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House of Representatives

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No. 66

CALL TO ORDER

At 4:00 p.m., Deputy Speaker Frederick "Erick" F. Abueg called the session to order.

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

NATIONAL ANTHEM

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Everybody will please rise to sing the National Anthem.

Everybody rose to sing the Philippine National Anthem.

PRAYER

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Everybody will please remain standing for a minute of silent prayer.

Everybody remained standing for a minute of silent prayer.

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

ROLL CALL

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we call the roll of Members.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). 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 reflected in Journal No. 66, dated February 21, 2018**

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. Mr. Speaker, the roll call shows that 204 Members responded to the call.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). With 204 Members present, the Chair declares the presence of a quorum.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve Journal No. 65 of February 20, 2018.

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

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we proceed to the Reference of Business.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). 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, Messages from the Senate, Communications and Committee Report, and the Deputy Speaker made the corresponding references:

BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 7189, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING RICE INCENTIVES TO TOP TEN STUDENTS IN EVERY GRADE OR YEAR LEVEL OF ALL PUBLIC ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Tambunting
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION
AND CULTURE

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

House Bill No. 7190, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING ALL ELECTRIC, CABLE AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPANIES TO CONDUCT PERIODIC INSPECTIONS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE AERIAL UTILITY LINES AND CABLE INSTALLATIONS, AND TO FIX OR REMOVE ALL THEIR UNUSED LINES TO ENSURE STRICT COMPLIANCE WITH THE STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS PROVIDED UNDER THE PHILIPPINE ELECTRICAL CODE”

By Representative Tambunting
TO THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

House Bill No. 7192, entitled:

“AN ACT CHANGING THE NAME OF BIKING HIGH SCHOOL IN BARANGAY BIKING, MUNICIPALITY OF DAUIS, PROVINCE OF BOHOL TO NICASIO M. BOLOS, JR. TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL”

By Representative Relampagos
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 7194, entitled:

“AN ACT DESIGNATING AUTHORITY TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO DETERMINE ROAD WORTHINESS OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE VEHICLES”

By Representative Olivarez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 7195, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A LICENSING OFFICE/BRANCH OF THE LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE (LTO) IN THE CITY OF PARAÑAQUE, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Olivarez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 7196, entitled:

“AN ACT UPGRADING THE MINIMUM MONTHLY SALARY OF NURSES TO P30,000 AND PROVIDING FOR BENEFITS FOR NURSES”

By Representatives Zarate, Tinio, Castro (F.L.), De Jesus, Brosas and Elago
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT AND THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

House Bill No. 7197, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE MONTHLY SALARIES OF ALL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, RAISING THE MINIMUM MONTHLY SALARY IN GOVERNMENT SERVICE TO P16,000, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

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

House Bill No. 7198, entitled:

“AN ACT TO STRENGTHEN NATION-BUILDING THROUGH THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF STRATEGIC VOLUNTEERISM BASED MULTI-SECTORAL PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK, IN ALL LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS AND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS IN THE COUNTRY, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Salon
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PEOPLE’S PARTICIPATION

House Bill No. 7200, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE DATA INTERCONNECTIVITY SYSTEM AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representatives Salo and Calalang
TO THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

House Bill No. 7201, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A BASIC EDUCATION SCHOOL IN EVERY INDIGENOUS PEOPLES COMMUNITY IN THE COUNTRY AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREOF”

By Representative Nieto
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 7202, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE AUTHORIZED CAMPAIGN EXPENDITURES OF CANDIDATES AND POLITICAL PARTIES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 13 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7166, ENTITLED 'AN ACT PROVIDING FOR SYNCHRONIZED NATIONAL AND LOCAL ELECTIONS AND FOR ELECTORAL REFORMS, AUTHORIZING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES' ”

By Representative Chipeco
TO THE COMMITTEE ON SUFFRAGE AND
ELECTORAL REFORMS

House Bill No. 7203, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE PHILIPPINE
SEAWEED DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
AND DEFINING ITS OBJECTIVES,
POWERS AND FUNCTIONS”

By Representative Dalipe
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
ENTERPRISES AND PRIVATIZATION AND
THE COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE
AND FISHERIES RESOURCES

RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 1689, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY,
IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE PERENNIAL
ISSUE OF SUPPLY, PROCUREMENT AND
IMPORTATION OF RICE, THE DISTORTION
OF THE MARKET SITUATION BY SOME SO-
CALLED 'UNSCRUPULOUS PARTIES' AND
THE EXISTENCE OF RICE CARTELS, WITH
THE END IN VIEW OF ENSURING FOOD
SECURITY AND GOVERNMENT SUPPORT
TO FILIPINO RICE FARMERS AS THE MAIN
PRODUCERS AND SOURCE OF OUR STAPLE
FOOD”

By Representative Chavez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1690, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING BRO.
EDUARDO V. MANALO, EXECUTIVE
MINISTER OF THE IGLESIA NI CRISTO,
FOR HIS DESIGNATION AS SPECIAL
ENVOY OF THE PRESIDENT FOR
OVERSEAS FILIPINOS CONCERNS”

By Representative Castelo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1691, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING
THE IGLESIA NI CRISTO (CHURCH
OF CHRIST) FOR MARKING ITS 50TH
ANNIVERSARY IN THE FAR WEST AS
IT CONTINUES TO CARRY OUT ITS
SUCCESSFUL FOREIGN MISSION OF
EVANGELIZATION AND MEANINGFUL
OUTREACH PROGRAMS THAT CUT
ACROSS RACES AND BOARDERS”

By Representative Castelo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1692, entitled:

“RESOLUTION CALLING FOR AN
INVESTIGATION IN AID OF LEGISLATION
BY THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE
OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ON THE POVERTY IMPLICATIONS OF
THE ARREST OF THE SUPERMARKET
EMPLOYEES WHO ALLEGEDLY
COMMITTED QUALIFIED THEFT OUT
OF HUNGER”

By Representatives Suarez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1693, entitled:

“RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE
COMMITTEES ON TRANSPORTATION AND
HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT,
TO EXERCISE ITS OVERSIGHT
FUNCTION AND TO INVESTIGATE, IN
AID OF LEGISLATION, THE REPORT THAT
THE PROPOSED SOUTHEAST METRO
MANILA EXPRESSWAY (SEMME) WILL
PASS THROUGH AREAS IN BARANGAY
BATASAN HILLS DESIGNATED FOR
SOCIALIZED HOUSING AWARDED TO
QUALIFIED BENEFICIARIES”

By Representative Castelo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1694, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE
APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE/S TO
CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE
CASE OF JOANNA DEMAFELIS, WHO WAS
KILLED BY HER SYRIAN AND LEBANESE
EMPLOYERS A YEAR AGO AND WHOSE
BODY WAS FOUND INSIDE A FREEZER
IN AN ABANDONED APARTMENT IN
KUWAIT ONLY RECENTLY, AND OTHER
ABUSES AGAINST OVERSEAS FILIPINO
WORKERS (OFWs) IN THE MIDDLE EAST
THAT SOMETIMES END IN DEATHS
AND TO RECOMMEND APPROPRIATE
LEGISLATION”

By Representative Violago
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1695, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION OF THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES EXPRESSING
PROFOUND CONDOLENCES ON THE
DEMISE OF NATIONAL ARTIST OF THE
PHILIPPINES, ESABELIO NAPOLEON
'BILLY' VELOSO ABUEVA”

By Representative Relampagos
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1696, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE HOUSE COMMITTEE TO URGE THE GOVERNMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELIEF FOR AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY THE ERUPTION OF MT. MAYON AND THE REHABILITATION OF ALBAY AND NEARBY COMMUNITIES' AGRICULTURAL SECTORS”

By Representative Salon
TO THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

House Resolution No. 1697, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO REPORT TO AND INFORM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON THE STATUS OF THE HEALTH FACILITIES ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM, PARTICULARLY FOR MINDANAO”

By Representative Rodriguez (M.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1698, entitled:

“RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING FILIPINO FIGHTER JERWIN JUNTILLA ANCAJAS FOR SUCCESSFULLY DEFENDING HIS INTERNATIONAL BOXING FEDERATION (IBF) JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHT WORLD TITLE VIA A TECHNICAL KNOCKOUT OF MEXICAN CHALLENGER ISRAEL GONZALES IN CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ON FEBRUARY 3, 2018”

By Representatives Pineda, Romero, Belmonte (R.), Canama, Salo, Lopez (B.), Villarín, Bertiz, Montoro, Belaro, Lacson, Uybarreta and Salon
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GAMES AND AMUSEMENTS

House Resolution No. 1699, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING HILLARY ANDALES OF THE PHILIPPINE SCIENCE HIGH SCHOOL-EASTERN VISAYAS CAMPUS FOR HONORING THE COUNTRY BY WINNING IN THE BREAKTHROUGH JUNIOR CHALLENGE”

By Representative Nieto
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1701, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION CONDEMNING IN THE

STRONGEST POSSIBLE TERMS THE NAMING OF FIVE UNDERSEA FEATURES IN THE PHILIPPINE RISE BY THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA”

By Representative Alejano
TO THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

House Resolution No. 1702, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD AND APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE DISPOSITION UNDERTAKEN BY THE BUREAU OF CUSTOMS (BOC) OF THE REPORTED SMUGGLED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS AMOUNTING TO P30.2 BILLION PESOS IN CY 2017”

By Representative Panganiban
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1704, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION CALLING ON A CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRY ON THE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PRIVATE ESTABLISHMENTS CONCERNED WITH HOUSING, TO BARE THEIR RESPECTIVE MANDATES, RULES AND PROCEDURES, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES RELATIVE TO THE REALIZATION OF THE HOUSING DREAMS OF OUR OVERSEAS FILIPINOS, IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH A SIMPLIFIED BUT COHERENT GUIDE WHICH THEY MAY REFER TO AND RELY ON, IN AID OF LEGISLATION AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Bertiz
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1705, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING JERWIN ANCAJAS FOR BRINGING PRIDE TO THE ENTIRE FILIPINO NATION BY SUCCESSFULLY DEFENDING, FOR THE 4TH TIME, HIS IBF JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHT WORLD TITLE LAST FEBRUARY 3 AT THE BANK OF AMERICA CENTER IN CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS”

By Representatives Rodriguez (M.), Uy (R.) and Unabia
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GAMES AND AMUSEMENTS

House Resolution No. 1706, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE REPORTED ESTABLISHMENT OF STRUCTURES IN FOREST AREAS, INCLUDING SHORELINES IN BORACAY”

By Representative Ty
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

MESSAGES FROM THE SENATE

Message dated February 14, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that on February 13, 2018, the Senate designated Senators Francis “Chiz” G. Escudero, Paolo Benigno “Bam” Aquino IV, Grace Poe and Ralph G. Recto as conferees to the Bicameral Conference Committee on the conflicting provisions of Senate Bill No. 1279, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL FEEDING PROGRAM TO COMBAT HUNGER AND UNDERNUTRITION AMONG FILIPINO CHILDREN, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

and House Bill No. 5269, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE NATIONAL SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAM FOR PUBLIC KINDERGARTEN AND ELEMENTARY PUPILS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Message dated February 14, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that on February 13, 2018, the Senate designated Senators Panfilo M. Lacson, Win Gatchalian, Juan Miguel F. Zubiri, Joel Villanueva, Gregorio B. Honasan II, and Antonio “Sonny” F. Trillanes IV as conferees to the Bicameral Conference Committee on the conflicting provisions of Senate Bill No. 1662, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8049 TO STRENGTHEN THE LAW ON HAZING AND REGULATE OTHER FORMS OF INITIATION RITES OF FRATERNITIES, SORORITIES, AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS, PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

and House Bill No. 6573, entitled:

“AN ACT PROHIBITING HAZING AND REGULATING OTHER FORMS OF INITIATION RITES OF FRATERNITIES, SORORITIES, AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS, AND PROVIDING

PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION THEREOF, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8049, ENTITLED 'AN ACT REGULATING HAZING AND OTHER FORMS OF INITIATION RITES IN FRATERNITIES, SORORITIES, AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AND PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREFOR' ”

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

COMMUNICATIONS

Letter dated January 23, 2018 of Martin Gerard T. Villamor, Municipal Mayor, Municipality of Carmen, Province of Cebu, transmitting their Report on Local Government Support Fund Utilization and Status of Program/Project Implementation for the Quarter Ended December 2017.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated January 29, 2018 of Beatriz Y. Caburnay, Municipal Mayor, Municipality of Alcantara, Province of Cebu, submitting their Report on Fund Utilization and Status of Program/Project Implementation for the 4th Quarter ended December 2017 of the Local Government Support Fund-Assistance to Disadvantaged Municipalities.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated February 5, 2018 of Roderick A. Ongcarranceja, President, Calapan Waterworks Corporation, submitting their Operational Report for Year 2017, in compliance with Section 10 of Republic Act No. 9185.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE FRANCHISES

Letters dated 14 February 2018 of Roger E. Dino, Deputy Director, Office of the General Counsel and Legal Services, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), furnishing the House of Representatives with duly certified and authenticated BSP issuances, to wit:

1. Circular No. 996 dated 8 February 2018;
2. Circular Letter No. CL-2018-010 dated 8 February 2018;
3. Memorandum No. M-2018-003 dated 7 February 2018;
4. Memorandum No. M-2018-004 dated 29 January 2018;
5. Memorandum No. M-2018-005 dated 7 February 2018; and
6. Memorandum No. M-2018-006 dated 7 February 2018.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

COMMITTEE REPORT

Report by the Committee on Cooperatives Development (Committee Report No. 618), re H.R. No. 1703, entitled:

“RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE SAN DIONISIO CREDIT COOPERATIVE (SDCC) FOR ITS PIONEERING COOPERATIVISM IN THE COUNTRY AND FOR ITS OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE ECONOMIC UPLIFTMENT OF ITS MEMBERS AND ITS CONTRIBUTIONS TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT”

recommending its adoption in substitution of House Resolution No. 1368

Sponsors: Representatives Geron, Bravo (A.) and Canama

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

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

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, may we acknowledge the presence of the guest of the Third District Representative from Cavite, the Hon. Alex “AA” L. Advincola. He is Mr. Eric Bustamante, the General Manager and Senior Assistant Vice President of the Philippine National Bank in New York, USA.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The guest of the honorable Rep. Alex Advincola, welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, may we also acknowledge the presence of the guests of the Hon. Strike B. Revilla from the Second District of Cavite. They are the officials of Masisipag na Bakoorenyong NGOs, otherwise known as Mabango Pederasyon Incorporated of the city of Bacoor, Cavite.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The guests of the Hon. Strike Revilla will please rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we now proceed to the consideration of measures under the Calendar of Business.

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

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7120

Continuation

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, under the Calendar of Unfinished Business, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 7120, as contained in Committee Report No. 598 and reported out by the Committee on Justice. For this purpose, may I ask that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

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

The Secretary General is directed to read only the title of House Bill No. 7120.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7120, entitled: AN ACT GRANTING PHILIPPINE CITIZENSHIP TO MR. PHILLIP LEACH.

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

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary status of the Bill is that we are still in the period of sponsorship and debate. I move that the Chairperson of the Committee on Justice, the Hon. Reynaldo V. Umali, be recognized.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Chairman of the Committee on Justice, the honorable Representative Umali is recognized for the sponsorship of this Bill.

REP. UMALI. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think we went past the sponsorship stage already and I am ready to entertain interpellation, questions, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we proceed to the interpellation.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from the First District of Albay, the Hon. Edcel C. Lagman, for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The Hon. Edcel Lagman is recognized for his interpellation.

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the distinguished Sponsor yield to some questions?

REP. UMALI. Gladly, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am not opposed per se to this Bill, but I would like to ask some clarificatory questions. May we know from the distinguished Sponsor what is the constitutional basis for a congressional grant of citizenship to a foreigner?

REP. UMALI. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, the basis in the constitutional provision is found in Article IV on Citizenship, Section 1 in particular, which reads: “The following are citizens of the Philippines”; and subparagraph (4) states: “Those who are naturalized in accordance with law.”

REP. LAGMAN. There are two regular processes for naturalization: one, by an administrative process; and other, by a judicial process. Is that correct, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. UMALI. That is correct: Commonwealth Act No. 473 on judicial naturalization and Republic Act No. 9139 on administrative naturalization.

REP. LAGMAN. Is there any specific provision in the Constitution which authorizes Congress to provide a congressional grant of citizenship to a foreigner?

REP. UMALI. This is it, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, it is Article IV, Section 1 (4) and this is the direct specific provision of the Constitution.

REP. LAGMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to think that the basis of a congressional grant of citizenship to a foreigner is the general or plenary legislative authority of Congress to enact laws. Would that submission be correct?

REP. UMALI. I beg your pardon, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. I would like to think, Mr. Speaker, that the constitutional basis for Congress to grant citizenship to a foreigner is its plenary power to enact laws.

REP. UMALI. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. It is?

REP. UMALI. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. This will have to go through the process of a bill, that is why we are considering it on Second Reading, is that correct?

REP. UMALI. That is correct.

REP. LAGMAN. Now, may we know from the distinguished Sponsor what are the present policies of the House leadership in the grant of congressional citizenship to a foreigner?

REP. UMALI. Let me cite, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, Rule X, covering the legislative grant of Philippine citizenship, and this appears in Section 25: “A bill granting Philippine citizenship to a specific person or individual shall be considered as an application for naturalization.”

REP. LAGMAN. No, that is the process, but what I am asking is, what are the current policies of the House leadership which would guide, say, the Committee on Justice and this Chamber in granting citizenship to a foreigner?

REP. UMALI. Of course, the policy is, that a bill is filed; and when a bill is filed, this is heard in the Committee on Justice, particularly in the Subcommittee, and this will all depend on the wisdom of the majority of the Committee and of the Plenary when the matter is put to a vote before this honorable Body.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, that is still the process. It would not answer my question, but let me go to specific parameters. For example, is there a minimum residence requirement for a foreigner to be given a special grant of Philippine citizenship?

REP. UMALI. There is none, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. This is really subject to the wisdom of each and every Member. Upon a vote of the majority of the Members of this Body, then this is the collective wisdom, this is the policy adopted insofar as the legislative grant of Philippine citizenship. In the course of the deliberations on any application done through a bill—this being a bill which becomes the law on citizenship, then we also consider the requirements under Commonwealth Act No. 473 and Republic Act No. 9139, but we are not strictly bound by the requirements therein because there is, I should say, an equal basis coming from any Member who would sponsor the citizenship. This is a right and privilege also of any Member of this Chamber, to sponsor the legislative grant and that, in itself, is considered a policy, and if the majority of the Members of this House would approve of it, then that is considered the policy also of the Committee. That is why when this matter was brought or filed

and assigned to the Committee on Justice and then further delegated to the Subcommittee on Naturalization of the Committee on Justice—we have here the Hon. Noli Fuentebella who chairs the Subcommittee and he is a stickler for the rules and the policies—I would like to think that he has also applied these rules in considering and recommending the approval by the Subcommittee of the legislative grant of citizenship to Mr. Leach.

REP. LAGMAN. Under the governing Commonwealth Act on citizenship by naturalization, is there any minimum residency requirement?

REP. UMALI. There is, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker. Under Commonwealth Act, he must be a resident for not less than 10 years.

REP. LAGMAN. Is this 10-year minimum requirement for residency not adopted by the Committee on Justice?

REP. UMALI. As I said, we are not strictly bound, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, by this requirement of the Commonwealth Act because this right and privilege, the power and mandate is also granted to the House of Representatives through the Justice Committee and therefore, the Subcommittee deemed it appropriate even while this applicant for a Philippine citizenship, who is an American citizen, has only seven years residency. The matter, because of the grant and privilege given to any Member to sponsor him, was considered, so then, that particular requirement under the Commonwealth Act is deemed waived.

REP. LAGMAN. Mr. Speaker, is the distinguished Chairman willing to adopt, as a policy, the minimum requirements for naturalization under the Commonwealth Act with respect to granting citizenship to foreigners by Congress?

REP. UMALI. Well, I have no objection except that, again, this is a matter that cannot be addressed to the Chair of the Committee on Justice only but to the Body as a whole. This must have the collective approval of the Plenary before the same can be adopted as the rule of the Committee on Justice and of the House of Representatives.

REP. LAGMAN. Is the distinguished Chairman prepared already to recommend to the House that a foreigner, before he applies for a congressional grant of citizenship, must at least comply with the minimum requirements of the Commonwealth Act on naturalization?

REP. UMALI. At this point in time, it has not

been discussed at all and so, this Representation is not prepared to adopt any policy that will put stringent policies that will disqualify the legislative grant of Philippine citizenship to an applicant who is sponsored by any Member of the House of Representatives. As I said earlier, this is a privilege that we grant a person, a foreigner, who would like to be a citizen, but this is equally a right and privilege that is vested upon any Member. If a Member believes that a foreigner should be granted Philippine citizenship for the many reasons that he puts forward in the bill that he filed, and if this is adopted by majority of the Subcommittee and later on, by the mother Committee and eventually, to be approved by the House in plenary, then this should be the policy, and I would not want to limit this privilege and/or power of any Member to sponsor the legislative grant of Philippine citizenship to a person who, he believes, ought to be called a Filipino as well.

REP. LAGMAN. In the case of the proposed grantee, Mr. Phillip Leach, is he qualified to be a naturalized Filipino citizen under the Commonwealth Act?

REP. UMALI. He has not, as yet, satisfied the 10-year residency requirement but, of course, Commonwealth Act No. 473 also provides that the 10-year residency requirement may be reduced to five years under certain conditions. So, if the Commonwealth Act admits of certain conditions, then by all means, a legislative grant of Philippine citizenship should be flexible enough to consider situations where there are other reasons that can be considered in the legislative grant of citizenship.

REP. LAGMAN. May we know, distinguished Sponsor, under the Commonwealth Act, what are the conditions or reasons which would trigger the reduction of the minimum residency requirement of 10 years to only five years?

REP. UMALI. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, there are five conditions for which the residency requirement may be reduced to five years: one, having honorably held office under the Government of the Philippines or under any of the provinces, cities, municipalities, or political subdivisions thereof; two, having established a new industry or introduced a useful invention in the Philippines; three, being married to a Filipino woman; four, having been engaged as a teacher in the Philippines in a public or recognized private school not established for the exclusive instruction of children of persons of a particular nationality or race, in any of the branches of education or industry for a period of not less than two years; and, five, having been born in the Philippines.

REP. LAGMAN. With respect to these five conditions, may we know, distinguished Sponsor, whether the prospective grantee, Phillip Leach, has, in his favor, any of these conditions?

REP. UMALI. Yes, Your Honor. The prospective grantee holds a degree in Biochemistry, minor in Food Science, and in pursuit thereof, he has established and founded Pacific Rim Natural Food Products, Incorporated. He has launched the Radical Organics brand for organic toasted coconut chips. He has distributed these products in different parts of the world, and this product is widely available in many of our commercial establishments, S&R, Starbucks, Rustan's. He had investments worth a total of P140 million in his company, and also in the tourism industry. He has done philanthropic work, being involved in disaster aid/response and rebuilding team through the Balay Kublihan project using earthbag technology to create homes for those affected by typhoon Yolanda. So, he has had breakthroughs in food science and has done philanthropic work in the Philippines.

REP. LAGMAN. Of all the five conditions which can be used to reduce the residence requirement of 10 to five years, what condition in particular can be invoked in favor of the prospective grantee? Would it be the introduction of a new industry?

REP. UMALI. This is having established a new industry or introduced a useful invention in the Philippines.

REP. LAGMAN. This industry which has been introduced by the prospective grantee, is that a new industry?

REP. UMALI. Well, this is a revolutionary technology in coconut. As you very well know, the Philippines is a coconut-producing country but over the years, the coconut industry has suffered a lot in terms of technological advancement, and his technology is now being used even by the Department of Agriculture in the conduct of seminars that offers his technology to the coconut farmers of the country.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, I do not know, I was not present when this condition was assessed by the Subcommittee, but I would have surmised that there was sufficient submission that this industry is new, so much so that the grantee, even under the Commonwealth Act, can avail of a reduced citizenship requirement.

Now, as a whole, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, what are the special attributes of a foreigner to qualify him for a grant of citizenship by Congress without undergoing the regular naturalization process under the Commonwealth Act?

REP. UMALI. Well, in this particular case, the prospective grantee has a son living here and in fact, doing or assisting him in his philanthropic work. He also has an adopted daughter living here, who went to school here, and who also married here and resides in the Philippines. As I said, he has contributed to and invested in agri-technology that resulted in a product that is now exported abroad. In fact, as I said, the Secretary of Agriculture wholeheartedly supports his product and his technology is being used; and he has also been invited not only to other venues in the country, but even in foreign venues to promote quality Philippine exports using his technology. More than that, this proposed grantee has brought in cutting-edge adventure to the Philippines through the tourism industry by establishing the G-Max Reverse Bungy in Boracay in 2014. This investment costs about P60 million and this is now being enjoyed in Boracay by many of our countrymen, including foreigners who have visited Boracay and have patronized this G-Max Reverse Bungy, an equipment that is being offered to the many patrons in Boracay Island.

REP. LAGMAN. Of course, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, the achievements of a son or daughter of a proposed grantee will not inure to that grantee. In any event, I am asking all of these policy questions, Mr. Speaker, so that this House should be able to establish some standards for granting citizenship to a foreigner because, for example, it should approximate the minimum requirements for the grant of citizenship by naturalization under that Commonwealth Act, or it must specify certain special attributes under which the grantee would qualify rather than consider the grant on a case-to-case basis.

Again, I would recall, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, that when I was the Chairman of the Committee on Justice, I did not recommend the approval of any bill granting congressional citizenship to a foreigner, and the policy then which I had was to let the foreigner undergo the regular process of naturalization either by judicial or administrative process. Anyway, that would be a suggestion to adopt certain standards or policies.

With that statement, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, I end my interpellation.

REP. UMALI. Thank you. Just to respond to it, we take note, with gratitude, the suggestion of my distinguished colleague. This is a matter that we will take up in the Subcommittee on Naturalization headed by Cong. Arnulfo "Noli" P. Fuentebella, and we will consider his suggestion and deliberate upon it as part of an output that we will do in this Seventeenth Congress.

Let me also say that, if this may be of interest to any Member, this prospective grantee is an American

without any derogatory record. I do not know if there is any American who has ever sought Philippine citizenship. This is probably one of a kind because I would like to think that there are more Filipinos who would want to become American citizens and not otherwise. This is—and I take my hat off to this prospective grantee, and I hope the Members would support me by favoring and voting for the grant of Philippine citizenship to this American by the name of Phillip Leach who would now want to be among us, who wants to be called a Filipino.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Cong. Edcel—Manong Edcel. Maraming salamat po.

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you for accommodating my interpellation. Let me just say that other Americans got a congressional grant of citizenship like American basketball players.

Thank you.

REP. UMALI. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

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

REP. DAZA. Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from the First District of Northern Samar, the Hon. Raul A. Daza, for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The honorable Rep. Raul Daza is recognized for his interpellation.

REP. DAZA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me start by saying that, with regard to this Bill, the distinguished Gentleman of the Committee on Justice, the Hon. Reynaldo Umali, will have my support.

REP. UMALI. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. DAZA. However, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask some questions to put on record certain observations and perhaps, comments that I would like to make. My understanding is that, under Article IV, Section 1 (4) which was quoted by the Chairman, among those considered to be citizens of the Philippines are “Those who are naturalized in accordance with law.”

I take it, Mr. Chair, that this provision should be related to the legislative power vested in Congress by

the Constitution because, if I recall correctly, Article VI, Section 1 says:

The legislative power shall be vested in the Congress of the Philippines which shall consist of a Senate and a House of Representatives, except to the extent reserved to the people by the provision under the law on initiative and referendum.

My question for the record, Mr. Speaker, is, whether the Chair, as well as the distinguished Sponsor, would agree with me that if and when we pass this Bill and it also passes the Senate and it becomes a law, it is not because of any existing laws or statutes like Commonwealth Act No. 141, but that because it is a direct exercise of the legislative power by Congress. Is my observation correct?

REP. UMALI. That is correct, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. DAZA. So, when this Bill becomes a law, it means that Congress has not been bound by other requirements under existing statutes in regard to residence or rather, qualifications for naturalization. For example, if Mr. Leach has only one-year residency, he could be granted Philippine citizenship by direct action of Congress. Am I correct?

REP. UMALI. That is correct, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. DAZA. Mr. Speaker, I am particularly attracted by the short resumé attached to the Bill. I come from Northern Samar and the number one industry of our province is coconut. Unfortunately, because of the decline in the prices of copra in the foreign market since decades ago and the lack of technology available to our common coconut farmers, the coconut farmers in my province have been living in poverty. I see from the resumé of Mr. Leach that he has that technology which has enabled the sale of higher value coconut products, thus, uplifting countless farmers and encouraging a healthy way of life for them as well. Again, I am paraphrasing from the resumé that he has developed a brand of organic toasted coconut chips which are being exported to Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

I see here, Mr. Speaker, a source of hope for the impoverished coconut farmers in my province. May I ask the Chair if the Committee on Justice has verified and researched the reliability of this information contained in the attached resumé or information of Mr. Leach?

REP. UMALI. Yes, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, this was done through the Subcommittee on Naturalization headed by the Hon. Noli Fuentebella. This is a matter

that was confirmed, meaning, that the proposed grantee is engaged in this business and has been helping or is producing this, using the technologies of the Pacific Rim Natural Foods Product. In fact, it has also been verified that the Secretary of Agriculture is well aware of this product and is even using his technology and sharing his expertise in the conduct of seminars even outside of the country.

REP. DAZA. Now, given these assurances from the distinguished Chairman of the Committee on Justice and the Sponsor now on the floor, I feel assured and I would like to reiterate, Mr. Speaker, my support for this Bill.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Chairman of the Committee on Justice.

REP. UMALI. Thank you, Your Honor. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, there being no other Member who wishes to interpellate or speak against the Bill, I move that we terminate the period of sponsorship and debate.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the period of sponsorship and debate is hereby closed.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of amendments.

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

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, there being no Committee amendments, I move that we now proceed to consider individual amendments.

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

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, there being no individual amendments, I move that we close the period of amendments.

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

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on House Bill No. 7120 on Second Reading.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). As many as are in favor of House Bill No. 7120, please say *aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). As many as are against, please say *no*.

FEW MEMBERS. *No*.

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7120 ON SECOND READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The *ayes* have it; the motion is approved.

House Bill No. 7120 is now approved on Second Reading.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, may we acknowledge the presence of the guests of the Hon. Ramon V.A. "Rav" Rocamora of the Lone District of Siquijor. They are 13 MBA students from Silliman University led by Atty. Gloria Futralan.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The guests of the Honorable Rocamora, please rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*) The Majority Leader is recognized.

OMNIBUS CONSIDERATION OF LOCAL BILLS ON SECOND READING PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider Bills under the Calendar of Business for Thursday and Friday.

Mr. Speaker, pursuant to our Rules, allow me to put forth an omnibus motion for the consideration of the following:

1. House Bill No. 7016 under Committee Report No. 579;
2. House Bill No. 7166 under Committee Report No. 602;
3. House Bill No. 7175 under Committee Report No. 603; and
4. House Bill No. 7177 under Committee Report No. 605.

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

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that

we consider the respective Explanatory Notes of the Bills as the sponsorship speech on the said measures.

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

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, there being no Member who wishes to interpellate or speak against the said local Bills, I move that we terminate the period of interpellation.

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

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of amendments, and approve the Committee amendments, if any, as contained in the respective committee reports of the aforementioned bills.

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

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, there being no individual amendments, I move that we terminate the period of amendments.

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

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on the following House Bills on Second Reading: House Bill No. 7016, 7166, 7175 and 7177.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). There is a motion to approve on Second Reading House Bills No. 7016, 7166, 7175 and 7177. As many as are in favor, please say *aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). As many as are against, please say *nay*. (*Silence*)

OMNIBUS APPROVAL OF LOCAL BILLS ON SECOND READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The *ayes* have it; the motion is approved.

The aforementioned Bills are now approved on Second Reading.

REFERRAL OF RESOLUTIONS ON INQUIRIES IN AID OF LEGISLATION

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, in accordance with our Rules governing Inquiries in Aid of Legislation, I move that we refer the following House resolutions to the appropriate Committees:

1. House Resolution No. 1649, to the Committee on Transportation;
 2. House Resolution No. 1651, to the Committee on Banks and Financial Intermediaries;
 3. House Resolution No. 1652, to the Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs;
 4. House Resolution No. 1653, to the Committee on Good Government and Public Accountability;
 5. House Resolution No. 1654, to the Committee On Energy;
 6. House Resolution No. 1656; to the Committee on Indigenous Cultural Communities and Indigenous Peoples;
 7. House Resolution No. 1658, to the Committee on Agriculture and Food;
 8. House Resolution No. 1659, to the Committee on Agriculture and Food;
 9. House Resolution No. 1660, to the Committee on Higher and Technical Education;
 10. House Resolution No. 1665, to the Committee on Information and Communications Technology;
 11. House Resolution No. 1666, to the Committee on Good Government and Public Accountability;
 12. House Resolution No. 1667, to the Committee on Ways and Means;
 13. House Resolution No. 1668, to the Committee on Agriculture and Food;
 14. House Resolution No. 1669, to the Committee on Higher and Technical Education;
 15. House Resolution No. 1671, to the Committee on Ways and Means;
 16. House Resolution No. 1675, to the Committees on Good Government and Public Accountability, and Health;
 17. House Resolution No. 1676, to the Committee on Agriculture and Food;
 18. House Resolution No. 1677, to the Committees on Government Reorganization, Basic Education and Culture, and Higher and Technical Education;
 19. House Resolution No. 1678, to the Committee on Trade and Industry; and
 20. House Resolution No. 1680, to the Committees on Good Government and Public Accountability, and Energy.
- I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we include as additional coauthors of House Bills No. 3988 and 7166, the Members contained in the list to be submitted by the Committee on Rules.

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

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn the session until Monday, February 26, at four o'clock in the afternoon.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abueg). The session is adjourned until Monday, February 26, 2018, at four o'clock in the afternoon.

It was 5:09 p.m.