



# Congressional Record

PLENARY PROCEEDINGS OF THE 17<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, SECOND REGULAR SESSION  
*House of Representatives*

Vol. 4

Wednesday, March 14, 2018

No. 75

## CALL TO ORDER

*At 4:00 p.m., Deputy Speaker Eric D. Singson called the session to order.*

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

## NATIONAL ANTHEM

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

*Everybody rose to sing the Philippine National Anthem.*

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

*Everybody remained standing for the silent prayer.*

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

## ROLL CALL

REP. DEFENSOR. Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that we call the roll.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). Is there any objection to the motion? (*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. 75, dated March 14, 2018.\**

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. Mr. Speaker, the roll call shows that 218 Members responded to the call.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). With 218 present, the Chair declares the presence of a quorum.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

## APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve Journal No. 74 of the session on March 13, 2018.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

## REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

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

## BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 7370, entitled:

“AN ACT STRENGTHENING NATIONAL SECURITY BY PROVIDING FOR THE ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE OF FOREIGN ENTITIES UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS”

By Representative Sy-Alvarado

TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY

\* See ANNEX (printed separately)

House Bill No. 7371, entitled:  
“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE DEFENSE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”  
By Representative Sy-Alvarado  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY

AS BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE 2ND DISTRICT OF MISAMIS OCCIDENTAL, IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SOCIAL SERVICES PROGRAMS”  
By Representative Oaminal  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Bill No. 7372, entitled:  
“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A RENTAL SUBSIDY PROGRAM FOR INFORMAL SETTLER FAMILIES (ISF) IN METRO MANILA AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”  
By Representative Castelo  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

House Resolution No. 1762, entitled:  
“A RESOLUTION URGING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, ON THE ALLEGED TORTURE AND THE FRUSTRATED MURDER OF TWO SMALL SCALE MINERS INCLUDING A MINOR IN MACO, COMPOSTELA VALLEY AND EXPRESS THE URGENT NEED FOR THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PHILIPPINES TO ENACT LEGISLATION TO REPEAL THE MARTIAL LAW EXTENSION IN MINDANAO”  
By Representatives Brosas, De Jesus, Zarate, Tinio, Castro (F.L.), Casilao and Elago  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Bill No. 7374, entitled:  
“AN ACT PROMOTING SOCIAL ENTERPRISE PROGRAM IN THE COUNTRY AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”  
By Representative Belaro  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND THE COMMITTEE ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION

House Resolution No. 1763, entitled:  
“A RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING ERIN ENTRADA KELLY, FILIPINO-AMERICAN AUTHOR, FOR WINNING THE PRESTIGIOUS JOHN NEWBERY MEDAL FOR HER 2017 CHILDREN'S NOVEL ‘HELLO, UNIVERSE’ ”  
By Representative Castelo  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Bill No. 7375, entitled:  
“AN ACT CREATING THE NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE TO BE MANAGED BY THE FILM DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”  
By Representative Nieto  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INFORMATION

House Resolution No. 1764, entitled:  
“A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING PROFOUND CONDOLENCES TO THE BEREAVED FAMILY ON THE DEMISE OF FORMER SECRETARY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE, FORTUNATO U. ABAT, (RET. MAJOR GENERAL)”  
By Representative Olivarez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Bill No. 7377, entitled:  
“AN ACT PROMOTING BREASTFEEDING PRACTICES IN THE PHILIPPINES AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”  
By Representative Cuaresma  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 1761, entitled:  
“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON GOOD GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, IN REGARD TO THE POSSIBLE IRREGULARITIES IN THE USE OF FUNDS BY THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT (DSWD), PARTICULARLY IN REGION 10 SUCH

House Resolution No. 1765, entitled:  
“A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING PROFOUND CONDOLENCES ON THE DEMISE OF VETERAN PHILIPPINE THEATER, FILM, AND TV ACTOR AND DIRECTOR BERNARDO BERNARDO”  
By Representative Olivarez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1766, entitled:  
“RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF

REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FAMILY OF THE LATE ANTHONY P. DEQUIÑA, FORMER REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FIRST DISTRICT OF COTABATO DURING THE NINTH, TENTH AND ELEVENTH CONGRESSES”

By Representatives Alvarez (P.), Fariñas and Suarez

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Concurrent Resolution No. 15, entitled:

“CONCURRENT RESOLUTION APPROVING THE TRANSFER, SALE, OR ASSIGNMENT OF THE CONTROLLING INTERESTS IN METRO CONNECTIONS AND TELECOM CORP. TO ALWAYS FULL HOLDINGS CORP.”

By Representative Cua

TO THE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE FRANCHISES

#### COMMUNICATIONS

Report on Fund Utilization and Status of Program/Project Implementation for the Quarter ended December 20, 2017 of the Assistance to Disadvantaged Municipalities under the Local Government Support Fund of Engineer Helen C. Alaba, Municipal Mayor, Municipality of Loboc, Province of Bohol.  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Report on Fund Utilization and Status of Program/Project Implementation for the Quarter ended December 31, 2017 of the Assistance to Disadvantaged Municipalities under the Local Government Support Fund of Albino M. Balo, Municipal Mayor, Municipality of Guindulman, Province of Bohol.  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Report on Fund Utilization and Status of Program/Project Implementation for the Quarter ended February 26, 2017 of the Assistance to Disadvantaged Municipalities under the Local Government Support Fund of Regina C. Salazar, Municipal Mayor, Municipality of Lila, Province of Bohol.  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Report on Fund Utilization and Status of Program/Project Implementation for the Quarter ended December 2017 of the Assistance to Disadvantaged Municipalities under the Local Government Support Fund of Angelina Simacio, Municipal Mayor, Municipality of Anda, Province of Bohol.  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated February 20, 2018 of Michael G. Aguinaldo,

Chairperson, Commission on Audit, transmitting to the House of Representatives the Performance Audit Reports of the Commission on Audit on the following priority programs of the government:

1. Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program;
2. In-City Resettlement Housing Program;
3. Disaster Risk Preparedness Program by Quezon City and Malabon City – Case Studies;
4. School-Based Immunization Program; and
5. Health Facilities Enhancement Program.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated February 26, 2018 of Marietta M. Fondevilla, Senior Vice President, Development Bank of the Philippines, submitting the Status of Implementation of the Barangay Micro Business Enterprises (BMBEs) Act of 2002 as of December 31, 2017.  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Report of Atty. Cesar Strait Pareja, Secretary General, House of Representatives, on enrolled bill, 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:

House Bill No. 477, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING JANUARY 23 OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL WORKING HOLIDAY IN THE ENTIRE COUNTRY TO COMMEMORATE THE DECLARATION OF THE FIRST PHILIPPINE REPUBLIC”

TO THE ARCHIVES

Letters dated March 1 and 6, 2018 of Salvador C. Medialdea, Executive Secretary, Office of the President, Malacañang, transmitting two (2) original copies each of the following Republic Acts which were signed on even date by President Rodrigo Roa Duterte:

1. R.A. No. 10973, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING THE CHIEF OF THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE (PNP) AND THE DIRECTOR AND THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR ADMINISTRATION OF THE CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION AND DETECTION GROUP (CIDG) THE AUTHORITY TO ADMINISTER OATH AND TO ISSUE SUBPOENA AND SUBPOENADUCES TECUM, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6975, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT OF 1990’ ”

2. R.A. No. 10974, entitled:  
 “AN ACT RENEWING FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO SARRAGA INTEGRATED AND MANAGEMENT CORPORATION UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7478, ENTITLED ‘AN ACT GRANTING THE SARRAGA INTEGRATED AND MANAGEMENT CORPORATION A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCASTING STATIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES’”
3. R.A. No. 10975, entitled:  
 “AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL IN BARANGAY PASONG TAMO, QUEZON CITY, METRO MANILA TO BE KNOWN AS EMILIO JACINTO NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”
4. R.A. No. 10976, entitled:  
 “AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL IN BARANGAY PASO DE BLAS, VALENZUELA CITY TO BE KNOWN AS PASO DE BLAS NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”
5. R.A. No. 10977, entitled:  
 “AN ACT CONVERTING THE SAN RAFAEL NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL IN THE CITY OF NAVOTAS INTO A NATIONAL TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS SAN RAFAEL TECHNOLOGICAL AND VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”
6. R.A. No. 10978, entitled:  
 “AN ACT SEPARATING THE PARAÑAQUE NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – DON BOSCO EXTENSION IN BARANGAY DON BOSCO, PARAÑAQUE CITY, FROM THE PARAÑAQUE NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS DON BOSCO NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”
7. R.A. No. 10979, entitled:  
 “AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL IN BARANGAY MANLILISID, MUNICIPALITY OF JAVIER, PROVINCE OF LEYTE TO BE KNOWN AS MANLILISID NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

8. R.A. No. 10980, entitled:  
 “AN ACT CHANGING THE NAME OF MANLABANG NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL IN BARANGAY MANLABANG, MUNICIPALITY OF CAIBIRAN, PROVINCE OF BILIRAN, TO CAIBIRAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL”
9. R.A. No. 10981, entitled:  
 “AN ACT SEPARATING THE MAYOR BARTOLOME SERUT NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL AND TRADE HIGH SCHOOL – MUSIMUT ANNEX IN BARANGAY MUSIMUT, MUNICIPALITY OF KABUGAO, PROVINCE OF APAYAO FROM THE MAYOR BARTOLOME SERUT NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL AND TRADE HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS MUSIMUT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”  
 TO THE ARCHIVES

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report by the Committee on Basic Education and Culture (Committee Report No. 661), re H.R. No. 1769, entitled:

“RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING THE MEMBERS OF THE PHILIPPINE DELEGATION COMPOSED OF STUDENTS FROM TONDO HIGH SCHOOL, ESTEBAN ABADA HIGH SCHOOL, MARCOS HIGH SCHOOL, T. ALONZO HIGH SCHOOL, V. MAPA HIGH SCHOOL, RAMON MAGSAYSAY HIGH SCHOOL AND P. GOMEZ ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FOR HONORING THE COUNTRY WITH VARIOUS MEDALS AND AWARDS DURING THE 2ND WORLD INVENTION AND INNOVATION FORUM HELD ON 23-25 NOVEMBER 2017 IN FOSHAN, GUANGDONG, CHINA”

recommending its adoption in substitution of House Resolution No. 1553

Sponsors: Representatives Durano and Lopez (M.L.)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Basic Education and Culture (Committee Report No. 662), re H.R. No. 1770, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING PRESIDENT RODRIGO R. DUTERTE TO ISSUE A PROCLAMATION TRANSFERRING TO THE NATIONAL HISTORICAL COMMISSION OF THE

PHILIPPINES (NHCP) THE OWNERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION OVER A PARCEL OF LAND LOCATED AT RIZAL PARK, ERMITA, MANILA, WHERE ITS OFFICE BUILDING HAS BEEN CONSTRUCTED”

recommending its adoption in substitution of House Resolution No. 603

Sponsors: Representatives Durano and Escudero  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Legislative Franchises (Committee Report No. 663), re H.B. No. 7385, entitled:

“ANACTRENEWINGTHEFRANCHISEGRANTED TO PHILIPPINE COMMUNICATIONS SATELLITE CORPORATION (PHILCOMSAT) TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, MAINTAIN AND OPERATE IN THE PHILIPPINES GROUND SATELLITE TERMINAL STATIONS FOR TELECOMMUNICATION WITH SATELLITE FACILITIES AND DELIVERY TO COMMON CARRIERS”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 6385

Sponsors: Representatives Alvarez (F.) and Go (M.)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Legislative Franchises (Committee Report No. 664), re H.B. No. 7386, entitled:

“AN ACT RENEWING FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO THE ANDRES BONIFACIO COLLEGE BROADCASTING SYSTEM, INC. UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8120, ENTITLED ‘AN ACT GRANTING THE ANDRES BONIFACIO COLLEGE BROADCASTING SYSTEM, INC., A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, MAINTAIN, AND OPERATE RADIO BROADCASTING STATIONS AND STATIONS FOR TELEVISION IN THE ISLAND OF MINDANAO FOR EDUCATIONAL, CULTURAL, AND COMMERCIAL PURPOSES’ ”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 6429

Sponsors: Representatives Alvarez (F.) and Bravo (A.)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Justice (Committee Report No. 665), re H.B. No. 7387, entitled:

“ANACTGRANTINGPHILIPPINECITIZENSHIP TO KWOK HING CARLOS YEUNG”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 6262

Sponsors: Representatives Umali, Fuentesbella and Garcia (G.)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Justice (Committee Report No. 666), re H.B. No. 7388, entitled:

“ANACTGRANTINGPHILIPPINECITIZENSHIP TO BRUCE DONALD MCTAVISH”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 4405

Sponsors: Representatives Umali, Fuentesbella and Lazatin

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Basic Education and Culture, the Committee on Higher and Technical Education and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 667), re H.B. No. 7392, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE ALTERNATIVE LEARNING SYSTEM IN THE BASIC EDUCATION FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN, YOUTH AND ADULTS, PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, AND OTHER MARGINALIZED SECTORS OF SOCIETY, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bills Numbered 2733, 3292, 3706, 4029, 4307, 4386 and 6039

Sponsors: Representatives Durano, Hofer, Nograles (K.A.) and Gonzales (A.D.)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we acknowledge the presence of the guests of the Gentleman from the PBA, the Hon. Mark Aeron H. Sambar. They are as follows: guests from the Department of Budget and Management, headed by Undersecretary Laura Pascua; from the Bureau of Treasury, headed by Deputy Treasurer Sharon Almanza; from the Department of Finance, headed by Ms. Maria Lourdes Quintos; and from the National Economic and Development Authority, Ms. Irene Cuya and Assistant Director Bien Ganapin.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). Please rise to be recognized. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we acknowledge the presence of the guests of the Lady from GABRIELA, the Hon. Emmi A. De Jesus. They are from the following organizations: PRO Divorce Gender Global Empowerment, Yes to Divorce Global, Divorce Advocates of the Philippines, Divorce in the Philippines Now, International Divorce and Dissolution of Marriage Philippines.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). Please rise. To the guests of Honorable De Jesus, welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

REP. DEFENSOR. Also, Mr. Speaker, I move that we acknowledge the presence of the guest of the distinguished Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, the Hon. Karlo Alexei B. Nograles. We have Vice Mayor Rico Golez of Parañaque City.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). Please rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we take up items under the Business for the Day.

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

#### CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7378 ON SECOND READING

#### PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 7378, contained in Committee Report No. 660, as reported out by the Committee on Suffrage and Electoral Reforms.

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

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

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7378, entitled: AN ACT POSTPONING THE MAY 14, 2018 SYNCHRONIZED BARANGAY AND SANGGUNIANG KABATAAN ELECTIONS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9164, AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9340, REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10656, REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10923 AND REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10952.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of sponsorship and debate.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, to sponsor the measure, I move that we recognize the distinguished Chairman of the Committee on Suffrage and Electoral Reforms, the Hon. Sherwin N. Tugna.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The Honorable Tugna is recognized to sponsor the Bill.

REP. TUGNA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, good afternoon. Good afternoon to our dear colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I move that we let the Explanatory Note of the Bill be considered as its sponsorship speech.

REP. DEFENSOR. With that, Mr. Speaker, I move that the Explanatory Note be considered as the sponsorship speech on the measure.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the first Member to interpellate, Rep. Antonio L. Tinio.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The Honorable Tinio is recognized to interpellate the Sponsor.

REP. TINIO. Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker, sa kagalang-galang na Sponsor po, Mr. Speaker, mga ilang katanungan at paglilinaw.

Una sa lahat, dahil po ipinasama na lang sa record iyong Explanatory Note, maaari po bang ipaliwanag lang sa Kinatawag ito kung bakit kailangang i-postpone nang pangatlong beses ang barangay elections? Ano po iyong napakahalagang dahilan para i-postpone na naman ang eleksyon?

\* See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)

REP. TUGNA. Mr. Speaker, ito pong current na Committee Report na ito o ang House Bill No. 7378, this is a consolidation of four House bills. The Explanatory Notes on the aforementioned bills state that—ang una hong nakalagay doon ay upang mas bigyan ng pagkakataon ang Comelec para makapaghanda para sa barangay and SK elections. Mayroon din pong isang proposal na isabay na iyong barangay and SK elections sa midterm election sa May 2019, and the other one is to move it to October 2018 and then, at the same time, magkakaroon po ng plebisito o referendum doon sa atin pong pag-shift from unitary to federal form of government, Mr. Speaker.

REP. TINIO. Okay, salamat po.

Batay sa inyong paliwanag, ang mga dahilan para sa panukalang ito ay: una, para mabigyan ng karagdagang panahon ang Comelec na makapaghanda; at pangalawa, kaya rin October ang itinatakda sa panukalang batas na ito ay para maisabay ang plebisito kaugnay sa pagbabago ng Konstitusyon. Tama po ba?

REP. TUGNA. Opo, Mr. Speaker.

REP. TINIO. Tama po. Ngayon, isa-isahin po natin. Una, kaugnay ng paghahanda diumano ng Comelec, hindi po ba napakalinaw naman sa hearing, sa kaisa-isang hearing na inilunsad ng inyong Komite na dinaluhan ko, napakalinaw naman po ang pahayag ng Comelec na, 100 percent, handang-handa sila na ituloy ang barangay and SK elections ngayong Mayo? Sa katunayan, nagastos na po nila ang malaking bahagi o ang signipikanteng bahagi noong mahigit kumulang P5 billion na budget na inilaan para sa eleksiyong ito. Halimbawa po, sinabi doon na tapos na ang printing ng mga balota para sa eleksyon, nabili na ang maraming supplies and paraphernalia katulad noong indelible ink, mga folder, at iba pa. Sa madaling sabi, wala pong batayan iyong unang dahilan dahil handa na po sila, hindi po ba?

REP. TUGNA. Well, base po doon sa hearing, ang tanda ko po noong ako ay personal na nagtanong doon sa direktor ng Comelec na si Director Pistong Elnas, tinanong po siya kung ilang porsyento na ang paghahanda ng Comelec, ang sabi niya po ay hindi 100 percent kung hindi 80 porsyento po. Nasa record po iyan.

Tapos po, iyong kanina naman na nabanggit na halaga, P5 billion, sa pagkakaintindi ko po bilang Chairman ng Committee on Suffrage and Electoral Reforms, hindi naman po ito expenses na napunta na sa waste. Ito po ay nai-print na balota na idineliver lang naman doon sa mga lugar malapit sa kung saan gaganapin iyong halalan. Hindi naman po ito nasayang kung hindi nag-aantay lang po na magamit sa October 8, 2018, Mr. Speaker.

REP. TINIO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Tama po, naalala ko na sinabi na 80 percent na ang pagkahanda nila. Eighty percent dahil iyon po ang itinatakda noong kalendaryo ng paghahanda ng Comelec. Kasi po may mga bagay na hindi pa talaga nila magagawa sa ngayon, halimbawa, iyong training ng mga BEI. Iyong iba pang mga preparasyon, may kalendaryo po iyan, kaya 80 percent pa lang po. Ang punto ko lang po doon sa 100 percent ay everything is according to schedule at walang problema po ang kanilang preparasyon.

Hindi lang po iyon. Hindi po ba sinabi rin nila na kung ipo-postpone ang barangay election to, halimbawa, gaya ng panukala ng iba sa hearing, December o kaya sa 2019, in fact, makakagulo pa ito sa preparasyon naman para sa national and local elections ng 2019. So, in fact, sa halip na makakatulong sa trabaho ng Comelec, ang postponement na ito ay makakagulo pa nga sa trabaho niya dahil, tandaan natin, hindi lang naman barangay election ang pinaghahandaan ng Comelec kung hindi iyong parating na national and local elections sa 2019.

REP. TUGNA. Opo, Mr. Speaker. May I ask the interpellator, Mr. Speaker, ano po iyong tanong?

REP. TINIO. Yes, ang punto ko, hindi po ba sinabi nga ng Comelec na actually, kung ipo-postpone pa ito, makakagulo pa nga sa preparation nila doon naman sa national and local election. Halimbawa, itong October, sinabi nila na makakasabay na nito iyong deadline for filing of candidacies for the national and local elections. So, bibigyan pa sila ng sakit ng ulo rito, Mr. Speaker.

REP. TUGNA. Well, Mr. Speaker, sa pagkakatanda ko po, hindi naman po nagamit iyong salitang “makakagulo”; ang nagamit pong salita roon ay “mas magiging abala sila.” Mr. Speaker, dalawa na po iyong gagawin nila—bukod po sa pag-file po ng certificate of candidacy ng mga tatakbo sa national and local elections sa 2019, mag-aasikaso rin po sila ng barangay and SK elections—pero, magiging abala po, hindi po makakagulo, Mr. Speaker.

REP. TINIO. Okay.

Mr. Speaker, ipinaalala sa akin ni kagalang-galang na Majority Leader na may mga mahalagang legislation pa na nakasalang kaya hindi ko rin po talaga patatagalin ang interpellation na ito. Kaya sunod na punto lang dito, sabi ninyo po, ang isang dahilan kaya October ay para isabay ang plebisito para sa Charter change. Nakatakda na po ba sa Oktubre ang plebisito para sa Charter change, Mr. Speaker?

REP. TUGNA. Dito po sa proposal noong mga proponent, wala pong malinaw na nakatakda. It is in anticipation, Mr. Speaker, dahil we are working on it.

REP. TINIO. So wala pong nakatakda; it is in anticipation. Sa madaling sabi, drawing lang po iyan na magkakaroon ng plebisito sa Oktubre. Walang makapagsasabi ni isa rito na may mailalabas nang draft ng bagong Konstitusyon pagdating ng Oktubre; walang makapagsasabi rito na sa Oktubre ay magkakaroon ng plebisito.

Iyan po ay isang napakalinaw na problema dito sa proposal na ito. Kaya daw October para isabay sa plebiscite, eh iyong plebiscite na iyon, drawing lang, walang legal basis, walang batayan, walang katiyakan. Ibig sabihin, Mr. Speaker, puwedeng dumating ang Oktubre na hindi pa handa ang plebisito, kaya baka ipaurong na naman ito at magtitipon na naman tayo rito, pag-uusapan na naman natin ang postponement. Iyon po ay napakalinaw.

Ang punto ko lang po, iyong dalawang batayan na binanggit, iyong kailangan daw ng Comelec ang dagdag na oras para maghanda para sa barangay and SK election, walang basis po iyon. They are on-schedule at handang-handa na sila. Pangalawa, mas lalong walang basis iyong Oktubre para isabay sa plebisito. Eh wala pa ngang plebisito, Mr. Speaker.

Kaya po—I will wind up, Mr. Speaker—napakalaking kasalanan na po sa taumbayan na napostpone, hindi lang isa, kundi nang dalawang beses ang barangay and SK election. Sa bawat panahon na ginagawa iyan ng Kongresong ito, inaagawan po ng mga Mambabatas ang mamamayan ng kanilang karapatan na pumili ng kanilang mga pinuno sa pinakabatayang antas. Alam naman po natin na ang barangay, iyan ang pinaka-basic na unit ng gobyerno.

Kaya po ako ay tumitindig dito dahil nakaabot po sa akin, sa pag-iikot ko sa buong kapuluan bilang Party-List Representative, ang sentimyento ng taumbayan. Galit na po sila. Gusto na po nilang matuloy ang barangay election, at galit na galit sila ngayon na ang Kongresong ito ay nagtutulak pa kahit malapit na, kahit ilang linggo na lang. Dapat matuloy na ito. Ang Kongresong ito ay nagtutulak pa ng panukala para i-postpone na naman ito at hindi na po ito katanggap-tanggap. Mahiya na po tayo sa taumbayan; gusto nila ng eleksyon.

Kaya huling appeal ko po sa mga kasamahan ko dito, pahalagahan natin at dinggin natin ang panawagan ng taumbayan na ituloy ang eleksiyong ito. Kasama rin po sa kahalagahan ng pagtutol dito ang malinaw na kaugnayan sa pagbabago ng Konstitusyon ng panukala—itinatali nga sa plebisito.

Malinaw din, inilatag na natin kung paanong sa pagbabago ng Konstitusyon ay karugtong nito ang posibilidad ng term extension at saka no election. Ibig sabihin, hindi na itutuloy ang eleksiyon sa May 2019, iyong national and local elections. Iyan po ang mga usapin na nakataya sa panukalang postponement ng eleksiyong ito.

Kaya po, muli, bilang pangwakas, inirerehistro po ng Kinatawang ito ang mariin at sukdulang pagtutol sa panukalang ito.

Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker.

REP. TUGNA. Mr. Speaker, iginagalang ko po ang opinyon at ang mga sinabi ng aking esteemed colleague na si Cong. Tonchi Tinio. Without sounding condescending, Mr. Speaker, the proposed postponement of the barangay elections to October 8, 2018, with the corresponding possibility of a plebiscite, will be beneficial to the country in case a Charter change will be approved because it will save the government from conducting barangay and SK elections, and a plebiscite on two different occasions, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize our next interpellator, the Hon. Jose “Lito” L. Atienza Jr.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The Hon. Lito Atienza is recognized to interpellate our Sponsor.

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

With the kind permission of the Sponsor, we would like to be clarified on certain provisions which propose a law postponing, again, the barangay elections in the country.

REP. TUGNA. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Congressman Atienza.

REP. ATIENZA. Sa inyo bang pananaw, ang barangay elections ay maaari nating ipalipat-lipat? Sincerely, as a lawmaker and as a Filipino, sa tingin po ba ninyo, itong barangay system natin ay maaari nating tratuhing parang *de quita y pon*, puwede ngayon, hindi puwede bukas? Ito po ay puwedeng maghalalan ngayon, sa susunod hindi natin alam. Iyon ba ang pananaw ng Sponsor dito sa ating barangay system of democracy?

REP. TUGNA. Ako po, Mr. Speaker, bilang isang Pilipino at bilang isang abogado na nag-aral ng Saligang Batas, ang pagkakaintindi ko po ay ibinigay po ng Saligang Batas sa atin, sa Kongreso, ang kapangyarihan o awtoridad. The Constitution gave us the authority to determine when are we going to hold barangay elections and, I believe, by virtue of that, if there is a valid reason to postpone it and to move it to a later date, ako po ay naniniwala na iyan po ang nagiging basehan ng aksiyon ng Mababang Kapulungan, Mr. Speaker.



REP. ATIENZA. Salamat po.

Mr. Speaker, to continue my clarificatory question, ilang beses na po ba nating na-postpone itong eleksiyon ng ating mga barangay official under this term of the present crop of barangay chairmen?

REP. TUGNA. Mr. Speaker, we have moved it to a later date on two occasions already, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Therefore, this is the third postponement. Kung sakali man eh this is the third, pangatlong ulit nang postponement.

REP. TUGNA. Opo, Mr. Speaker. Pero, if I may add, Mr. Speaker, even in the past administrations, not only from 2016 but between the period, let us say, I am just going to use a 10-year period, from 2006 to 2016, o gamitin na lang po natin mula year 2000 hanggang year 2016, marami na pong pagkakataon na ibinigay o naibigay talaga ng Saligang Batas sa Kongreso ang kapangyarihan na i-postpone po ang halalan at ilipat sa ibang petsa.

REP. ATIENZA. Sa aking kaalaman, Mr. Speaker, walang panahon na na-postpone ang barangay election even under the severest condition in the country three times as we are doing now. Pangatlong ulit na po ito eh. Inaamin po ba ninyong ganoon? Binanggit ninyo ...

REP. TUGNA. Two thousand sixteen po.

REP. ATIENZA. ... year 2016, pero isang postponement, malamang dalawa at a certain point, but this is the third time now. So, this is the most postponed barangay election in our history. Hindi po ba ninyo inaamin iyon? Ako na ang nagsasabi, this has the most number of postponements in our barangay history. You cannot dispute that because this is the third time that we are postponing it. Therefore, the barangay officials who were elected in 2012 will be serving until when, according to your proposal, Mr. Speaker?

REP. TUGNA. Apat na buwan po, apat o limang buwan, Mr. Speaker, hanggang October po.

REP. ATIENZA. Hindi puwede po iyong apat o limang buwan. Kailan po ang itinatakda ninyong eleksiyon kung ito man ay ...

REP. TUGNA. Opo.

REP. ATIENZA. ... ipo-postpone natin ngayon?

REP. TUGNA. To the second Monday of October 2018—that will fall on October 8, 2018, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. October 8, ...

REP. TUGNA. Two thousand eighteen.

REP. ATIENZA. ... two thousand eighteen. Nakasulat po ba iyan dito sa inyong panukala?

REP. TUGNA. Hindi po, second Monday of May.

REP. ATIENZA. Dahil kung hindi ...

REP. TUGNA. Tiningnan ko lang po iyong kalendaryo, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. ... ay verbal lamang itong ating pag-uusap. Ano po ba ang nakalagay sa ating nakasulat na panukala?

REP. TUGNA. Under line 9 of House Bill No. 7378, “x x x postponed to the second Monday of OCTOBER 2018,” Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Isinulat po ninyo and, thereafter, on May or October 2021, magkakaroon ng halalan muli. Tama po ba iyon?

REP. TUGNA. Opo, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. “x x x and every three (3) years thereafter.”

REP. TUGNA. Opo, line 11.

REP. ATIENZA. At, itinatakda po ninyo, ang mga mananalò ay uupo sa Nobyembre a-treinta, 2018?

REP. TUGNA. Opo, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Tinatanggap ba ninyo na ang halalan ay inaasahan ng mamamayan? Nakikini-kinita po ba ninyong itong batas na ito ay tatanggihan ng ating mga mamamayan? Kayo po ba ay naging barangay leader in your political—past chairman, kagawad, tanod?

REP. TUGNA. Hindi pa po, ...

REP. ATIENZA. Hindi po.

REP. TUGNA. ... Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Ang inyong lingkod, ako po ay naging kagawad at inihalal po akong chairman. Naglingkod po ako ng walong taon bilang chairman. Alam ko po ang pulso ng ating mga mamamayan na mayroong kaukulang paghanga, respeto sa ating mga

punong barangay sapagkat inihalal nila ang kanilang kapitbahay upang mamuno sa kanilang pamayanan na kapag ito ay mabuti ang serbisyo ay inihalal muli at kung masama naman ang kanyang paglilingkod ay hindi na inihalal. Sa tingin po ninyo ngayon, dahil pangatlong beses na nating ipagpapaliban ang halalan ng mga punong barangay, ito po ba ay sang-ayon sa kagustuhan ng ating mga mamamayang Pilipino sa buong bansa?

REP. TUGNA. Sa palagay ...

REP. ATIENZA. Ano po ang tingin ninyo? Ito po ba ay kagustuhan ng tao o kagustuhan nating mga Congressmen?

REP. TUGNA. Well, Mr. Speaker, kapag sinabi po nating kagustuhan nating mga Congressmen, eh ang kagustuhan po natin ay hindi po natin iyon personal; bagkus, we work under a representative system. So, ang boses po natin ay boses po ito ng ating mga mamamayan. Iyon po ang paniniwala ko at iyon din po ang nakasulat sa batas, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Maganda po iyong sinabi ninyo at tayo ay nabubuhay, nandito tayo sa isang demokratikong sistema.

Iyong halalan po ba sa barangay ay hindi bahagi ng ating demokratikong sistema na maaari nating pag-usapan sa Kongreso? May halalan ngayon. Bukas, walang halalan ang mga barangay. Iyon po ba ay magpapatibay sa ugat ng ating barangay system of democracy kung babagu-baguhin natin ang halalan, babagu-baguhin natin ang kanilang panahon ng paglilingkod, at iyong mga hindi naglingkod ay mananatili sa kanilang tanggapan, magpapatuloy ang kanilang pagiging punong barangay?

Mayroon po ba kayong idea na ang isang barangay chairman ngayon ay humahawak ng malaking kapangyarihan at responsibilidad, at mayroon din silang hinahawakang pananalapi ng bayan? Alam po ninyo iyon.

REP. TUGNA. Opo, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. At maraming punong barangay ngayon ay nasasakdal sa salang malversation, misuse of funds, graft and corruption—na ngayon ay nililitis ng iba't ibang korte at tinutulungan ng Department of the Interior and Local Government ang mga kaso. Alam ninyo iyon.

REP. TUGNA. Opo, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Ano po ang plano ninyo? Pagka na-postpone po ang halalan, itong mga chairman na ito,

hindi po naman maaalis hanggang hindi natatapos ang kaso. Sila po ba ay magpapatuloy sa kanilang paghawak ng kapangyarihan at salapi ng bayan?

REP. TUGNA. Sa pagkakaintindi ko po, Mr. Speaker, the way I understand it, it is within the mandate, jurisdiction and responsibility of the Department of the Interior and Local Government, as well as the supervising authority of the local government unit head who is in charge of the aforementioned—iyong mga nabanggit po na mga barangay captain, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Kayo po bilang may-akda, Mr. Speaker, ay inaasahan kong mayroong sasabihin sa amin. Ano po ang pananaw ninyo sa mga punong barangay na may kaso na nilaspag iyong pera ng kanilang barangay o kaya ay gumawa ng masama, nang-abuso sa kanyang kapangyarihan, may kaso pero hindi pa desidido? Mayroon po ba tayo ritong inilagay na probisyon na lahat ng mga may kaso ay maaari munang tumabi at pamahalaan ng national government ang kani-kanilang mga area? Wala po ako kasing nakita tungkol dito.

It is a simple extension of terms but without even accepting the fact that many local barangay chairmen now are answering cases of malversation in court.

REP. TUGNA. Mr. Speaker, ito po, I will lead the Honorable Atienza to page two. Sa pagkakaintindi ko po, under line 12, Section 3. "Hold-Over," babasahin ko po, Mr. Speaker:

Until their successors shall have been duly elected and qualified, all incumbent barangay officials shall remain in office, unless sooner removed or suspended for cause.

So, Mr. Speaker, ang intindi ko po dito sa pangungusap na ito ay dito na po papasok iyong awtoridad at kapangyarihan ng DILG, as well as iyong mga mayor po na may supervisory authority sa kanila na sila ay disiplinahan o suspendihin o i-remove from their office.

REP. ATIENZA. Medyo malabo po iyon, Mr. Speaker. What is not written in the law will be subject to a lot of interpretations and misinterpretations depending on the political conditions in that barangay, municipality or city. Kapagka kalaban ang chairman, maaaring alisin iyan; kapagka kakampi ang chairman, maski patungpatong ang kaso niyan sapagkat nililitis pa ay wala pang cause. Hindi po ba magandang isulat iyan dito, idagdag ninyo sa inyong panukala? Linawin natin kung ano ang gagampanang papel ng mga chairmen na may kaso tungkol sa kanilang abuso sa kanilang tanggapan dahil kung wala po iyon, you are practically condoning graft and corruption in the barangay level.

Many of the cases of barangay chairmen today concern misuse of funds and abuse of authority over the barangay funds which incidentally hindi na po maliliit iyan. Ang pondong hinahawakan ng mga chairmen ngayon ay nagkakahalaga din ng milyun-milyon, iyong iba daang milyon. So, you cannot belittle it by saying, well, for a cause they can be removed. Hindi po ba magandang isinulat ninyo dapat dito iyon? Iyong mga may kaso ng malversation at misuse of funds should be automatically attended to and should not be given an extension. This will be a mockery of justice if it remains as it is written in this manner, because it is a fact. Sabi ko sa inyo, marami ang punong barangay at kagawad na may kaso. Eh sa isang pirmahang ito, sa isang aksiyon nitong Kongresong ito, para bang binigyan natin sila ng premyo—magpatuloy kayo, magnakaw kayo. Inilagay ninyo for a cause, eh kung wala pa ngang cause eh, demanda palang ang mayroon, anong gagawin dito sa mga taliwas na mga lingkod bayang ito?

Mayroon po ba kayong naiisip na dapat gawin o puwede na itong ganito? Bahala na kayo diyan, basta kami, na-postpone namin ang eleksiyon. Palagay ko hindi naman tama iyon sapagkat nandito tayo para balangkasin ito, suriin, pag-aralan, at tiyakin natin na ito ay makatutulong at hindi makapeperwisyo sa ating sistemang umiiral ngayon.

REP. TUGNA. Opo, Mr. Speaker. Ako po, naniniwala po ako doon sa sinasabi ni Hon. Lito Atienza, ni Manong Lito. Iyon nga lang po ang aking paniwala, although it is not explicitly stated here, ang mga barangay officials po kasi under po sila ng DILG at sa pag-aaral ko po ng batas, kapagka po mayroong administrative case na na-file sa kanila, kahit po, dahil mababa lang iyong quantum of evidence na kinakailangan kapagka administrative case unlike if it is a criminal case, puwede po silang masuspinde o maalís sa kanilang opisina. Depende na po kasi iyan doon po sa vigilance noong Department of the Interior and Local Government, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Inuulit ko po, Mr. Speaker, what is not mentioned cannot be added after we act on this proposal. Bakit hindi ninyo isama iyon, iyong malakimalaking bahagi kung saan tutol ang mga tao? Masama iyong punong barangay namin, in-extend ng Kongreso. Hindi po siguro maganda at hindi magiging tama iyon sa magandang intensiyon ninyo. Ayaw po ninyong ilagay doon sa titik ng batas? Gusto ninyong bigyan ng kasiyahan ang mga nakaupo. Ganoon po ba ang aking magiging interpretasyon at interpretasyon ng marami? Hindi po ba namumulitika lang tayo?

REP. TUGNA. Mr. Speaker, iyong nabanggit ko po kanina, as I have said earlier, I believe the rules in the DILG, most especially with respect to administrative

proceedings that apply to barangay officials, although not explicitly stated here, they exist and it can be done. Opo.

REP. ATIENZA. Bakit hindi po natin ilagay, Mr. Speaker? Iyong magkakaroon ng kaso—may kaso at magkakaroon ng kaso ay aaksiyunan ng Department of the Interior and Local Government? Kayo ba ay sasang-ayon doon sa probisyon na iyon o ayaw din ninyo?

REP. TUGNA. Ako po, Mr. Speaker, ay sang-ayon po kay Manong Lito. Hindi ko lang masabi sa kanya na hindi rin naman maganda na masabi ko. Baka sa susunod, kung may proposal po. So ang point ko, Mr. Speaker, there is a law that exists that validly addresses Manong Lito's concern.

REP. ATIENZA. But the law is very clear, Mr. Speaker. Unless proven guilty, the man can continue holding office. But if it is written in your proposal, wala pong debate iyon. Eh kung ikaw ay may kaso, under the disposition of the DILG ka na. Kung ikaw ay magkakakaso, ikaw rin ay malalagay na rin sa probationary or under the authority of the DILG, and you will not benefit from this carte blanche. This is a carte blanche for corruption. Iyan ang idinidiin ko sa inyo, na kung hindi ninyo bibigyan ng probisyon iyong mga chairman na hindi naglingkod, nang-abuso, wala kayong binabanggit except for cause, iyong cause ay puwedeng may kulay ng pulitika iyan. Pero kung sasabihin ninyo iyong mga nagwaldas ng salapi na may kaso na ngayon ay hindi makikinabang sa ekstensiyong ito, ...

REP. TUGNA. Opo, Mr. Speaker. Personally, sang-ayon po ako kay Congressman Lito Atienza na iyong may mga kaso, iyong mga nagwaldas, iyong mga nangurakot ay dapat po silang maalís. Ako ay personal na naniniwala rin po na sapat po ang kasalukuyang batas natin. Kasi ang belief ko po, Mr. Speaker, legally, let us separate being presumptive, let us separate iyong ginagamit po na quantum of evidence pagdating po sa mga barangay official, kasi administrative proceedings lang po ito. So, mababa lang po iyong quantum of evidence, so kayang-kaya pong gawin iyan ng DILG. Hindi po iyan presumption of innocence until proven guilty, which is being used sa mga kriminal na kaso po. Iba po iyon, conviction po iyon, at pagkakapiit o pagkakakulong. Dito po, basta po may sapat na basehan at nakita po ito ng investigating authority, puwede po silang suspendihin at puwede po silang alisin sa kanilang pagkakaupo bilang barangay official at papasok na po iyong line number 12 na iyong successor nila ay magiging duly qualified na po to replace them. I submit, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, binanggit po ng ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor na wala siyang karanasan sa barangayan. Ang inyong lingkod lumaki sa barangayan. Alam ko po ang sakit ng barangay. Iyong sinasabi niyang mayroon namang kapangyarihang isuspende na nanggagaling sa alkalde o kaya ay sa DILG, dahil sa wala nga pong batas na umiiral how to handle this kind of situation. But now that we are talking about the barangay law, in fact, that will postpone the election. We should be very clear. Sino ba ang makikinabang dito, mabubuting chairman o lahat ng chairman, whether may kaso kayo o wala? Huwag po nilang sabihin na administrative case iyong malversation. Iyong paggamit ng salapi sa maling paraan ay hindi po administrative case, criminal case po iyon. Kaya hihintayin nating matapos ang kaso kung hindi po natin ilalagay dito na kung may kaso na kayo, hindi na kayo kwalipikadong ma-extend pa sa inyong tanggapan. Dahil kung hindi, parang binibigyan natin ng premyo ang mga gumawa ng kasalanan.

So, tatanggap po ba ang kagalang-galang na Sponsor ng kaunting amendment dito sa probisyong ito sa takdang oras ng ating pagtitipon? Uulitin ko po ang tanong, tatanggap po ba ang ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor ng amyenda para po mabigyan natin ng punto iyong kalagayang aking binanggit? Ang mga punong barangay na mayroong track record sa kanilang pagwaldas ng pera ng bayan ay hindi dapat masali rito sa biyayang ito. Dapat sila ay asikasuhin na ngayon ng DILG at ng mayor ng lungsod upang sila ay matanggal sa kani-kanilang mga puwesto. No extension, not even one day, should they qualify. I think the people will understand what you mean and your well-meaning ideas on this proposed law. But if you do not include that, sa dami po ng mga barangay chairmen ngayon na gustong alisin ng mga taumbayan na for cause, sabi nga ninyo na hindi ginagalaw ay hindi po maiintindihan ng mamamayan bakit natin sila ine-extend. Pag nabalitaan po iyong sinabi ng ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor na hindi naman criminal act iyong malversation ay baka hindi kayo maintindihan ng mga tao.

REP. TUGNA. Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Pagtakbo niyan ng Senador ay ...

REP. TUGNA. Opo. Hindi ko po nasabi ...

REP. ATIENZA. ... hindi kayo maiintindihan.

REP. TUGNA. ... na hindi criminal act iyong malversation, mawalang-galang na po, Manong Lito.

Ang sabi ko po, pagka sa mga kaso tungkol sa barangay officials at DILG, ang in-charge ang basehan, ang maaaring basehan po na gamitin lamang nila upang suspendihin o alisin ay iyong ginagamit lang na

quantum of evidence sa administrative cases. I am not saying na ang malversation ay hindi criminal act. Ano po iyan, crime of a public officer po iyan at iyan po, criminal act po iyan.

REP. ATIENZA. Eh, di lalinawin ko po iyong tanong ko.

REP. TUGNA. Opo.

REP. ATIENZA. Ano ang dapat nating gawin sa mga punong barangay na may kaso na ngayon ay nakapiyansa lang subalit nagfa-function po as chairman? Marami po akong alam na ganyan. Ano po ang gagawin natin sa kanila? Extended din sila sa kanilang ...

REP. TUGNA. Well, ako po, personally, naniniwala po ako na dapat bigyan natin ng due process. Pero kung ako po ang nasa DILG, re-review-hin ko po ang mga kaso niya at ang gagamitin ko lang naman na quantum of evidence ay iyong ginagamit sa substantial evidence po at ako po, tatanggalin ko po ang mga iyan, kung ako po ang nandoon, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Pero ayaw ninyong ilagay sa letra ng batas, ayaw ninyong ilagay. Gusto ninyong nakabitin tayo rito, malabo at discretion na lamang ng mga mamamayan.

REP. TUGNA. Ako po, ...

REP. ATIENZA. Iyon ba ang gusto ninyo?

REP. TUGNA. Mr. Speaker, lahat po ng sinabi ni Congressman Lito Atienza, sang-ayon po ako roon eh. Napakaganda po ng mga proposal pero bilang Sponsor, isa-submit naman po ito sa Body mamaya eh. So, ako po nano-note ko po iyong mga sinasabi ni Manong Lito, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Uulitin ko po ang tanong ko. Tatanggap po ba ang kagalang-galang na Sponsor ng mga amyenda na aming ilalahad sa takdang oras, abutin man tayo ng alas-dose ng gabi rito?

REP. TUGNA. Opo, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Tatanggapin ninyo?

Iyon lamang naman ang dapat sagot eh para ipakita ninyong bukas ang loob ninyo sa maayos na pag-uusap at pagdedebate tungkol sa panukalang batas na ito na una sa lahat, hindi katanggap-tanggap sa tao. Ito ay malamang pag-uusapan sa lahat ng sulok ng ating bansa at hindi po tatanggapin ng marami, subalit ipipilit ng Lower House, mangyayari po ang gusto ng mayorya rito, pero i-ban, naniniwala po ako. Sa Senado, hindi

pag-uusapan ito eh, sa totoo lang. Hindi sila tatanggap ng ganoong klaseng pangangatwiran na iyong mga bulok, wala tayong magagawa riyan.

Sa akin naman, bilang Miyembro nitong ating Kapulungan, kung ano ang kagustuhan ng mayorya, iyon ang mananaig. Pero tungkulin po nating nakakakita ng mga kahinaan sa inyong isinulat na panukalang batas na punahin upang baguhin ito bago natin gawing isang official na aprobadong batas na dumaaan sa Lower House, sa Kongreso ng bansa.

Ang susunod pong tanong ko ay ito, may kinalaman din po sa holdover. Ngayon ba ay mayroon tayong SK ex officio members ng mga Sangguniang Bayan, City Councils, mayroon po ba tayong mga kinatawan ng mga kabataan?

REP. TUGNA. Mr. Speaker, sa kasalukuyan po ay wala. Ang pagkakaalam ko po, sa experience ko rin, Mr. Speaker, bagama't ako ay hindi pa nagiging tanod o hindi rin po ako nagiging kagawad pa, o naging kapitan pa ng isang barangay, pero sa paglilingkod po sa ground ay nakikita ko rin po iyong ginagawa ng mga barangay officials at kung paano nagfa-function ang isang barangay.

May mga ilang barangay po na mayroon po silang itinatalagang isang kagawad ng kanilang barangay upang espesyal na pagtuunan ng pansin iyong concerns ng mga kabataan, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Sa ngayon ay masasabi ninyong wala nang kinatawan ex officio member ang mga SK? Iyon ba iyong inyong tinuturan for the record? Wala na pong representanteng ex officio basis ang SK sa ating mga barangay council?

REP. TUGNA. Sa kasalukuyan po ay wala pa po, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Eh, ano ang nangyari roon sa mga iniluklok ng mga SK bago na-postpone ang election?

REP. TUGNA. Sa pagkakaalam ko po, they ceased to hold office noong panahon ng 2013 dahil nga nagkaroon po ng SK Reform Bill na naging Act po, tuluyan nang naging isang batas, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. So, masasabi ninyo ba, Mr. Speaker, na iyong mga SK na naupo sa mga city council at mga municipal council ay wala na po sila sa kanilang mga tungkulin? Kung naroroon pa sila, dapat sila ay aksiyunan na ng DILG.

REP. TUGNA. Sa pagkakaalam ko po, Mr. Speaker, since 2013, ang SK po na ex officio sa munisipyo, sa probinsiya o sa panlungsod ay wala na po. Natapos na po ang kanilang mga termino.

REP. ATIENZA. Kung sila ay nakatalaga pa sa kanilang mga tanggapan, maaari ba ninyong sabihin on the floor, in this discussion that they are now holding their offices illegally? They are not covered, in other words, in any way by this extension.

REP. TUGNA. Opo, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Dapat lang sapagkat hindi naman sila kumakatawan sa SK; hindi na po nagkaroon ng halalan diyana.

Doon po naman sa bahagi ng mga ex officio ng punong barangay na nakaupo sa city council, ano po ang nakalaan ayon sa inyong panukala? How will they be affected? Are they automatically extended? Are they automatically privileged or are they now needing qualification as they are being the representatives of the present barangay chairmen?

REP. TUGNA. Opo, Mr. Speaker. Under line 14, page 2 of the proposed Bill, nakasaad po rito:

*Provided*, That barangay officials who are ex officio members of the sangguniang bayan, sangguniang panlungsod, or sangguniang panlalawigan, as the case may be, shall continue to serve as such members in the sanggunian concerned until the next barangay election.

So, ...

REP. ATIENZA. Therefore, ...

REP. TUGNA. Opo.

REP. ATIENZA. ... this Bill automatically also extends the office of all ex officio members of the sanggunian.

REP. TUGNA. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. As you said, until the next barangay election, meaning, hanggang Oktubre of 2018, kung hindi ninyo ipo-postpone na naman ang halalan pagdating ng Oktubre. Ano po ba ang nakikita ng ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor ngayon? Is October a certainty or depending on the thinking of the Committee on Barangay Affairs as you are trying to now seemingly, using your discretion to decide on when to postpone and when to hold the barangay election?

REP. TUGNA. Well, ako po ...

REP. ATIENZA. Nakikini-kinita po ba ng ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor na sa Oktubre 2018, magaganap na rin ang barangay election? Mahalaga po ito

sapagkat, Mr. Speaker, when we go back to our districts, when I go back to the city of Manila, this will be asked of me: “Ano ang nakikita ninyo, Congressman? Iyon bang October, sigurado na o depende na naman sa ihip ng hangin kung galing sa amihan o galing sa habagat?”

REP. TUGNA. Well, ako po, Mr. Speaker, bilang isang Miyembro ng Kongreso, bilang isang Mambabatas, ang tinitingnan ko lang po ay iyong batas. Kung, halimbawa po, itong proposal na ito ay maaprubahan at tuluyang maging isang ganap na batas, eh ang tingin ko po roon ay ito po ay matutuloy dahil ang nakasaad po ay second Monday of October 2018, so hindi ko po iyon nilalagyan ng kulay. Ang tingin ko po roon, Mr. Speaker, ay tuloy po iyon, opo.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, sa dinami-dami ng mga kadahilanang narinig natin, sa kabila nitong postponement na ito, sa pananaw po ng ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor, ano po ba ang sa tingin ninyong pinakamalaking dahilan na masasabi namin sa mga taong magtatanong sa amin na ginagamit ninyo kaya ipo-postpone natin ang halalan sa kanilang mga barangay? Sa marami pong dahilan, ano po ang masasabi ninyong pinakamalaking dahilan? Para hindi po naman masabing, “Ano ba iyan, kapritso ba ni Congressman Tugna iyan?” Sasabihin ko, hindi, eto ang sinabi niya, “O, iyan ba ay kapritso ni Speaker?” Hindi, ito ang talagang damdamin na aming pinag-usapan sa plenaryo. Ano po ba ang pinakamalaking dahilan kaya ipo-postpone natin ang halalan?

REP. TUGNA. Opo. Mr. Speaker, sa akin pong pagbabasa ng mga Explanatory Note, at ito po ay ang aking personal na opinyon, ang tingin ko po is that, since this administration was sworn into office, alam naman po natin na ang isa sa mga ipinapanukala at panukala din po dito sa Mababang Kapulungan, ay magkaroon po tayo ng isang Charter change, mag-shift din po into a federal form of government. So, ito po ay isang proposed Bill, na bagama’t ito ay pending, ito po ay may posibilidad din na mangyari. Kaya po, ipinapamove po ito sa October of 2018 upang maisabay na sa plebisito kung sakali man na ito po ay napagdesisyunan ng Mababang Kapulungan.

REP. ATIENZA. Nabanggit ng ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor na ito ay ipinapamove. Kayo po ba ay inuutusan o ito ay inyo talagang nilikha upang ihayag sa ating plenary session ngayon? Sabi ninyo ay ipinapamove—nino? Sino po ba ang nagpapa-move? Ang tanong ko po ay, ano ang pinakamalaking kadahilanang ng inyong proposal to postpone the barangay election? Pinapamove nino?

REP. TUGNA. Mr. Speaker, pwede po ba akong

mag-request sa TSN, wala po akong natatandaan na gumamit po ako ng salitang “move.”

REP. ATIENZA. Sinabi po nila, ipinapamove. Eh, kaya lang, if you are denying what you said, it only means that you are denying a lot of things that you have said.

REP. TUGNA. Hindi, Mr. Speaker, iyon lang pong sa TSN, iyon sa nag-ano sa atin. Ang tanda ko po, wala po akong nagamit na pagpapa-“move.” Ang tinitingnan ko lang po iyong apat na bills na na-consolidate doon po sa Committee. Iyon po iyong mga rason na napagdesisyunan po ng collegial body, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Nais kong ilagay sa record, Mr. Speaker, sinabi po ni Kagalang-galang Tugna, ipinapamove. Eh, nadulas siguro siya. Alam ninyo, kung minsan, nahuhuli ang isda talaga sa kanyang bibig eh. Sinasabi ko lang, kung ito ay inyong panukala, katha ninyo, we respect your thinking. Everybody has a right to think for himself. Pero kung ito naman ay isinubo sa inyo, kayo ay isang masunuring sundalo, kahanga-hanga rin, okay din iyon. Ang ibig sabihin, kayo ay isang masunuring alagad. Pero kailangang malinaw po ang ating pananaw sa isa’t isa. Kung kayo ay mahusay na alagad, kung kayo ay isang mahusay na Mambabatas, o kaya naman eh kaya maraming pagkukulang dito sa panukalang ito sapagkat ito ay, practically, binuo hindi sa inyong isipan kung hindi sa isipan ng lumikha nitong kababalaghang ito na postponement of barangay elections.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I will not belabor the point as I have already consumed enough time to ask questions which are relevant to the questions that our people will ask. This is the third time that our people will be deprived of the barangay elections. This is now an occasion for this government to prove its sincerity in removing those that are part of the problem—graft and corruption. Corruption is the biggest problem of the nation, sabi po ng ating Pangulo. We support him on that. Pero kung itong batas na ito ay magbibigay lamang ng karagdagang pagkakataon para sa pangungulimbat ng salapi ng bayan ay hindi po katanggap-tanggap ito sa inyong lingkod at sa marami nating mga kababayan.

Let me stress and let me emphasize that elections should not be touched by any Congress because it is a dangerous precedent that elections can be moved from one period to another, or one date to another. The time would come when the period for the election of the Members of this Congress may also be touched by those who are developing funny and ridiculous ideas on how a democracy should function.

We stand squarely on the principle that elections are the cornerstone of a free and democratic society

and that the people choosing their leaders is the basic necessity for the stability of our nation. We are fortunate to have barangay leaders in our midst. They are people who are willing to serve practically with no salary. Sa Maynila po, ang sweldo ng isang kagawad ay P1,000. Ang tanod naman ay P300. Ang inyong lingkod ay naglingkod nang walong taon, at wala pong pera na pinanghawakan sapagkat noong mga panahong iyon ay wala pang budget ang ating barangay. Subalit sa ilalim po ng Local Government Code o sa ilalim po ng ating kasalukuyang batas—mga batas na dumaan sa Kongresong ito—binigyan na natin ng kapangyarihan ang mga punong barangay na humawak ng milyun-milyong salapi na kanilang dinedesisyunan kung papaano gamitin. While we have given them the opportunity to be more effective in service with the use of public funds, there are also those who misuse this power. Therefore, the basic principle of honoring dates of elections should prevail, so that the abuses of some can be corrected by the election process.

Iyong mga magagaling na punong barangay, ang alam ko, ay taas-noo na haharap sa halalan at mananalong muli. Iyong mga may kasalanan na nagtatago sa technicality ng batas at protektado ng ilang makapangyarihang pulitiko ay mananatili rin kung hindi natin ilalagay sa titik dito na lahat niyong mga mayroong pending criminal cases ay kinakailangang palitan. Kagaya ng sinabi ng Pangulo, marami sa kanila ay sangkot sa droga. Lahat ng mga may pagkakasangkot o mga nasangkot sa droga ay hindi na dapat bigyan ng anumang extension.

May we put all of those requirements in your proposal, Mr. Speaker. Those who are suspected drug pushers, why should they be given an extension? Dapat alisin, kasuhan at ikulong upang lalo nating paniwalaan ang kampanyang ngayon ay ginagawa sa lahat ng ating sulok ng bansa. Unless we are able to clarify these issues, Mr. Speaker, this measure will reward the bad and punish the good and, therefore, it will not be an effective law, promoting good, effective governance.

Ako ay nakikiusap sa lahat upang pag-isipan ito nating mabuti bago tayo umaksyon sa panukalang ito. I am ready to support it if the good honorable Sponsor is also amenable to certain amendments that we will be introducing. If not, then I will definitely vote against it.

Thank you.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, there being no other interpellators or any Member who wishes to speak against the Bill, I move that we terminate the period of sponsorship and debate.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). Is

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of amendments.

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). Yes, what is the pleasure of the Honorable Elago?

REP. ELAGO. I signified my intent to interpellate and talked to some members of the Committee on Rules that I be listed as one of the interpellators for the bill on the postponement of the barangay and sangguniang kabataan elections.

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

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move for a few minutes suspension of the session.

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

*It was 5:25 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 5:27 p.m., the session was resumed.*

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, we have a pending motion, and I would like to reiterate the motion to open the period of amendments.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, there being no Committee or individual amendments, I move that we close the period of amendments.

Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my motion to close the period of amendments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). Is there any objection to the motion?

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). Okay, you may continue, Majority Leader.

REP. DEFENSOR. I would like to reiterate my motion that we close the period of amendments.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve House Bill No. 7378 on Second Reading.

#### VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). There is a motion for the approval of House Bill No. 7378 on Second Reading.

As many as are in favor, please say *aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

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

FEW MEMBERS. *Nay*.

#### APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7378 ON SECOND READING

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

House Bill No. 7378 is approved on Second Reading.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, mas malakas po iyong *nay*. (*Laughter*)

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we take up the Unfinished Business.

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

#### CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7303 *Continuation*

#### PERIOD OF AMENDMENTS

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 7303, as contained in Committee Report No. 640, and that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7303, entitled: AN ACT INSTITUTING ABSOLUTE DIVORCE AND DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE IN THE PHILIPPINES.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, to stand as the Sponsor of the Bill, I move that we recognize the distinguished Gentleman from the First District of Albay, the Hon. Edcel C. Lagman.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The Hon. Edcel C. Lagman is recognized to continue his sponsorship.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary status is that we are in the period amendments. I therefore move that we open the period of amendments.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. There being no amendments, Mr. Speaker, I move that we close the period of amendments.

REP. LAGMAN. Mr. Speaker, we have Committee amendments and we are going to propose omnibus Committee amendments.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, with that, as we have opened the period of amendments, may we hear the amendments from the Sponsor of the measure?

#### COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

REP. LAGMAN. The following would constitute the omnibus amendments of the Committee:

1. On lines 21 and 22 on page 3, between PhP5,000,000.00 and the semicolon (;), provide the following: COMMA (,) WHETHER SINGLY OR JOINTLY;

2. On line 15, delete the phrase “the respondent”, and in lieu thereof, provide for the following: ANY OF THE SPOUSES;

3. On line 24 on page 5, after the word “petitioner”, insert the following: AND/OR THEIR CHILDREN UNDER THE CUSTODY OF THE PETITIONER;

4. Between lines 29 and 30 on page 6, provide



for a new Section 6 to read as follows: SECTION 6. PRESCRIPTION OF ACTION. – A PETITION FOR ABSOLUTE DIVORCE AND DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE SHALL BE FILED WITH THE PROPER COURT BY THE INTERESTED PARTY OR PARTIES WITHIN FIVE (5) YEARS FROM THE ACCRUAL OF THE CAUSE OF ACTION;

5. The original Section 6 and the subsequent section should be renumbered accordingly;

6. Between the lines 33 and 34 on page 7, provide the following: (H) PARTIES WITH PENDING CASES IN COURT FOR ANNULMENT OF MARRIAGE UNDER ARTICLE 36 OR LEGAL SEPARATION UNDER ARTICLE 55 OR NULLIFICATION OF MARRIAGE UNDER ARTICLE 36 OF THE FAMILY CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES SHALL BE ALLOWED TO AMEND AND CONVERT THEIR RESPECTIVE PETITIONS TO ONE FOR ABSOLUTE DIVORCE OR DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE;

7. On line 18 on page 8, after the phrase “summary judicial proceeding”, insert the following: UNDER LETTERS A TO E IN THE PRECEDING SECTION 8;

8. On line 21 on page 8, after the phrase “the parties”, provide for the following: AND THE COURT SHALL AWAIT THE SUBMISSION OF THE REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC PROSECUTOR AS PROVIDED FOR UNDER SECTION 7 (G);

9. On line 14 on page 9, after the phrase “That the support shall”, delete the phrase “only be for one (1) year”, and in lieu thereof provide the following: NOT EXCEED THREE (3) YEARS; and

10. After line 34 on page 10, provide for the new Section 13 as renumbered to read as follows: SECTION 13. FINALITY OF DECISION OR DECREE, – EXCEPT FOR DECISIONS OR DECREES IN SUMMARY PROCEEDINGS WHICH SHALL BE IMMEDIATELY EXECUTORY, ALL OTHER DECISIONS OR DECREES ON ABSOLUTE DIVORCE OR DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE SHALL BE FINAL AND EXECUTORY AFTER FIFTEEN (15) DAYS FROM THE RECEIPT BY THE CONCERNED PARTY OR PARTIES OF THE PRINCIPAL DECISION OR DECREE OR THE RESOLUTION DENYING A MOTION FOR RECONSIDERATION WHICH IS FILED WITHIN THE 15-DAY REGLEMENTARY PERIOD, EXCEPT WHEN AN APPEAL TO THE COURT OF APPEALS IS FILED BEFORE THE DECISION OR DECREE BECOMES FINAL.

Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve the foregoing omnibus amendments of the Committee.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, we join the distinguished Sponsor in his motion for the approval of the aforesaid Committee amendments.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, there being no other Committee amendments or individual amendments, I move that we close the period of amendments.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve House Bill No. 7303 on Second Reading.

#### VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). There is a motion for the approval of House Bill No. 7303, as amended, on Second Reading.

As many as are in favor, please say *aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

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

FEW MEMBERS. *Nay*.

#### APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7303, AS AMENDED, ON SECOND READING

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

House Bill No. 7303, as amended, is approved on Second Reading.

#### CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7185

##### *Continuation*

#### PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 7185, as contained in Committee Report No. 610, and that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7185, entitled: AN ACT RECOGNIZING THE FOREIGN DECREE OF TERMINATION OF MARRIAGE AND ALLOWING ITS SUBSEQUENT REGISTRATION WITH THE PHILIPPINE CIVIL REGISTRY, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 209, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE FAMILY CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary status is that we are in the period of sponsorship and debate. Mr. Speaker, for this purpose, I move that we recognize the distinguished Chairperson of the Committee on Population and Family Relations for her sponsorship, ...

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The honorable Chairman, ...

REP. DEFENSOR. ...the Hon. Sol Aragones, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The Honorable Aragones is recognized to sponsor the measure.

REP. ARAGONES. Mr. Speaker, for the amendments, may we recognize the Vice Chairperson.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, before that, there being no Member who wishes to interpellate or speak against the measure, I move that we close the period of sponsorship and debate.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of amendments.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Ma. Lourdes "Nettie" R. Aggabao for Committee amendments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The Honorable Aggabao is recognized for the Committee amendments.

#### COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

REP. AGGABAO. Mr. Speaker, the Committee on Population and Family Relations submits the following amendments by Deputy Speaker Pia S. Cayetano:

1. On page 2, delete lines 26 to 29 and in lieu thereof insert a new paragraph to read as follows: ARTICLE 412 OF THE CIVIL CODE SHALL NOT APPLY IN RECOGNIZING THE TERMINATION OF MARRIAGES REFERRED HEREIN;

2. On the same page, after the previous amendment, insert another paragraph to read as follows: ANY AGREEMENT ON THE LIQUIDATION, PARTITION AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE PROPERTIES OF THE SPOUSES, THE CUSTODY AND SUPPORT OF COMMON CHILDREN, THE DELIVERY OF THEIR PRESUMPTIVE LEGITIMES INCLUDED IN THE DECREE OF TERMINATION OF MARRIAGE SHALL BE RECOGNIZED. IN THE ABSENCE THEREOF, THE PROVISIONS OF THE FAMILY CODE SHALL BE IN FORCE; and

3. On page 3, delete lines 11 to 17.

I so submit, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move for the approval of the aforesaid Committee amendments, as stated by the Honorable Aggabao.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, there being no other Committee amendments or individual amendments, I move that we close the period of amendments.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve House Bill No. 7185, as amended, on Second Reading.

#### VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). There is a motion for the approval of House Bill No. 7185, as amended, on Second Reading.

As many as are in favor, please say *aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye.*

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

FEW MEMBERS. *Nay.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7185, AS AMENDED,  
ON SECOND READING

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

House Bill No. 7185, as amended, is hereby approved on Second Reading.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 6425

*Continuation*

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 6425 contained in Committee Report No. 389, and that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 6425, entitled: AN ACT PRESCRIBING AN URGENT, COMPREHENSIVE AND INTEGRATED LAND-BASED TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT POLICY TO EFFECTIVELY ADDRESS THE TRAFFIC CONGESTION CRISIS IN METRO MANILA, METROPOLITAN CEBU AND METROPOLITAN DAVAO AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary status is that we are in the period of sponsorship and debate. With that, Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of sponsorship and debate.

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

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move for a few minutes suspension of the session.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The session is suspended for a minute.

*It was 5:40 p.m.*

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 5:42 p.m., the session was resumed.*

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION  
OF H.B. NO. 6425

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 6425 on Second Reading.

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

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7302

*Continuation*

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 7302, the Budget Reform Act, embodied in Committee Report No. 639, and submitted by the Committee on Appropriations.

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

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7302, entitled: AN ACT TO REFORM THE BUDGET PROCESS BY ENFORCING GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY IN PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT (PFM), PROMOTING FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY, STRENGTHENING CONGRESS' POWER OF THE PURSE, INSTITUTING AN INTEGRATED PFM SYSTEM, AND INCREASING BUDGET TRANSPARENCY AND PARTICIPATION.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we continue with the period of sponsorship and debate.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, to sponsor the measure, I move that we recognize the distinguished Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, the Hon. Karlo Alexei B. Nograles.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The Hon. Karlo Nograles, the Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, is recognized to continue to sponsor the measure.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We are prepared to answer any questions with regard to the proposed measure.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, with that, I move that the Explanatory Note of the measure be considered as its sponsorship speech.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I would like to withdraw my motion for the consideration of the Explanatory Note as the sponsorship speech because the measure has been previously sponsored.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The motion has been withdrawn.

REP. DEFENSOR. With that, Mr. Speaker, we can now proceed with the interpellation. First to interpellate, Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from AKBAYAN, the Hon. Tom S. Villarín.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The Honorable Villarín is recognized to interpellate the Sponsor.

REP. VILLARIN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Majority Leader.

Will the good Sponsor be willing to yield to some questions?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Gladly, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VILLARIN. As I understand it, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, the objective of this Budget

Reform Bill is that of clipping the powers of the President over savings, impoundment and augmentation of funds already approved or provided for in the annual General Appropriations Act. Is this one of the objectives of this Budget Reform Bill?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). It strengthens the power of the purse of Congress, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps, you may consider that by strengthening the power of the purse of Congress, we also put certain limitations to what the Executive can do in terms of the budget.

REP. VILLARIN. In effect, it will delimit the powers of the President over the exercise of the power of the purse which is in Congress, in the implementation of the budget, particularly on the use of savings, and in the augmentation of funds and impoundment. I am asking if these specific post-budget enactment actions by the Executive would be limited.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes. In fact, we have provided in Section 40, Section 41 and Section 43, and other sections in the proposed Budget Reform Bill, Mr. Speaker, the limitations on impoundment, on the use of savings and of augmentation, taking into consideration our past experiences and the decisions of the Supreme Court, particularly on the DAP.

REP. VILLARIN. Thank you for that clarification, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

With this proposed Budget Reform Bill, would this Bill substantially amend, modify or revise provisions of Presidential Decree No. 1177 and the Administrative Code of 1987 or that of EO No. 292?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). It will amend, Mr. Speaker, with the view in mind of, again, strengthening and improving the power of the purse. That is why it is called the Budget Reform Bill because we want to improve our budget processes, make it more transparent, kumbaga sagutin ang lahat ng mga pangangailangan natin, make the budget more speedily available, make the implementation of the projects and programs more speedy. Yes, Mr. Speaker, there will be substantial amendments to PD No. 1177.

REP. VILLARIN. When you say there would be substantial amendments to PD No. 1177, one of the major criticisms against PD No. 1177 is the automatic debt appropriation. Would this automatic appropriation over our debts be amended, substantially altered, revised or stricken off?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). We cannot amend the automatic appropriations for our debt servicing so that we would not have some difficulty in borrowing in the

future, because the automatic debt provision allows and gives assurance to our lenders that the country is fully committed in paying all of its debts.

REP. VILLARIN. Meaning, this automatic debt appropriation provision in PD No. 1177 will stay.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VILLARIN. When we talk about debt payment, this automatic payment would be for the interest of the debt or the loan. Is it correct to say that this automatic debt appropriation provision refers only to the interest paid?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Also included in the payment would be a part of the principal. So, it is the interest and a part of the principal.

REP. VILLARIN. So part of the principal, but the whole item for debt appropriation, most of it goes to interest payments alone.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VILLARIN. Okay. Now, with regard to the principal amount, is there a provision or is there some sort of an item or a code in our budget that pertains to what we call off-budget allocations? Can you say that there is this term “off-budget”?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Mr. Speaker, the only off-budget items, I know, are those that by special law have their own special account in the government fund. Those are the off-budget items that I am familiar with.

REP. VILLARIN. Meaning, if we have loans that provide for sovereign guarantees for principals, these are part of the off-budget items in the General Appropriations Act.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Mr. Speaker, even ODA or the official development assistance is part of what we automatically appropriate for payment in the General Appropriations Act.

REP. VILLARIN. So this would fall under the automatic appropriation ...

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes.

REP. VILLARIN. ... provisions in the GAA.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VILLARIN. So, there are no off-budget items,

meaning, funds from the National Treasury are being spent outside of what is provided in the GAA.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VILLARIN. Meaning, right now, everything from the principal payment for debts to interests is found under the General Appropriations Act.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VILLARIN. Meaning, there are no so-called “off-budget items.”

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Again, as I said, Mr. Speaker, the off-budget items, I know, that I am familiar with, are those that have, by provision of law, their own special account in the General Fund.

REP. VILLARIN. I am asking these questions, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, because right now, I think our national debt is around P6.9 trillion, and we are again planning to incur additional debts because of the Build, Build, Build Program. We want to pump-prime, jump-start the economy through huge infrastructure spending. With our existing debts and their interest payments, and the future debts that may be incurred, do you have certain projections with regard to our budget because right now, we are budgeting around P3.7 trillion? We have an existing debt of P6.9 trillion, and perhaps, we will be incurring additional debts in the immediate future. How can these be addressed by the Budget Reform Bill?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). With the Budget Reform Bill that we are proposing, Mr. Speaker, it would accelerate the usage of the budget in terms of implementing our projects and programs. With that, we believe that by accelerating the implementation of these projects and programs, it will help in spurring economic growth for our country.

The good news, Mr. Speaker, is that our debt burden share in the budget has been declining. From 10.5 percent in 2017, it is now pegged at 8.9 percent in 2018 because of the faster growth of our economy, and the Budget Reform Bill will help in accelerating that growth even further.

The proportion of our public debt to GDP has been declining. From 52 percent in 2010, it is now at 42 percent in 2017. Our plan for 2017 to 2022 is to further bring down this ratio, this debt-to-GDP ratio to 38 percent by 2022. This is lower than the 45 percent safe public debt level for the country, as measured by the IMF. So we are in a healthy position as far as our debt level is concerned.

Ang importante lamang, Mr. Speaker, is that the

debts that we incur go into projects and programs that would help spur further growth for our economy. If we keep doing that, not only will we grow our economy faster, but we will also be able to lower our debts in the near future.

REP. VILLARIN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, with those rosy projections, we can say that the debt-to-GDP ratio can be achieved. But of course, given all the externalities, the global externalities, with respect to our economy, we cannot, for sure, say that everything will be that rosy.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, as I said, because of this attempt to spend 5 percent of GDP from 3 percent for public infrastructure spending, and given that our revenues, if you look at them now, we have a P3.7 trillion budget; but actual revenues would be just around P3.1 trillion or a difference of around P700 billion, and other projections, in terms of raising revenues, national revenues on tax, and non-tax sources, would also be in line with these projections of increased spending vis-à-vis our targeted revenues.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes, Mr. Speaker, whenever we make projections on future budgets, we take into consideration our revenue stream, legislation that would increase our revenues. For instance, when we were then discussing the 2018 Budget, we already took into account the passage of the TRAIN Law and our projections, and on how much revenue they will raise. All of these things are taken into consideration. I am sure the Committee on Ways and Means already had their hands full on the number of bills that are pending there to increase the revenue being generated by the government to finance all of the laudable projects.

REP. VILLARIN. Well, as I also understand, Mr. Speaker, good Sponsor, that indeed as you have mentioned earlier, our economy wants to improve and, of course, incurring debts is part of the reality.

Now, would the good Sponsor cite if, in the Budget Reform Bill, is there a provision for an automatic debt review to be undertaken by Congress with regard to our existing debts and, of course, the possibility of whether these debts or obligations have or have not benefitted us?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes, Mr. Speaker, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas is required to submit all of these figures to Congress for our review, our regular review.

REP. VILLARIN. So, meaning, all the debts incurred and the future debts that we will incur would be subject to an automatic review by Congress.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes, others, they are required and mandated to submit the figures to Congress for our regular review.

REP. VILLARIN. But is there a provision that says that Congress will undertake an automatic annual debt review?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). In Section 58 of the Bill, on Debt Reporting, it is stated there, Mr. Speaker, and I quote:

The DOF, through the BTr, shall ensure that the records include information on the principal, terms of repayment, amounts drawn, interests and service charges accrued, principal and interests paid, and the balance outstanding, and shall make the records available in a timely way to the President, Congress, and COA and in accordance with the reporting requirements in this Act.

Now, Mr. Speaker, ...

REP. VILLARIN. Thank you for that elucidation, Mr. Speaker, good Sponsor. If I may just be specific, during the process of our budget hearings, where in our budget hearings will the debt review come in?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). On the first day when we discuss—in our Committee hearings, when we invite the DBCC to make a report to us and the DBCC includes the DBM, the DOF and the BSP, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VILLARIN. Well, thank you for that, Mr. Speaker, good Sponsor, and I am pleased to say that this automatic debt review is part of this proposed measure. But, again, going back to this proposal, I have certain questions with regard to—if this Bill would be enacted into a law and the annual Appropriations Act that Congress will pass into law. If there will be conflicting provisions between our annual Appropriations Act and this Budget Reform Law, what will take precedence?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Well, ideally, Mr. Speaker, what I imagine that will happen is, whenever we pass a General Appropriations Act in Congress, we have so many general provisions and special provisions that are included in the General Appropriations Act; but with this, with the passage of the Budget Reform Bill, many of the provisions there will already cover what we used to include in our general provisions and even in special provisions in the GAA.

If we pass the Budget Reform Bill into law, then there will be no need for us to include it in our General Appropriations Act because it will already be redundant.

So, that will be the major change that we will experience whenever we pass the GAA.

REP. VILLARIN. I also understand, Mr. Speaker, good Sponsor, that the GAA would really be more specific than this Budget Reform Bill and if ever we pass the GAA, then the DBM will also come up with its own National Budget Circular, and as regards to the National Budget Circular, would it be in conformity with the GAA or should it be in conformity with the Budget Reform Law?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). I think, it should be in conformity with the Budget Reform Law, Mr. Speaker, because this would be a law of general application whenever we discuss or talk about the topic of budgeting. So, it would take precedence.

REP. VILLARIN. As a stated policy in the Budget Reform Bill, it is said that it will “strengthen the integration of planning, budgeting, and performance management, ensure internal controls, accounting, reporting, and risk management.”

Now, again, if we look at the budget, the devil is in the details, so to speak. Is the good Sponsor aware of DBM National Budget Circular No. 573?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). That is the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the General Appropriations Act of 2018, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VILLARIN. So, usually, these budget circulars are the pro-forma documents year after year, after year.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). I would imagine that because they are based on the GAA specifically, I mean, they are not pro forma per se, but perhaps, because year in and year out, there are similar provisions in our general provisions for each and every Appropriations Act that we pass, it may seem pro forma. Ideally, however, the Implementing Rules and Regulations should conform with what is written in the GAA of that particular year.

REP. VILLARIN. Going back to this Budget Circular No. 573, this is the IRR for GAA 2018, well, it is one of the so-called “documents,” the BED or the Budget Execution Documents states here that there are two classifications, meaning, there are two classifications of a budget. Though it is understood that the GAA itself is the “release document” for all project funds, the Budget Circular talks about two classifications: the “For Comprehensive Release (FCR)” and the “For Later Release (FLR).” Can we be elucidated on these two classifications if we consider the GAA-as-a Release

Document scheme? Then, why does the DBM have the discretion to identify a certain budget as FCR or as FLR?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). The IRR conforms with the general provisions that we passed in the General Appropriations Act, which states in Section 3 that the GAA shall be considered as the allotment authorizing agencies to obligate in accordance with its provision except for the following. So, the general rule is that—comprehensive release po ang lahat, except for the following:

(a) Appropriations that by virtue of law, general or special provisions, and rules and regulations have conditions or requirements before release;

(b) Lump-sum appropriations in the agency budget and Special Purpose Funds that have no details necessary for release; and

(c) Those requiring a special budget under the general and special provisions in this Act.

So, ito iyong tatlong exceptions na maaaring i-consider For Later Release.

REP. VILLARIN. So, in effect, if we look at these exceptions and if we look at the present 2018 Budget, we have here regular budget items which are in the line agencies, about 60 percent of the 2018 GAA. We have the so-called Automatic Appropriations which is 26 percent of the GAA, and the SPF. So, basically, what you are saying, good Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, is that the 26 percent Automatic Appropriations and the 14 percent Special Purpose Fund would fall under these exceptions categorized as For Later Release, giving the Secretary of DBM a wider discretion and latitude to release such funds. And, in effect, it would also be short-circuiting the powers of Congress when it enacted the GAA.

So, I assume, Mr. Speaker, good Sponsor, that, again, if we talk about the budget, the devil really is in the details. And if we really look at the Budget Circulars that the DBM made, they came up with certain terminologies that any Member of the House or of Congress have not seen in the General Appropriations Act.

So, for me, Mr. Speaker, good Sponsor, I think it would be incumbent upon this proposed Budget Reform Bill that we have to include specific terminologies relative to the budget execution documents. For example, Mr. Speaker, good Sponsor, in the DBM, before it was Performance Incentive Budgeting. Now, they have this document about PREXC, P-R-E-X-C. I do not know how they come up with new terminologies. When we come up with a GAA, that is so general to the effect that only DBM knows what would be the difference among what is the budget for release, what

budget could be augmented, what could be moved from one item to another. Perhaps, in the proper time, Mr. Speaker, good Sponsor, we really need to identify the terminologies.

For one, is there a definition of what is a “Lump-Sum Appropriation” in our Budget Reform Bill?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). We have a provision in Section 27 for Special Purpose Funds, and this would be limited to the NDRRMF, or what we commonly know as the Calamity Fund, the Contingent Fund, the Statutory Shares of LGUs, and other SPFs not falling under any of the preceding purposes, the details of which could not be determined during the budget preparation stage, and based on the parameters to be set in the Implementing Rules and Regulations. Under the Budget Reform Bill, it would be limited to these four items only if we talk about lump-sum funds.

REP. VILLARIN. Well, can you safely say that in the regular budget items, there are no lump-sum amounts? Lump sums are only found in the SPF.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes.

REP. VILLARIN. Would that be correct?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VILLARIN. Again, Mr. Speaker, in the Supreme Court decision in the PDAF, it was stated and it was declared unconstitutional, and let me quote, Mr. Speaker, good Sponsor:

Since this appropriation type, meaning lump sum, necessitates the further determination of both the actual amount to be expended and the actual purpose of the appropriation which must still be chosen from the multiple purposes stated in the law, it cannot be said that the Appropriation Law already indicates a specific “specific appropriation of money,” and hence, there should be a proper line item for which the President may veto.

So, meaning, even the Supreme Court decision would say that lump sums are not just limited to the SPFs because the SPFs are already identified. We have, again, a definition about SPF, but again, if we look at the General Appropriations Act, we can still see a lot of lump-sum items. So, meaning, again, it is not just the SPF. There are provisions even in the GAA and even inside the DPWH budget that I could cite, but again, it would be too long. I could give the Sponsor a list of lump-sum appropriations in the Department of Public Works and Highways amounting to P57 billion

So, this P57 billion with no clear Programs, Activities, Projects or PAPs being specified can still be considered lump sums even if there is an item or iyong tinatawag nila na may bahay. Lalagyan lang ng bahay, lalagyan ng amount—in a way, nangyari din ito sa panahon ni PNoy na basta may bahay, dagdagan lang iyong bahay na iyon when the opportune time comes. So, in effect, the presence of items that are not very detailed or descriptive, as what the Supreme Court decision says, can also be considered lump-sum appropriation.

*At this juncture, Deputy Speaker Singson relinquished the Chair to Representative Gerald Anthony “Samsam” V. Gullas Jr.*

So, my point, Mr. Speaker, good Sponsor is that, again, in the Budget Reform Bill, we need to be as specific as possible. And in the “Definition of Terms,” there are definitions like the DBM has these statements of appropriations, allotment, obligations, balances, and disbursements. A very important document which I think should also be included in the Budget Reform Bill so that they will be obligated to show or to report to Congress on a regular basis these statements of allocations, allotment, obligations, and balances.

So, again, as I have mentioned, having a detailed provision in our Budget Reform Bill could spell the difference between the discretion of the Executive and the exercise of Congress of its power of the purse.

So, in effect, that is my view, good Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes, Mr. Speaker. We used the word “lump sum” very loosely here because, I mean, when we discuss the budget, the word “lump sum” is used very loosely. But for purposes of what has been pronounced by the Supreme Court in jurisprudence, I would like to assure the good Gentleman, Mr. Speaker, and our colleagues here that the purpose of the Budget Reform Bill is precisely to do away with lump sums that have been declared unconstitutional or have been cited by the Supreme Court and being discouraged by it. That is the reason we have Section 27 that limits the Special Purpose Funds. We would like to point out that Special Purpose Funds are not lump-sum funds defined by the Supreme Court as unconstitutional. But these are funds that by their very nature, we cannot determine with certainty the details of. Like for instance, with the Calamity Fund, we cannot determine with certainty what sort of calamity will strike or what part of the country and what sort of items or projects or programs we would need in order for us to address that calamity.

So, the Budget Reform Bill tries to limit itong paggamit natin or paglagay natin ng lump-sum funds dito sa GAA. At iyon din po iyong purpose kung bakit



isinusulong din natin itong Budget Reform Bill, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VILLARIN. Thank you for that, good Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

Well, it was mentioned earlier by the good Sponsor that iyong mga lump-sum funds, nasa SPF, like the Calamity Fund, the Disaster Fund ...

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Kaya nga, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VILLARIN. Of course, ...

REP. NOGRALES (K.). I said we use the word “lump sum” very loosely, but I would like to point out that this is precisely why we are crafting the Budget Reform Bill—we want to be in conformity with what the Supreme Court had already pronounced in previous jurisprudence.

REP. VILLARIN. Well, as I understand, over the years, the SPF has been increasing. And now, we have seen that 14 percent of the 2018 Budget is for SPF, and that is quite a significant amount which Congress has no discretion over because, again, it is given to the President. And if we will look at the so-called “lump-sum funds,” the SPF in particular, we have this assistance to local government units. While we do have automatic appropriations for the Internal Revenue Allotment, we put in a lump sum the ALGU Fund that, again, is under the discretion of the President. Though it is lodged in the DILG budget, again, being an SPF, it is ultimately in the hands of the President.

So, do we see that with this Budget Reform Bill, these Special Purpose Funds, which are appropriations that are nonpermanent in nature, can be decreased? Because even the assistance to LGUs can be projected if we will look at how regional development is being undertaken—even down to the barangays. Then perhaps there would be no need for an ALGU, Assistance to LGU Fund, and of course, other SPFs. But again, the problem really is that because it is the Executive that prepares the budget through the NEP, there is always that discretion that the Executive wants. So, is it foreseeable that with this Budget Reform Bill, we will not be having this SPF in the future?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, if we compare our budget now to the former budgets, we have actually had a reduction in the Special Purpose Funds in terms of the number of Special Purpose Funds. With this Budget Reform Bill, again, we want to limit it even more. So, in terms of limiting the number of Special Purpose Funds, yes, that is one of our objectives. Second, whenever we pass the budget, even if we say there are Special Purpose Funds, we provide

special provisions for each and every Special Purpose Fund in order for us to limit even more the discretion of the Executive, and as an exercise of the power of the purse of Congress.

*At this juncture, Representative Gullas relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Eric D. Singson.*

Whenever we pass, if you notice, our GAA or our General Appropriations Act, when we discuss it and we deliberate on it, each and every Special Purpose Fund has a corresponding special provision that provides for limitations. So, I believe, as much as we can, with that system in place, the power of the purse still belongs to Congress when it comes to putting those limitations, and also as a system of checks and balances for the Executive. But of course, there is still some latitude that we give to the Executive, like for instance, the Calamity Fund, hindi naman natin ma-predict kung among klaseng calamity ang darating at kailangan. May kaunting latitude din ang Executive in using the Calamity Fund to address whatever calamity may happen.

In terms of whether or not magde-decrease ba or mag-i-increase ang amounts that we will put in the Special Purpose Funds, it is up to us in Congress to decide. That is a matter of policy. Let me just say this again: we are in a time of drastic climate change. So, in terms of the Calamity Fund, I do not know if it would be a policy of future Congresses to increase the Calamity Fund. If we go into the future and, you know, we do not see—we cannot predict how many natural or man-made calamities will happen in our country. Perhaps, future Congresses will see it fit to increase the Calamity Fund in the future. Basta ang importante lang, Mr. Speaker, na naglalagay tayo ng mga limitations para hindi maabuso ang Calamity Fund at ito ay mapunta naman sa mga kinakailangan nating mga proyekto at mga programa.

REP. VILLARIN. Well, I do understand that the Calamity Fund should be in the SPF, but again, as I have stated, there are other SPFs that should not be, like as I have mentioned, the ALGU, the Assistance to LGUs. Anyway, Mr. Speaker, good Sponsor, you said that we have to put in protection, but in the proposed Bill, in Section 27, it states here that the implementing rules and regulations for the SPF would be left to the Executive. Is that right, Mr. Speaker, good Sponsor?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). No. Number (4) provides that the other SPFs that do not fall under (1), (2) or (3) but are SPFs, Special Purpose Funds—because the details could not be determined during the budget preparation stage. These SPFs will only be created following the parameters that we put in the implementing rules and regulations of this law.

So, the implementing rules and regulations of the

Budget Reform Bill will set in place the strict criteria that we should follow before another SPF is created. The reason for that provision is because we cannot anticipate in the future other SPFs that we, Congress, may create over and above what is already provided for under Section 27, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VILLARIN. Yes, but again, I am baffled by the last sentence which states that the IRR will be defined by the Executive and not by Congress. Anyway, Mr. Speaker, good Sponsor, may I move to another section. On Section 32, again, it is a description of the present budgeting system, we have Budget with Account Codes, the UACS. Can you describe to us what these are? Because there is a provision here that states that the budget should have account codes. But, in the DBM budget circular, they are more specific in stating that the budget account codes ...

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Mr. Speaker, UACS or the Unified Accounts Code Structure is a way for us to sort of to put an ID, identification system, to assets, liabilities, equities, incomes, and expenses of government. It is for easier tracking, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VILLARIN. Yes, but I think the practice before was, Mr. Speaker, when you talk about UACS, you have to really identify the source, the organization, the location, the MFO, the programs, activities, projects, and object codes, which even right now in the GAA special provisions have been left out. If we really want to have very specific account codes, even in a UACS—this has been practiced before. My question is, the present DBM is leaving this UACS, and even in our general provision in the 2018 Budget, we did not specify that the UACS should identify the source, organization, location, the MFO, the PAP, and the object codes. And, I think, these are very crucial words, crucial definition of what a UACS should contain. Otherwise, we could have a unified accounts code system, but in the end, we will just have various repetitions of items, codes with no meanings if it does not identify the source, the organization, the location, the particular PAPs, and the object codes.

So, as I understand, this has been practiced before. Now, I am saying that, if you have this Budget Reform Law, we should include that in the UACS, there should be an identification, a breakdown of such. If we put that in the Budget Reform Law, it would, again, delimit the discretion of the DBM with regard to the budget execution.

My fear, Mr. Speaker, good Sponsor, is again, giving the DBM more leeway in terms of deciding on the budget, especially now that we have a cash budgeting system and the budget is just for a year. By

mid-year, the DBM can exercise discretion in terms of augmenting several items in the budget, which to me, if there is really no specific UACS, can again be abused.

So, that is my point, good Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, if we can put in the source, organization, location, et cetera, of this UACS.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes, I would like to assure the good Gentleman, Mr. Speaker, that, well, number one, there is a manual on the UACS, on the utilization of the UACS; and then, at the end of the GAA. Every time we pass the GAA, the DBM comes up with their own technical GAA where you can see the UACS code being used for specific items. You can actually view it in the DBM website, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VILLARIN. Yes, but as I have said, even in our existing GAA, those previous provisions in previous GAAs, meaning, the words identifying the source, organization, location, have been deleted so even if you look at the DBM UACS now, there are a lot of codes that lose meaning because there is no location, organization or source. So, again, perhaps at the proper time, we could put an amendment about that.

Now, going to Section 40, on Impoundment of Appropriations, Mr. Speaker, good Sponsor, it says here that the President will submit an impoundment proposal to Congress, after which, Congress has to act on it within 30 session days and inaction by Congress is deemed an approval of said impoundment proposal. But my thinking, Mr. Speaker, good Sponsor, is, should it be that an inaction by Congress is deemed a rejection, rather than an approval, of such an impoundment proposal precisely because, when Congress does not act on something, then corollarily, Congress is, in effect, saying that we are not in support of that impoundment proposal and that appropriation should now go back to the National Treasury, as has been the practice in our budgeting?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes, Mr. Speaker, there were several discussions about this, whether we should go this way or we go the opposite way on how we should interpret the inaction of Congress. But at the end of all of these discussions, the consensus was to treat it like a Presidential veto of the budget. So, when the President vetoes or provides a line-item veto on the budget, it is up to Congress, for us, to override that veto. But inaction of Congress shows that we approve or we consent to the veto of the President.

In the same manner, the Budget Reform Bill follows that same procedure, that the inaction of Congress on

the impoundment proposal of the President is deemed an approval. Just like the veto action of the President on the budget, the inaction of Congress is also deemed an approval of the veto.

REP. VILLARIN. My understanding, Mr. Speaker, good Sponsor, is that by mid-year, usually, the Executive, the DBM, looks at all the savings, all these items that are not implementable within the year, then it comes up with an impoundment proposal. Meaning, it is usually the Executive that gathers, that consolidates all these funds, unused obligations within the year and it resubmits or submits a proposal on where to use this impoundment. In effect, it is again the Executive submitting another budget, the impoundment proposal. Again, it would be left to the discretion of the Executive because this impoundment would pertain to an aggregation of funds taken from various agencies, just like what happened to the DAP, D-A-P.

With this proposal, I mean, if we deliberate for 30 session days and there is no consensus in the House whether to grant this impoundment or rescission proposal, then, an inaction by Congress should mean that we rejected that impoundment proposal of the Executive and that money should again be reallocated in the next budget cycle, so that, again, as we have said, the power of the purse would still remain with Congress.

That is my point, Mr. Speaker, and it is not akin to the veto of the President of the budget because here, it is like a submission of a proposed expenditure plan, but again, this is a lump sum because it entails an aggregation of budgets from the different agencies.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). No.

REP. VILLARIN. My fear is that, if inaction is deemed to be an approval, then Congress is giving up its power of the purse over to the Executive.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). No, we are not giving it up, Mr. Speaker. We still have that option. We are, in fact, given 30 session days to act on it. I would just like to assure everybody, especially the Gentleman, Mr. Speaker, that it is very limited. The Budget Reform Bill provides very tight limitations on when impoundment can happen. In fact, I do not see it happening anytime soon, or this section being applied or used in the near future.

Mr. Speaker, very limited lang po kung kailan puwede mag-operate ang Section 40. It is only: number one, "if there is an unmanageable National Government deficit" and it is defined in the Bill what we can consider as an unmanageable National Government

budget deficit. So, you know, the budget deficit is unmanageable when:

(i) the actual National Government budget deficit has exceeded the quarterly budget deficit targets consistent with the full-year target deficit as indicated in the BESF x x x; or

(ii) there are clear economic indications of an impending occurrence of such condition, as determined by the DBCC.

So, this is like a self-defense measure in order for us to control an unmanageable budget deficit.

Number two is "if the appropriations are no longer required to fulfill the objectives originally sought to be achieved by the programs, activities, and projects covering the same." And, because it is the Executive that is actually executing the budget, then it would really be up to them to decide if these appropriations are no longer required to fulfill the objectives originally sought. So, it is very, very limited, Mr. Speaker, when Section 40 would come into play.

REP. VILLARIN. Yes, I understand your point, Mr. Speaker, good Sponsor. But again, precisely because we put this impoundment of appropriations, because in the past and even until now, such impoundment occurs, whether it is in the modification of budget items, in the augmentation of certain budget items, and even in the use of savings, meaning, the mere fact that we put that as a provision here in a way puts us in a situation wherein if we really want to control that power of the President in impounding funds, in impounding savings, then he can do it. And, precisely, because we asked the Executive to submit a proposal or an impoundment proposal, I think that is one positive aspect. But again, the issue here really is we should still exercise control over that impoundment and an inaction should be deemed a disapproval of such impoundment.

Again, because my time is almost up, I would like to go to the issue of savings. Well, savings here has been defined over the years. I mean, it is obvious. I am just curious why we did not put a provision on the priority use of savings because even in our General Appropriations Act, we usually state what should be the priority use of savings. But here in the Budget Reform Bill, we left out that provision on the priority use of savings.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Well, we can address the concern of the good Gentleman, Mr. Speaker, on every budget because it is found in the GAA. We can always place inside the GAA the priority use of savings if Congress is amenable. So, we did not put it here in the Budget Reform, but we can always insert it in the GAA.

REP. VILLARIN. My last point, Mr. Speaker, good Sponsor, is on the automatic appropriations under the IRA. Well, if we look at the Internal Revenue Allotment, how much is the share now of our LGUs in the 2018 Budget?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). For 2018, the IRA is P522.7 billion.

REP. VILLARIN. And P522 billion is, ...

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes.

REP. VILLARIN. ... I think, 14 percent of the entire GAA.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes.

REP. VILLARIN. Historically, this has been decreasing over the years. Meaning, even if the amount has been increasing, but in terms of sharing, this has decreased. I think the problem here is that when the DOF computes the IRA, it only computes the collections of the BIR. But here, again, if we put in our proposed Budget Reform Bill that national revenues collected by the government should include share, fees and charges and income from the National Treasury, then I think that would broaden the base from which the IRA is computed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). May I remind the Gentleman that he has ...

REP. VILLARIN. This is my last point, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). ... already used his one hour.

REP. VILLARIN. Yes, this is my last point, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). Please wind up.

REP. VILLARIN. So, would the good Sponsor be amenable to address this concern of LGUs? Meaning, if we put in all the revenues to include collections by the Bureau of Treasury, it would dramatically increase the share of the IRA. Based on my projection, Mr. Speaker, in our 2018 GAA, revenues' share of LGUs would amount to P1.136 trillion, and I think with such amount, a barangay that is receiving P1 million now can receive P2 million. That would address the concerns of our local government. So, do you think this is a sound proposal that under this Budget Reform Law, we make it an

explicit provision that the shares of LGUs would come from a single fund, meaning, all the revenues collected not just from the BIR but collected and remitted to the Bureau of Treasury?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Well, Mr. Speaker, number one, there is a pending case in the Supreme Court filed by no less than our former colleague here and now Governor Mandanas. Well, what I heard was that a decision is forthcoming. Number two, I believe if any amendment needs to be made in terms of what the good Gentleman is proposing, it may be more suitable that the amendment will be on the Local Government Code and not on the Budget Reform Bill, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VILLARIN. So, thank you for that, Mr. Speaker, good Sponsor. I do hope that amendments to this Budget Reform Law will be opened up by the good Sponsor at the proper time.

Again, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, good Sponsor.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Thank you also.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, next to interpellate is the Hon. Sarah Jane I. Elago of KABATAAN. I move that the Lady be recognized.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The Honorable Elago is recognized to interpellate the Sponsor.

REP. ELAGO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Will the distinguished Sponsor yield to an interpellation?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, much of our concerns, especially on lump-sum funds, were already scrutinized well by the previous interpellators. However, I still have grave concerns on a few provisions of the proposed Budget Reform Bill. First, on Section 30, distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, on the Statutory Shares of Local Government Units, it says here:

The shares of LGUs in the proceeds from national taxes and other transfers to LGUs authorized by law shall be released to the LGUs in accordance with the provisions on the use, allocation, and release of the funds as may be provided in pertinent laws, rules and regulations.

My query is, would this not make the LGUs' fund dependent on the policies, decisions set by commissions and lawmakers, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). No, Mr. Speaker. In fact, that is the reason we put it here, to assure the LGUs that they will be receiving their proper shares as provided for under the law, under existing laws. So, yes, that is the reason it is there, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ELAGO. What will be our assurance that this provision will not be used for political leveraging or as a tariff instinct mechanism? Nababahala po tayo sa isang statement na sinabi mismo ng ating Speaker, bagama't ito ay kanyang binawi at sinabi na siya ay nagbibiro lamang, na kung hindi susuportahan ang federalism, na kung hindi susuportahan ang ating Pangulo ay hindi bibigyan ng budget ang ating LGUs. So, bilang may kapangyarihan sa kung paano po natin magagastos at babantayan ang paggamit ng pondo ng ating bayan, tayo ay nababahala na ito ay gagamitin at ida-dangle na tila ba pabuya pa, ayon, para sa pagkuha ng mas maraming suporta mula sa ating local government units.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). May automatic appropriations po, Mr. Speaker. That is our assurance. It is automatically appropriated under the GAA and that would be supported by the Budget Reform Bill and it would be automatically released.

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, iyan po ay babantayan ng Representasyong ito lalung-lalo na at tayo din ay nababahala dahil mayroon din pong allocation na budget ang nakalaan para sa ating mga Sangguniang Kabataan. At maaari na ang pangatlong beses nang postponement ng Sangguniang Kabataan at ng barangay elections, ang isa sa mga dahilan ay kung paano din magagamit pa ng kung sino ang mga nasa kapangyarihan ngayon ang pondo na dapat sana ay nagagamit natin para sa development programs, sa activities na para sa welfare ng ating mga kabataan.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, let me proceed to my next concern on Section 40, Impoundment of Appropriations. Ito po ay mariin na ring nabusisi ng mga nakaraang interpellator, ngunit tayo po ay nababagabag dahil nitong mga nakaraang budget deliberations po dito sa Seventeenth Congress, lagi nang nagtataas o nagsa-sound talaga ng alarm ang Representation ng KABATAAN hinggil dito. In fact, Mr. Speaker, noong 2017 GAA, isa po ito sa ating mga panukalang tanggalin na probisyon sa loob ng General Principles ng ating budget. Ang hugot po natin diyan, ang ating pinanggalingan noong 2016 na General Appropriations Act natin, Mr. Speaker, sinasabi dito mismo na bawal at talagang pinagbabawalan ang impoundment ng ating appropriations. Ngunit nitong 2018 GAA, ito ay

pinapayagan na. At ngayon, layon pa natin na ito ay ma-institutionalize sa pamamagitan ng pagsasama nito sa ating Budget Reform Bill. Mr. Speaker, this provision in the Budget Reform Bill essentially empowers the President to choose, not to release portions of the budget as long as he can justify that it is no longer required.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, may we know the reason the distinguished Sponsor changed his mind or what convinced him to include this impoundment provision that he himself said before that that was unconstitutional and should not be allowed in our budgetary processes.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Well, Mr. Speaker, first would be iyong sa unmanageable National Government budget deficit. I think we all understand that if it happens—of course, we do not want it to happen—if it comes to a point that we will have an unmanageable National Government budget deficit, we have to have a certain mechanism wherein we would be able to address it. We provided very clearly, when an unmanageable National Government budget deficit happens, so it is very specific here, when we can declare an unmanageable National Government budget deficit.

The second one is iyong appropriations are no longer required to fulfill the objectives or the reasons to be achieved. We are trying to impose fiscal and budgetary discipline. That is one of the objectives of the Budget Reform Bill. We want to be able to impose a disciplined approach in crafting the budget. This sort underlines the importance of us, crafting a budget and ensuring that the line items, the projects, the programs that we put in the budget will actually be used and will fulfill certain objectives. Mr. Speaker, I believe the last say still belongs to Congress. So, even if the President, let us say, applies paragraph (a) and impounds a certain item because the Executive feels that it is not fulfilling the objectives, Congress can overrule the impoundment.

So, at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, the last touch is still with Congress and once Congress overrules the impoundment of the President, then that is the last of it. It is still Congress that has the last say and we can reverse the impoundment of the President.

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, ang naturan ng ating distinguished Sponsor ay siya ring mga sinasabi na exceptions pagdating sa pagpayag ng paggamit ng kapangyarihan ng impoundment ng ating Pangulo, ngunit ang Kongresong ito mismo ang nagtanggap sa prohibition na iyan—ang nagtanggap dito sa provision ng impoundment. Ngunit ano po ba ang nagbago, bago po ako sumagot sa inyong sinabi na provision din that allows a latitude in circumventing the rule because Congress itself will approve the proposal for impoundment? So, ano po ba ang nagbago mula

noong 2017 GAA hanggang 2018 GAA? Bakit noong 2017 ay hindi natin pinayagan pero ngayong 2018 ay pinapayagan na natin ito?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Actually, Mr. Speaker, iyong 2017 GAA also provides that there can be an impoundment if we incur an unmanageable National Government budget deficit. Actually, it is the same, iyong unmanageable government budget deficit pati iyong may provision pa rin sa impoundment actually in the 2017 GAA.

REP. ELAGO. Iyong prohibition ho.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes. Now, it says, prohibition, so kumbaga, it is just a different way of wording it. Section 61 of the 2017 GAA says that no appropriations shall be impounded unless there is an unmanageable National Government budget deficit.

So, parang it is just a play of words, but the improvement is that Congress can override, so the last touch is still with Congress, because if you look at the 2017 Budget, there is no provision that Congress can overrule the impoundment. So, this is the improved version because, again, we are strengthening the power of the purse of Congress, so Congress still has the last say.

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, tayo po ay sumasang-ayon dito sa ating distinguished Sponsor sa kanyang sinabi na ang Kongreso ay ang siya namang may last say; na hindi naman maki-clip ang ating power of the purse. Ngunit paano po natin matitiyak na hindi naman magagamit ang tira niyang numero pagdating po sa pag-o-overrule or doon sa pagpayag o hindi pagpayag sa kung anumang impoundment proposal ng ating Pangulo?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). It is a leadership call of Congress. Congress as a Body has to make that decision. *(Laughter)*

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, in the first place, why must we give the President the option to impound?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Our main concern really is that iyong sa national budget deficit, iyong unmanageable national government deficit and, again, iyong sa paragraph (a) is just to impose fiscal discipline and budget discipline sa atin to make sure that we identify the projects and programs, and we make sure that these projects and programs fulfill certain objectives.

Perhaps, you know, during the implementation, I guess, the reason we are putting that is that, in anticipation in the future, if it is not fulfilling certain objectives, then, kumbaga, at least, hindi masayang

iyong pera mula sa kaban ng bayan sa mga programa na hindi naman tinutupad iyong objectives na we thought when we crafted the budget should have been addressed by these programs.

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, is this admission not a manifestation of our current poor budgetary management rather than the goal or the pursuit of flexibility?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Hindi naman, Mr. Speaker, I do not believe so. Like I said, this provision is just there for safety. I do not anticipate it being really used by the President, given the budget cycle that we have wherein it has to pass through a lot of committee hearings, then, we have a lot of debates here in the plenary and iyong sa pag-identify natin ng mga projects and programs, talagang mabusisi naman ang pagtalakay natin sa mga ito at mabusisi naman ang pagtingin natin sa mga programang ginagawa natin para sa kapakanan ng bayan pati iyong pagba-budget natin dito.

So, this section is more of just like a safety valve, but I do not think it would be, you know, applied on a regular basis. I do not think that it is just a “just-in-case provision,” Mr. Speaker, more of an exception rather than the general rule.

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, even with the good intent of the distinguished Sponsor, we are still raising a howling alarm and a fair warning to everyone and to the public that this provision will essentially widen the President’s discretion over the national budget, clip Congress’ power of the purse, and which can be abused to serve patronage politics. Iyon lang po ang ating mga ikinababahala na bagay, ayan, kaya kung dati ay ipinagbabawal natin ito, bakit natin ngayon bubuksan at bakit natin papayagan sa current administration?

Mr. Speaker, let me go to my final question, a last concern regarding this Budget Reform Bill. Nito pong 2017, bilang isang neophyte lawmaker, ang karanasan ko ho noong 2016 at batay na rin sa mga nabahaging mga karanasan ng mga nauna sa ating Kinatawan at mga kasamahan sa Makabayan bloc ay kung gaano iyong, hindi naman siya standard pero iyong haba, iyong period na kung paano ba natin dini-deliberate ang budget ng ating bayan ay tila mas mabilis o talagang mas mabilis, ayan, ngayong 2017, kumpara noong 2016, mas mabilis nang halos mga dalawang linggo. Tama po ba, Mr. Speaker, iyong ...

REP. NOGRALES (K.). In our experience.

REP. ELAGO. Yes.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Siguro—if you are talking about when we deliberate on the floor, maybe it may not

be as long as we have done in the previous Congresses, but that is because the treatment that we do in our budget hearings now is, we have three layers of discussion, unlike in the previous budgets wherein two layers lang, meaning to say, committee deliberations, and then after committee deliberations, straight to plenary. What we did kasi with the 2017 and 2018 budgets is, we had three layers of discussion. First was in the committee level, and then we did pre-plenary discussions, and then after pre-plenary discussions, we had plenary discussions. So, I think in terms of managing the approval of the budget, the middle layer helped because mayroon pa tayong pre-plenary, so lahat ng pwedeng maitanong ng ating mga colleagues ay naitatanong na nila in the first two layers. So, pagdating doon sa plenary, halos na-exhaust na nila lahat ng katanungan nila doon sa mga kinaukulang mga Department Secretaries or Heads of agencies, so pagdating sa plenaryo, medyo satisfied na sila. Nobody really—I mean, not many of our colleagues asked parochial concerns anymore because they had already been discussed in the committee and pre-plenary levels, so general questions na lang ang lumabas sa plenary. I would like to believe that is the reason we had shorter plenary discussions on the budget compared to the previous Congresses.

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, ang ibig sabihin po ba nito ay pag naipasá itong batas na ito, itong panukalang ito hinggil sa Budget Reform ay hindi na rin natin isasalang sa debate dito sa plenaryo ...

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Ah hindi, isasalang pa rin sa debate.

REP. ELAGO. ... ang General Provisions?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes. Ah, General Provisions, I think what will happen is, there are many provisions in the Budget Reform Bill that you would see in the General Provisions of the GAA that we passed. So, because we do not want to be redundant, and because if this is passed into law, we need not write the same provisions in the GAA. But I think there will still be special provisions and general provisions in the General Appropriations Bill that will still be open to debate in the plenary.

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, tayo po ay nanindigan na dapat ito ay mabusisi pa rin natin at maisalang dito sa plenaryo para sa lalo pang pag-aaral, at kung mayroong kailangang baguhin at kung may kailangang tanggalin ay dapat nating gawin para matiyak na ang pondo ng bayan ay magagamit para sa serbisyo sa ating mamamayan, at titiyakin natin na hindi rin ito magagamit para lamang sa interes ng iilan imbes na magpondo para sa mga panawagan ng kalidad na serbisyo ng ating taumbayan.

Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Maraming salamat din po sa ating Representative from KABATAAN Party-List.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, the next to interpellate is the distinguished Gentleman from the First District of Albay. I move that we recognize the Hon. Edcel C. Lagman.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The Hon. Edcel Lagman is recognized to interpellate the Sponsor.

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Let me congratulate the Sponsoring Committee for having no less than the hierarchy of the Committee on Appropriations, the distinguished Chairman, defending this Bill.

This is not to demean the very earnest efforts of the Hon. Mark Aeron H. Sambar who also defended this measure although, I think, he is the most junior Vice Chairman of the Committee.

I am not in any way questioning the quorum, but I think the distinguished Sponsor will agree with me that this is a very important Bill. Any bill about the budget is of overriding importance. So, it would be ideal if more Members are present so that they can listen or participate in a very educational and instructive interplay. But since the distinguished Sponsor will not be available on Monday, then I will start with my interpellation.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, does this Bill address the situation where the bicameral Conference Committee, despite the absence of differing provisions in the respective House and Senate versions of the General Appropriations Bill, effects a substantial amendment or amendments different from the identical versions of the House and the Senate?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). I am sorry, the situation is if in the bicameral Conference Committee, there are differences between...

REP. LAGMAN. No, no. There are no differing provisions between the House version and the Senate version of the General Appropriations Bill, and yet, the bicameral Conference Committee would effect substantial amendments despite the absence of any difference.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Mr. Speaker, as I know it, if

there are no differences between the House version and the Senate version, by tradition, we do not even have to go into a bicameral Conference Committee.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, I agree to that proposition but in various bicameral Conference Committees, the latest example of which was the bicameral Conference Committee on the 2018 General Appropriations Bill, subsequently, the GAA. I understand that there were no differing provisions with respect to some appropriations between the House version and the Senate version, yet, the bicameral Conference Committee effected substantial amendments more particularly the deletion of common appropriations. Would the distinguished Chairman recall that this happened in the Bicameral Conference Committee?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Well, Mr. Speaker, to my knowledge, to my memory, there were differences between the versions of the House and the Senate, and that is the reason we went into a bicameral Conference Committee. Certain items, certain provisions in the House version—certain numbers, certain figures were not the same with the Senate version and because of that, we entered into a bicameral Conference Committee.

Now, we all know and we all understand that once Congress, both the House and the Senate, enters into a bicameral Conference Committee meeting to iron out the differences in both versions, it will open up, in fact, amendments to any provision. So, not only in provisions where there are differences but the whole bill itself will be open to any amendments that the bicameral Conference Committee would see fit to amend in finalizing and arriving at a consensus that would be agreeable to both panels.

REP. LAGMAN. So, ...

REP. NOGRALES (K.). So, it happens, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. So, that practice would go against the grain of the proposition that if there are no differences between the House version and the Senate version on identical appropriations, then, this should not be the proper subject of a bicameral Conference Committee's amendments.

Let me go to a specific example. For example, a P10-million infrastructure project is appropriated in the House version as approved on Third Reading, and the same appropriation is replicated in full or in its totality by the Senate version, approved on Third Reading, will the action of the bicameral Conference Committee deleting in its entirety the identical appropriation, both in the House and Senate versions, be consistent with the proposition that if there is no difference, then the

bicameral Conference Committee should not make any amendment?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Let me qualify my answer, Mr. Speaker. My first answer was, when I meant that usually, by tradition, the House and the Senate do not enter into a bicameral Conference Committee if word for word, line by line, there are no differences in both the House version and the Senate version; but once there are differences, any difference between the House version and the Senate version of any bill, including the General Appropriations Bill, in any line, provision or section of either bills, then, that is when we elect members of the bicameral Conference Committee, who will iron out either that singular difference or the many differences in either version. But like I said, once the panel of the House and the panel of the Senate enter into a bicameral Conference Committee, then, by practice, even provisions, words, sentences, and phrases that were common to both the House version and the Senate version, may in fact be amended by the bicameral Conference Committee. So, in the same manner, since the General Appropriations Bill is also a bill albeit having figures and numbers more than words, then, even these figures and numbers can be subjected to amendments by the bicameral Conference Committee.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, there will always be a bicameral Conference Committee with respect to varying provisions of the GAB in the House version and in the Senate version. There has been no time, to my recollection, that there was no bicameral Conference Committee, because there will always be differences. But my question is this: If in a particular appropriation, there is no difference between the House version and the Senate version, like my example of a P10-million infrastructure project approved by the House on Third Reading as part of the version of the House of the GAB and also approved by the Senate on Third Reading as part of their version, does the bicameral Conference Committee have jurisdiction to effect amendments so much so that it could delete the entire common appropriation?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Mr. Speaker, by tradition, and by practice, yes, the bicameral Conference Committee may delete, may reappropriate it to another item or another program.

It may transfer the appropriation to another project or program altogether as long as the total amount of the General Appropriations Bill is not changed. Then yes, it is within the power of the bicameral Conference Committee to make those changes even if it were common to both the House and the Senate version. At the end of the day, the bicameral Conference Committee



will subject these changes to ratification by both the House and the Senate, and once ratified, including all of the changes made or amendments made and proposed by the bicameral Conference Committee, then they will be deemed approved by both Houses.

REP. LAGMAN. In other words, with that statement from the distinguished Sponsor, even if there is no difference with respect to a particular appropriation between the House version and the Senate version of the GAB, still the bicameral Conference Committee can delete that identical appropriation and reappropriate it to another budget program or item. Is that correct?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay. You know, I am taking the cudgels for some Members of this House, I think, 14 Members, initially, who were given zero appropriation for infrastructure projects and programs in their respective districts. Most probably, the distinguished Chairman is aware of that.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes, there were changes made in the budget different from what was approved by both the GAB of the House and the GAB version of the Senate. So, there were items that were reappropriated and transferred to other projects and programs during the finalization of the budget for 2018, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. These districts which suffered zero infrastructure appropriations, where their Representatives were perceived to be non-cooperative or who have disagreed or dissented from government programs and policies were not the ones penalized, their constituents were the ones deprived of the benefits of infrastructure development.

Now, the distinguished Sponsor said that despite the fact that there are no differences in the identical appropriations, both in the House and the Senate versions of the GAA, the same can be deleted and reappropriated. Did I hear the distinguished Gentleman correctly?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). The same can be reappropriated to other items.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay. In the case of these 14 districts whose infrastructure appropriations had been reduced to zero, despite the fact that these were not coming from their initiative, it was part of the infrastructure program of the Department of Public Works and Highways. May we know to where these deleted appropriations were reappropriated or reallocated?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). There is no one-to-one correspondence, Mr. Speaker, on let us say, from one item directly to another item. But if you look at the final version of the 2018 GAA compared to the GAB of the House version and the GAB of the Senate version, perhaps the biggest change or increase in appropriations would go to the financing of the increase in base pay of the salaries of the military and other uniformed personnel. There were several other changes that were made or reappropriations that were made in the 2018 GAA final version, so it is not a one-to-one correspondence. But if you look at what items were increased, then I guess, the biggest item increase in appropriation would be the increase in base salary.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay. Well, is it possible for the distinguished Sponsor to ask for technical assistance and budgetary assistance in order to trace where the deleted appropriations went. Like for instance, preparing a matrix?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Perhaps, we could show where the increases were made. Again, like I said, there is no one-to-one correspondence. For instance, there were increases in Capital Outlay of State universities and colleges. We also placed an increase in Capital Outlay for police stations, different police stations all over the country. So you will see that these are the differences between the final version of the 2018 and the GAB of the House and the Senate.

REP. LAGMAN. We would appreciate it, Mr. Chairman, distinguished Sponsor, if there will be a submission before we approve this Budget Reform Act, on best efforts by the distinguished Chairman and his technical advisers on where the deleted appropriations were reappropriated. Can we have that serious attempt to make this matrix?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Well, we could compare. When we compare the appropriations per department and per program, you will see where the increases were made so ...

REP. LAGMAN. Okay. We will appreciate it if we can be shown that kind of presentation.

Now, the distinguished Sponsor said that most of the deleted appropriations went to the base pay. May we know how much of the deleted appropriations went to the base pay?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Again, it is not like you cannot identify peso per peso how much went to the base pay. But as far as base pay is concerned, we needed to look for P62 billion additional in the increase in base salary for police, military and other uniformed personnel. So that is P62 billion that was not present

in the House version and the Senate GAB version that we had to effect in the 2018 final version of the Bicameral.

REP. LAGMAN. May we know, distinguished Sponsor, as far as the House version of the GAB is concerned, how much was appropriated for the increase in base pay of uniformed personnel?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Sa House version, Third Reading, zero.

REP. LAGMAN. Zero.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Zero.

REP. LAGMAN. In the Senate version?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Zero also.

REP. LAGMAN. Zero also. But there is a catch, all lump sum for this could be a source of the payment of the increase in base pay of a uniformed personnel. Is that correct?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). No, Mr. Speaker, there is no ...

REP. LAGMAN. No.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). None.

REP. LAGMAN. None. And, would the distinguished Sponsor know how much was the totality of the deleted appropriations for infrastructure projects and programs pertaining to the 14 districts?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). No, I would not, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. But, will the distinguished Sponsor be able to find out?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Well, our budget books are open to scrutiny. It is all available in all of our budget books, from the GAB, the House version to the Senate, and all the way to the final version of the GAA. It would take some time for us to make a computation.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, if it is open to scrutiny to any Member of the House or of the Senate or even of the public, then, it should be open to scrutiny by the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Banks and Financial Intermediaries so that it would be a more authoritative computation of how much was the total amount deleted from the infrastructure projects and programs of these 14 districts.

I know it will take a little effort to do that, but it can be done. We can do it but I think, it is more authoritative if it is done by the proper agency or Committee because this is no small matter, Mr. Chairman, and we thank the honorable Chairman for trying to defend his colleagues during this time. But if we do not do it now, it can be replicated in the 2019 General Appropriations Bill, and subsequently the General Appropriations Act. That is why we are asking the earnest cooperation of the distinguished Chairman and his Committee to give us proper presentation and guidance on this particular issue. I do not think we are asking too much if there is a need to stop this kind of emerging practice. Can we get any categorical commitment from the distinguished Chairman?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). We could only endeavor to show the differences in the levels, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Now, let me go on. The title of the Bill includes this statement, "x x x STRENGTHENING CONGRESS' POWER OF THE PURSE x x x." Will the distinguished Gentleman-Sponsor confirm that?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, does it mean that there is a trend of weakening the Congressional power of the purse so much so that there is a need to strengthen such power?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). No, Mr. Speaker. Number one, I think, what we are trying to do with this Bill is that we are just trying to highlight and begin a new practice wherein the Executive properly provides the needed information to Congress so that it could be properly guided when it crafts the budget or when it monitors the execution of the budget. Number two, it gives assurance to Congress which holds the power of the purse that the amount that we have allocated for the different programs, activities and projects would be properly utilized versus budgets that are underutilized by certain departments. So, these are the aspects of strengthening that we want to see effected upon the passage of this Budget Reform Bill, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Is the distinguished Sponsor through with his answer?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes.

REP. LAGMAN. What are the provisions in this Bill which seek to strengthen the Congressional power of the purse?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). First, it strengthens the oversight function of Congress by providing improvements in the financial disclosure and reporting practices such as the submission of regular fiscal budgetary and debt reports, medium-term fiscal plans, and mid-year and year-end fiscal reports, so that Congress can better exercise its oversight functions. It limits the types of Special Purpose Funds as we have discussed earlier with another colleague of ours who was interpellating on that same matter. It also reforms the Unprogrammed Appropriations by placing an expressed limit and clarifying the coverage and parameters for their use. It clarifies the definition of "savings," consistent with the Supreme Court decision, particularly on the DAP. It sets rules on modification of allotments. It limits the extent of a reenacted budget. It supports the one-fund concept wherein all monies received by the NGAs shall accrue to the General Fund and be remitted to the National Treasury. It supports an annual cash-based budgeting system. And it provides legislators with access to new information such as the program classification, the people's budget, and others, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Now, going to the oversight function of the Congress, without the enactment of this Budget Reform Act, will not the oversight functions of Congress include what the distinguished Sponsor has enumerated?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes, Mr. Speaker, but we are enhancing our oversight functions by providing us the tools that we need in order for us to scrutinize even more the execution of the budget.

Napakaimportante dito iyong mga financial disclosures and reportings na gagawin if we pass the BRB into law such as the budgetary, the debt reports, the fiscal reports, more particularly the medium-term fiscal plans, the mid-year reports, and the year-end reports. All of these things will institutionalize a practice wherein we anticipate the DBM to regularly provide all of these reports to Congress, and that will provide us with the necessary tools to exercise our oversight functions, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. This one-fund concept, with or without the enactment of this Budget Reform Act, the prevailing practice or concept is the one-fund concept. Is that correct?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes, Mr. Speaker, but particularly, what we want to address here, Mr. Speaker, is the Special Accounts in the General Fund. There are many SAGFs floating around, Mr. Speaker, that are underutilized or there is a very great difficulty in accessing these SAGFs and so there are a lot of funds

that can be used if placed in the General Fund and can be put to better use particularly right now that we are looking for fund sources in order for us to help in growing our economy and addressing the social concerns of our people.

REP. LAGMAN. Is the one-fund concept part of a legislative act? Is it authorized by law?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). PD No. 1445, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. In other words, there is already a law and the more you enumerate what should be included in that one-fund concept, the more there is a delimitation of the concept, because what may not be included in the enumeration can be deemed excluded. So, it would be best to let the existing law prevail so that there will be no delimitation on the items or funds which will be included in that one-fund concept, rather than make a codification and in the process, most probably forget some which should be included or include some which should be excluded.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Mr. Speaker, I understand the point of the Gentleman from Albay, but actually, what Section 45 of the Budget Reform Bill really wants to emphasize is ang pag-address natin ng SAGFs, Mr. Speaker. The Gentleman is correct that the one-fund concept is already found in an existing law, in PD No. 1445. This particular section only seeks to enhance and emphasize the issue. It highlights and addresses the issue of these special accounts in the General Fund that for many years have not been put to its maximum utilization, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Let me go to another subject.

In the distinguished Sponsor's estimation or experience, what are the current practices which derogate the Congressional power of the purse?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Perhaps what comes to mind, Mr. Speaker, would be the presidential veto.

REP. LAGMAN. No, that presidential veto should not derogate the power of the purse. That is a limitation of the power of the purse because that is provided for in the Constitution, that the President has the veto power. Actually, it is item veto.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Would it be the provision that Congress cannot increase the appropriation?

REP. LAGMAN. Again, that is a constitutional provision. That does not derogate the power of the purse. It is a limitation but not a derogation.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Perhaps the Gentleman is referring to the use of savings.

REP. LAGMAN. Yes, the use of savings will be one. Are there others?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Nothing comes to mind, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay. There are at least four or five others. But, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, I have so many questions yet to ask, more particularly on the present practices which would derogate the power of the purse. One has already been mentioned by the distinguished Sponsor, which is in the use of savings, another would be automatic appropriations, another is impoundment of approved appropriations, another will be lump-sum appropriations, and most probably, Unprogrammed Funds, because all of these would be removed from the congressional discretion to appropriate huge sums of money. But, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, I think I have started my interpellation and I would request that I will be allowed to finish my interpellation on Monday when there are sufficient Members of the House present, without, in any way, questioning the quorum.

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

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move for a suspension of the session.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER. The session is suspended.

*It was 7:47 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 7:55 p.m., the session was resumed.*

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7302

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend consideration of House Bill No. 7302.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we take up the Business for Thursday and Friday.

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

#### OMNIBUS CONSIDERATION OF HOUSE BILLS ON SECOND READING

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move for the omnibus consideration of the following measures:

1. House Bill No. 7310, contained in Committee Report No. 642;
2. House Bill No. 6724, contained in Committee Report No. 645;
3. House Bill No. 7327, contained in Committee Report No. 646;
4. House Bill No. 7346, contained in Committee Report No. 648; and
5. House Bill No. 7362, contained in Committee Report No. 651.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. For these local measures, Mr. Speaker, I move that the respective Explanatory Notes be considered as the sponsorship speeches thereon.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, there being no Member who wishes to interpellate or speak against these measures, I move that we close the period of sponsorship and debate.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of amendments.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, there being no Committee or individual amendments, I move that we close the period of amendments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). Is there

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve the aforesaid measures on Second Reading.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). As many as are in favor of the approval of the bills enumerated in the omnibus motion, please say *aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

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

FEW MEMBERS. *Nay*.

OMNIBUS APPROVAL OF HOUSE BILLS  
ON SECOND READING

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

The bills enumerated in the omnibus motion are hereby approved on Second Reading.\*

CONSIDERATION OF H. RES. NO. 1722

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Resolution No. 1722, and may I ask that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

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

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Resolution No. 1722, entitled: RESOLUTION URGING PRESIDENT RODRIGO R. DUTERTE TO ISSUE A PROCLAMATION TRANSFERRING THE OWNERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE INTENDENCIA BUILDING IN INTRAMUROS, MANILA TO THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF THE PHILIPPINES (NAP).

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we adopt House Resolution No. 1722.

ADOPTION OF H. RES. NO. 1722

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

House Resolution No. 1722 is adopted.

CONSIDERATION OF H. RES. NO. 1690

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Resolution No. 1690, and may I ask that the the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

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

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Resolution No. 1690, entitled: A RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING BROTHER EDUARDO V. MANALO, EXECUTIVE MINISTER OF THE IGLESIA NI CRISTO, FOR HIS DESIGNATION AS SPECIAL ENVOY OF THE PRESIDENT FOR OVERSEAS FILIPINOS CONCERNS.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we adopt House Resolution No. 1690.

ADOPTION OF H. RES. NO. 1690

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

House Resolution No. 1690 is adopted.

CONSIDERATION OF H. RES. NO. 1695

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Resolution No. 1695, as reported out by the Committee on Rules.

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

\* See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)

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

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Resolution No. 1695, entitled: A RESOLUTION OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES EXPRESSING PROFOUND CONDOLENCES ON THE DEMISE OF NATIONAL ARTIST OF THE PHILIPPINES, ESABELIO NAPOLEON “BILLY” VELOSO ABUEVA.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we adopt House Resolution No. 1695, in consolidation with House Resolutions No. 1720 and 1723.

#### ADOPTION OF H. RES. NO. 1695

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

House Resolution No. 1695, in consolidation with House Resolution No. 1720 and 1723, is hereby adopted.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### CONSIDERATION OF H. RES. NO. 1767

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Resolution No. 1767, contained in Committee Report No. 657, as reported out by the Committee on Higher and Technical Education.

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

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

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Resolution No. 1767, entitled: A RESOLUTION URGING THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION TO CONDUCT THE MANDATORY REVIEW OF THE CIVIL ENGINEERING CURRICULUM TO INTEGRATE THERETO RELEVANT ACADEMIC SUBJECTS ON EARTHQUAKE DESIGN SAFETY, SPECIALLY NEW ENGINEERING AND STRUCTURAL STANDARDS THAT WILL ENSURE THE STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY OF PHILIPPINE BUILDINGS AND CIVIL WORKS, AND THE PROFESSIONAL REGULATION COMMISSION TO INCLUDE EARTHQUAKE ENGINEERING DESIGN AS A TOPIC IN THE CIVIL ENGINEERING LICENSURE EXAMINATION.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we adopt House Resolution No. 1767.

#### ADOPTION OF H. RES. NO. 1767

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

House Resolution No. 1767 is adopted.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we take up Bills on Third Reading.

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

#### NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 7264 ON THIRD READING

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 7264, and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

*Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on March 8, 2018, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.*

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7264, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE

\* See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)

CORDILLERA STATE POLYTECHNIC SKILLS INSTITUTE, INTEGRATING THE TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING CENTERS AND TESDA-SUPERVISED STATE-RUN TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS (TVIs) IN THE CORDILLERA ADMINISTRATIVE REGION AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

*The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading\* on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 75, dated March 14, 2018.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7264  
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). With 217 affirmative votes, no negative vote, and no abstention, House Bill No. 7264 is approved on Third Reading.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 7291  
ON THIRD READING

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 7291, and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

*Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on March 8, 2018, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.*

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7291, entitled: AN ACT DECLARING IMMACULATE CONCEPTION PARISH CHURCH, SANCTUARY OF THE HOLY FACE OF JESUS, IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF NAMPICUAN, PROVINCE OF NUEVA ECIJA A PILGRIMAGE SITE AND TOURIST DESTINATION, PROVIDING FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

*The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading\* on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 75, dated March 14, 2018.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7291  
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). With 217 affirmative votes, no negative vote, and no abstention, House Bill No. 7291 is approved on Third Reading. The Majority Leader is recognized

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 7292  
ON THIRD READING

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 7292, and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

*Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on March 8, 2018, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.*

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7292, entitled: AN ACT DECLARING THE PURARAN BEACH AND ITS PREMISES LOCATED IN BARANGAY PURARAN, MUNICIPALITY OF BARAS, PROVINCE OF CATANDUANES A TOURIST SPOT AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

*The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading\* on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 75, dated March 14, 2018.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7292  
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). With 217 affirmative votes, no negative vote, and no abstention, House Bill No. 7292 is approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

\* See ANNEX (printed separately)

DESIGNATION OF MEMBERS TO THE  
BICAM. CONF. CTTEE.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we designate the following as members of the bicameral Conference Committee on the disagreeing provisions of House Bill No. 5777 and Senate Bill No. 1537, on strengthening nutrition programs for pregnant and lactating women, adolescent girls and teenage mothers, infants and young children in the first 1,000 days:

1. Rep. Angelina “Helen” D.L. Tan, M.D.
2. Rep. Sandra Y. Eriguel, M.D.
3. Rep. Rogelio J. Espina, M.D.
4. Rep. Michelle M. Antonio
5. Rep. Alexandria P. Gonzales
6. Rep. Arlene B. Arcillas

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

The Members nominated are so designated.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, we are in receipt of a message from the Senate informing the House that the Senate has passed with amendments House Bill No. 4927, entitled: AN ACT CREATING BARANGAY UPPER PUGAAN IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF DITSAAN-RAMAIN, PROVINCE OF LANA DEL SUR.

We have been informed that the Committee on Local Government, Sponsor of House Bill No. 4927, and the author thereof have no objections to the amendments introduced by the Senate to the said House Bill.

I therefore move, Mr. Speaker, in accordance with our rules, that we concur with the Senate amendments on House Bill No. 4927.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recommit House Bill No. 7236, under Committee Report No. 622, to the Committee on Government Enterprises and Privatization.

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

CHANGE OF REFERRAL OF CERTAIN  
MEASURES

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we change the referral of House Bill No. 7236, from the Committee on Government Enterprises and

Privatization, to the Committees on Local Government, and Government Enterprises and Privatization.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move for the change of referral of the following measures:

1. House Bill No. 1103 - creating the Metro Rail Transit Regulatory Authority, from the Committees on Government Enterprises and Privatization and Transportation, to the Committees on Government Enterprises and Privatization, Transportation, and Legislative Franchises;

2. House Bill No. 1265 – establishing a National Railway System in the Philippines, from the Committee on Transportation, to the Committees on Government Enterprises and Privatization, Transportation, and Legislative Franchises;

3. House Bill No. 1911 – creating the Central Luzon Railways Corporation, from the Committees on Government Enterprises and Privatization, and Transportation, to the Committees on Government Enterprises and Privatization, Transportation, and Legislative Franchises;

4. House Bill Nos. 5458, 6837 and 6959 and House Resolution No. 203 – restructuring the Philippine National Railway System, from the Committees on Government Enterprises and Privatization, and Transportation, to the Committees on Government Enterprises and Privatization, Transportation, and Legislative Franchises;

5. House Bill No. 5507 – declaring as unlawful the membership in any Philippine Court proscribed or United Nations Security Council-Designated Terrorist Organization, from the Committee on Public Order and Safety, to the Committees on Public Order and Safety and National Defense and Security; and

6. House Bill No. 7141 – amending Republic Act No. 9372, entitled “An Act to Secure the State and Protect our People from Terrorism,” otherwise known as the “Human Security Act of 2007”, from the Committee on Public Order and Safety, to the Committees on Public Order and Safety, and National Defense and Security.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REFERRAL OF HOUSE RESOLUTIONS  
ON INQUIRIES IN AID OF LEGISLATION

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, in accordance with our Rules Governing Inquiries, in Aid of Legislation,



I move that we refer the following House Resolutions to the appropriate Committees:

1. House Resolution No. 1728, to the Committee on Government Enterprises and Privatization;
2. House Resolution No. 1729, to the Committee on Basic Education and Culture;
3. House Resolution No. 1730, to the Committee on Labor and Employment;
4. House Resolution No. 1731, to the Committee on Tourism;
5. House Resolution No. 1732, to the Committee on Aquaculture and Fisheries Resources;
6. House Resolution No. 1733, to the Committee on Aquaculture and Fisheries Resources;
7. House Resolution No. 1736, to the Committee on Public Order and Safety;
8. House Resolution No. 1737, to the Committee on Energy;
9. House Resolution No. 1738, to the Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs;
10. House Resolution No. 1742, to the Committee on Good Government and Public Accountability;
11. House Resolution No. 1745, to the Committee on Housing and Urban Development;
12. House Resolution No. 1747, to the Committee on Energy;
13. House Resolution No. 1749, to the Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs; and
14. House Resolution No. 1750, to the Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. I move that we include as coauthors of House Bills No. 6385, 6916 and 7236, the Members contained in the list to be submitted by the Committee on Rules.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we include as additional coauthors of bills and resolutions that are pending in various committees, the Members appearing in the lists to be submitted by the Committee on Rules, after due verification of their requests for inclusion as coauthors of such bills and resolutions.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn the session until March 19, 2018, at four o'clock in the afternoon.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The session is adjourned. We will meet again next week, Monday, at four o'clock in the afternoon.

*It was 8:20 p.m.*