

Proposed Statement on the FOI BILL

“Public Office is a public trust. “

Many times over, this simple promise has been broken by countless public officials who begin their terms of office with noble promises of helping the poor and the oppressed, only to fall short of the peoples’ expectations. Institutionalized, it creates a culture of corruption that becomes systemic and difficult to overcome.

Twenty six years following the first people power revolution against an administration that reveled in systemic corruption, further creating the tool for further oppressing the Filipino people, our new Constitution placed into writing what the people know all along – our government is one that must work for the people and as such, must be held accountable to the people.

With this present administration, an upsurge of hope and a promise of renewing the people’s faith in its government is taking root. What began as a campaign of the straight path appears genuinely sincere – with the ouster of questionable government officials and the demand for transparency in all branches of government.

No less than sec. 7 of our Bill Rights declare: *The right of the people to information on matters of public concern shall be recognized. Access to official records, and to documents and papers pertaining to official acts, transactions, or decisions, as well as to government research data used as basis for policy development, shall be afforded the citizen, subject to such limitations as may be provided by law.*

The CEAP, a national organization of catholic educational schools in the Philippines composed of _____ members, joins the campaign in the passage for a Freedom of Information Law, one that will effectively concretize what has already been constitutionally mandated.

The CEAP hopes that we do not have to wait for 26 years more before our country will finally pass a law realizing the people’s right to have access to information concerning matters of public concern.

The CEAP join this campaign for the passage of the FOI law on the belief that transparency in the disclosure of all pertinent government transactions, especially those affecting the interest of the public, enables a full articulation of the issues concerning vital government contracts. The CEAP looks forward to the day when its member schools can discuss with their students these transactions and contracts that affect public interest and thus play a more active role in government policy formulation. The CEAP prays for enlightenment of all legislators, that they recognize the importance of this piece of legislation and push for the approval of this bill before Congress adjourns in 2013.