



STATEMENT OF DR. PABLO MANALASTAS
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On the Filing of Petition for Mandamus vs Comelec to Release
the Election Source Code
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Today we are compelled to file a Petition for Mandamus against the Comelec before the Supreme Court to release the source code because we don't want a repeat of the Typhoon Ondoy-type disaster in the coming 2010 automated election due to the ill-preparedness of the Commission.

The Petitioner in this case, the Center for People Empowerment in Governance (CenPEG), is not only a policy research institution engaged in the study and advocacy of electoral reform but is also an interested group and a citizens' arm seeking to bring transparency in the May 2010 automated election. We are thus filing this Petition not only for CenPEG but also on behalf of the Filipino people especially the voters who will troop to the polls next May.

In fact two days ago on Oct. 3, at least 80 of the country's leading IT educators, several Bishops, members of Congress and political parties, NGO leaders and governance advocates appealed to the Comelec for the immediate release of the source code before it is too late.

We want the next election to succeed not only because we will be electing the new government that will replace the Arroyo administration but because the technology that will be used remains untested and is replete with at least 30 vulnerabilities or weak spots. Critical among these weak spots is the source code where all voters have the right to know how Comelec's counting, scanning, canvassing, and transmission machines will work and whether their operations comply with the law.

We don't want a repeat of what happened in the 2008 ARMM automated election where Comelec failed to conduct a source code review. We oppose the Comelec Advisory Council's (CAC) recommendation that the source code review be removed from the election law.

Truth will set us free – and truth will bring integrity and credibility to the 2010 election. We call for a transparent, credible, and trustworthy election. Let us uphold the people's freedom of information and the democratic principle of secret voting and public/transparent counting!