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Fil-Am Leaders Call on Marcos to Confront Trump Over New Taxes

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Filipino American officials and community advocates are urging Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to step up diplomatic efforts to shield Filipinos from sweeping new economic measures enacted under former United States President Donald Trump. The policies include a 1% tax on remittances sent abroad and a 20% tariff on goods imported from the Philippines, both of which threaten to strain working families and small businesses on both sides of the Pacific.

New York State Assemblymember Steven Raga, the first Filipino American elected to the New York legislature, emphasized that these policies will have far-reaching consequences for the Filipino American community and the broader U.S. economy. “The cost of goods affected by these tariffs will ultimately fall on consumers, and the families relying on remittances to survive will feel the impact most,” Raga said. He urged President Marcos to prioritize the issue during his scheduled talks with Trump in Washington, D.C.

United States Congresswoman Grace Meng, who opposed the legislation known as the “One Big Beautiful Bill,” underscored how the 20% tariff could devastate small businesses still recovering from the economic turmoil of the pandemic. She warned that rising costs will hurt entrepreneurs and families struggling to meet basic needs, describing the bill as a direct blow to communities that form the backbone of essential services and local economies.

Community leader Enzo Manzano echoed these concerns, accusing Trump of betraying his campaign promise to make life more affordable for American families. He pointed out that rampant inflation has already eroded household budgets and argued that these new tariffs and remittance fees only deepen the hardship. “This move goes directly against what he promised: to make it easier for people to afford day-to-day living,” Manzano said.

Erick Bustamante, First Vice President of the Philippine National Bank in New York, warned of the broader economic risks to the Philippines. He called on Marcos to secure an exemption or reduction of the 20% tariff, noting that Philippine industries, particularly electronics, garments, and food exports, face losing U.S. market share if costs surge. Bustamante stressed that the Philippines has been a reliable trade partner and ally to the United States, making the blanket imposition of these measures both harmful and shortsighted.

As President Marcos prepares to meet with Trump, Filipino American leaders remain united in their call for decisive negotiations. They argue that effective diplomacy is essential to protect the livelihoods of Overseas Filipino Workers, maintain affordable prices for Filipino American consumers, and uphold strong trade ties between the two nations.

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