

# Philippines Senator criticises use of foreign artists

*Senator calls on big business to use local artists to promote their services.*

MANILA, PHILIPPINES, October 28, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A member of the Philippine House of Congress, Ronnie Ong, has issued a statement calling out top executives of Philippine

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*Senator Ronnie L. Ong*

telecommunications company PLDT-Smart for its strategy to spend millions of dollars to pay foreign artists as brand endorsers at a time when the Philippines is battling an economic crunch because of the pandemic.

In a press interview, the lawmaker appeared displeased over the evident bias of the PLDT-Smart chair, Manuel V. Pangilinan, and its president, Al Panlilio, against local talents said, "Paying hundreds of million pesos to foreign artists for the telco's product promotions amid this pandemic that wrought havoc in our economy is immensely insensitive and unsympathetic to say the

least."

Ong, a party list representative for Probinsiyano Ako pointed out the local telco executives' misplaced preference in hiring foreigners as product endorsers which had virtually downgraded Filipino artists.

The Philippine lawmaker was reacting to reports that the telecommunications firm has tapped popular South Korean entertainment personalities as endorsers, including the well-liked BTS group that was reportedly paid US \$10 million for a commercial last year.

Rep. Ong said that while Smart-PLDT's hiring of foreign talents is its own prerogative, such 'executive decision' has reportedly become a [source of frustration](#) among Filipino nationalists.

“We understand the right of local companies to choose whoever they want endorsing their products but we would like to remind them to choose Filipino first just like when we remind our kababayans (countrymen) to choose Filipino products first,” stressed Ong.

Smart-PLDT has a history of hiring popular South Korean and Western entertainment personalities for their commercial endorsements, reportedly spending millions of dollars (USD 1 = Php 50.82), in the process.

Among them were Hyun Bin, Son Ye Jin, Park Seo Joon and the BTS from South Korea. Joining the Asian stars are Hollywood's A-list like Chris Evans, Charlize Theron and Gwyneth Paltrow who have also signed up as brand endorsers.

Professional fees for said stars could range from US \$1 million to about US \$10 million in the case of BTS, it was gathered.

Rep. Ong is also a member of the House Committee on the Creative Industry and Performing Arts which has been advocating a Filipino first policy to help local industries overcome the adverse economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Philippines landed 121st out of 121 countries in Nikkei Asia's latest COVID-19 Recovery Index.

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Senator Ronnie L. Ong is adamant about using local artists.

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