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No. 58

CALL TO ORDER

At 4:00 p.m., Deputy Speaker Ferdinand L. Hernandez called the session to order.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The session is now called to order.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

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

Everybody rose to sing the Philippine National Anthem.

PRAYER

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). Please remain standing for a minute of silent prayer and meditation.

Everybody remained standing for the silent prayer.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we defer the calling of the roll.

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

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we defer the approval of the Journal.

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

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we proceed to the Reference of Business.
I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Secretary General is directed to read the Reference of Business.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

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

BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 4718, entitled:

“AN ACT PLACING THE PROVINCIAL, SUB-PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT JAILS UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF BUREAU OF JAIL MANAGEMENT AND PENOLOGY (BJMP), AMENDING SECTIONS 61, 62 AND 63 OF THE REPUBLIC ACT NUMBER SIXTY-NINE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FIVE OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE □DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT OF 1990□ AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Yap (V.)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ORDER AND SAFETY

House Bill No. 4719, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE SATELLITE OFFICE OF THE MARITIME INDUSTRY AUTHORITY LOCATED IN CALBAYOG CITY, PROVINCE OF SAMAR INTO AN EXTENSION OFFICE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Sarmiento (E.)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 4720, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING JULY 27 OF EVERY YEAR AS A SPECIAL NON-WORKING HOLIDAY IN RECOGNITION OF THE

FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY OF THE IGLESIA NI CRISTO IN THE PHILIPPINES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 3 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9645”

By Representative Castelo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF LAWS

OF REPRESENTATIVES TO EXTEND ASSISTANCE TO THE FAMILY AFFECTED BY THE ARBITRARY KILLINGS OF THE FISHERMEN IN LAUD SIROMON, ZAMBOANGA CITY”

By Representative Lee
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Bill No. 4721, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING EMPLOYEES THE RIGHT TO DISCONNECT FROM WORK-RELATED ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS AFTER WORK HOURS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 442, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LABOR CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES, AS AMENDED”

By Representative Castelo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

House Resolution No. 675, entitled:

“RESOLUTION CALLING FOR AN INVESTIGATION ON THE CONDUCT OF ANIMAL CRUELTY DURING THE PRODUCTION AND FILMING OF THE METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL OFFICIAL ENTRY MOVIE □ORO□ ”

By Representative Villafuerte
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Bill No. 4722, entitled:

“AN ACT ADOPTING TELECOMMUTING AND OTHER ICT-BASED SOLUTIONS TO BOOST GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS OF THE FILIPINO WORKFORCE”

By Representative Del Rosario
TO THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

House Resolution No. 676, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION'S (NBI) TASK FORCE AGAINST ILLEGAL DRUGS FOR THEIR SUCCESSFUL OPERATION THAT RESULTED TO THE BIGGEST DRUG SEIZURE IN THE COUNTRY'S HISTORY”

By Representative Alejano
TO THE COMMITTEE ON DANGEROUS DRUGS

RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 672, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION URGING THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT TO LOOK INTO THE POSSIBILITY OF TRANSFORMING CAMP AGUINALDO AND CAMP CRAME INTO A MIXED-USE URBAN HOUSING AND ECONOMIC ZONE”

By Representatives Batocabe and Castelo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 677, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION URGING THE APPROPRIATE HOUSE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE RECENT JAILBREAK INCIDENT IN NORTH COTABATO DISTRICT JAIL IN ORDER TO RECOMMEND REMEDIAL LEGISLATION TO ADDRESS SECURITY AND SAFETY IN OUR PRISON FACILITIES”

By Representative Alejano
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 673, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION STRONGLY CONDEMNING THE KILLINGS THAT OCCURRED RESULTING IN THE DEATH OF EIGHT FISHERMEN OFF THE COAST OF SIROMON ISLAND IN ZAMBOANGA CITY”

By Representative Lee
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ORDER AND SAFETY

House Resolution No. 678, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEES ON AGRARIAN REFORM AND LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT TO CONDUCT A JOINT INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE CASE OF THE FIFTY-TWO (52) MINDANAO SAKADAS AS VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING, UNFAIR LABOR PRACTICES AND SLAVE-LIKE TREATMENT OF THE GREEN HAND LABOR SERVICE COOPERATIVE, AGRIKULTO, INC. AND CENTRAL AZUCARERA DE TARLAC IN TARLAC PROVINCE”

House Resolution No. 674, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION URGING THE HOUSE

By Representatives Casilao, Zarate, De Jesus, Tinio,
Brosas, Castro (F.L.) and Elago
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 679, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO CONDUCT INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE DECEMBER 24, 2016 EXTRA JUDICIAL-KILLING OF JIMMY SOTTO, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE AGUMAN DARENG MAGLALAUTANG CAPAMPANGAN (AMC) IN BRGY. SAN JOSE, FLORIDABLANCA, PAMPANGA”

By Representatives Casilao, Zarate, De Jesus, Tinio,
Brosas, Castro (F.L.) and Elago
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 680, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRARIAN REFORM AND COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO CONDUCT A JOINT INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE PLIGHT OF FARMERS, HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES AND MILITARIZATION IN HACIENDA MATIAS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SAN FRANCISCO, QUEZON PROVINCE”

By Representatives Casilao, Zarate, De Jesus, Tinio,
Brosas, Castro (F.L.) and Elago
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

House Resolution No. 681, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON AGRARIAN REFORM AND HUMAN RIGHTS TO CONDUCT A JOINT INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE ABUSES AGAINST FARMERS IN HACIENDA UY, MUNICIPALITY OF SAN ANDRES, QUEZON PROVINCE”

By Representatives Casilao, Zarate, De Jesus, Tinio,
Brosas, Castro (F.L.) and Elago
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

House Resolution No. 682, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMENDING ABS-CBN CORPORATION FOR ITS ADVOCACY AND COMMITMENT IN PRESERVING THE LOCAL FILM HERITAGE THROUGH ITS FILM RESTORATION PROJECT”

By Representative Nieto
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INFORMATION

House Resolution No. 683, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND CONDOLENCES ON THE DEMISE OF FORMER MAYOR GEMILIANO "MEL" CAMPOS LOPEZ JR, FATHER OF THE HONORABLE REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL LUIS LOPEZ OF THE 1ST DISTRICT OF MANILA”

By Representative Nieto
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 684, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT TO GRANT AND/OR CONVERT TO SUBSIDY THE EMERGENCY CALAMITY LOANS EXTENDED BY THE NATIONAL ELECTRIFICATION ADMINISTRATION TO THOSE AFFECTED BY TYPHOON LAWIN”

By Representative Uybarreta
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

House Resolution No. 685, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT TO GRANT AND/OR CONVERT TO SUBSIDY THE EMERGENCY CALAMITY LOANS EXTENDED BY THE NATIONAL ELECTRIFICATION ADMINISTRATION TO THOSE AFFECTED BY TYPHOON NINA”

By Representative Uybarreta
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

House Resolution No. 686, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DECLARING JANUARY 17 OF EVERY YEAR AS JAMES L. GORDON DAY, A SPECIAL NON-WORKING HOLIDAY IN THE CITY OF OLONGAPO, AND JANUARY 17 TO FEBRUARY 20 OF EVERY YEAR AS JAMES L. GORDON MONTH IN THE CITY OF OLONGAPO IN RECOGNITION OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF JAMES LEONARD TAGLE GORDON TO SAID CITY ON THE OCCASION OF HIS 100TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY”

By Representative Hernandez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF LAWS

House Resolution No. 687, entitled:

“RESOLUTION CALLING FOR AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE VIOLENT SHOOTING OF FARMERS, RESULTING TO NINE INJURED FARMERS BELONGING TO THE MADAUM

AGRARIAN REFORM BENEFICIARIES ASSOCIATION, INC. (□MARBAI□) BY THE SECURITY GUARDS AND PERSONNEL OF LAPANDAY FOODS CORPORATION (□LFC□) IN BARANGAY MADAUM, TAGUM CITY, DAVAO DEL NORTE”

By Representative Alvarez (P.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

ADDITIONAL COAUTHORS

Rep. Carmelo “Jon” B. Lazatin II for House Bills No. 104 and 118;

Rep. Manuel Jose “Mannix” M. Dalipe for House Bills No. 18, 1325, 1350, 1859, 2313, 3823, 3828, 4008 and 4113;

Rep. Rosanna “Ria” Vergara for House Bill No. 4661;

Rep. Ronald M. Cosalan for House Bills No. 4570 and 4571;

Rep. Wilter “Sharky” Wee Palma II for House Bills No. 696 and 4105;

Reps. Ma. Lourdes Acosta-Alba, Bellaflor J. Angara-Castillo, Elisa “Olga” T. Kho, Juliette T. Uy, Divina Grace C. Yu, Jocelyn Sy Limkaichong, Marisol C. Panotes, Ma. Lourdes R. Aggabao, Ma. Lucille L. Nava, M.D. and Glona G. Labadlabad for House Bill No. 4105;

Rep. Leopoldo N. Bataoil for House Bill No. 1855;

Reps. Mohamad Khalid Q. Dimaporo and Manuel F. Zubiri for House Bill No. 1858;

Rep. John Marvin “Yul Servo” C. Nieto for House Bill No. 3407;

Rep. Raul “Boboy” C. Tupas for House Bills No. 2318, 2319, 2474, 2953 and 3782;

Rep. Jose Antonio “Kuya Jonathan” R. Sy-Alvarado for House Bills No. 335, 336, 3675, 4136, 4302, 4342, 4343, 4373, 4374, 4435, 4465, 4469, 4521, 4569 and 4576 and House Resolution No. 251;

Rep. Celso L. Lobregat for House Bill No. 3887;

Reps. Fredenil “Fred” H. Castro, Baby Aline Vargas-Alfonso, John Marvin “Yul Servo” C. Nieto and Roger G. Mercado for House Bill No. 3254;

Rep. Alfredo A. Garbin Jr. for House Bill No. 545;

Rep. Deogracias Victor “DV” B. Savellano for House Bills No. 144 and 146;

Rep. Joaquin M. Chipeco Jr. for House Bill No. 144;

Rep. Ma. Lourdes Acosta-Alba for House Bills No. 56, 85, 123, 475, 516, 580, 1859, 2061, 2798 and 6286 and House Resolutions No. 17 and 2425;

Rep. Edwin C. Ong for House Bills No. 4136, 4302, 4342 and 4343;

Reps. Reynaldo V. Umali and Baby Aline Vargas-Alfonso for House Bill No. 4174;

Rep. Harlin Neil J. Abayon III for House Resolution No. 558;

Rep. Raneo “Ranie” E. Abu for House Bills No. 193, 194, 1301 and 1302;

Rep. Linabelle Ruth R. Villarica for House Bills No. 104, 335, 338, 1344, 1530, 1890, 2055 and 4174; and

Rep. Gerald Anthony “Samsam” V. Gullas Jr. for House Bills No. 4637 and 4660.

COMMUNICATIONS

Letters dated December 14, 2016 of Michael G. Aguinaldo, Chairperson, Commission on Audit, furnishing the House of Representatives copies of the 2015 Annual Audit Reports on the following government agencies, to wit:

1. Department of Foreign Affairs; and
2. Philippine Sports Commission.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated December 19, 2016 of Maria Gleda E. Lim, State Auditor V, Supervising Auditor, Office of the Supervising Auditor, Audit Groups CGS I and II-Water Districts and Other CGS Stand Alone Agencies, Regional Office No. VI, Commission on Audit, furnishing the House of Representatives the Annual Audit Report on the Tobias Fornier Water District, Tobias Fornier, Antique for the years ended December 31, 2014 to 2015.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated December 23, 2016 of Pelilia C. Veloso, Director IV, Regional Director, Regional Office No. II, Commission on Audit, furnishing the House of Representatives the Annual Audit Reports on the following Water Districts for CY 2015:

- A. Province of Cagayan
 1. Aparri Water District
 2. Claveria Water District
 3. Gattaran Water District
 4. Gonzaga Water District
 5. Lal-lo Water District
 6. Peñablanca Water District
 7. Sanchez Mira Water District
 8. Metropolitan Tuguegarao Water District
 9. Abulug Water District
 10. Amulung Water District

- B. Province of Isabela
 11. Alicia Water District
 12. Angadanan Water District
 13. Roxas Water District
 14. San Manuel Water District

15. Gamu Water District
 16. Tumauini Water District
 17. Naguilian Water District
 18. City of Ilagan Water District
 19. Cabagan Water District
 20. Cordon Water District
 21. Ramon Water District
 22. Aurora Water District
 23. Reina Mercedes Water District
 24. Cauayan City Water District
 25. Santiago Water District
 26. San Guillermo Water District
 27. Benito Soliven Water District
 - C. Province of Nueva Vizcaya
 28. Diadi Water District
 - D. Province of Quirino
 29. Aglipay Water District
 30. Diffun Water District
 31. Maddela Water District.
- TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

PRIVILEGE HOUR

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, with leave of the House, I move that we hold a Privilege Hour.

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

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Antonio L. Tinio of the Party-List ACT TEACHERS. He wishes to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). Rep. Antonio Tinio of the Party-List ACT TEACHERS is hereby recognized.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. TINIO

REP. TINIO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker, colleagues.

I rise today to share with this Body, with the public, and to record this Representation's views on the 2017 General Appropriations Act which was signed into law by President Duterte just last December, in relation to the administration's promise of change.

President Duterte was swept into power on the wave of this promise. His election was a strong statement of the people fed up and angry, having long been under a government of the privileged few and for the privileged few.

Congress was presented with the first budget bill of the Duterte administration in August last year, and within a few months, approved and ratified it, before session went on recess in December. House Bill No. 3408 or what would eventually become the 2017 General Appropriations Act was labelled as "A Budget for Real Change" or "Badyet ng Tunay na Pagbabago."

This Representation, along with the Makabayan bloc of progressive party-lists of which I am a member, scrutinized the said budget on the basis of those promises of change, since we believe that if this new administration is going to walk the talk, its first national budget will be its legs.

Upon our scrutiny of the 2017 national budget, we believe that genuine change will be far from our reach. That is why last December, along with the Makabayan bloc, I voted against, I voted "No" to the 2017 national budget.

We acknowledge several gains brought about by the campaigns of various sectors during the budget deliberations which were reflected in the General Appropriations Act, so there were some successes. These include the people's demands for the restoration of cuts in the budgets of State universities and colleges; the increase in chalk allowance for classroom teachers in public schools; the provision mandating the regularization of contractual teachers in both public schools and in State universities and colleges; the restoration of the cuts to the maintenance and operating budgets of public hospitals; free irrigation for farmers; and free tuition for undergraduate students in State universities and colleges, of which I will say more a little later on. These gains, indeed, translate into concrete benefits for the people. However, in the grand scheme of things, in the context of a P3.3 trillion budget, we see no fundamental changes. This should really come as no surprise if we go back to point no. 1 of President Duterte's 10-Point Socio-economic Agenda. Point no. 1 states: "continue and maintain the current macroeconomic policies, including fiscal, monetary and trade policies."

In other words, from the outset, the Duterte administration committed to continuing the neoliberal economic policies that have globally created a world in which, according to Oxfam, it was just in the paper today, eight individuals led by people like Bill Gates, Warren Buffett, and Mark Zuckerberg own as much wealth as 3.6 billion people, half of humanity. That same pattern of economic growth creating growth and social inequality via the aforementioned neoliberal economic policies is playing itself out in our own country.

Professor Cielito Habito, in 2012, pointed out that the growth in the aggregate wealth of our 40 richest families in 2011, which Forbes Asia reported to have risen by \$13 billion in 2010 to 2011, was equivalent in value to 7.5 percent of the growth in our total GDP

at that time. In other words, to translate that roughly, more than three-fourths of the wealth created in that period was captured by a handful, just 40 of the richest families in the Philippines.

The P3.35 trillion budget for 2017 will very clearly perpetuate the pattern of highly unequal growth making a handful of rich families stupendously wealthier while unemployment, underemployment and poverty worsens. The 2017 budget will continue to neglect national industrialization and fail to modernize agriculture based on genuine land reform.

We also see no sufficient funding in this budget for job creation or programs reflecting policy changes that will address unemployment and underemployment, or abandonment of the labor export policy. We also could not see a substantial increase in government support for micro, small and medium enterprises. Instead of these reforms that will provide for more effective and sustainable benefits for the people, the 2017 General Appropriations Act maintains the Conditional Cash Transfer program as the centerpiece poverty safety net.

A recent Pulse Asia survey only last December shows that the number one concern of Filipinos, the overwhelming majority, the main concern of Filipinos is increasing the salary of workers. This is the most urgent concern of Filipinos, with 45 percent of respondents naming this as their top concern over other concerns, such as fighting criminality or fighting graft and corruption in the government. So, the main concern is salary, and yet, if we look at the national budget—even in its own backyard, the government is not adequately addressing the issue of decent salaries for its workers.

If we look at the provision for salary increase for the almost two million government employees both in the national government and the local government units, including the employees in this own Chamber, the House of Representatives, the 2017 budget only funded the continuation or the second tranche of the Aquino administration's Executive Order No. 201, which provides for a little more than a P500 increase per month in the salaries of low- and middle-level employees who comprise the bulk of the bureaucracy, and this includes public school teachers.

I therefore take this opportunity to reiterate our advocacy and our demand for Congress to immediately take steps to pass a new law on salaries that will incorporate the demands especially of rank-and-file or lower-and middle-level government employees for salary increases to address the bias of the existing salary increase law in favor of the higher level executives and officials of government who receive a much higher salary increase.

We also express a similar concern regarding the matter of job security, particularly in the government.

During the budget deliberations, this Representation

strongly urged the Duterte government to put an end to endo in the civil service. We found that, in fact, both the national government and local governments are the biggest users of endo work, meaning to say, the hiring of almost 600,000 persons on contracts of service and job orders. And these individuals are not even considered as employees of the government and, therefore, do not enjoy the salaries and benefits of government employees. This number—almost 600,000—is almost double the number of job order- and contract of service-employees in 2014. We trace this to the long-standing failure of the government, in particular, the Civil Service Commission, to set guidelines that will limit the hiring of workers through job orders and contracts of service.

So, unfortunately, the Duterte administration, through the national budget for 2017, will not address this problem of proliferation of endo in the government, which can only be addressed through the regularization of these employees, recognizing them as workers, and giving them full rights, salaries and benefits.

What of social services?

In the 2017 Budget, the funding for the delivery of social services such as education, health and housing is still, in the first place, profoundly deficient considering the needs or the demands of our people. The DepEd's budget, for instance, may be the highest among all the departments but there is still no sufficient funding for the establishment of public senior high schools, and the building and repair of classrooms for the public school system all over the country.

Our teachers and students still suffer from the inadequate maintenance and operating budgets for schools. These are only some of the needs that will not be covered by the 2017 budget.

The increase in social services budget—it is true, there is an increase—as has been the case annually, yet, it masks the privatization and commercialization policies which continue to be implemented and are unabated. We note for instance that the single biggest item in the DepEd budget is the Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education or the GASTPE Program which leapt by 69 percent, from P21.1 billion in 2016 to P35.7 billion in 2017.

This GASTPE for 2017, which dwarfs all items under the DepEd budget, even the operational budget for the entire division of the Department of Education, includes P26.3 billion for senior high school, for the Voucher Program. This speaks of a privatization policy being aggressively implemented in the case of senior high school where the government relies on the private sector to provide for senior high school instead of direct public provision by the government directly investing in schools and personnel, which is in fact the clear mandate of the Constitution. The Constitution says that it is the responsibility of the State to provide free education

up to the high school level, and this would include senior high school. So, as far as this Representation is concerned, the provision of senior high school through the voucher system does not comply with the constitutional mandate.

Under other agencies, we can find funding for similar privatization and commercialization schemes and policies which would have the effect of making social services even more expensive and inaccessible especially to the poor, and this includes public-private partnership schemes in education, health, housing and infrastructure, including a separate P12.4 billion fund, the PPP Strategic Support Fund in the DPWH budget.

At this point, I would like to mention the important victory in the funding of P8.3 billion for free tuition for undergraduate students in State universities and colleges. We raised a concern, however, that while there is this P8.3 billion fund for free tuition in State universities and colleges, the President included this particular item in his veto message and placed it under conditional implementation. Specifically, our concern is the President's directive that the CHED and the DBM issue the necessary guidelines which shall include, among others, the standards and procedures for the entitlement and availment of free tuition by students of State universities and colleges.

We raised this concern because as far as this Representation is concerned, the wording of the General Appropriations Act and the Special Provision providing for free tuition in State universities and colleges is very clear, and it states that starting the first semester of school year 2017-2018, no tuition fee shall be collected from undergraduate students. So, that is very clear as far as entitlement is concerned. As long as one is a student of a State university or college, then one is entitled. So, we hope that the CHED and the DBM, in formulating guidelines, will not seek to limit entitlement to this free tuition. We are thinking of something like the STFAP, the socialized tuition fee scheme that has been implemented in the University of the Philippines for many years—this is not the intention of Congress.

As to the issue of pork barrel or the PDAF, in the past few weeks, Senator Lacson has been very vocal in his critique of the 2017 budget asserting that the PDAF, the so-called congressional pork barrel, still exists and can still be found in the 2017 General Appropriations Act. Our esteemed Chair of the Committee on Appropriations, Cong. Karlo Alexei B. Nograles, has pointed out that perhaps the good Senator Lacson is confused and asserts that the 2017 General Appropriations Act is fully compliant with the landmark Supreme Court decision, *Belgica vs. Ochoa*, abolishing the Priority Development Assistance Fund. So, which is which? What is true?

Well, this is my take on this particular and very important issue. Our esteemed Chair, Representative

Nograles, is 100-percent correct when he said that, indeed, there is no longer any PDAF in the 2017 budget and it is, and the budget is fully compliant with the *Belgica vs. Ochoa* decision. However, Senator Lacson is also correct when he said that there is still pork barrel in the 2017 General Appropriations Act.

Insofar as the Supreme Court itself defines pork barrel, the pork barrel system as “the collective body of rules and practices that govern the manner by which lump-sum, discretionary funds, primarily intended for local projects, are utilized through the respective participation of the Legislative and Executive branches of government, including its members.”

So, given that definition, it is true, wala nang PDAF sa 2017 budget pero nananatili iyong pork barrel system which at this point reminds us of the limitations of the Supreme Court decision on *Belgica vs. Ochoa*. Yes, *Belgica vs. Ochoa* abolished the PDAF, the particular form, the particular manner by which a large portion of the budget, particularly for infrastructure, is divided by Members of the Legislature and assigned at their discretion as to how this fund is accessed. Yes, the particular form, the mode of accessing these funds has been abolished. But in its place, new forms have evolved and so the struggle must continue for the abolition of the pork barrel system.

Moreover, to my knowledge, Senator Lacson did not dwell, he did not focus on the issue of congressional pork barrel, nor on the Presidential pork barrel. But we in the Makabayan bloc have always maintained that the root and source of all patronage in the budget is the Presidential pork barrel, the largest lump sums, the largest discretionary lump sums are those lump sums under the control of the President of the Philippines. And so, we still see in the 2017 budget the Special Purpose Funds. These include such funds as the Budgetary Support for Government Corporations, Unprogrammed Funds, Contingent Funds, and so on. Also, we include in the matter of Presidential pork barrel which remains very much alive and kicking in the 2017 budget, the conspicuous increase in the budget of the Office of the President. From P2.8 billion in the 2016 General Appropriations Act, the budget of the Office of the President for 2017 has ballooned to P20.17 billion. Notable is the increase in total of the MOOE for the Office of the President, from last year's P1.9 billion, it is now P19.28 billion. It is worth noting that this increase includes tremendous increases in travel and communications expenses and in Confidential and Intelligence Funds for the Office of the President. For example, the Travelling Expenses in 2016 was P313 million, it is now P2.1 billion; the Communication Expenses, from P23.8 million it has ballooned to P1.3 billion, and that is an increase of 55 times from the previous years. The Confidential Funds from P250 million, it is now P1.25 billion; and the Intelligence

Funds, from last year's P250 million, it is now again, P1.25 billion, a five-time increase compared to last year. These Confidential and Intelligence Funds under the Office of the President are of particular concern because, as my colleague in the KABATAAN Party-List has described it, these are the so-called black budget of agencies where practically no public scrutiny is afforded as regards the use of Confidential and Intelligence Funds.

We also note that the 2017 budget provides for significant increases in the budgets of the PNP, the Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines. This means that there will be continued funding for the repressive activities of the police and the military, the continuing counter-insurgency operations even in the context of mutual unilateral ceasefires between the AFP, the military and the CPP-NPA-NDF. Proof of which includes the continuing human rights violations in the countryside particularly against the Lumad population in Mindanao and, of course, the tide of extrajudicial killings in the course of this administration's war on drugs which now runs to over 6,000 deaths with the PNP largely unconcerned as far as addressing this rampage of murder of fellow Filipinos.

For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, we voted "No" to the 2017 budget. We in the Makabayan bloc voted "No." The above observations indicate that as far as the fundamentals of this budget are concerned, change has not come.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the Privilege Speech of the Honorable Tinio to the Committee on Rules.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, before we recognize the next Member to avail of the Privilege Hour, we would like to acknowledge the presence of some guests in the gallery.

In the gallery are the guests of the Hon. Cheryl P. Deloso-Montalla of the Second District of Zambales. These are the Philippine League of Secretaries to the Sanggunian Officers of Region III: SB Secretaries Maricel Sudduth, Gerbie Anito, Joy Gopez, Kathyrine Fan, Jay Sangalang, Troy Grypo, Nezie Lustu-Jubinal, Eloisa Valdez-Pacheco and Jose Pacheco.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). May the guests of Congresswoman Deloso-Montalla please rise and be recognized. (*Applause*) Welcome to the House of Representatives.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Other guests of the Honorable Deloso-Montalla are also in the gallery. These are the Council of Personnel Officers of Zambales-Olongapo City Chapter, namely: Abigail Abad, Gamelia Datugan, Teresita Lising, Adelene Catolico, Eleanor Abasta, Myrna Lara, Rovena Elayba, Maribeth Garcia, Dhel Alarma, Aurea Bolasco, Mercedes Foronda, Lolita Reyes-Dullas, Loida Maturgo, Charlie Asinas, Angelica Joy Mose, Margie Asio and Nicholette Rojo.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). May the guests of Congresswoman Deloso-Montalla please rise and be recognized. Welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Aniceto "John" D. Bertiz III of Party-List ACTS-OFW, who wishes to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). Rep. Aniceto John D. Bertiz III of Party-List ACTS-OFW is hereby recognized.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. BERTIZ

REP. BERTIZ. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Majority Leader. Good afternoon, my colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, allow me to rise to raise once again the concerns of our OFWs or overseas Filipino workers.

Last December 2016, the Department of Finance announced that by September 2017, the doors of a new OFW bank would be open to the public. Based on the press release issued by the Department of Finance, the LandBank of the Philippines will use its money to buy the Philippine Postal Savings Bank, Inc. or PPSBI and turn it into a subsidiary bank to be known as the "OFW Bank."

LandBank President, Mr. Alex Buenaventura, said:

The OFW Bank will be a listed company with an authorized capital of P3 billion and a subscribed capital of P2 billion, of which P1 billion is paid-up by LandBank. Another P1 billion will be open for subscription to OFWs who can acquire them by buying shares in the bank.

In his visit to Japan, President Duterte informed the Filipino community that he was thinking about creating an overseas workers' bank. The Filipino workers in Japan and across the globe welcomed this announcement. However, the roadmap in creating this bank as revealed by the Finance Department has been met with some apprehensions. In a letter addressed to this humble Representative, a non-partisan coalition of OFW groups raised the following questions:

Why buy out a cash-strapped and heavily indebted Postal Bank and pass this on as an OFW Bank? Why not create a real, authentic OFW Bank, through legislation, and with the direct participation of the OFWs themselves?

How will ordinary OFWs and their families, including tens of thousands of distressed OFWs from Saudi Arabia benefit from LandBank's subsidiary OFW Bank? Would this new OFW Bank be able to provide non-Haram banking services and products to the increasing number of Muslim OFWs and their families? Has LandBank consulted the farmers and other agricultural groups prior to engaging the Postal Bank management in negotiations considering the huge capital infusions involved? What role would the OWWA or the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, as the primary government agency representing the interests of millions of OFWs, play in ensuring the viability and legitimacy of this so-called OFW Bank?

Mr. Speaker, these are very important questions, and it is truly unfortunate that even I, as the lone Party-List Representative of our overseas Filipino workers and their families, cannot supply the answers. It seems that only the Department of Finance, the Land Bank of the Philippines and the Philippine Postal Savings Bank are involved in this billion-peso conversion.

We certainly do not want a bank that was created to bail out another government bank. Kung gagamitin lang ang OFWs para mabura ang liabilities ng Postal Bank, hindi po ito OFW Bank. Ang dapat na itawag dito ay Saklolo Bank. Ito po ang dapat nating itawag, because we all know that the Philippine Postal Savings Bank is not without problems.

In fact, no less than the Commission on Audit has this to say about the state of the Postal Bank in its 2015 Audit Report, from which I quote:

PPSBI recorded the cash balance of the Project DRIVE Fund amounting to P249.235 million as capital in its books of accounts under a condition that the same shall be used for its original purpose. Said balance came from the fund amounting to P500 million released by the National Government to PPSBI for disbursement to the National Government's microfinance

program for the transport sector. In January 2012, PPSBI re-launched its microfinance program and renamed it "Arangkada Pasada." Loans amounting to only P0.660 million representing a little more than one-fourth of one percent of the converted Project DRIVE Fund was released for said program. Further, the treatment on the cash balance as capital was in violation of Section 84(2) of P.D. 1445 and Section 28(3), Article VI of the Philippine Constitution. The implementation of Project DRIVE is subject of a special audit by the Commission on Audit, the results of which shall be covered by a separate audit report. x x x

Hindi ba dapat hintayin muna ng Land Bank of the Philippines ang resulta ng special audit ng Commission on Audit sa Project DRIVE kung saan ang pondo para dito ay pinadaan sa Philippine Postal Savings Bank sa ilalim ng dalawang administrasyon?

Mr. Speaker, ang OFW sector ay may kahilingan po sana kay Pangulong Duterte. Bakit hindi po natin ayusin muna ang sitwasyon ng pamamalakad ng Postal Bank sa pamamagitan ng paglalagay ng mga OFW bankers upang masubaybayan nang husto ang rehabilitation program para sa Postal Bank?

Initially, we can change the composition of the board of directors and put in key officers who really understand the seemingly simple yet truly complex dynamics of OFW transactions. Mr. Speaker, we can try this track first, without pouring billions of pesos that LandBank should be using to help its farmer beneficiaries.

The Postal Bank currently has 31 branches and microfinancing banking offices nationwide. It does not even have a single overseas office. Compare to this a well-established bank that now caters to the needs of OFWs with thousands of ATM machines and hundreds of branches nationwide. How many billions would be required and how long would it take to modernize the Philippine Postal Savings Bank to make this thrift bank at par with the best banks that we have in the Philippines today?

Naaalala ko po tuloy and kuwento ng isang tricycle driver at ng kanyang misis na si Fe.

Minsan, sa sobrang pagod sa gawaing-bahay, napabuntong-hininga si misis. "Sana naging donya na lang ako." Napaisip ang tricycle driver.

Isang araw, tinawag niya ang kanyang misis at ipinakita ang lumang tricycle na may bagong pintura, at sa harap at likod nito ay nakasulat: "Doña Fe."

Mr. Speaker, batid ko na tulad ni Fe, maraming nagmamahal sa sektor ng mga overseas Filipino workers. Pangarap naming magkaroon ng bangko, pero hindi sa salita lamang, hindi sa letra lamang, at hindi sa porma lamang.

We want a banking institution that is as world-class as our modern-day heroes.

I appeal, therefore, to the leadership of the House and to all our colleagues to please support our resolution to be filed by yours truly, seeking an immediate inquiry into the Department of Finance's plan to convert the Philippine Postal Savings Bank, Inc. into a subsidiary bank for our OFWs using Land Bank of the Philippines.

Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Anthony M. Bravo, PhD. of COOP-NATCCO Party-List for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). Representative Bravo is hereby recognized.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Dep. Majority Leader. Good afternoon to everyone. Will the distinguished Representative from ACTS-OFW Party-List yield to some questions from this Representation.

REP. BERTIZ. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you, distinguished colleague.

Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to commend the Representative from ACTS-OFW Party-List for informing this august Chamber about a relevant and timely issue on the conversion of Postal Bank to an OFW Bank. May the honorable OFW Representative indulge this Representation about this issue.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, how much is the authorized capitalization for the Postal Bank?

REP. BERTIZ. It has an authorized capital stock of P1 billion, with P500 million actually subscribed, and P300 million paid-up capital, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BRAVO (A.). With that figure, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, is it practical that the LandBank will buy it for P3 billion as you made mention? Am I right?

REP. BERTIZ. Looking at the figure, I do not think, Mr. Speaker, it is advisable or even practical for the LandBank to purchase the Postal Bank at P3 billion.

REP. BRAVO (A.). So, with the charter and capital stock, not to mention the controversies involving the Postal Bank, do you think the plan of converting it to an OFW Bank, through the LandBank, will really be a viable and effective strategy?

REP. BERTIZ. No, Mr. Speaker, because that

Postal Bank only has 25 branches nationwide and, as you know, that OFWs are remitting billions of dollars annually, and branches are the most vital and it is a banking structure, plus the Postal Bank does not have international offices or it needs an overseas bank to have a foreign partner from different countries in order to service the needs of our OFWs.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, is this how you envision an OFW Bank to be created?

REP. BERTIZ. No, Mr. Speaker, because as of now, the OFW has a private trust fund in the OWWA right now which amounts to P20 billion, and half of which is deposited in the LandBank. So, if the LandBank is going to purchase it and take over the Postal Bank and change it to an OFW Bank ay para naman po tayong ginigisa sa sarili nating mantika. Might as well, we will have our own bank using our own money that is sitting and deposited in or being managed by the OWWA for so many years, na alam naman natin sa libu-libong mga distressed workers na mga OFWs, nagreklamo pati ang kanilang mga pamilya na wala silang nakukuhang pakinabang dito sa pondo na ito.

REP. BRAVO (A.). So, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, if you will agree on a particular proposal coming from the Department of Finance on such creation of an OFW Bank, by acquiring the Postal Bank through the LBP, it will never serve the very purpose of why such a bank will be created as far as OFWs are concerned.

REP. BERTIZ. Definitely, Mr. Speaker, because we have to determine first that it will serve the needs of our OFWs, not only in harnessing the billions of dollar remittances of our OFWs but the livelihood programs and other benefits that a bank will be created, as well.

Alam po natin na marami pong umuuwi sa katulad kong mga OFW na pagdating sa Pilipinas ay naghahanap ng kaniyang reintegration program ng gobyerno at wala po tayong maibigay o wala man lang tayong maitulong na puhunan. Isa sa mga example nito ay iyong mahigit sa 6,000 umuwi from Saudi Arabia na tayo pa mismo ang sumundo at sinalubong ng ating mahal na Presidente na pinangakuan natin ng mga kung anu-anong livelihood programs. Sila ay iyong mga nasa probinsiya, pero pag sila ay dumudulog sa DSWD, sa OWWA o kahit sa DOLE ay wala silang makuhang tulong.

Bakit ang LandBank ang bibili ng Postal Bank na alam naman natin na nalulugi na at problemado, at gagawin itong OFW Bank? Samantalang mayroon po tayong P20 bilyon na ito ay dugo at pawis ng mga OFW na inihuhulog nila taun-taon na \$25

kada lalabas sila ng bansa natin, na ngayon ay P20 bilyon, hindi man lamang natin mapakinabangan, at kung saan puwedeng—might as well na magkaroon ng—magtatag ang OWWA ng isang group of experts that is going to study the viability of having our own bank, not buying a dying bank and call it an OFW Bank, at gamitin para ang pera ng mga OFW ang mag-revive o bumuhay dito.

Alam ko po na marami rin tayong mga government banks na nalugi. Might as well, siguro mag-concentrate na lang ang LandBank—tulad ng Coco Levy Fund na P300 million—ang kakarampot na P20 billion ng OFW ay huwag na nating pag-interesan pa. Ang pamilya ng mga OFW ay umaasa rin na sana ay magkaroon ng sariling bangko ng mga OFW. Ito iyong malalapitan mo na puwede kang makahingi ng tulong para sa loan or livelihood programs na sa ngayon, ito po ang wala talaga. Kaya nga po kalahati ng 6,000 na umuwi galing sa Saudi Arabia ang ngayon ay nagsisibalikan na ulit sa Saudi Arabia kung saan sila ay nagkaroon ng trauma at malagim na mga karanasan na halos lahat o karamihan sa kanila ay nangamatay na, ang mga pamilya nila ay nabuwag na dahil nga po wala silang mapakain.

So, hindi ko po nakikita ang viability ng LandBank na mas marami pang dapat na inaasikaso lalung-lalo na sa sektor ng agrikultura. At ang isa pa, bakit Postal Bank lang? Mayroon din naman tayong isang Amanah Bank na government bank na puwede mo ring i-merge nang sa ganoon, maserbisyuhan naman ang ating mga kapatid sa Mindanao na napakalaking bilang ng mga OFW ay mga Muslim, which is alam naman natin, iba ang kanilang banking system. Is it conforming to non-haram banking system ang itatatag ng ating Department of Finance?

Hindi po kami nagmamadali. Mas maiging pag-aralan muna nating maigi ang paggamit ng pangalang OFW at pagkakaroon ng sariling OFW Bank, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BRAVO (A). So, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, it is a firm stand of the Representative from ACTS-OFW Party-List not to go with the proposal of converting the Postal Bank into OFW Bank. So, what will be your proposed solution to this matter, distinguished Speaker?

REP. BERTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I propose that since we have P20 billion funds in the OWWA and part of it can be used for re-integration or for research and development; the OWWA should also create a group of experts that will study the viability of having our own OFW Bank using its own money instead of the LandBank owning and acquiring a troubled Postal Bank, and that 70 percent of its ownership will be by the LandBank, and 30 percent only by OFW.

In that way, we can also do it in reverse, 70 percent

ownership of OFW, and 30 percent ownership of the LandBank, just because of their banking expertise.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you for that response. Mr. Speaker. May I go back to the issue of the creation of an OFW Bank through the LandBank. Do you know what will be the percentage of sharing?

REP. BERTIZ. Yes, Mr. Speaker. As per the first statement of the Secretary of the Department of Finance, the 70 percent will be the shares of the LandBank and 30 percent will be opened for OFW, para naman kaming nagmamakaawa at ang pangalan namin ang nakabandera sa bangkong ito at kami ang minority.

REP. BRAVO (A.). So it will not be wholly-owned by the OFWs, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague.

REP. BERTIZ. No, Mr. Speaker. It will not be wholly-owned by the OFWs.

REP. BRAVO (A.). I commend you, distinguished colleague, Mr. Speaker, for raising the issue about non-haram banking products and services to our Muslim brothers and sisters, as you made mention a while ago. This might have been overlooked in the plan to convert the Postal Bank into an OFW Bank. How do you think will this be addressed?

REP. BERTIZ. Yes, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps, the proponents should look into the operations of Amanah Bank which is the only government-controlled bank compliant to non-haram or, meaning, unforbidden banking products and services. This will ensure that no one will be left out from among the members of the sectors the OFW Bank intends to serve. Mayroon po tayong Amanah Bank na nagsisilbi sa ating mga kapatid na Muslim sa Mindanao at napakalaki ng bilang ng mga OFW ngayon sa ibang bansa ay mga Muslim.

They have their non-haram banking system at hindi rin po ito tiningnan ng ating Department of Finance sa pag-acquire ng Postal Bank in which at the moment, Amanah Bank is under the DBP. Bakit hindi muna natin pag-aralan nang sa ganoon po, mapakinabangan din namin ang mga tinatawag na non-haram products para sa ating mga kapatid na Muslim sa Mindanao?

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you for that answer, distinguished colleague, Mr. Speaker. I truly believe this is a very vital matter for you for it directly concerns your sector. But in your speech a while ago, it seems that you were not consulted regarding this matter. Am I correct in my understanding, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague?

REP. BERTIZ. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BRAVO (A.). How about your sector, were they also consulted?

REP. BERTIZ. No, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BRAVO (A.). So, if not, how are you going to involve your sector in the planning on how to participate in this process?

REP. BERTIZ. Mr. Speaker, a group of civil society organizations or CSOs sent a letter to my office regarding the matter saying that they are in full support of the OFW agenda of the President, but they have several questions concerning the creation of an OFW Bank, or they were not informed.

That is why, as the lone Representative of the OFW Party-List, Mr. Speaker, in today's privilege speech and the filing of resolution directing the appropriate House committee to conduct an inquiry on the plan of actions of the Department of Finance, the Land Bank of the Philippines and the Philippine Postal Corporation, and other concerned agencies to establish a bank for overseas workers to start a plan to participate in this very important issue so that our sector will be consulted in this major decision of having our own OFW Bank.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you for those candid answers, distinguished colleague, Mr. Speaker.

At this juncture, I would like to manifest that first, I would like you to be informed that this Representation is a former OFW, and would like to manifest full support to the position of the Representative of ACTS-OFW, Cong. John Bertiz.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, distinguished colleague.

REP. BERTIZ. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the Honorable Bertiz and its interpellations to the Committee on Rules.

I so move.

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

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). Is

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

ROLL CALL

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we call the roll of Members.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). 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. 58, dated January 17, 2016:

PRESENT

Abad	Belmonte (J.C.)
Abaya	Belmonte (R.)
Abayon	Benitez
Abellanos	Bertiz
Abueg	Billones
Acharon	Bolilia
Acop	Bondoc
Acosta	Bordado
Advincula	Bravo (A.)
Agarao	Brosas
Aggabao	Bulut-Begtang
Aglipay-Villar	Calderon
Albano	Calixto-Rubiano
Alejano	Caminero
Almario	Campos
Almonte	Canama
Alonte-Naguiat	Casilao
Alvarez (P.)	Castelo
Amatong	Castro (F.L.)
Andaya	Castro (F.H.)
Angara-Castillo	Cayetano
Antonio	Celeste
Aragones	Cerafica
Arcillas	Chavez
Arenas	Chipeco
Atienza	Co
Bag-ao	Cojuangco
Bagatsing	Collantes
Banal	Cortes
Barzaga	Cortuna
Bataoil	Cosalan
Batocabe	Crisologo
Bautista-Bandigan	Cuaresma
Belaro	Cueva
Belmonte (F.)	Dalipe

Dalog	Lobregat	Salimbangon	Tupas
Daza	Lopez (B.)	Salo	Unabia
De Jesus	Lopez (M.L.)	Salon	Ungab
De Venecia	Loyola	Sambar	Unico
De Vera	Macapagal-Arroyo	Sandoval	Uy (R.)
Defensor	Madrona	Santos-Recto	Uybarreta
Del Mar	Malapitan	Sarmiento (C.)	Vargas
Del Rosario	Mangaoang	Sarmiento (E.M.)	Vargas-Alfonso
Deloso-Montalla	Mangudadatu (Z.)	Savellano	Velarde
Dimaporo (M.K.)	Marcoleta	Sema	Velasco
Duavit	Marcos	Siao	Velasco-Catera
Durano	Mariño	Singson	Veloso
Dy	Marquez	Suansing (E.)	Vergara
Elago	Martinez	Suarez	Villanueva
Enverga	Mending	Sy-Alvarado	Villaraza-Suarez
Eriguel	Mercado	Tambunting	Villarica
Ermita-Buhain	Mirasol	Tan (M.)	Villarin
Escudero	Montoro	Tejada	Violago
Estrella	Nava	Tiangco	Yap (A.)
Eusebio	Nieto	Ting	Yu
Evardone	Noel	Tinio	Zamora (M.C.)
Fariñas	Nogralas (J.J.)	Tolentino	Zamora (R.)
Ferrer (L.)	Nogralas (K.A.)	Tugna	Zubiri
Flores	Nolasco		
Fortun	Oaminal		
Fortuno	Ocampo		
Fuentebella	Olivarez		
Garbin	Ong (E.)		
Garcia (G.)	Ortega (P.)		
Garcia (J.E.)	Ortega (V.N.)		
Garcia-Albano	Pacquiao		
Garin (R.)	Paduano		
Garin (S.)	Palma		
Gasataya	Pancho		
Geron	Panganiban		
Go (M.)	Panotes		
Gonzaga	Papandayan		
Gonzales (A.P.)	Pichay		
Gonzales (A.D.)	Pimentel		
Gonzalez	Pineda		
Gorriceta	Plaza		
Gullas	Primicias-Agabas		
Hernandez	Quimbo		
Herrera-Dy	Radaza		
Hofer	Ramirez-Sato		
Jalosjos	Ramos		
Kho	Revilla		
Khonghun	Roa-Puno		
Labadlabad	Rocamora		
Lacson	Rodriguez (I.)		
Lagman	Romualdez		
Lanete	Romualdo		
Laogan	Roque (H.)		
Lazatin	Roque (R.)		
Lee	Sacdalan		
Limkaichong	Sagarbarria		

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. Mr. Speaker, the roll call shows that 228 Members responded to the call.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). With 228 Members responding to the call, the Chair declares the presence of a quorum.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

PRIVILEGE HOUR
Continuation

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume the Privilege Hour.

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

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we extend the Privilege Hour for another hour upon expiration of the Privilege Hour.

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

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Jose L. Atienza Jr. of Party-List BUHAY, who wishes to avail of the Privilege Hour. I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). Rep. Jose L. Atienza Jr. of Party-List BUHAY is hereby recognized.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ATIENZA

REP. ATIENZA. Salamat po, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Dep. Majority Leader. At maraming salamat po sa ating kapulungan.

Ako po ay magbibigay lamang ng kaunting paalala upang mailagay po naman natin sa ating tala ng ating Kongreso ang buhay ng isang tao, isang lalaki at maituturing natin na isang bayani ng ating bansa.

Noong Enero 1, pumanaw ang isang Manileño na nagngangalang Gemiliano “Mel” Campos Lopez Jr. Siya po ay isang taong nakasama ko sa larangan ng pulitika at paglilingkod sa ating mga mamamayan, kaya ako po ay naglalakas-loob na magbigay ng kaunting pananalita sapagkat siya ay hindi na natin kasama ngayon.

In his political and social life, I saw him as a real man. Isang tunay na lalaki at Pilipinong may pagmamahal sa ating bansa sapagkat dumaan kami sa mga pagsubok na hadlang sa ating demokrasya, si Mel Lopez ay palaging nandoon at namumuno.

We were together in the Plaza Miranda bombing kung saan po kami ay binato ng granada noong kami po ay tumatakbo pa lamang bilang mga miyembro ng City Council ng Maynila. At kami po naman, sa awa ng Panginoon, ay hindi po naman nadisgrasya. Although the first grenade exploded right in front of us, we were both saved providentially. But instead of being cowed into submission, Mel Lopez continued to lead the opposition in Manila so that we may all be enlightened and inspired to continue the struggle for a genuine democracy in the land. Isang demokrasyang magbibigay ng buhay na mas higit dito sa ating nakikita at natatamasa ngayon—isang buhay na magbibigay ng kasaganahan sa pangkarinawang mamamayang Pilipino. Iyon po ang adhikain nitong taong ito. Sinasabi ko lamang sa ating Minority Leader kanina kung sino si Mel Lopez sa aking pagkakilala—isang tunay na tao. What you see is what you get. What he says is what he does. At wala pong halong pagbabalatkayo kapagka siya ay gumalaw para sa ating mga mamamayan.

From the humble beginnings of a political, social, and Christian leader in Tondo, this man rose to become one of the brightest stars in the Regular Batasang Pambansa, simply because he was always involved with struggles to give us a democracy which will really provide opportunities for everyone.

Hindi ko po malilimutan na noong 1971, kami ay naging survivors of the Plaza Miranda bombing. Mel Lopez continued his political career. His past led him to become very involved in the Anti-Martial Law Movement which all of us resisted at that point. Hindi po nawawala si Mel Lopez basta mayroon pong pag-uusapan upang ihayag ang damdamin ng bayan, namumuno po iyong

taong iyon. Kaya dumaan po ang mahabang madilim na panahon ng batas militar, si Mel Lopez ay kasama ng masang Manileño sa ating pagsisikap na mapalaya ang ating mga sarili sa tanikala ng batas militar.

In 1978, tumawag po ng halalan ang naghaharing diktador at andun po si Mel Lopez, kasama rin po. Siya po ang bumuo ng tiket na iniharap namin upang labanan ang dambuhalang KBL, ang Kilusang Bagong Lipunan, at alam naman naming nanalo ang sigaw ng bayan, ang kinapanganakan ng ating Laban Party ngayon, subalit hindi po nagwagi sa bilangan.

Nadaya ang bayaning si Ninoy Aquino at hindi rin nanalo. Ang lahat ng mga lumaban noong 1978 ay ni isa ay walang nanalo. Subalit hindi nasiraan ng loob si Mel Lopez. Ipinagpatuloy po niya ang kaniyang pamumuno sa aming mga taga-Maynila. At noong sumapit po ang 1980 elections na ang tumawag ng local elections ay ang diktador, wala pong gustong lumaban sapagkat alam naming walang mananalo. Ang sabi nga, kung si Ninoy Aquino hindi nanalo, papano tayo mananalo? Subalit si Mel Lopez ang ginawa naming kandidatong opisyal ng oposisyon upang harapin ang kandidato ng KBL sa Maynila.

Nagpatuloy po ang taong ito bagama’t hindi nagtagumpay ang sino man noong 1980. Nagpatuloy po ang aming organisasyon upang ipagtanggol at itaguyod ang karapatang pantao ng noon ay hindi nakikilala ng maraming kabataan.

I know that there are many heroes of the revolution, so that today, we are enjoying freedom and democracy. We now enjoy free discussions and debates in this Chamber wherein once upon a time, Mel Lopez’s voice rang in every corner of the Batasang Pambansa.

Hindi ko po malilimutan iyong mga pagkakataong dinidebate namin ang KBL doon sa Bataan Nuclear Plant, doon sa impeachment ni Mr. Marcos, doon sa Amendment No. 6, kung saan gumagawa ng batas ang diktador at hindi po binibigyan ng laya ang Regular Batasang Pambansa.

So, when we look back, we cannot help but appreciate the contributions of this man. Kung hindi ko po sasabihin ito ngayon upang maitala sa ating Record ay wala na pong magsasabi nito sapagkat wala na pong naiwan dito sa ating kapulungan ni isang Miyembro ng oposisyon noong mga panahong iyon.

There were 59 of us, and I am very happy that God has given me the opportunity to be the only voice out of that group of 59 who fought for the liberation of our country. But many of the children of our colleagues are here. Andito po si Rep. Art Defensor Jr., anak ni Arthur Defensor Sr. Andito po si Rep. Luis Raymond Villafuerte, anak ni Louie Villafuerte. Andito po si Rep. Mercedes “Didi” Cagas, ang maybahay po ni Douglas Cagas, at marami pang iba, subalit hindi po siguro makukumpleto ang ating appreciation sa mga nangyari noong nakaraan kung hindi natin babanggitin ang pangalan ni Mel Lopez.

Maaari po nating ihambing, isama sa talaan kung atin pong gugunitain ang mga pangalang Cecilia Muñoz-Palma, Jaime Ferrer, Cesar Climaco, Pepito Laurel Jr., Monching Mitra Jr., Hilario Davide Jr., Marcelo Fernan at marami pang iba, subalit ang pangalang Mel Lopez ay hindi pupuwede at hindi dapat maiwanan.

I stand today to remind everyone that there were Filipinos and that there were lawmakers who dared stand up for what was right then.

Hindi po madali ang tumayo noong mga panahong iyon dito sa ating Kongreso. Tumayo ka at hindi mo alam kung makakatawid ka pa dito po sa ating dinadaanang well-lighted highways sapagkat noong araw, madilim po iyang mga highway na iyan. Kaya para tumayo ka rito at ipaglaban mo kung ano ang tama ay kinakailangan ang katatagan ng kalooban at tibay ng prinsipyo sa iyang mga ipinaglalaman.

Mel Lopez excelled in all of those. I remember that fateful night when he dared point at the Chairman of the COMELEC, who was also a Member of this Body in the Regular Batasang Pambansa, at sinabi niyang: "Itigil mo na sapagkat ikaw ay makapal ang mukha at marumi ang budhi!"

For that statement, he almost got expelled from the Regular Batasang Pambansa, but he would not shirk. He would not allow that what he said would be removed from the records of the Batasan, simply because we knew that cheating was being done in every political exercise, whether it was a referendum, whether it was a plebiscite or whether it was an election, nandadaya po ang administrasyon noong mga panahong iyon.

Hindi ko rin po malilimutan ang yugto kung saan pinatay, pinaslang si Ninoy Aquino sa airport sapagkat nangibabaw na naman ang tinig ni Mel Lopez, ipinaglaban niya ang katarungan sa pagpatay kay Ninoy. Those were very challenging times and only men of solid character would have been able to stand up to resist the fear that was being hoisted all over the land.

Mahirap po ang lumaban sa diktadurya. Marami po ang nalagas sa hanay ng mga sumigaw na mga kabataan. Nameless, faceless young Filipinos were sacrificed in the altar of our democratic struggle, and we may never even hear their names anymore as we even try our best to recall and recollect whenever there is an opportunity. But the name of Mel Lopez should be remembered because he was very instrumental in our continuing nightly struggle in this Body. Naaalala ko po na bawat galaw, bawat botohan, bawat desisyon nitong Kapulungang ito ay dumadaan sa masusing pagde-debate at pagbibigay paraan sa prinsipyo ng bawat isa.

We fought for the democratic space that we are now enjoying, so we must now value this because people have already come and gone. Marami po sa kanila ay wala na rito ngayon sa mundong ating

ginagalawan, subalit ang pangalan nila ay hindi natin dapat kalimutan sapagkat itong mga pangalang ito ang magbibigay ng inspirasyon sa mga kabataan upang ang ating demokrasya at ating kalayaan ay hindi na maalís sa ating mga kamay kailanman.

We must continue and learn how to stand up for what is right. If the President is wrong, we must say and outright tell him he is wrong. When he is right, we should support whatever he would want to do for the Filipino people.

Sa ngayon, dumadaan na naman tayo sa makitid na landas kung saan ang batas militar ay binabanggit na maaaring ipataw na muli sa ating lahat. When that happens, this Body will disappear, will dissipate, will be abolished, so we must not allow it. We must not allow martial law to again rule the land. As Mel Lopez would have been here, if he were here, he would be fighting with us all the way, and I would expect my colleagues to be inspired to also defend what we have already accomplished.

Dumaan na po tayo sa EDSA, dumaan po tayo sa mga pagsubok. That fateful night of the Marcos proclamation in 1986, February 15, 1986, kung saan ipoproklama na ang sinabi nilang nanalong Pangulo, ang oposisyon noon ay nagpulong at kaming lahat ay nagkaisa, kami ay lalabas at magwo-walkout sapagkat ayaw naming makiisa sa isang proklamasyong alam naming ninakaw sa kapangyarihan ng mamamayan. We saw the ballots. We saw the returns. We saw the tampering that was done, so how could we participate in a rigged election? But I will not forget the voice of Mel Lopez in our in-Chamber caucus where he was very, very eloquently saying that we cannot be part of this proclamation, we must all go home tonight, even under the threat of expulsion. So when we stood up here, and the KBL was proclaiming then President Marcos, we all decided to stand up and walk out amidst the shouting, the jeering, the insults that we got from this gallery which they filled with partisans. Pinuno po ito ng mga lider ng mga Kilusang Bagong Lipunan.

Minura kami, binato kami, inalipusta kami, subalit umalis kami habang isinisigaw ng Speaker doon, "hindi na kayo babalik sapagkat we will now move for your expulsion." Yes, we were ready to be expelled because we decided to fight for what is right, and Mel Lopez was in the middle of all of that.

To allow his passing away without anything being written about him would be a travesty of justice, and a distortion of history, because we know that there are those sectors who are out to really remove the participation and contribution of the parliamentary struggle in the liberation of the country. Kapag pinag-uusapan po ang EDSA, kapag pinag-uusapan ang ating bagong kalayaan, hindi na nababanggit ang mga lumaban dito sa Kongresong ito. Hindi na po nababanggit man lang ang pangalan ng mga taong tumayo at nanindigan.

I will never forget my friend, Mel Lopez, because he was always in the thick of any debate on the floor of the Regular Batasang Pambansa.

On January 1, he was asked by our Lord Almighty to join Him. Even now that he is now with our Lord Almighty, we who are still struggling in our country must be inspired by the life of a man like Mel Lopez to continue what he has not seen in his lifetime, the total and genuine liberation of our people. Kailangan pong umunlad ang ating bayan. Kailangan pong baguhin natin ang mga makalumang pag-iisip na tayo ay kayang takutin, tayo ay kaya nilang pilitin. Hindi po dapat natin pabayaang ang mga prinsipyo na taglay na natin ngayon.

Liberty, democracy and a better life for the Filipino can be accomplished by the new set of leaders in Congress. Ako po ay naniniwala na itong Kongresong ito, the Seventeenth Congress of the Philippines, will stand up in protection of the rights of each and every citizen no matter how poor he is. Gabi-gabi, pinapatay ang mga tao, kailangang magsalita tayo. Ngayong napipinto ang mga panukalang batas na lalo pang kikitil sa kapangyarihan ng mamamayan, kailangang magsalita tayo. Kung magkakaroon tayo ng pagkakataong tulungan ang ating Pangulo, gawin natin. We are always ready to help him, but to sacrifice the rights and the liberties that we now enjoy as the fruits of the labors of those people who fought for them, it would be an insult to our history.

Iyon po naman ay kailangan nating aminin, ang tungkulin ngayon ay nasa ating mga balikat. Huwag nating kalilimutan ang mga taong tumayo sa gitna ng kadiliman. If we are now enjoying partial democratic space where we can speak like this freely in this Chamber, we must continue to defend that right so that the coming generation will gain from it. Sila po naman ang makinabang dito sa ating ginagawa sa kasalukuyan.

Mel Lopez—a genuine Filipino; isang tunay na lalaki na mayroong salita at hindi lamang salita kundi gawa; a genuine family man; a Christian leader; a community and social leader; a defender of human rights; and a genuine patriot. I would like all of these things that we said to be written in the annals, in the history of our Congress, because we did not enjoy this simply because it was given to us. We fought for this and we must continue fighting for its retention.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, dear colleagues.

REP. LOPEZ (M.). Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. I move that we recognize the Hon. Manuel Luis T. Lopez, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Honorable Lopez is hereby recognized.

REP. LOPEZ (M.). Mr. Speaker, una sa lahat, isa pong karangalan, and I would like to commend the Gentleman from Manila. Siya po ay isang taong magiting, matapang at honorableng lalaki, na nakasama po ng aking ama sa mahigit na limang dekada sa kanilang pakikibaka at paglaban, lalung-lalo na para sa mga naaaping mga taga-Maynila.

Sa nakalipas na 20-minuto na nagsasalita po ang aking itinuturing na parang ama na, binigkas po niya at isinalaysay nang masusi ang talambuhay at sakripisyo na inialay ng aking ama. Kaya po sa ngalan ng aming pamilya at sa amin pong libu-libong mga kasamahan, lalo na po sa aming magiting na bayan ng Tondo, malugod kaming nagpapasalamat sa inyo pong pagbabanggit ng magandang mga pananalita tungkol sa aking ama.

Sa lahat po ng nakiramay, maraming salamat din po at tatanawin ko pong isang utang na loob lalung-lalo na po ng aming pamilya.

Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much. Magandang gabi po.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. Isa pong karangalan ang aking nakamtan na makapagsalita nang malaya tungkol sa isang bayaning katulad ni Mel, kaya't huwag ninyo akong pasalamat. Ang pasalamat natin ang buhay ng taong ito na ibinigay niya, hindi lang para sa lungsod, kung hindi para sa ating bansa.

REP. LOPEZ (M.). Salamat po.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the Honorable Atienza and the manifestation to the Committee on Rules.

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

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the distinguished Minority Leader, the Hon. Danilo E. Suarez, who wishes to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). Rep. Danilo Suarez, the Minority Leader, is hereby recognized.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. SUAREZ

REP. SUAREZ. Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker, my dear colleagues.

In 2003, Republic Act No. 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act or GPRA was enacted in the midst of rampant corruption and government losses in procurement.

The GPRA was envisioned to eliminate corruption in the public procurement system. It aimed to improve transparency and competition, while eliminating political interference and collusion in the procurement process. Despite having a so-called “world class” legislation, controversies continued to plague the system.

The improvement of the government procurement process began on October 8, 2001, when Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo issued Executive Order No. 4, consolidating the procurement rules and procedures for all national government agencies, GOCCs and government financial institutions; and required the use of the Government Electronic Procurement System. Two years later, the GPRA was signed into law. It codified all pertinent laws and rules governing government procurement and established the Government Procurement Policy Board or GPPB to oversee its implementation. The law stipulated how public bidding should proceed—beginning with posting a notice on the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System or PhilGEPS where all government procurement opportunities, notices, results of biddings, awards and reasons for the award must be published.

The GPRA is quite promising but still faces several challenges. More than 10 years since its passage, allegations of corruption still persist and *bona fide* contractors are frustrated that exemplary projects are frustrated or delayed by “fly-by-night” contractors who are using the provisions of the law to conduct shakedowns. These “fly-by-night” operators derail the bidding process in many ways. An example of which is when contractors from Luzon, without a single equipment, will bid on a province in Mindanao, with the lowest bid, with the sole intention of blackmailing legitimate contractors.

The current procurement process is too stringent that it gives contractors difficulty in complying with the requirements, such as requiring very detailed specifications of materials, even to a nail’s specific length. Due to a very strict procurement process, contractors exit or even refuse to enter the bidding process. This equates to stalled projects, as seen in the low percentage of bid notices with results published by the PhilGEPS as of December 31, 2016. The trend shows that less than half of the bid notices are completed each month. Unfortunately, 40 percent of the country’s

gross domestic product is driven by infrastructure, most of which should be initiated by the government.

Recent issues on procurement suggest loopholes in the implementation of the law. One example of which was the alleged anomalous P24 billion military procurement assessed by the COA in 2015 and the P3.4 billion PNP purchases during the tenure of then General Purisima, where agencies failed to submit all necessary documents. Another case was when the Commission on Audit reported P13.2 billion worth of infrastructure projects which were implemented in 2014 but in violation of the Government Procurement Law. Violations cited by the COA were: splitting of contracts, failure of contractors to pay the construction bond, sudden change in designs to cover up structural defects, and violations in the bidding process and non-submission of required documents. Such violations and noncompliance resulted in awarding of contracts to bidders with inadequate bid documents, contrary to the vision of transparency and efficiency, and delays in project implementation. Almost P34 billion in the Capital Outlay of the Department of Public Works and Highways remained unobligated as they failed to utilize the fund for much needed infrastructure due to the delays and total nonimplementation of programmed projects.

This implies a significant probability of continuing corruption in the government due to the bureaucratic process. The problems with the Government Procurement Law are not limited to public works. Our information is that it also affects the speed of delivery of social services during calamity period. Furthermore, several government agencies other than the DPWH display low absorptive capacity or are spending less than their allocated budget because of rigid procurement policies. Unfortunately, their underspending implies inefficiency.

With the continuing allegations of corruption and complaints in the government procurement system, we need to review the existing law, its implementing rules and procedures, and later on come up with a more effective and reality-based law.

I submit that the true mark of a progressive law is its encouragement of efficiency in the delivery of services. Hence, the Government Procurement Law should be amended to reflect the lessons learned during the last 10 years of its implementation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, my dear colleagues.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the privilege speech of the honorable Minority Leader to the Committee on Rules.

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

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the last to avail of the Privilege Hour, the Hon. Gabriel H. Bordado Jr. from the Third District of Camarines Sur.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). Rep. Gabriel Bordado Jr. from the Third District of Camarines Sur is hereby recognized.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. BORDADO

REP. BORDADO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, typhoon “Nina,” packing peak winds of more than 300 kilometers per hour, struck the Bicol Region on Christmas day, directly hitting the island province of Catanduanes along with Camarines Sur and Albay.

Mr. Speaker, my district, the Third District of Camarines Sur, also bore the brunt of typhoon Nina’s fury, that the calamity happened during the most unanticipated and supposedly joyful day of the year made the scheme of things immensely tragic. However, Mr. Speaker, the devastation and the general feeling of helplessness and deep distress in the aftermath of typhoon Nina were somehow assuaged by the collective efforts being done by people from both the government and the private sectors to help the victims and set them up on the road to recovery. Special acknowledgment should be given to President Rodrigo Duterte for being there at the so-called “ground zero” and promptly extending the much-needed assistance.

For her part, Vice President Leni Robredo, who is from Camarines Sur, organized “Tindog, Bicol” or roughly translated to English “Stand up, Bicol” to ensure the systematic and efficient provision of relief goods to the families affected by the typhoon. She also devoted almost a week visiting the ravaged barangays and giving the assurance that rehabilitation assistance would be forthcoming.

Mr. Speaker, I also wish to thank my colleagues here in the House of Representatives, especially Cong. Kit Belmonte of Quezon City and Cong. Edgar Sarmiento of Samar, for going out of their way to make life a bit bearable for my hapless constituents.

Mr. Speaker, to fast-track the restoration of electricity in the affected areas, electric cooperatives from other provinces, notably Camarines Norte, Benguet, and Samar, are deploying manpower and

equipment in order to help the overwhelmed Camarines Sur II Electric Cooperative, Inc. Even Meralco, through its One Meralco Foundation, has been pitching in to bring my province and district out of darkness, literally and figuratively.

Mr. Speaker, our work though is far from over. Thousands of families are still homeless and in dire need of whatever aid we can extend. This latest calamity, moreover, underscores once again the urgent need to further empower our local governments, particularly the barangays, in the area of disaster risk reduction management. Be that as it may, Mr. Speaker, let me express my thanks to all of you. As we say in Bicol, “Diyos mabalos po!”

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the privilege speech of the Honorable Bordado to the Committee on Rules.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we terminate the Privilege Hour.

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

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H. RES. NO. 647

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Resolution No. 647.

May I ask that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

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

The Secretary General is directed to read only the title of the measure.

With the permission of the Body, and since copies of the measure have been previously distributed, the Secretary General read only the title thereof without prejudice to inserting its text in the Congressional Record.

* See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Resolution No. 647, entitled: RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND SYMPATHY AND DEEPEST CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE BEREAVED FAMILY OF THE LATE CONG. ROBERTO "BOBBY" GUANZON, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FIRST DISTRICT OF CALOOCAN CITY DURING THE TENTH CONGRESS, WHO PASSED AWAY ON DECEMBER 18, 2016.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we adopt House Resolution No. 647.

ADOPTION OF H. RES. NO. 647

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

House Resolution No. 647 is hereby adopted.
The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H. RES. NO. 670

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Resolution No. 670.

May I ask that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

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

The Secretary General is directed to read only the title of the measure.

With the permission of the Body, and since copies of the measure have been previously distributed, the Secretary General read only the title thereof without prejudice to inserting its text in the Congressional Record.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Resolution No. 670, entitled: RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FAMILY OF REPRESENTATIVE FRANCISCO A. CALALAY, JR., FORMER REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FIRST DISTRICT OF QUEZON CITY DURING THE SIXTEENTH CONGRESS.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we adopt House Resolution No. 670, in consolidation with House Resolution No. 648.

ADOPTION OF H. RES. NO. 670

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

House Resolution No. 670, in consolidation with House Resolution No. 648, is hereby adopted.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H. RES. NO. 671

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Resolution No. 671.

May I ask that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

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

The Secretary General is directed to read only the title of the measure.

With the permission of the Body, and since copies of the measure have been previously distributed, the Secretary General read only the title thereof without prejudice to inserting its text in the Congressional Record.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Resolution No. 671, entitled: RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FAMILY OF THE LATE GEMILIANO C. LOPEZ, JR., FORMER MEMBER OF THE BATASANG PAMBANSA, FORMER MAYOR OF THE CITY OF MANILA AND FATHER OF REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL LUIS T. LOPEZ OF THE FIRST DISTRICT OF MANILA.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we adopt House Resolution No. 671, in consolidation with House Resolutions No. 653 and 683.

ADOPTION OF H. RES. NO. 671

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

House Resolution No. 671, in consolidation with House Resolutions No. 653 and 683, is hereby adopted.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

* See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)

REFERRAL OF HOUSE RESOLUTIONS
ON INQUIRIES IN AID OF LEGISLATION

REP. GULLAS. Mr. 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. 598 – on the proliferation of online “sabong,” to the Committee on Games and Amusements;

2. House Resolution No. 599 – on the perceived snail-paced implementation of housing relocation and resettlement projects for those affected by typhoon Yolanda and for those living in dangerous zones, to the Committee on Housing and Urban Development;

3. House Resolution No. 601 – on the inability of the LTRFB to curb the proliferation of multiple franchise grant to bus companies, to the Committee on Transportation;

4. House Resolution No. 604 – on the current state of forcibly evicted families and the condition of their relocation sites, to the Committee on Housing and Urban Development;

5. House Resolution No. 609 – on the implementation of Sec. 16 (D & D.2) of Republic Act No. 10022, An Act Amending Republic Act No. 8042, Otherwise Known as Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995, Directing Local Government Units to Establish Overseas Filipino Worker Help Desk or Kiosk in Their Localities, to the Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs;

6. House Resolution No. 610 – on the reported illegal online gaming activities at Fontana Leisure Park and Casinos, to the Committee on Good Government and Public Accountability;

7. House Resolution No. 612 – on the purported illicit online gambling activities involving illegal aliens inside the Clark Freeport Zone in Pampanga, to the Committee on Good Government and Public Accountability;

8. House Resolution No. 614 – on the employment of anti-drug operation “Oplan Tokhang” against farmers of San Jose Del Monte City, Bulacan who are resisting land grabbing involving the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), to the Committee on Human Rights;

9. House Resolution No. 615 – on the threat of land grabbing and displacement of farmers since 2006 to 2016, as a consequence by the planned land-use conversion in Hacienda Yulo at Sitio Buntog, Barangay Canlubang, Calamba City in Laguna, to the Committee on Human Rights;

10. House Resolution No. 616 – on the spate of human rights violations in Hacienda Dolores located in Porac, Pampanga from 2011 to 2014, in relation to the Ayala Land, Inc. Alviera Project, to the Committee on Human Rights;

11. House Resolution No. 625 – on the efforts of the Philippine government to respond to the needs of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) affected by the crisis in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to the Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs;

12. House Resolution No. 627 – on the lifting of quantitative restrictions on rice and assess its impact on local rice production, to the Committee on Agriculture and Food;

13. House Resolution No. 628 – on the lack of proper accounting on the proceeds of by different government agencies concerned relating to the proceeds derived from Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Funds created under Republic Act No. 8187, to the Committee on Agriculture and Food;

14. House Resolution No. 630 – on the planned conversion of the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex into a commercial center, to the Committee on Youth and Sports Development;

15. House Resolution No. 634 – on the shooting of agricultural workers of Madaum Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Association, Inc. (MARBAI) on Tagum City, Davao del Norte on December 12, 2016, to the Committee on Human Rights;

16. House Resolution No. 636 – on the reported sale of Rizal Memorial Coliseum, to the Committee on Youth and Sports Development;

17. House Resolution No. 644 – on the possibility of transforming Camp Aguinaldo and Camp Crame into a Mixed-Use Urban Housing and Economic Zone, to the Special Committee on Bases Conversion;

18. House Resolution No. 645 – on the status and quality of implementation of RA No. 10121 or the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010, to the Committee on National Defense and Security;

19. House Resolution No. 646 – on the persistent delays in the issuance of passports to Filipino applicants and the utilization of the Passport Revolving Fund, to the Committee on Foreign Affairs;

20. House Resolution No. 649 – on the deprivation of the farmers in the Cotabato Foundation College for Science and Technology in Barangay Doroluman, Arakan, North Cotabato of their agricultural land, to the Committee on Human Rights;

21. House Resolution No. 654 – on the circumstances surrounding the sale of Paskuhan Village in Pampanga by the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA) to SMDC reportedly under the former’s Asset Privatization Program, to the Committee on Good Government and Public Accountability; and

22. House Resolution No. 656 – on the review of Sections 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 of Rule 29 A of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act 9136, Otherwise Known as Electric Power Industry Reform Act (EPIRA), to the Committee on Energy.

I so move, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

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

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve Journal No. 57, dated January 16, 2017.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the aforesaid Journal is hereby approved.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn the session until January 18, 2017, at four o'clock in the afternoon.

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

The session is adjourned until tomorrow, January 18, at four o'clock in the afternoon.

It was 5:48 p.m.