



# Congressional Record

PLENARY PROCEEDINGS OF THE 17<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, SECOND REGULAR SESSION

## House of Representatives

Vol. 1

Monday, August 7, 2017

No. 7

### CALL TO ORDER

*At 4:00 p.m., Deputy Speaker Mylene J. Garcia-Albano called the session to order.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano).  
The session is now called to order.

### NATIONAL ANTHEM

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano).  
Please rise for the singing of the Philippine National Anthem.

*Everybody rose to sing the Philippine National Anthem.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano).  
Please remain standing for the prayer to be led by the Hon. Ann K. Hofer from the Second District of Zamboanga Sibugay.

*Everybody remained standing for the prayer.*

### PRAYER

REP. HOFER. Lord God almighty, we bow down before You, our hearts overflowing with thanksgiving for manifold blessings, and we call to mind verse 4, Psalm 100, which joyously exhorts:

Enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise. Be thankful unto Him and bless His name.

We bless Your Name, Lord, thankful to You for inspiring and guiding President Duterte into signing such a noble law, RA 10931 or the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act which will benefit millions of Filipino youth, and also for signing into law other equally important measures such as An Act Extending the Passport Validity for 10 years; An Act Establishing the Free Internet Access Program in Public Places; An Act Extending the Validity of Driver's

License to Five Years; and An Act Strengthening the Anti-Hospital Deposit Law.

Lord, in whatever we are trying to accomplish here in Congress, whether it be in our crucial budget hearings or vital committee meetings, help us always to keep in mind that whatever success we may achieve can be attributed only to You, to Your mercy, to Your wisdom, to Your love.

In all that we do here therefore, Lord God, be with us, be our compass and our balance. For today, many challenges press upon us from all sides, thus, we need Your steadying strength, Lord, to successfully hurdle each challenge. Help us, Lord, to keep in mind the words of Winston Churchill when he said, "Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak. Courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen."

Grant us, Lord, the courage to listen to each other. For with sincere listening, one arrives at deep understanding and with it, we become unified in our purpose of doing good and following Your Word and, thus, do we glorify and praise You, Lord, forever and ever.

Amen.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano).  
The Floor Leader is recognized.

### ROLL CALL

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we call the roll of Members.

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

The Secretary General will call the roll.

*The Secretary General called the roll, and the result is as follows, per Journal No. 7, dated August 7, 2017:*

### PRESENT

Abaya	Abellanosa
Abayon	Abu

Abueg	Calixto-Rubiano	Garin (S.)	Ong (H.)
Acharon	Caminero	Gasataya	Ortega (P.)
Acop	Campos	Gatchalian	Pacquiao
Acosta	Cari	Geron	Paduano
Acosta-Alba	Casilao	Go (A.C.)	Palma
Advincula	Castelo	Go (M.)	Pancho
Agarao	Castro (F.L.)	Gomez	Panganiban
Aggabao	Castro (F.H.)	Gonzaga	Panotes
Aglipay-Villar	Catamco	Gonzales (A.P.)	Papandayan
Albano	Cayetano	Gonzales (A.D.)	Pichay
Alcala	Celeste	Gonzalez	Pimentel
Alejano	Cerafica	Gullas	Pineda
Almario	Cerilles	Hernandez	Primicias-Agabas
Almonte	Chavez	Herrera-Dy	Quimbo
Alvarez (F.)	Chipeco	Hofer	Radaza
Alvarez (M.)	Cojuangco	Jalosjos	Ramirez-Sato
Alvarez (P.)	Collantes	Javier	Ramos
Amante	Cortes	Kho	Relampagos
Amatong	Cortuna	Khonghun	Revilla
Andaya	Cuaresma	Labadlabad	Roa-Puno
Angara-Castillo	Cueva	Lacson	Robes
Antonio	Dalipe	Lagman	Rodriguez (I.)
Aquino-Magsaysay	Datol	Lanete	Rodriguez (M.)
Aragones	Daza	Laogan	Romualdez
Arbison	De Jesus	Lazatin	Romualdo
Arcillas	De Venecia	Limkaichong	Roque (H.)
Arenas	De Vera	Lobregat	Sacdalán
Atienza	Defensor	Lopez (B.)	Sagarbarria
Aumentado	Del Mar	Lopez (C.)	Sahali
Bag-ao	Del Rosario	Lopez (M.L.)	Salimbangon
Bagatsing	Deloso-Montalla	Loyola	Salo
Banal	Dimaporo (A.)	Macapagal-Arroyo	Salon
Barbers	Dimaporo (M.K.)	Maceda	Sambar
Barzaga	Duavit	Madrona	Sandoval
Bataoil	Durano	Malapitan	Santos-Recto
Batocabe	Dy	Manalo	Sarmiento (C.)
Bautista-Bandigan	Enverga	Mangudadatu (Z.)	Sarmiento (E.M.)
Belaro	Erice	Marcoleta	Savellano
Belmonte (F.)	Eriguel	Marcos	Sema
Belmonte (J.C.)	Ermita-Buhain	Mariño	Siao
Belmonte (R.)	Escudero	Marquez	Silverio
Benitez	Espina	Martinez	Singson
Bernos	Espino	Matugas	Suansing (E.)
Bertiz	Evardone	Mendoza	Suansing (H.)
Biazon	Fariñas	Mercado	Suarez
Billones	Fernando	Mirasol	Sy-Alvarado
Biron	Ferrer (J.)	Montoro	Tambunting
Bolilia	Ferriol-Pascual	Nava	Tan (A.)
Bondoc	Flores	Nieto	Tan (M.)
Bordado	Fortun	Noel	Tan (S.)
Bravo (A.)	Fortuno	Nogralés (J.J.)	Tejada
Bravo (M.V.)	Garbin	Nogralés (K.A.)	Teves
Brosas	Garcia (G.)	Nolasco	Tiangco
Bulut-Begtang	Garcia (J.E.)	Ocampo	Ting
Cagas	Garcia-Albano	Olivarez	Tinio
Calderon	Garin (R.)	Ong (E.)	Tolentino

Treñas	Veloso
Tugna	Vergara
Ty	Villafuerte
Umali	Villanueva
Unabia	Villaraza-Suarez
Ungab	Villarica
Uy (J.)	Violago
Uy (R.)	Yap (A.)
Uybarreta	Yap (M.)
Vargas	Yu
Vargas-Alfonso	Zamora (M.C.)
Velarde	Zamora (R.)
Velasco	Zarate
Velasco-Catera	Zubiri

TITLES UNDER SECTIONS 118, 119, AND OTHER RESTRICTIONS AGAINST ENCUMBRANCE OR ALIENATION ON FREE PATENTS ISSUED UNDER SECTION 44 OF COMMONWEALTH ACT NO. 141 OR THE PUBLIC LAND ACT, AS AMENDED”

By Representative Hernandez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 6092, entitled:

“AN ACT IMPLEMENTING JOURNALISM COURSE AS MANDATORY SUBJECT IN THE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL, TO STRENGTHEN THE JOURNALISM SKILLS OF THE YOUTH AS A BASIC TOOL TO PRESERVE OUR FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AS PART OF DEMOCRACY, AND PROMOTE RESPONSIBLE AND ETHICAL SOCIAL MEDIA FOR THE BETTERMENT OF OUR COUNTRY, UNDER TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Sy-Alvarado  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 6093, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE TOURISM RESILIENCY CERTIFICATION PROGRAM UNDER THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENTERPRISE ZONE AUTHORITY (TIEZA), PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Gomez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

House Bill No. 6094, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8495, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE PHILIPPINE MECHANICAL ENGINEERING ACT OF 1998”

By Representative Del Rosario  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL REGULATION

House Bill No. 6095, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A MANDATORY PERIOD TO RELOCATE SQUATTERS, GRANTING DISTURBANCE FEE AND TAX EXEMPTION TO OWNERS OF ILLEGALLY OCCUPIED RESIDENTIAL LANDS, AND PENALIZING VIOLATIONS THEREOF”

By Representative Del Rosario  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. The Speaker is present.

Mme. Speaker, the roll call shows that 256 Members responded to the call.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). With 256 Members present, the Chair hereby declares the presence of a quorum.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, I move for the deferment of the approval of the Journal of the previous session.

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

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we now proceed to the Reference of Business, and may we request that the Secretary General be directed to read the same.

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

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, Communications and Committee Reports, and the Deputy Speaker made the corresponding references:*

#### BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 6091, entitled:

“AN ACT REMOVING THE RESTRICTIONS IN THE REGISTRATION OF LAND

House Bill No. 6096, entitled:

“AN ACT RENAMING PANLAYAAN TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL SCHOOL AS SALVADOR H. ESCUDERO III SCHOOL OF ARTS & TRADES (SHESAT) AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Bravo (A.)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 1156, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE/S TO UNDERTAKE A REVIEW ON REPUBLIC ACT NUMBERED 9511, ALSO KNOWN AS LEGISLATIVE FRANCHISE OF THE NATIONAL GRID CORPORATION OF THE PHILIPPINES (NGCP) AS WELL AS ITS FEBRUARY 2008 CONCESSION AGREEMENT WITH THE POWER SECTOR ASSETS AND LIABILITIES MANAGEMENT CORPORATION (PSALM), NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION (TRANSCO), AND RELATED TRANSACTION AGREEMENTS AND CONTRACTS, AND INVESTIGATE THEREON, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, THE ALLEGEDLY ILLEGAL, ANOMALOUS, AND UNAUTHORIZED ACTS OF THE NATIONAL GRID CORPORATION OF THE PHILIPPINES CONTRARY TO REPUBLIC ACT NUMBERED 9511, CONCESSION AGREEMENT AND RELATED LAWS AND AGREEMENTS OR CONTRACTS, AND TO RECOMMEND APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL ACTION”

By Representative Evardone  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1157, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE IGLESIA NI CRISTO ON THEIR ONE HUNDRED THIRD (103RD) ANNIVERSARY ON JULY 27, 2017”

By Representative Silverio  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1158, entitled:

“RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE NATIONAL ELECTRIFICATION ADMINISTRATION AND THE NATIONAL ELECTRIFICATION AWARENESS MONTH”

By Representative Velasco  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1159, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING PROFOUND CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON THE DEMISE OF VETERAN DIRECTOR SOCRATES HERNANDEZ TOPACIO ALSO KNOWN AS ‘SOXIE TOPACIO’”

By Representative Olivarez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1160, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING PROFOUND CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON THE DEMISE OF MS. PRESENTACION ‘PRESY’ LOPEZ-PSINAKIS, BOARD MEMBER OF ABS-CBN”

By Representative Olivarez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1161, entitled:

“RESOLUTION CALLING FOR AN INVESTIGATION IN AID OF LEGISLATION BY THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON THE IMMEDIATE APPROVAL OF THE SEVEN POWER SUPPLY AGREEMENTS OF MERALCO BY THE ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION”

By Representative Suarez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

ADDITIONAL COAUTHORS

Rep. Eleanor C. Bulut-Begtang for House Bills No. 3468, 5164, 5523, 5524, 5784, and 5808;

Rep. Jesulito A. Manalo for House Bills No. 3468, 5164, 5523, and 5549;

Rep. Lorna C. Silverio for House Bills No. 3468, 5164, 5523, and 5883, and House Resolution No. 1103;

Reps. Joey Sarte Salceda, Pablo C. Ortega, Jesus Nonato Sacdalan, Lorna P. Bautista-Bandigan, Abraham “Bambol” N. Tolentino, Franz E. Alvarez, Sandra Y. Eriguel, M.D., Elisa “Olga” T. Kho, Christopher V.P. De Venecia, Orestes T. Salon, Arthur R. Defensor Jr., Mario Vittorio “Marvey” A. Mariño, Ramon V.A. “Rav” Rocamora, Ferdinand L. Hernandez, Pedro B. Acharon Jr., and Teodoro “Ted” G. Montoro for House Bills No. 3468, 5164 and 5523;

Rep. Ricardo “RJ” T. Belmonte Jr. for House Bills No. 5750 and 5808;

Reps. Fernando V. Gonzalez and Jose Enrique

“Joet” S. Garcia III for House Bills No. 5164 and 5523;

Rep. Leo Rafael M. Cueva for House Bills No. 5914 and 6042;

Rep. H. Harry L. Roque Jr. for House Bills No. 192, 193, 194, 1301, 1302, 1563, 2330, and 3771;

Reps. Ma. Lucille L. Nava, M.D., Frederick “Erick” F. Abueg, Imelda R. Marcos, Greg G. Gasataya, Julieta R. Cortuna, Harlin Neil J. Abayon III, and Roy M. Loyola for House Bill No. 5549;

Rep. Micaela S. Violago for House Bills No. 4111, 4590, 5359, 5378, 5458, 5479, and 5534, and House Resolutions No. 823 and 932;

Rep. Salvador B. Belaro Jr. for House Bills No. 5549, 5631, 5705, 5792, 5821, 5822, 5915, and 5918;

Rep. Nancy A. Catamco for House Bills No. 3468, 5164, 5523, 6040, 6042, 6043, 6044, 6047, 6057, and 6058;

Rep. Gabriel H. Bordado Jr. for House Bills No. 691, 5745, 5784, 5792, 5808, 6000, 6001, 6002, 6004, 6005, 6006, 6007, and 6008;

Rep. John Marvin “Yul Servo” C. Nieto for House Bills No. 921, 3468, 5164, 5523, 5588, 5836, 5845, 5846, 5873, 5916, 5931, 5947, 5948, 5963, and House Resolution No. 1048;

Rep. Evelina G. Escudero for House Bill No. 1795;

Rep. Luis Raymund F. Villafuerte Jr. for House Bill No. 5006;

Rep. Lorna P. Bautista-Bandigan for House Bill No. 263;

Rep. Edgar Mary S. Sarmiento for House Bill No. 4334;

Rep. Manuel Luis T. Lopez for House Bill No. 3152;

Rep. Strike B. Revilla for House Bills No. 6022, 6058, 6070, and 6090;

Rep. Jose Antonio “Kuya Jonathan” R. Sy-Alvarado for House Bills No. 5317, 5761, 5762, 5819, 5820, 5821, 5822, 5823, 5833, 5836, 5870, 5873, and 6020;

Rep. Francis Gerald A. Abaya for House Bills No. 2192, 2193, 2622, 2624, 4106, 4462, and 5524;

Rep. Rene L. Relampagos for House Bill No. 929;

Rep. Josephine Ramirez-Sato for House Bills No. 4503 and 4578;

Rep. Rose Marie “Baby” J. Arenas for House Bill No. 5405;

Rep. Karlo Alexei B. Nograles for House Bills No. 5078 and 5273;

Rep. Florida “Rida” P. Robes for House Bills No. 3468, 5164, 5523, 5709, and 5711;

Rep. Jose Christopher Y. Belmonte for House Bill No. 5609;

Rep. Michael L. Romero, Ph.D. for House Bills No. 2286, 2627, 2628, and 2881;

Rep. Erico Aristotle C. Aumentado for House Bill No. 2881;

Rep. Estrellita B. Suansing for House Bill No. 4473;

Rep. Noel L. Villanueva for House Bill No. 4221;

Rep. Edward Vera Perez Maceda for House Bill No. 5818;

Rep. Harlin Neil J. Abayon III for House Bills No. 1204 and 6057;

Rep. Manuel Monsour T. Del Rosario III for House Bill No. 1003;

Rep. Gus S. Tambunting for House Bill No. 4101;

Rep. Scott Davies S. Lanete, M.D. for House Bill No. 5792;

Rep. Enrico A. Pineda for House Bills No. 25, 3468, 5164, and 5523;

Rep. Marlyn L. Primicias-Agabas for House Bills No. 5745, 6039, and 6042;

Rep. Ron P. Salo for House Bills No. 3468, 5164, 5523, 5675, and 5792; and

Rep. Orestes T. Salon for House Bills No. 1855, 2473, and 5501.

#### COMMUNICATIONS

Letter dated 02 August 2017 of Salvador C. Medialdea, Executive Secretary, Office of the President, Malacañang, transmitting two (2) original copies of Republic Act No. 10928 which was signed on even date by President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, entitled:

“AN ACT EXTENDING THE VALIDITY OF PHILIPPINE PASSPORTS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 10 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8239, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘PHILIPPINE PASSPORT ACT OF 1996’, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”  
TO THE ARCHIVES

Letter dated 02 August 2017 of Salvador C. Medialdea, Executive Secretary, Office of the President, Malacañang, transmitting two (2) original copies of Republic Act No. 10929 which was signed on even date by President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE FREE INTERNET ACCESS PROGRAM IN PUBLIC PLACES IN THE COUNTRY AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”  
TO THE ARCHIVES

Letter dated 02 August 2017 of Salvador C. Medialdea, Executive Secretary, Office of the President, Malacañang, transmitting two (2) original copies of Republic Act No. 10930 which was signed on even date by President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, entitled:

“AN ACT RATIONALIZING AND STRENGTHENING THE POLICY REGARDING DRIVER’S LICENSE BY EXTENDING THE VALIDITY PERIOD OF DRIVERS’ LICENSES, AND PENALIZING ACTS IN VIOLATION OF ITS ISSUANCE AND APPLICATION, AMENDING FOR THOSE PURPOSES SECTION 23 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 4136, AS AMENDED BY BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 398 AND EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 1011, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LAND TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC CODE”

TO THE ARCHIVES

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report by the Committee on Transportation (Committee Report No. 340), re H.B. No. 6112, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING THE INSTALLATION OF SAFETY MONITORING DEVICES IN PUBLIC UTILITY VEHICLES AND PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION THEREOF”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bills Numbered 593, 755, 2305, 2742, 5104 and 5363

Sponsors: Representatives Sarmiento (C.), Velarde, Aglipay-Villar, Castelo and Olivarez

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Health and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 341), re H.B. No. 6114, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE BED CAPACITY OF THE LUIS HORA MEMORIAL REGIONAL HOSPITAL FROM ONE HUNDRED (100) TO TWO HUNDRED (200) BEDS, UPGRADING THE SERVICE FACILITIES AND PROFESSIONAL HEALTH CARE THEREIN, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 282

Sponsors: Representatives Tan (A.), Dalog, Manaoang and Nograles (K.A.)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Floor Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, I move for a few minutes suspension of the session.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the session is suspended.

*It was 4:13 p.m.*

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 4:25 p.m., the session was resumed.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The session is resumed.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 5745

*Continuation*

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, with leave of the House, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 5745, as contained in Committee Report No. 262, submitted by the Committee on Agriculture and Food and the Committee on Appropriations.

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

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, could the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure?

I so move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Secretary General is so directed.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 5745, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE COCONUT FARMERS AND INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT TRUST FUND AND PROVIDING FOR ITS MANAGEMENT AND UTILIZATION.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mme. Speaker, our parliamentary status is that we are in the period of sponsorship and debate, and with that, Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the honorable Chairman, the Hon. Jose T. Panganiban Jr., CPA, LLB and the interpellator, the Hon. Edcel C. Lagman.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Honorable Panganiban is recognized to sponsor the measure and the Honorable Lagman is likewise recognized to start his interpellation

## SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. GULLAS. I move for a suspension of the session for a few minutes, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The session is suspended.

*It was 4:27 p.m.*

## RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 4:32 p.m., the session was resumed.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The session is resumed.  
The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mme. Speaker, our parliamentary status is that we are in the period of sponsorship and debate regarding House Bill No. 5745 contained in Committee Report No. 262. The Honorable Panganiban has been recognized and the Honorable Lagman has likewise been recognized and therefore, I move that we continue with our interpellations.

I so move, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). So granted. Mr. Chairman, kindly proceed.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, this Representation is ready to accept clarificatory questions from the interpellator.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). Kindly proceed, Congressman Lagman.

REP. LAGMAN. Mme. Speaker, first, I would like to thank the distinguished Sponsor for the avalanche of materials sent to my office with respect to this case. Thank you very much.

REP. PANGANIBAN. You are welcome, Congressman Lagman.

REP. LAGMAN. Next, I would like to clarify that I am interpellating not because I am against the Bill. I am in favor of the Bill, more particularly, to introduce subsequently amendments to give priority, reasonable priority, to the interest of the small coconut farmers. Let me proceed, Mme. Speaker.

The Supreme Court, in its final and last decision on the Coco Levy Funds, declared that the funds should be utilized for the benefit of coco farmers and the development of the coco industry; but the Supreme Court did not say how much should go to the coconut

farmers and how much should be allocated for the development of the coco industry. Is that correct, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes, Mme. Speaker. In the ruling of the Supreme Court, the public nature of the fund and the purpose of the fund is that it is to be used for the development of the coconut industry and for the coconut farmers. It did not state anything as regards the amount to be used to develop the industry and for the coconut farmers, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Just to be very specific, the Supreme Court said in its order, it is for the benefit of the coconut farmers and the development of the coconut industry. In other words, distinguished Sponsor, the Supreme Court left it to the full discretion of the Congress to allocate funds between the coconut farmers and the development of the coconut industry. Do you agree to that proposition, Mme. Speaker?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, inasmuch as the decision of the Supreme Court did not state the amount—as regards the amount to be spent for the coconut industry—for the development of the coconut industry and for the coconut farmers, this Representation would tend to agree that this Congress has the latitude to determine the amount to be spent for the development of the coconut industry and for the coconut farmers, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. With more reason, Your Honor, distinguished Sponsor, that the levy was generated as an impost on coconut farmers, then it stands to social justice, reason and logic that the direct interest of coco farmers must be prioritized percentage-wise. Would you agree to this proposition?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, with respect to the percentage of the funds to be used for the development of the coconut industry and the percentage of the fund to be used for the exclusive benefit of the coconut farmers, as I had said, the Supreme Court did not elaborate on that matter. However, in the decision of the Supreme Court, it is categorically said that the funds should be used for the development of the coconut industry and for the benefit of the coconut farmers, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. The Supreme Court said it is for the benefit of the coco farmers and the development of the coconut industry without any percentage allocation. So, the distinguished Sponsor agreed that it is Congress which has full discretion on how the funds would be allocated between the coconut farmers and the coconut industry. Now, would 80 to 20 percent allocation

ratio in favor of the coconut farmers be justified and reasonable?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, may I just take a look, I mean, read the decision of the Supreme Court because it did not categorically state that there should be a fund for the coconut industry and funds for the coconut farmers; rather, it said that the Supreme Court viewed the fund as a whole and that it should be used for the development of the coconut industry for the benefit of the coconut farmers, Mme. Speaker.

So, the proposed Bill did not take into consideration the percentage of the funds to be used for the development of the coconut industry and to be used for the benefit of the coconut farmers because, as it is viewed, the development of the coconut industry would benefit the coconut farmers, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, but since the power to appropriate belongs to Congress, then, the authority to prioritize the utilization of funds also belongs to Congress. Is that a correct statement?

REP. PANGANIBAN. That is a correct statement, Mme. Speaker, but then, again, I would just like to remind the good Gentleman from the First District of Albay that this fund, as categorically stated by the Supreme Court, is a public fund and not a fund which belongs to the farmers in their private capacity, Mme. Speaker. Therefore, when we dispose of this fund, its utilization as a public fund, then it is the best judgment of the Committee that we should not allocate percentages to this fund—what percentage should be used for the development of the coconut industry and what percentage should be used for the coconut farmers because, in totality, the development of the coconut industry would redound specifically to the benefit of the coconut farmers, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. No, funds are divisible and they are allocated in accordance to priorities. That is why, while the Supreme Court said that these are public funds and the two beneficiaries for the utilization of the funds would be the coconut farmers and the coconut industry, there are only two beneficiaries identified by the Supreme Court. Is that correct?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, I read the decision of the Supreme Court and it did not say that the funds are divisible into two beneficiaries. What the Supreme Court said was that the fund is a public fund and should be used for the development of the coconut industry for the benefit of the coconut farmers, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, as we said and agreed on,

the Supreme Court did not identify the allocation of the funds between the two beneficiaries; and it left to Congress the full discretion as to how to allocate the funds between the two beneficiaries. That is why as a social justice legislation, then there should be reasonable and justified bias in favor of coconut farmers. So, it is opportune for this Congress to make the necessary allocation and prioritization.

Now, let me go to the development of the coconut industry. With respect to the development of the coconut industry, this is an obligation of government with or without the existence of the Coco Levy Funds. Is that a correct statement?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, the development of the coconut industry, of course, is left to the agency of the government. But, again, this Coco Levy Funds should be taken as complementary to all the funds that would be given by the different agencies of government for the development of the coconut industry. So, this fund is to complement those other funds to be given by the government, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Now, let me just raise the history of the PCA and its mandate to develop the abaca—no, the coconut industry. When was the PCA established, Mme. Speaker?

REP. PANGANIBAN. The PCA was established or created under P.D. No. 414 on April 18, 1974, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. I think the PCA was established on June 30, 1973 under P.D. No. 232. Is that a more correct statement?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, P.D. No. 414 was—I mean, P.D. No. 414 dated April 18, 1974 amended P.D. No. 232. Then, P.D. No. 232 created the Philippine Coconut Authority, Mme. Speaker, but it was amended by P.D. No. 414, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. My question was, when was the creation of the Philippine Coconut Authority? It was created on June 30, 1973 under P.D. No. 232. I was not asking for the amendments to that presidential decree.

REP. PANGANIBAN. That is correct, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay. Then P.D. No. 232 was substantially amended by P.D. No. 1468 on June 11, 1978 which established the PCA Charter. Is that correct?

REP. PANGANIBAN. That is correct, Mme.



Speaker. P.D. No. 1468 was issued on June 11, 1978, otherwise known as the Revised Coconut Industry Code, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. But the government's concern in the development of the coconut industry antedated the creation of the Philippine Coconut Authority. In fact, the National Coconut Corporation, the NACOCO, was created to promote the growth and development of the coconut industry. Would the distinguished Gentleman know when the NACOCO was created? Can I volunteer the information that NACOCO was created in 1940?

REP. PANGANIBAN. It was created in August 1, 1946, Mme. Speaker, under Republic Act No. 5, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Then NACOCO became the Philippine Coconut Administration or PHILCOA, with the same functions and responsibilities, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, and that was in 1954. Ten years later, it expanded its scope of operations and was renamed as the Philippine Coconut Research Institute, PHILCORIN, an agency created to monitor, evaluate and conduct researches on coconut; and then, in 1971, at the height of the period of expansion, the Coconut Coordinating Council or CCC was created in lieu of PHILCORIN and was tasked to supervise, coordinate and evaluate the implementation of the coconut self-sufficiency program of the government. Would the distinguished Gentleman confirm this?

REP. PANGANIBAN. I confirm, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. In 1973, since agencies lacked singleness in its purpose and the framework upon which they operated did not revolve around the total development of the coconut industry, the government deemed it necessary to create an agency that would address the situation. Thus, the Philippine Coconut Authority was created in June 30, 1973 by virtue of P.D. No. 232. It absorbed and assumed the powers and functions, including the personnel and assets, of then defunct CCC, PHILCOA and PHILCORIN. Is that an accurate historical narration of the genesis of the Philippine Coconut Authority, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, Presidential Decree No. 232 was indeed signed on June 30, 1973. As to whether or not it took all the assets and all the functions of NACOCO, PHILCORIN, and the other coconut agencies at that time, Mme. Speaker, with the indulgence of the Gentleman from Albay, I would not know, Mme. Speaker. Then, again, it is true that P.D. No. 232 creating the Philippine Coconut Authority was signed into law on June 30, 1973, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Most probably, a reading of P.D. No. 232 would attest to the absorption of the powers and functions of the defunct CCC, PHILCOA and PHILCORIN. In 1987, more particularly on January 30, 1987, pursuant to Executive Order No. 116, the Philippine Coconut Authority was officially declared as an attached agency of the Department of Agriculture. Is this correct, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Then, by virtue of Executive Order No. 165 issued on May 15, 2014, the Philippine Coconut Authority, National Food Authority, National Irrigation Administration, and Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority were transferred from the Department of Agriculture to the Office of the President.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Then, on June 30, 2016, pursuant to Executive Order No. 1, the Philippine Coconut Authority was one of the 12 agencies placed under the supervision of the Office of the Cabinet Secretary. Is this correct?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes, that is correct, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. I am tracing, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Gentleman, the genesis of the Philippine Coconut Authority just to impress that for the longest time, the government has been concerned with the development of the coconut industry. Meanwhile, the coco farmers remained impoverished, and even during martial law, an impost was levied on them, supposedly to contribute to government coffers. Would the distinguished Gentleman know, from 1940, with the creation of the National Coconut Corporation, up to today, under the auspices of the Philippine Coconut Authority, how many billions of pesos have been allocated by the government for the development of the coconut industry?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, I would want to answer the query of the good Gentleman from Albay but, unfortunately, we do not have the amount of the billions or how much the government has allocated to the development of the coconut industry. If the good Gentleman would give us some time, then we will submit this to his office, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, I would appreciate that, Mme. Speaker, because it is very important to show that for the longest time, the government has been appropriating tremendous sums of money to develop

the coconut industry, and when the bonanza came to the utilization of the Coco Levy Funds, here again, the government would like to allocate an unidentified portion of the Coco Levy Funds for the development of the coconut industry. That is why I was advocating that there should be a bias, a reasonable and warranted bias in favor of the coconut farmers. That is why I was saying that most probably, this Congress, in its discretion, should be able to allocate 80 percent of the Coco Levy Funds in favor of the farmers as a direct benefit, and 20 percent, again, to the development of the coconut industry where the farmers will only have indirect benefits.

So, at the proper time, Mme. Speaker, I will introduce the necessary amendments because I cannot understand what rhyme or reason the Committee entertained in not prioritizing the coco farmers in the allocation of the funds. I am not saying that we should not give to the development of the coco industry; I am just saying that a good majority of the funds should be given to the coco farmers who have waited for so long to utilize these Coco Levy Funds, almost or more than 40 years.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, if I could just read Section 21 of the proposed Bill because, with the provision of Section 21, the concern of the good Gentleman from Albay would be directly answered, Mme. Speaker. In the formulation of the Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Plan, the focus is given to the benefit of the coconut farmers, Mme. Speaker. The committee which shall establish the plan shall be guided by the following objectives as enumerated in Section 21 of the proposed Bill, as follows:

- (a) Increase in the income of coconut farmers and increase coconut productivity including intercropping and livestock-raising;
- (b) Establishment of coconut-based enterprises including integrated processing of coconut products and downstream products;
- (c) Rehabilitation and modernization of the coconut industry x x x;
- (d) Establishment of social protection programs that directly benefit coconut farmers and farm workers, in case these social protection programs are not funded by an appropriations law or any other special law, or where funding is insufficient. The social protection program shall include: (1) social services such as life, medical, and accident insurance coverage of the coconut farmers; (2) scholarships for the benefits of the deserving descendants of the coconut farmers; and (3) livelihood programs of the coconut farmers.

So, in the development of the plan, Mme. Speaker, so much is directed to the direct benefit of the coconut farmers, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, does Section 21 specify how much funds should be allocated as direct benefits to the coco farmers under the Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Plan?

REP. PANGANIBAN. It did not, Mme. Speaker, but the whole objective of this Section 21, is for the plan to—I mean, for the coconut farmers to become direct beneficiaries of the Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Plan, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Are we to understand, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, that in the preparation of the Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Plan, the full discretion is given to the particular agency, the Ad Hoc Committee, in the allocation of the funds without any guidance or parameters from the Congress?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, as Section 21 is crafted, Mme. Speaker, the preparation of the Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Plan is given to the Ad Hoc Committee which is composed of the different Secretaries of the different agencies of the government, nine representatives from the farmers' groups and two representatives from the coconut industry sector, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. But this Ad Hoc Committee is given full, 100-percent discretion on the prioritization of the funds because Congress did not specify any parameters or guidelines?

REP. PANGANIBAN. That is correct, Mme. Speaker, as it is worded in the proposed Bill, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Yes, but...

REP. PANGANIBAN. The Ad Hoc Committee has all the powers and concept parameters as regards the utilization of the funds in accordance with the plan which is to be made by the members of the Ad Hoc Committee which includes, Mme. Speaker, nine representatives from the farmers' groups, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Is this, the preparation of the Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Plan by the Ad Hoc Committee, a delegation of legislative powers?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, what is delegated here is the preparation of the plan.

REP. LAGMAN. Yes, well, not only the preparation

of the plan but the allocation of funds. Since this is a delegated authority, I think Congress should set up the necessary parameters and guidelines to make such delegation constitutional and legal.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, we have already set the parameters and guidelines as to the proper utilization and disposition of the funds. In fact, this proposed House Bill, as it is crafted, shall make the fund a perpetual fund and therefore, out of the P75 billion fund, only P10 billion as a Jumpstart Fund will be used for the development of the coconut industry and for the benefit of the coconut farmers; and for the succeeding years, only the income of the trust fund shall be used, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. We should not go yonder to other provisions, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor. The distinguished Sponsor cited Section 21, that is why I am asking questions with respect to Section 21 and under Section 21, Congress is delegating to the Ad Hoc Committee the preparation of the Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Plan. There are two aspects: the Coconut Farmers and the Industry Development Plan, but Congress in this Bill has failed to make necessary parameters and guidelines on how much should go to the direct benefit of coconut farmers and how much should go to the development of the coconut industry.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, as this House Bill is crafted, the Committee did not take into consideration as to what percentage of the fund should go to the direct benefit of the farmers and how much percentage of the fund should go to the development of the coconut industry. What the Committee had in mind was that the fund should be taken as a whole for the benefit of the coconut industry—for the development of the coconut industry and for the benefit of the coconut farmers, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Why is the ...

REP. PANGANIBAN. So, whatever funds that will be used for the development of the coconut industry shall redound to the benefit of the coconut farmers because, as it is worded, the Ad Hoc Committee shall be guided by the following objectives as enumerated in Section 21 of the proposed House Bill, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, the objectives of the development plan would cover both the coconut farmers and the development of the coconut industry. Now, will the distinguished Sponsor be happy—will he be happy with an allocation of 80 percent for the development of the coconut industry and 10 percent for the direct benefit of coconut farmers?

REP. PANGANIBAN. As I have already expounded, Mme. Speaker, in this proposed Bill, we looked at the fund as a whole and would not look at the fund as 80 percent for the benefit of the coconut industry and 20 percent or 10 percent for the direct benefit of the coconut farmers because we believe that the development of the coconut industry will redound to the benefit of the coconut farmers, because in the preparation of the plan, the Ad Hoc Committee is already guided—I mean, the plan should see to it that the benefit of the coconut farmers shall be foremost, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. As we had said, Mme. Speaker, the funds are divisible, the funds should be subject to prioritization, and that is the duty, the obligation of Congress to do so, but this Bill failed to discharge that duty of Congress to prioritize these funds. May we know why the Committee did not prioritize the funds between the coconut farmers and the development of the coconut industry?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, it was because the Committee looked at the funds as one and single fund, Mme. Speaker, that should be used for the development of the coconut industry and for the benefit of the coconut farmers.

REP. LAGMAN. As we have said repeatedly, the funds are divisible and are subject to the full discretion of Congress to prioritize the utilization of funds. I get receiving the same answer that the Committee considers this as one fund, but that fund is divisible. Now, may we know the position of the various coconut farmers' organizations when this Bill was pending before the Committee on Agriculture and Food?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, the positions of the various coconut farmers' organizations were already given and discussed during the Committee deliberations, and some of the farmers even asked that 100 percent of the fund be used for the development of the coconut industry. I did not—looking into the records, Mme. Speaker, we have not come across any position paper dividing the funds for the development of the coconut industry and for the benefit of the coconut farmers.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, it is not important that there was a recommendation on the prioritization. The Committee itself should have prioritized the funds which are divisible.

REP. PANGANIBAN. We have already prioritized the funds for the benefit of the coconut farmers, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. No, the Committee, in this Bill, has not prioritized the funds; under the Bill, there is no prioritization between the two beneficiaries, the coconut farmers and the coconut industry.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, in the formulation of the Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Plan—I mean, under Section 21, the members of the Ad Hoc Committee are guided by the objective that benefits should redound to the coconut farmers.

REP. LAGMAN. Wala ngang prioritization na nilagay. When you prioritize, you say how much should go to one sector, ...

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. ... how much should go ...

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. ... to the other sector. There is no such prioritization.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Prioritization does not only entail what percentage should go to the coconut industry and what percentage would go to the coconut farmers, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. That is not prioritization if you do not divide the funds between the beneficiaries. No less than the Supreme Court did not make the prioritization because it gave Congress the discretion to make the prioritization.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, the Supreme Court decision categorically stated ...

REP. LAGMAN. Paulit-ulit na lang ang sagot natin.

REP. PANGANIBAN. ... that the ...

REP. LAGMAN. You know, I have heard that a thousand times.

REP. PANGANIBAN. ... fund should be used for the development of the coconut industry in trust for the coconut farmers, for the benefit of the coconut farmers, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Let me go to another topic, Mme. Speaker, kasi paulit-ulit na lang ang sagot.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Paulit-ulit din iyong tanong, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. No, hindi paulit-ulit ang tanong. I am just impressing on the distinguished Chairman that the Bill is not correct because it failed to prioritize these funds.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, this Bill had already been approved by the 55 members of the Committee on Agriculture, okay. We are now debating this in the plenary, so I do not see the reason the Gentleman from Albay is saying that this Bill is wrong.

REP. LAGMAN. Mme. Speaker, the mere fact that this has the imprimatur of the Committee does not mean to say that it is perfect. That is why we have this plenary...

REP. PANGANIBAN. It...

REP. LAGMAN. ...session in order to...

REP. PANGANIBAN. ...does not mean that the Bill is wrong, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. ...introduce—I have the floor, Mme. Speaker. That is why we have this plenary debate in order to introduce perfecting amendments after we have debated.

Now, let me go to the Declaration of Policy. May we know the Declaration of Policy as provided for in House Bill No. 5745?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, the Declaration of Policy is stated in Section 2 of the proposed House Bill.

REP. LAGMAN. Yes, can we have that read for the Members of this House?

REP. PANGANIBAN. If the Gentleman, Mme. Speaker, would allow me to read Section 2. Mme. Speaker, may I read.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). Please proceed, Mr. Chairman.

REP. PANGANIBAN. It says:

Section 2. Declaration of Policy. It is hereby declared the policy of the State to pursue and attain the balanced, equitable, integrated, and sustainable growth and development of the coconut industry. Towards this end, the State shall adopt the necessary measures to immediately address the serious problems besetting the coconut industry, protect the socio-economic well-being of coconut farmers, and ensure that the benefits due to coconut farmers,

especially the poor and the marginalized under various statutes shall be consolidated and their delivery expedited. Any measure or program undertaken in accordance to this Act shall only be deemed complementary to and shall not be a replacement for existing and potential coconut development programs already conducted by other government agencies.

REP. LAGMAN. How does this Declaration of Policy compare to the Senate Bill with respect to its Declaration of Policy?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, may I ask the good Gentleman to repeat his question.

REP. LAGMAN. How does the Declaration of Policy under Section 2 of House Bill No. 5745 compare with the Declaration of Policy in the Senate version?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, I would like to take time to check because there are various Senate bills being taken into consideration in the Senate.

REP. LAGMAN. Is there already an approved version in the Senate?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, I have here with me the Committee Report on Senate Bill No. 1233. This is Senate Bill No. 1233 in substitution of Senate Bills No. 52, 64, 139, 669 and 934. Under Section 2, it reads:

Declaration of Policy. – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to consolidate the benefits due to coconut farmers, especially the poor and marginalized, under various statutes and to expedite the delivery thereof to attain a balanced, equitable, integrated and sustainable growth and development of the coconut industry.

That is how the Declaration of Policy is worded in Senate Bill No. 1233, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. May I know from the distinguished Sponsor whether the Senate has already approved its own version?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Not yet, Mme. Speaker. As far as the Coco Levy Bill is concerned, it is not yet approved in the Senate, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. So, the Senate version is still pending just like this House Bill?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. But you would notice the bias, the justifiable bias in favor of the coconut farmers in the Declaration of Policy in the Senate version. Now, may we know whether, during the Sixteenth Congress, a similar bill had already been approved on Third Reading by this Chamber?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, a similar bill was tackled during the Sixteenth Congress but it did not pass Third Reading. In the House of Representatives, Mme. Speaker, it passed Third Reading, but in the Senate, it did not reach Third Reading.

REP. LAGMAN. It passed Third Reading in this House. I was not a Member of the Sixteenth Congress but I am informed that it passed Third Reading. May we know, as it was passed on Third Reading, what was the definition thereof of “coco farmer”?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, House Bill No. 6135, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE COCONUT FARMERS AND INDUSTRY TRUST FUND AND PROVIDING FOR ITS MANAGEMENT AND UTILIZATION, was passed on Third Reading during the Sixteenth Congress, and in Section 3 thereof, under the Definition of Terms, “coconut farmer” refers to a farmer-owner of a coconut farm, which is not more than five (5) hectares, who tills the land or does not till the land, but has control and supervision over the cultivation, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Now, may we know, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Gentleman, why the provision “not more than five (5) hectares” in the definition of a coconut farmer does not appear anymore in House Bill No. 5745 which we are discussing?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, as I espoused that on the first day of the interpellation, the definition of “coconut farmer” was—I mean, the phrase “which is not more than five (5) hectares” was taken out of House Bill No. 5745 because of two reasons: first, if we trace back the exaction of the coco levy, it was imposed on the sale of copra. It did not distinguish whether or not a farmer is the owner of three, five or more than five hectares and the levy was exacted on the first sale or the sale of copra produced, Mme. Speaker. Number two, in the decision of the Supreme Court, the Court did not distinguish the beneficiary as coconut farmers, whether or not they are owners of five hectares or owners of more than five hectares, Mme. Speaker. We deliberated on this very lengthily in the Committee and we voted on this, and fortunately or unfortunately, the definition of coconut farmers as worded in House Bill No. 5745 was adopted by the Committee, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Mme. Speaker, distinguished Gentleman, when you say “fortunately or unfortunately,” and this definition without the hectarage has been approved by the Committee, why do you say “unfortunately”?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, some of the members of the Committee would have wanted to place, I mean, to include, in the definition of coconut farmers, those coconut farmers owning more than five hectares; and of course, some members of the Committee would want to exclude, but some would not want to make any distinction, Mme. Speaker. So, in the final deliberation of the Committee, there are as many members of the Committee who would want not to make any distinction of coconut farmers as to the number of hectarage they own.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, a so-called coconut farmer who owns 10 hectares will be a direct beneficiary of this Bill when it becomes a law. Is that correct?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, again, I would like to state once again that the fund should be used for the development of the coconut industry and for the benefit of the coconut farmers and so, I would not understand if a farmer who owns more than 10 hectares would not be a stakeholder in the coconut industry, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Now, my question is, will a supposed coconut farmer who owns 20 hectares be a beneficiary of this Bill once it becomes a law?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Of course, Mme. Speaker, because he is a stakeholder in the coconut industry and so, a farmer owning 10, five or three hectares would be at parity with respect to the development of the coconut industry. To benefit, for example, from scholarship programs, Mme. Speaker, maybe, between a farmer owning 100 hectares and a farmer owning less than five hectares, of course, the beneficiary of the scholarship program under this fund should favor those farmers owning less than five hectares, but as far as being a stakeholder in the coconut industry, a farmer owning 100 hectares, 50 hectares, 10 hectares, or less than five hectares stands in parity with the others, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Going further, a supposed coconut farmer who owns 20 hectares will be a beneficiary of this Bill once it becomes a law, is that correct?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. I thought this Bill is a social justice legislation, which means to say that it should

favor the less fortunate, the marginalized sector like the poor farmers who would own less than five hectares. So, if you extend the benefits to supposed coconut farmers owning 10, 20 or 30 hectares, then the social justice impact of this legislation is lost, Mme. Speaker.

Now, let me go ...

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker...

REP. LAGMAN. Yes.

REP. PANGANIBAN. ... can I interject? I would just like to put it on record, Mme. Speaker, that farmers owning less than five hectares comprise 90 percent of the total number of coconut farmers in the Philippines.

REP. LAGMAN. I do not care about the 90 percent. What I am concerned about is giving benefits to the 10 percent who are not supposed to get direct benefits from this measure. May we know, distinguished Sponsor, what is the version of the Senate with respect to the definition of a coconut farmer?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, the Senate has not yet come out with the final draft. What I have here is a committee report, Mme. Speaker. So, if the Gentleman would agree that I will read his inquiry by using this draft, I would gladly answer him, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. PANGANIBAN. May I ask the good Gentleman from Albay to please repeat his question, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. I thought the distinguished Sponsor was about to answer my question. The question is, what is the version of the Senate with respect to the definition of “coconut farmer”?

REP. PANGANIBAN. I have already read that a while ago, Mme. Speaker. The Senate version defines “coconut farmers” as—as I was looking at the Senate version, it failed to include the definition of “coconut farmers,” Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Does the definition in the Senate include or does not include a cap on the hectarage?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, what I have here are two versions of the draft of the Senate. So, as I have said earlier, if the good Gentleman would allow me to read the two versions of the Senate Bill, Mme. Speaker?

REP. LAGMAN. All I am asking is whether any

of those versions would include or not include a cap on the hectarage.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, the Senate Bill annexed to the committee report did not include the definition of a coconut farmer. However, as of March 15, 2017, I have here a copy, Mme. Speaker, which included the definition of “coconut farmer,” and it defines “coconut farmer” as an owner of coconut farm that is more than five hectares. However, Mme. Speaker, as I have stated earlier, I do not know which version of the two drafts is officially being deliberated on the Senate floor.

REP. LAGMAN. We will have to check that because my impression is that the Senate definition includes a cap of not more than five hectares. Now, and I would like also to find out whether the Senate has already approved their version on Third Reading, we will have to check that also. Now, with respect to Section 10, Designation of the Bureau of the Treasury (BTr) as Depository of the Trust Fund. It says here, under the second paragraph, that “The committee may designate alternative depository banks which shall perform the same functions as that of the BTr,” or the Bureau of the Treasury may designate alternative depository banks. Is the committee given the full discretion in designating alternative depository banks?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, as worded, the committee is given the power to designate alternative depository banks.

REP. LAGMAN. Could the committee designate the UCPB as a depository bank?

REP. PANGANIBAN. They can, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. I suppose, Mme. Speaker, there is a need to make a clear guidance to the committee on which banks can be designated depository banks. At the proper time, I think we should be given the opportunity to make necessary amendments because I think the UCPB, which was a party to the coco levy imposition and utilization, should not be a depository bank.

I have more questions, Mme. Speaker, but there are certain items we will have to check. I am also waiting for the submission of the distinguished Gentleman with respect to the total funds allocated by the government through the various agencies which were mandated to develop the coconut industry, particularly the Philippine Coconut Authority and its predecessors.

So, may I request for a suspension to another date of this interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. LAGMAN. I am going to repeat that I am not against the utilization of the funds, but I suppose there is a need to rationalize the utilization of the funds.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Floor Leader is recognized.

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, I move to suspend the session.

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

The session is suspended.

*It was 5:30 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 5:34 p.m., the session was resumed.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The session is resumed.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

#### SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 5745

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 5745, as contained under Committee Report No. 262, submitted by the Committee on Agriculture and Food, and the Committee on Appropriations. I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we acknowledge the presence of the guests of Congressman Bataoil who are seated at the gallery at the moment. They are Gen. Victor S. Ibrado, former AFP Chief of Staff; Gen. Alexander B. Yano, former AFP Chief of Staff; Gen. Avelino Razon, former PNP Chief; Gen. Jose Antonio G. Salvacion; Rear Admiral Ramon Punzalan; Vice Admiral Emilio C. Marayag Jr.; Gen. Restituto Mosqueda; Police Director Van D. Luspo, Chairman/President of the PNP Retirees Association, Inc. (PRAI); and the members of the PNP Retirees Association, Inc.

From the Philippine National Police, we have Police Deputy Director General Archie Francisco F. Gamboa, the Chief Directorial Staff; Police Director Jose Maria Victor DF Ramos, Directorate for Logistics; Police Director Efren M. Perez, Directorate for Research and Development; Police Senior Superintendent Robert Rodriguez; and Police Chief Superintendent Alfred Corpuz.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). Please rise so that we can acknowledge the guests of the Honorable Bataoil. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

The Floor Leader is recognized.

#### PRIVILEGE HOUR

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, today being a Monday and pursuant to our Rules, I move that we open the Privilege Hour.

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

The Privilege Hour is hereby opened.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, I now move that the Gentleman from the Second District of Pangasinan, the honorable Congressman Leopoldo “Pol” N. Bataoil, be recognized to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Hon. Leopoldo N. Bataoil from the Second District of Pangasinan is hereby recognized. May we inquire on the subject of the Honorable Bataoil’s speech.

REP. BATAOIL. Mme. Speaker, my speech is about the pension arrearages of the PNP retirees.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). Thank you. Kindly proceed, Congressman Bataoil.

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. BATAOIL

REP. BATAOIL. Thank you.

Mme. Speaker, honorable Members of this Chamber, I rise today to manifest the clamor of the retirees of the Philippine National Police regarding their pension arrearages.

Sa ating mga kapulisan at mga kapatid sa Armed Forces of the Philippines na tapat na naglingkod at naglilingkod sa bayan at sa mamamayan, at sa lahat ng ating panauhin dito ngayon, binabati ko po kayong lahat ng isang maka-Diyos, makabayan at makataong hapon. Today, I dedicate this privilege speech in honor of those who retired from both the PC-INP and the PNP,

including our brothers from the Armed Forces of the Philippines—some of them are here with us today—and including those coming from the different provinces of Luzon. Those from Visayas and Mindanao wanted to come over but, sad to say, due to hardship and lack of funds, they opted to just monitor the proceedings today.

May I ask, one more time, for them to be recognized, to stand up, together with the Pangasinan Police Retirees Association who are here with us. Some of them are aging but are still strong to manifest their love for country. *(Applause)* Thank you.

It is sad to note that, as I speak, many of them are in their sickbed and some of them already passed away waiting for the pension increase that they deserve for the many years of dedicated service that they have rendered. Their ill-feelings towards this government, past and present, have been brewing to a boiling point, but they manage to keep their professionalism, love of country above self—they prevailed over their sentiment.

“To serve and protect”—that is the motto that all policemen all over the country, active or retired, dead or alive, live up to.

“Always outnumbered but never outfought”—to this date, that PC Ranger motto reverberates in the hearts of those who are here with us today. And, again, I say, many of them cannot make it here anymore due to various illnesses, and some of them succumbed to the hardships in life.

The PNP and our AFP have been given the monumental task of protecting the nation from external and internal threats. They keep our communities safe and they are willing to risk their lives for others to live. Given the magnitude of terrorism, criminality, and the viciousness of crimes being committed, the organization has stepped up to meet the challenges despite budgetary constraints and meager resources. That policeman, that soldier, when he steps out of his house to carry out his duty, his family would never know if he would ever come back alive.

Tomorrow, August 8, is a historically important day for the Philippine National Police. On the same date in 1901, the Insular Constabulary was established through Commission Act No. 175 with Capt. Henry T. Allen as their first chief. This organization became the forerunner of national policing in our nation. A year after, the Insular Constabulary was renamed as the Philippine Constabulary. Over the years, the need for an integrated approach to address peace, order and anti-criminality efforts in the local governments spurred the merger of the Philippine Constabulary and the Integrated National Police. On August 8, 1975, by virtue of Presidential Decree No. 765, these two institutions were merged to form the PC-INP. After the first People Power Revolution, the new Constitution provided for a national police force. So, on January 29, 1991, Republic Act No. 6975 was enacted and it abolished the PC-INP



and in its place, created the Philippine National Police or the PNP. Every year thereafter, on August 8, the PNP celebrates the Police Service Anniversary.

Hindi madali ang buhay ng pulis at sundalo. Maraming pagsubok na hinaharap hindi lamang sa trabaho, kundi pati na rin sa pananaw ng madla, lalo na sa ating mga kapulisan. May mga hindi magagandang balitang lumalabas tungkol sa mga pulis at sa halip na pagkatiwalaan, takot at pangamba ang nangingibabaw. Maaari ngang mas madaling paniwalaan ang mga ganitong kuwento. Sa tuwing manonood o makikinig tayo ng balita, para bagang mas madalas na may balita tungkol sa mga pulis na nasasangkot sa mga gawaing hindi kanais-nais. Ngunit huwag nating kalimutan na wala namang perpektong institusyon kahit saan. Bagamat may mga ganitong balita, huwag din nating kalimutan na mas maraming mabubuting pulis. Hindi man natin sila nakikita sa balita, may mga kababayan naman nating nakasasaksi sa kanilang mga ginagawang kabutihan na minsan ay labas sa kanilang trabaho.

Tulad noong isang foundation, ang Metrobank Foundation in particular, binibigyan ng recognition ang mga pulis sa buong bansa sa pamamagitan ng kanilang Country's Outstanding Police Officers in Service na taun-taon ay binibigyan po natin sila dito ng parangal. Atin pong tingnan ang isang halimbawa ng mga pulis na nagsisilbi ng higit sa kanilang nakatakdang gawain sa trabaho, at kung mamarapatin po ninyo, ay nandiyan po ang mga katibayan sa dalawang screen na nasa ating harapan.

*(Audiovisual presentation)*

Dito ay makikita natin ang iba't ibang kuwento ng kabayanihan at paninilbihan ng mga pulis na hindi natin karaniwang nababalitaan. Makikita natin sa mga larawang ito ang iba't ibang pulis mula sa iba't ibang bahagi ng bansa na pinarangalan. Hindi man sila mabigyan ng papuri sa pamamagitan ng trophy, plaque o mga magarbang award, nakikita natin, ng mga mamamayan, ang kanilang kabayanihan sa kanilang pagsisilbi ng tapat. Lahat sila ay tumutulong sa kapwa nang walang hinintay na kapalit o papuri mula sa iba.

There are also police officers who have made headlines because of their bravery and exemplary actions. One of them is PO2 Ryan S. Cabansag who was awarded the PNP Heroism Medal. While travelling in a bus along NLEX, he responded to a robbery that was being perpetrated by three armed suspects. Despite the threat to life, he still performed his sworn duty to serve and protect. Sr. Inspector Rodrigo de Dios was another officer named. He helped the bloodied 81-year old man who was lying under a bridge. An unidentified officer, who was photographed helping a man on a wheelchair, also gathered a lot of praise on social media. There is also PO2 George Jalandoni who shelled out his own money to help an elderly lady pay her medical bills in San Lazaro Hospital.

Sometimes, however, we hear stories about police officers who go above and beyond the call of duty. There are those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the name of dedicated service and love for country. Recently, we heard about the police officers in Negros Oriental who died on duty because they were ambushed by the NPA. In order to protect the citizens in their locality, these policemen made the ultimate sacrifice. We also know the story of the PNP Special Action Forces who were killed in action in Mamasapano. The SAF 44, as they were popularly known, stand as a beacon of hope and inspiration to those who serve the nation. As I speak today, our soldiers and policemen are still in Marawi. Ninety of our police officers and soldiers had already offered the ultimate sacrifice. We are praying that this war will not claim any more lives, but our policemen and soldiers will keep on defending Marawi and will stay there until the mission is accomplished.

There are many more stories like the ones I had mentioned. In this age of likes and shares, it is easier now to see the silver lining on social media because of citizen journalism. The things that our news media may not be able to capture, our citizens take care of and share with us through the digital platform. So, let us continue loving, caring for and understanding our policemen and our soldiers, especially those who are already retired but not yet tired.

I include herewith our own colleagues, Rep. Amado T. Espino Jr. and Rep. Romeo M. Acop. For Rep. Amado Espino Jr., he almost lost his life in Quirino Province in a fierce encounter with the New People's Army thereat but he survived and on record, he captured Jose Maria "Joma" Sison in classic intelligence operations. Rep. Romeo Acop is one of the best investigators of the PC-INP and best director of the PNP-CIDG, and one of the best interpellators in Congress, I suppose. He was charged in an operation against the so-called Kuratong Baleleng, if you will recall. The Kuratong Baleleng was at its notoriety at that time when they were encountered by the group of now Rep. Romeo Acop. That group was initially neutralized by government forces after a series of bank robbery hold-ups and other crimes.

Twenty-five PNP-SAF troopers were charged in that Merville Subdivision, Parañaque encounter, if you will recall, in 2006, the so-called Waray-Waray and the Ilonggo kidnap-for-ransom group. I was one of them, as the former Regional Director of NCRPO. We were charged by the Human Rights and the DOJ as a result of a legitimate encounter, but thank God, we were able to legally extricate ourselves from that problem. Those 25 SAF troopers who were initially incarcerated, are now back on duty and still continue their resolve to serve this country.

Our police officers and our soldiers put their lives on the line to do their jobs. They invest blood, sweat and tears to perform the call of duty and as such, they

deserve to be compensated justly for the sacrifices they make. This is why it is with great disappointment that I inform this august Body that our government owes the PNP retirees 26 months of pension differential. This is certainly a poor way to repay those who have put their lives at stake to serve the country.

In 2009, the Salary Standardization Law was enacted, thereby giving all government employees, including uniformed personnel, an increase in their pay. This increase was implemented in four tranches. The Salary Standardization Law also adjusted the pension rates pursuant to the automatic indexation stated in Republic Act No. 8551. Those in active service and those who retired during this time are supposed to receive a pension according to the prescribed rate. However, due to the non-availability of appropriations for pension adjustment at the time of the salary increase, the funds have not yet been released to the PNP retirees. The DBM explained that the policy they are adopting in the payment of pension adjustments is to apply the same uniform effective date of the succeeding year when the increases are mandated to active personnel. Thus, pension adjustments were only implemented on the succeeding year, that is the second tranche, after the grant of the base pay adjustment of police personnel in active service. To date, 26 months of unpaid pensions for the PNP retirees amounted to P3,839,627,000. This is the accumulated amount from the months that were left unpaid when the SSL was implemented. For their pensions to be withheld due to a lack of funding sends the message that we do not value their efforts and sacrifices.

Sa aking pagkakaalam, tayo lang ang bansang may utang sa ating mga beteterano. Uulutin ko po iyon—tayo lang ang bansang may utang sa ating mga beteterano. When the government is unable to pay their dues, we send a message to our people, and not just those in the uniformed service, that serving this country is a thankless job or a wasted endeavor. But look, Mme. Speaker, my dear colleagues, the retirees are out there all over the country, still helping the active members of the organization, both the PNP and the AFP, in their own capacity.

Mme. Speaker, my dear colleagues, as we celebrate the 116 years of police service in this country, I seek your support in the adoption of House Resolution No. 1117, which I have offered. This Resolution urges the DBM and the DILG to release immediately the amount of P3.8 billion pension differential of the retirees of the PNP (*Applause*) in the 2018 National Budget and to expedite its immediate release to the pensioners; and better still, if it can be done now or within the year for both PNP and AFP retirees, to avail themselves of while they are still alive and not when they are already in “Thy kingdom come.” Mme. Speaker, I end my speech by way of sharing with you a video on the life of a policeman entitled: “Ang Tatay Kong Pulis.” (*Audiovisual presentation*)

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from BUHAY Party-List, Cong. Jose “Lito” L. Atienza Jr. for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Honorable Atienza is recognized. On what subject would the honorable Gentleman speak?

REP. ATIENZA. We would like to elaborate further and support the call of the Gentleman, Congressman Bataoil, on a very important and critical issue of not supporting our retirees enough. The Gentleman made a very serious call and I would like to respond and support the call of Congressman Bataoil.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Gentleman will please proceed.

REP. ATIENZA. With the permission of the Gentleman, I would like to clarify further on his proposal to allocate enough funds for the full payment of the delayed pensions of our police officers.

REP. BATAOIL. Yes, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Magkano po ba ang total na pondong iniisip ninyo ang kailangan?

REP. BATAOIL. Ang amount po na kailangan ay P3.8 billion, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. That is P3.8 billion. Tama po ba, Mme. Speaker?

REP. BATAOIL. Opo, Mme. Speaker. Ito ang kabuuan ng apat na tranches na hindi pa naibibigay.

REP. ATIENZA. Considering that these gentlemen are now retiring and are helplessly waiting, the Congressman’s call merits all of our support, although I now see a minimal number of Members on the floor. We should repeat this tomorrow when we have more Members on the floor. Sapagkat hanggang hindi po naayos ang gusot na ito, magkakaroon tayo ng tunay na hapdi ng damdamin sa mga taong naglingkod, nagsikap at nagtanggol sa bayan sa maraming pagkakataon.

I remember the golden years of the policemen of Manila, for instance, when they were the most respected. They were the peacekeepers; they were the harmony-men. Sila po ang tumutulong sa nangangailangan at

inaasahan ng lahat sa mga problemang panglipunan, at pagkatapos maglingkod ng 25 taon at 30 taon ay makakalimutan natin. Hindi naman po tama iyan, and that is why I am in full support of the Gentleman's appeal. I hope the 20 or so Members on the floor now also get affected by the same sentiment. Our police officers need all the support and encouragement, inspiration and motivation so that they will continue even beyond the years of their service. Now that they are retired, they can even devote more time for their fellowmen.

I heard loud and clear the statements of Congressman Bataoil that our policemen are, most of the time, outnumbered but never outfought. In Manila, we even have a big, big saying that reminds all of us Manileños growing up in the City of Manila. When you pass by the headquarters of the Manila Police Department, you will read the famous words before the Battle of Thermopylae was fought, "Go, spread the word. Tell the passersby that in this little world, men knew how to die." Ang ganda po nito. Iyon ang kinalakihan namin kaya ang aming respeto sa pulis ay sobra- sobra. Kaya ako ay natuwa nang narinig ko si Congressman Bataoil, being an ex-police officer himself, as he reflects on the genuine truth about our police officers. If some of them are going awry, going the wrong way, that is not the police organization, that is not the civilian police especially. Temporarily, they may be lost without that inspirational direction, but I know very well that the retired policemen who served in the yesteryears do not commit the same abuses on the people. To harness them once more the spirit of nation-building, we should encourage them by giving them their dues.

Mga kapanalig, mga kaibigan, tulungan natin si Congressman Bataoil sa kanyang pakikipaglaban ngayon sa komite. Let us fight for that small amount which is meaningful if we are to encourage our young policemen to do better than how they are behaving today. The inspiration should come from the reinforcement of the feeling that we do care for them as we care for their elders. That is P3.8 billion. This administration should not say "we have no money for that." We know very well—we are reviewing what the budget is being proposed today, and we know very well how the budget was spent last year and is being spent this year. Hindi nga nila nagastos ang P600 billion. Is Congressman Bataoil aware of that, Mme. Speaker?

REP. BATAOIL. My understanding ...

REP. ATIENZA. They were not ...

REP. BATAOIL. ... is that ...

REP. ATIENZA. ... able to spend the P600 billion.

REP. BATAOIL. ... P477 billion was unspent for the previous year.

REP. ATIENZA. And we are only asking for P3.8 billion, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BATAOIL. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. That is a drop in the bucket. For all of us remaining here today and hearing the message of Congressman Bataoil, I think we should all have one voice in the Committee deliberations on the budget. If they fail to act on that, let us incorporate that in the plenary. Listening to Congressman Bataoil, I am committing myself fully in whatever small measure I can to do justice to our police retirees. *(Applause)*

I have not forgotten the tragedy of Mamasapano. Sino po ang pinatay doon? Sino po ang nag-alay ng buhay doon? Sino po ang isinubo doon? Mga kabataang pulis, Special Action Force men who are especially trained to protect society. Up to now, no one has been made to suffer the consequences of how we lost 44 lives of men of the PNP Special Action Force in that big glaring neglect of the welfare and the lives of our policemen. Iyon ba ay pumipigil sa mga pulis ngayon para maglingkod? Hindi. Tuloy pa rin po sapagkat itinuturing nila ang pagpupulis ay pinakamarangal na magagawa nila sa mundong ito. I salute them for that because I know 99 percent of policemen are imbued with heroic motivation. So let us take care of those who are helplessly now stationed in life—retirees who are unable to earn more, unable to help themselves. Sino po ang tutulong sa kanila? Tayo na mayroon pang nagagawa para sa ating kapwa. It is not the amount but the honor, the recognition, that we know how to look back and look up to people who have served the country well, and that should be the motivation.

Congressman Bataoil, I am with you 1,000 percent. Thank you. *(Applause)*

REP. BATAOIL. Maraming salamat po, Congressman Atienza. Mme. Speaker, thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the Honorable Bataoil and the interpellation of the Honorable Atienza thereon to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action. *(Applause)*

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

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, next to avail of the Privilege Hour is the Gentleman from the Second District of Cagayan de Oro City, Rep. Maximo B. Rodriguez Jr., who is to speak on the rehabilitation and development of Mindanao.

I move that he be recognized.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Hon. Maximo B. Rodriguez Jr. is hereby recognized.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. RODRIGUEZ (M.)

REP. RODRIGUEZ (M.). My dear Chairperson, Mme. Speaker, dear colleagues, I rise today on the issue on the rehabilitation and development of Mindanao. Before that, I would like to congratulate Congressman Bataoil for a very nice presentation, and we assure him of our support in the budget deliberations this year.

Congratulations, Congressman Bataoil.

I stand here because we have concerns on the Mindanao problem. Last May 23 this year, the joint operations of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police was launched in Marawi City to capture terrorist leader Isnilon Hapilon who is believed to be the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) leader in Southeast Asia. In the said operation, a firefight between government troops and the Maute group ensued and a black flag with a logo of ISIS was raised in front of Amai Pakpak Hospital, with the goal of establishing a “wilayat” or a province for the Islamic state. On the same day, martial law was declared in the island of Mindanao.

A little over three months after that unfortunate day, firefighting still continue despite the major headway by our Armed Forces of the Philippines. There are still terrorists in Marawi and our soldiers continue to flush out the remaining members of the ISIS, the Maute and other rogue elements. On July 22, 2017, martial law was extended until December 2017. The most recent report of the AFP stated that the total number of deaths now is at 607, with 119 of our soldiers dying heroically, 453 terrorists, 45 civilians, and with 80 to 100 hostages still inside the mosque. By this time, another village is about to be liberated.

I wholeheartedly support President Duterte in his decision to place Mindanao under martial law, and I wholeheartedly support our troops in the fight against terrorists. But while my support remains, there will always be the need to end this conflict as soon as possible. We need to bring back normalcy not just in Marawi, but also in the entire Mindanao. While Moody’s has stated that the impact of the crisis on economic activity is expected to be minimal and short-lived, it has also stated that “If recent developments lead to prolonged uncertainty around security or governance,

such a development would eventually dampen business confidence and consequently diminish economic outcomes in Mindanao.”

As recommended by the Mindanao Development Authority, Marawi’s early recovery, rehabilitation and long-term development will entail the following actions and key recommendations:

First, there should be rapid assessment by all government agencies in this country. For instance, it is about time that the National Housing Authority recognizes the need to establish a temporary shelter for all the evacuees in Iligan and elsewhere.

Second, what is the infrastructure planning through the Mindanao Development Corridors Program which has as partners the DPWH, Department of Tourism, Department of Transportation, TIEZA and other infrastructure agencies? This will identify critical connectivity projects in the whole of Mindanao and specifically, a framework for the Northern Mindanao Development Corridor Program which will cover the connection of Marawi to the rest of the corridors. Where is the budget under the National Expenditure Program which will later on become the General Appropriations Act?

Third, there should be the establishment of the agricultural economic cooperative zones which will help in providing jobs and livelihood to the evacuees through the Department of Trade and Industry, together with the Department of Labor and Employment.

Fourth, who shall administer the donations? We need a donors convergence group. The Mindanao Development Authority has already convened the Mindanao Development Corridors Steering Committee and generated initial commitments of support from international development partners such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Labour Organization (ILO), the German Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ), World Food Programme (WFP), European Union (EU), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Marawi and the Lanao areas within the context of the Bangsamoro Development Corridor and the Mindanao Development Corridors in general.

Further, there is a need to immediately restore livelihood and economic activities and in the long-term, connect Marawi to the overall development goals of Mindanao through the development of the Mindanao Corridors. We need to immediately implement transport and connectivity projects that would link Marawi to the rest of the Mindanao economy through the establishment of the Bangsamoro Development

Corridors, namely Lanao del Sur/Maranao Development Corridor, Maguindanao Development Corridor, the Lupah Sug Development Corridor (Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Basilan). For this, we need the active participation and collaboration of the Mindanao Development Authority, the DPWH, the Department of Transportation, the local government units of Marawi and Lanao del Sur, and the ARMM regional government. It is recommended that financial institutions promote the opening of a special facility for financing, loan or compensation for the businesses that were lost in the siege. Islamic financing is especially needed in specifically providing capital and enabling the environment for the immediate restoration of economic activities for displaced businesses. For this, we need the active participation and involvement of the Al-Amanah Islamic Investment Bank of the Philippines, LANDBANK and the Development Bank of the Philippines.

There is also a need to rebuild trust and review approaches to counter violent extremism. There is a need to implement social cohesion programs to repair intercultural and interfaith relationships, implement a campaign to refrain from connoting Islam with violent extremism, and strengthen Madrasah education. Also, cyber security and e-safety mechanisms should be installed to prevent cases of recruitment of the youth via social media platforms. For this, the DICT, the DepEd, the OPAPP and the DILG should take the lead.

With all these plans and recommendations, the big question is: How much fund is needed to rehabilitate and develop Mindanao?

This is why we legislators need to be informed of the timeline of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and why it has proven to be that difficult to capture these ISIS rebels in Marawi. We also need to be informed of the immediate and long-term plans of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the government on how to have a peaceful Mindanao. Aside from the plans of the AFP, we also need to know what other government agencies are planning in helping the island recover from the effects of the siege. We need to know what the National Housing Authority plans to do to provide housing to all those who have lost their homes; we need to know how the Department of Social Welfare and Development plans to provide immediate and long-term assistance to the people of Mindanao especially those displaced; and we need to know what and how much the AFP and the PNP need to ensure lasting peace in Mindanao. As the branch of government holding the power of the purse, it is important to know the financial requirements of the government and its agencies in its rehabilitation plan of Marawi and that of Mindanao. In these trying times, we need to allocate more resources to Mindanao and to not only rehabilitate those places affected by the terror attacks, but also to spur development and growth in the entire Mindanao Island.

We, in Mindanao, have been through many struggles already, and this recent Marawi siege is just another setback for us. As always, we Mindanaoans will continue to rise above and we will be back on our feet, but we cannot do it alone. We need the help of our government, which is why I am here asking the national government and its agencies, including the Armed Forces of the Philippines, to provide us the information we need on their concrete immediate and long-term plans, the amount they need to implement these plans, and their plans on how to maintain peace in Mindanao and make Mindanao reach its potential.

That ends my privilege speech, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from the First District of Lanao del Norte, Cong. Mohamad Khalid Q. Dimaporo, for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Hon. Mohamad Khalid Dimaporo is recognized. The Gentleman may proceed.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). Thank you, Mme. Speaker. I would like to congratulate a good friend, Cong. Maxie Rodriguez, for his privilege speech and bringing to the highlight, the rehabilitation of Marawi City and our area.

My district is right beside Marawi City and Lanao del Norte. The evacuees have spilled over to Baloy and Iligan City.

I would like to inform my colleague that during the budget briefing, Secretary Diokno mentioned that Marawi City has P20 billion earmarked for its rehabilitation. On top of that, starting from the month of August up to September, October, November and December, Marawi City has P1 billion a month earmarked this year, for a total of P5 billion for 2017 and P20 billion for 2018. I think it is delightful to hear that my colleague is calling for transparency which, when I speak to my counterparts here in Congress and also my counterparts, the LGUs, we do not know how much and where the funds are being used for. So, I think there is a very good need for Congress to be proactive in working with the national line agencies to determine exactly how the funds of government are being used and hopefully, will be used effectively so that Marawi City will restore its former appearance and former standing in the region, and we can bring real development to the people of Marawi and recover from the damaging war that has raged on over the last few months.

So again, thank you so much, my colleague, Rep. Maximo "Maxie" Rodriguez, for your privilege speech

and bringing to the highlight, the rehabilitation of Marawi City.

REP. RODRIGUEZ (M.). Can I comment on that? Well, it is good that the Secretary of Budget said that they will give P1 billion a month, but that is all in words. I have not seen any plan or actual implementation on it. The last time I know is that on the papers, they were rushing for the construction of 1,000 units of—what do you call these—semi-temporary shelters, and 1,000 units are good only for about 3,000 evacuees because each building will house about three families and we have about 70,000 evacuees.

I remember that when we had Sendong in Cagayan de Oro which demolished 12,000 houses, the city government bought lands where foreign donations went into the building of temporary shelters. So, it actually gave a chance for our evacuees to be relocated to temporary shelters. We do not need a permanent shelter because it takes so much time. But this information I have from Congressman Dimaporo (M.), I am calling on the DBM to lay out the plan for these because from what I read in the papers, they are not enough.

The purpose of this privilege speech is to make them aware, the national agencies concerned, that they should do the evaluation themselves and make plans, concrete plans, transparent plans for us to know in Congress and for us to be able to sponsor any amendment to the National Expenditure Program towards the approval of the General Appropriations Act. That is good, that P1 billion a month, but it is not enough for the rehabilitation of Mindanao.

So, Mme. Speaker, I would like to thank you for the comment—for the manifestation of my brother, Congressman Mohamad Dimaporo; and thank you, colleagues, for this time.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the Hon. Maxie Rodriguez and the interpellation of the Hon. Mohamad Dimaporo thereon to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

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

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, I now move that the Lady from ACT TEACHERS Party-List, the Hon. France L. Castro, be recognized to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The honorable Cong. France L. Castro of the Party-List ACT TEACHERS is hereby recognized.

May I inquire from the distinguished Lady the subject of her privilege speech.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Thank you, Mme. Speaker. The subject of my privilege speech is on Lumad schools in Mindanao.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). Thank you. Congresswoman Castro, kindly proceed.

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. CASTRO (F.L.)

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Mme. Speaker, I rise today as I speak of our indigenous people's youths' right to education.

Lumad is the collective term pertaining to the indigenous people living in Mindanao. These tribes have been historically struggling for their ancestral lands and asserting their right to self-determination. For decades, they have been historically fighting against destructive mining, logging, and other forms of plunder of natural resources in their ancestral lands. It is those in the far-flung communities in Mindanao, hardly reached by education and other basic public services, where Lumads had set up their own community schools.

With the help of socio-civic institutions, religious organizations and members of the Lumad communities themselves, they have established and maintained alternative systems for their youth rooted within the community's values and culture. To date, there are about 220 alternative schools and programs in Mindanao catering to a total of 8,251 indigenous people's youth. These schools offer a form of transformative and holistic education which educates Lumad people about their human rights, their responsibilities to their environment, and stewardship of their ancestral lands which is one of the important components of the learning system in the study of sustainable agriculture suitable to their lands. All these are in accordance with Article 14 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which states, and I quote:

Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.

I feel privileged to have personally witnessed how these Lumad schools have been successfully integrating the communities, culture and traditions in the development of their socio-economic welfare. Last

April, Congressman Tinio and I attended the Second Graduation and Moving-Up Rites of the Community Technical College of Southeastern Mindanao Inc. or the CTCSMI at Barangay Lapu-Lapu in Maco, Compostela Valley. The Community Technical College is made up of around 70 percent Lumad student population coming from 10 tribes from all over Mindanao. It opened last June 2015, with only 37 elementary, 77 high school, and 184 college students. Now, they have more than 200 from preschool to Grade 10, 19 in tech-voc and 190 in college.

The Alternative Learning Center for Agricultural and Livelihood Development or the ALC ADEV offers an alternative learning system for the indigenous youth of Caraga Region in Mindanao. It is recognized by DepEd's Bureau of Alternative Learning System or the DepEd-BALS, serving the Lumad people of Surigao del Sur. The curriculum and method of instruction are specially designed for their distinct situation and needs appropriate to the culture and traditions of the different tribes of Caraga. It provides free education to Lumad students with a goal of encouraging them to give back to their community.

ALCADEV's curriculum employs an interdisciplinary approach which aims to uplift the economic condition of the IP communities. Their major subjects include scientific sustainable agriculture technology, animal husbandry and organic farming technology. With agriculture at the very core, they teach science, history and T.H.E. as major subjects. Mathematics, English, Pilipino and values formation are taught as minor subjects. In their last year, they take up specialized skills and training along with their practicum in the field of agriculture, literacy and numeracy, community health care, and community capacity-building. ALC ADEV's effort in bringing literacy, numeracy and sustainable agriculture to Lumad communities merited the DepEd's National Literacy Award in 2001 and 2005. It also topped the regional level of the DepEd's National Literacy Award in the Outstanding Literacy Program category and placed fifth in the national level in 2014.

The Salugpongan International is a network which aims to support and promote the Manobo Talaingod tribe's defense of their ancestral land and rainforest from destruction by corporate loggers which started decades ago in Southern Mindanao Region of the Philippines. Salugpongan is a Manobo term for "unity" or "gathering." Today, the Manobo Talaingod tribe continues to protect their ancestral land, educate their children and empower their communities through their community school named Salugpongan Ta' Tanu Igkanogon Community Learning Centers, which means "Unity in Defense of Ancestral Land." The Salugpongan schools have permits to operate and have been complying with the K-to-12 curriculum,

thus, adhering to the basic formal education system set by the Department of Education. Currently, they are serving more than 1,500 students. The Salugpongan International also supports the Mindanao Interfaith Services Foundation, Inc. or the MISFI Academy and other community schools throughout Mindanao which has provided free, quality culture-responsive education to the underserved indigenous, Moro and rural communities throughout Mindanao for over a decade.

Some of the schools under Center for Lumad Advocacy and Services, Inc. or CLANS in SOCCSKSARGEN are still awaiting their permits from DepEd despite having submitted all the required documents for operation. The applications of many are being denied as part of the systematic attack against indigenous peoples which the President is now openly advocating. With or without permits and government recognition, these institutions have already contributed to community-building and national development by promoting the social, political and cultural well-being of the Lumad people since its inception.

Mme. Speaker, this Representation adamantly asserts that the existence of the operations of these schools are clearly legal and constitutional. It is only unfortunate that instead of supporting their operations, they have been consistently subjected to militarization, attacks and even killings by the military and their paramilitary groups under the past administrations. Two years ago, DepEd issued a statement condemning the Lianga massacre where Lumad leaders and school administrator Emerito Samarca were allegedly killed by the Magahat-Bagani paramilitary group with the 36th Infantry Battalion last September 2015. The Lumads from Lianga, Surigao del Sur spent more than a year in an evacuation center in Tandag City after the massacre. They returned in 2016 to find their homes and fields ransacked and wrecked. The rehabilitation process is not yet finished, and justice for the tribe leaders and the executive director remains elusive. Today, under the implementation of martial law in Mindanao, our Lumad brothers and sisters from Lianga, San Miguel and San Agustin were forced to evacuate due to heightened attacks by the military troops from the 75th IBPA, 36th IBPA, and 6th Special Forces Battalion since July 3, 2017. Two hundred learners of ALC ADEV and 43 volunteer teachers of five community schools of Tribal Filipino Program of Surigao del Sur or TRIFPSS evacuated due to a possible airstrike when an AFP bomber plane was seen hovering around the mountains in the nine communities of Lianga, including Sitio Hanayan in the village of Diatagon.

This Representation, Mme. Speaker, strongly condemns the continuing attacks against IPs and the Lumad schools under the administration of President Duterte. There is at least one attack per week from

July 2016 to July 2017. Military operations under the counterinsurgency program Oplan Kapayapaan and the Mindanao-wide martial law only endanger and disrupt the lives of Lumad schools, teachers, staff, students and community leaders. A total of 52 schools and 1,663 students were affected by the said attacks. Moreover, the attacks worsened since the declaration of martial law in Mindanao. A year ago, President Duterte promised us peace. He also claims that he is of Maranao blood, yet schools independently put up by IPs themselves are still being targeted under his administration. What is worse is the President's threat to bomb Lumad schools. This Representation, Mme. Speaker, strongly condemns the President's threats as clear red-tagging and an endorsement of violence and murder against indigenous peoples. Moreso, as the Commander-in-Chief, his words are policies and orders to his men on the ground.

The Save Our Schools Network reported, last Tuesday, that four members of the paramilitary group Alamara threatened to burn the Salugpongan Community School in Sitio Dulyan, Barangay Palma Gil in Talaingod town. They threatened to burn the Salugpongan Community School if they are not able to kill at least one of the four people they have been looking for: a student of the school, namely, Lando Dalin, and PTCA members Benancio Dalin, Benjo Bayao and Nonoy Dawsay. This attack caused disruption of classes. Moreover, Presidential Spokesperson Banaag blatantly red-tagged ALCADDEV Inc., CLANS, and Salugpongan Community Learning Center. She also justified the President's threat to bomb the schools by saying that he only pertained to so-called "illegal Lumad schools."

This Representation can no longer take this government's unrelenting attacks against Lumad schools which have been working to combat illiteracy in the indigenous communities. I enjoin the DepEd's leadership to stand with the Lumads against the military attacks on our schools, bomb threats and threats to destroy school infrastructures made by no less than the President. Justice must be served to all the victims of militarization of communities, including the thousands of bakwits due to martial law. Even the Education International (EI), a global union federation that represents organizations of teachers and other education employees, called upon all its member organizations all over the world to condemn these human rights violations. EI sent a protest letter to President Duterte on July 24 and invited the government to endorse the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict, an intergovernmental instrument to protect students, teachers, schools and universities from the attacks. The IP youth is challenging this administration to fulfill its mandate of providing free, quality and accessible

education to all. We are all reminded that upholding the rights of the indigenous peoples to mold their own system of education is essentially an acknowledgment of their right to self-determination.

To end my speech, Mme. Speaker, let me read the last parts of ALCADDEV Inc.'s open letter addressed to President Duterte:

We urge you, Mr. President, to re-evaluate your current stand and withdraw your statement about bombing our schools. We ask you to keep your men in check and stop the militarization of Lumad schools. Most of all, we call on you to end Martial Law because far from ensuring peace and order, it only intensifies the military attacks and harassments in our community. Instead of attacking us, we enjoin you recognize, support, and protect our schools. Stay true to the promises you made and stand with the people whom you swore to serve at the start of your Presidency.

Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the Hon. France Castro to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

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

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we extend the Privilege Hour for another 30 minutes.

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

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, I now move that the Gentleman from the First District of Lanao del Norte, Cong. Mohamad Khalid Q. Dimaporo, be recognized to avail of the Privilege Hour to talk about the Pantao Ragat raid and the inaction of the Department of Justice.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Congressman from the First District of Lanao del Norte, the Hon. Mohamad Khalid Q. Dimaporo, is hereby recognized.

He will please proceed.



## PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. DIMAPORO (M.)

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). Thank you, Mme. Speaker, Floor Leader, and colleagues in the Seventeenth Congress, for the privilege to speak today.

*Assalamu'alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.*

In the run-up to the 2013 elections, there was a raid in my province as part of the campaign against private armies. This is either the biggest successful law enforcement operation in the region at the time, or a monumental disappointment in the application of law for the benefit of the general public's welfare. I wish to discuss tonight the 2013 raid in Pantao Ragat, Lanao del Norte.

As part of their mandate to ensure honest, orderly and peaceful elections, the COMELEC imposes a five-month long gun ban during an election year. The PNP implements the gun ban by establishing checkpoints, especially in areas identified as "hot spots" of violence during elections. In addition, the PNP also establishes a task force to dismantle private armed groups that threaten the sanctity and integrity of the people's vote. So, in preparation for the 2013 elections, the PNP conducted a raid in Pantao Ragat, Lanao del Norte on February 13, 2013.

CIDG Intelligence identified Vice Mayor Lacson Lantud as a warlord using the Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Unit or CAFGU as his private armed group. As a result of their intelligence operations, Executive Judge Marino M. Dela Cruz Jr. of Branch 22, NCR Judicial Region Manila issued search warrant 13-21378. With the support of a warrant, CIDG Region X executed a raid using SAF personnel in coordination with local PNP and AFP counterparts. They convened in the AFP Brigade Headquarters at Barangay Maria Cristina, Iligan City and entered Pantao Ragat at the break of dawn. The raid was successful, as seen in the images on the screen. Seven members of the town's CAFGU were found in the residence of Vice Mayor Lantud. More than 40 guns were seized. The inventory included an M60 machine gun, six M203 grenade launchers, nine M14 Armalite rifles, 14 M1 Garand rifles, six short hand guns, and an assortment of ammunition. PNP Region X Spokesperson Sr. Supt. Ronnie Francis Cariaga reported that the house also yielded vests, ammunition bandoliers, and other protective equipment marked "AFP" and "PRAT." The 2013 raid in Pantao Ragat is an example of good intelligence operations and textbook incidence-free execution. In recognition, incumbent Chief PNP Alan Purisima awarded the Medalya ng Kadakilaan to all personnel of CIDG Region X on March 8, 2013.

Three cases were filed in the Regional State Prosecutor's Office for violation of P.D. No. 1866, as amended by R.A. No. 8294 and R.A. No. 9516. Presidential Decree No. 1866 was signed by President

Marcos on June 29, 1983. The decree is entitled: "Coding the Laws of Illegal/Unlawful Possession, Manufacture, Dealing in, Acquisition or Disposition of Firearms, Ammunition, or Explosives, and Imposing Stiffer Penalties for Certain Violations Thereof, and for Relevant Purposes."

Section 1 states that the penalty of *reclusion temporal* in its maximum period to *reclusion perpetua* shall be imposed upon any person who shall unlawfully acquire or possess a firearm. The section also gives the same penalty to any public entity used by any person found guilty of possessing illegal firearms. Section 3 states that the penalty of *reclusion temporal* in its maximum period to *reclusion perpetua* shall be imposed upon any person who shall unlawfully acquire or possess hand grenades, rifle grenades and other explosives. The same penalty is given to any public entity used by any person possessing illegal explosive devices.

On June 6, 1997, the Tenth Congress passed Republic Act No. 8294, amending P.D. No. 1866 and categorizing firearms into low-powered and high-powered. The law reduces the penalty for possession of illegal firearms and explosives. Section 1 of R.A. No. 8294 reduces the penalty to *prision correccional* in its maximum period and a fine of not less than P15,000 for any person in unlawful possession of any low-powered firearms such as rimfire, .380 or .32 caliber and other firearms of similar firepower; and reduces to *prision mayor* in its maximum and a fine of P30,000 for any person in unlawful possession of high-powered firearms such as those with bores bigger in diameter than .38 caliber and 9 mm like calibers .40 and .45, and other firearms with the firing capability of full automatic and by burst of two or three. The same penalty is imposed on public entities who knowingly allow any of the firearms owned by the public entity to be used by the persons found guilty of possessing illegal firearms.

On December 22, 2007, the Fourteenth Congress passed Republic Act No. 9516, further amending P.D. No. 1866. It provided stiffer penalties for illegal possession of explosives and makes law enforcement agencies more responsible and liable in testifying as prosecution witness. Section 1 of R.A. No. 9516 amended P.D. No. 1866 to impose the maximum penalty of *reclusion perpetua* upon any person who shall willfully and unlawfully acquire and possess any explosive or incendiary device capable of producing destructive effects or causing injury or death to any person. The section also provides that mere possession of any explosive device shall be *prima facie* evidence that the person had knowledge of the existence and the explosive character of the device. Section 3 of Republic Act No. 9516 inserts Section 4, entitled Responsibility and Liability of Law Enforcement Agencies and Other Government Officials and Employees in Testifying as Prosecution Witnesses. It provides the penalty of

*reclusion temporal* and a fine of P500,000 in addition to administrative sanctions by his/her superior and/or the appropriate governing body, should the member of law enforcement fail to appear as a witness for the prosecution in any proceeding.

In summary, after the signing of Presidential Decree No. 1866 by President Marcos, the legislative work of the Tenth and Fourteenth Congresses provided for the following penalties: for illegal possession of low-powered firearms, the penalty is six months to six years plus a fine of P15,000; for illegal possession of high-powered firearms, the penalty is six years and one day to eight years plus a fine of P30,000; and for illegal possession of explosives such as rifle grenades, the penalty is 20 years and one day to 40 years.

Mme. Speaker, colleagues, the prison terms are my layman's understanding of what those found guilty, after the Pantao Ragat raid, will be sentenced to after the seizure of more than 40 high-powered rifles, six handguns, and explosive devices such as rifle grenades if they were found to be illegally acquired. However, after a successful raid, after the CIDG was awarded by the Chief of the PNP, and after the cases were filed in the Regional State Prosecutor's Office, nothing has happened. It is as if the hard work and effort of our law enforcement agencies disappeared once transferred to their counterparts in the criminal justice system, the Department of Justice. This caught the attention of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption during the campaign period in 2013. As the May 2013 election was approaching, they appealed to the COMELEC, PNP, AFP and other law enforcement agencies to concentrate on dismantling known private armed groups. They made mention of the cases filed against the local officials of Pantao Ragat for the cache of firearms, ammunition and explosives found during the February 13 raid by the SAF and CIDG but for some unknown reasons, were still stalled at the DOJ at that time. This placed into question the sincerity of the government's campaign to dismantle private armies.

In the Sixteenth Congress, my predecessor, Cong. Angging Quibranza Dimaporo made two privilege speeches and filed House resolutions regarding the cases filed in DOJ as a result of the Pantao Ragat raid. Unfortunately, her efforts were wasted because for the entirety of the Sixteenth Congress, the cases filed in the DOJ have not moved. In my capacity as Provincial Governor of Lanao del Norte for my third and final term, from 2013 to 2016, I inquired from the Regional State Prosecutor as to the status of the Pantao Ragat case. The unofficial answer was that the cases were sent to Manila at the request of the RSP to inhibit himself out of fear of retaliation by a known local warlord; and perhaps because of my local stature, my queries were not entertained when I was following up the status of the cases in Manila.

Now, as Representative for the First District of Lanao del Norte, my first order of business was to write the DOJ under the Duterte administration as to the status of the cases from August 2016 to December 2016. I was not answered. I wrote again early 2017, only to be informed that my concern has been forwarded to the Prosecutor General. Six months later, I am still waiting and I now feel compelled to file a resolution with regard to the Pantao Ragat cases. My resolution reads: A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE STATUS OF THE CASES FILED AGAINST LOCAL CHIEF EXECUTIVES OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF PANTAO RAGAT, LANAO DEL NORTE, AS A RESULT OF A POLICE RAID IN 2013 FOR VIOLATION OF PD 1866, AS AMENDED BY RA 8294 AND RA 9516.

I find it unfortunate that it is often experienced in the ground, after good police work that the wheels of justice fail to turn because of the inaction or low performance of local prosecutors. The Pantao Ragat raid is an example of just that. Unlike the police raid in Ozamiz City which became a blood bath, the Pantao Ragat raid was clean and the suspects were apprehended seemingly, only to be released with their cases not seeing the light of day in the criminal courts. I appeal to the Department of Justice to intensify their role in our criminal justice system. This is supposed to be an administration for change. The intensified campaign of the Philippine National Police should be matched by the Department of Justice. Our success should be gauged by the number of suspects incarcerated instead of being neutralized. I hope the DOJ will thoroughly look into these cases because justice delayed is justice denied, and it has been four years and counting that these cases have sat, pending in the Department of Justice. I pray for the support of the Seventeenth Congress and the DOJ so that the Pantao Ragat cases may finally be set in motion and that due process and justice may be observed.

Thank you, Mme. Speaker, dear colleagues.

*Assalamu 'alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano).  
The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. DIMAPORO (A.). Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano).  
Sorry. What is the pleasure of the the Hon. Abdullah D. Dimaporo?

REP. DIMAPORO (A.). Mme. Speaker, in order that Congress may take notice of this issue which has been asked in the last Congress and now again, may we ask some questions to the Gentleman from the First

District of Lanao del Norte. This is in order that we may be able to highlight the problem that we are facing in Lanao del Norte and perhaps, in Mindanao. Maybe this will be repeated in other areas of the Muslim provinces. May we therefore ask some questions, Mme. Speaker.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, I then move that we recognize the Gentleman from the Second District of Lanao del Norte, the Hon. Abdullah D. Dimaporo, for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Hon. Abdullah Dimaporo is recognized. He will kindly proceed.

REP. DIMAPORO (A.). Mme. Speaker, Lacson Lantud is a creation of the military, just like the Kuratong Baleleng and also the Ampatuan. I have heard that the Abu Sayyaf is also a creation of the military. Perhaps, there are other creations of the military being used by the military as local partners against insurgents and later becoming criminals. Mme. Speaker, I wonder if the Gentleman knows that Lacson Lantud has killed many personalities in his municipality. May I ask this question, if the Gentleman knows, for example, that a first-degree cousin of Lacson Lantud was hit in the head when he was returning home, shot by Lacson Lantud himself because he wanted to run against him as municipal mayor? Does he know this?

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). Mme. Speaker, I am aware of the allegations. I would like to say “allegations” because nothing has been officially ruled in the court of law. But, yes, locally, Vice Mayor Lacson Lantud is known to be an armed personality and very brutal in dealing with his enemies.

I had the experience in the 2010 elections when his father ran in the Municipality of Matungao and my mayor was his opponent. I was governor then. His brother was campaigning in the different barangays and on the way home he passed by the headquarters of Lacson Lantud’s father. They were all carrying an M-Force. He was unarmed with his group in motorcycles, and all he can do was shout “Bapa,” which means uncle as they are actually related, “huwag, no, anak siya ng Lantud.” His father opened fire. The vice mayor, my municipal candidate’s brother, was actually hit, but he was able to survive. We brought him to the hospital, took care of his medical bills, and then cases were filed. Unfortunately, after the elections, the prosecutor handling the case against Lacson Lantud’s father, the prosecutor was killed. So, yes, there are a lot of allegations, Mme. Speaker, of the violence involved with Pantao Ragat.

Nobody would dare enter Pantao Ragat because they have full control of it. Locals call Lacson Lantud, the

Ampatuan of Lanao del Norte. Pantao Ragat is like our Mamasapano, and that is why these police operations were such a success. Unlike Mamasapano where there were so many police officers killed, in Lanao del Norte, we were able to neutralize a warlord and seize so much firearms. My question here in Congress is, or ever since I was a governor, what happened then? If the rule of law will not work, if our courts will not work, then how do we legally dismantle private armies? So, yes, Mme. Speaker, I am aware, as a former governor of the province, of the history and the background of Vice Mayor Lacson Lantud.

REP. DIMAPORO (A.). Mme. Speaker, to add more information on the killing of the provincial prosecutor of Lanao del Norte, then Representative of Lanao del Norte in the past Congress asked Secretary De Lima of the Department of Justice to investigate the killing of her prosecutor in Lanao del Norte and the answer was, “she was too busy.” Perhaps, the same answer is being given to the Gentleman from the First District of Lanao del Norte, that the Department of Justice Secretary is very busy to attend to our problems on peace and order in Lanao del Norte.

I wonder, Mme. Speaker, if the Gentleman also knows that in one election, Lacson Lantud lost in the precinct counts and then in the municipal count in the provincial government property, the Mindanao Civic Center, the sultan of Pantao Ragat lost in the municipal count. In spite of the victory of Lacson Lantud, he laid siege on the barangay of the defeated candidate for about three weeks and the military just watched him, saying that he has been identified as an MILF. Later, the Brigade Commander said that it is rido and they cannot attend to it. But then, people were saying that if it is rido, then why are the illegal guns being displayed to lay siege on the barangay of the defeated opposition of Lacson Lantud? Does the Gentleman know about this?

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). Yes, Mme. Speaker, I know that Lacson Lantud was challenged at one point.

He almost lost the municipality of Pantao Ragat. Just like many municipalities in the interior of our provinces where the reach of the law is very far and its grasp, the grasp of the law, in some cases, the presence of law is not felt, that happens when election results are not in favor of one candidate, and the only option is violence.

The purpose of my privilege speech here today is to ask the question: What are we going to do about it? Is there a clear-cut policy on how to handle violence in the countryside? Is there a clear-cut policy on how to handle private armies? Is there a clear-cut policy on how to handle warlords? The answer is yes, but the real solution is for our courts to function and this Pantao Ragat case is one example of our courts not functioning.

Our police did their job. Congress gave them guidance and armed them with the rule of law. They were able to seize so many firearms and yet, when the case reached the Department of Justice, nothing happened. How can we solve the problem of private armies? How can we eradicate warlords in our country if the DOJ will not act on the laws passed by Congress?

So, yes, Mme. Speaker, I am aware of what is happening in Pantao Ragat, the political violence that is happening in Pantao Ragat whenever they are challenged. I am aware of it, and I am still waiting—I believe in our institutions but I am still waiting for our institutions to function. It is my hope that, in the Seventeenth Congress, we can prod the Department of Justice to make it work in my small corner of the country, Lanao del Norte.

REP. DIMAPORO (A.). Mme. Speaker, to close my interpellation, I just want to state that if some of us are worried about martial law, why is it that not many of us worry about the license to kill being given by the military to some groups?

Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the Hon. Mohamad Dimaporo and the succeeding interpellation of the Hon. Abdullah Dimaporo thereon to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

I so move.

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

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, I now move that the Lady from KABATAAN Party-List, the Hon. Sarah Jane I. Elago, be recognized to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Hon. Sarah Jane I. Elago from the Party-List KABATAAN is recognized.

May we inquire on the subject of the Lady's privilege speech?

REP. ELAGO. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

I will speak about free education and the celebration of the International Youth Day for this year.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). She will kindly proceed.

REP. ELAGO. Mme. Speaker and Members of this Chamber, before I begin, I would like to acknowledge the presence of the guests of KABATAAN Party-List in the gallery. They are from the USA Chapter of the youth group, Anakbayan, a National Democratic Mass Organization.

With your permission, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). Please, may the guests of the Honorable Elago stand to be recognized. Welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ELAGO

REP. ELAGO. Sa darating na Sabado, ika-12 ng Agosto, ipagdiriwang sa buong mundo ang 2017 International Youth Day. Nais pong maipahayag ng Representasyong ito ang ilang punto hinggil sa kalagayan ng kabataang Pilipino at ang landas na ating nararapat na tahakin pagdating sa pag-unlad ng kabataan at ng bayan.

Just last Friday, President Rodrigo Duterte signed Republic Act No. 10931 or the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act which will provide free tuition and other school fees in all state universities and colleges, CHED-accredited local universities and colleges and TESDA-run technical vocational institutes. Under the new law, close to two million students of SUCs will not be paying tuition and other school fees. Wala pa po sa bilang ang mga estudyante sa LUCs at mga TESDA-run na mga TVIs natin.

First of all, this Representation thanks and congratulates each and every legislator on this floor who continually supported this measure. Indeed, this is a clear victory, a victory not only for the youth of today but also for future generations. Despite the passage of this law, we need to maintain our guard, we need to remain vigilant. We have to take note how Budget Secretary Benjamin Diokno and other economic managers not only expressed opposition to this Bill, but also made sure that not a single peso is allotted for its implementation in the 2018 proposed budget.

Congress has to address this fact with sheer diligence. Based on the 2018 NEP, the government's economic managers expect all state schools to collect tuition totaling P9.1 billion next year. Mas mataas po iyan mula sa nakaraang taon. We must ensure that this amount will be subsidized, as not a peso should be collected if we want to actualize the real spirit of the new law. Also, we must collectively guard against possible limits that may be inserted in the new law's implementing rules and regulations. Ipinagbawal nga po ng bagong batas na ito ang pangongolekta ng bayarin pero ibang isyu pa o concern o usapin kung tunay nga itong magagawa sa ating mga eskuwelahan.

We note how our economic managers plan to spend up to P8.1 trillion for the Build, Build, Build infrastructure program until 2022. It will only take about 1.1 percent of that or P100 billion to allow budgetary support to free education in SUCs, LUCs and TESDA-TVIs in the next five years. Iyong P100 billion po na binabanggit ng ating Secretary Diokno ay sapat na para sa susunod na limang taon para sa mga iskolar ng bayan. Mme. Speaker, at present, the Philippines is only spending about four percent of its Gross Domestic Product on education, while six percent is the international benchmark. Further, our nation allocates about 10 percent of the total education budget to tertiary education. This funding is relatively low in the ASEAN region, despite the Philippines being dubbed as one of the region's fastest growing economy. Malaysia devotes as high as 31 percent while Indonesia apportions 25 percent. The international benchmark is at 15 percent.

Now, the only path to viability is to make a U-turn from a framework of generating income at the expense of students. Our call is this: "Yes to Build, Build, Build" the future of the youth, leading a generation empowered and honed to their maximum potentials, and able to serve the people and the nation. Nananawagan po ang kabataan sa suporta ng bawat Kongresista sa pagpondo sa kanilang kinabukasan at sa kinabukasan ng ating bayan. This Representation intends to file a resolution this week to express the House's commitment towards funding RA 10931 and I ask all of you, my dear colleagues, to join me in the said resolution.

This is the investment in human capital development that we need in order to propel our economy upwards. Coupled with genuine agrarian reform, rural development, and national industrialization, we are taking significant strides towards the right direction to an inclusive growth, comfortable life and better future for all. Ngunit ang pagpasa po ng libreng edukasyon ay hindang-hindi maglalayo sa atensiyon ng kabataan sa iba't iba pang mas malalaking isyu hindi lamang sa edukasyon kung hindi sa ating lipunan. Bagama't ang pagpasa nito ay kinikilala nating mahalagang panandang-bato sa ating kasaysayan, ngunit hindi dito nagtatapos ang laban ng kabataan.

At the home front, the youth and student movement still has a lot of battles to wage—the actual and swift implementation of the "No Collection Policy" in our public universities and colleges, the high cost of other living expenses for students including food, lodging and transportation, and of course, the big elephant in the room—the yet-to-be-slayed high cost of matriculation and profiteering in our private schools worsened with the implementation of K-to-12 Program. Bukod diyan, nariyan pa rin ang mga isyung kinakaharap ng kabataan hinggil sa kontraktuwalisasyon, kawalan ng trabaho, mababang pasahod at sistemang endo. Nariyan din ang kawalan ng lupa, pang-aagaw ng lupa, matinding

kahirapan at mataas na presyo ng mga bilihan. Iyan po ang nagpapanatili ng laganap na kahirapan, pang-aapi at pagsasamantala sa ating bayan. Ang lahat ng ito ang magpapatuloy sa paglalalag natin ng landas tungo doon sa kapayapaan na may hustisya, Mme. Speaker.

Concurrently, the theme for this year's UN International Youth Day celebration is "Youth Building Peace." Youth building peace—ang mga kabataan bilang siya mismong tagahubog ng kapayapaan. Yes, the Filipino youth wants to build peace, but how can we build peace if our very own government resorts to militarist solutions instead of addressing the roots of armed struggle, of armed conflict in our country. Martial law in Mindanao and the regressing elements of the peace negotiations only show that our national government is reneging on its duty to sow genuine peace.

Sa kabila po nito, bagama't napakamasalimuot ng landas ay pipiliin pa rin ang landas ng paglaban dahil ang landas ng paglaban ay siya ring landas ng pag-asa. Naniniwala ang kabataan na kaya nating maabot ang tunay na kapayapaan. Kung kaya nga nating gawing posible ngayon ang dati ay imposible na katulad ng libreng edukasyon sa mga pampublikong kolehiyo, bakit hindi pa ang tunay na kapayapaan na may hustisya para sa lahat.

With this, I end my privilege speech today, distinguished colleagues, Mme. Speaker, with a challenge—empower the youth in building peace. Let us unite in building peace dahil ang kapayapaan gaya ng libreng edukasyon at napakarami pang magiging tagumpay sa pamamagitan ng sama-samang pagkilos, patuloy na pakikialam, pag-alam, at paglaban ng mga kabataan, ay maghahawan ng landas tungo sa mas maraming tagumpay hindi lamang ngayon, Mme. Speaker, hindi lamang para sa henerasyon na ito kung hindi para sa mga susunod pang henerasyon para sa isang mas magandang bukas na malaya sa pang-aapi at pagsasamantala.

Maraming salamat, Mme. Speaker. Mabuhay ang mga kabataan na makabayan. Mabuhay ang mga kabataan na lumalaban. Mabuhay po ang mamamayan at lahat ng mga nakikiisa sa laban para sa tunay na paghawa ng landas ng kapayapaan na may hustisya.

Maraming salamat.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano).  
The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we refer the privilege speech of the Honorable Elago to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

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

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENEZIA. Mme. Speaker, there being no other Member who wishes to avail of the Privilege Hour, I move to terminate the Privilege Hour.

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

The Floor Leader is recognized.

APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

REP. DE VENEZIA. Mme. Speaker, considering that copies of the Journal of the previous session had been distributed, I move that we approve Journal No. 6, dated August 2, 2017.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano).

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

The Journal is approved.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

REP. DE VENEZIA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we adjourn the session until tomorrow, August 8, 2017, at four o'clock in the afternoon sharp.

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

The session is adjourned.

*It was 7:14 p.m.*