



# Congressional Record

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

## House of Representatives

Vol. 3

Monday, September 18, 2017

No. 25

### CALL TO ORDER

*At 4:00 p.m., Deputy Speaker Rolando G. Andaya, Jr. called the session to order.*

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

### NATIONAL ANTHEM

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

*Everybody rose to sing the Philippine National Anthem.*

### INVOCATION

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Please remain standing for the Invocation to be led by Rep. Cheryl P. Deloso-Montalla.

*Everybody remained standing for the Invocation.*

REP. DELOSO-MONTALLA. Let us put ourselves in the presence of God.

Thank You, dear Lord, for giving us another day.

As the difficult work of legislation continues in the House of Representatives, we ask Your blessing upon all the Members and staff who do the detailed work to produce legislation for the government of our nation. May our work be blessed with success to benefit all Filipinos.

We pray for wisdom, humility and mercy to be in the hearts of our leaders as we make decisions for the welfare of all our people. We ask that You allow us to execute our actions to clarify the rights—especially the right to adequate food—and establish standards for compliance that shall harmonize all laws related to the Filipino's rights.

In a special way, we humbly ask You to bring peace to our country. Give to the men and women of Congress the courage to be resolute in their convictions and the strength to be steadfast in their mercy and above all,

to be certain in their knowledge that they have served their country well.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Good afternoon.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

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

### ROLL CALL

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

The Secretary General will please call the roll.

*The Secretary General called the roll, and the result is as follows, per Journal No. 25, dated September 18, 2017:*

### PRESENT

Abaya	Andaya
Abayon	Angara-Castillo
Abellanosa	Antonio
Abu	Aquino-Magsaysay
Abueg	Aragones
Acosta	Arenas
Advincula	Atienza
Agarao	Banal
Aggabao	Barbers
Albano	Bataoil
Alejano	Batocabe
Almario	Belaro
Almonte	Belmonte (F.)
Alonte	Belmonte (J.C.)
Alvarez (F.)	Belmonte (R.)
Alvarez (M.)	Benitez
Alvarez (P.)	Bertiz
Amante	Biazon
Amatong	Billones

Bolilia	Ferriol-Pascual	Nolasco	Savellano
Bondoc	Flores	Nuñez-Malanyaon	Siao
Bordado	Fortun	Oaminal	Silverio
Bravo (A.)	Fortuno	Ocampo	Singson
Bravo (M.V.)	Fuentebella	Olivarez	Suansing (E.)
Brosas	Garbin	Ong (E.)	Suansing (H.)
Bulut-Begtang	Garcia (G.)	Ortega (P.)	Suarez
Calderon	Garcia (J.E.)	Ortega (V.N.)	Tambunting
Calixto-Rubiano	Garin (R.)	Pacquiao	Tan (A.)
Caminero	Garin (S.)	Paduano	Tan (S.)
Campos	Gasataya	Palma	Teves
Canama	Gatchalian	Pancho	Tiangco
Cari	Geron	Panganiban	Ting
Casilao	Go (A.C.)	Panotes	Tinio
Castelo	Go (M.)	Papandayan	Treñas
Castro (F.L.)	Gomez	Pichay	Tugna
Castro (F.H.)	Gonzaga	Pineda	Tupas
Catamco	Gonzales (A.D.)	Primicias-Agabas	Ty
Cayetano	Gonzalez	Quimbo	Umali
Celeste	Hernandez	Ramirez-Sato	Unabia
Ceramica	Herrera-Dy	Ramos	Ungab
Cerilles	Hofer	Relampagos	Unico
Chavez	Jalosjos	Roa-Puno	Uy (J.)
Chipeco	Kho	Robes	Uy (R.)
Collantes	Khonghun	Rocamora	Vargas
Cortes	Labadlabad	Rodriguez (I.)	Vargas-Alfonso
Cortuna	Lagman	Rodriguez (M.)	Velarde
Cosalan	Lanete	Roman	Velasco
Cua	Laogan	Romualdez	Velasco-Catera
Cuaresma	Lazatin	Romualdo	Veloso
Cueva	Leachon	Roque (H.)	Vergara
Dalipe	Lee	Roque (R.)	Villafuerte
Datol	Limkaichong	Sahali	Villanueva
Daza	Lobregat	Salceda	Villaraza-Suarez
De Jesus	Lopez (B.)	Salimbangon	Villarica
De Venecia	Lopez (C.)	Salo	Violago
De Vera	Lopez (M.L.)	Salon	Yap (A.)
Defensor	Loyola	Sambar	Yap (M.)
Del Mar	Macapagal-Arroyo	Sandoval	Yu
Del Rosario	Maceda	Santos-Recto	Zamora (M.C.)
Deloso-Montalla	Madrona	Sarmiento (C.)	Zamora (R.)
Dimaporo (A.)	Manalo	Sarmiento (E.M.)	Zubiri
Dimaporo (M.K.)	Mangudadatu (Z.)		
Durano	Marcoleta		
Elago	Marcos		
Erice	Mariño		
Eriguel	Marquez		
Ermita-Buhain	Martinez		
Escudero	Matugas		
Espina	Mercado		
Espino	Mirasol		
Eusebio	Montoro		
Evardone	Nava		
Fariñas	Nieto		
Fernando	Noel		
Ferrer (L.)	Nogralas (K.A.)		

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. Mr. Speaker, the roll call shows that 234 Members responded to the call.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). With 234 Members present, the Chair declares the presence of a quorum.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

#### APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve Journal No. 23, dated September 12, 2017. I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

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

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

The Secretary General will please read the Reference of Business.

#### REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

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

#### BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 6385, entitled:

“AN ACT RENEWING THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO PHILIPPINE COMMUNICATIONS SATELLITE CORPORATION (PHILCOMSAT) TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, MAINTAIN AND OPERATE IN THE PHILIPPINES GROUND SATELLITE TERMINAL STATIONS FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS WITH SATELLITE FACILITIES AND DELIVERY TO COMMON CARRIERS”

By Representative Go (M.)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE FRANCHISES

House Bill No. 6386, entitled:

“AN ACT ADOPTING IRA PORTABILITY FOR EVERY CONVERSION OF A MUNICIPALITY INTO A CITY, AMENDING FOR THAT PURPOSE SECTION 285 OF R.A. 7160 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991”

By Representative Macapagal-Arroyo  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 6387, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES-QUEZON CITY CAMPUS, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Castelo  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 6388, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE CALULUAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ANNEX IN BARANGAY PANDO, MUNICIPALITY OF CONCEPCION, PROVINCE OF TARLAC FROM THE CALULUAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS THE PANDO NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Villanueva  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 6390, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM FOR THIRD PARTIES UNDER THE CUSTOMS MODERNIZATION AND TARIFF ACT”

By Representative Biazon  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

House Bill No. 6392, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MULTI-SPECIES MARINE HATCHERY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ABORLAN, PROVINCE OF PALAWAN AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Acosta  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE AND FISHERIES RESOURCES

House Bill No. 6393, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING ONE-TIME CONDONATION OF INTEREST ARREARAGES AND PENALTIES IN FAVOR OF QUALIFIED LOCAL WATER DISTRICTS (LWDs) PERTAINING TO THEIR LOANS WITH THE LOCAL WATER UTILITIES ADMINISTRATION (LWUA)”

By Representative Macapagal-Arroyo  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ENTERPRISES AND PRIVATIZATION

House Bill No. 6395, entitled:

“AN ACT STRENGTHENING REPUBLIC ACT 8049 OR THE ANTI-HAZING LAW OF 1995, AMENDING IT FOR THAT PURPOSE”

By Representative Olivarez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

## RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 1308, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING THE HK SISTERS FOR WINNING MULTIPLE MEDALS AND AWARDS IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS OF PERFORMING ARTS (WCOFA)”

By Representative Bertiz

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1309, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION URGING THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE ANOMALOUS ELECTRICITY SUPPLY AGREEMENTS BETWEEN FIRST CATANDUANES ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, POWER ONE CORPORATION AND CATANDUANES POWER GENERATION INCORPORATED”

By Representatives Uybarreta and Batocabe

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1310, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND CONDOLENCES AND DEEPEST SYMPATHIES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE BEREAVED FAMILY OF CAPTAIN ROMMEL SANDOVAL WHO DIED IN MARAWI CITY WHILE IN THE LINE OF DUTY”

By Representative Dalipe

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

## ADDITIONAL COAUTHORS

Rep. Salvador B. Belaro Jr. for House Bills No. 5397, 6251, and 6346;

Reps. Eric L. Olivarez, Jose “Pingping” I. Tejada, Rozzano Rufino B. Biazon, Rodante D. Marcoleta, Frederick W. Siao, Prospero A. Pichay Jr., Benhur B. Lopez Jr., Orestes T. Salon, Benjamin C. Agarao Jr., Eugene Michael B. De Vera, Horacio P. Suansing Jr., Winston “Winnie” Castelo, Edcel C. Lagman, Mauyag “Jun” B. Papandayan Jr., Vicente “Ching” S.E. Veloso, Raul A. Daza, Emi G. Calixto Rubiano, Dale “Along” R. Malapitan, Suharto T. Mangudadatu, Romeo M. Acop, Wilter “Sharky” Wee Palma II, Emmanuel F. Madrona, Joel Mayo Z. Almario, Milagros Aquino-Magsaysay, Elisa “Olga” T. Kho, Roger G. Mercado, and Nancy A. Catamco for House Bill No. 6251;

Reps. Frederick “Erick” F. Abueg and Franz E. Alvarez for House Bill No. 990;

Rep. Jerry P. Treñas for House Bills No. 1858, 2625, 3468, 4344, 4672, 5164, and 5523;

Rep. Ricardo “RJ” T. Belmonte Jr. for House Bills No. 474, 480, 3682, 5897, and 5898;

Rep. Manuel Jose “Mannix” M. Dalipe for House Bills No. 6215, 6251, and 6308;

Rep. Christopher V.P. de Venecia for House Bill No. 5992;

Rep. Gus S. Tambunting for House Bills No. 1975, 2881, 4443, 6243, 6250, 6321, and 6322;

Rep. Wes Gatchalian for House Bill No. 6236;

Rep. “Kuya” Jose Antonio R. Sy-Alvarado for House Bills No. 5808, 5828, 5968, 6012, 6161, 6216, 6217, 6218, 6306, 6309, 6310, 6312, 6318, 6319, 6325, 6347, 6348, and 6353;

Rep. Manuel Luis T. Lopez for House Bill No. 3641;

Rep. Dale “Along” R. Malapitan for House Bills No. 197, 4954, 5061, 5370, 5382, 5505, 5706, 6122, 6148, and 6302;

Rep. Jose “Pingping” I. Tejada for House Bills No. 3352, 4115, 4116, 5213, 5549, 5900, 5985, and 6029;

Rep. Marlyn L. Primicias-Agabas for House Bills No. 4898 and 6396;

Reps. Raneo “Ranie” E. Abu and Ma. Theresa V. Collantes for House Bill No. 6256;

Rep. Deogracias Victor “DV” B. Savellano for House Bills No. 391, 3679, 6132, and 6209;

Reps. Joel Mayo Z. Almario, Manuel Jose “Mannix” M. Dalipe, and Ricardo “RJ” T. Belmonte Jr. for House Bill No. 5156;

Rep. Arnel M. Cerafica for House Bills No. 2625, 4344, and 4703;

Rep. John Marvin “Yul Servo” C. Nieto for House Bills No. 6115, 6117, 6124, 6204, 6210, 6251, and 6372;

Rep. Erico Aristotle C. Aumentado for House Bill No. 6033;

Rep. Gary C. Alejano for House Resolution No. 1083;

Rep. Scott Davies S. Lanete, M.D. for House Bill No. 180;

Rep. Angelina “Helen” D.L. Tan, M.D. for House Bill No. 627;

Rep. Noel L. Villanueva for House Bill No. 5549;

Rep. Micaela S. Violago for House Bill No. 579;

Reps. Eleanor C. Bulut-Begtang and Ben P. Evardone for House Bill No. 5745;

Rep. Jesulito A. Manalo for House Bill No. 5745;

Rep. Mario Vittorio “Marvey” A. Mariño for House Bills No. 4344, 4703, 6251, and 6256;

Rep. Jose T. Panganiban Jr., CPA, LLB. for House Bills No. 2625, 4344, 4703, and 6251;

Rep. Eric L. Olivarez for House Bill No. 4898;

Rep. Mylene J. Garcia-Albano for House Bill No. 4774;

Rep. Florencio T. Flores Jr., M.D. for House Bill No. 2716; and

Rep. Jeffrey D. Khonghun for House Bill No. 4174.

## WITHDRAWAL OF COAUTHORSHIP

Rep. Gabriel H. Bordado Jr. withdrew his coauthorship of House Bill No. 6215.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report by the Committee on Natural Resources (Committee Report No. 379), re H.B. No. 6394, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING THE MAYON VOLCANO NATURAL PARK IN THE PROVINCE OF ALBAY AS A PROTECTED AREA AND PROVIDING FOR ITS MANAGEMENT”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 3167

Sponsors: Representatives Ty, Nograles (K.A.), Cua and Gonzalez

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Labor and Employment (Committee Report No. 380), re H.B. No. 6396, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTING POLICIES FOR THE PROTECTION AND WELFARE OF CAREGIVERS IN THE PRACTICE OF THEIR PROFESSION”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bills Numbered 269 and 500

Sponsors: Representatives Ting, Roman, Nograles (K.A.) and Nograles (J.J.)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Public Order and Safety (Committee Report No. 381), re R.B.H. No. 12, entitled:

“RESOLUTION OF BOTH HOUSES OF CONGRESS PROPOSING TO IMMEDIATELY CONVENE THE JOINT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE ON THE HUMAN SECURITY ACT OF 2007 FOR THE PURPOSE OF REVIEWING AND ASSESSING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ANTI-TERRORISM POLICY OF THE COUNTRY”

recommending its adoption in substitution of Resolution of Both Houses No. 04

Sponsors: Representatives Acop and Alejano

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Natural Resources (Committee Report No. 382), re H.B. No. 6405, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING THE THIRD DISTRICT OF PALAWAN AS A MINING-FREE ZONE”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 5597

Sponsors: Representatives Ty and Acosta  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Natural Resources (Committee Report No. 383), re H.B. No. 5301, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING THE PROVINCE OF SOUTHERN LEYTE A MINING-FREE ZONE”

recommending its approval without amendment

Sponsors: Representatives Ty and Mercado  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

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

## PRIVILEGE HOUR

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

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

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I now move that the Gentleman from the Second District of Pangasinan, the honorable Rep. Leopoldo N. Bataoil, be recognized to avail of the Privilege Hour. I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

Rep. Leopoldo N. Bataoil is hereby recognized to avail of the Privilege Hour.

## PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. BATAOIL

REP. BATAOIL. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Honorable Members of this Chamber, I rise today to honor the great heroes of our land, our veterans.

Last August 7, 2017, I delivered a privilege speech calling for the support of this Chamber to release the differential and pension arrears of retired personnel of the Philippine National Police. Today, I rise to seek your support for our World War II Veterans, the so-called vanishing breed whose number continues to decline as they are called to the next life.

Sa ating kagalang-galang at kapita-pitagang mga bayani ng bayan, mga kapwa ko lingkod ng bayan, mga panauhin: Sa inyong lahat, magandang hapon po.

Ito po ang aking third attempt na i-deliver po ito. Tamang-tama po sana ito noong National Heroes Day

pero hindi nagkaroon ng pagkakataon na mai-deliver ito. Nandito po lahat ng mga beterano natin at that time and also, the retirees but due to unforeseen circumstances, this privilege speech was not delivered.

As we celebrated our National Heroes Day last August 28, the first thing that came to mind were the national heroes who were taught to us in Sibika at Kultura: the life and works of Jose Rizal, ang tapang ni Andres Bonifacio, ang Utak ng Himagsikan na si Apolinario Mabini, at iba pa. However, we also remember those valiant heroes of World War II.

We remember the greatness of all Filipinos who offered their blood, sweat, tears and life so that we can live free. We remember those who are called to arms to fight for a noble cause. We remember those young boys who changed from careless teenagers into men and became heroes overnight. We remember those who, without a second thought, offered their lives so that others may live, so that we, our children and our children's children may live in peace and progress.

*(Video presentation)*

On the screen, you will see some photos of our ailing veterans and some of their actions on the ground during those momentous events.

I also stand before you today, Mr. Speaker, our colleagues, to put front and center the current plight and living conditions of the few remaining war heroes who are in the twilight years of their lives. Our veterans are struggling today not only from the injuries of the battle and horrors of the war inside them, but also on how to survive day by day. Our veterans do not ask for monuments of men, but the recognition that they had accomplished their mission. Now, it is our turn to return the favor. This is our chance to show them, to our dear veterans, that we stood up for them in their time of need.

Sa kanilang pakikipaglaban sa kalayaan at demokrasya noong Ikalawang Digmaang Pandaigdig, mahigit 70 taon na tinatamasa ng isang malayang Pilipinas ang isang malayang pamumuhay para sa mga Pilipino. Siguro, mapapansin ninyo, matutunghayan ninyo sa video presentation na ito ang mga kadakilaan na kailanman ay hindi makakalimutan.

Libu-libo ang namatay sa Bataan Death March. Dugo ng libu-libong bayaning Pilipino ang idinilig sa lupa ng Bataan, sa Corregidor, sa Mindoro, sa Lingayen Gulf, at sa Maynila pati sa Leyte, sa Cebu, sa Cotabato, sa Maguindanao at sa Davao. Libu-libo ang nagbuwis ng buhay para sa kalayaan at demokrasya ng Pilipinas.

In the fight against the Japanese Imperial Forces in 1942, more than 60,000 Filipino soldiers made the ultimate sacrifice. Thousands of brave men and women were left wounded and roughly hundreds were missing in action. Hundreds more offered their lives for a greater purpose in South Korea and in Vietnam and by some miracle and divine intervention, some of those brave

men and women survived and are still here with us today. They were with us during the scheduled delivery of my privilege speech.

Let us remember the service of our veterans and renew our national promise to fulfill our sacred obligations to them. I am filled with solemn pride and gratitude for the service not only because of the freedom they have ensured for this country, but also because of the opportunity they have given us.

With your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, I would like to share the story of our veterans, the war veterans, particularly Pfc. William Pasiwen, Infantry. He is now 99 years old. He joined the resistance movement in Cervantes, Ilocos Sur. Throughout the Liberation Period, his unit engaged in intelligence work, sabotage, harassment, combat and cutting off enemy communication lines.

Gen. Pedro Zafra served under the USAFIP-Fifth Northern Luzon that operated in the whole of Northern Luzon, launching attacks against the retreating Japanese forces. His unit cut communication lines and bridges and isolated enemy installations, capturing bases and airfields, thereby allowing Americans to proceed. He had fought the fiercest and most difficult battles that became the turning point in the eventual defeat of the Japanese forces. He was also in South Korea as a member of the Philippine Expeditionary Forces to Korea from 1953 to 1954 that earned fame in the defense of "Sandbag Castle" and "Heartbreak Ridge."

Commander Madayag is currently the National President of the Filipino Disabled Veterans Association Incorporated. He was an intelligence officer of the Hunters Guerrillas during the war. He survived numerous raids and encounters. He suffered injuries in the knee and leg when a hand grenade was thrown at his group, the pain of which he still endures up to this day. Commander Madayag is already 94 years old.

Sa ngalan po ng sambayanang Pilipino, taos-puso po kaming nagpapasalamat sa ating mga bayani na nakipaglaban para sa Inang Bayan. Nagpapasalamat po kami sa malayang kinabukasan. Nagpapasalamat po kami na dahil sa kanilang kabayanihan at kagitingan, malaya kami at ang aming mga anak sa lagim ng digmaan. Sa mga pamilya at kaanak ng mga sundalong nagbuwis ng buhay, maraming salamat po sa kanilang sakripisyo. Bagamat may kakambal na hinagpis, hindi nila pinagdamutan ang sambayanang Pilipino ng isang ama o anak na matapang at ipinagtanggol ang kalayaan.

On the other hand, it is disheartening to know, Mr. Speaker, that the remaining valiant heroes who risked their lives for liberty and freedom during World War II, only less than 8,000 strong, as we speak, have been living their twilight years despondent and in need.

Mr. Speaker, siya po ay si World War II veteran Alberto Cariaga Solomon, 97 years old, tubong La

Libertad, Negros Oriental at ngayon ay naninirahan sa isang depressed area sa Barangay Santolan, Pasig. Sa batang edad na 21, siya ay napabilang sa United States Armed Forces in the Far East (USAFFE) noong 1941 at nadestino sa Mindanao. Noong 1942, siya ay nadakip ng mga Hapon at ikinulong sa pinakamalaking concentration camp sa Camp O'Donnell sa Tarlac. Sa kanilang katandaan at marahil sa mga tinamong pasakit noong digmaan, may kahinaan ang pandinig ng beterano. Sa edad na 97, ang kanyang mga apo ang nagsisilbing kaligayahan at inspirasyon ni Lolo Alberto. Isa po siya sa mga beteranong nangangailangan ng tulong at suporta ng gobyerno.

Siya naman po ay si World War II veteran Porfirio Laguitan, 93 years old, ipinanganak sa Pozorrubio, Pangasinan. Noong February 10, 1924, siya ay naging informer ng mga guerrilla noong panahon ng giyera. After the Liberation, he looked for and turned over Japanese deserters to the USAFFE headquarters. He was assigned to the 13<sup>th</sup> Military Police Company, Philippine Army. Sa kabila ng kanyang edad, suot ang kanyang blue cap at polo, ay patuloy na nagbibigay-pugay sa ating Inang Bayan at sa watawat ng Pilipinas si Lolo Porfirio tuwing Lunes ng umaga, walang kawala, nandoon siya sa Taguig City Hall. Siguro ay hihilingin ko sa ating colleague diyan sa bandang Taguig City Hall na batiin po siya para sa ating lahat—294 po tayo lahat dito na magkakasama. Ipaabot po ang ating pasasalamat kay Lolo Porfirio as he joins almost every morning, Lunes, the flag-raising ceremony, at sumasaludo po siya doon sa watawat ng Pilipinas diyan sa Taguig City Hall.

Born on February 15, 1915, World War II veteran, Jose Santiago Quilatan Sr. is 102 years old. While having reached his centennial year, veteran Quilatan still retains a good memory. During the war, he was inducted into the Hunters ROTC Guerrillas, 47<sup>th</sup> Regiment as a Corporal and was promoted to Sergeant, assigned to the Trigger Unit in 1943. This group was noted for neutralizing enemy soldiers and Makapilis in the provinces of Laguna and Rizal.

These war veterans, Mr. Speaker, managed to get through their daily needs with a meager monthly pension of P5,000 per month. This is not enough, considering the continuing increase in the prices of food, electricity, gas and other basic commodities, not to mention their medicines and health care needs. Since 1994, when Republic Act No. 7696 mandated the increase in the monthly pension for senior veterans from P1,000 to P5,000, funding constraints have hindered the passage of proposed measures that will further increase the old age pension of veterans. Many attempts have been made for the past 23 years but none of the bills have gone through Congress. It is sad to note, Mr. Speaker, that these bills were put in the backseat.

In this file video from 2015, our war heroes have already been clamoring for the increase in

old age pension. Please focus your attention on the video presentation as you witness this clamor of our veterans.

*(Video presentation)*

The message two years ago and today is still the same. The veterans' old age pension of P5,000 is not enough to make a decent living. Kulang na kulang pong kabayaran sa sakripisyo at paghihirap ng mga beterano noong Ikalawang Digmaang Pandaigdig. Taun-taon nating ginugunita ang mga pangyayari noong panahong iyon. Taun-taon natin silang pinupuri at pinarangalan ngunit hindi po ito sapat. Wika nga ni Lolo Bayani, ang taun-taon nating paggunita "is but a social obligation without any real reason." Huwag po nating ipagwalangbahala ang kanilang hinaing. Kailangan po tayo ng ating mga beterano. Ipakita natin sa kanila na hindi nasayang ang kanilang sakripisyo.

In this Seventeenth Congress, the Committee on Veterans Affairs and Welfare, which I chair, is pushing for a measure which seeks to increase the old age pension of senior veterans from P5,000 to P20,000 per month. The increase will enable them to enjoy, at the very least, day-to-day quality living. Mr. Speaker, the additional appropriations needed for the proposed increase in the old age pension of war veterans is only P1.3 billion, and will continue to decrease every year kasi po, according to record, every month ay mayroon pong 300 na mga beterano na namamatay o pumapanaw. When we first proposed the increase in the old age pension of war veterans in 2016, the target beneficiaries were 8,834 veterans. This year, it is projected at only 7,523 veterans who will benefit from the increase in pension. If we further delay the approval of this measure, Mr. Speaker, who shall reap these benefits, the projected 5,888 in 2018 or the 4,596 veterans left by 2019 at the end of our term, tayong mga third term po?

On the average, 300 veterans, as I said earlier, die every month. The number of veterans is dwindling day by day, Mr. Speaker. Will they still be alive to be able to enjoy these benefits? Mr. Speaker, time is almost up for them, our national heroes. May I seek your support to increase the old age pension of these war veterans in honor of the sacrifice of the few remaining living heroes, and to at least provide them with a life free from poverty, debt and worry.

Let me share this quote, "A veteran—whether active duty, discharged, retired, or reserve—is someone who, at one point in his life, wrote a blank check made payable to the country "for an amount of up to, and including his life." That is honor.

Kaya pa nating habulin ang nai-propose na budget natin for 2018 dahil sa mayroon pa naman pong tinatawag na bicam. Huwag po nating sayangin ang pagkakataon na bigyan ng halaga at parangal ang ating mga beterano. In closing, my dear colleagues, Mr. Speaker, "As we further our efforts to build a stronger, peaceful, and

more secure nation, we count on our people to emulate the patriotism of our heroes so that we may all prevail against the looming threats of criminality, terrorism and drugs.” That was the very statement of our beloved President Rodrigo R. Duterte.

Thank you very much, my dear colleagues, Mr. Speaker. Good evening to one and all.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Thank you, Congressman Bataoil. *(Applause)*

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from the First District of Bulacan, the Hon. “Kuya” Jose Antonio R. Sy-Alvarado, for his interpellation. I so move.

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

Congressman Sy-Alvarado is recognized for his interpellation.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Maraming salamat, Dep. Majority Leader. Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker.

Maaari po ba akong magbigay ng ilang katanungan sa ating kasama mula sa Pangasinan, Mr. Speaker?

REP. BATAOIL. Opo, my pleasure po, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Maraming salamat po.

Sa akin pong kasamang Kongresista mula sa Pangasinan, maaari ko po bang itanong kung ilan po ba nagsimula iyong ating mga war veteran bago sila tuluyang isa-isang namatay, at sinasabi nating 300 per month ay nababawas sa kanila?

REP. BATAOIL. Ito pong figure, siguro, ay uumpisahan ko na lang doon po sa data na nasa akin. Noong 2016 po, sa record ng ating PVAO ay mayroong 8,834 veterans. Sigurado po, before that time ay mayroon pang mas mahigit pa sa 8,834 ang mga beteranong ito pero dahil doon sa rate na 300 veterans, approximately around 300 veterans die every month, ito po ang latest figure: as of 2016, 8,834; 2017, maaaring 7,523 na lang po; at hanggang sa 2018 to 2019, maaaring 4,496 na lang.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mr. Speaker, kung sinasabi po ng ating kasama na pagdating ng 2019 ay 4,000 na lamang mahigit, hindi po ba dapat bigyan natin ng pagmamadali o pagpupursigi ang bagay na ito sapagkat baka magulat tayo, kung patatagalin pa natin ay baka wala na tayong beteranong mabibigyan pa noong benepisyong dapat nating ibibigay sa kanila. Baka

kung kailan pumayag nga tayong bigyan natin sila ng P20,000 ay dadalawa na lang pala iyong beteranong bibigyan natin nito.

Iyon po kasing sinabi ng ating kasamang Congressman mula sa Pangasinan na ang mga beteranong ito ay naghanda at nabuwis ng buhay, hindi lamang kayamanan, hindi lamang bahay ang kanilang sinanla pero buhay ang kanilang binuwis para sa ating kalayaan. Hindi po siguro mapapantayan lamang ng isang bilyon o mahigit isang bilyong hinihingi ng ating kasama para sa appropriations iyong pasasalamat natin sa mga war veteran na nagbigay ng kanilang buhay, pagod at lahat-lahat para sa ating minamahal na bansa, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, isa pa pong katanungan—maaari po ba nating malaman, kung alam po ba ng ating kasama, kung magkano iyong naibigay ng allied forces, hindi lamang ng bansang Pilipinas, doon sa mga war veteran po natin? Ako po ay naniniwalang noong panahon na sila ay nakikipaglaban para sa ating kalayaan ay hindi lamang para sa Pilipinas ang kanilang pinaglalaban kung hindi kalayaan ng buong mundo laban sa ating mga kaaway.

REP. BATAOIL. Mr. Speaker, maganda po iyong katanungan ninyo. Magkano ba talaga ang naibigay ng ibang nasyon, ibang bansa, particularly ang Amerika, sa mga beterano natin na lumaban sa mga mananakop hindi lang sa Pilipinas, kundi sa ibang bansa? Iyon po, as to the figure, siguro, ay maaari nating mai-provide later on sa ating kasamahan. Ang mahalaga dito ay iyong ano ba ang naibibigay ng ating bansa, ng ating mga mamamayan bilang pagtingin, pagsaludo at pasasalamat sa kabayanihan ng ating mga beterano.

So, I appreciate the concern of our colleague from Bulacan at maipo-provide po natin ang data kung magkano ba talaga ang natanggap nila, kung mayroon man. Iyong iba, siguro, sa aking pananaw, ay mayroong naging recipient ng compensation as members of the Philippine Scouts. However, some were not. In fact, iyong akin pong tito, uncle, a member of PMA Class 43, 3<sup>rd</sup> Lieutenant sa Philippine Army, kinomisyon po sila noong sila pa ay kadete sa Philippine Military Academy. Ang pangalan po niya ay 3<sup>rd</sup> Lieutenant Leopoldo G. Bataoil. Pinangalan po ako sa kanya. I remember na iyong lolo ko, tumatanggap siya ng pension from the PVAO. Iyon lang po at wala naman po silang natatanggap sa Amerika. Siguro, this is true to all veterans. May mga nakatanggap, mayroong mga hindi pero iyong data na iyon, we can provide when they are available.

Maraming salamat po.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Maraming salamat po sa ating kasama.

Panghuling katanungan na lang po, Mr. Speaker. Sa pananaw po ba ng ating kasama mula sa Pangasinan ay



sasapat po ba iyong P5,000 na, sa palagay po ng inyong abang lingkod mula sa Bulacan, ay napakaliit para sa ating pagpapakita ng pasasalamat sa ating mga war veteran na, inuulit ko, nagbuwis ng buhay at lahat-lahat sa panahong tayo ay nasa kadiliman at kaguluhan para lamang sa kalayaan ng ating bansa at ng buong mundo, Mr. Speaker?

REP. BATAOIL. Mr. Speaker, definitely, iyong P5,000 a month ay hindi po sapat iyon, at kahit iyong P20,000 a month na aking iminumungkahi ay baka hindi pa rin sapat ito pero maski papaano, makakatulong na ito. Mayroon nga pong ibang mungkahi ang mga kasamahan natin, “Why do we not double that to P40,000 a month?” Ganoon pa ang talagang mapursigi na mungkahi ng ating mga kasamahan dito pero tinitingnan din natin iyong kakayahan ng ating gobyerno, siguro, iyong P20,000 ay medyo acceptable o maluwag sa kalooban ng bawat isa sa atin dito. Sad to say, Mr. Speaker, ito ang sasabihin ko sa inyo: pinursigi ko talaga ito, pinursigi rin ni Congresswoman Herminia Roman ng napakaraming taon noong kanyang panunungkulan bilang Congresswoman, bilang Chairman ng Veterans Affairs, pero hindi po nangyari iyon. Ngayon, matatapos na rin ang akin pong termino at sa 2019 ay ga-graduate na po ako. I hope na dito sa 2018 na ito ay maihabol pa, may pag-asa pa, Mr. Speaker.

Maraming salamat po.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mr. Speaker, sa aking mga kasama, ang mga mamamayan po ng Lalawigan ng Bulacan, kasama na po ang mga miyembro ng National Unity Party ay nakikiisa sa inyong panukala at masidhing humihingi ng tulong sa ating mga kasama na ipasa na po natin ito. Bigyan po natin ng bonus at award iyong mga taong nag-alay at nagbuwis ng kanilang buhay para sa ating kalayaan.

Maraming salamat po sa mga beterano. Maraming salamat po sa aking kasama, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BATAOIL. Maraming salamat po.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Thank you, Congressman Sy-Alvarado.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, before we proceed with further interpellation, may I move that we recognize the Gentleman from Party-List BUHAY, the Hon. Jose L. Atienza Jr.

REP. ATIENZA. Thank you, Mr. Dep. Majority Leader.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). For his interpellation?

REP. MERCADO. For his manifestation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). There is a manifestation from Congressman Atienza.

REP. ATIENZA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, we would like to express our wholehearted support to the call of the Gentleman from Pangasinan about a better deal for our veterans. Kakaunti na lang sila, totoo po iyan dahil ang edad ng mga iyan ay between 90 to 100 and so, in a short while, mauubos na po talaga sila. So, the very urgent call of the Gentleman from Pangasinan should be listened to, and I listened intently, and we would like to express our full support to his call.

Having said that this is not an interpellation, Mr. Speaker, I would like to call your attention to the Journal that we just approved 30 minutes ago. I am talking about the Journal of Tuesday, September 12, and on page 6, paragraph 6, it was recorded that we interpellated the MMDA. That is true, that is a fact, Mr. Speaker, but the recording reflected in no way the sentiments that we aired in interpellating the MMDA. We did not talk only about garbage. We also talked about the inability of the MMDA to address effectively the traffic situation in Metro Manila. If they would recall it now, I am talking to the Secretariat, they would remember the very, very strong words that I used that afternoon. I even said, “It is bordering on incompetence”—I said this when General Manager Dan Lim was present—“for you not to realize you have to have back-up pumps in critical roadways like EDSA, hindi ninyo dapat pinapayagang mapuno ng basura iyang mga pumps na iyan.”

Iyon po ang essence of my interpellation which is not contained in this recording. If ever we would go back to the recording of what happened on Tuesday, September 12, it will not be reflective of that, it will not be reflected on the records. So, we would like an adjustment of the records. You should be faithful to what you witnessed and what you heard on the floor; otherwise, we will be wasting our saliva, our voices, our time if you do not reflect this in the Journal. We should be more sensitive to this, Mr. Speaker. This is for the good of every Member who stands up and interpellates any Department in our bureaucracy.

Kailangan po sumasalamin ito sa damdamin na ibinibigkas ng ating mga Miyembro, sapagkat iyong sinasabi niya ay damdamin ng higit na nakararaming mga miyembro na kanyang kinakatawan. When I stand up here, I do not speak for myself, but I speak for all the members of BUHAY Party-List and for every Filipino, every Metro Manilan suffering from the horrendous, horrific traffic conditions, at hindi natin puwedeng tanggapin ang dahilan na tumigil daw po iyong bomba, walang back-up pump, kaya binaha po iyong Cubao underpass. That should not happen if the MMDA is

doing its job. So we indicted practically and put the MMDA on the spot by pointing out to them that they are not doing their job properly.

I want the Journal adjusted so, at any time, it should be reflective of what actually happened on the floor. It was not a social greeting on the part of this Representation, neither did I mention only garbage. I talked about the horrific, horrendous, unattended traffic conditions in Metro Manila, and the MMDA should be pointed to in this regard, as I am reiterating that they should do their job; otherwise, we can consider all of them incompetent and not fit for their job.

I hope the Dep. Majority Leader would cause the correction and the reflection of the sentiments aired by this Representation. We did just not greet them and then talk about the garbage, but we almost castigated them about the traffic.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Thank you, Congressman Atienza.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, we join the Sr. Dep. Minority Leader in his manifestation and move that Journal No. 23, dated September 12, 2017, be amended accordingly.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Would you like to suspend first the interpellation of...

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from MAGDALO Party-List, the Hon. Gary C. Alejano, for his interpellation. I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Congressman Alejano is recognized for his interpellation.

REP. ALEJANO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat.

Nais ko lang pong magtanong sa ating kagalang-galang na Representative ng Second District ng Pangasinan kung willing po siyang tumanggap ng mga katanungan mula sa MAGDALO Representative.

REP. BATAOIL. Opo, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ALEJANO. Thank you po.

Nabanggit na rin po iyong dami ng mga beteranong namamatay kada buwan. Ito po ay 300 kada buwan, and in a matter of so many years, mauubos na po sila. Ngayon, ang natitira po, as of 2016, ay 8,800. Natanong na rin iyong mga benepisyo. Gusto ko lang

pong magtanong kay Congressman Bataoil: Sir, ang benepisyo po bang medical ay enough na nakatutugon doon sa pangangailangan ng ating mga beterano sa ngayon?

REP. BATAOIL. Sa ngayon po, Mr. Speaker, minabuti po naming pumunta doon sa Veterans Memorial Medical Center, kasama ko iyong ibang mga Congressmen—nandoon si Congressman Biazon at iba pa. Marami kami na pumunta, miyembro ng Veterans Affairs and Welfare Committee, at tiningnan namin mismo iyong facilities ng ospital para makita kung iyong tungkol sa katanungan ng ating Congressman Alejano ay sapat para maasikaso ang medical needs ng ating mga beterano and their families. So, nakita po namin na nandoon po naman iyong pursigi at saka iyong facilities natin, pero nakita din namin na ang daming mga pasyente na, sa tingin namin, ay nagku-queuing. Kaya nga, mayroon pong mungkahi na magpatayo ng ospital ng mga beterano sa Visayas at isa rin sa Mindanao. So, iyon po ay isang pagpapatunay na itong problema natin sa medical assistance and services para sa ating mga beterano ay mayroong matinding kakulangan.

REP. ALEJANO. Salamat po, Congressman Bataoil, Sir. Naitanong ko po ito dahil alam ho natin na ang Veterans Memorial Medical Center ay nag-iisa lamang at nandito sa NCR. Alam naman ho natin na iyong mga beterano ay hindi lamang nandito sa NCR. Tama po iyan— mayroon tayong beterano sa Mindanao, may beterano sa Visayas and even in the northern part of Luzon. Alam naman ho natin na sila ay nasa twilight years na nila at kailangan ho nila ng atensiyong medikal, kaya nga ho nakalulungkot kung sila ay pupunta pa sa Veterans Memorial Medical Center at doon magpapagamot. Kaya nga ho nagkakaroon ng queuing.

Ang pangalawang tanong ko po kay Congressman Bataoil: Sir, ano pong inisyatiba ng ating gobyerno upang ma-educate ang publiko sa buhay ng ating beterano? Hindi lamang mag-educate kung hindi mag-inspire sa ating mga kabataan upang magsilbi sa ating bayan, dahil gusto ko lang i-quote po ang wisdom ng ating kasamahan na si Congressman Acop nang sinabi niya po, “A country that does not take care of its veterans does not deserve to send its soldiers to any war.” Kaya po, ano po ba ang ating ginagawang inisyatiba upang mabigyan ho sila ng honor, mabigyan ho sila ng pagpapahalaga, at ma-educate ho iyong ating mga kabataan sa sakripisyo na kanilang ibinigay sa ating bansa?

REP. BATAOIL. In fairness po, Mr. Speaker, doon sa quality of services rendered by our Veterans Memorial Medical Center, kasi nakita namin na maganda po iyong facilities, kaunting pag-aayos lang

siguro para from the outside ay makita natin na talagang one of the best hospitals ang Veterans Memorial Medical Center. Doon sa loob, may modernong facilities and equipment. Pinagmamalaki rin natin na iyong doctors doon ay talagang magagaling and in fact, many doctors, new doctors, desire to be accommodated for practice or on-the-job training therein or even employment because of the doctor's standards in our Veterans Memorial Medical Center. However, that is not enough to promote awareness and love of veterans and love of country.

Ito na iyong tinatanong ni Congressman Alejano: How do we promote the heroism, the value of service and of love of country to our constituents para mapatibay natin iyong mga ganitong pagpapahalaga ng ating mga beterano? Love of country is one of the major plans, projects and programs and activities of the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office sa pamumuno ni Gen. Ernesto Carolina. Nakita ko po iyong pagpapahalaga sa mga memorial shrines, iyong places of heroism, at iyong plano na i-upgrade ang Libingan ng mga Bayani at iba pang places of heroism.

In Pangasinan lang po, dahil sa hindi makayanan ng national government iyong pag-upgrade at pagpapaganda ng aming veterans center doon, iyong mismong provincial government of Pangasinan, during the time of Governor, now Congressman Amado T. Espino Jr., pinaganda niya iyon. It is now a beautiful place for everyone to see. You can be proud na the Pangasinan veterans really fought for this country.

So, iyon ang isa sa mga manifestation na kung bibigyan natin ng halaga itong places of heroism, mae-engganyo natin itong mga kabataan natin upang mahal in ang ating bansang Pilipinas at maging handang ialay ang kanilang buhay kapag kinakailangan, kapag dumating ang pagkakataon, hindi lang in time of war, but especially in time of peace.

Ano ba ang mga hinaharap natin ngayon in time of peace? We experience disasters, calamities, and other hardships that our people experience as a result of so many man-made, unnatural disasters. So, how can we encourage the youth to become heroes and real servant-leaders of our Filipino people and our country? By way of introducing sa educational systems—elementary, high school, college, and even post-graduate—ang love of country, kung kinakailangan ay ibalik natin iyong ROTC. Sa pamamagitan niyan ay magkakaroon ng dibdibang pagmamahal ang mga kabataan sa kanilang sariling bayan.

REP. ALEJANO. Maraming salamat po, Kgg. Bataoil.

Tama po, nag-a-agree po ako sa inyo na hindi lamang tuwing National Heroes Day lang natin inaalaala ang ating mga beterano dahil napapansin din ho natin sa ngayon, ang ating mga kabataan ay wala

na pong appreciation sa kasaysayan ng ating bansa, especially doon sa ating mga beteranong lumaban sa mga dayuhang nanakop sa ating bansa. Kaya nga po itong pagsulong din mismo ng ROTC ay sinusupportahan din po ng MAGDALO Party-List at naniniwala din po kami na hindi lamang ngayon ang paghahanda sa kalamidad, both natural and man-made calamities, ang dapat harapin ng ating bansa.

Ngayon po, panghuli, nais ko lang pong pasalamatan si Cong. Leopoldo N. Bataoil, Sir, sa inyong pagpupursigi na mabigyan pansin at madagdagan ang kaukulang pondo para sa ating mga beterano. Sa tingin ko po, kailangan ho nating bigyang pansin ito dahil hindi po ordinaryong pagsusugal lang ang inalay ng ating mga beterano. Iyan din po ang magiging mensahe sa ating mga sundalo ngayon at ang mga kabataan in the future, paano ho sila magsisilbi sa ating bayan kung hinahayaan natin na ang ating mga beterano ay naglilimos sa kanyang bansang sinisilbihan.

Kaya nga po ako, bilang Kinatawan ng MAGDALO Party-List, ay sumusuporta na madagdagan po ang pondo ng ating mga beterano upang maiangat naman ang benepisyo mula sa P5,000 sa ngayon, upang ito ay lumaki pa at maging P20,000.

With that, Mr. Speaker, maraming salamat po, Congressman Bataoil, Sir, maraming salamat po.

REP. BATAOIL. Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Thank you very much.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Lady from the First District of Bataan, the Hon. Geraldine B. Roman, for her interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Congresswoman Roman is recognized for her interpellation.

REP. ROMAN. Mr. Speaker, will the honorable Gentleman from Pangasinan and the Chairman of the Committee on Veterans Affairs and Welfare yield to some questions. Before I pose my questions, I would like to express also my support. Mr. Speaker, bilang Representante ng Unang Distrito ng Bataan kung saan nakipaglaban ang karamihan ng mga beterano noong Ikalawang Digmaang Pandaigdig, at bilang anak na rin ng dating puno ng Committee on Veterans Affairs and Welfare na ang aking inang si Minia Roman, ay nais kong ipaabot sa ating Chairman ang akin pong taos-pusong suporta, lalung-lalo na po sa panukalang batas na ito na ipinaglaban din ng aking ina at ipinaglalaban ko rin po upang taasan ang pensiyon ng ating mga World War II veterans mula sa P5,000 na maging P20,000.

Mr. Speaker, base po doon sa ating computation, sa 8,000 beterano ng World War II na mayroon po sa panahong ito at nababawasan po ng 300 kada buwan, sa loob ng dalawang taon, dalawang buwan at iilang araw ay mawawala na po ang lahat ng ating World War II veterans.

Kung kaya't bagamat ako ay nakikilala sa Seventeenth Congress bilang champion ng LGBT rights at sa LGBT SOGIE Equality Bill, nananawagan din ako sa aking mga kasamahan na sana isaalang-alang nila na two years na lang po ang nalalabi at mawawalan na tayo ng World War II veterans. Kung hindi pa natin ibibigay ngayon ang kanilang karampatang recognition, ang pagkilala sa kanilang kontribusyon sa ating kalayaan, kailan pa?

Nais kong ipaalam din sa ating Chairman na sa darating na panahon ay magla-lobby po ako bilang Representative ng Unang Distrito ng Bataan at kasapi rin po ng Committee on Veterans Affairs para po sa pagsusulong nito. Makaasaya kayo na kung anumang dedikasyon ang ipinakita ko doon sa SOGIE Equality Bill ay ipapakita ko rin po para sa panukalang batas na ito.

Mr. Speaker, ang tanong ko po dito sa ating Chairperson ay ito, sa inyo pong buong paniniwala ay kakayanin ng ating gobyerno itong P1.3 bilyon na ating hinihingi?

REP. BATAOIL. Mr. Speaker, buo po ang aking paniniwala na iyong P1.3 bilyon ay kayang-kaya ng ating gobyerno. Kahit noong mga nakaraang taon kayang-kaya ito. Iyong sa CCT nga, ilan bang inilaan natin doon? Itong veterans natin, very, very senior citizens na sila and they can be categorized under the CCT kung tutuusin. So, nagbigay tayo ng multibillion sa Conditional Cash Transfer kamakailan. Bakit hindi ba natin puwedeng i-allocate o i-realign man lang a portion of that kung wala tayong mapagkuhanan para sa ating mga beterano?

Naniniwala ako doon sa sinabi ng ating mahal na Kongresista ng Bataan na baka dalawang taon na lang maubos na nga sila. Dalawang taon na lang— 92, 93, 94, iyong oldest dito na nabanggit ko is 102 years old. Baka next month or next day, pumanaw na po sila, huwag naman po sana, ano. Ipagdasal po natin ang kanilang kalusugan at ipagdasal po natin na ito pong iminumungkahi namin ni Representative Roman ay maisama dito sa 2018 budget kasi kaya ito kung tutuusin.

Iyon po ang aking idinulog at iniluhod sa ating Chairman ng Committee on Appropriations. Sana po, ma-feel nila iyong aking pagluhod dito mismo ng nagko-conclude tayo noong matatapos na iyong usapin. Sabi ko, please nandiyan iyong mga beterano, at nandiyan si Gen. Ernesto Carolina. Huwag ninyong kalimutan iyong mga beterano natin. Sila ang dahilan

kung bakit tayo ay namumuhay ng may kalayaan. Sad to say na—well, I respect the position of our Committee. Ipinaubaya ko na lang po iyon sa ating leadership. Hopefully, itong hinain natin, Representative Roman, ay marinig doon sa Senado at sa bicameral meeting.

Maraming salamat po.

REP. ROMAN. Mr. Speaker, narinig din po natin ang Chairperson ng Committee ng Veterans Affairs and Welfare. Malinaw po na kaya ng ating national budget ang bigyan ng karampatang pagkilala ang ating mga beterano, P1.3 bilyon lamang ang ating hinihingi. Sa isang taon, 3,600 veterans ang namamatay; sa dalawang taon, 7,200; at 8,000 na lang po ang ating veterans.

Bago po ako magpaalam ngayong hapon na ito sa aking pakikipag-usap at pakikipag-ugnayan sa inyo, mag-iiwan po ako ng isang tanong hindi lamang po para sa ating Chairman, kundi para sa lahat ng ating mga kasamahan dahil lahat tayo na nakikinabang sa ipinaglaban ng ating mga beterano—kung kaya ng ating pamahalaan ang P1.3 bilyon na ating hinihingi, ano pa ang ating hinihintay? Bakit natin hindi aprobahan ang panukalang batas na magtataas from P5,000 to P20,000. Makaasaya kayo sa mga darating na linggo na ako po, pati ang aking mga kasamahan sa Committee on Veterans Affairs and Welfare, ay iikot at hihingin ang pirma nang bawat isa sa inyo. Ang pirma po nang bawat isa ay nangangahulugan ng inyong pagkilala sa mga taong nagsakripisyo ng kanilang buhay at ang pagkilala rin po sa kabayanihan nilang lahat.

Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BATAOIL. Maraming salamat po.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Thank you very much.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from the Lone District of Muntinlupa City, the Hon. Rozanno Rufino “Ruffy” B. Biazon, for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Representative Biazon is recognized for his interpellation.

REP. BIAZON. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My distinguished colleague, my Chairperson at the Veterans Affairs and Welfare Committee, would the Gentleman yield to a few questions?

REP. BATAOIL. My pleasure po, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BIAZON. Before my question, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, I would like to express my full support to

the call of the Chairperson of the Veterans Affairs and Welfare Committee. I am one with the Chairman of the Committee in calling for support for us to give to our veterans. In fact, during our budget deliberations on the Department of National Defense and its attached agencies, we have likewise called for additional budget for the Veterans Memorial Medical Center which, at this time, is about to complete its first cardiac center. The infrastructure and the equipment are there, but unfortunately, these are not enough as there were no funds allocated for personnel. So, we have lobbied and requested the Committee on Appropriations for additional funds in order to hire additional doctors.

I was really moved to stand up this afternoon, not only because of the call of the Chairman of the Veterans Affairs and Welfare Committee, but on the question of one of our colleagues with regard to Filipino veterans, if they have been able to get the benefits they deserve from the US government, especially those who served under USAFFE. Would the distinguished Gentleman be able to get the concerned agencies of government to verify if the US government has, indeed, fulfilled its commitment?

REP. BATAOIL. Mr. Speaker, iyong recent na, not necessarily the benefits of the individual veterans, but iyong some kind of goodwill doon sa Veterans Memorial Medical Center in the amount of—I will provide the exact figure—but they provided the Veterans Memorial Medical Center with certain assistance in the upgrading of facilities, but that assistance had been terminated as of last year. So, wala na tayong aasahan diyan, ano. As to the individual assistance or benefit given by a foreign country like America to our veterans, I do not have the figure right now.

REP. BIAZON. Mr. Speaker, kasama po ako ng Committee on Veterans Affairs and Welfare noong binisita namin ang Veterans Memorial Medical Center. Indeed, ang facilities na ipinagawa sa pamamagitan ng tulong ng US Veterans Affairs and Welfare ay talaga namang significant. Siguro po, bigyan ko lang ng kaunting background iyong aking katanungan tungkol doon sa benepisyong karampatang dapat matanggap ng Filipino veterans.

Sometime in 2008, Mr. Speaker, this Representation, who was a member of the Committee on Veterans Affairs and Welfare then, was part of a team who lobbied in the US Congress for the recognition of the services of Filipino veterans, and not just the recognition but compensation as well. As a background, noong World War II, iyong ating mga kababayang nagsilbi at lumaban sa giyera laban sa mga Hapon, kabilang tayo na bahagi ng American territory noong panahon na iyon at kinikilala sila na, kumbaga, parang subjects or US nationals. Noong sila ay nanilbihan, particularly doon

sa USAFFE, kinilala sila bilang sundalo ng United States of America at mayroong supposed to be na benepisyong makukuha. Iyon nga lang pagdating ng 1946, the US Congress, with the approval of President Truman, The Rescission Act of 1946, kung saan binawi iyong commitment ng US government to the Filipino veterans, and for so many years, decades, hinahabol ng Filipino veterans ang mga benepisyong iyon.

Noong 2008, nagpadala ang House of Representatives ng isang delegation sa US Congress to lobby. Tatlong beses po kaming pumunta doon at literally ho, nag-door-to-door kami sa mga opisina ng US Senators and Representatives to ask for their support under the leadership of then Chairman of the Committee, the late Rep. Antonio “Tony” M. Diaz of Zambales, together with Rep. Roman T. Romulo of Pasig and a few others such as Justice Manuel R. Pamaran. Kasama po kami doon. At that time pa nga ho, ang Veterans Affairs Office head sa Washington DC was Ret. Major General Delfin N. Lorenzana, iyong ating kasalukuyang Department of National Defense Secretary.

Doon po sa lobby na iyon, hiniling na maipasa iyong Filipino Veterans Equity Act sa tulong po ng legislators sa US sa pangunguna po ng the late Senators Daniel Ken Inouye, David K. Akaka, Reps. Robert Earl Filner, at Darrell Edward Issa. To cut the long story short, Mr. Speaker, pinasa ng US Congress iyong American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 kung saan \$198 million was given to compensate Filipino veterans. There were an estimated 300,000 who fought in World War II under the USAFFE but at the time in 2008, it was estimated at 18,000 na lang. Since then, noong nawala na po, natapos na rin po ang mission, and we have not really been updated. So probably, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Speaker, if we can have an initiative under the Veterans Affairs and Welfare Committee to find out what exactly was the progress of that commitment of the United States to recognize the service of the Filipino veterans and give them compensation, at iilan na lang iyong buhay pa sa kanila? Baka naman po, kung hindi pa complied with fully, magkaroon po tayo ng pagkilos para makilala at maibigay na iyong compensation nila.

Ano po ang tingin ng aking kasamahan dito sa issue na ito?

REP. BATAOIL. Opo, Mr. Speaker. I support very strongly that we make a clear manifestation for the benefit of our remaining veterans. Iyon pong World War II Filipino Veterans Equity Compensation Fund na pinirmahan ng Presidente ng Amerika which is called the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, it was in February 17, 2009 when there was the order to release a one-time lump sum payment to eligible World War II Filipino veterans, and these payments are being made by the Veterans Affairs from a \$198-million appropriation established for this purpose. The

application period for the benefits ended on February 16, 2010 and the following veterans are eligible to receive payments, for the information of our colleagues: first, iyong Commonwealth Army of the Philippines Veterans with service from July 26, 1941 through June 30, 1946 while the Commonwealth Army was with the Armed Forces of the United States; then, the Special Philippine Scouts who enlisted between October 6, 1945 and June 30 of 1947; and last, the recognized guerrillas with service prior to July 1, 1946. To be eligible for the new benefits, the service members in each of the three categories mentioned must have been discharged or released for service under conditions other than dishonorable. So, they should be honorably discharged. The eligible veterans who are not United States citizens will receive a one-time payment of \$9,000, and eligible veterans who are United States citizens will receive a one-time payment of \$15,000.

The suggestion of the good Representative is well-taken and we believe that we should make a strong representation/manifestation in order to find out how this was effectively implemented, this equity which had been prescribed.

REP. BIAZON. Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Speaker.

Tulad po ng nabanggit natin na tayo po ay nakikiisa hanggang doon sa panawagan na iyong sariling benepisyo na ibinibigay ng ating gobyerno sa ating mga World War II veterans ay mabigyan natin ng atensiyon, nakikiisa po ako sa panawagan na iyan at makakatiyak po kayo sa aking suporta kung magkaroon po ng pagkilos dito sa Kamara para po makamit ang compensation na iyan para sa ating mga beterano.

Maraming salamat po, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much.

REP. BATAOIL. Maraming salamat po.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Thank you.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the lady from the Second District of Masbate, the Hon. Elisa “Olga” T. Kho for her manifestation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Congresswoman Kho is recognized for her manifestation.

REP. KHO. Mr. Speaker, as I was sitting, I heard the honorable Representative from Pangasinan na sinabi niya na ang mga doktor sa Veterans Memorial

Medical Center ay napakagagaling. I would like to thank him personally for that manifestation because I am very proud to say that I was a product of the Veterans Memorial Medical Center. I took up my residency in the Department of Pulmonary Medicine of the Veterans Memorial Medical Center from 1982 to 1986.

Sa totoo lang po, during my residency training, ang mother po ng former Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, and at that time, he was the Secretary of the Department of National Defense, ay isa po sa mga naging pasyente ng Veterans Memorial Medical Center. Kung hindi po magagaling ang mga doktor sa Veterans Memorial Medical Center, hindi ipagkakatiwala ng ating Secretary ng Department of National Defense at former Senate President na si Juan Ponce Enrile ang kanyang mother sa kamay ng mga doktor sa Veterans. Hindi lang po iyan, marami pa pong mga kamag-anak ang ating mga kapwa pulitiko at matataas na pinuno ng ating bansa na nagpa-confine sa Veterans Memorial Medical Center.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to manifest also my full support na sana po madagdagan ang pondo ng ating mga beterano at ang pagbibigay po ng support sa Veterans Memorial Medical Center na hanggang ngayon ay patuloy na nagsisilbi, hindi lamang po sa ating mga sundalo, kundi sa kanila pong mga dependents.

Marami pong salamat.

REP. BATAOIL. Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Thank you.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the Gentleman from Pangasinan to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action. I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The speech as well as the interpellations is referred to the Committee on Rules.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, before we recognize the next speaker, may I request that we acknowledge the presence of the guests of the Hon. Antonio M. Bravo, PhD, Dep. Minority Leader and Representative of the COOP-NATCCO Party-List, as follows: Mr. Ramon C. Gargantos Jr., Atty. Kosuke Kashima, Mr. Marianito Almazar, Mr. Angelo Manlapaz and Mr. Rodrigo Manlapaz.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Your presence is hereby noted.

Welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)  
The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Before we proceed to the next person who will deliver a privilege speech, may the Dep. Majority Leader formalize his previous motion regarding the request of Congressman Atienza.

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we request the Secretariat to make the necessary corrections and amendments regarding the manifestation of the Honorable Atienza. I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Secretariat is hereby directed to make the required corrections.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Anthony M. Bravo, PhD, Representative, Party-List COOP-NATCCO.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Rep. Tony Bravo is hereby recognized.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Dep. Majority Leader.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Please proceed.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. BRAVO (A.).

REP. BRAVO (A.). Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give voice to the concern of our overseas Filipino workers in Canada to articulate their needs for developmental support.

It is a known fact that OFWs play a significant role in making our economy afloat. Their contributions go beyond the sector's share in the Gross Domestic Product. Their remittances have an overarching public benefit to and impact on their families back home. Government statistics show that there are 2.24 million overseas workers who worked abroad at any time during the period April to September 2016. Their total remittances for six months last year reached P202.9 billion, with an average of P100,000 remittance per OFW. The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported that for the entire 2016, cash remittances reached a record

of P26.9 billion, which is five percent higher from P25.61 billion in 2015. BSP Deputy Governor Diwa C. Guinigundo said that "the growth of remittance flows continues to be a major driver of domestic demand and that personal remittances accounted for 9.8 percent of the Philippine gross domestic product in 2016."

Mr. Speaker, OFW remittances fund the economic and social needs of families, especially basic necessities such as food, education and health for their families and relatives. This means that their remittances contribute to human development. Hence, it is only fitting that we look on the welfare of Filipino workers who are sacrificing a lot in order to give a better life for their loved ones. The government's labor export policy capitalizes on human capital. The OFWs are the Philippines' asset, especially in the era of globalization and economic reintegration. Our skilled human resources are valuable and they form part of the country's pillars of national progress.

Recently, I attended the Taste of Manila Festival organized by Filipinos in Canada. It is an annual cultural festival that aims to strengthen the Filipino-Canadian community as they relentlessly seek better opportunities for Filipinos in their host country. The festival is now recognized by the Canadian government, with no less than Prime Minister Justin Trudeau acknowledging and attending this initiative of the Filipino community. During the festival, this Representation, together with Cong. Aniceto "John" D. Bertiz III, met with and had a dialogue with OFW organizations in Canada which are looking for mechanisms on how to strengthen and unify the OFW and immigrant workers in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, there are 662,605 Filipinos in Canada, comprising 1.8 percent of the Canadian population. This number is growing due to Canada's liberal immigration policies. With the robust growth of Canada's economy, it provides more employment opportunities for multisectoral workers, not only to Filipinos. As Canada opens its doors to other races, the competition becomes tight. This is when the concern of our overseas workers arises as they encounter integration problems in the Canadian community due to the growing competition with equally competent migrant workers coming from other corners of the world.

Mr. Speaker, according to the Canadian LuzVisMin Alliance, Incorporated, the OFW group that we talked with, the integration crisis encountered by the OFWs in Canada stemmed from two main factors: (1) the absence of an organized support mechanism in the Filipino community; and (2) the absence of on-site government programs to uplift the condition of OFWs. The Canadian LuzVisMin Alliance contends that, in the absence of a well-conceived and properly-run support program, the Filipino migrant workers navigate in the tightly-congested and highly-congested Canadian labor market alone, resulting in taking survival jobs or no jobs

at all. This results in the diminishing of the well-being of a highly competent Filipino labor force and reduced potential for productivity. The net effect would be decreased remittances of our overseas workers which, of course, will have a negative impact on the welfare of their loved ones in the Philippines.

Mr. Speaker, the integration crisis of Filipinos arriving in Canada, either as an independent applicant, a family class or through a caregiver program, begins as soon as they touch Canadian soil. They are confronted with the financial challenges of adapting to new environment and the high cost of food, house rent and transportation. In this critical stage of OFW survival, the presence of an organized Filipino community and the presence of the Philippine government are very much needed. The Canadian LuzVisMin Alliance also contends that the reason other ethnic groups are successful in saturating the more attractive jobs in Canada is because of an organized and structured support mechanism supported by their government of origin.

During my visit in Canada, I met the Mayor of Midland in Toronto and we discussed opportunities in agriculture, Mr. Speaker. He said that his town is in need of more than 4,000 OFWs who will concentrate on agriculture and food production for their own food security. He expounded further, Mr. Speaker, that given a chance to make a choice, he will be choosing a Filipino OFW. This only shows that many employment opportunities could be accessed by our overseas workers if our government will actively support and invest in increasing the competitiveness of our overseas labor force. If there is a support system from the Filipino community, Filipinos could get their fair share of the opportunities in Canada, and this holds true for other countries as well.

At this juncture, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, this Representation would like to encourage Congress and the government to support development and integration programs for our OFWs in Canada and across the globe. Some OFW leaders have taken initiatives to develop a framework for the North American OFW and migrant workers. The objective is to put in place development and welfare programs for Filipino migrant workers as well as facilitate placement of Filipinos to employment opportunities offered by the Canadian labor market. The following courses of action are proposed to meet these objectives: First is the establishment of an integration and labor networking program, which seeks to facilitate a smooth, healthy and effective integration for newcomers to adapt to the culture and immediate system in Canadian society and labor market. This program also aims to assist newcomers and provide them with a support system in all aspects of their OFW life.

Second is the creation of an effective support mechanism program through a nucleus center for support and development to be called a People's Support Development Center. This action aims to educate and empower OFWs by providing them opportunities to upgrade their skills and lift the standard of the OFW to competitive edge. The People's Center will undertake sustainable programs and provide a venue for all Filipinos and OFW organizations to effectively carry on their missions under the auspices of the Center. The People's Center will also serve as an extension of the Philippine government outreach programs for the empowerment of Filipinos.

Third is to organize a unifying Filipino organization and establish collaboration with the concerned agencies of the Philippine government. There are 300 Filipino organizations in Toronto alone, but these organizations exist merely for socializations, regional groupings, festivals and other type of acquaintance groups. The idea is to consolidate these organizations under one umbrella organization and there are already initial initiatives undertaken by the lead groups in Toronto. The umbrella organization of all Filipinos in Canada will be the focal point in which the programs for OFWs by the Philippine government and private sector will flow. It will also be the focal point where individual and group concerns will be addressed. The umbrella organization will initiate collaborative projects with agencies of the Philippine government and establish a database of all OFWs in the country.

Mr. Speaker, a strong, unifying organization is essential for OFWs in every country of destination for our OFWs. It should take the task of continuously formulating and developing relevant programs for OFWs. Mr. Speaker, honorable colleagues, I believe that the framework is excellent and could be adopted as a model for other OFW communities in other continents. The action plan for implementation is very important in addressing the needs of our OFWs for holistic interventions and support.

I am aware that the Duterte administration gives importance to our OFWs. In fact, during his SONA last July, he said that he ordered the increase in assistance to OFWs from P400 million to P1 billion to ensure that the rights of OFWs are protected. The Department of Labor and Employment also launched the new ID system for OFWs to ease their transactions with concerned government agencies that they deal with. Hence, I hope that the government will likewise support the initiatives of concerned organizations in Canada and support further programs that will strengthen the Filipino-Canadian community.

At this point, Mr. Speaker, may I call on the Duterte administration to support the following initiatives: 1. unify the OFWs into one single organization; 2. establish a center for support and development; 3.



formulate programs for the development of OFW and the Filipino community; 4. forge collaborations and partnership with appropriate government agencies; 5. undertake immediate programs for OFWs such as settlement and newcomers' integration programs; 6. establish labor education and networking programs; establish a database of vital information useful in program development and improved services; and the last but not the least, Mr. Speaker, 7. create an Emergency Trust Fund for distressed OFWs.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, distinguished colleagues.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Thank you.

The Dep Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from ACTS-OFW Party-List, Rep. Aniceto "John" D. Bertiz III.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Congressman Bertiz is recognized.

Please proceed.

REP. BERTIZ. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Dep. Majority Leader.

Good afternoon, my colleagues. Will the honorable Gentleman from the COOP-NATCCO Party-List be willing to yield for some clarification and questions?

REP. BRAVO (A.). Gladly, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague.

REP. BERTIZ. Before I manifest my support, I just would like to clarify, because under Republic Act No. 8042, Mr. Speaker, the policy of the State as mentioned in Section (c), and we quote:

While recognizing the significant contribution of Filipino migrant workers to the national economy through their foreign exchange remittances, the State does not promote overseas employment as a means to sustain economic growth and achieve national development. The existence of the overseas employment program rests solely on the assurance that the dignity and fundamental human rights and freedoms of the Filipino citizens shall not, at any time, be compromised or violated. The State, therefore, shall continuously create local employment opportunities and promote the equitable distribution of wealth, benefits and development.

We really appreciate, as the lone Representative of OFWs, his concerns on promoting jobs and livelihood for our OFWs. Hindi po ba, Mr. Speaker, that we are focusing our government, especially the Duterte government na mayroong *malasakit* at puso para sa ating mga OFW, mas lalo tayo dapat po ay nagpo-focus sa livelihood dito sa ating bansa dahil na nga po sa ilang libo at ilang mga biktima ng karahasan, ng maltrato, lalong-lalo na po sa ating mga kababaihan, Mr. Speaker?

REP. BRAVO (A.). I agree, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, but reality on the ground shows us that unemployment in this country exists. Therefore, if we will not allow our kababayan to have their livelihood in other countries, what opportunities can we offer to those unemployed workers? I agree that there should be a sustainable program, a reintegration program for that matter, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, that whenever our OFWs come home, there are already programs that can accommodate them and can provide them with a sustainable livelihood.

REP. BERTIZ. Thank you, Hon. Tony Bravo and Mr. Speaker.

Ako po ay 12 taon sa Saudi Arabia, ganoon na rin po ang aking ama, second generation na po akong OFW. For the past 40 or almost 50 years, migration is a global phenomenon. Hindi po natin maaawat ito dahil *ultimo* ibon ay lumilipat ng ibang bansa para maghanap ng kanilang makakain. Hindi po ba, for the past 40 years na paikot-ikot lang ang ating pangingibang-bayan, na mas nararapat na may programa na po sa ngayon ang ating gobyerno, Mr. Speaker?

REP. BRAVO (A.). Ako po ay naniniwala, distinguished colleague, Mr. Speaker, na kailangang tutukan ito at bigyan ng pansin, tunay na pansin, upang ma-address ang mga pangangailangan ng ating mga OFW. Sabi ko nga po, dito po ay hindi naman tinutulak natin ang ating mga kababayan to go out of our country, but the opportunity being offered to them is far, far better than the opportunity being offered back home.

REP. BERTIZ. Thank you, Hon. Tony Bravo, Mr. Speaker.

Ang nakakalungkot nga lang po, nagpasa po tayo noong nakaraang linggo lang po, ng ating budget na mahigit tatlong trilyon piso at ang focus po natin ay mega infrastructure. Ang nakakalungkot po, Mr. Speaker, *ultimo* ang ating Secretary of Budget ay nagbabalak na mag-employ ng foreign nationals from China, India and Pakistan because he was saying, the Department of Budget and Management was saying that the reason our Build, Build, Build Program is crawling like a snail is that we are losing skilled workers.

Ito po ay taliwas sa mga nangyari nitong mga nakaraang taon. Isa po ako sa nagpunta sa Saudi Arabia bago pa lamang po magbukas ang Kongreso. Pinadala po tayo ng ating mahal na Presidente Duterte sa Saudi, kasama ang taga Department of Labor at Department of Foreign Affairs, at nag-uwi po tayo ng mahigit-kumulang sa 20,000 manggagawang nawalan ng trabaho sa Gitnang Silangan at karamihan po sa kanila ay engineers at mga nasa construction, but right now, they are all jobless. Ito po ay isang pagpapatunay na wala po tayong tinatawag na isang buong package para sa ating mga OFW o iyong tinatawag nating the complete cycle of migration which is from deployment to development up to reintegration.

For the past 40 years, mas lalo pong tumaas ang bilang ng ating mga kababayang Filipino na mga OFW na nangingibang-bayan para maghanap ng trabaho pero ang ating gobyerno ay sinasabi na mayroon po tayong napakalaking proyekto sa Build, Build, Build Program. How can we be able to harness all these talents who helped develop those first-world countries, Mr. Speaker?

REP. BRAVO (A.). Alam ho ninyo, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, ako ay nakikiisa sa Representative ng OFW at nais ko pong banggitin na ang inyong lingkod ay isang pong OFW din—from 1988 to 1990. Ibig ko pong sabihin, kung ano po ang nararamdaman ng isang OFW ay naramdaman ko rin ho—ang hirap malayo sa minamahal sa buhay. Subalit po, gusto ko pong tuunan ng pansin na kailangan po talaga na magkaroon ng tayo ng genuine reintegration program na kung saan kumpleto po tayo ng datos. Kung mayroon man pong madi-displace na OFW na manggagaling sa labas, alam na natin kung saan patungo kapag siya ay umuwi po ng bansang Pilipinas.

REP. BERTIZ. Salamat po, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker. Sumasang-ayon po ba ang Kinatawan na dapat tuldukan na natin ang pagpapadala ng mga kababaihan, lalong-lalo na po sa bansang Middle East kung saan halos araw-araw ay may namamaltrato, may nagagahasa at mayroon pong namamatay? Ano po ang dapat nating gawin dito? Bilang ako po ay isang OFW, ito po ang aking pinaglalaman magmula pa noong isang taon pero hanggang ngayon ay wala pa tayong nakikitang linaw. Ayon sa mga lumalabas pa na announcements ng ating Kagawaran, ng Department of Labor, ay lalo pa nating pinapalawak ang pag-deploy ng vulnerable sectors tulad po ng domestic workers. Bilang Kinatawan po ng COOP-NATCCO or ng mga kooperatiba, nagpapasalamat po kami sa inyo, Hon. Tony Bravo, at sana rin po ay mabigyan ninyo ng pansin na mabuo at mabigyan ng mga pangkabuhayan, lalong-lalo na po ang mga kababaihan natin na Muslim sa Mindanao na sa ngayon po ay biktima ng illegal recruiters at sinasamantala na sila po ay walang makain at sila po ay

mga displaced, kaya nandiyan po ang illegal recruiters sa Mindanao ngayon at nire-recruit ultimo ang mga menor de edad at dinadala po sa Middle East.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Ako po ay umaayon at sumusuporta sa tinuran ng ating Representative ng OFW. Kailangan po na tingnan nating maigi, tutukan at seryosohin ang ating mga manggagawa na piniling mangibang-bansa subalit dapat may kaakibat doon na suporta ang ating gobyerno upang masiguro ang kanilang kapakanan.

REP. BERTIZ. Salamat po, Mr. Speaker. Salamat po, Hon. Tony Bravo.

Sa palagay po ninyo, ito na ba ang tamang panahon ng pagbabago at matutupad na ba ang pinangako ng ating Presidente Rodrigo Roa Duterte sa 10 milyong OFW at kanilang pamilya na sila ay magkaroon ng sariling departamento?

REP. BRAVO (A.). Ako po ay naniniwala na napapanahon na. In fact, ako po ay isang kasama ng lingkod ng Kinatawan ng mga OFW bilang coauthor ng panukalang departamento para sa OFW.

REP. BERTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the good Gentleman from COOP-NATCCO for the establishment of cooperatives and livelihood programs for our migrant workers. As the Lone Representative of OFWs in the Seventeenth Congress, this Representation would like to manifest my full support to the Hon. Tony Bravo. Their programs and their cooperative movement over the years included many migrant cooperative groups. This has resulted in the successful migrant cooperatives which help our members in their eventual reintegration.

Maraming salamat po sa inyong puso at malasakit, Hon. Tony Bravo, at ganoon na rin po, Mr. Speaker. Thank you so much.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Representative from the OFW Party-List.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Thank you.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the Hon. Tony Bravo to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action. I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The speech of the Hon. Tony Bravo is hereby referred to the Rules Committee.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Carlos Isagani T. Zarate of the Party-List BAYAN MUNA for his turn to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Congressman Zarate is hereby recognized to avail of the Privilege Hour. Please proceed.

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ZARATE

REP. ZARATE. Maraming salamat, G. Ispiker.

G. Ispiker, noong nakaraang taon po, binigyan ng go-signal ni Pangulong Duterte ang mga programang reclamation sa buong bansa na nagkakahalaga ng P80 bilyong na magmumula sa kaban ng bayan. Sa kabila ng pagtutol ng mga mamamayan laban sa reklamasyon, pinamamadali ngayon ng pamahalaan ang mga proyektong ito para diumano sa programang pag-unlad at para maibsan rin daw ang matindi at mas lalo pang lumalalang traffic dito sa Kamaynilaan. Ngunit, G. Ispiker, mayroong napakabigat na mga dahilan kung bakit tinututulan ng mga mamamayan ang mga planong reclamation: Una, ang mga residente sa mga lugar na apektado ng reklamasyon ay mawawalan ng kabuhayan at kabahayan. Pangalawa, ang mga proyektong ito ay may kaakibat na panganib sa loob at labas ng reclamation sites. Muli, G. Ispiker, ang mga salik na ito ang pangunahing dahilan kung bakit dapat tutulan ang mga proyektong reclamation.

Sa Manila Bay pa lamang, G. Ispiker, ay may walong proyektong reclamation. Isa na rito ang 650-hectare Navotas Business Park Reclamation Project na muling binigyang buhay noong panahon ni Presidente Aquino dahil sa kanyang Programang Public-Private Partnership. Samantala, ang dating Pangulo at ngayon ay Manila City Mayor Erap Estrada ay nag-aproba rin ng karagdagang apat na mga proyektong reklamasyon sa kanyang sinasakupan. Ang mga ito ay ang mga sumusunod: ang 419-hectare Horizon Manila na nagkakahalaga ng P100 bilyon. Ito ay magiging tinatawag na “commercial hub” at gagawa ng tatlong artipisyal na isla sa Manila Bay. Pangalawa, kaakibat ng Horizon Manila ang isa pang proyektong reklamasyon— ang P7 bilyong Manila North Harbor expansion na kukuha ng 50 ektaryang lupa pa ulit mula sa baybay. Noong Pebrero 2017 ay inaprobahan din niya ang pangatlong proyektong reklamasyon at ito ay ang New Manila Bay International Community Project. Ito ay may sukat na 407 hectares para sa turismo at komersiyo na ipinanukala ng isang dayuhang korporasyon, ang Hong Kong-based UAA Kingming Development Corporation. Pinagtibay rin ni Mayor Estrada ang pagsasagawa ng Solar City Project na magiging isang entertainment hub kapag ito ay natapos. Ito ay may sukat na 148 hectares.

G. Ispiker, ang iba pa pong mga programang reklamasyon sa Manila Bay ay ang mga sumusunod: ang 635-hectare Las Piñas-Parañaque Coastal Bay Project,

ang 360-hectare project sa Pasay City, at ang 300-hectare project na reklamasyon din sa Parañaque na kasosyo ang isang higitang mall at real estate company. Ang mga dambuhalang proyektong reklamasyon ito, G. Ispiker, na sasakop sa katubigan ng Manila Bay ay bahagi lamang ng kabuuang planong reklamasyon sa buong bansa. Sinasabi ng ating pamahalaan na ito diumano ay para sa kaunlaran ngunit ang katotohanan, sa mga apektadong mamamayan, ito ay gagawin sa kapinsalaan ng kalikasan at ng mga komunidad sa baybay, kabilang na ang mga maralitang mangingisda o mga namamalakaya.

G. Ispiker, hindi po patay ang Manila Bay para sa namamalakaya. Sa libu-libong mamamayan nating naninirahan at kumukuha ng kabuhayan sa katubigang ito, hindi tambakan lamang ng basura ang Manila Bay. Sa katunayan, ang Manila Bay ay isang mayor na sentro ng gawaing pang-ekonomiya tulad ng pangingisda at aquaculture, kahit pa ito ay nahaharap sa maraming problemang dulot ng mga proyektong pangkaunlaran sa mga paligid nito. Ang polusyon, over fishing at pagkawala ng tahanan ng laksang-buhay sa Manila Bay ay ilan sa problemang nagbabanta sa kabuhayan ng mga mamamayang nakadepende dito.

Gayunpaman, G. Ispiker, hindi demolisyon at pagpapalayas ang sagot sa mga problemang ito ng ating mga kababayan. Bagkus, suporta upang paunlarin ang kabuhayan ng mga maralitang mangingisda, rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay, at paglilinis sa mga basura sa dagat ang mga dapat sanang ginagawang proyekto ng ating pamahalaan. Ito ay ang pag-unlad na ating hinaharap, ang pag-unlad na magpapabuti ng kabuhayan ng mga mamamayan, pag-unlad na mararamdaman mismo ng ating mga mahihirap na mga kababayan. G. Ispiker, nagiging madali para sa iba na isisi ang pagkadumi ng Manila Bay sa mga mahihirap nating kababayan na nakatira sa mga gilid nito pero sa katunayan, 80 porsiyento ng basurang itinatapon sa Manila Bay mula Pasig River ay mula sa mga pabrika at iba pang commercial establishments sa Metro Manila. Ito ang mabigat na dahilan, sa katunayan, sa pagkawala ng mga isda at iba pang lamang-dagat sa Manila Bay.

Hindi lamang isyu ng kabuhayan ng mamamayan ang usapin reklamasyon. Ang mga organisasyong pang-kalikasan din ay may nakakabahalang pagtingin sa pagdami ng reclamation projects sa Manila Bay at sa paligid nito. Ayon sa Center for Environmental Concerns, maraming kaakibat na panganib ang reclamation projects, lalong-lalo na sa Manila Bay, G. Ispiker. Ayon din sa Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology, hinog na para sa malakas na lindol ang Metro Manila, na puwede ngang aabot ito ng 7.2 sa Richter Scale. Ito ang isa sa pinakamalaking depekto ng pagbibigay ng DENR ng Environmental Compliance Certificate sa mga proyektong ito. Hindi rin binigyan ng bigat ng DENR ang domino effect ng reclamation sa iba't iba pang mga lugar at ang kaligtasan

ng mamamayan sa loob at labas ng mga lugar na ito. G. Ispiker, dapat na muli itong pagtuunan ng masusing pag-aaral, lalong-lalo na ng mga eksperto at maging tayong mga lingkod-bayan. Hindi dapat mauna ang kita sa kapakanan ng mamamayan.

Mga kapwa ko Mambabatas, G. Ispiker, ang pag-unlad ay hindi pag-unlad kung ito ay kapinsalaan ng mamamayan. Kung nais natin ng tunay, makabuluhan at damang pag-unlad, dapat nating pakinggan ang hiling at panawagan ng mamamayang direktang apektado ng mga proyektong katulad ng reclamation. Hindi ang tawag ng tubo ng iilan na malalaking negosyo ang dapat manaig.

Paunlarin natin ang kabuhayan ng mamamayan at sagipin natin ang kalikasan. No to reclamation projects. Save Manila Bay.

Maraming salamat po, G. Ispiker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Thank you very much.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the Honorable Zarate to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action. I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The privilege speech of Congressman Zarate is referred to the Rules Committee.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Ariel “Ka Ayik” B. Casilao of the Party-List ANAKPAWIS for his turn to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Cong. Ariel Casilao is hereby recognized to avail of the Privilege Hour.

Please proceed.

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. CASILAO

REP. CASILAO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mme. Floor Leader.

Ang privilege speech ko po ay hinggil as paparating na ika-45 taong anibersaryo ng deklarasyon ng dating diktador na si Ferdinand Marcos, Presidential Proclamation No. 1081 o and proklasmasyon sa martial law.

Mr. Speaker, mga kasamang Mambabatas, pagbati ng hustisya at kapayapaan ang ipinapahatid ng Kinatawagang ito. Sa darating po na 21 ng Setyembre, ito ang ika-45 anibersaryo ng Proclamation No. 1081 ng dating diktador na si Ferdinand Marcos. Bilang pagmarka sa makasaysayang araw na ito, ipinapahayag

ng ANAKPAWIS Party-List, kasama ng mga regional chapters, gayundin ng Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, ang panawagang itigil ang pamamaslang sa mga magsasaka. Stop killing farmers.

Bagamat hindi pa ako ipinanganak noong mga panahong idineklara ang martial law, Mr. Speaker, nakuwento na po ito ng aking mga magulang na nakaranas ng panunupil, panggigipit, pag-aresto at pagkabilanggo, maging ng aking mga kasamahang nauna sa akin, mga nakakatanda sa akin na mayroong mga karanasan, tulad na lang ng martial law survivors sa ilalim ng Samahan ng mga *Ex-Detainees Laban sa* Detensyon at Aresto o SELDA. Pakiwari nila sa kanilang mga kuwento kung gaano kalupit, gaano kadilim ang mga panahong iyon. Ipinagbabawal ang anumang mga pulong, kumpul-kumpol ng lilimang katao ay ipinagbabawal, sarado ang mga media, sarado ang Kongreso, kontrolado ng iisang tao ang lahat ng kapangyarihan. Walang hudikatura. Noong panahon na iyon, ang diktador na si Marcos siyang huwes at siya rin ang executioner.

Ang mga elemento po na sinasabi ng lantarang diktadurya, open dictatorship, na ibinahagi ng mga nakakatanda sa akin, sabi nila ay lumilitaw o sa Ingles, there seems to be a creeping dictatorship in the offing. Ang ibig sabihin, Mr. Speaker, ang mga elemento ng diktadurya, hindi lang simpleng pasismo, lantarang pasismo, kung hindi lahat ng elementong binanggit kanina ay nakikita sa kasalukuyang panahon. Mula pa noong nakaraang taon, Mr. Speaker, palagian ko na itong panawagan sa aking mga privilege speech, kasama ang paghingi ng hustisya para sa mga biktima ng extrajudicial killings o EJKs na karaniwang ang mga perpetrator ay ang mga miyembro ng Armadong Lakas ng Pilipinas o AFP, CAFGU at kanilang mga paramilitar na mga grupo. Sa kasalukuyan, umaabot na sa malapit siyamnapu o ninety mula sa sektor ng mga magsasaka ang naging biktima ng pampulitikang pamamaslang sa ilalim ng kasalukuyang rehimen.

Nito lamang Setyembre o sa taon mula nang naupo si Pangulong Duterte hanggang nitong Setyembre, may bilang po ang alyansa ng human rights organization na KARAPATAN, 88 na mga magsasaka ang naging biktima kung saan napakalaking bahagi nito, 57 biktima o 65 percent, ay mula sa isla na aking pinanggalingan sa Mindanao, 11 naman sa Visayas, 12 sa Southern Luzon, at walo sa Central at Northern Luzon. Gayundin, aabot sa halos 30 porsiyento ng mga biktima ay mula sa mga katutubong mamamayan. Mula Hulyo hanggang Setyembre, aabot sa pitong magsasaka ang pinatay na mula sa bayan ng Guihulngan sa Negros Oriental. Bukod pa ito sa lider-organisador ng Bayan Muna at empleyado ng Department of Education na pinatay noong Agosto. Dagdag dito, pumalo na sa 47 magsasaka ang nabiktima mula sa Davao region, pinakamarami sa Compostela Valley na nagiging “Valley of Death” para sa mga aktibistang magsasaka sa rehiyong iyon.

Mr. Speaker, mga kapwa ko Mambabatas, huwag na nating ikumplika ang mga usapin. Ito ay malinaw

namang bunga ng counter-insurgency campaign ng kasalukuyang rehimen, ang kanilang operational plan, internal security plan Kapayapaan o Oplan Kapayapaan ng AFP dahil ang mga biktima ay palagian naman pinagbibintangang na mga miyembro o legal fronts ng New People's Army o maging supporter ng NPA. Gaya na lang po ng mga paaralang itinayo ng ating mga katutubong Lumad mula sa iba't ibang bahagi ng Mindanao, umaabot ito sa mahigit 200 pero kalakhan nito ay hindi na nag-o-operate dahil kinakampuhan, ginagawang kampo ng mga militar o ng mga paramilitar, o sadyang hindi pinahihintulutan ng local government unit, kasapakat ang AFP at iba pang ahensiya ng gobyerno, na hindi ito mag-operate dahil ito ay binansagang mga paaralan ng New People's Army.

Saan ka nakakita, Mr. Speaker, sa halip na tulungan ang mga aping sektor na ito tulad ng ating mga katutubong Lumad, kung saan aminado ang Department of Education sa kakulangan ng mga paaralan, mga classroom, mga guro, mga upuan, at ang mga librong ginagamit, kung saan mayroong mga sektor ng ating lipunan na nagbigay ng kanilang panahon, nagbigay ng kanilang rekurso para matulungan ang ating mga katutubong Lumad na magtayo ng kanilang sariling paaralan, at kahit na ang kanilang curriculum ay aprobado ng Department of Education, sadyang pinahihintulutan ang anumang kaparaanan para sila ay patigilin sa pag-aaral o maging unoperational ang kanilang mga naitayong paaralan?

In fact, Mr. Speaker, isa po ako doon na naka-witness at tumulong sa pagtayo sa ilang mga paaralan sa Davao del Norte. Mula sa mga ginagamit nilang pambili ng mga pako, kahoy, hanggang sa naitayo ang isang two-classroom type na paaralan nila, nagmula po iyon sa kolektibong pagtutulungan ng Salugpongan Ta' Tanu Igkanogon, isang Lumad school sa Talaingod, Davao del Norte. Kaya nga po ang anumang bansag sa kanila na ang itinuturong A sa abakada ay sinasabi ng militar—A para sa armas, B para sa bala. Sa totoo lang po, Mr. Speaker, sa mga araw na ako ay nandoon, malinaw po ang itinuturo ng mga gurong nagmula din sa hanay ng mga katutubo. Hindi lang simpleng abakada kundi ang pag-aralan ang kanilang kasaysayan, ang kanilang tradisyon at kultura, at kung papaano ito maidepensa laban sa panghihimasok ng mga malalaking negosyanteng tulad ng korporasyong pagmimina at mga logging corporation.

Kinokondena ng Kinatawagang ito, Mr. Speaker, ang lantarang paglabag sa karapatang pantao ng mga puwersa ng ating gobyerno. Bilang mga kasapi ng Kongreso na tagapagtaguyod ng prinsipyong demokrasya at kalayaan, hinihikayat ko kayo bilang aking mga kasamahan na sumama sa panawagan para sa agarang pagtigil sa mga pagpatay at pagkamit ng hustisya para sa mga biktima. Sa prinsipyo po ng demokrasya, Mr. Speaker, sa ating bansa, na siyang niyurakan noong panahon ng martial law ng diktadurang

Marcos, hinahamon ko ang Kongresong ito na itaguyod ang karapatang pantao para sa interes ng mamamayan at sa ating susunod na henerasyon ng mga Pilipino.

Bilang pagtatapos, Mr. Speaker, ang laban po para sa ating demokrasya, ang laban para manatili ang mga institusyong nagpapahiwatig at nagsasabing mayroon tayong demokrasya ay laban po ng buong sambayanan. Kaya ang aming sigaw, Mr. Speaker, "Itigil ang extrajudicial killings sa mga magsasaka!"

"Hustisya para sa mga biktima!" at "Itaguyod ang tunay na reporma sa lupa sa ating bansa!"

Maraming salamat at magandang hapon sa ating lahat.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Thank you very much.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the Honorable Casilao to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action. I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The speech of Congressman Casilao is referred to the Committee on Rules.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we terminate the Privilege Hour. I so move.

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

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Before anything else, we would like to acknowledge the presence of the guests of the Hon. Carlos Zarate, namely: Fernando Sevilla, Anna Henrietta Sapor, Bonifacio Francisco and Romeo Broqueza—all of Pagkakaisa ng Mangingisda't Manggagawa sa Navotas-Pamalakaya who are here with us today. (*Applause*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Your presence is hereby noted.

Welcome to the House of Representatives.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

DESIGNATION OF MEMBERS TO THE  
BICAM. CONF. CTTEE. ON  
H.B. NO. 6016 AND S.B. NO. 1466

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we designate the following as members of the Bicameral

Conference Committee on House Bill No. 6016 and Senate Bill No. 1466: Reps. Ferjanel G. Biron, M.D., Xavier Jesus D. Romualdo, Rosanna “Ria” Vergara, Manuel F. Zubiri, Winston “Winnie” Castelo, “Kuya” Jose Antonio R. Sy-Alvarado, Gus S. Tambunting, Jose Christopher Y. Belmonte, Vini Nola A. Ortega and Arlene B. Arcillas.

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

The Members nominated are so designated.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move for the change of referral of the following measures:

1. House Bill No. 404, promoting entrepreneurship among Filipino youth, from the Committee on Youth and Sports Development, to the Committees on Basic Education and Culture, and Higher and Technical Education;

2. House Bill No. 885, increasing the minimum age sales of tobacco products to 21 years of age, from the Committee on Trade and Industry, to the Committees on Health and Trade and Industry;

3. House Bills No. 884 and 4129, prohibiting smoking in public places nationwide, from the Committee on Health, to the Committees on Health, and Trade and Industry;

4. House Bills No. 917 and 925, strengthening the Inter-Agency Committee Tobacco (IAC-TOBACCO) to ensure compliance with Article 5.3 of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), from the Committee on Health, to the Committees on Health, and Trade and Industry;

5. House Bill No. 4713, providing for the comprehensive banning of all forms of tobacco advertising, promotions and sponsorships in the Philippines, from the Committee on Health, to the Committees on Health, and Trade and Industry;

6. House Bill No. 5204, requiring the mandatory posting of graphic health warnings in designated smoking areas, from the Committee on Health, to the Committees on Health, and Trade and Industry;

7. House Resolution No. 973, expressing the sense of the House of Representatives in urging the Department of Health to adopt harm reduction measures particularly the use of electronic cigarettes as an alternative for smokers as part of its national tobacco control strategy, from the Committee on Health, to the Committees on Health, and Trade and Industry;

8. House Bill No. 6259, amending certain portions of Republic Act No. 7942, otherwise known

as the “Philippine Mining Act of 1995” by prohibiting mining in watersheds, requiring a legislative franchise for mining operations, from the Committee on Natural Resources, to the Committees on Natural Resources, and Legislative Franchises; and

9. House Resolution No. 599, urging the Committee on Good Government and Accountability and/or the Committee on Housing and Urban Development, to conduct an investigation, separately or jointly, on the perceived snail-paced implementation of housing relocation and resettlement projects for those affected by typhoon Yolanda and for those living in dangerous zones, and to recommend appropriate legislation, from the Committee on Housing and Urban Development, to the Committees on Good Government and Public Accountability, and Housing and Urban Development.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The aforementioned change of referrals is hereby approved.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

#### APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move for the approval of Journal No. 24, dated September 13, 2017. I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). There is a motion for the approval of Journal No. 24, Wednesday, September 13, 2017. Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

#### ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, there being no other matters, I move to adjourn the session until tomorrow, September 19, at four o'clock in the afternoon. I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). The session is adjourned until tomorrow, September 19, at four o'clock in the afternoon.

*It was 6:07 p.m.*