

Comments on House Bill 2587 authored by Representatives Ralph Wendel P. Tulfo and Jocelyn P. Tulfo and House Bill 6281 authored by Representative Ma. Victoria Pilar-Co on “An Act Strengthening the Right of the Government to Expropriate Lands for Socialized Housing, Amending for Purposes Sections 9, 10 and 11 of Republic Act 7279 or the Urban Development and Housing Act of 1992”.

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05 December 2025

1. We are in favor of the removal of priority on land for expropriation for socialized housing but such expropriation should be conditional to two material conditions:
2. First, the presence of an approved City Development Plan or Township Development Plan. Any expropriation of land for socialized housing should be considered within the context of the said City/Township Development Plan and not merely with the intent to isolate a piece of property for socialized housing. The presence of an approved Plan would enable the integration of contiguous lands and better infrastructure connectivity allowing for a well-planned mixed-income housing development.
3. In line with the first condition, the second paragraph of Section 9 of the combined House Bills 2567 and 6281 can be deleted and replaced by a provision from the National Housing and Urban Development Framework that carries the principle of inclusive urban development and livable communities, as follows: *“The expropriation of land shall be “spatially and thematically integrated in approved City or Township or Infrastructure Development Plans that includes: (1) the development of integrated neighborhoods and sustainable communities particularly for low-income households; and (2) the implementation of alternatives and innovative solutions in addressing the housing needs of the lower income classes and vulnerable sector such as public rental housing, mixed income and mixed-use housing development”*
4. The Second condition is that expropriated lands are to be held in public Trusteeship. Expropriation of lands (regardless of ownership or current use) is meritorious when the objective is for public use and purposes. However, in the case of social housing, *expropriation of land with the intent to sell or transfer the land to private individuals or associations for private use* could conflict with constitutional rights and will become unattainable for socialized housing purposes because land valuation will have to consider the best economic value of the land.
5. Therefore, expropriation of lands for social housing should remain for public use. This means that the expropriated property should be held in Public Trust for beneficial ownership. The LGU or the proper government agency can serve as the Trustee, which can assign a Trustor to manage the property for socialized housing beneficiaries. The expropriated land

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is taken out of the real estate market and speculative forces, thus minimizing displacement of low-income households from cities and urbanizing areas due to increasing commercialization. Keeping the land in public Trust will enable the Trustee to define the terms of development, whether rental or sale of housing unit (but not land), consequently ensuring that the poor and low-income families will have a place in the city in a sustainable manner.

6. Government can also use zoning regulations to allocate land for socialized housing. The LGU or the proper approving authority can mandate that Township Development Plans/Projects should provide an area for mixed-income housing. National and local governments should require Project Plans including infrastructure development plans (e.g. Transit-oriented Developments (TODs) to include mixed-income planning. Escrow funds from the balanced housing regulation and other sources of funding can be used by the government to co-finance the development of the socialized housing zones.
7. The government needs to take a comprehensive development approach on urban and infrastructure development projects ensuring that existing low-income communities are not fenced off from these developments but are considered part of the transformation process.

Reference:

Ancheta, J. A., M. M. Ballesteros, and T. P. Ramos. 2025. Urban Revitalization and Shelter Inadequacy: A Geospatial Analysis. PIDS Discussion Paper Series No. 25-40. Quezon City, Philippines: Philippine Institute for Development Studies.