconditionally supports the Secretary of Defense approving and facilitating the return of the three Catholic church bells taken from the Philippines by US forces, and now on display at US military installations, to the Parishioners of the Church of San Lorenzo de Martir in the town of Balangiga, Province of Eastern Samar, Republic of the Philippines.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ebb Hinchliffe", written over a horizontal line.

Ebb Hinchliffe  
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bruce Winton", written over a horizontal line.

Bruce Winton  
President