

# Zamora: JDV's refusal to endorse son's impeachment case might doom it

The refusal of former Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. to endorse the impeachment

complaint filed by his son and namesake Jose III would spell the end of the latest attempt to

unseat President Arroyo, the head of the opposition bloc in

By DELON PORCALLA and JESS DIAZ

the House of Representatives said yesterday.

"That's not going to help the progress of his son's complaint. If the father can't be convinced about the legitimacy of the complaint filed by his son, how can we in the minority go around and convince others to join us," House Minority Leader Ramaldo Zamora said.

The San Juan lawmaker conceded the absence of the elder De Venecia's endorsement was "obviously a setback" on renewed attempts to hold Mrs. Arroyo liable for betrayal of public trust, culpable violation of the Constitution, bribery and graft and corruption.

"If the complainants want to have this (complaint) get to the Senate, they have to do a little more of what has been done in the past three years. They have to convince JDV (elder De Venecia) to back up his son, who is the principal complainant," Zamora pointed out.

In a separate radio interview, Zamora said they still do not have the numbers to impeach Mrs. Arroyo.

"Up to this point, I'll be honest. I haven't seen much reaction from the other congressmen aside from those in the minority. At this point, we may lack the numbers," Zamora said.

"We hope the others will see the complaint and read the evidence," he said.

Paranaque Rep. Rollo Golez said the minority congressmen would meet today to assess whether to support Mrs. Arroyo's impeachment.

"We will consider the following: the 2010 elections are just around the corner, the financial crisis needs to be addressed, plus Charter change, the 2009 budget, reproductive health, and agrarian reform," Golez said.

"It might be construed as politicking and not good for the image of the opposition," he added.

Golez also wondered why the elder De Venecia is not endorsing the complaint.

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Speaker Prospero

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Nogralles, however, gave an indication of the fate that awaits the impeachment case.

In a statement from Geneva, Switzerland, where Nogralles is attending a conference of parliamentarians, he said impeachment is a "political process" and a "numbers game." Mrs. Arroyo's allies dominate the House.

"The impeachment complaint will definitely go through the normal process as stipulated by our Constitution. But as we all know... impeachment is largely a partisan issue... at the end of the day, it's a numbers game," Nogralles said.

He said the impeachment petition is "ill-timed" since the country is facing a threat of economic slowdowns and the next elections are just more than a year away.

On the other hand, Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo, one of the three principal endorers of the impeachment complaint, said they are giving the elder De Venecia the opportunity to rethink his position.

The Pangasinan lawmaker had claimed he would not endorse the impeachment complaint filed by his son out of *delicadeza* (propriety).

"We are giving JDV time to mull over his move. What is important is for him to convince members of the majority to support the complaint once it is taken up by the (House) justice committee," Ocampo said.

Ocampo believed the impeachment process might yet succeed.

"I think it will prosper if administration congressmen believe that Charter change (Cha-cha) will fail and CMA (President Arroyo's initials) will be stepping down on June 30, 2010. Many of them might abandon her because she is already a lame duck. This is the scenario I see happening because Cha-cha has no chance to succeed," Ocampo said.

"On the other hand, if her allies see that Cha-cha will succeed and she would stay in office beyond 2010, they would stick it out with her and vote to block her impeachment," he said.