



# Congressional Record

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

## House of Representatives

Vol. 4

Monday, March 5, 2018

No. 70

### CALL TO ORDER

*At 4:00 p.m., Deputy Speaker Linabelle Ruth R. Villarica called the session to order.*

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

### NATIONAL ANTHEM

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Villarica). Everybody is requested to rise for the National Anthem.

*Everybody rose to sing the Philippine National Anthem.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Villarica). Please remain standing for the Invocation to be delivered by the Hon. Milagros Aquino-Magsaysay of the Party-List SENIOR CITIZENS.

*Everybody remained standing for the Invocation.*

### INVOCATION

REP. AQUINO-MAGSAYSAY. A reading from the Holy Book of Proverbs, chapter 31, verses 25 to 31:

Strength and honor are her clothing; she shall rejoice in time to come. She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness. She watches over the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: "Many daughters have done well, but you excel them all." Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates.

Father, we are gathered here today in deference to our duties in the country as lawmakers, as well as in

celebration of the National Women's Month. We humbly ask that You preside over our obligations today with nothing but Your omnipotent wisdom and compassion as our guide.

Throughout history, You have shown us how a virtuous woman can be Your tool in shaping a future that is godly, merciful, faithful, and strong in spirit, and we are humbly beseeching Your name that You would bestow the same favor You have for all the women You have called by name and by faith towards Your perfect cause.

May we be more like Sarah who demonstrated unwavering faith in all Your promises.

May we be more like Ruth who would not be judged by our past, but remain hopeful of a future that is anointed by Your love.

May we be more like Hannah whose persistence and prayers helped change the course of history.

May we be more like Esther whose bravery and courage helped save the lives of Your chosen people and used her influence to bring more souls towards Your fold.

May we be more like Deborah whose divine wisdom became the root of compassionate justice.

May we be more like Mary of Bethany whose dedication to Your Word brought us closer to the truth.

May we be more like Mary Magdalene whose unwavering love and passion helped bring life to a sense of godly duty and piety.

And may we be more like the Virgin Mary whose perfect faith and obedience of complete surrender to Your purpose showed how each woman could be a vessel of Your destiny.

May this prayer echo the words of some 52 million women of the country, whose shared passion and commitment to the betterment of our Republic are both a duty and a sense of divine destiny that could only come anointed by Your grace.

These we ask in the strong and loving name of Jesus.

Amen.

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

As part of the celebration of the International Women's Month, today's session shall be presided over by several women Legislators as we discuss issues relating to the rights and welfare of women. Relative to this, the Chair would like to inform the Body that pursuant to Section 15(h), Rule IV of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the honorable Speaker Pantaleon D. Alvarez has also designated the following House Members to preside successively over today's session:

1. Hon. Bernadette "BH" Herrera-Dy of Party-List BH (Bagong Henerasyon);
2. Hon. Corazon T. Nuñez-Malanyaon of the First District of Davao Oriental;
3. Hon. Jocelyn Sy Limkaichong of the First District of Negros Oriental; and
4. Hon. Emi G. Calixto-Rubiano of the Lone District of Pasay City.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### ROLL CALL

REP. ZAMORA (M.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we call the roll.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Villarica). 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. 70, dated March 5, 2018.\**

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. The Speaker is present.

The roll call shows that 228 Members responded to the call.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Villarica). With 228 Members present, the Chair declares the presence of a quorum.

#### APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

REP. ZAMORA (M.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we approve Journal No. 69 of the session, dated February 28, 2018.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Villarica). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; Journal No. 69 of the session, dated February 28, 2018, is hereby approved.

REP. ZAMORA (M.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we proceed to the Reference of Business.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Villarica). 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, Communications and Committee Reports, and the Deputy Speaker made the corresponding references:*

#### BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 7265, entitled:

"AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE RIGHT OF CITIZENS TO INFORMATION HELD BY THE GOVERNMENT"

By Representative Nieto

TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INFORMATION

House Bill No. 7267, entitled:

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

By Representative Villafuerte

TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ENTERPRISES AND PRIVATIZATION AND THE COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE AND FISHERIES RESOURCES

House Bill No. 7268, entitled:

"AN ACT PROHIBITING AND PENALIZING THE UNAUTHORIZED POSSESSION AND USE OF OFFICIAL LETTERHEADS AND STATIONERY BELONGING TO DIFFERENT NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, OFFICES OR ENTITIES, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS AND PROVIDING PENALTIES THERETO"

By Representative Villafuerte

TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 7269, entitled:

"AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE GRANT OF STUDENT FARE DISCOUNT PRIVILEGES ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES"

By Representative Villafuerte  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON  
TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 7270, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING THAT 100% OF THE SERVICE CHARGE COLLECTED IN HOTELS AND OTHER ESTABLISHMENTS BE DISTRIBUTED TO ALL COVERED EMPLOYEES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Villafuerte  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND  
EMPLOYMENT

House Bill No. 7271, entitled:

“AN ACT EXPANDING THE PURPOSES AND APPLICATION OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION FUND (SEF), AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTIONS 100, 235 AND 272 OF REPUBLIC ACT 7160, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991”

By Representative Villafuerte  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 7272, entitled:

“AN ACT MAKING AUTOMATED TELLER MACHINES ACCESSIBLE TO THE VISUALLY-IMPAIRED INDIVIDUALS”

By Representative Villafuerte  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND  
FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

House Bill No. 7273, entitled:

“AN ACT PREVENTING THE DANGERS OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION IN CAUSING FETAL ALCOHOL SYNDROME IN MOTHERS”

By Representative Villafuerte  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 7274, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A BAYANIHAN HOMEBUILDING PROGRAM FOR LOW INCOME GROUPS THROUGH GRADUATED AMORTIZATION PAYMENT (GAP) SCHEME AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Villafuerte  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND  
URBAN DEVELOPMENT

House Bill No. 7275, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING SECTION 21 OF

REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8749, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE CLEAN AIR ACT, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Villafuerte  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY

House Bill No. 7276, entitled:

“AN ACT REGULATING THE PRODUCTION, IMPORTATION, SALE, PROVISION, USE, RECOVERY, COLLECTION, RECYCLING AND DISPOSAL OF PLASTIC BAGS”

By Representative Villafuerte  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY

House Bill No. 7277, entitled:

“AN ACT DEFINING AND PROHIBITING SENIOR CITIZEN ABUSE, PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Villafuerte  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON POPULATION AND  
FAMILY RELATIONS

House Bill No. 7278, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE TO BE MANAGED BY THE FILM DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Villafuerte  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC  
INFORMATION

House Bill No. 7279, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE COMPULSORY DISCLOSURE OF FIRE SAFETY STANDARDS AND MEASURES IN CAMPUS BUILDINGS”

By Representative Villafuerte  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND  
TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 7280, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING GOOD CONDUCT TIME ALLOWANCE TO PRISONERS WHO PARTICIPATE IN LITERACY, SKILLS AND VALUES DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN PENAL INSTITUTIONS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE ARTICLE 97 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 3815, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE REVISED PENAL CODE”

By Representative Villafuerte  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 7281, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING PUBLIC TELECOMMUNICATIONS ENTITIES TO

PROVIDENATIONWIDEMOBILENUMBER  
PORTABILITY TO SUBSCRIBERS”

By Representative Villafuerte  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION AND  
COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

House Bill No. 7282, entitled:

“AN ACT REGULATING CLASS SIZE IN ALL  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND APPROPRIATING  
FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Villafuerte  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION  
AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 7283, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING ALL TOLL OPERATORS  
OF ALL MAJOR EXPRESSWAY IN MEGA  
MANILA TO ESTABLISH AND UTILIZE A  
STANDARD AND UNIFIED ELECTRONIC  
TOLL COLLECTION (ETC) SYSTEM IN  
THE FORM OF A RADIO FREQUENCY  
IDENTIFICATION DEVICE (RFID)”

By Representative Sy-Alvarado  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON  
TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 7284, entitled:

“AN ACT COMPILING THE TRAFFIC RULES  
AND REGULATIONS OF THE PHILIPPINES  
INTO AN OFFICIAL ‘RULES OF THE ROAD  
HANDBOOK’ ”

By Representative Sy-Alvarado  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON  
TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 7285, entitled:

“AN ACT UPGRADING THE SERVICES  
AND FACILITIES OF THE COTABATO  
REGIONAL AND MEDICAL CENTER IN  
COTABATO CITY, AND INCREASING ITS  
BED CAPACITY TO SIX HUNDRED (600),  
AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC  
ACT NO. 8316, AND APPROPRIATING  
FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Sacdalan  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 7286, entitled:

“AN ACT RENEWING FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-  
FIVE (25) YEARS THE FRANCHISE  
GRANTED TO ENRIQUE M. OROZCO  
AND SONS, INC. UNDER REPUBLIC ACT  
NO. 3229”

By Representatives Castelo and Batocabe  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE  
FRANCHISES

House Bill No. 7287, entitled:

“AN ACT RENEWING THE FRANCHISE  
GRANTED TO ULTIMATE  
ENTERTAINMENT, INC., UNDER  
REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8102, ENTITLED  
‘A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT,  
INSTALL, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN  
FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES AND  
IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST RADIO  
BROADCASTING STATIONS WITHIN  
THE PHILIPPINES AND FOR OTHER  
PURPOSES,’ FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-  
FIVE (25) YEARS FROM THE EFFECTIVITY  
OF THIS ACT”

By Representative Ferrer (J.)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE  
FRANCHISES

House Bill No. 7288, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TECHNICAL  
EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT  
AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING AND  
ACCREDITATION CENTER IN BRGY.  
POBLACION, MUNICIPALITY OF TUBOD,  
PROVINCE OF LANA O DEL NORTE”

By Representative Dimaporo (M.K.)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND  
TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 7289, entitled:

“AN ACT REGULATING THE TRADE OF  
VAPORIZED NICOTINE PRODUCTS,  
PARTICULARLY THE USE, SALE,  
PACKAGING, DISTRIBUTION, AND  
COMMUNICATIONS THEREOF”

By Representative Noel  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND  
INDUSTRY

RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 1727, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND  
AFFORDING FULL SUPPORT ON THE  
IGLESIA NI CRISTO’S ECOLOGICAL  
PARK CALLED ‘THE GARDEN’ LOCATED  
AT THE PHILIPPINE ARENA IN BOCAUE,  
BULACAN”

By Representative Castelo  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1728, entitled:

“RESOLUTION FOR THE HOUSE  
COMMITTEES ON GOVERNMENT  
ENTERPRISES AND PRIVATIZATION  
AND GOOD GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC

ACCOUNTABILITY TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE PROPOSED SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM (SSS) CONTRIBUTION INCREASE”

By Representative Zarate  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1729, entitled:

“RESOLUTION TO CONDUCT AN URGENT INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE DELAYED REMITTANCE OR NON-REMITTANCE OF THE PERSONAL AND GOVERNMENT SHARES OF TEACHERS’ GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE SYSTEM PREMIUMS BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION”

By Representatives Tinio and Castro (F.L.)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1730, entitled:

“RESOLUTION TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE DELAY OR OUTRIGHT FAILURE TO REMIT EMPLOYEES’ CONTRIBUTIONS FOR PHILHEALTH WHICH RESULT IN THESE EMPLOYEES NOT BEING ABLE TO ACCESS THEIR BENEFITS UNDER THE NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE ACT OF 2013”

By Representatives Tinio and Castro (F.L.)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1731, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEES ON TOURISM, ECOLOGY, HEALTH, NATURAL RESOURCES AND OTHER APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE ALLEGED OVERCROWDING, OVERDEVELOPMENT AND IRRESPONSIBLE WASTE MANAGEMENT BY SOME ESTABLISHMENTS IN THE ISLAND OF BORACAY IN MALAY, AKLAN WITH THE END IN VIEW OF SUSTAINING ITS NATURAL BEAUTY AND PRESERVING ITS STATUS AS A TOP GLOBAL DESTINATION”

By Representative Villafuerte  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1732, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE AND FISHERIES RESOURCES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE STATUS OF DELINEATION

OF THE COUNTRY’S MUNICIPAL WATERS PURSUANT TO THE RELEVANT PROVISIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8550, AS AMENDED”

By Representative Villarín  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1733, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE AND FISHERIES RESOURCES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE CONTINUED ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED FISHING ACTIVITIES IN THE COUNTRY IN VIOLATION OF THE PROVISIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10654, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ‘AN ACT TO PREVENT, DETER AND ELIMINATE ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED FISHING, AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8550, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ‘THE PHILIPPINE FISHERIES CODE OF 1998,’ AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES’ ”

By Representative Villarín  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1734, entitled:

“RESOLUTION EXPRESSING DEEPEST SYMPATHIES AND CONDOLENCES TO THE FAMILIES OF THE VICTIMS OF THE RECENT EARTHQUAKE IN TAIWAN”

By Representative Olivarez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1735, entitled:

“RESOLUTION EXPRESSING PROFOUND CONDOLENCES TO THE FAMILIES OF THE VICTIMS IN THE SHOOTING AT MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HIGH SCHOOL, PARKLAND, FLORIDA, USA”

By Representative Olivarez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1736, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION IN RELATION TO THE CABADBARAN CITY POLICE AND AGUSAN DEL NORTE PROVINCIAL POLICE’S HIGHLY IRREGULAR AND EXCESSIVELY FORCEFUL SERVICE OF THE PATENTLY ILLEGAL SEARCH WARRANTS ISSUED BY BRANCH 2 OF THE BUTUAN CITY REGIONAL TRIAL COURT”

By Representative Amante  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1737, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE MANNER BY WHICH THE MALAMPAYA BANKED GAS, WHICH IS AT RISK OF BEING IMPAIRED BY 2024, IS GOING TO BE DISPOSED BY THE PNOC AND/OR THE DOE”

By Representative Sambar  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1738, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE HOUSE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT A REVIEW ON THE POLICIES AND PROGRAMS OF THE GOVERNMENT REGARDING OUR OFWs AMIDST REPORTS ON ABUSES AND DEATHS IN ORDER TO PROVIDE INTERVENTIONS THAT WOULD PRESERVE AND ADVANCE THEIR RIGHTS AND DIGNITY”

By Representative Alejano  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1739, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION ENTREATING THE SUPREME COURT FOR AN UPDATE ON THE MAY 21, 2008 PETITION URGING THE SUPREME COURT TO STRIKE DOWN AS UNCONSTITUTIONAL THE JOINT MARINE SEISMIC UNDERTAKING BETWEEN THE PHILIPPINES, CHINA, AND VIETNAM AND APPEAL FOR THE EXPEDITIOUS RESOLUTION OF THE SAME PETITION TO SETTLE DOUBTS OVER THE UNCONSTITUTIONALITY OF A JOINT MARINE EXPLORATION OVER PHILIPPINE WATERS”

By Representative Alejano  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Resolution No. 1740, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE HOUSE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTED DECLINE OF THE PHILIPPINES’ RANKING IN THE LATEST CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX OF TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL WITH AN END VIEW OF ENACTING MEASURES TO CURTAIL CORRUPT PRACTICES AND FURTHER IMPROVE THE TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT”

By Representative Alejano  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

#### COMMUNICATIONS

Letter dated 13 February 2018 of Rey Leonardo B. Guerrero, Chief of Staff, Armed Forces of the Philippines, submitting to the Congress of the Philippines the Monthly Report on the Implementation of Martial Law in Mindanao covering the period from January 1 to 31, 2018.  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY

Report of Atty. Cesar Strait Pareja, Secretary General, House of Representatives, on enrolled bills, submitted to the Office of the President, for His Excellency’s consideration and signature, pursuant to the provision of Rule VI, Section 18, Par. (h) of the Rules of the House of Representatives:

1. Consolidated Senate Joint Resolution No. 8 and House Joint Resolution No. 15, entitled:

“JOINT RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE NATIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY TO AWARD TO OTHER QUALIFIED BENEFICIARIES THE UNAWARDED HOUSING UNITS, AWARDED HOUSING UNITS THAT ARE NOT YET OCCUPIED AND WHOSE OWNERSHIP AND POSSESSION ARE SURRENDERED BY THEIR RESPECTIVE AWARDEES, AND HOUSING UNITS WHOSE RESPECTIVE AWARDS WERE CANCELLED IN THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES (AFP)/PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE (PNP)/BUREAU OF FIRE PROTECTION (BFP)/BUREAU OF JAIL MANAGEMENT AND PENOLOGY (BJMP)/BUREAU OF CORRECTIONS (BUCOR) HOUSING PROJECTS”;

2. House Bill No. 5063, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING THE PANGASINAN GULF WAVES NETWORK CORPORATION A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, ESTABLISH, OPERATE, AND MAINTAIN RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCASTING STATIONS THROUGHOUT THE PHILIPPINES”;

3. House Bill No. 5175, entitled:

“AN ACT RENEWING FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO BETA BROADCASTING SYSTEM, INC., UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8026, ENTITLED ‘AN ACT GRANTING THE BETA BROADCASTING SYSTEM CORPORATION A FRANCHISE TO

CONSTRUCT, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN RADIO BROADCASTING STATIONS IN THE ISLAND OF LUZON, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES’ ”

4. House Bill No. 2737, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10597, ENTITLED: ‘AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE NORTHERN ILOILO STATE UNIVERSITY IN THE PROVINCE OF ILOILO BY INTEGRATING THE NORTHERN ILOILO POLYTECHNIC STATE COLLEGE (NIPSC) IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ESTANCIA, THE NIPSC – BAROTAC VIEJO CAMPUS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BAROTAC VIEJO, THE AJUY POLYTECHNIC COLLEGE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF AJUY, THE BATAD POLYTECHNIC COLLEGE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BATAD, THE CONCEPCION POLYTECHNIC COLLEGE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF CONCEPCION, THE LEMERY POLYTECHNIC COLLEGE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF LEMERY AND THE VICTORINO SALCEDO POLYTECHNIC COLLEGE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SARA, ALL LOCATED IN THE PROVINCE OF ILOILO AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR’ ”;

5. House Bill No. 3179, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10596, ENTITLED: ‘AN ACT CONVERTING THE MINDORO STATE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF VICTORIA, PROVINCE OF ORIENTAL MINDORO INTO A STATE UNIVERSITY TO BE KNOWN AS THE MINDORO STATE UNIVERSITY (MINSU) AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR’ ”;

6. House Bill No. 5051, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS HIGH SCHOOL IN BARANGAY HULONG-DUHAT, CITY OF MALABON TO BE KNOWN AS MALABON CITY NATIONAL SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR’ ”;

7. House Bill No. 5146, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMPOSTELA VALLEY STATE COLLEGE, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 26 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10598, ENTITLED: ‘AN ACT ESTABLISHING A STATE COLLEGE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF COMPOSTELA,

PROVINCE OF COMPOSTELA VALLEY TO BE KNOWN AS COMPOSTELA VALLEY STATE COLLEGE, INTEGRATING THEREWITH AS REGULAR BRANCHES THE BUKIDNON STATE UNIVERSITY EXTERNAL STUDIES CENTERS IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF MONKAYO, MARAGUSAN, MONTEVISTA AND NEW BATAAN, ALL LOCATED IN THE PROVINCE OF COMPOSTELA VALLEY AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR’ ”;

8. House Bill No. 5147, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE TALISAY CITY COLLEGE IN THE CITY OF TALISAY, PROVINCE OF CEBU INTO THE TALISAY CITY STATE COLLEGE, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10594, ENTITLED: ‘AN ACT ESTABLISHING A STATE COLLEGE IN THE CITY OF TALISAY, PROVINCE OF CEBU TO BE KNOWN AS THE TALISAY CITY STATE COLLEGE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR’ ”;

9. House Bill No. 5150, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10600, ENTITLED: ‘AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE SURIGAO DEL NORTE STATE UNIVERSITY IN THE PROVINCE OF SURIGAO DEL NORTE BY INTEGRATING THE SURIGAO STATE COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY IN SURIGAO CITY, THE SIARGAO NATIONAL COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF DEL CARMEN AND THE SURIGAO DEL NORTE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF MAINIT, ALL LOCATED IN THE PROVINCE OF SURIGAO DEL NORTE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR’ ”;

10. House Bill No. 5151, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10583, ENTITLED: ‘AN ACT CONVERTING THE MOUNTAIN PROVINCE STATE POLYTECHNIC COLLEGE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BONTOC, MOUNTAIN PROVINCE INTO A STATE UNIVERSITY TO BE KNOWN AS THE MOUNTAIN PROVINCE STATE UNIVERSITY, WITH CAMPUSES IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF TADIAN, BAUKO, PARACELIS AND BARLIG, ALL LOCATED IN MOUNTAIN PROVINCE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR’ ”; and

11. House Bill No. 5211, entitled:

“AN ACT RENEWING FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS THE

FRANCHISE GRANTED TO GATEWAY U.H.F. TELEVISION BROADCASTING, INC., PRESENTLY KNOWN AS GATEWAY TELEVISION BROADCASTING, INC., AND DOING BUSINESS UNDER THE NAME AND STYLE OF HOPE CHANNEL PHILIPPINES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7223, ENTITLED ‘AN ACT GRANTING GATEWAY U.H.F. TELEVISION BROADCASTING, INC., A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES UHF TELEVISION BROADCASTING STATIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES’ ”.

TO THE ARCHIVES

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report by the Committee on Justice and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 641), re H.B. No. 7309, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE POSITIONS FOR JUDGES-AT-LARGE, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE BATAS PAMBANSA BILANG 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ‘THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980,’ AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bills Numbered 167, 1513, 2308 and 5215

Sponsors: Representatives Umali, Nograles (K.A.), Veloso, Velasco-Catera, Velasco and Loyola  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Higher and Technical Education and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 642), re H.B. No. 7310, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN EXTENSION PROGRAM OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY OF SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES (USTSP) IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF VILLANUEVA, PROVINCE OF MISAMIS ORIENTAL”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 1930

Sponsors: Representatives Hofer, Nograles (K.A.) and Uy (J.)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Local Government (Committee Report No. 643), re H.B. No. 7311, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY TO BE

KNOWN AS BARANGAY STA. MARIA IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ABRA DE ILOG, PROVINCE OF OCCIDENTAL MINDORO”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 4613

Sponsors: Representatives Acharon and Ramirez-Sato

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

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

REP. ZAMORA (M.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we acknowledge the presence of our guests in the gallery. We have the guests of her honor, Dep. Speaker Linabelle Ruth R. Villarica. We have Mayor Henry R. Villarica and the respective department heads of the city government of Meycauayan City, Bulacan—we have Mayor Edwin Santos, Vice Mayor Arvin Dela Cruz and the Councilors of Obando, Bulacan; Vice Mayor Henry Lutao and the Councilors of Marilao, Bulacan; heads of the Soroptimist International of the Philippines; and the Department of Education School Superintendent, Principals, and Teachers assigned to the Fourth Congressional District of Bulacan.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Villarica). Please stand up. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

REP. ZAMORA (M.). Mme. Speaker, may we also acknowledge the presence of the guests of Hon. Jennifer Austria Barzaga, the officials of the city government of Dasmariñas, Cavite—the members of the Kababaihan ng Dasmariñas sa Bagong Milenyo, and the Green Ladies of Dasmariñas.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Villarica). Please stand up. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

REP. ZAMORA (M.). Mme. Speaker, we also have the guests of Hon. Emi G. Calixto-Rubiano, the officers and some members of the Enlightened Mothers Incorporated from Pasay City.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Villarica). Please stand up. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

REP. ZAMORA (M.). Mme. Speaker, we also have the guests of Hon. Greg G. Gasataya. They are the officials of the Carlos Hilado Memorial State College of Negros Occidental, headed by Pres. Renato M. Sorolla.



THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Villarica). Please stand up. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

REP. ZAMORA (M.). Mme. Speaker, we also have the guests of Hon. Christopher V. P. De Venecia. We have the members and officers of some national farmers organizations, namely: PAKISAMA of Rizal, PAKISAMA of Camarines Sur, PKSK of Mindoro Oriental, PKSK of Nueva Ecija, KAMMPIL of Southern Leyte, Lakambini Pilipinas Rural Women Association of Bukidnon, and Federation of Free Farmers of Agusan del Sur, Davao del Norte and Camarines Norte.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Villarica). Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

REP. ZAMORA (M.). Mme. Speaker, we also have the guests of Hon. Ron P. Salo, the students from the Meiji University in Tokyo, Japan, and members of the International Law Society of De La Salle University College of Law, headed by Atty. Jocelyn Cruz.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Villarica). Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

REP. ZAMORA (M.). Mme. Speaker, we also have the guests of Hon. Pablo C. Ortega, the League of Barangay Secretaries of the city of San Fernando, La Union, together with the staff of the Office of the Secretary to the Sangguniang Panlungsod and the Sangguniang Bayan Secretaries of the province.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Villarica). Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

REP. ZAMORA (M.). Mme. Speaker, we also have the guests of Hon. Rozzano Rufino B. Biazon, the officers and members of the Rotary Club of the city of Muntinlupa, as well as the teachers and students from Pedro E. Diaz High School, Muntinlupa City.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Villarica). Please stand up. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

REP. ZAMORA (M.). Mme. Speaker, we also have the guests of Hon. Tomasito “Tom” S. Villarin, from various organizations. They are Patricia Seguera, Georgina Vilar, Marlyn Tacoyo, Marselina Bentulan, Reyanne Joy Librado, Donna Nano, Rigel Moreño, Vicky Parocho, Merly Escala, Cecile Cuaño, Vives Moraño and other members of the group.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Villarica). Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

REP. ZAMORA (M.). Mme. Speaker, we also have the guests of Hon. Lorna C. Silverio. We have the officers and members of the Soroptimist International Philippines, headed by Governor Cherry Tumaneng, Bulacan North Chapter President, Ms. Maribel Vergel De Dios and District Governor Ms. Marivic Vergel De Dios.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Villarica). Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*  
The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ZAMORA (M.). Mme. Speaker, may we recognize the Acting Dep. Minority Leader, Representative Ferriol.

REP. FERRIOL-PASCUAL. Mme. Speaker, may I make a parliamentary inquiry.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Villarica). The Lady from the Party-List KALINGA, Dep. Minority Leader Ferriol-Pascual, may proceed.

REP. FERRIOL-PASCUAL. Thank you so much, Mme. Speaker.

I would like to inquire on the status of House Bill No. 2793, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND CRISIS ASSISTANCE CENTERS FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN EVERY PROVINCE AND CITY OF THE COUNTRY, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8505, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE RAPE VICTIM ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION ACT OF 1998. I believe this Bill has been referred to the Committee on Women and Gender Equality.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Villarica). Will the Majority Floor Leader please respond?

REP. ZAMORA (M.). Mme. Speaker, may we request the Hon. Bernadette “BH” Herrera-Dy, Chairperson of the Committee on Women and Gender Equality to give us an update on the status of House Bill No. 2793.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Villarica). The Honorable Herrera-Dy is recognized to respond to the parliamentary inquiry of the Honorable Ferriol-Pascual.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, for the information of the Honorable Ferriol-Pascual, the Committee on Women and Gender Equality to which House Bill No. 2793 was referred will schedule the Bill for deliberation soon, because it is one of the seven priority measures identified as such by our Committee. Rest assured that it will be scheduled at the soonest possible time.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Villarica). Is the Dep. Minority Leader satisfied with the response of Honorable Herrera-Dy?

REP. FERRIOL-PASCUAL. Yes, Mme. Speaker. Thank you so much, and I am satisfied. I appreciate the update given to us by the Chairperson of the Committee on Women and Gender Equality, and I look forward to the immediate consideration of this Bill by the Committee.

Thank you so much, Mme. Speaker.

REP. VILLARAZA-SUAREZ. Mme. Speaker, ...

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Villarica). What is the pleasure of the Minority Leader, the Hon. Anna Marie Villaraza-Suarez?

REP. VILLARAZA-SUAREZ. Mme. Speaker, may I make a manifestation.

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

REP. VILLARAZA-SUAREZ. Mme. Speaker, I would like to manifest my intention to be included as coauthor of House Bill No. 2793, with the permission of the author of the Bill, the Dep. Minority Leader, Hon. Abigail Faye C. Ferriol-Pascual.

I fully support the purpose of the Bill, which is to provide at least one shelter for street children, abandoned children, physically and sexually abused women and children, the homeless or those displaced by armed conflict in each city of Metro Manila, and each province of the Philippines. I join the call for the immediate consideration of this Bill.

Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Villarica). The manifestation of the Minority Leader is duly noted.

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. ZAMORA (M.). Mme. Speaker, I move for a few minutes suspension of the session.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Villarica). The session is suspended.

*It was 4:36 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 4:36 p.m., the session was resumed with Rep. Corazon T. Nuñez-Malanyaon presiding.*

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Nuñez-Malanyaon). The session is resumed.

The Majority Floor Leader is recognized.

#### PRIVILEGE HOUR

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

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Nuñez-Malanyaon). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Chair declares a Privilege Hour.

REP. NAVA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Elisa “Olga” T. Kho of the Second District of Masbate to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Nuñez-Malanyaon). The Hon. Elisa Kho is recognized.

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. KHO

REP. KHO. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

Mme. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Filipino women who went against the odds and succeeded in their lives. These women lived a life starting from abject poverty, climbed the ladder and achieved something that got them ahead in life. I will be citing a few of these women, Mme. Speaker, although I know that there are countless others who flourished, prospered and overcame their dire situations in the beginning.

When we think of Filipinas who had risen from rags to riches, the first woman who comes to mind is no other than Socorro Ramos. She was born in Sta. Cruz, Laguna and their family was poor. In order to help financially, at an early age, Socorro had to work in a cigarette factory peeling paper off discarded cigarettes where she earned five centavos per pack. Later on, she was hired as a salesgirl at a bookstall, where she fell in love with the son of the owner. The couple eventually set up their own bookstore and it was the beginning of what we know today as the National Bookstore. They experienced setbacks in their initial venture, losing their first store during World War II and their second store was destroyed by fire. With their perseverance, at present, the National Bookstore is the largest bookstore chain in the whole country and thanks to this hardworking lady who rose from their economic woes.

The second woman worthy of emulation is Corazon Ong. She was a dietician for a hospital, but because she wanted to take care of her growing family, she decided to quit her job. In her daily chores, whenever preparing food for her family, she

did not forget her dietary skills. She sold homemade siopao which she prepared in her neighborhood. She experimented with different methods and later on developed skinless longganisa which was well-received by those who tasted it and the orders suddenly overwhelmed her. She decided to get some loans and founded the CDO Foodsphere Inc. Today, CDO is a household name producing quality processed foods.

The third woman is July Gandiongco who was already 50 years old when she decided to go into business. She started as a sari-sari store owner and later on as a sewer in places like Cebu, Bohol, Leyte, Zamboanga and other areas as she went with her husband whose job was being assigned to various places, starting from scratch every time they and their children settled in a new place. When her husband started to just do farming instead, she also helped by being a farm help in Dumaguete. They lost the farm during the sugar crisis and settled back in Cebu where she put up a canteen in a company. Looking for other opportunities, she finally agreed to take a jobless baker and she opened her bakery. At age 50, she set up Julie's Bakeshop, one of the most franchised neighborhood bakeries in the country.

The fourth woman is Mila Ferrer, a native of Pangasinan, who was an orphan but with the desire to succeed, and migrated to the United States of America upon graduation from college. Barely speaking the English language, she applied for a lot of jobs. She was interviewed 17 times, but no one offered work for her. She had to settle as a house cleaner or sometimes as a real estate seller or as an assistant to other professionals in order to survive. She lived in a trailer home having no money to rent an apartment. After more applications and rejections, she finally landed a clerical job in a financial institution, and after gaining an experience, she transferred to a bank. She rose to become a loan manager, then was hired to a higher position as a Regional Vice President for an international investment corporation. From experiencing poverty in the United States, she now owns more than 50 real estate properties. She even owns the house that she used to clean when she was starting. Instead of a trailer home, she now lives as a single mother in a very large mansion with her children.

The fifth woman is Rebecca Bustamante who lived as an impoverished young woman. Because her family was so poor and with 10 brothers and sisters, she was determined to help by selling pandesal and ice candy to contribute to the much-needed money. She would also sell fish in the market and all sorts of merienda in her neighborhood. She likewise experienced tending a sari-sari store as a housemaid, as a sewer and as a janitress while pursuing a college degree. Asking help from her employer one day, she later on applied as a

yaya in Singapore, and with only a few hours each day to rest, she still managed to study in one of the best open universities in Singapore where she studied every night. She eventually applied as a domestic helper and a nanny in Canada. She again enrolled in schools and attended classes at night and even sold pots and pans on the side. She finished her course in Accounting in Ontario which later on allowed her to secure various jobs, including at Mary Kay Cosmetic Corporation, where she became a Senior Sales Director. With the vision of making a name for herself, she founded her own recruitment company called "High-Q Personnel." She was also offered to put up a local counterpart of Mary Kay in the Philippines, which she eventually established. They also put up Chalre Associates, a recruitment company in the Philippines; launched the Asia CEO Forum, the largest annual business gathering in our country and recognized in the Asia Pacific Region; and the Asia CEO Awards to recognize Filipinos excelling abroad especially in Asia.

Looking back at these stories, these Filipinas' difficult journey to success is really an inspiration. These women's success is a testament not only to their will to survive their poverty or hard life they were in at the beginning, but to their hard work and tenacity to reach their dreams as well. They did not believe that they can be poor forever. They believed that challenges can be overcome and that anything is possible as they chart their own future.

Mme. Speaker, these women made it on their own and their common factor is their hard work. Imagine, Mme. Speaker, if more women were given more access to education, in law, as well as in economic opportunities so that no woman would have to endure sufferings and hardships early in their lives. Imagine if the inspiration they need to succeed and achieve their dreams can be attained through a path that we in the government can provide. They only need the opportunity to prove themselves and show that they can do it and do it well.

Mme. Speaker, there are still archaic and discriminatory laws in the Civil Code that I believe do not treat women equally.

Article 112 of the Civil Code says, "The husband is the administrator of the conjugal property."

Article 114 says, "The wife cannot, without the husband's consent, acquire any property by gratuitous title, except from her ascendants, descendants, parents-in-law, collateral relatives within the fourth degree."

Article 115 says, "The wife manages the affairs of the household."

Article 117 says, "The wife may exercise any profession or occupation or engage in business. However, the husband may object, provided his income

is sufficient for the family according to its social standings, and his opposition is founded on serious and valid grounds.”

Mme. Speaker, in this day and age, we do not need these old laws anymore. They in fact hinder women to achieve what these inspiring women have achieved. Let us give our women that change so that we would have more women breaking the barriers to success and become women worthy of emulation as the modern Filipina woman.

Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Nuñez-Malanyaon). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. NAVA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the Honorable Kho to the Committee on Rules.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Nuñez-Malanyaon). The speech of the Honorable Kho is referred to the Committee on Rules.

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. NAVA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session for a few minutes.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Nuñez-Malanyaon). The session is suspended.

*It was 4:48 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 4:48 p.m., the session was resumed.*

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Nuñez-Malanyaon). The session is resumed.

REP. NAVA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Ruby M. Sahali from the Lone District of Tawi-Tawi to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Nuñez-Malanyaon). The Honorable Sahali is recognized.

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. SAHALI

REP. SAHALI. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

Mme. Speaker, honorable colleagues, I rise before this honorable Body on the occasion of National Women’s Month.

*Assalamu alaykum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.* Peace to everyone.

As former US First Lady Michelle Obama said, and I quote:

I am an example of what is possible when girls from the very beginning of their lives are loved and nurtured by people around them. I was surrounded by extraordinary women in my life who taught me about quiet strength and dignity.

For more than 10 years now, the World Economic Forum has placed the Philippines in the top 10 among the more than 100 countries that are making progress towards gender parity. We are closing the gender gap in economic participation, educational attainment, health and survival, and political participation.

Today, more women are no longer confined at home being wives and mothers. We are able to go out to find food, to earn a living for our families, make names for ourselves as we take part in economic, social and political affairs of our country.

We have 93 women elected as legislators of the Seventeenth Congress, six of them are in the Senate and 87 in the House of Representatives, actively and ably working towards crafting laws for the betterment of the lives of all Filipinos. We have seven Deputy Speakers who are women and one of them, of course, is my Deputy Speaker Bai Sandra Sema, a fellow Bangsamoro, a woman leader who inspires us to fight for the right to self-determination of the Bangsamoro.

The Provincial Governor of neighboring Lanao del Norte is also a woman, the Hon. Imelda Quibranza-Dimaporo. The province belongs to Region XII, and yet, it has a sizable Muslim population. We also have a woman governor in the province of Lanao del Sur in the name of Bai Soraya Alonto-Adiong.

In Tawi-Tawi province, Mme. Speaker, two of the 10 municipal mayors are women and two of the 10 municipal vice mayors are also women. There are women barangay leaders, including those from the people’s organizations and civic society organizations.

Mme. Speaker, I would like to attribute the empowerment of Bangsamoro women in the ARMM to our people’s newly embraced positive outlook in life: total abhorrence to war and violence, and assimilation into the political and social mainstream as being Filipinos. These are, admittedly, feminine attributes.

In the 2017 data of the Philippine Statistics Authority, 53 percent of our overseas Filipino workers are women, working hard to provide for their families. Their remittances, we know so well, are a big source of revenue for our country.

We mold minds of our children and youth. In the ARMM alone, there are more than 18,000 public elementary and secondary school teachers as of 2014. Majority of them are women who devote their time,

sweat and tears, sometimes in precarious conditions, to educate our children so that they can become productive and peace-loving members of our society.

We take care of the health of our nation. In the ARMM, about 700 midwives are deployed as part of the “Midwife in Every Community in ARMM” that provide professional healthcare to those who need medical care, especially mothers and their families. They contribute significantly to improve maternal and newborn health and reduce cases of maternal and neonatal deaths in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. Most of these teachers and midwives, along with thousands of barangay health workers, are Muslim women.

To observe International Women’s Month, Mme. Speaker, is to recognize the women’s rights and aspirations. It is to ventilate issues and concerns that affect health, income and security, particularly of women. It is to understand their plight and do the things that would help improve the lives of women and the lives of their children. It is to empower them so they may be enabled to decide for themselves their future and choose the roles that they may play without being exploited or disrespected or denied their rightful place as being “equal” to men.

Mme. Speaker, empowering women takes account of protecting them from all forms of violence and abuse. They are not to be harmed nor shamed. The wisdom is that when men make safe and secure their women, they will also subsequently develop in their women a culture of peace, and this they will impart to their children. Truly, empowered women could help strengthen and stabilize families and societies.

Mme. Speaker, I have made “women empowerment” my flagship program. I rallied the women in Tawi-Tawi—mothers, housewives, senior citizens, even the young ladies—and organized them into focus groups, trained them and assigned them tasks. I made the International Women’s Month celebration as the culmination of the year-long women empowerment activities in Tawi-Tawi, which my congressional district offices have so ably implemented for five years in a row now. The activities included, but not limited to, women’s rights orientation, capacity and team building, giving of awards and recognition, distribution of gifts and tokens, free medical services, financial help or assistance and connectivity.

I just wanted the Tawi-Tawi women to be important, Mme. Speaker. I just want them recognized, empowered and respected, because it is my belief that for as long as women are discriminated, oppressed and neglected, we may never be able to effectively solve any of the social ills that are besetting our country today, especially poverty and ignorance, even the war on illegal drugs.

I am reminded of Margaret Thatcher who said, and I quote: “If you want something said, ask a man. If you want something done, ask a woman.”

Let me then call upon the honorable Members of this Chamber to speak aloud about women’s rights or women empowerment. Let us make the message reach across faiths, colors and political affiliations, so that many can hear it and do action on the ground.

No one can say that we are here just as benchwarmers for our husbands, fathers or other male relatives, because the women legislators are competent in their own right.

I am standing before you now, Mme. Speaker, and all my colleagues, as we recognize the contributions of women in our society, to urge you to continue to provide more avenues, mechanisms and opportunities for women, for all of us to do more and be more because we can.

In closing, Mme. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the contributions of women in my communities in Tawi-Tawi and the whole Bangsamoro communities. I dedicate all my hard work and perseverance to you, because with you, everything is possible.

*Pagtayakkup iban pagkasilasa pa baran iban pa labi pa awla iban pa kawman.*

And with this, thank you and *wassalam*.

Happy Women’s Month to all of you.

*Wabillahi taufiq wal hidayah assalamu alaikum warahmatullahi taalah wabarakatuhu.*

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Nuñez-Malanyaon). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. NAVA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the Honorable Sahali to the Committee on Rules.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Nuñez-Malanyaon). The speech of the Honorable Sahali is referred to the Committee on Rules.

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. NAVA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session for a few minutes.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Nuñez-Malanyaon). The session is suspended.

*It was 4:58 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 4:59 p.m., the session was resumed with Rep. Bernadette “BH” Herrera-Dy presiding.*

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Herrera-Dy). The session is resumed.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. BAGATSING. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Tricia Nicole Q. Velasco-Catera from the Party-List MATA to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Herrera-Dy). The Lady from the Party-List MATA, the Honorable Velasco-Catera, is recognized.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. VELASCO-CATERA

REP. VELASCO-CATERA. Honorable Speaker of the House, my esteemed colleagues and all those present here today. Greetings!

Since time immemorial, women throughout the world have continuously been confronted with issues ranging from outright discrimination and abuse, to the lack of economic and employment opportunities and to the lack of meaningful empowerment. Over the last century, our country has made great strides towards addressing these issues, beginning with the filing of the first bill on women's suffrage before the Philippine Assembly in 1907, that eventually led to the Philippine women's suffrage plebiscite in 1937, which ultimately culminated in granting the right of suffrage to women. Since then, the efforts of those who preceded us in this continuous and unwavering battle for women's rights, especially those in the legislative arena, have profoundly impacted and shaped Philippine society into what it is today. Among the cornerstones of legislation for women was and continues to be Republic Act No. 9710, otherwise known as "The Magna Carta of Women," which affirmed our government's commitment to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979. Together with the enactment of subsequent laws like the "Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act of 2004," and "The Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act of 2012," among others, the Magna Carta provides the necessary legal framework for gender equality and women's empowerment to which our society must adhere.

It is with great pride that I tell you today that the Philippines has been recognized as among the top performing countries in terms of efforts to minimize gender-based disparities. This is according to The Global Gender Gap Report, released annually by the World Economic Forum. This report measures the size of the gender inequality gap in four areas: first of all, economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, political empowerment, and health and survival. In fact, for 12 consecutive years since the report was first released in 2006, the Philippines maintained its position as the most gender-equal country in Asia. Our country is also consistently among the

top 10 countries globally in terms of gender equality. Recently, the Philippines was found to be among the countries that have been able to close the gender gap in educational attainment.

Even with the recognition we have received from the international community as the best performer in Asia in terms of gender equality, we must nevertheless remain guarded against one peril that can easily put all our efforts to waste. This is complacency. Although we remain one of the top overall performers in Asia and in the world, the Philippines was overtaken by other countries in 2017. Given this, we must realize that much more can still be done. Apart from enacting legislation, we must also ensure that the laws we enact are effectively implemented and enforced in order to give life and meaning to what we intended.

We cannot simply stop at what we have already achieved, nor bask in the recognition of what we have already accomplished. Our place among the top countries with respect to gender equality should serve not simply as a reward for our previous efforts, but a challenge to work harder, and more importantly, an inspiration to do better if we are to achieve genuine equality and empowerment for women in the Philippines. For this to be possible, we, at the same time, have to ensure that Filipino women will be able to live in a safe environment, one conducive to the fulfillment of their passions and to the pursuit of their dreams.

During the National Women's Month, we must task ourselves with creating and supporting legislation that will fulfill this mandate. This Seventeenth Congress is the most productive and forward-thinking in Philippine history. There are already many laudable measures before us, but I believe that the following measures, if enacted into law, will have the greatest impact on what we hope to achieve:

First of all is House Bill No. 04113, which is AN ACT INCREASING THE MATERNITY LEAVE PERIOD TO ONE HUNDRED (100) DAYS FOR FEMALE WORKERS IN THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE AND IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR, AND GRANTING AN OPTION TO EXTEND FOR AN ADDITIONAL THIRTY (30) DAYS WITHOUT PAY;

Second, House Bill No. 05156, which is AN ACT ENSURING THE FUNDAMENTAL EQUALITY OF MEN AND WOMEN UNDER THE LAWS ON MARRIAGE AND FAMILY RELATIONS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE ARTICLES 14, 96, 124, 211, AND 225 OF EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 209, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE FAMILY CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES; and

Third, House Bill No. 00218 and House Bill No. 00759, which is AN ACT DEFINING THE CRIME OF SEXUAL INFIDELITY AND PROVIDING

PENALTIES THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE ARTICLE 333 (ADULTERY), ARTICLE 334 (CONCUBINAGE) AND ARTICLES 344 AND 345 OF TITLE ELEVEN, BOOK II OF ACT NO. 3815, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE REVISED PENAL CODE.

Each one of us here today is in a position to make the kind of change that will last beyond our lifetimes. Let us lead the change that will turn what women have long aspired for into reality.

Thank you.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Herrera-Dy). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. BAGATSING. Mme. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the Honorable Velasco-Catera to the Committee on Rules.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Herrera-Dy). The speech of the Honorable Velasco-Catera is hereby referred to the Committee on Rules.

REP. BAGATSING. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize Hon. Anna Katrina M. Enverga of the First District of Quezon to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Herrera-Dy). The Honorable Enverga is recognized.

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ENVERGA

REP. ENVERGA. Mme. Speaker, esteemed colleagues, I rise today as women all over the Philippines celebrate Women's Month and reclaim what it means to be a Filipina.

Even as young children, we are able to recognize that men and women are different. Physically, we have a decidedly different anatomy. Women can bear children; men cannot. But aside from the stark differences in our physiology, we are also conditioned to associate certain preferences and behaviors with a particular sex or gender. For instance, most of us associate being masculine with the use of hard and objective logic, a display of strength, and unapologetic assertion. In our culture, there is a strong notion of male machismo or ang machong Pinoy. This celebrated image of the Filipino man, as prominently represented in media, often reinforces the idea that not only are men "in control," but they are also superior.

On the other hand, we learn to equate the feminine with emotions, frailty and submission. In media, we celebrate the "Dalagang Pilipina" or the "Ulirang Ina." Women are expected to be reserved, understanding, resilient, nurturing and subservient. However, often

times, in these narratives, the same qualities that make the feminine agreeable to us is also what implies that she is weak, inferior and in need of protection. But does the Filipina truly equate to those things? Does being in touch with one's emotions, along with an innate desire to nurture and understand, truly render us the weaker sex? Should we change something in our nature as Filipinas to earn our seat at the table or are we missing something here?

Over time, many of us have resisted the gender stereotyping and double standards, and for good reason, women have struggled with being taken seriously and being recognized on equal terms as men over the years. In the Philippines, this has meant nothing short of redefining what being a strong Filipina means—not just subservient but capable of critical thought and agency; not just reserved but articulate and confident; not only nurturing but tenacious and passionate as well.

Across generations, Filipinas have sought to actively challenge the old codified gender roles in our everyday lives. We do it through our interactions at home, in the workplace and in our larger communities. We continue to defy these labels of weakness and subordination and have campaigned to be equally recognized for what we can bring to the table, and for the most part, we have managed to push that needle along. I have had the privilege of meeting countless Filipinas who, even unknowingly, have driven this movement forward. However, I have also observed that oftentimes, the kneejerk response to the limitations associated with being feminine is a reductive demonstration of strength. Often, we feel that women, in order to appear truly strong and win the regard of others, we have to act like men and deny our femininity in absolute terms. We feel compelled to deny our intuition, passion and emotions in favor of logic and detachment so we do not seem illogical, shrill or emotional. We feel that we have to deny our inclination to nurture and to take care of others in order to appear unrelenting, capable and strong. But perhaps we should ask ourselves, capable and strong by whose standards? Competent and qualified according to whom?

I see no reason for us to deny our femininity in order to continue to push for equality and a meaningful agenda for women. Femininity and strength are, after all, not mutually exclusive. As women and as modern Filipinas, in order to truly say that we have come into our own, we must learn to embrace what makes us different from men and not see them as inherently flawed or negative. The moment we realize that acting "like a girl" is not necessarily a weakness and definitely not something we should change, then perhaps we would have achieved a true breakthrough in our efforts to truly build a more equitable world for our daughters and sons, too.

For once, Mme. Speaker, I urge our colleagues in this Chamber to embrace our intuition, emotions and the caretakers within us and to celebrate them as strengths. Let us tap that inner power and allow ourselves to redefine and reclaim what being a Filipina truly is.

Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Herrera-Dy). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. BAGATSING. Mme. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the Honorable Enverga to the Committee on Rules.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Herrera-Dy). The speech of the Honorable Enverga is hereby referred to the Committee on Rules.

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. BAGATSING. Mme. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session for a few minutes.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Herrera-Dy). The session is suspended.

*It was 5:12 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 5:13 p.m., the session was resumed with Rep. Jocelyn Sy Limkaichong presiding.*

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Limkaichong). The session is resumed.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ZAMORA (M.). Mme. Speaker, may we acknowledge the presence of the following guests. We have here the guests of Hon. Antonio L. Tinio, the teachers from the different schools division in the National Capital Region. They are also the guests of ACT TEACHERS Rep. France L. Castro. May we request that their presence be acknowledged, Mme. Speaker.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Limkaichong). I request them to please stand. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

REP. ZAMORA (M.). Mme. Speaker, we also have the guests of honorable Rep. Sandra Y. Eriguel, MD, and Rep. Vini Nola A. Ortega, the League of Barangay Secretaries of the city of San Fernando, La Union, together with the staff of the Office of the Secretary to the Sanggunian Panlungsod and the Sanggunian Bayan Secretaries of the province.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Limkaichong). Will the guests please stand up. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

REP. ZAMORA (M.). Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ACOSTA-ALBA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize Hon. Vini Nola A. Ortega of the Party-List ABONO to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Limkaichong). Hon. Vini Nola Ortega of Party-List ABONO is recognized.

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ORTEGA (V.)

REP. ORTEGA (V.). Mme. Speaker, my dear colleagues, good afternoon.

I rise today as a shout-out to all women within these halls of Congress. I am honored to be with wives, mothers, daughters, sisters, by birth, by virtue of marriage and by choice, significant partners to and of our loved ones, all superwomen in our own right. Happy Women's Month to us all.

I am a woman. Thank you, God.

First, I was born a girl, daughter to my parents and sister to my three siblings. As a middle-girl child, I discovered and formed my strong points for being flexible, even-tempered and a peace-maker. I also discovered that I thrive in the friendships that I make just as I support my friends' self-actualization goals. Second, I married the most handsome governor of the Philippines, Governor Pacoy Ortega of La Union. *(Applause)* This marriage and union has strengthened my value and worth as a woman, a partner and co-equal in a relationship that has allowed me to polish the rough edges of my youth. Third, I now know that each woman is naturally gifted with the powers of unconditional love, care and nurture that remain dormant until a life-changing event or decision, that is unique for each of us, unleashes the same.

I brought forth into this world four girls through three pregnancies. It has also rewarded me four-fold with the most precious gift of being a mother-raising, shaping and guiding these girls into the loving, caring and beautiful persons that my daughters are becoming and have become. I am so fortunate to have been with them full-time as they are forming their insights on everything and everyone around them. Fourth, I have answered the call of public service early on as I was immersed in my husband's chosen career to be a politician. The evolution of women empowerment in our country has led us into the current arena where we have witnessed and continue to be amazed by superwomen making their indelible marks in different



fields. We are fortunate that unlike women in other nations, who still struggle to this day, Filipinas have broken this glass ceiling in different fields of vocations and have shown the way for other women to follow. Some others will argue that the numbers in gender distribution and opportunity are far from being equal. Instead, I will focus on the gains and the potentials that may be unlocked through legislation and policy transformation.

I used to pledge, with my right hand atop my heart, mahal ko ang Pilipinas, ang aking Inang Bayan, and wondered how I would make manifest my dreams for a great nation. I humbly offer my services now, in this Seventeenth Congress, with an 87-strong woman representation out of a total of 297 Representatives, to support and champion legislation that will further advance the welfare of all Filipino women. It can start with the basic mapping of the basic needs of a Filipino girl, to ensuring that she freely avails of the resources to meet the same needs as she requires them, especially the guarantee to education that will unlock the promise for her to thrive as a productive Filipina. Fifth, I am a vessel of the Lord. All that I am is by His grace and providence. I give back to Him the glory of my womanhood by the dreams and thoughts that I keep, the words that I utter, the love in my heart—all meant to empower another woman and girl. In humility, I surrender the work of my hands to Him, that they may be blessed for the good of the people and especially all Filipino women.

“Empowered women empower other women” is what an anonymous wise woman thinks and shares. I totally agree. Not all women, however, accept or recognize their strengths and gifts simply because of circumstance that are abound in culture and affected by the norms and standards imposed by the social structures that evolve around them. That is why I feel and truly believe that with the powers vested in us as lawmakers, we have to especially think, discuss, and consider the impact of our decision-making to protect the welfare and advance the development of the Filipina. We have it in our hands, just as we must have it in our hearts to be instruments of empowerment for every other woman.

In closing, I borrow wisdom from another anonymous source, and I address this to all women and anyone who truly recognizes and validates another woman, and I quote:

Be a real woman. Support, encourage, compliment, and cheer on fellow females, both in the workplace and your personal life. Do it all with an inspiring amount of love and grace.

I am Vini Nola Alviar-Ortega, five times a woman,

Representative of the ABONO Party-List, a proud Filipina! (*Applause*)

REP. ACOSTA-ALBA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of Honorable Vini Nola A. Ortega to the Committee on Rules.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Limkaichong). The speech of Honorable Ortega is referred to the Committee on Rules.

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. ACOSTA-ALBA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session for a few minutes.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Limkaichong). The session is suspended.

*It was 5:22 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 5:22 p.m., the session was resumed.*

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Limkaichong). The session is resumed.

REP. ACOSTA-ALBA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we acknowledge the presence of the guests in the gallery. These are the guests of Cong. Bernadette “BH” Herrera-Dy. We have guests from non-government organizations such as Industry-All, Trade Union Congress of the Philippines, Nagkaisa Women Labor Group, Partido ng Manggagawa, PLCPD, and other women’s labor groups.

Mme. Speaker, I move now that we recognize the Hon. Jennifer Austria Barzaga of the Fourth District of Cavite to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Limkaichong). The Honorable Barzaga of the Fourth District of Cavite is recognized.

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. BARZAGA

REP. BARZAGA. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

I stand before you, my dear colleagues, friends, and guests to share my thoughts as we celebrate the Women’s Month.

I remember Hillary Clinton saying, “Women are the largest untapped reservoir of talent in the world.” She would have not said it had it been untrue, but sadly, it was true. But that is already a thing of the past because women have evolved over the years. Allow me to summarize the evolution of women in five words:

struggle, recognition, empowerment, continuity, and gratitude.

Women in the past went to great lengths and through tremendous struggles to fight for our rights, to liberate us from chains of inequality, and to free us from the dictates of a then very conservative society. If not for these strong women who selflessly worked hard to ensure that our voices were heard and our presence was felt, the recognition, privileges, and appreciation we are enjoying nowadays will not be possible.

Today, we celebrate to recognize women's great contributions in the fields of education, health, socioeconomic platforms, and civil and political policy and programs. Gone are the days when women were thought to be better off as homemakers or as mothers. Women indeed have gone a long way from being homemakers to lawmakers, and some have even become presidents. From being outcasts during elections, we now cast our votes, count the ballots and even get elected, from being a man's shadow to being their light and source of inspiration.

The acceptance and acknowledgement of our society about our undeniable existence and hard work gave birth to women empowerment. Many women are now working alongside men in all areas of interest. And I must say women have emerged renowned, influential and self-made. We are now more expressive of our own points of views, are emotionally secured, financially independent, and are much more in control of our lives.

Women aim to continue the principles of empowerment and equality not because we want to prove to everyone that we are the superior or the stronger gender, but rather we want to tell everyone that men and women are partners more than being coequals. Just like St. Teresa of Calcutta, I also believe that men and women are not exactly the same, and that insisting that they are equal would amount to denying the beautiful differences among them. Hence, there is really no competition and comparison to speak of because men and women can certainly complement each other. This kind of relationship creates harmony and balance, and this is what is ideal in this world.

Our hearts overflow with gratitude, recognition, equal opportunities, and trust our society now provides to us, women. My sincere appreciation of those men who, in one way or the other, believe in the capabilities of women, that women can make a difference and that women should be valued and loved. Thank you so much.

A warm round of applause to all the beautiful Lady Representatives in this plenary, who are the epitome of beauty, strength, and wisdom. We are the manifestation and the living testimony of a realized dream for all of us women. Such gratitude also goes out to all the other women who continuously and untiringly support

women advocacies. We could not have achieved and performed our duties and responsibilities if not for our people's unwavering support and cooperation.

In my almost 11 years of public service, two women groups have steadily shown me that they are always there for me: my Kababaihan ng Dasmariñas sa Bagong Milenyo and my Green Ladies. (Applause) They are my constant and loyal allies.

Thank you very much for your support and for not letting me down. Thank you for all the understanding and love.

In closing, I shall leave you with the quote from G.D. Anderson, a poet from Montreal, who said, and I quote:

Feminism isn't about making women stronger. Women are already strong. It's about changing the way the world perceives that strength.

I am a woman. I am strong and I am grateful.

Magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat, at muli, maligayang Buwan ng Kababaihan. (Applause)

REP. ACOSTA-ALBA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the Honorable Barzaga to the Committee on Rules.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Limkaichong). The speech of Honorable Barzaga is referred to the Committee on Rules.

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. ACOSTA-ALBA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session for a few minutes.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Limkaichong). The session is suspended.

*It was 5:29 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 5:31 p.m., the session was resumed with Rep. Calixto-Rubiano presiding.*

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Calixto-Rubiano). The session is resumed.  
The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. NAVA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Marlyn B. Alonte of the Lone District of Biñan City to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Calixto-Rubiano). Honorable Alonte is recognized.

## PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ALONTE

REP. ALONTE. Before I proceed with my message, Mme. Speaker, I wish to invite everyone on the floor and all our guests in the gallery to join me to offer a moment of silence in a symbolic gesture of appreciation of all the important women in our lives—to all the mothers, wives, sisters, daughters, our leaders, and mentors, and all the women who continue to inspire us in present and future endeavors.

“Babae,” isang salita na may malawak at hindi mabilang na kasingkahulugan—a woman is synonymous to a mother, a daughter, a friend, a partner, a hero. Women, over the years, have been liberated, educated, and empowered in different ways. The essence of being a woman has definitely evolved in the past decades. I stand here today to dedicate such a time as this to celebrate and recognize the pillars of our society.

Today, it is my privilege to honor women and put the spotlight on Filipinas all over the world. This year’s celebration is a salute to all strong, hardworking Filipinas across the globe. As we face continuous challenges of being a woman, the theme “Making Change Work for Women.” is rather timely as it focuses on uplifting the status of women in our society. This highlights the contributions we make as women in our society.

We know that Filipinas play a big role in shaping our communities. It is very important to honor them by making a difference in their lives. As we gather here today, millions of Filipinas are out there making a living and trying their hardest to sustain a family away from home.

According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, 2.2 million overseas Filipino workers worked abroad during the period of April to September 2016. These 2.2 million OFWs contribute largely to the economic growth of our country. As the second largest source of foreign capital, OFW remittances surged to an all-time high of 7.1 percent to \$2.74 billion last December, and has even pushed the overall growth of remittances for 2017 above our government’s projection. Out of these, more than two million modern-day heroes, a big chunk of it, about 53.6 percent, are female OFWs. Evidently, there are more females than males working abroad.

So, it got me thinking: There are over one million families who have missing mothers, sisters, aunts, even grandmothers because these women have to go abroad to earn and support their families from many miles away. Ilang pamilya ang nangungulila sa yakap at pagmamahal ng isang ina, at umaasang taun-taon ay makakapiling ang kanilang mga mahal sa buhay na nasa malayong lugar? Ilang pamilyang Pilipino ang nananalangin sa kaligtasan ng kanilang mga mahal sa buhay? Higit sa lahat, mahigit isang milyong pamilya ng babaeng OFW ang nagnanais na makauwi para makapiling ang kanilang pamilya, ngunit kailangang

panindigan ang desisyong lumayo at isakripisyo ang sarili para sa ikabubuti ng nakararami. Our Filipina workers have their own crosses to bear for their families. Some are fortunate enough to find employers who are compassionate and kind. Others find it really difficult to blend in culturally. Unfortunately for others, they face a rather unfortunate fate as they experience abuse at the hands of the very people that they serve.

Last year, a Filipina domestic worker was admitted to the National Mental Hospital upon returning home after she experienced trauma and abuse while working in Kuwait. A video of her circulated online clearly showed that she suffered so much as she could not talk properly with her fellow passengers on her flight home. And just recently, another Filipina domestic worker suffered a brutal and inhumane death. Joanna Demafelis once dreamed of a good life for her family, but her dream will now be part of her bittersweet memories as Demafelis, 29, was found frozen in her employer’s apartment more than a year after she was reported missing. Her body was found with signs of torture. Her death prompted outrage which was followed by our government’s step to stop the processing of the overseas employment certificates of all Kuwaiti-bound Filipino workers. My heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family of Joanna and to the many OFW victims of abuse. May you find comfort in this time of grief in God’s loving arms.

My fellow Congressmen and Congresswomen, these two stories are just a small portion of the states of abused Filipina overseas workers. There are still a lot of unheard stories of torture and abuse that are far more than heartbreaking and devastating. No words can describe how much my heart and mind suffer thinking of how our fellow Pinays have suffered emotionally, psychologically, physically, and spiritually while they are far away from home. The sad plight of our Filipina workers has revealed so many gut-wrenching, unimaginable stories of abuse and maltreatment, and yet, many Filipinas are unfazed and still want to go abroad to work. Their exodus for a better future comes at a heavy price.

The Magna Carta of Women, the Constitution, our laws—these protect the women and children in our domain. My heart goes to the millions of Filipinas working abroad, who are faced with trials and adversities but despite all these, remain strong for themselves and for their families.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am speaking here to encourage everyone in the House to be more aggressive in making a change in the lives of these overseas Filipina workers. The situation of our Filipina workers should also be focused on. Taking care of their welfare should be our priority as men and women of the Congress. My fellowmen, should we wait for another distressed domestic worker to appear on the headlines? Should we wait for more families to lose the women of their homes because we cannot protect them? Altogether, we

must act now to ensure the safety and security of our Filipina workers abroad.

The United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes women's participation in the economy as a crucial step in achieving development. This being said, women's economic empowerment is at the core of the agenda. The Sustainable Development Goal No. 5, also known as Gender Equality, seeks to "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" by "providing equal access to education, healthcare, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes."

Eliminating all forms of violence against women and children is a global initiative. More than the economic stability that our OFWs help provide, especially the Filipina workers, it is our role as their leaders to ensure a safe workplace for them. Let us continue working with the government in taking bold and innovative steps to reduce abuse and violence against our overseas Filipino workers.

What else can we do? As we welcome our overseas workers home, let us continue to provide them livelihood programs that can help their family's needs so that they do not need to find greener pastures abroad and be away from their families. Here in our country, we have the power to empower these women by providing them education, healthcare, security and livelihood. The massive change for women empowerment has to begin at the grassroots level. It has to start within our communities, our municipalities, and our local government units. Let us intensify all our efforts in bringing them services that will benefit them most.

They say that the hands that rock the cradle can rule the world. The women of our society can make a change if we make change work for them. Together, let us continue empowering women for a better future.

Thank you, Mme. Speaker, good afternoon, at mabuhay po ang mga kababaihan. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Calixto-Rubiano). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. NAVA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the Honorable Alonte to the Committee on Rules.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Calixto-Rubiano). The speech of the Honorable Alonte is referred to the Committee on Rules.

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. NAVA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session for a few minutes.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Calixto-Rubiano). The session is suspended.

*It was 5:41 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 5:41 p.m., the session was resumed.*

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Calixto-Rubiano). The session is resumed.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. BAGATSING. Mme. Speaker, I move that we acknowledge the presence of several guests of the Hon. Bernadette "BH" Herrera-Dy. They are the staff of Nailandia Body Massage, Reyes Haircutters, Erase Facial and Hands on Foot Spa, Manicure and Pedicure. They were the ones who provided us free services to the House Members today in celebration of the Women's Month, and during the conduct of the Beauty and Health Caravan.

May we recognize them, Mme. Speaker.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Calixto-Rubiano). Please stand to be recognized.

REP. ZAMORA (M.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Emmi A. De Jesus of GABRIELA Party-List to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Calixto-Rubiano). The Honorable De Jesus is recognized.

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. DE JESUS

REP. DE JESUS. Maraming salamat, Mme. Speaker, at ikinagagalak ko na maging bahagi ng araw na ito.

Ilang araw na lamang at muli nating gugunitain at gugunitain ng buong mundo ang Marso 8, ang Pandaigdigang Araw ng Kababaihan. Tiyak kong makakarinig na naman tayo ng mga papuri sa mahalagang papel ng mga kababaihan sa nation-building. Maririnig natin kung paanong napakahusay ng mga kababaihan sa kabila ng mga limitasyong itinatakda ng lipunan. Itatambol ang mga programang para sa kapakinabangan ng kababaihan.

Para sa Kinatawang ito ng GABRIELA, ang partido ng kababaihan sa bulwagang ito na lagi't lagi nang nagbibigay-tinig sa pinakamaralita at hihakos na mga kababaihan, nawa ang mga talumpati ay hindi manatiling mga salita lamang. Higi't dapat na may kaakibat na aksiyon ang mga pagpupugay sa kababaihan lalo pa kung tayo ay magbabalik-tanaw sa kasaysayang nagluwal sa araw ng kababaihan. Ating mapapagtanto

na ito ay nagmula sa pakikibaka ng mga manggagawang kababaihan para sa kanilang batayang karapatan. Ito ay nagmula sa paglaban sa iba't ibang anyo ng pang-aapi at pagsasamantala, paglaban sa kahirapang doble-dobleng maituturing na pasanin ng mga kababaihan.

Tulad na lamang ng usaping pangkalusugan. Sa pamilyang mahirap, madalas ang nanay ang huling kumakain. Titiyakin niyang mauuna sa hapag-kainan ang kanyang asawa at mga anak. Hindi nakakagulat na maraming ina ang malnourished, mahina ang pangangatawan at bulnerable sa pagkakasakit. Kapag ang ina naman ang may karamdaman, halos hindi niya ito papansinin sa panghihinayang sa haharapang gastusin, subalit sa bahagyang pag-inda ng kanyang mga anak, gagawa at gagawa ng paraan ang mga nanay para madala sa doktor kahit magkabaun-baon sa utang. Ganoon ang pag-aaruga ng isang ina sa susunod na henerasyon. Sana—magandang katanungan, sino naman ang mangangalaga sa ating mga ina?

Bago pa lamang manganak ang isang babae ay may kaakibat na itong komplikasyon. Mataas na percentage o 24.8 percent ng mga buntis ay nutritionally at risk. Maraming kababaihan ang hindi nakatatanggap ng sapat na nutrisyon na kinakailangan ng isang nagdadalang-tao. Maliban pa rito ay ang hatid na ligalig sa pag-iisip sa mga pangambang gastusin na haharapin sa panganganak at siyempre sa pagpapalaki ng mga anak. Bagama't mayroon tayong batas para sa responsible parenthood and reproductive health, hindi dapat na pangunahing nakatuon ito doon lamang sa pagbilang o dami ng populasyon na tila tinutukoy pang pangunahing dahilan ng kahirapan. Sa halip, tingnan ang implementasyon ng mga probisyong aktuwal na mangangalaga sa kalusugan ng kababaihan. Ang budget magkagayon man para sa reproductive health supplies na makakatulong din sana ay binawasan pa mula P4.27 billion noong nakaraang taon, at sa 2018, magiging P3.64 billion na lamang. May mga nagbanggit na rin nito kanina na ang Pilipinas ay isa sa may pinakamataas na bilang ng mga nanay na namamatay sa panganganak. Sa bawat 100,000 na nagluwal ng sanggol, 114 ang namamatay. Malaking bilang sa mortality rate na ito ay dahil sa malalang impeksiyon. Kapag nagpunta ka sa pampublikong ospital, hindi mahirap makita ang ganitong sitwasyon—sa isang kama, sa isang higaan, dalawa minsan o tatlong nanay pa ang nagsisiksikan. At ang mga kasong ito ay malamang papalalain pa kapag nagtuluy-tuloy ang pagsasapribado sa mga pampublikong ospital.

Makikita pa ang kabalintunaan sa pagtataguyod ng kalusugan ng mamamayan kung paano nito pinaglaanan ng budget ang health sector sa taong 2018. Ang MOOE para sa mga pampublikong ospital ay binawasan ng P1.49 billion. Sa halip na paglaanan ng pondo ang sahod at benepisyo ng maraming manggagawang

pangkalusugan, marami ay kontraktuwal o naka-job order status lamang.

Ang paglalaan ng malaking pondo sa isang insurance na katulad ng PhilHealth ay pinatunayan na maraming limitasyon sa kanyang dalawang dekadang implementasyon. Hindi ba at napakaganda sana kung ang iskema ay ang maghahatid ng libre, angkop, batayan, at kagyat na serbisyong pangkalusugan sa mamamayan?

Maitututuring na nasa isang matinding krisis ang kalagayang pangkalusugan sa ating bansa at kapos na kapos ang kakayahan nitong tugunan at harapin ang pagkakasakit ng maraming kababaihan. Ang matinding krisis pangkalusugan sa ating bansa ay nailantad dito sa isang kaso ng fiasco sa bakuna na walang pag-iingat na ipinatupad ang mabilisan at maramihang pagbibigay. Sana ay maunawaan natin kung anong klaseng ligalig at pagkataranta ang dala nito sa mga nanay ngayon. Walang pagdadalang-isip na sinunggaban ng mga pamilyang mahihirap ang libreng bakuna sa pag-aakalang makakatulong ito sa kanila. Subalit ngayon, hindi na sila mapakali. Maya't maya pinapakiramdaman kung ang anak ba ay nanghihina, may sinat o masakit ang tiyan. Mahigpit na tagubilin ng Department of Health na panatilihin malusog at malakas ang resistensiya ng mga bata at ng buong pamilya, pero alam natin ang pagsirit at patuloy na pagtaas na dulot ng bagong batas kaugnay ng dagdag na tax para sa ating mga mahihirap na pamilya.

Hindi na natin kailangang ulit-ulitin na mahirap ang mayorya ng populasyon sa Pilipinas. Hind na rin natin kailangang ulitin pa na mas matindi ang kahirapan sa mga kababaihan at alam na natin na sa kasalukuyang lipunan ay maraming realities which should lead us to action.

Sa pagbibigay-pugay natin sa mga kababaihan, sa ating mga ina, isulong natin at ipaglaban ang healthcare na comprehensive at pro-poor.

Maraming salamat at magandang hapon.

REP. BAGATSING. Mme. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the Honorable De Jesus to the Committee on Rules.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Calixto-Rubiano). The speech of the Honorable De Jesus is referred to the Committee on Rules.

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. BAGATSING. Mme. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session for a few minutes.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Calixto-Rubiano). The session is suspended.

*It was 5:51 p.m.*

## RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 5:51 p.m., the session was resumed.*

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Calixto-Rubiano). The session is resumed.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ACOSTA-ALBA. Mme. Speaker, there being no other Members who wish to avail of the Privilege Hour, I move that we close the Privilege Hour.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Calixto-Rubiano). Is there any objection? (Silence) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Privilege Hour is hereby closed.

*At this juncture, Representative Calixto-Rubiano relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Linabelle Ruth R. Villarica.*

REP. ZAMORA (M.). Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. ZAMORA (M.). May we acknowledge the presence of the guests of the Hon. Sarah Jane I. Elago, some student-leaders who are here with us today: Mr. Raoul Daniel Manuel, Shari Oliquino, Isaac Punzalan, Regine Guevarra and Marikris De Guzman.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Villarica). Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*  
The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ZAMORA (M.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we take up an item under the Calendar of Unfinished Business.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Villarica). There is a motion to take up an item under the Calendar of Unfinished Business.

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

## CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 4113

*Continuation*

## PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. ZAMORA (M.) Mme. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 4113, as contained in Committee Report No. 13, submitted by the Committee on Women and Gender Equality. For

this purpose, may we direct the Secretary General to read the title of the Bill.

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

The Secretary General will please read the title of the measure.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 4113, entitled: AN ACT INCREASING THE MATERNITY LEAVE PERIOD TO ONE HUNDRED (100) DAYS FOR FEMALE WORKERS IN THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE AND IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR, AND GRANTING AN OPTION TO EXTEND FOR AN ADDITIONAL THIRTY (30) DAYS WITHOUT PAY.

REP. ZAMORA (M.). Mme. Speaker, the parliamentary status of the Bill is that it is in the period of sponsorship and debate. I move that we recognize the Hon. Bernadette "BH" Herrera-Dy, Chairperson of the Committee on Women and Gender Equality, to sponsor the measure.

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

The Honorable Herrera-Dy, Chairperson of the Committee on Women and Gender Equality, is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Thank you, Mme. Chair. I am open to any interpellation from our colleagues.

REP. ZAMORA (M.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Lady from Party-List KABATAAN, the Hon. Sarah Jane I. Elago, for her interpellation.

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

REP. ELAGO. Mme. Speaker, instead of interpellating the distinguished Chairperson, I would like to manifest my support for House Bill No. 4113.

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

REP. ELAGO. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

As a public servant who represents the youth and also as a member of various organizations defending basic civil liberties and promoting comprehensive human development, this Representation urges our fellow lawmakers to lend their unequivocal support to the immediate plenary approval of the 100-day Maternity Leave Bill.

We cannot let this significant piece of legislation gather dust in this august Chamber. We are duty-bound to protect and promote the rights and welfare of working women, taking into account their maternal functions. Our advocacy for empowering women does not end with proposing legislation, policies and programs. We must speak up and act even outside the confines of Congress. Along with the pursuit of the welfare for working women is the struggle for job opportunities, decent, equal pay and safe working conditions. Intensified contractualization, coupled with gender discrimination in the workplace, easily targets women workers and pushes them to further destitution. Ang panawagan para sa karapatan at kagalingan ng mga kababaihan na manggagawa, Mme. Speaker, ay panawagan para sa hustisya. We must resist and stand beside their interests. Let us create more spaces where we can foster an enabling environment for working women, especially the marginalized and the oppressed.

Sa lahat ng mga kabataan, sa ating mga kababayan, Mme. Speaker, let us make our mothers proud. Together, let us make our Inang Bayan proud.

Maraming salamat at isang mapagpalayang araw sa lahat.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. ZAMORA (M.). May we recognize Representative Herrera-Dy, Mme. Speaker.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, on behalf of the Committee, I thank the Honorable Elago for her support to our Bill, increasing the maternity leave benefit for our female workers, both in the public and private sectors. I am confident that her support and those of our colleagues, especially the House leadership, would ensure the passage of this measure.

Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

#### SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 4113

REP. ACOSTA-ALBA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 4113.

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

The consideration of House Bill No. 4113 is hereby suspended.

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. ACOSTA-ALBA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session for a few minutes.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Villarica). The session is suspended.

*It was 5:58 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 5:58 p.m., the session was resumed.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Villarica). The session is resumed.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

REP. ZAMORA (M.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we adjourn the session until tomorrow, Tuesday, March 6, 2018, at four o'clock in the afternoon.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Villarica). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the session is adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, March 6, 2018, at four o'clock in the afternoon.

*It was 5:59 p.m.*