

Is it legal for Pacquiao to meddle in U.S. politics?

Written by ANTONIO C. CAMPO



By ANTONIO C. CAMPO

ON the front page of the **Filipino Reporter's** Nov. 5-11, 2010 issue appeared a news item captioned "Pacquiao stumps for Reid."

The news reports that Filipino world boxing superstar Manny Pacquiao stumped for U.S. Sen. and Majority Leader Harry Reid, a Democrat of Nevada, who eventually won his tough re-election fight for a fifth-term on Nov. 2.

Pacquiao praised Reid for his work in the Senate in support of Filipino veterans and immigration, and warmly endorsed him for re-election.

"I came here to support Harry Reid on his candidacy," Pacquiao said addressing the crowd. "We are not only to vote but we are supposed to convince our friends and relatives to vote for Harry Reid."

Query: Is it legal for an alien like boxer-turned-congressman Pacquiao to meddle in American politics by campaigning for Reid?

Is it legal for Pacquiao to meddle in U.S. politics?

Written by ANTONIO C. CAMPO

I checked with Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia on elections in the United States, and found no prohibition for aliens who campaign for senatorial candidates.

The law in the State of Nevada, according to Wikipedia, is likewise bereft of any provision prohibiting aliens to campaign for candidates for senator.

Unlike Philippine election law, it appears that there is no federal or state law in the United States penalizing aliens who engage in aiding the candidacy of senators or congressional candidates.

Philippine law on aliens to aid any candidate

Section 81 of Batas Pambansa Bilang 881, otherwise known as the Omnibus Election Code of the Philippines, penalized intervention by foreigners in any election in the Philippines.

Section 81 states: Intervention of foreigners - It shall be unlawful for any foreigner, whether judicial or natural person, to aid any candidate or political party, directly or indirectly, or take part in or influence in any manner, any election, or to contribute or make any expenditure in connection with any election campaign or partisan political activity.

Section 262 of the Omnibus Election Code made it an election offense for violation of the above cited Section 81.

As an election offense, Section 264 of the Omnibus Election Code imposed the following penalty:

Any person guilty of election offense the penalty is imprisonment for not less than one year and not more than six years, not subject to probation plus the additional penalty of disqualification to hold public office and deprivation of the right to suffrage for Philippine citizens. If the offense is committed by a foreigner, he or she shall be deported after serving the prison term.

Is it legal for Pacquiao to meddle in U.S. politics?

Written by ANTONIO C. CAMPO

Author's comment

If Sen. Reid plans to repay Congressman Pacquiao's re-election for congressman of Sarangani, he is barred by Philippine law under Section 81 of the Omnibus Election Code and would subject him to imprisonment under Section 264 of the same code.

(Editor's note: Why is it that a Filipino citizen, Mark Jimenez, was extradited to the U.S., tried and convicted in Florida for contributing to the presidential campaign of Bill Clinton? Jimenez served jail time in Florida. Is it wrong to contribute to a campaign fund but right for a non-citizen like Pacquiao to endorse U.S. candidates for office?)

tonyc1028@aol.com