



Congressional Record

PLENARY PROCEEDINGS OF THE 17th CONGRESS, FIRST REGULAR SESSION

House of Representatives

Vol. 1

Monday, September 19, 2016

No. 23

CALL TO ORDER

At 4:00 p.m., Deputy Speaker Sharon S. Garin called the session to order.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The session is called to order.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Everybody is requested to rise for the singing of the Philippine National Anthem.

Everybody rose to sing the Philippine National Anthem.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Please remain standing for the Invocation to be delivered by Rep. Ma. Cristina “Chiqui” Roa-Puno of the First District of Antipolo.

Everybody remained standing for the Invocation.

INVOCATION

REP. ROA-PUNO. Let us put ourselves in the presence of the Lord.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Father in heaven, we thank You for this new day.

We ask You to reign over this assembly that all our work be for Your glory and for the best interest of our country.

Thank you for calling us all to serve our people, and for the chance to be of help to those in need.

We believe that we are all in this position for a purpose designed by You.

Open our hearts, minds, and ears to the yearnings of our countrymen.

Enlighten us in our sincere desire to serve our constituents, and in working toward common solutions to the problems plaguing our nation.

When conflicts arise, give us a forgiving spirit so as to understand each other.

Let not our differences get in the way of our tasks.

Remind us that we all have the same goal, that is, to love and serve You through serving the Filipino people.

May all this be done for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. HOFER. Mme. Speaker, I move that we defer the calling of the roll.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

Please proceed.

REP. HOFER. Mme. Speaker, considering that copies of the Journal of the previous session had been distributed to the Members, I move that we dispense with the reading of the Journal.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*), The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

REP. HOFER. Mme. Speaker, I move that we approve Journal No. 22, dated September 14, 2016.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*), The Chair hears none; Journal No. 22 is hereby approved.

REP. HOFER. Mme. Speaker, I move that we proceed to the Reference of Business.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Secretary General will please read the Reference of Business.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

The Secretary General read the following House Bills on First Reading and Communications, and the Deputy Speaker made the corresponding references:

BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 3559, entitled:

“AN ACT FORMALLY INCORPORATING THE MALAMPAYA SOUND PROTECTED LANDSCAPE AND SEASCAPE SITUATED IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF TAYTAY AND SAN VICENTE, PROVINCE OF PALAWAN WITHIN THE ENVIRONMENTALLY CRITICAL AREAS NETWORK SYSTEM OF PALAWAN AND THE NATIONAL INTEGRATED PROTECTED AREAS SYSTEM, PROVIDING FOR ITS MANAGEMENT AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFORE”

By Representative Alvarez (F.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

House Bill No. 3560, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING THE PHILIPPINE CROP INSURANCE CORPORATION TO OFFER INDEX BASED INSURANCE COVERAGE AND ALLOWING IT TO ENGAGE IN REINSURANCE, INCREASING ITS FUNDING SOURCE AND IMPOSING HEAVIER PENALTIES ON SPURIOUS CLAIMS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 1467, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE CHARTER OF THE PHILIPPINE CROP INSURANCE CORPORATION (PCIP)”

By Representative Yap (A.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ENTERPRISES AND PRIVATIZATION

House Bill No. 3561, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING SEPTEMBER SEVENTEEN OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL NON-WORKING HOLIDAY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF LOS BAÑOS, PROVINCE OF LAGUNA IN CELEBRATION OF THE TOWN’S FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY AND THE ANNUAL BAÑAMOS FESTIVAL”

By Representative Chipeco
TO THE COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF LAWS

House Bill No. 3562, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING THE CONSTRUCTION OF PUBLIC RESTROOMS ALONG NATIONAL ROADS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Mercado
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 3563, entitled:

“AN ACT ENHANCING THE PHILIPPINE BASIC EDUCATION SYSTEM BY FOCUSING ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL THINKING, CRAFTSMANSHIP AND CHARACTER AMONG THE LEARNERS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10533, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ENHANCED BASIC EDUCATION ACT OF 2013”

By Representative Salo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 3564, entitled:

“AN ACT FOR SUPPORTING SCALING UP NUTRITION DURING THE FIRST 1000 DAYS OF LIFE BY STRENGTHENING AND PROTECTING PRIMARY HEALTH CARE WORKERS”

By Representative Baguilat
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 3565, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A MORE RESPONSIVE AND COMPREHENSIVE REGULATION FOR THE PRACTICE, LICENSING, REGISTRATION AND CERTIFICATION OF SANITARY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERS AND SANITARIANS IN THE PHILIPPINES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 1364, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Baguilat
TO THE COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL REGULATION

House Bill No. 3566, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING FOUR (4) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE NINTH JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED AT ZAMBOANGA CITY, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14, PARAGRAPH (J) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BILANG 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ‘THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION

ACT OF 1980', AS AMENDED, AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR"

By Representative Dalipe
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 3567, entitled:

"AN ACT CONVERTING THE OLD RAILWAY
- CABUTOY ROAD TO TUNGKIL
MINGLANILLA FROM A BARANGAY
ROAD TO A NATIONAL ROAD AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR"

By Representative Gullas
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS
AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 3568, entitled:

"AN ACT CONVERTING THE FIDELBAS ROAD
TO RIZAL ROAD FROM A BARANGAY
ROAD TO A NATIONAL ROAD AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR"

By Representative Gullas
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS
AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 3569, entitled:

"AN ACT RECLASSIFYING CERTAIN
PARCELS OF LAND OF THE PUBLIC
DOMAIN LOCATED IN BARANGAYS
CABIGAAN, MAGBABADIL, BARAKE,
IRAAN, SAGPANGAN, ISAUB, SAN
JUAN, APURAWAN AND CULANDANUM
OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF ABORLAN,
PROVINCE OF PALAWAN AS ALIENABLE
AND DISPOSABLE LAND"

By Representative Acosta
TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL
RESOURCES

House Bill No. 3570, entitled:

"AN ACT MAKING TEACHERS WORK FOR
ONLY HALF A DAY"

By Representative Belaro
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION
AND CULTURE

ADDITIONAL COAUTHORS

Rep. Joaquin M. Chipeco Jr. for House Bills No.
554, 581, 584, 1590 and 2798;

Rep. Edward Vera Perez Maceda for House Bills
No. 208, 1912, 1915, 1916 and 2798;

Rep. Leo Rafael M. Cueva for House Bills No.
2952, 2957, 2961, 2965, 3371 and 3430;

Rep. Estrellita B. Suansing for House Bill No. 2600;

Rep. Mario Vittorio "Marvey" A. Mariño for
House Bills No. 1953 and 1975;

Rep. Christopher "Toff" Vera Perez De Venecia
for House Bills No. 2404, 2405 and 3389;

Rep. Rosanna "Ria" Vergara for House Bill
No. 3171;

Reps. Florida "Rida" P. Robes and Bayani F.
Fernando for House Bill No. 56;

Rep. Jericho Jonas B. Nograles for House Bill No.
1894;

Rep. Enrico A. Pineda for House Resolution No.
258;

Rep. Henry C. Ong for House Bill No. 2566;

Rep. Victoria Isabel G. Noel for House Bills No.
2505, 2906 and 3509;

Rep. Ronald M. Cosalan for House Bills No. 1894
and 3532 and House Resolution No. 328;

Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda for House Bill No. 3594
and House Resolution No. 363;

Rep. Jose Antonio "Kuya Jonathan" R. Sy-
Alvarado for House Bill No. 2563 and House
Resolutions No. 328 and House Joint Resolution 4;

Rep. Nancy A. Catamco for House Bills No. 2783,
3495 and 3514;

Reps. Wilter "Sharky" Wee Palma II, Jesus
Nonato Sacdalan, Amado T. Espino Jr., Henedina R.
Abad, Rodrigo A. Abellanosa, Arlene B. Arcillas,
Kaka J. Bag-ao, Peter John D. Calderon, Wilfredo S.
Caminero, Jonas C. Cortes, Raul V. Del Mar, Ramon
"Red" H. Durano VI, Luis "Jon-Jon" A. Ferrer IV,
Bernadette "BH" Herrera-Dy, Rene L. Relampagos,
Edgar Mary S. Sarmiento and Lorna P. Bautista-
Bandigan for House Joint Resolution No. 4;

Rep. Gwendolyn F. Garcia for House Bills No.
3409, 3411 and 3416;

Reps. Rodolfo T. Albano III, Joel Mayo Z.
Almario, Jorge T. Almonte, Isagani S. Amatong,
Rolando G. Andaya Jr., Bellaflor J. Angara-Castillo,
Rozzano Rufino B. Biazon, Emmanuel A. Billones,
Lianda B. Bolilia, Anthony M. Bravo, Ph.D.,
Mercedes "Didi" C. Cagas, Peter John D. Calderon,
Wilfredo S. Caminero, Sabiniano S. Canama, Winston
"Winnie" Castelo, Fredenil "Fred" H. Castro, Arnel M.
Cerafica, Cecilia Leonila V. Chavez, Ma. Theresa V.
Collantes, Jonas C. Cortes, Julieta R. Cortuna, Leo
Rafael M. Cueva, Raul V. Del Mar, Mohamad Khalid
Q. Dimaporo, Ramon "Red" H. Durano VI, Anna
Katrina M. Enverga, Edgar R. Erice, Sandra Y.
Eriguel, M.D., Bayani F. Fernando, Antonio R.

Floirendo Jr., Florencio T. Flores Jr., M.D., Wes
Gatchalian, Fernando V. Gonzalez, Arcadio H.
Gorricketa, Gerald Anthony "Samsam" V. Gullas Jr.,
Bernadette "BH" Herrera-Dy, Elisa "Olga" T. Kho,
Glon G. Labadlabad, Virgilio S. Lacson, Dennis C.
Laogan, Carmelo "Jon" B. Lazatin II, Benhur B.
Lopez Jr., Carlo V. Lopez, Manuel Luis T. Lopez,
Jesulito A. Manalo, Carlito S. Marquez, Eric M.
Martinez, Alejandro Y. Mirasol, Jericho Jonas B.

Nogralles, Henry S. Oaminal, Pablo C. Ortega, Vini Nola A. Ortega, Marisol C. Panotes, Isidro S. Rodriguez Jr., Michael L. Romero, Ph.D., Ron P. Salo, Orestes T. Salon, Josephine Ramirez-Sato, Deogracias Victor "DV" B. Savellano, Frederick W. Siao, Eric D. Singson, Tobias "Toby" M. Tiangco, Antonio L. Tinio, Alberto T. Ungab, Juliette T. Uy and Rolando "Klaxex" A. Uy for House Bill No. 51;

Rep. Len B. Alonte-Naguiat for House Bill No. 3469;

Rep. Manuel T. Sagarbarria for House Bills No. 208, 209, 210, 262, 264, 479, 2287, 2430 and 2514;

Rep. Amado T. Espino Jr. for House Bills No. 37, 40, 229, 246, 290, 278, 304, 324, 417, and 489;

Rep. Eric M. Martinez for House Bill No. 287;

Rep. Michael L. Romero, Ph.D. for House Bills No. 262, 264, 515, 516, 517, 1038, 1039, 1378, 1536, 1537, 1836, 1837, 1894, 1955, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2430, 3350, 3351, 3352, 3353 and 3435;

Reps. Strike B. Revilla and Jose Enrique "Joet" S. Garcia III for House Bills No. 1955, 2288, 2289 and 2290;

Reps. Karlo Alexei B. Nogralles and Strike B. Revilla for House Resolution No. 258;

Rep. Isidro S. Rodriguez Jr. for House Bills No. 56 and 2798;

Rep. Arnel M. Cerafica for House Bill No. 1894;

Rep. Maria Vida Espinosa Bravo for House Bills No. 37, 39, 2037, 2038, 2444, 2445, 2448, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2455, 2457, 2462, 2464, 2465, 2709, 2727, 2798 and 2897;

Rep. Cesar V. Sarmiento for House Bills No. 34, 52, 55, 201, 459 and 460;

Rep. Ron P. Salo for House Bills No. 458 and 3181;

Rep. Ramon V.A. "Rav" Rocamora for House Bill No. 53;

Rep. Raul V. Del Mar for House Bills No. 2798 and 2989;

Rep. Carmelo "Jon" B. Lazatin II for House Bills No. 196 and 2798;

Rep. Divina Grace C. Yu for House Bills No. 479, 480, 797, 798, 1870 and 1872;

Rep. Aurelio "Dong" D. Gonzales Jr. for House Bills No. 479, 796, 797, 798, 1870, 1872, 2287, 2396 and 2531;

Rep. France L. Castro for House Bills No. 478, 480, 796 and 797;

Rep. Richard C. Eusebio for House Bills No. 478, 1871, 2287, 2396 and 2514;

Rep. Lorna P. Bautista-Bandigan for House Bills No. 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566 and 2567;

Reps. Salvador B. Belaro Jr., Frederick W. Siao, Edwin C. Ong, Jennifer Austria Barzaga, Jose Enrique "Joet" S. Garcia III, Cristina "Chiqui" Roa-

Puno, ViniNola A. Ortega, Carlos Roman L. Uybarreta, Teodoro "Ted" G. Montoro, Arlene B. Arcillas, Mark Aeron H. Sambar and Romeo M. Acop for House Resolution No. 328;

Reps. Frederick W. Siao and Divina Grace C. Yu for House Bill No. 2566;

Reps. Mark Aeron H. Sambar and Romeo M. Acop for House Bill No. 3532;

Rep. Wilter "Sharky" Wee Palma II for House Bills No. 1325 and 1350;

Rep. Suharto T. Mangudadatu for House Bills No. 208, 209, 210, 211, 1912, 1914, 1915 and 1916;

Rep. Greg G. Gasataya for House Bills No. 208, 209, 210, 1912, 1915 and 1916;

Rep. Marisol C. Panotes for House Bills No. 208, 209, 210, 1911, 1912, 1914, 1915 and 1916;

Rep. Raul "Boboy" C. Tupas for House Bills No. 208, 210, 1911, 1912 and 1915;

Rep. Edwin C. Ong for House Bill No. 210;

Rep. Franz E. Alvarez for House Bill No. 1179;

Rep. Prospero A. Pichay Jr. for House Resolution No. 334;

Rep. Cheryl P. Deloso-Montalla for House Bill No. 580;

Rep. Deogracias Victor "DV" B. Savellano for House Bill No. 584;

Rep. Teodoro "Ted" G. Montoro for House Bills No. 2663 and 3246;

Rep. Ma. Theresa V. Collantes for House Bills No. 533, 534, 535, 2774, 2775 and 2926;

Rep. Celso L. Lobregat for House Bill No. 2434;

Rep. Arlene B. Arcillas for House Bills No. 1204, 1205, 1206, 1207, 1209, 1210, 1211, 1212, 1213, 2798, 2812, 2973, 2974, 2975, 2976, 2977 and 3159; and

Reps. Vilma Santos-Recto, Ruby M. Sahali, Maria Valentina G. Plaza, Anna Katrina M. Enverga, Lorna P. Bautista-Bandigan, Mark O. Go, Luis "Jon-Jon" A. Ferrer IV, Conrado M. Estrella III, Tricia Nicole Q. Velasco-Catera, Rolando "Klaxex" A. Uy, Vicente "Ching" S.E. Veloso, Scott Davies S. Lanete, M.D., Salvio B. Fortunato and Sandra Y. Eriguel, M.D. for House Bill No. 2798.

COMMUNICATIONS

Letters dated May 31, June 17, 20 and 27 and July 18, 2016 of Roland A. Rey, Regional Director, Commission on Audit, Regional Office No. V, transmitting copies of the Annual Audit Report on the following Water Districts for the year ended December 31, 2015:

1. Paracale Water District, Paracale, Camarines Norte;
2. Pandan Water District, Pandan, Catanduanes;
3. Camalig Water District, Camalig, Albay;

4. Donsol Water District, Donsol, Sorsogon; and
5. Libmanan Water District, Libmanan, Camarines Sur

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated 25 July 2016 of Salvador C. Medialdea, Executive Secretary, Office of the President, Malacañang, transmitting two (2) original copies of Republic Act No. 10922 which lapsed into law on 22 July 2016 pursuant to Art. VI, Sec. 7 (1) of the Constitution, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING THE SECOND WEEK OF NOVEMBER OF EVERY YEAR AS ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL LITERACY WEEK”

TO THE ARCHIVES

Letter dated August 16, 2016 of Evelyn P. Reyes, Director IV, Commission on Audit, Regional Office No. VI, transmitting a copy of the Annual Audit Report on the Hamtic Water District, Hamtic, Antique for the years ended December 31, 2012 to 2014.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated August 26, 2016 of Jelu G. Gela, State Auditor IV, Audit Team Leader, Commission on Audit, Office of the Auditor, transmitting copies of the 2015 Annual Audit Reports on the following Water Districts:

1. Ayungon Water District, Ayungon, Negros Oriental;
2. Bais City Water District, Bais City, Negros Oriental;
3. Bayawan Water District, Bayawan City, Negros Oriental; and
4. Tanjay Water District, Tanjay City, Negros Oriental.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. HOFER. Mme. Speaker, I move that we acknowledge the presence of some guests in the gallery. They are guests of Rep. Geraldine B. Roman of the First District of Bataan and Rep. Kaka J. Bag-ao of the Lone District of Dinagat Islands.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). To the guests of Congresswomen Bag-ao and Roman, please rise as you are called. *(Applause)*

REP. HOFER. We have in the gallery, Ambassador Luis Calvo of Spain and Ambassador designate John Holmes of Canada. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Welcome to the House of Representatives.

REP. HOFER. Ambassador Kok Li Peng, Embassy of Singapore to the Philippines; Martin Macalintal, Attaché, Embassy of France to the Philippines; the Representative from the Embassy of the United States to the Philippines; the Human Rights Officer of the US Embassy; and from the Embassy of Australia, the Economic Section, Senior Program Officer, the Development Section; and the consultant of the Embassy of Australia. *(Applause)*

From the COMELEC, we have Commissioner Rowena V. Guanzon; we have the Vice President of Philippine College of Criminology; Emelita Apostol Alvarez, the President of the Congressional Spouses Foundation Inc.; former Cong. Willy Villarama and family; Frederick Peralta, Paul Cabral and Rajo Laurel; Board Member Dexter Dominguez *(Applause)*; Sangguniang Bayan Members from the municipality of Dinalupihan, province of Bataan; Mayor Efren Pascual Jr. from the municipality of Orani; Vice Mayor Godofredo Galicia from the municipality of Orani; and the Sangguniang Bayan Members of the municipality of Orani. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Welcome to the House of Representatives.

REP. HOFER. We also have Mayor Cynthia Estanislao and former Mayor George Estanislao of the municipality of Morong; Mayor Generosa Dela Fuente of the municipality of Samal; and Mayor Antonio Joseph Inton of the municipality of Hermosa. We have the LGU officials from Dagupan City, Pangasinan; and the Gender Equality and Human Rights officials from the Commission on Human Rights. We have Liza Diño, the Chairman of the Film Development Council; and from Caritas Manila, we have Rev. Fr. Anton Pascual. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

REP. HOFER. And, Madam Speaker, we have the members of various organizations present here: Gay Alliance for Len Alonte or GALA. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

REP. HOFER. Rotary Club of Makati *(Applause)*; AKBAYAN LGBT Collective *(Applause)*; Babaylanes Incorporated; AKBAYAN Youth from UP Diliman *(Applause)*; UP Babaylan *(Applause)*; BUKLOD CSSP from UP Diliman *(Applause)*; Association

of Transgender People in the Philippines or ATP (*Applause*); TLF SHARE (*Applause*); Youth Reform Movement PH (*Applause*); Gender and Development Advocates or GANDA Filipinas (*Applause*); Amnesty International Philippines Youth (*Applause*); Circle of Public Administration and Governance from PUP Manila (*Applause*); Metro Manila Pride (*Applause*); ASEAN SOGIE Caucus (*Applause*); Philippine LGBT Chamber of Commerce (*Applause*); TEAM Magazine; LGBT politicians; Rainbow Rights Project Inc. (*Applause*); Ang Ladlad (*Applause*); LGBT Pilipinas (*Applause*); ASOG (*Applause*); LGBT Bar (*Applause*); LGBTS Christian Church; Galang Pilipinas; Galang Philippines; Bahaghari (*Applause*).

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

REP. HOFER. We also have GABRIELA Youth (*Applause*); GABRIELA Women's Party and KABATAAN Party-List (*Applause*); KALikha UP; GANDA Filipinas; Transman Brotherhood Philippines (*Applause*); Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer (LGBTQ); (*Applause*); Alyansa ng mga Mag-aaral para sa Panlipunang Katwiran at Kaunlaran - UP Diliman (*Applause*); Kasama Ka sa Paglikha ng Arte at Literatura Para sa Bayan (KALikha) from UP Diliman also; Fashion Designers Association of the Philippines (*Applause*); Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities; Northern California Nurses Association; (*Applause*); guests from the Alvarez Foundation; Love Yourself Foundation; Rule of Law Initiative from the American Bar Association; Bataan Peninsula State University (*Applause*); the representative from the People Management Association of the Philippines; Director of Lumina Events; and the guests from the First District of Bataan. (*Applause*)

We also acknowledge the presence of Raymond Ang; BJ Pascual; Martin Bautista and Bong Prada Lim. (*Applause*) We would like to acknowledge further the presence of guests of Hon. Eric L. Olivarez from the First District of Parañaque: we have Ms. Eva Olivarez, Vice President Finance and Administration of Olivarez College; Ms. Rose Vidallon; Dr. Ellen San Nicolas Salac; (*Applause*) Dr. Ester B. Vedaña, Dr. Vinci Nicholas Villaseñor, Ms. Maria Regina Milagros C. Manabat, Dr. Paulo Campos, Dr. Adlai C. Castigador, Dr. Nenita B. Nagarit, Ms. Gloria Ascano, Ms. Esmenia Javier, Ms. Cecilia Pring, Ms. Geraldine De Erit, Ms. Janet Calupitan, Ms. Leonor Tin and Ms. Jade Salvador. (*Applause*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). To all the guests present tonight, to the multi-national and multi-gender guests of our colleagues here, welcome to the House of Representatives.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. HOFER. Mme. Speaker, we would like to acknowledge the presence of Ms. Janelle Mae Frayna, the first female grandmaster of the Philippines and her party. (*Applause*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Please rise. (*Applause*) Welcome to the House of Representatives.

REP. HOFER. We have, of course, Ms. Janelle Mae Frayna, Mr. Eugenio Torre, Mr. George Frayna, Mrs. Sonia Frayna, Mr. Don Mari Phil Frayna, Mr. Jayson Gonzales, and Mr. Leo Futol, and the Philippine Chess Team men and women. This event is sponsored by our Representatives: Hon. Joey Sarte Salceda, Hon. Edcel C. Lagman, Hon. Fernando V. Gonzalez, Hon. Rodel M. Batocabe, Hon. Alfredo A. Garbin Jr., Hon. Christopher S. Co and Hon. Prospero A. Pichay Jr. (*Applause*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). To the Philippine Chess Team, welcome to the House of Representatives.

REP. HOFER. Further, we would like to acknowledge the presence of guests of Rep. Emmanuel F. Madrona from the Lone District of Romblon: Vice Mayor Loijorge Fegalan, ...

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Please rise as your names are called.

REP. HOFER. ... Sangguniang Bayan Members: Felixberto Fadrilan, Tessie Fajut, Allan Fabula, Jefferson Famadico, Patricio Flores, Imelda Fietas, and Carmelita Faderanga; and the secretary, Michael Fadrilan.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

PRIVILEGE HOUR

REP. GONZALES (A.P.). Mme. Speaker, today being a Monday and pursuant to our Rules, I move that we proceed to the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Chair declares a Privilege Hour.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. GONZALES (A.P.). Mme. Speaker, I now move that the Gentleman from the Third District of Bohol, the Hon. Arthur C. Yap, be recognized to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The Gentleman from Bohol is now recognized.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. YAP (A.)

REP. YAP (A.). Mme. Speaker, honorable colleagues, distinguished guests, friends:

I rise not to discuss the current burning issues of the day but what others have called the burning issue of past decades. Mme. Speaker, I speak of financing Philippine agriculture. The Duterte administration vowed to make the Philippines safer by ridding our streets of the menace of drugs. Confidently, the administration declared: “Change is coming” and from all indications, the government is steadily and dramatically, if not, controversially, delivering on its promise. As many applaud these developments, other sectors of society eagerly await change to come into their lives.

One of these long-suffering sectors is the rural sector. Poverty in the Philippines, according to the Asian Development Bank, is a rural phenomenon with about 40 percent of the rural population categorized as poor, compared to an average national poverty incidence of about 25 percent. The farm sector is characterized by low productivity and poor infrastructure. Many eagerly await the promise of free and expanded irrigation services plus infrastructure support for roads, logistics for post-harvest facilities, storage and warehousing, among others.

These are not new requests; many of us here continually lobby for the release of this assistance to our constituents. Unfortunately, Mme. Speaker, due to the costs involved and the scale of construction that needs to be done, these requests will need time to be executed. In the meantime, climate change continues to beat down on our farmers. Of the 186 countries surveyed by the Climate Change Vulnerability Index, the Philippines came in as the 13th most vulnerable, even as this was an important improvement from past surveys. Many of us here need no study to tell us what we have to suffer through year after year.

From 2010-2015, the Department of Agriculture Operations Group pegged consolidated crop losses at a staggering P190 billion. When these damages were inflicted on our farmers, our farmers did not have the security of savings or insurance to mitigate the impact of losses and damages upon them. In fact, Mme. Speaker, effectively, insurance is absent due to the fact that our insurance products are defectively designed in the Philippines. Agricultural crop insurance continues to be peril- or indemnity-based today. This means that farmers pay premiums expecting to be compensated when a peril occurs and an indemnity is approved, to be paid by the insurance company’s adjuster. The payout usually comes months after the occurrence of the calamity, if the farmer is even paid at all.

This is no different from the insurance product taken against accidents for one’s car. Along the way, hazards plague the process: meaning, farmers can be less than candid about the necessary information that needs to be declared to the insurance company while the insurance company can also be less than truthful in adjusting the true cost of the damage for which the farmer must be paid. The inefficiency, the tediousness, the complexity and the attendant hazards in crop insurance today result in exorbitant and unreasonable premium prices for the insurance products. It is no wonder, Mme. Speaker, that crop insurance is not popular in our country.

Data gathered from the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC) bear this out. During the period 2010-2015, when consolidated losses summed up to P190 billion, payouts merely reached P3.6 billion or not even two percent of the crop damages. Beyond laying the blame on the PCIC’s performance, we have to recognize that the insignificant payout rate may very well be due to the absence of the correct insurance products today. However, in other parts of the world, particularly India, the Caribbean and Africa, which are also reeling from the effects of climate change, crop insurance is being offered on the basis of innovative terms. Instead of being peril-based or indemnity-based, crop insurance in those areas are Weather-Index Based Insurance or WIBI.

Mme. Speaker, many in this Chamber are farmers, but we do not need to be farmers to know how the climate significantly and substantively affects yields of crops. All along the planting season and the cropping cycle, dips and highs in temperature and weather patterns affect crop yields. Disasters do not need to occur to subject farmers to crop damages. For this reason, how does Weather Index-Based Insurance work? Very simply, W-I-B-I or WIBI takes related measures like, rainfall, precipitation, wind speed, temperature, dry spells and even historical crop yield data, and converts them into an index.

Since we all know that there is a correlation between weather and crop yields, what triggers the payment is not the occurrence of a disaster, but the breaching of the index. When the weather index is breached, we all know that the farmer’s harvests will be affected and under WIBI, he will be paid long before the occurrence of an actual calamity. Take rice for example. As can be seen from this chart, water affects rice yields significantly in different stages. In the first stage, in the vegetative stage, water requirement for rice is about 238 millimeters for 55 days; in the second stage, 151 millimeters for 35 days; and on the last stage, 129 millimeters of water for 30 days. Science and empirical data through the PHILRICE have set this relationship. Along the way, PHILRICE has also established that once these indices are breached, if during the vegetative stage the rice crop does not receive 238 millimeters of water for 55

days, there is bound to be water stress, and as much as 30 percent of the rice crop will be affected even before the ripening stage.

Next slide. Temperature as well plays a very critical role. For example, for rice again, rice cannot suffer in maximum temperature of not more than 35 degrees centigrade for 10 days during the day, and it cannot suffer more than the minimum temperature of 25 degrees centigrade for 15 days at night time. If you breach these parameters, you will affect the rice harvest. This is the reason we can see that without having to wait for a calamity to transpire, we can peg our insurance payments on the basis of these index parameters. The rice farmer can be paid sooner rather than later to allow him to save his investment.

Many will find this idea abstract or light years away from implementation. Some here may think that we are still dreaming. However, in an experimental area, hundreds of farmers in Mindanao are actually presently enrolled in a WIBI program, W-I-B-I program, pioneered by PCIC itself with technical and funding support from the United Nations Development Programme, the UNDP. Based on the model built by these pioneering institutions, hundreds of farmers have been paid during the planting cycle when the climate or the weather index is breached without the need of or without waiting for a calamity to visit disaster or devastation on our farmers. W-I-B-I is the only way to go in the future. The administration of the insurance products is simpler because there is no need to maintain so many people to process information or adjust damages on the field. Indices are maintained by a credible third party like PAGASA, so the moral hazard of compromised payments due to fraudulent data is virtually eradicated overnight, making assessors or adjusters redundant. WIBI insurance, coupled later on by an institutionalized agricultural guarantee fund pool which we can discuss in another session, plus free irrigation as promised by this administration, can form the backbone of government support for our farmers to turn them into cost-effective food producers.

Eradicating rural poverty and alleviating farm misery from the quandary of generational debt is an end we must pledge our efforts to because, Mme. Speaker, profitability in agriculture, especially in these times when we are subjected to the violence of climate change, is the only sure way to achieve food security for our people. Profitability assures food security. It is for this end that I seek your support, Mme. Speaker, and I seek this august Chamber's innovative thinking and support, to join me as I call for the recapitalization and the expansion of the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation's mandate to engage in reinsurance and direct insurance of Weather-Index Based Insurance products for crops and agriculture. Allowing the PCIC to specifically engage in these products will embolden

the private sector to partner with the government in coming up with innovative insurance products which we can roll out to our farmers.

Mme. Speaker, colleagues, the tides wait for no man nor will nature yield its powers to us. We may not have polluted this planet and yet, we are most vulnerable to climate change's effects. Without risk-mitigating instruments like this to ensure capital flow and risk transfers in agriculture, our farmers stand no chance to escape the poverty trap brought upon by the stream of never-ending debts resulting from weather-related crop losses. The time to act was yesterday, but some say the time to act was even decades ago. Yet, even so, we can still act now to save our farmers rather than sit in hopelessness and inaction.

Mme. Speaker, thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. GONZALES (A.P.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the Hon. Arthur Yap to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. GONZALES (A.P.). Mme. Speaker, next to be recognized is the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee from the First District of Davao City, the Hon. Karlo Alexei B. Nograles.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The Honorable Nograles (K.) is recognized.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. NOGRALES (K.)

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

Mme. Speaker, dear colleagues, on Friday, September 16, 2016, the Chair of the Senate Committee on Justice presented a surprise witness in the Senate hearing on extrajudicial killings. This witness was, indeed, a surprise. Even the Chairperson of the Committee that was jointly conducting the hearings on extrajudicial killings was not informed of his appearance before the Committee, to what and for what purpose he was to testify. This surprise witness was also full of incredible surprises. First off, he claimed he was a hired killer with an incredible kill record of around 1,000 murders perpetrated singly and/or in cooperation with other hired killers in the most savage and heinous ways imaginable. Even the most

murderous cinematic villain could not measure up to his record of kills. Among the surprises that came out of his mouth was his claim that, upon the orders of then Mayor Rodrigo Duterte, four bodyguards of my father, then Speaker Prospero Nograles, were kidnapped and killed during the election period in 2010. My father and I have come out to dispute this lie and set the record straight. No one among the security personnel assigned to him during that period or at any other period during his incumbency as Representative of the First District of Davao or as Speaker of the House of Representatives was kidnapped or killed.

The stories of this surprise witness became even increasingly fantastic as he kept on piling one lie after another in the course of the Senate hearing. What takes the cake, Mme. Speaker, is his tall tale of an unarmed man who amazingly survived even after being shot and hit by no less than 30 gunmen firing at him simultaneously. Mme. Speaker, daig pa yata si Rambo, Chuck Norris, and Terminator combined. His testimony has since been proven to be a litany of lies. One by one, people with facts and evidence at their fingertips came out to unravel one lie after the other.

Mme. Speaker, we all know of the legal maxim, “*falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus*.” This surprise witness has turned out to be nothing but a false witness, and it is lamentable, Mme. Speaker, that this false witness was presented before a Senate hearing by the Chair of a Senate committee without informing the committee members about the existence of this person. Was there even a vetting procedure to validate the claims of this witness? More lamentable was how the Chair of the Senate Committee was aiding the false witness, clarifying and explaining testimonial details and facts as if she was the witness herself. She appeared to have swallowed the testimony of this false witness hook, line and sinker, and she was doing her very best to make the public swallow the same litany of canards as Bible truth as well. The hearing became a blatant mockery of the integrity of legislative inquiries in aid of legislation.

I respect tradition, Mme. Speaker. I am fully aware of the unwritten rule of inter-Chamber courtesy and I have restrained myself from questioning the adherence to Chamber rules on inquiries in the conduct of the Senate investigation at issue, but I cannot help myself from being amazed. How could the glaring inconsistencies and distortions of facts and events be overlooked, that this surprise witness would merit being heard in a legislative hearing upon the direct endorsement of the Committee Chair herself? What we witnessed in that sad episode of a Senate hearing was not a sincere search for truth on the matter of extrajudicial killings. What we witnessed was a calculated and unmitigated direct assault on the dignity and reputation of the President of the Republic for reasons I can only surmise as dangerous to the stability of this Republic. The weapon used was a

false witness, and the platform from which the assault was mounted is a Senate investigation supposedly in aid of legislation. The assault on the dignity and reputation of the sitting President of the Republic has only one ultimate objective—to destroy public trust and confidence in the President.

So, I ask, Mme. Speaker, what is behind this assault on the dignity and reputation of the President? Is the groundwork being laid for something sinister?

A sense of *déjà vu* descends upon us, Mme. Speaker. The foreign media has entered the fray and disinformation is being peddled on the current state of affairs in the country. International talking heads are pontificating on violations of human rights and their statements are barely concealed declarations that the President has authorized state-sponsored killings in his administration’s war against drug trafficking and use. A coordinated attack on the presidency appears to have been launched from within and from without. Lies are being piled one after another to waylay the President’s change agenda and stop the momentum for radical reform towards making government work as it should work for the people. At stake is not simply the success of the war against illegal drugs or the agenda for reform of the Duterte administration. At stake, in real terms, is not even the presidency—it is the stability and survival of our Republic.

We cannot sit idly and be content watching at the sidelines, Mme. Speaker. So, I rise not only as a Davaoño defending a fellow Davaoño, the President; I rise to sound the call for all Filipinos to stand in defense of our aspirations, for stability and survival and meaningful change in our government work to serve the people.

In this spirit, I condemn in the strongest terms the lies being peddled to destroy the dignity and reputation of the President and the use of congressional inquiries in aid of legislation as platforms for peddling these lies to achieve purposes that undermine the stability and survival of the nation. In the same spirit, I call for vigilance from the members of this Chamber—vigilance in defense of what is true and just and right in government; and vigilance in honoring the mandate of our people when they voted overwhelmingly for a meaningful change in the government under the leadership of President Duterte.

Thank you, Mme. Speaker. Thank you, dear colleagues.

Good afternoon. (*Applause*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Thank you, Honorable Nograles (K.).

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. GONZALES (A.P.) Mme. Speaker, the Honorable Nograles has indicated that he does not wish

to be interpellated. With that, I move to refer the speech of Honorable Nograles (K.) to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. GONZALES (A.P.). Mme. Speaker, next to be recognized is the Lady from the First District of Bataan, the honorable Rep. Geraldine B. Roman. (*Applause*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Rep. Geraldine B. Roman of the First District of Bataan is recognized.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ROMAN

REP. ROMAN. Mme. Speaker, I rise on a personal privilege—I say personal—from the innermost recesses of my heart and my memory because part of what I am about to share with the Members of this august Body and with our visitors in the gallery was written by my late father, Tony P. Roman Jr., a former Member of this House and a friend to many of you.

Tony Roman was the epitome of a macho politician with his iconic moustache and charming good looks. He is remembered as a legislator with the gift of eloquence and communication as well as a much-appreciated sense of humor expressed with his baritone voice. Former Congressman and now UN Ambassador, Teddy Boy Locsin, once described Tony Roman as a “sharp lawmaker who drafted laws like an experienced surgeon cuts with a knife,” but you know what? I remember him most not because of all these wonderful traits which make me very proud as a daughter, I remember him dearly because he was a father who loved, accepted, supported and defended me, Geraldine Roman, his transgender daughter, with no question or condition whatsoever.

In October 2013, shortly before the barangay elections of that year, as my mother and I were busy meeting with barangay captains, I clearly recall how my father, then a frail shadow of the sturdy man that he used to be—because he had already lost more than 30 pounds of weight due to emphysema—called me out of the meeting and sat me down in a corner of our living room. He held my arm and said, “Geri, I know you are going to make it as a Congresswoman. How I pray that I will still be around when you make it but just in case, I want you to know that I dreamt of you last night delivering your first privilege speech. I want you to remember what I am about to tell you.” I asked him, “Really, Daddy? Did you really dream of me delivering my first privilege speech?” You know, my dear colleagues, to be honest, at that moment, I had

a gut feeling that all he wanted me to do was just to memorize his own thoughts and that he was just using his so-called dream as an excuse to convince me to use his words when this time comes. “Yes, I dreamt it,” he assured me. “Just remember these words.”

My dear colleagues, Mme. Speaker, what I heard surprised me. Rather than a victorious speech with a legislative agenda meant to impress my future colleagues, what he was telling me basically constituted a plea. Instead of a triumphant discourse meant to shame potential detractors, my father’s speech sounded more like an appeal for my colleagues to look beyond my gender and to accept me as an equal. It was an appeal meant for you, my dear colleagues in Congress, to overcome whatever biases and prejudices you may have and focus on what I have to offer. It was a humble plea for all of you to respect me, if not for who I am, but for who I represent and these are the noble people of the First District of Bataan. (*Applause*)

The better part of me could not imagine saying these words, these words of supplication, but I could understand where those words were coming from. Here was a father who was dying. He was not questioning my qualifications nor my ability to win, but he knew perfectly well that for me to be an effective lawmaker, I had to gain the respect of my colleagues, and my father, he was willing to beg for that respect, all for the sake of his transgender daughter.

If my father could hear me now, I would tell him this: “Daddy, you and I need not beg my colleagues for respect. I am glad and proud that the Members of the Seventeenth Congress have not only welcomed me with open arms but they have dealt with me as a full-fledged Member and colleague, as an equal. Daddy, you would be glad to know that they have treated me with the dignity and respect that is due all human beings. For this, mga minamahal kong mga kasamahan sa Kongreso, maraming, maraming salamat po. (*Applause*)

Nais din ng LGBT community na pasalamatang aking mga kasamahan sa Kongreso na lumagda bilang coauthors ng Anti-Discrimination Bill on the Basis of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity. Nakikita ninyo iyong mga rosas sa mesa ninyo, tanggapin po ninyo ang mga rosas na iyan bilang simbolo ng pagkakaisa at pasasalamat. Kayo po, mga minamahal kong kasamahan, ang #equalitychampions of the Seventeenth Congress. Palakpakan po natin ang ating mga #equalitychampions. (*Applause*)

Mme. Speaker, my dear colleagues, I stand before you on a personal privilege, but I also speak to you on a matter of collective significance. I say collective because what I thought would be a victory for an ordinary politician like me has instead been described as a turning point, a paradigm shift, a light at the end of the tunnel for a sector of society that has long been judged, marginalized and neglected. As much as I would

have wanted to focus my entire energy in serving the people of the First District of Bataan, in the tradition of my father and my mother, I cannot turn my back on a group of people who have long suffered discrimination and have long been denied adequate legal protection. How can I turn my back, how can I turn a blind eye to the suffering that I myself had experienced at some point in my life?

My dear colleagues, you know who I am talking about. We are your brothers; we are your sisters, your sons and daughters, your nieces and nephews. We are your family. We are your friends, your schoolmates, your colleagues at work, your Twitter and Facebook buddies, your neighbors. We are part of society. We laugh, we cry, we love and yearn to be loved. We are human beings. We love our families. We love our country. We are proud Filipinos who just happen to be LGBT. So, the question now is: Do we, as members of the LGBT community, share the same rights as all other citizens? Does the State grant us equal protection under our laws?

An overview of legal references to the LGBT phenomenon shows that there are no direct references to lesbian, gay, transgender and bisexual individuals. In fact, these terms are nowhere to be found in any of our existing laws, save for a few references to sexual orientation. It is clear, therefore, that this sector and its needs have been consistently overlooked. We lack psychosocial counselors equipped with the proper skills and training to respond to the needs of individuals with LGBT-related depression, anger, suicidal tendencies and family relationship issues. There are no data concerning violations of labor standards involving LGBT employees. There is even confusion even within the judiciary, with no less than the Supreme Court using LGBT and the term “homosexual” interchangeably in some of its decisions, even if not all LGBT people are homosexuals.

In our collective knowledge, the Philippines has had numerous incidents of hate crimes against the LGBT. Sadly, only 164 of these have been documented as cases since 1996 because there is no single officer or even a desk within the DOJ, the PNP and the NBI that documents and monitors such hate crimes. When, in June of 2011, the UN Human Rights Council introduced a joint statement urging states to end violence, criminal sanctions and related human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity, our own permanent representative to the UN did not support it. That is our situation.

My dear brothers and sisters in the LGBT community, I want you to know that I am but one voice among many in this august Chamber that says it is time—it is time to pass the Anti-Discrimination Bill on the Basis of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity and the time is now. Once passed, this measure will prohibit the following discriminatory acts: If an employer,

whether from the private or public sector, includes sexual orientation or gender identity in the criteria for hiring, promotion, transfer, designation, work assignment, reassignment, dismissal, performance review, selection for training, and the computation of benefits, privileges and allowances, that is discrimination. If a school or any educational or training institution refuses to admit a student or participant, or chooses to expel him or her solely on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity, that is discrimination. If a school imposes disciplinary sanctions, penalties, restrictions and requirements harsher than the usual that infringe on the rights of students on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity, that is discrimination. When a student or a trainee is harassed, punished or restricted due to the sexual orientation or gender identity of his parents or legal guardians, that is discrimination.

My dear colleagues, if this measure is passed, the Commission on Elections will have no right to prohibit the registration or revoke the accreditation of an LGBT organization based on sexual orientation, just like what they did to Ang Ladlad Party-List. Never again should such an outright rejection and blatant act of discrimination by a government agency based on sexual orientation and gender identity be permitted under our laws. The Bill also underscores the right of every LGBT individual to have access to or use of establishments, facilities, utilities or services, including housing. Bakit naman kaya may mga restaurants at clubs na ayaw magpapasok ng transgender individuals? How different are we from your other patrons? Hindi ba nagbabayad din naman kami? Ipinagbabawal ng panukalang batas na ito ang mga ganitong uri ng diskriminasyon.

What if a member of the PNP harasses a person because he or she is LGBT? Then the proposed law will make the officer accountable for his or her actions. Harassment occurs when a person is arrested or placed in custody and subjected to extortion, physical or verbal abuse because that person is gay and vulnerable. One cannot also force a person to undertake any medical or psychological examination to alter the person’s sexual orientation or gender identity without the consent of the person involved, as if you are dealing with a disease that has to be cured. If that person is a minor and below the age of discernment, then the approval of the appropriate Family Court shall be required and the Office of the Solicitor General can represent that child.

Now, the question is: Now that we have identified the situations of discrimination, what will happen to those who violate the law? A jail term of not less than one year but not more than six years awaits. Add to that a fine of not less than P100,000 to a maximum of P500,000. In addition, the court may sentence the guilty party to community service and to undergo human rights education, including familiarization with and exposure to the plight of the victims.

What else does this measure seek to accomplish? Under Section 7, the Women and Children's Desks now existing in all police stations, shall also act on and attend to the complaints and cases covered by this Act. Officers assigned to these desks shall undergo appropriate training with a human rights-based approach to include, among others, gender sensitivity, awareness of proper terminology and the dynamics of LGBT relationships, and the proper handling of hate crime investigations.

Mme. Speaker, my dear colleagues, nais ko lang sanang balikan at dugtungan ang naging panawagan ng aking yumaong ama sa inyo. Sana po, katulad ng inyong malugod na pagtanggap sa akin ay tanggapin po ninyo ang pagiging pantay-pantay ng bawat Pilipino, LGBT man o hindi. I want to remind all of you here that recognizing our rights and dignity will in no way diminish yours. We are not asking for extra rights or privileges. We simply ask for equality. With inclusiveness and diversity, our nation has so much to gain and yet, sadly, previous attempts to pass this Bill have all failed.

Mme. Speaker, my dear colleagues, history awaits. The time and the opportunity to pass the Anti-Discrimination Bill on the Basis of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity is now.

Ako po si Geraldine Roman, anak ng magiting na lalawigan ng Bataan, transgender woman, Mambabatas, Pilipino.

Maraming, maraming salamat po. (*Applause*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Thank you, Representative Roman. (*Applause*)

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. GONZALES (A.P.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Lady from the Lone District of Dinagat Islands, the Hon. Kaka J. Bag-ao, for interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Congresswoman Bag-ao is recognized.

REP. BAG-AO. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. Mme. Speaker, I would like to ask if the Representative from the First District of Bataan would yield to a few questions.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Is Representative Roman willing to entertain some questions?

REP. ROMAN. I would be willing.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Please proceed, Congresswoman Bag-ao.

REP. BAG-AO. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. First of all, before I interpellate the good Congresswoman from the First District of Bataan, Mme. Speaker, I would like to tell her that long before she entered this Chamber as a legislator, I already had great respect for her and what she stands for. I thank her for her powerful privilege speech. These are words that we need to hear, especially today.

Now, allow me to go straight to what many of our colleagues might be asking in their minds at this moment: Mme. Speaker, does your advocacy for the Anti-Discrimination Bill permit same-sex marriage?

REP. ROMAN. The Bill has nothing to do with same-sex marriage. In fact, it is very specific. As I have read before in my privilege speech, it will deal with the delivery of basic services and the opportunities, maybe, to enter a school or find a job. It has nothing, nothing at all, to do with the same-sex marriage issue.

REP. BAG-AO. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. Thank you for clarifying that because that has always been the objection raised in the previous Congresses. To remind everyone, the Bill that is pending now is already 17 years old. Next year, it will already celebrate a debut. That is why I think it is really about time to enact this Bill.

My next question is, some people insist that the Bill does—and they always refer to the provision barring discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in the issuance of professional or other similar kinds of licenses, clearance, certification or any other similar documents issued by the government—they say that this is a provision that grants marriage licenses. What does the Lady from the First District of Bataan say in response to this argument?

REP. ROMAN. I say that the provision is very clear. We are dealing with professional licenses, but in order to appease those who doubt the nature or the kind of licenses that are going to be issued under this provision, we can work it out. We can actually specify which licenses, specific licenses, we are referring to, to erase any kind of doubt.

REP. BAG-AO. Thank you. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. My next question is, can persons, individuals or even juridical entities refuse to provide services enumerated in the Bill or in the proposed law, to people on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity because it is against their conscience or their religious beliefs?

REP. ROMAN. Under this law, they cannot. We live in a civil society governed by civil laws. As much as we would like to respect the individual religious beliefs of our citizens when dealing with each other,

we have to follow the law and if this Bill is passed, definitely, those persons, whether juridical or personal, cannot deny these services simply on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

REP. BAG-AO. Thank you. Thank you rin, Mme. Speaker. Some would argue that we have enough laws and provisions in the Constitution that protect all persons. Why do proponents like you of the anti-discrimination policy say that these laws are not enough?

REP. ROMAN. I say that they are not enough because they are too limited and binary and at times, they are very vague. I want to give myself as an example. Had I not been able to avail of a legal gender and name change, imagine that, I would be discriminated against even up to the present. I say it is necessary also because we have no legislation that actually makes direct reference to the phenomenon of LGBT, which is a reality that has existed since time immemorial. So, why do we close our eyes to the reality that stares us in the face?

So, it is really a recognition of the reality that exists in our society. There are LGBT members in Philippine society and they need protection, which other laws are not able to provide them with.

REP. BAG-AO. Thank you. In the past, when this proposed policy was being heard at the Committee level, during the hearings of the Committee, one of the resource persons therein invited by the Committee said that being an LGBT is a social disorder. What do you say about this, Mme. Speaker?

REP. ROMAN. Mme. Speaker, I would like to tell my colleague from the Dinagat Islands that being an LGBT is not a social disorder. Being an LGBT is part of the human condition. We did not choose to be this way, believe me. If we had a choice, I guarantee you, 100 percent, there would be no LGBT members in our society but the reality is that we are here, we are human beings, we are Filipinos and therefore, we have rights that have to be protected. As lawmakers, I feel that it is our sacred duty to uphold the constitutional tenet of equality by approving this Bill.

REP. BAG-AO. Yes, but in another Committee hearing, in several times that this measure was being proposed, a resource speaker also said that the Constitution of the Philippines refers only to men and women, implying that LGBTs are not included; and yes, it is in the records of the hearings of the committees in Congress. Can the Representative of the First District of Bataan, Mme. Speaker, shed light on the definition of sex, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity

for the benefit of our colleagues and for the benefit of those who are listening, who may be confused?

REP. ROMAN. Okay. Mme. Speaker, for the benefit of our colleagues, we are dealing here with two questions. The first question is about sexual orientation. To which sex are you attracted? If you are a man and you identify as a man and you are happy with your anatomy, but you are attracted to other men, then you are a homosexual. If you are a woman, you are happy with your identity and you are attracted to other women, then you are a lesbian. That is the first question, sexual orientation. The second question is, how do you identify yourself? Are you a man or are you a woman? Sometimes in nature, it happens that a person is born with the anatomy of a man, of a male but has the psyche, the mind and the heart of a woman, and vice versa, and these people are called transgender people. Also, for the term "bisexual," that belongs to the first question; if you are attracted to both sexes, then you are a bisexual.

Whether we are dealing with sexual orientation and gender identity, what I want to remind the Members of this august Body is that this is not something that we choose, and with regard to the earlier allusion to the Constitution, where there is only male and female who are recognized, I do not see any disparity. Even if we develop laws and policies in favor of protecting the LGBT members in our community, I do not see anything unconstitutional.

REP. BAG-AO. Lastly, Mme. Speaker, will the Anti-Discrimination Law be truly effective in eliminating discrimination in our country? What does the Representative from the First District of Bataan say about this?

REP. ROMAN. You know, Mme. Speaker, will it be effective? The efficacy of a law is only as good as its implementation, but the first step has to be taken. The mere fact that we are about to pass a Bill that actually recognizes the phenomenon of the LGBT is already a statement in itself, in the right direction, in the direction of equal rights for all. Secondly, the typification of certain behaviors as discriminatory acts, as something that are unacceptable and illegal, is already a statement to society that these behaviors are not only not to be tolerated but these behaviors constitute illegal acts. So, the question is, will it be effective? As I said, once passed, this will depend on the implementation and, of course, once this is passed, I think a clear message will be sent throughout society that it is not okay to discriminate against anyone.

REP. BAG-AO. Mme. Speaker, I thank the Lady from the First District of Bataan for answering

my questions but more importantly, I thank her for standing on this floor right now and because of this, she has amplified the voices of Filipino LGBTs. She is truly an inspiration, not just for us who are fighting for the passage of this measure within the House of Representatives, but also for every lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Filipino, no matter who they are and where they come from, her presence in this august Chamber is proof that there are victories in our struggle. The LGBT community is asking for more rights, they are asking for respect.

At this point, I join the Lady from Bataan in her call. The time for the Anti-Discrimination Law, a measure that simply seeks to protect the rights and dignity of human beings, is now. Sa pamamagitan po ng panawagang ito, mapapakita po natin, hindi lang sa Pilipinas pero sa buong mundo, na lahat tayo ay pantay-pantay.

Maraming salamat po, Mme. Speaker.
(Applause)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Thank you, Representative Bag-ao.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GONZALES (A.P.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from the Fourth District of Pangasinan, the honorable Rep. Christopher “Toff” Vera Perez De Venecia, for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The Hon. Christopher De Venecia is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. Will the honorable Lady from the First District of Bataan yield to some questions?

REP. ROMAN. Mme. Speaker, I would be willing.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Please proceed.

REP. DE VENECIA. First, allow me to congratulate my dear friend and colleague for delivering such a heartfelt, personal, humane and historic privilege speech. Mme. Speaker, I am honored and humbled to have listened to your manifesto, the Philippines’ first ever transgender Congresswoman, Geraldine Roman, a game-changer and my fellow equality champion in this august Chamber. *(Applause)*

My line of questioning is geared towards the state of our LGBT youth. To your knowledge, what is the extent of discrimination faced by our youths in our educational institutions?

REP. ROMAN. Mme. Speaker, it is very difficult to quantify the discrimination suffered by the youths in our educational system but I have heard of incidents, several in fact, of youths who are not allowed to study in certain institutions simply on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity. I have also identified situations wherein these individuals are not allowed to enroll in schools because their parents happened to be lesbians or homosexuals.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, is this right?

REP. ROMAN. Mme. Speaker, beyond our religious and personal beliefs, I think we all believe that it is not all right to discriminate against individuals for circumstances that are beyond their control.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, are there any measures being undertaken by the present administration to address such problems, whether it be on the part of the DEPED, the CHED or any other significant institutions or agencies?

REP. ROMAN. Mme. Speaker, during the budget hearings with the CHED and the DEPED, I specifically asked the Secretary and the Assistant Secretaries if there is a clear-cut policy with regard to the teaching of gender sensitivity courses, and their answer was “no.”

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, that is very unfortunate, and perhaps we can enjoin these agencies to be able to devise programs that will address this issue because certainly, a lot of youths are affected by this and they will not be able to operate properly and soundly in schools if they have to go through this degree or type of discrimination. My third question would be, Mme. Speaker, how does your proposed measure ensure that our LGBT youths will no longer have to experience discrimination in our educational institutions?

REP. ROMAN. It is very clear, as I read from my speech, that in educational institutions, Mme. Speaker, the acts that would constitute discriminatory acts are not to be allowed—whether in the admission or selection of students, in imposing psychosocial tests to determine masculinity or femininity of students, requiring the students to sign a sort of affidavit or promissory note that they are not gay or lesbian and that they will not turn gay or lesbian—these are acts that will be punished, according to this Bill.

REP. DE VENECIA. Could the honorable Lady from the First District of Bataan reiterate these proposed punitive measures for such educational institutions which will not comply?

REP. ROMAN. There are fines that range from P100,000 to P500,000, Mme. Speaker. Also, the judge in the court who will hear the case may impose community service or courses on gender sensitivity to the violators.

REP. DE VENECIA. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. I certainly hope that this measure will be supported by our dear colleagues here in Congress. Perhaps, as a final question or clarification, you mentioned earlier the lack of data with regard to, I suppose, crimes and injustices committed towards the LGBT. *Time* magazine wrote that if there are no data, it is as if the sector does not exist. What efforts can the government or the private sector undertake with regard to collecting such data that can hopefully amplify this and support and complement the proposed measures here in Congress?

REP. ROMAN. Mme. Speaker, I believe that the mere passage of this Bill will already provide knowledge to all our public servants and those in the government up to the LGU units. It will provide information on which act actually constitutes discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI). As such, once given this information, they will be able to adequately report these cases.

I want to remind the Gentleman from the Fourth District of Pangasinan that the figures that I cited are very low precisely because people do not know which types of behavior constitute discrimination and therefore, if you do not know this, you cannot report it. With the passage of this Bill, Mme. Speaker, I believe we can properly document and report cases of discrimination based on SOGI.

REP. DE VENECIA. Perhaps, Mme. Speaker, we can enjoin the guests in this august Chamber, as well as our dear colleagues, to help us solicit this information so that we will be able to strengthen the efficacy and the potency of this proposed measure as spoken about by the honorable Gentlewoman from the First District of Bataan.

Cong. Geraldine Roman, you are the personification of change; you are change personified. I am very proud of you and I join you in championing the Anti-Discrimination Bill here in the Seventeenth Congress. Like she said, Mme. Speaker, the time is right, the time is now. Let us all be #EqualityChampions and let us all be #PartnersForChange.

Thank you, Mme. Speaker. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Thank you, Representative De Venecia.
The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. GONZALES (A.P.). Mme. Speaker, next to

interpellate is the Lady from the Fifth District of Manila, the honorable Rep. Cristal L. Bagatsing.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Representative Bagatsing is recognized.

REP. BAGATSING. Mme. Speaker, good afternoon. Is the Lady from Bataan willing to yield to some questions?

REP. ROMAN. Mme. Speaker, it would be an honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The Lady will please proceed.

REP. BAGATSING. Does the Lady, Mme. Speaker, think or believe that it is unfair or just that HIV is often linked to homosexuality?

REP. ROMAN. Mme. Speaker, I do not believe in stereotypes or generalizing certain phenomenon or behavior in a society. The tragedy of HIV is not the exclusive property of the LGBT community. It is a problem that affects the entire society regardless of one's sexual orientation and gender identity and so, it is unfair to associate this tragedy solely with the LGBT community.

REP. BAGATSING. What about those people, Mme. Speaker, who think that it is very parallel to homosexuality? What would the Lady suggest that we can do to educate those people?

REP. ROMAN. We need figures, Mme. Speaker, that will shed light on the phenomenon of HIV—the cases that involve whether homosexual or heterosexual couples or individuals are necessary. These facts and figures will speak for themselves. I am sure once these figures are before us, we cannot make generalizations that are very much in the line of stereotyping and bias.

REP. BAGATSING. Okay. Mme. Speaker, one more question. Would the Lady know if there are health centers or offices wherein those questioning their genders can call, something like a support system, if they are too embarrassed to talk to their families or friends about it?

REP. ROMAN. Psychosocial counselors equipped with the proper skills and training to respond to the needs of individuals in LGBT-related problems like depression, anger, suicidal tendency and family relationship issues, Mme. Speaker, are not readily available in our society. One would have to go to private practitioners and because of economic and financial

restraints, they are not readily available in the grassroots level. In fact, if we go to our small barangays, to the remote barrios, the problem is hardly dealt with as there are no professionals who actually attend to this type of problem.

REP. BAGATSING. I join the Lady's plight, Mme. Speaker, in helping educate people to be more sensitive in their words and actions, that these words and actions have their consequences and so, if we need to find a way to have a gender sensitivity class on a barangay level, maybe we can talk to the DEPED about this.

That ends my line of questioning. I would like to inform the Lady from Bataan that I stand beside her and my congratulations to her for such a wonderful privilege speech that came from the heart. *(Applause)* We felt the honesty in that speech and I also manifest my support to the Anti-Discrimination Bill.

Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

REP. ROMAN. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Thank you.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GONZALES (A.D.). Mme. Speaker, next to interpellate is the Gentleman from AKBAYAN Party-List, the honorable Rep. Tomasito "Tom" S. Villarín.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The Hon. Tom Villarín from AKBAYAN is recognized.

REP. VILLARIN. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. Dear colleagues, good afternoon.

Mme. Speaker, may I make a short manifestation and later, I hope the Lady from the First District of Bataan would yield to some interpellations.

REP. ROMAN. I would be glad to answer those questions, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The Gentleman will please proceed.

REP. VILLARIN. Mme. Speaker, everytime an anti-discrimination bill is filed in Congress, AKBAYAN is there in the frontline, and everytime an anti-discrimination bill fails to pass, Congress fails to recognize that the totality of a person's identity is more than just a person's biological parts. A law against discrimination is a law protecting human dignity and the right to self-expression. Let me quote, Mme. Speaker:

We should all be outraged when people suffer discrimination, assault or even murder simply because they are LGBTs. We should all speak out when someone is arrested and imprisoned because of who they love or how they look. This is one of the great neglected human rights challenges of our times. We must right these wrongs.

Those words, Mme. Speaker, were uttered by the Secretary General of the United Nations after the attack in Orlando, Florida.

Mme. Speaker, some may oppose change and they may invoke culture, tradition or religion to defend the status quo. Such arguments have been used to justify slavery, child marriage, rape within marriage, and female genital mutilation. I respect culture, tradition and religion but they can never justify the denial of basic rights.

Now, let me go to my interpellation, Mme. Speaker. Would the honorable Lady from the First District of Bataan know of any specific law, or even a provision in our Civil Code for that matter, that discriminates based on SOGI?

REP. ROMAN. Mme. Speaker, I only know of very few references to the phenomenon of sexual orientation and gender identity, and these are not directly aimed at the LGBT community. I know of a law, for example, which is the Social Workers Act, which only warns against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation but this is aimed at social workers. It is not aimed at the LGBT community. I see a vacuum, Mme. Speaker, on laws that will precisely and specifically protect the LGBT community.

REP. VILLARIN. Thank you for that response, honorable Lady, but this Representation believes that we must review our pertinent laws, especially our Civil Code because, for that matter, even in previous Congresses, in legislations, we found out that there are specific laws which still have discriminatory provisions.

Going forward, Mme. Speaker, I came from a recent Inter-ASEAN Parliamentary Forum on Security Sector Reforms, meaning our security sector. Does the Lady think that in the military, in the security sector, will the rules apply to all, with no biases on SOGI?

REP. ROMAN. I believe, Mme. Speaker, that we should follow the example of developed countries with regard to individuals serving in the military. In the United States, for example, there used to be a policy which is, "Don't ask, don't tell" but for me, that policy was sort of hypocritical in the sense that it refuses to recognize the reality of the LGBT community. So what they have

now in the United States is this: any individual, whether homosexual or heterosexual, transgender or bisexual, can serve in the military and be open about it. They can express their gender identity with no problem and then, they can also avail of the benefits that are afforded heterosexual individuals and that are afforded to spouses or partners of heterosexual couples.

So, I believe that there is room in our laws, and also in the policies of the armed forces that will enable us to follow the example of developed countries, like the United States and countries in the European Union, with regard to individuals who want to serve in the military.

REP. VILLARIN. Thank you for that, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker. I also do support that in the security sector reforms, the security sector governance should include SOGI as inclusive in the policies that will be discussed in the security sector.

My third point, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor: how can men and women who are not members of the LGBT community benefit from this proposed law?

REP. ROMAN. Mme. Speaker, as I said in my speech, society has so much to gain if it will become an inclusive society, an inclusive society where all citizens are free to be who they are and to love whom they love, because if we have happy citizens, they become productive citizens and so, the economy will also benefit and we will grow as a society.

REP. VILLARIN. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. As a last note, Mme. Speaker, and standing beside our esteemed colleague from Bataan, AKBAYAN Party-List is here in the frontline and will always be here until an anti-discrimination bill is passed to ensure that no Filipino will ever be treated less than how a Filipino should be treated before the eyes of the law, regardless of a person's sexual orientation, gender identity and expression.

On a personal note, Mme. Speaker, from a TNL, I am highly supportive and cognizant that a person's SOGI should not be a basis for discrimination. With that, this Representation congratulates the Hon. Geri Roman and invites our colleagues in the Seventeenth Congress, as well as the Filipino people, in the fight against discrimination and the fight for self expression.

Thank you, Your Honor. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Thank you.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GONZALES (A.D.). Mme. Speaker, next to interpellate is the Lady from the BAGONG

HENERASYON Party-List, the honorable Rep. Bernadette "BH" Herrera-Dy.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Representative Herrera-Dy is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. Through you, Mme. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Lady from the First District of Bataan. Will the good Lady from Bataan yield to just one question, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The Honorable Roman may respond.

REP. ROMAN. I would be glad, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The Lady will please proceed.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. Again, through you, Mme. Speaker, there is this school in Mindanao—I think it is the Ateneo de Davao or Zamboanga, I am not sure—where they put up one comfort room for either the male or the female and called it "whichever." I would like to know the opinion of the Lady from Bataan if this is an appropriate term, or that it is really necessary to push for this Anti-Discrimination Bill, that she wants to push for this in our country, Mme. Speaker?

REP. ROMAN. Mme. Speaker, I have read the news about Ateneo de Davao building these gender-neutral bathrooms. I want to laud the Jesuits of Ateneo de Davao for this inclusive measure that recognizes the phenomenon of the LGBT, but I do not agree with the form. In essence, I agree with the objective but the form is rather politically incorrect in using "whichever." You know, we are talking about human beings. I prefer to look beyond the form and look at the essence because my message has always been that we have to look at the heart and essence of of the people that surround us.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I thank the Lady for that answer because that really puzzled me—"whichever"—and I was not comfortable with the term "whichever." This leads me to another question: Is it really important to have a third restroom, Mme. Speaker?

REP. ROMAN. Mme. Speaker, having a third restroom is not obligatory, it is not even dealt with in this Bill that we are trying to pass but based on the example of many countries, in developed countries, it would help. It is not necessary, it would help, but

I want to focus on the Anti-Discrimination Bill which we are trying to pass here, and that is not really dealt with in this bill.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Maraming salamat for that. Mme. Speaker, those are all my questions for today. Thank you for clarifying that. Again, I congratulate the Lady from Bataan. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Thank you.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, before we recognize the next interpellator, may we acknowledge the presence of some visitors in the gallery, the guests of Deputy Speaker Raneo “Ranie” E. Abu, Rep. Scott Davies S. Lanete M.D., the House Basketball Team, and this Representation, namely: the Philippine Ambassador to South Korea, the Hon. Raul S. Hernandez. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Please rise as your names are called. Welcome to the House of Representatives.

REP. NOEL. Likewise, Court of Appeals Justice Edwin Sorongon *(Applause)* accompanied by Mr. Velasco, Mr. Ravales, Mr. Perez, Mr. Ang, Mr. Relova, Mr. Manalo, Mr. Legaspi, Mr. Nieto, Dr. Lacson and Mr. Salva.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Please rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GONZALES (A.P.). Mme. Speaker, next to interpellate is the Lady from the Third District of Nueva Ecija, the Hon. Rosanna “Ria” Vergara.

REP. VERGARA. Good afternoon, Mme. Speaker. Will the honorable Lady from Bataan be open for questions?

REP. ROMAN. Mme. Speaker, I would be willing to answer questions.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The Lady will please proceed.

REP. VERGARA. Thank you for sharing your personal and touching memories of your late father. Mme. Speaker, since I spoke to you over a month ago and we discussed your first privilege speech, I eagerly awaited for this day and I am very happy to be present here to listen to it. I admire your conviction

and determination to stand for the rights of a long-neglected and often maligned sector of our society, the LGBTs, and I share your view that it is time that they are recognized—that you are recognized not because of your sexual orientation, but because you are a Filipino like all of us.

Mme. Speaker, this House Bill that you propose addresses discrimination and harassment in the workplace, in educational settings, and even on how alleged criminals will be treated in police stations. However, it is silent on discrimination within the family, usually the first place a child with a different sexual orientation experiences ridicule. My question is: How do we deal with parents or guardians who mistreat and abuse their own children, their own family members, because of their refusal to accept their children’s sexual orientation? How do we reach out and help these minors?

REP. ROMAN. Mme. Speaker, in order to deal with discrimination within the family, I admit this is not covered in this Bill, but we are open to ideas in the committee hearings so that we can fine-tune and add additional situations that would constitute discrimination.

REP. VERGARA. Thank you. It is my hope that you, Mme. Speaker, will include this provision in the House Bill which I will support cognizant that discrimination is first experienced by children of LGBT orientation in the family. I believe in the personal nature of each Representative’s decision to enter public service and how within our individual callings, there is a particular responsibility that each of us must meet. We are each called uniquely for a purpose, an individual task that will mold us into the person God meant us to be. As elected legislators, we are tasked to reform our society, through our attitudes and actions towards persons and events to be others-centered and Christ-centered. There is no doubt in my mind, Congresswoman Geri, why you are here today, and our country is all the better for it.

Thank you very much. I support this House Bill and all future bills that would stand up for the rights of the LGBT community. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. GONZALES (A.P.). Mme. Speaker, next to interpellate is the Lady from the KABATAAN Party-List, the honorable Rep. Sarah Jane I. Elago.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Representative Elago is recognized.

REP. ELAGO. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. If I may

just make a manifestation and if the Lady from the First District of Bataan is willing to yield to a question from this Representation.

REP. ROMAN. Mme. Speaker, I would be willing to answer.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Please proceed.

REP. ELAGO. Nakikiisa ang Kinatawan na ito mula sa KABATAAN Party-List sa pagtindig laban sa diskriminasyon dahil ang pagtindig laban sa diskriminasyon ay pagtindig para sa karapatang pantao. Iyan po ay dapat kinikilala natin para sa ating lahat ng kabataan at mamamayang Pilipino.

Mme. Speaker, the Lady from Bataan mentioned in her privilege speech that there are numerous incidents of hate crimes in our country and that there are about a hundred reported incidents of these hate crimes. Now, the steady rise of these hate crimes both in the Philippines and abroad is a clarion call for us for the youth and the people to intensify the fight to stop the continuing and deepening culture of discrimination and hate in the country and in the world. In the Philippines, the absence of a law that explicitly deals with hate crimes is one of the reasons the violent deaths or discriminatory acts against certain groups of people, including members of the LGBT community, are simply reported generically as murders or homicides without considering the perceived or actual hate or bias towards them because of their personal characteristics.

Sa tingin ko po, isang inhustisya ang hindi kilalanin na ang mga krimen na ganito ay nagme-merit talaga ng dagdag na parusa. How do you think we can address this inadequacy in our law?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Before the Honorable Roman will respond, the Chair would like to remind those in the gallery to refrain from clapping in view of the Rules we have in the House of Representatives. Thank you.

REP. ROMAN. Mme. Speaker, we would have to address the problem by passing more bills that would actually make the aspect of—there is a legal term right now that I am trying to recall—to make hate crimes based on SOGI as an aggravating circumstance. This is not yet included in our laws and I suppose that an amendment in the corresponding law would be necessary to make hate crimes based on SOGI as an aggravating circumstance. Meaning, hindi lamang ganito kalaki ang ipapataw na kaparusahan, kung hindi lalaki pa dahil ang naging dahilan ay ang diskriminasyon na naka-base sa sexual orientation at gender identity.

REP. ELAGO. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. I asked this question because this Representation believes that apart from the passage of an anti-discrimination law, the passage of an anti-hate crime law will address this inadequacy and will serve the interest and welfare of the most vulnerable and marginalized sectors of our society, especially the LGBT community.

That is all, Mme. Speaker. I would like to congratulate again the Lady from Bataan for standing up for gender rights, for human rights, for the youth, and the Filipino people. Thank you. *(Applause)*

REP. ROMAN. Thank you, Representative Elago.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Please refrain from clapping, those in the gallery.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. GONZALES (A.P.). Mme. Speaker, next to interpellate is the Lady from the First District of Antipolo, the honorable Rep. Cristina “Chiqui” Roa-Puno.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mme. Speaker, I would like to know if the Gentlelady from the First District of Bataan will be willing to yield to a question?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Representative Roman, are you still willing to accept questions?

REP. ROMAN. Yes, Mme. Speaker, very gladly.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Please proceed.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mme. Speaker, I would like to take this discourse to an issue that is very much related to the issue of homosexuality, that is, the argument of nature versus nurture. I have come across some readings that support the theory that there is an epigenetic link to homosexuality. In other words, there is a theory that there might be a gene that causes or that is related to homosexuality which, therefore, leads or lends to the biological explanation of this condition.

I would like to know if the Lady from Bataan subscribes to this theory and if so, if she thinks it has any pertinence to the Anti-Discriminatory Bill that she has put forth in this Congress.

REP. ROMAN. Mme. Speaker, I share the observation and the opinion of the Representative from Antipolo that there is a biological basis for the condition of LGBT, not only homosexuals but also transgenders. I would not like to explain this because it is going to be lengthy, but what I have read so far is that, you know,

aside from the genetic theory, there is also a hormonal, a developmental theory that refers to the development of a fetus of an individual in the womb of his or her mother. The important point when we discuss whether or not it is genetic or there is a biological basis, once proved definitely that there is a biological basis, we cannot hold individuals from the LGBT community as morally accountable. If you are born this way, you have no choice but to behave this way and to express what your condition is.

As I had earlier said, if there were really a choice, I guarantee all of the members of this august Chamber that no one will actually choose to be LGBT given the biases and the prejudices that exist in our present-day society.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Thank you very much, Mme. Speaker. I just like to also manifest my full support to the good Congresswoman from Bataan to her cause, for everything she stands for, to her Anti-Discriminatory Bill. Most importantly, I would like to express my full support to the person that she is, without labels. Geraldine Roman is a person worthy of praise and admiration.

Thank you very much, Mme. Speaker. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Thank you.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GONZALES (A.D.) Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from the First District of Camarines Sur, the honorable Rep. Rolando G. Andaya Jr., for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Representative Andaya is recognized. Again, I would like to request all those in the gallery to please refrain from clapping during the interpellation.

REP. ANDAYA. Thank you very much, Mme. Speaker. Would the Congressman from Zambales—I am mistaken—from Bataan...

REP. ROMAN. Yes.

REP. ANDAYA. ... be willing to answer a few questions, Mme. Speaker?

REP. ROMAN. Yes, Mme. Speaker, the Congresswoman from the First District of Bataan would be willing to answer questions.

REP. ANDAYA. That is a good point raised, Mme. Speaker. You are very smart, Mme. Speaker. I asked, the Congressman, and she told me, the Congresswoman

but in reality, Congressman is generic to both man and woman. The point is, a lot of people are talking about the legal effects of your particular bill, Mme. Speaker. Would she be addressed now as a Congresswoman or Congressman? Putting that aside, let me just say that I am a friend of your father, I had worked with him, and I am sure he is very proud of you at this point in time. You are your own person. I could feel his love for you when you described him a while ago and that truly, you are worthy of the Roman family name.

First of all, let me ask, were you surprised when you were able to gather that many signatures?

REP. ROMAN. Mme. Speaker, to be honest, I was surprised because I was expecting more hesitance on the part of my colleagues. It was a pleasant surprise and definitely, a very welcome surprise to have garnered so much support from this Congress.

REP. ANDAYA. Yes. I noticed that, Mme. Speaker, you were approaching each Member with caution. You would be, in a way, using your father's name, the good name of your father to come near each Congressman to convince them to sign but in reality, you did not need to do that. We understood or we knew what you were fighting for. I saw the list a while ago of persons who actually signed the Bill and I am quite surprised that—*kulang pa nga e*. Here I am, I signed for it, but I know a lot of my friends, colleagues here who are members of the LGBT, who have not yet signed it and maybe, you should go around more. From Region V, we have a lot more Members who are willing to sign that Bill. You know, but kidding aside, that is true, that is true.

When I was about to sign that petition, I actually was facing up to my own fears and biases and I took the cue from you. If you were brave enough to fight for this, maybe I could be the same—that you could be an example for me. So, I took the chance of signing it and I must confess that this Bill has been languishing in Congress for about 17 years.

In the past, when I was approached with this same Bill, I turned it down but, you know, as time goes by, a person matures, a person understands how the world works and understands the people you live with, and the people you have to live with and work with. So I faced up to my biases and apprehensions. You also have to understand, we all come from different provinces, different backgrounds, different religions, different upbringing, different nature, but allow me to take this opportunity to ask few questions which are in the minds of a lot of our colleagues who are not quite as convinced at this point in time.

For example, I am still quite confused with the terms "sexual orientation." What is the difference between "sexual orientation" and "gender ...

REP. ROMAN. Gender identity.

REP. ANDAYA. Can you please explain, I think it will go a long way. A lot of people would also like to ask this. Congressman Abaya would like to ask this but he is too shy to ask and so, let me ask it for him.

REP. ROMAN. Mme. Speaker, for the knowledge of our colleagues and in particular Congressman Abaya, when we ask the question: to which sex you are attracted, we add that we are dealing with sexual orientation. So, if you are a male and you are happy with your anatomy and you identify as a male, but you are sexually attracted to other men, then you are a homosexual. If you are a woman, if you like a woman, you identify as a woman but you are attracted to other women, then you are a lesbian. If you are attracted to both sexes, then you are a bisexual.

So, these three categories actually belong under the umbrella of sexual orientation. Now, another group actually is gender identity. As I said, nature is not perfect. Sometimes there are individuals who are born with a male anatomy but their psyche—their hearts, their minds, the way they think, the way they relate to other people—is that of the opposite sex, physical sex, I mean. Take my case. I was born with the anatomy of a male but as much as I wanted to fight against it, really my heart, my mind—my psyche was that of a female. Eventually, thank God, thanks to the support of my parents, thanks to modern medicine and science, I am who I am today. I am happily a woman, a transgender woman. So, those are the two different spheres that we speak of.

REP. ANDAYA. Yes. I asked that question because this Bill is more for the legal acknowledgment of the LGBT, or is it more of a policy statement in which members of the LGBT should not suffer any discrimination?

REP. ROMAN. It is basically both, Mme. Speaker. It is a recognition of the condition of the LGBT, the phenomenon of the LGBT, for the first time in our history and at the same time, it is a declaration of policy and principle—that it is not okay to discriminate against individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity.

REP. ANDAYA. It does not go to the point of, shall we say—I am a lawyer by practice, forgive me for taking the argument a few steps farther. See, I asked the question of orientation and gender identity, they seem to be interchangeable in the discussions I have heard, but in terms of, let us say, documents, sexual orientation has nothing to do with it. If you are a female, you are a female regardless of your

orientation. Or is there anything else which is sought by this particular Bill?

REP. ROMAN. This Bill does not deal with gender recognition which is basically the second sphere I was talking about, Mme. Speaker. It deals with, simply, the cases of discrimination and that is it.

REP. ANDAYA. Nothing to do with legalities. In other nations, what would be the practice? I am sure that ...

REP. ROMAN. Legalities? Mme. Speaker, I would like to find out from the Gentleman from Camarines Sur what he is referring to exactly.

REP. ANDAYA. We hear cases in different jurisdictions about same sex marriages or changes in their gender. Would that be the ultimate goal of this particular Bill eventually?

REP. ROMAN. Mme. Speaker, I would like to remind the Gentleman from Camarines Sur that this Bill does not deal with same sex marriage.

REP. ANDAYA. Yes.

REP. ROMAN. Nor gender recognition.

REP. ANDAYA. Yes. I agree, but the point is, are we headed towards that particularly? Not that I am against it, Mme. Speaker, but I am just trying to learn what we have right now and what we are trying to do.

REP. ROMAN. Mme. Speaker, I would like to find out from the Gentleman from Camarines Sur if he is interested in my legislative agenda. I would gladly inform him about that outside this forum because now, we are talking about the Anti-Discrimination Bill on the Basis of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.

REP. ANDAYA. Yes, forgive me for my ignorance. There, it is showing again, Mme. Speaker, that is why I asked a while ago the difference between orientation and gender identity. I get confused and I think that is where the problem lies, Mme. Speaker, that we have to be educated some more on this matter. Here I am, supporting this Bill but admittedly, through my own questioning, I have just exposed my ignorance on the matter. Maybe, we could spend more time on this.

REP. ROMAN. Mme. Speaker, I would gladly and patiently explain to any colleague of mine here in Congress the differences between sexual orientation and gender identity in the hope that with this information,

we shall be able to dispel any kind of bias and prejudice. I believe that bias and prejudice are based on ignorance and so, information and knowledge is the key to this bias and prejudice.

REP. ANDAYA. Thank you very much, and I expect to be educated by the Congresswoman from Bataan. Thank you very much, Mme Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Thank you very much.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, we move to suspend the proceedings for one minute.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The session is suspended.

It was 6:00 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 6:03 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The session is resumed.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, we move to refer the speech of the Hon. Geraldine Roman and the interpellations to the Committee on Rules for appropriate action.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, we move to call the roll of Members. Oh, I am sorry. Mme. Speaker, we move to suspend the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

ROLL CALL

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, we move to call the roll of Members.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Secretary General will please call the roll.

The Secretary General called the roll, and the result is as follows, per Journal No. 23, dated September 19, 2016:

PRESENT:

Abaya	Bravo (A.)
Abayon	Bravo (M.)
Abu	Brosas
Abueg	Bulut-Begtang
Acharon	Calderon
Acop	Calixto-Rubiano
Acosta	Caminero
Acosta-Alba	Campos
Adiong	Canama
Advincula	Cari
Agarao	Casilao
Aggabao	Castelo
Aglipay-Villar	Castro (F.L.)
Akbar	Castro (F.H.)
Alcala	Catamco
Alejano	Cayetano
Almario	Celeste
Almonte	Cerafica
Alonte-Naguiat	Cerilles
Alvarez (F.)	Chavez
Alvarez (P.)	Chipeco
Amatong	Co
Andaya	Collantes
Angara-Castillo	Cortes
Antonino	Cortuna
Antonio	Cosalan
Aragones	Crisologo
Arbison	Cua
Arcillas	Cuaresma
Arenas	Cueva
Atienza	Dalipe
Aumentado	Dalog
Bag-ao	Daza
Bagatsing	De Jesus
Baguilat	De Venecia
Barbers	De Vera
Barzaga	Defensor
Bataoil	Del Mar
Batocabe	Deloso-Montalla
Bautista-Bandigan	Dimaporo (A.)
Belaro	Dimaporo (M.)
Belmonte (F.)	Dy
Belmonte (J.)	Elago
Belmonte (R.)	Enverga
Billones	Erice
Bolilia	Eriguel
Bondoc	Ermita-Buhain
Bordado	Escudero

Espina	Marcos	Sarmiento (C.)	Ungab
Espino	Marquez	Sarmiento (E.)	Unico
Estrella	Martinez	Savellano	Uy (J.)
Evardone	Matugas	Sema	Uy (R.)
Fariñas	Mellana	Siao	Uybarreta
Fernando	Mercado	Silverio	Vargas
Ferrer (J.)	Mirasol	Singson	Vargas-Alfonso
Ferrer (L.)	Montoro	Suansing (E.)	Velarde
Floirendo	Nava	Suansing (H.)	Velasco
Fortun	Nieto	Suarez	Velasco-Catera
Fortuno	Noel	Sy-Alvarado	Veloso
Fuentebella	Nogralas (K.)	Tambunting	Vergara
Garbin	Nolasco	Tan (A.)	Villafuerte
Garcia (G.)	Nuñez-Malanyaon	Tan (M.)	Villanueva
Garcia (J.)	Oaminal	Tan (S.)	Villaraza-Suarez
Garin (R.)	Ocampo	Tejada	Villarica
Garin (S.)	Olivarez	Teves	Villarin
Gasataya	Ong (E.)	Tiangco	Violago
Gatchalian	Ong (H.)	Ting	Yap (A.)
Go (A.C.)	Ortega (P.)	Tinio	Yap (M.)
Go (M.)	Ortega (V.)	Tolentino	Yap (V.)
Gomez	Pacquiao	Treñas	Yu
Gonzaga	Paduano	Tugna	Zamora (M.)
Gonzales (A.P.)	Palma	Tupas	Zamora (R.)
Gonzales (A.D.)	Pancho	Turabin-Hataman	Zarate
Gonzalez	Panganiban	Umali	Zubiri
Gorriceta	Panotes	Unabia	
Gullas	Papandayan		
Hernandez	Pichay		
Herrera-Dy	Pimentel		
Hofer	Pineda		
Jalosjos	Plaza		
Javier	Primicias-Agabas		
Khonghun	Radaza		
Labadlabad	Ramirez-Sato		
Lacson	Ramos		
Lagman	Relampagos		
Lanete	Revilla		
Laogan	Roa-Puno		
Lazatin	Robes		
Leachon	Rocamora		
Lee	Rodriguez (I.)		
Lobregat	Rodriguez (M.)		
Lopez (B.)	Roman		
Lopez (C.)	Romero		
Lopez (M.)	Romualdez		
Loyola	Roque (R.)		
Macapagal-Arroyo	Sacdalán		
Maceda	Sagarbarria		
Madrona	Sahali		
Malapitan	Salimbangon		
Manalo	Salo		
Mangaoang	Salon		
Mangudadatu (S.)	Sambar		
Mangudadatu (Z.)	Sandoval		
Marcoleta	Santos-Recto		

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. Mme. Speaker, the roll call shows that 261 Members responded to the call.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). With 261 Members present, the Chair declares the presence of a quorum.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REFERRAL OF HOUSE RESOLUTIONS ON INQUIRIES IN AID OF LEGISLATION

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, in accordance with our Rules Governing Inquiries in Aid of Legislation, I move that we refer the following House Resolutions to the appropriate committees:

1. House Resolution No. 117 re: the revision of the current college curricula by reducing the residency of students from five years to four years for five-year degree courses and from four years to three years for four-year degree courses, to the Committee on Higher and Technical Education;

2. House Resolution No. 118 re: the expanded Anti-Trafficking of Persons Act of 2012 or Republic Act 10364, and the performance of the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT), to the Committee on Revision of Laws;

3. House Resolution No. 120 re: the alleged violations in the contracts between Oil Palm Plantation

Cooperatives in Southern Palawan and Agumil Phils., Inc., to the Committee on Cooperatives Development;

4. House Resolution No. 122 re:irregularities in the implementation of the Student Academic Information System (SAIS) and the E-UP Project, which inconvenienced thousands of UP students, especially at the University of the Philippines-Los Baños (UPLB), to the Committee on Higher and Technical Education;

5. House Resolution No. 123 re: the current state and condition of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) in the Middle East, to the Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs;

6. House Resolution No. 124 re: the current state of the alleged P750-million E-UP Project of the University of the Philippines in light of the recently reported Student Academic Information System (SAIS) downtime experienced in the University of the Philippines-Los Baños (UPLB), to the Committee on Higher and Technical Education;

7. House Resolution No. 130 re:hacking incident involving the Commission on Elections website and its impact on voters and the result of the past elections, to the Committee on Suffrage and Electoral Reforms;

8. House Resolution No. 133 re: the status of implementation of the newly-passed Republic Act No. 10390 (The People's Television Network, Inc. Law) before transforming the government-run television network into a public service broadcaster, to the Committee on Government Enterprises and Privatization;

9. House Resolution No. 135 re:the erratic operations of major power plants and to determine the status of power supply in the country, to the Committee on Energy;

10. House Resolution No. 136 re: the sudden price spike of electricity at the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM) that reached twenty pesos (P20.00) per kilowatt-hour (kwh) during another series of suspicious simultaneous emergency and scheduled shutdowns of power plants by generation companies, to the Committee on Energy;

11. House Resolution No. 141 re: the leadership of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in light of an undated footage on Facebook depicting the miserable and disturbing plight of Filipino soldiers in the wake of an encounter with NPA rebels and pitifully awaiting rescue that appeared to have never come, to the Committee on National Defense & Security;

12. House Resolution No. 165 re: online or electronic games (E-Games), to the Committee on Games and Amusements;

13. House Resolution No. 172 re: plight of thousands of overseas Filipino workers working in various construction companies who remain stranded in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to the Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs;

14. House Resolution No. 173 re: shutting down of rural and thrift banks, to the Committee on Banks and Financial Intermediaries;

15. House Resolution No. 177 re: indiscriminate firing in Sitio Tibugawan, Brgy. Kawayan, San Fernando, Bukidnon allegedly perpetrated by the paramilitary group New Indigenous People's Army backed by the 8th IB of the Philippine Army which resulted to the death of a pregnant woman and wounding of seven (7) civilians, including five (5) minors, to the Committee on Human Rights;

16. House Resolution No. 179 re: performance of DOH government-owned and controlled corporate specialty hospitals vis-a-vis revenue generation and provision of inexpensive and free health services for indigent patients, to the Committee on Health;

17. House Resolution No. 190 re: disbursement of almost P1 billion in public funds meant to establish adequate residential drug rehabilitation centers, to the Committee on Dangerous Drugs;

18. House Resolution No. 203 re: framework for the general refurbishment of the Philippine National Railways(PNR)mass transport system, to the Committee on Government Enterprises and Privatization;

19. House Resolution No. 204 re: scientific validity of the finding that alkaline water is the secret to longevity, to the Committee on Health;

20. House Resolution No. 206 re: loophole on RA 10533, otherwise known as the "Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013," which appears to have overlooked the considerable toll on college teachers of the transition from Grades 11 to 12 to college, to the Committee on Basic Education and Culture;

21. House Resolution No. 207 re: adverse effects of character-based video games on children, to the Committee on Welfare of Children;

22. House Resolution No. 209 re: alleged land grabbing by the Maria Theresa Virata Realty Corporation and Manila Southcoast Development Corporation involving 602 hectares of Patungan Cove, to the Committee on Natural Resources;

23. House Resolution No. 210 re: violent dispersal of protesting farmers on April 1, 2016, dubbed as the "Kidapawan massacre" perpetrated by elements of the Philippine National Police, to the Committee on Human Rights;

24. House Resolution No. 212 re: required level of ancillary services necessary to support the transmission of capacity and energy from resources to loads while maintaining reliable operation of the transmission system, to the Committee on Energy;

25. House Resolution No. 216 re: viability and disaster vulnerabilities of the Jalaur River Multipurpose Project Stage II (JRMP), to be situated on top of the West Panay Fault which is an active fault, to the Committee on Natural Resources;

26. House Resolution No. 217 re: SSS computer glitch affecting hundreds of thousands of SSS member contributions and remittances, to the Committee on Government Enterprises and Privatization;

27. House Resolution No. 218 re: reported irregularities in the sale of houses and lots by real estate developer Pro-Friends, to the Committee on Housing and Urban Development;

28. House Resolution No. 220 re: Php530-million fraud involving the Embassy of Kuwait and a private company known as Winston Q8 Certification Solutions, Inc. with Kuwait-bound OFWs as victims, to the Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs;

29. House Resolution No. 221 re: massive flooding in the city of San Fernando and adjoining municipalities of the province of Pampanga on August 7, 8 and 9 of 2016, to the Committee on Public Works and Highways;

30. House Resolution No. 235 re: dismal, unsanitary and neglected condition of the existing facilities of Bahay Pag-asa, and on the alleged detention and inhumane treatment of children in conflict with the law inside the said facilities, to the Committee on Justice;

31. House Resolution No. 236 re: policy of the Department of Health prohibiting deliveries assisted by traditional birth attendants (TBA) dubbed as the “No Home-Birthing Policy,” to the Committee on Women and Gender Equality;

32. House Resolution No. 237 re: why telecommunication providers should have the privilege to keep their legislative franchises despite the poor service provided to the Filipino people, to the Committee on Legislative Franchises;

33. House Resolution No. 239 re: violent demolition of an urban poor community in Apollo St., Brgy. Tandang Sora, Quezon City, to the Committee on Housing and Urban Development;

34. House Resolution No. 240 re: performance of Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) vis-a-vis its concession agreements with Maynilad Water Services, Inc. and Manila Water Company, Inc., to the Committee on Government Enterprises and Privatization;

35. House Resolution No. 241 re: effectiveness of Republic Act No. 9344 as amended by Republic Act No. 10630, otherwise known as the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act, and its impact on children if the minimum age of criminal responsibility is lowered, to the Committee on Justice;

36. House Resolution No. 244 re: reported increased cash out and substandard hemodialysis services for service patients in the National Kidney and Transplant Institute, and the poor plight of hemodialysis patients in general, to the Committee on Health;

37. House Resolution No. 247 re: sale of water by CE Casecan Water and Energy Corporation, Inc. to the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) for

purposes of irrigation, to the Committee on Agriculture and Food;

38. House Resolution No. 250 re: actions taken by the Department of Foreign Affairs to address the plight of stranded overseas Filipino workers in Saudi Arabia, to the Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs;

39. House Resolution No. 252 re: insufficient funding for the construction, management and operation of Bahay Pag-asa facilities, resulting in the failure to fully and properly implement RA 10630, strengthening the juvenile justice system, to the Committee on Justice;

40. House Resolution No. 253 re: propriety and legality of NAPOLCOM’s withdrawal of deputation of Mayor Tomas R. Osmeña of Cebu City as NAPOLCOM’s representative in his jurisdiction, to the Committee on Local Government;

41. House Resolution No. 254 re: current validity periods for prepaid load credits, to the Committee on Information and Communications Technology;

42. House Resolution No. 256 re: noncompliance of the Bureau of Internal Revenue with Section 13 of the Joint Rules and Regulations Implementing Articles 60, 61 and 144 of Republic Act No. 9520, otherwise known as the Philippine Cooperative Code of 2008, to the Committee on Cooperatives Development;

43. House Resolution No. 258 re: reported case of 177 Indonesians using Philippine passports to participate in the Hajj Pilgrimage in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, to the Committee on Foreign Affairs;

44. House Resolution No. 260 re: implementation of Section 33 of RA 9211, otherwise known as the Tobacco Regulation Act of 2003, to the Committee on Trade and Industry;

45. House Resolution No. 264 re: the case of the eight Filipino seafarers who went missing after they were commissioned to man and participate in the conduction operation of M/T Rokku Maru from Busan, RoK to the Philippines, to the Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs;

46. House Resolution No. 266 re: use and distribution of the Disbursement Acceleration Program (DAP) funds in FY 2010, 2011 and 2012, to the Committee on Appropriations;

47. House Resolution No. 267 re: prohibitive, unconscionable, deceptive, unfair and opportunistic pricing of domestic air carriers, specifically on the purchase of tickets that would fly on the same day, to the Committee on Transportation;

48. House Resolution No. 270 re: alleged possession of Philippine passports by 117 Indonesians bound for Medina, Saudi Arabia for the Hajj pilgrimage, to the Committee on Foreign Affairs;

49. House Resolution No. 273 re: existing laws with provisions which are considered as discriminatory to women, to the Committee on Women and Gender Equality;

50. House Resolution No. 275 re: status of the audit on the funds and operations of the Board of Trustees of the Veterans of World War II by the Commission on Audit pursuant to Resolution No. 206 adopted by the House of Representatives in the Sixteenth Congress, to the Committee on Veterans Affairs and Welfare;

51. House Resolution No. 280 re: participation of foreigners in the ownership and operations of the National Grid Corporation, to the Committee on Energy;

52. House Resolution No. 281 re: implementation of the Unified Vehicular Volume Reduction Program (UVVRP), to the Committee on Transportation;

53. House Resolution No. 282 re: implementation of Republic Act No. 9184 or the Government Procurement Reform Act, to the Committee on Appropriations;

54. House Resolution No. 289 re: rape and subsequent death of OFW Irma Edloy in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to the Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs;

55. House Resolution No. 292 re: illegal practices in the Bureau of Immigration, to the Committee on Good Government and Public Accountability;

56. House Resolution No. 296 re: capacity of the Commission on Higher Education to effectively regulate increases in tuition and other school fees imposed by higher educational institutions, to the Committee on Higher and Technical Education;

57. House Resolution No. 299 re: continuing harassment through the filing of trumped-up charges against the farmers who protested for rice subsidy and calamity aid, and members of nongovernment organizations (NGOs) who supported such legitimate calls in Kidapawan City last 1 April 2016, to the Committee on Human Rights; and

58. House Resolution No. 304 re: extent of the presence of ISIS in the Philippines, to the Committee on National Defense and Security.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that we reconsider the referral of House Resolution No. 61.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). What is the motion, Dep. Majority Leader?

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that we reconsider the referral of House Resolution No. 61.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Is

there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that we refer House Resolution No. 61 to the Committee on Rules.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

PRIVILEGE HOUR

Continuation

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that we resume the Privilege Hour. For this purpose, I move that we extend it for another hour, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Privilege Hour is resumed and extended.

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, next to avail of the Privilege Hour is the Gentleman from the First District of Parañaque City, the Hon. Eric L. Olivarez.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Rep. Eric L. Olivarez is recognized.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. OLIVAREZ

REP. OLIVAREZ. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

Honorable Speaker of the House, my fellow legislators, dear guests, ladies and gentlemen, a pleasant afternoon.

I stand before you today in this august Chamber, on the First Regular Session of the Seventeenth Congress of the Philippines, to deliver a very important positioning in Philippine education that will surely contribute to a great stride towards a sustainable national economy. This is about the strengthening of voluntary accreditation as a driving tool to improve Philippine quality education.

Education is very close to my heart since I am a true-blooded educator, having been teaching at the De La Salle University–Manila in the Graduate School of the College of Education for 19 years now since 1997. I am the Vice President for Academics and Services in our family-owned educational institution, Olivarez College; a commissioner/accreditor for 17 years now since 1999 of the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation; and a Regional Quality Assurance Team member of the Commission on Higher Education otherwise known as CHED RQAT for 10 years now since 2006.

This is the reason I chose to discuss strengthening the voluntary accreditation in improving the quality

of education in the Philippines. For any developing country, improving the quality of higher education institutions is of paramount interest of government agencies, especially the Commission on Higher Education. Several reforms have taken place and one of the initiatives being done is rationalizing the structure of higher education and improving the budget to ensure resource mobilization and cost efficiency. Despite these efforts, there are several issues that need to be addressed and one is the strengthening of voluntary accreditation system. Similar to other countries in the region, the accreditation process in the country is initiated by the private sector and is also voluntary which adheres to the nature of the academe. Though it is a way of fostering academic freedom and motivating some institutions to compete, this could result in complacency in others. Policy implications include reshaping the institution in terms of keeping an accreditation mechanism built into the system such as a quality assurance framework.

Higher education institutions play a vital role in preparing our country to be globally competitive through the skilled human capital resources it produces by making higher education competitive and responsive to national development goals. The task is indeed daunting as the institution has to constantly assess itself against the standards in place and keep itself abreast with the latest demands of the labor market. Hence, raising the quality of higher education institutions is one of the motivations on why government agencies such as the CHED are constantly finding ways to address the issue.

Mme. Speaker, allow me to stand on my ground as I unveil this fact as we take a look at the status of Philippine higher education. Based on the CHED records, there are 1,934 total higher educational institutions in the Philippines—1,706 are private and 228 are public. We have 4.1 million college students—2.22 million students are in private institutions and 1.88 million students are in public. Education analysts point out that most of the higher education institutions are of low quality as evidenced by low passing rate in the board examinations certifying entry to various professional fields.

Based on the records of the Philippine Regulation Commission, otherwise known as PRC, the licensure examinations' national passing rate is only 39 percent. As an example, in the National Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET), it is just 31 percent and in the Certified Public Accountants exam, it is only 24 percent, to name a few, with the rest that follow suit. Furthermore, only 52 percent of the faculty members teaching in the college level have a master's degree and the minimum requirement to teach in the college level is a master's degree. Also, employees in the business sectors in general have warned that inadequate supply of well-trained and prepared graduates is limiting

the performance of the business arena and forcing a downward projection in the expansion plans. For example, leaders in the service outsourcing industry, an area of projected rapid growth, complain that out of every 100 applicants for call center operator positions, only two have adequate skills, and managers of these centers are even harder to come by.

Mme. Speaker, with undaunted determination, with much confidence and conviction, I fervently claim the need for voluntary accreditation system in the academe today. Accreditation is one way that HEIs or higher educational institutions keep themselves abreast with the standards. With the growing number of HEIs in the country, the demand for skilled workers in the global market, there is an urgent need to further enhance the quality of education. There are several issues, however, in accreditation. For one, the voluntary nature of accreditation among HEIs only puts pressure on those who are willing and able to undergo the process. Furthermore, there is an inquiry on the multiple number of accrediting agencies catering to various HEIs. Since accreditation of HEIs is voluntary, one of the drawbacks is that only a few colleges and universities go through the process of accreditation.

To note, only 484 or 25 percent of the total Philippine higher educational institutions had subscribed to voluntary accreditation: 230 are public HEIs while 254 are private HEIs. According to the CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 1, series of 2005, also known as the Revised Policies and Guidelines on Voluntary Accreditation in Aid of Quality and Excellence in Higher Education, it emphasizes the encouragement of "the use of voluntary non-governmental accreditation systems" which propels a set of policies in full support of an accrediting agency's practices toward regulation.

Mme. Speaker, let me underscore the concept and significance of accreditation mechanism for further understanding and for the profound interest of my fellow legislators. According to the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities, Commission on Accreditation, otherwise known as PACUCOA, accreditation is a concept of self-regulation which focuses on self-study and evaluation and on the continuing improvement of educational quality. Therefore, it is both a process and a result. As a process, it is a form of peer review in which an association of schools and colleges establishes a set of criteria and procedures to encourage high maintenance of standards of education among its affiliate members. As a result, it is a form of certification granted by a recognized and authorized accrediting agency to an educational program or to an educational institution in processing certain standards of quality which are over and above those prescribed as minimum requirements set by the Commission on Accreditation. Likewise, the CHED accreditation is a quality assurance mechanism wherein educational institutions and their academic

program offerings are evaluated by an external body to determine if set standards are met and it is generally voluntary in nature.

There are two accrediting bodies which are stated in the said CMO. One is the FAAP, the Federation of Accrediting Agencies in the Philippines, which consists of the ACSCU-AAI, otherwise known as the Association of Christian Schools, Colleges and Universities Accrediting Agency, Inc.; PAASCU, the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities; and PACU-COA, as I spelled out earlier; while the other is the NNQAA, the National Network of Quality Accrediting Agencies, which includes Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities of the Philippines or AACCUP, and the ALCUCOA or the Association of Local Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation.

In a nutshell, for the accreditation of universities and colleges, they undergo a self-study using a survey to assess the organizational or program profile. The areas to be evaluated in the HEIs are the following: philosophy and objectives, faculty, instruction, research, library, laboratories, physical plant and facilities, student personnel services, social orientation and community involvement, and organization and administration; second, an on-site evaluation/review/inspection by the accreditors. As to practices, accreditation of HEIs in the Philippines merits autonomy while other forms of quality assessment merit funding and subsidy. As aforementioned, the accreditation of individual programs or institutions is voluntary on the part of the HEIs.

Generally, all agencies subscribe to two steps in accreditation, which are: (1) self-study by the assigned department for accreditation, typically in the form of a survey tailored to the HEI's framework; and (2) an on-site assessment by representatives from the accrediting agency. The incentives are guaranteed for each institution, and such vary in different levels of accreditation. Such benefits and incentives are outlined by PAASCU, among others, full administrative deregulation, financial deregulation, authority to revise without CHED approval, authority to graduate students from accredited courses or programs of study in the levels accredited, priority in the awards of grants/subsidies or funding from the CHED, scholarships and faculty development program. Program accreditation is a predictor of successful licensure examinations and higher income as evidenced by the fact that in almost all professional board examinations, high-performing colleges and universities are from among accredited institutions.

In the context of ASEAN community integration, there are efforts to develop a system of comparable qualifications, degrees and diplomas across the Asia-Pacific Region with the support of UNESCO and

other multilateral agencies from which accreditation is indeed imperative dynamics. UNESCO believes that accreditation is a process that an institution goes through to ensure that it has achieved a certain level of quality. Truly, accreditation is a good scheme to enhance quality in higher educational system that is already well-developed and where there is a proliferation of low quality higher education institutions.

Mme. Speaker, and fellow Representatives of the House, being in the academe for more than two decades and now, as a Commissioner of a national accrediting agency who has visited and accredited hundreds of institutions all throughout the country, yours truly has personally witnessed how accreditation really works and has contributed not only towards institutional improvement but also economic sustainability. It has indeed paved off to a metamorphic evolutionary change in robust educational strata among institutions towards capitalizing on quality standards for national and international milieu of development at all cost.

Thus, I stand before you today to fervently propel such move of strengthening the wheel of voluntary accreditation system in this country involving more educational institutions, big or small, public or private, in their concurrent capacity to improve and contribute to the national development goals as everyone here desires. With this ardent aspiration, I should say, as a lawmaking body, we can do something about it to mitigate deterring educational causes and in so doing, an appropriate budget is entailed thereto as yours truly believes and strongly upholds the urgent need for such initiative as relevant, timely and imperative towards making Philippine quality education truly working and earnestly realized.

In trust that may all this account merit your favorable reflection and consideration in this well-attended confluence of esteemed legislators, hence, this Representation will file a House Bill to strengthen voluntary accreditation in the Philippines by institutionalizing the existing policies and practices and providing financial assistance thereof.

Thank you very much, Mme. Speaker and fellow Representatives, and a pleasant evening to all.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Thank you.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. LOPEZ (B.). Mme. Speaker, I move that the speech of the Hon. Eric L. Olivarez be referred to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. LOPEZ (B.). Mme. Speaker, before we proceed to the next who will avail of the Privilege Hour, we would like to acknowledge the presence of the following guests of the Hon. Arthur C. Yap from the Third District of Bohol in the gallery.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Please rise as you are being recognized.

REP. LOPEZ (B.). They are from UNDP, Israel dela Cruz, Project Manager; Lyka Barlis, Communications Associate; and from PCIC, the President, Jovy Bernabe, and the VP, Norman Cajucom.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Welcome to the House of Representatives.

REP. LOPEZ (B.). Mme. Speaker, we would also like to acknowledge the presence of the guests of the Hon. Jose Antonio “Kuya Jonathan” R. Sy-Alvarado from the First District of Bulacan.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Please rise as you are being recognized.

REP. LOPEZ (B.). The guests are Principal IV, Zen Dionisio from Barasoain Memorial Elementary School; Principal III, Mavic Vivo from Atlag Elementary School; Principal IV, Nova B. Santiago from Santisima Trinidad Elementary School; Principal IV, Elvira de Guzman from Sta. Isabel Elementary School; Principal I, Cora Martin from Sumapa Elementary School; Principal II, Richard Santiago from Longos Elementary School; Principal II, Rosy Guanzon, from Look 1st Elementary School; and Principal I, Dexter Edrosa from Babatnin Elementary School.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Welcome to the House of Representatives.

REP. LOPEZ (B.). Mme. Speaker, with this, we would like to continue, and we would like to request that the Gentleman from the First District of Surigao del Norte, the Hon. Francisco Jose F. Matugas II, be recognized to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Rep. Francisco Jose Matugas is recognized.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. MATUGAS

REP. MATUGAS. Mme. Speaker, my colleagues in this august Chamber, good evening.

It is with great pride that in my first time to rise, I will discuss a matter close to me and my fellow Siargaonon’s hearts which is surfing. Not many of you may know this

northeastern tip island in the Pacific, which I represent, 800 kilometers southeast of Manila, but to many local and international surfers, this island of ours is paradise.

Siargao Island, composed of the municipalities of Burgos, Dapa, Del Carmen, General Luna, San Benito, Pilar, San Isidro, Santa Monica and Socorro, contains over 6,000 hectares of contiguous mangrove forests, probably the largest in Mindanao. Powdery white beaches, aquamarine waters, mystical lagoons, enchanted caves, sand bars—these are words which have been associated with our unassuming island. You can come visit us to go island hopping, birdwatching, game fishing, taste the freshest of seafood, or simply lounge on the beach and watch the sunset but Siargao became popular because of surfing. It is the surfing capital of the Philippines. Our famous “Cloud 9” surf break is ranked top eight best surfing spot in the world by CNNGo and is one of Asia’s best kept secrets. Wade Goodall, one of the best all-around surfers in the world, has described Cloud 9 in Siargao as perfect 10 compared to other surfing sites in the world. For him, Siargao has the best waves in the world which are more suitable for surfing. In fact, Goodall has participated in the Annual Siargao Surfing Cup organized by the local government of Surigao Del Norte.

This week, we will be hosting the 22nd International Surfing Competitions. Moreover, for the second year in a row, the event will be a world qualifying series and once again, the World Surf League will team up with the Asian surfing championship to co-sanction the event. The ASP WQS, also known as the World Qualifying Series or “The Grind” is the second tier in the association of surfing professionals’ two-tier system. The WQS’ series of events determines which surfers qualify for the ASP world tour with an average of approximately 45 WQS events per season. Considering this, we expect to host the best international surfers seeking qualifying points when we host the event this coming September 23 to 27. Therefore, it goes without saying that when the International Olympic Committee announced, towards the end of the Rio Olympics, that surfing will be included in the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo, Japan, Siargaonons were elated. In fact, we were euphoric over the news. We were literally in cloud 9.

Mme. Speaker, my dear colleagues, this humble Representation believes that if there is one sport where the Philippines can excel and finally earn that elusive gold medal in the Olympics, it is in surfing. A few years ago, the government adopted the sports roadmap for 2011 to 2016, incorporating what were called “focus sports” or those sports that will accelerate the full development of sports and where Filipinos had greater chances of earning medals in international competitions. Among the criteria used for making the classifications were: those sports in which Filipinos’ physical characteristics were deemed fit to creating champions such as those

sports that do not require height as an advantage or those that are by weight category; second, medal-rich sports; third, individual sports; fourth, records of performance; fifth, potential for winning in international competitions; and lastly, the capability to implement a mass-based or grassroots program. Mme. Speaker, my dear colleagues, using these criteria, surfing should be one of the focus sports in the country.

First, it must be pointed out that in surfing, height and a heavier body type are not an advantage. Indeed, we have seen pro-surfers who are not tall by sporting standards: two-time world champion Tom Carroll is only 5'6" while Derek Ho who won the world championships in 1993, stands at only around 5'5". While recently, taller surfers have emerged, it is reported that the average height of the professional male surfers appears to be only around 5'9" and 5'4" for female surfers. It would appear that a shorter stature may, therefore, be an advantage to surfing performance, as a lower center of gravity would allow surfers to obtain a better dynamic balance performance which seems to be crucial for surfing. The report stated that, together with the stature figures, values for body mass suggest that a relatively short and light body type may be advantageous for performing specific movements in surfing.

The next question which needs to be asked, Mme. Speaker, my dear colleagues, is, do we have the potential in getting that elusive gold medal this coming 2020 Olympics? I sincerely believe so, Mme. Speaker. Given the discipline and perseverance exhibited by Filipino surfers, plus the fact that we have our own backyard, a world-class surf spot Cloud 9, we only have to give them more opportunity to compete abroad in order to broaden their experience and hone their skills further. In fact, in 2015, five of the best surfers from Siargao Island already joined the Asian Surfing Championship tour, the Quik Indo Challenge #1, held in Bali, Indonesia. In 2008, Carlito Nogalo was listed as one of the world's top four surfers by Billabong International-Southeast Asia. Just this year, Siargao Island's Philmar Alipayo and Nilbie Blancada dominated the surfing competitions conducted in Indonesia. Philmar won the West Sumbawa Pro 2016 in Indonesia, earning a perfect 10-point score from the judges to get his first ASC tour win. Nilbie, on the other hand, took a big win at the Quiksilver Padma Challenge for the Women's Division.

You might ask, "Can we implement a mass-based or grassroots program for surfing?" One only needs to look at the geography of the Philippines to answer this question.

Mme. Speaker, my esteemed colleagues, we have the fifth longest coastline in the world. With 7,107 islands, one can always find a good place to surf—from as far north in Pagudpud, Ilocos Norte down to San Juan in La Union; San Antonio, San Narciso and San

Felipe in Zambales; Bagasbas Beach in Daet, Camarines Norte; Baler in Aurora; Real in Quezon; Eastern Samar, Sorsogon to as far as south in Mati, Davao Oriental and of course, in Siargao. I guarantee you that you will find little boys and girls who have fallen in love with surfing and who have the potential to make it big in the international surfing scene.

Naima Green, an author of "An Insider's Guide to Surfing," could not have described surfing better and so, I quote, "One of the greatest things about the sport of surfing is that you need only three things: your body, a surfboard, and a wave." We have all three, Mme. Speaker, my dear colleagues. We need, however, to rally behind our Filipino surfers and give them all the support they need in terms of funding, training and exposure in order for them to do well in the qualifying rounds leading to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

Mme. Speaker, my dear colleagues, our President Rodrigo Duterte has indicated his strong commitment towards sports development in our country and promised to provide more funding for our athletes. The new chairman of the Philippine Sports Commission, Chairman Butch Ramirez has vouched for the creation of a master plan for sports. I believe that the prospects of sports development in the country have never been brighter. It is with these pronouncements of the President and of the PSC Chairman in mind that I would like to appeal to the PSC to consider the inclusion of surfing as a "focus-sport" and as one of the priorities for its grassroots program for development. Of course, hand in hand with this is my request for the PSC to provide the adequate funding for the training of our surfers. As the saying goes, "the early bird always catches the worm," thus, the earlier we prepare, the brighter will be our chance to catch our first Olympic gold medal.

Before I end, I would like to leave you with this video on surfing at Cloud 9, Siargao. It includes one of the bright spots in the sport, our homegrown surfers who are already making waves around the world, and a young Siargaonon boy considered to be a prodigy in surfing by international surfers.

Thank you very much for the opportunity, Mme. Speaker, my colleagues. Good evening.

(Video presentation)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. LOPEZ (B.). Mme. Speaker, I move that the speech of the Hon. Francisco Jose "Bingo" F. Matugas II be referred to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. LOPEZ (B.). Mme. Speaker, I move to terminate the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the Privilege Hour is terminated.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

REP. FARIÑAS. May I move for the election of the following Members to the Committee on Justice:

The Majority Leader read the names of the House Members elected to the Committee on Justice, per Journal No. 23, dated September 19, 2016.

Rep. Lucy T. Gomez vice Rep. Frederick “Erick” F. Abueg

Rep. Rodel M. Batocabe

Rep. Ron P. Salo
Rep. Sherwin N. Tugna
Rep. Carlos Roman L. Uybarreta
Rep. Carlos Isagani T. Zarate; and
Rep. Salvador B. Belaro Jr.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that we adjourn the session until tomorrow at four o’clock in the afternoon.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The session is adjourned until tomorrow at four o’clock in the afternoon.

It was 7:02 p.m.