



**Re-affirming the People's faith in the Judiciary:  
A call for Chief Justice Renato C. Corona to give his written consent  
to the opening of his Foreign Currency Deposit Accounts  
relative to the Impeachment Proceedings**

---

*"The behavior and conduct of judges must re-affirm the people's faith in the integrity of the Judiciary. Justice must not merely be done but must also be seen to be done."  
(section 2, Canon 2 of the New Code of Judicial Conduct)*

In an unfortunate turn of events, the Supreme Court issued a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) on the Senate acting as an Impeachment Court, preventively cutting short the inquiries conducted last February 9, 2012 relative to the accounts owned and maintained by Chief Justice Renato C. Corona, specifically as regards his foreign currency deposits, pursuant to section 8 of RA 6426 (as amended by P.D. 1035, and further amended by PD 1246) which declares and considers all foreign currency deposits as absolutely confidential in nature and in no instance shall these deposits be inquired or looked into by any person, government official, or office whether judicial or administrative or legislative, or any other entity EXCEPT upon the written permission of the depositor.

This is truly disconcerting inasmuch as the political process of **impeachment is seen by many Filipinos as an avenue for authentic institutional reforms in the Judiciary**. Instead, the impeachment trial of CJ Corona is being challenged as a violation of the theory of "Co-Equal Branches of Government," more so when viewed in light of the prevailing criticism that the Supreme Court has stepped in on this issue, to "protect" one of its own.

The CEAP, a national association comprising 1,345 schools, colleges and universities, believes that **CJ Corona's voluntary assent to open his foreign currency deposit accounts can set the tone for authentic judicial reforms** by letting the Impeachment Proceedings run its course and not insist on meeting the Legislative and Executive branches "head-on" with this issue, lest it would stir conditions ripe for a constitutional crisis in our country.

### **Moral Integrity**

*"Judges shall ensure that not only is their conduct above reproach,  
but that it is perceived to be so in the view of a reasonable observer."  
Section 1, Canon 2 New Code of Judicial Conduct.*

The CEAP believes that a judge must be someone who gives a tangible semblance to an otherwise intangible concept – "justice in society." In fact, some judicial pronouncements even describe judges as the "visible representation of the law and justice." (Arban vs. Borja, 143 SCRA 634)



## CATHOLIC EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES

This must be so because the people's faith in the legal and judicial system is not based only on the magnitude of legal knowledge and diligence of members of the bench but also on the *highest standard of integrity and moral uprightness they are expected to possess*. (Dawa vs. De Asa 292 SCRA 703)

Simply put, it is about integrity. In the Judiciary, moral integrity is more than a cardinal virtue, it is a necessity. (Pascual vs. Judge Rodolfo R. Bonifacio, 398 SCRA 695.)

If this ethical standard is made to apply to all judges, this admits of no exceptions, not even for the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

Thus, when Chief Justice Corona conveniently hides behind the mantle of protection offered by this TRO issued in favor of PSBank, it reveals his questionable character leading one to logically posit this question – **if Chief Justice Corona is truly innocent as he so claims, then why is there resistance in the request for a disclosure of his foreign currency deposit accounts?**

The CEAP calls on the Chief Justice to be a shining example to all members of the bench by exhibiting the kind of moral uprightness demanded of them as best exemplified if he provides his written assent to the disclosure of his foreign currency deposit accounts.

### Propriety

Like all positions in government, a judicial office is also regarded as a public trust. As such, his actions must be viewed closely by the public as any betrayal of his sworn duties only serves to destroy that trust reposed on him by the people and only contributes to the further erosion of the people's faith in the Judiciary.

While Canon 4, sec.6 of the New Code of Judicial Conduct explicitly recognizes that judges, like any other citizen, are entitled to basic constitutional freedoms – his freedom of expression, assembly, including his right to privacy in relation to his financial records – the same proviso is also clear that in the exercise of such rights, the judge must always conduct himself in such a manner as to preserve the dignity of the judicial office and impartiality and independence of the judiciary.

To that end, if there is truly nothing that Chief Justice Corona is hiding in his foreign currency deposit accounts, the CEAP strongly urges CJ Corona to take heed and permit the disclosure of the same. Not only is this consistent with ethical standards, the same is likewise consistent with the requirement of a judge to be financially transparent about his personal fiduciary interests as well as those of his family members.

A disclosure of these foreign currency deposits also strengthens the capacity of the people to have access to relevant records not ordinarily available to them, an essential component in the public's right to know whether its servant, the judge (the Chief Justice) is properly performing his duty. As held in *Cowley vs Pulsifer* (137 Mass. 392):



CATHOLIC EDUCATIONAL  
ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES

*"It is of the highest moment that those who administer justice should act under the sense of public responsibility, and that every citizen should be able to satisfy himself with his own eyes as to the mode in which a public duty is performed."*

We therefore urge CHIEF JUSTICE CORONA to heed our call.

**In the interest of truth and justice, allow the disclosure of these foreign currency deposit accounts in order that the Impeachment Proceedings can fully and fairly take place.**

**We pray that the Chief Justice recognize the impeachment proceedings as a vital part of our political exercise designed by the 1987 Constitution for the protection of the body politic, and therefore must take all steps to ensure that this political exercise enshrined in our Constitution be faithfully carried out.**

**Finally we hope that CHIEF JUSTICE RENATO C. CORONA is one with us, in our collective call for authentic and long lasting reforms not only in the judiciary but also in other branches of government – characterized by a high sense of accountability to the public, financial transparency and utmost integrity, one that not only restores but re-affirms the faith of our people in its public servants.**

**CATHOLIC EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES  
11 February 2012**