



# Congressional Record

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

## House of Representatives

Vol. 4

Monday, March 19, 2018

No. 76

### CALL TO ORDER

*At 4:00 p.m., Deputy Speaker Fredenil “Fred” H. Castro called the session to order.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The session is now called to order.

### NATIONAL ANTHEM

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F. H.). Please rise for the singing of the National Anthem.

*Everybody rose to sing the Philippine National Anthem.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F. H.). Please remain standing for a minute of prayer and meditation to be led by Congressman Erlpe John “Ping” M. Amante.

*Everybody remained standing for the Invocation.*

### INVOCATION

REP. AMANTE. Almighty God, we thank You for gracing us with another wonderful day and for the opportunity to serve our beloved country. Thank You for gifting us with strength, grace and confidence to face and overcome the day-to-day challenges that come our way.

We ask for forgiveness for the many times that we turned our backs on You. We were weak of heart during these times of pressure and allowed ourselves to succumb to temptation and the ills of personal gain and convenience. We failed to remember Your faithfulness and Your great love for us. For this, we earnestly ask for Your pardon.

Help us find Your light. Bless us with wisdom and clarity of mind to understand how we can be effective leaders of our people. Bless us with patience and perseverance to keep being faithful to You despite our worries and troubles. Bless us with courage to speak

up for our people and strength to choose to do what is right over what is easy.

We dedicate ourselves to be Your vessels of truth, justice, love and peace in our nation today. We commit to be the kind of servants our fellow Filipinos chose and deserve. We pledge to do what is right and uphold our people’s welfare before our own, at all times. With Your grace, we hope to lead our countrymen to the right direction, free the nation from divisiveness and ingrain among our people a sense of unwavering unity and love for country.

In Your love, we remain, Lord. Amen.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Majority Leader is recognized

### ROLL CALL

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we call the roll.

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

The Secretary General will please call the roll.

*The Secretary General called the roll, and the result is reflected in Journal No. 76, dated March 19, 2018.\**

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. The roll call shows that 221 Members responded to the call.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). With 221 Members present, the Chair declares the presence of a quorum.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

### APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve Journal No. 75, dated March 14, 2018. I so move, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

\* See ANNEX (printed separately)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*)

REP. DAZA. Objection, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DAZA. Mr. Speaker, I objected. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, here.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Hon. Raul A. Daza is recognized.

REP. DAZA. Yes, I object. I objected to the approval of the minutes particularly with regard to the record of attendance because for the sessions last Monday, Tuesday, as well as Wednesday, I should have been recorded as absent after having officially notified the Secretariat.

The week before last, I sent a letter to the Office of the Secretary General, which was received in his office, to state that I was going to be absent for the sessions of March 12, 13 and 14 because I would be at my district to conduct consultations in regard to certain legislative matters pending before the House. The Secretary General is here.

Mr. Speaker, I was shown by the able Majority Leader that the asterisks on my name are four, which correspond to having duly notified the Secretariat. With this clarification, Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my objection to the motion of the Majority Leader for the approval of the minutes.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I reiterate my motion that we approve Journal No. 75 of the previous session, dated March 14, 2018.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). There is a motion to approve the Journal and with Representative Daza, having withdrawn his objection, the motion is approved.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

I so move, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

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

The Secretary General will please read the Reference of Business.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

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

BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 7379, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FUND FOR SOLO MOTHERS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Castelo  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

House Bill No. 7380, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE LUZON INVESTMENT CORRIDOR AND THE REGIONAL INVESTMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Roman  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ENTERPRISES AND PRIVATIZATION

House Bill No. 7381, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE REGIONAL INVESTMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE CORPORATION OF CENTRAL LUZON TO FACILITATE THE CREATION OF THE CENTRAL LUZON INVESTMENT CORRIDOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Sy-Alvarado  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ENTERPRISES AND PRIVATIZATION

House Bill No. 7382, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING ARTICLES 99, 121 AND 122 OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 442, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LABOR CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES”

By Representative Sagarbarria  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

House Bill No. 7383, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE HIGHER EDUCATION CAREER SYSTEM AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Hofer  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND  
TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 7384, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE SATELLITE  
OFFICE OF THE LAND TRANSPORTATION  
OFFICE (LTO) LOCATED IN THE  
MUNICIPALITY OF INITAO, PROVINCE  
OF MISAMIS ORIENTAL INTO A  
REGULAR LTO DISTRICT OFFICE AND  
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Uy (J.)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON  
TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 7389, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE MAIMBUNG  
NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ANNEX  
LOCATED IN BARANGAY LAUM,  
MUNICIPALITY OF PAIMBUNG,  
PROVINCE OF SULU INTO A NATIONAL  
TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL  
TO BE KNOWN AS THE MAIMBUNG  
NATIONAL TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL  
HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING  
FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Tan (S.)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION  
AND CULTURE

RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 1768, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE  
COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION  
AND CULTURE TO CONDUCT AN  
INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION INTO  
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF REPUBLIC  
ACT 10533 OR THE ENHANCED BASIC  
EDUCATION ACT OF 2013 WITH THE END  
IN VIEW OF ENACTING LEGISLATIVE  
MEASURES TO ADDRESS THE SAME”

By Representative Escudero  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1771, entitled:

“RESOLUTION REQUESTING HIS  
EXCELLENCY, PRESIDENT RODRIGO  
ROA DUTERTE, TO ALLOCATE PHP6  
BILLION IN THE FY 2019 BUDGET  
FOR THE PONDO SA PAGBABAGO AT  
PAG-ASENSO (P3) PROGRAM BEING  
IMPLEMENTED BY THE DEPARTMENT  
OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY, THROUGH  
THE SMALL BUSINESS CORP.”

By Representatives Unabia, Limkaichong, Gonzaga,  
Abellanosa, Acosta, Panotes, Marquez, Montoro  
and Villaraza-Suarez

TO THE COMMITTEE ON SMALL  
BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
DEVELOPMENT

House Resolution No. 1772, entitled:

“RESOLUTION REQUESTING HIS  
EXCELLENCY, PRESIDENT RODRIGO  
ROA DUTERTE, TO INCREASE THE  
BUDGET FOR FY 2019 FOR THE  
PROGRAMS/PROJECTS FOR MICRO,  
SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES  
(MSMEs), SPECIFICALLY THE KAPATID  
MENTOR ME PROGRAM, THE SHARED  
SERVICE FACILITIES PROJECT AND  
THE TRADE FAIRS OF THE BUREAU OF  
DOMESTIC TRADE PROMOTION”

By Representatives Unabia, Limkaichong, Gonzaga,  
Abellanosa, Acosta, Panotes, Marquez, Montoro  
and Villaraza-Suarez

TO THE COMMITTEE ON SMALL  
BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
DEVELOPMENT

House Resolution No. 1773, entitled:

“RESOLUTION COMMEMORATING THE  
100TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF FILIPINO  
FILMMAKING”

By Representative Lanete  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC  
INFORMATION

House Resolution No. 1774, entitled:

“RESOLUTION STRONGLY URGING THE  
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS TO  
EXCLUDE ANY FOREIGN ENTITY/  
INDIVIDUAL AS PROVIDER OF GOODS,  
MACHINES, SERVICES AND/OR  
TECHNICAL SUPPORT WHICH SHALL  
BE USED FOR NATIONAL AND LOCAL  
ELECTIONS, AND TO INCLUDE IN THE  
CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY THAT  
THE PROSPECTIVE BIDDER BE FULLY  
OWNED BY A FILIPINO ENTITY OR  
INDIVIDUAL”

By Representative Atienza  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON SUFFRAGE AND  
ELECTORAL REFORMS

House Resolution No. 1775, entitled:

“RESOLUTION MANDATING THE  
DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM TO  
INTENSIFY PROMOTION BY REQUIRING  
ALL LOCAL COMMERCIAL AIRLINES TO

INCLUDE IN THEIR OFFICIAL IN-FLIGHT ANNOUNCEMENTS THE INFOMERCIALS ABOUT THE BEAUTY AND HOSPITALITY OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS AND ITS PEOPLE”

By Representative Atienza  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

House Resolution No. 1776, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE COUNTRY'S IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM AND THE REPORTED MEASLES OUTBREAK IN THE PHILIPPINES”

By Representative Vargas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1777, entitled:

“RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE HOUSE DEMANDING THE IMMEDIATE RESIGNATION OF SANDRA CAM AND THE INITIATION OF CONTEMPT PROCEEDINGS AGAINST HER”

By Representatives Teves, Suarez, Barbers, Catamco, Plaza, Gasataya, Del Mar, Cueva, Cagas, Marquez, Abayon, De Vera, Cortuna, Garbin, Relampagos, Billones, Durano, Mirasol, Calderon, Limkaichong, Labadlabad, Bertiz, Cortes, Campos, Datol, Atienza, Calalang, Lopez (M.L.), Bravo (A.), Velasco, L.A., Benitez, Sambar, Yap (M.), Alvarez (F.), Caminero, Acosta, Tupas, Madrona, Vergara, Antonino, Violago, Velarde, Marcoleta, Paduano, Villanueva, Radaza, Sagarbarria and Evardone  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1778, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE NATIONAL IRRIGATION ADMINISTRATION (NIA), THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (DA), THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES (DENR), THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (NEDA) AND THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS (DPWH) TO INITIATE AND INSTITUTIONALIZE THE CREATION OF A MULTI-SECTORAL LOCAL WATER RESOURCE PROGRAM IN THE FIRST DISTRICT OF ILOCOS SUR”

By Representative Savellano  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

House Resolution No. 1779, entitled:

“RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE BEREAVED FAMILY OF MR. MIGUEL LORENZO BERMUDEZ ROMERO, SON OF THE HONORABLE MICHAEL ODYLON L. ROMERO, REPRESENTATIVE OF 1-PACMAN PARTYLIST”

By Representatives Alvarez (P.), Fariñas and Suarez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

MESSAGES FROM THE SENATE

Message dated March 12, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that the Senate on even date passed Senate Bill No. 1698, entitled:

“AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS OF MEMBERS OF THE CITIZEN ARMED FORCES OR THE RESERVE FORCE OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

in which it requests the concurrence of the House of Representatives.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY

Message dated March 12, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that the Senate on even date passed Senate Bill No. 452, entitled:

“AN ACT REGULATING THE PRACTICE OF CRIMINOLOGY PROFESSION IN THE PHILIPPINES, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6506, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ‘AN ACT CREATING THE BOARD OF EXAMINERS FOR CRIMINOLOGISTS IN THE PHILIPPINES’ ”

in which it requests the concurrence of the House of Representatives.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Message dated March 12, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that the Senate on even date passed Senate Bill No. 1534, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8439, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘MAGNACARTA FOR SCIENTISTS, ENGINEERS, RESEARCHERS AND OTHER SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY PERSONNEL IN THE GOVERNMENT’ ”

in which it requests the concurrence of the House of Representatives.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Message dated March 12, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that the Senate on even date passed without amendment the following House Bills:

House Bill No. 5002, entitled:

“AN ACT RENAMING THE MOLINO-SALAWAG-PALIPARAN ROAD, TRAVERSING BARANGAY TALABA 4 IN THE CITY OF BACOR, AND BARANGAY PALIPARAN 1 IN THE CITY OF DASMARIÑAS, ALL IN THE PROVINCE OF CAVITE, AS BACOR-DASMARIÑAS NATIONAL ROAD”;

House Bill No. 5123, entitled:

“AN ACT RENAMING THE MOLINO BOULEVARD TRAVERSING BARANGAY TALABA 4 AND BARANGAY SAN NICOLAS 3 IN THE CITY OF BACOR, PROVINCE OF CAVITE AS BACOR BOULEVARD”;

House Bill No. 1425, entitled:

“AN ACT RENAMING THE ACOP, TUBLAY, KAPANGAN – KIBUNGAN – BAKUN – SINIPSIP, BUGUIAS SECONDARY NATIONAL ROAD IN THE PROVINCE OF BENGUET TO GOV. BADO DANGWA NATIONAL ROAD”;

House Bill No. 5356, entitled:

“AN ACT NAMING THE LINAMON – MATUNGAO – BALOI NATIONAL ROAD TRAVERSING BARANGAY SAMBURON IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF LINAMON, AND BARANGAY BULAO IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BALOI, ALL IN THE PROVINCE LANA DEL NORTE, AS THE METRO ILIGAN REGIONAL AGRO-INDUSTRIAL CENTER (MIRAIC) HIGHWAY”;

House Bill No. 2656, entitled:

“AN ACT NAMING THE DIVERSION ROAD IN SORSOGON CITY, PROVINCE OF SORSOGON AS SALVADOR H. ESCUDERO III DIVERSION ROAD”;

House Bill No. 833, entitled:

“AN ACT RENAMING THE MONTEVISTA-CATEEL NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAVERSING THE MUNICIPALITY OF COMPOSTELA, COMPOSTELA VALLEY PROVINCE INTO THE BENIGNO S. AQUINO, JR. NATIONAL HIGHWAY”;

House Bill No. 4782, entitled:

“AN ACT RENAMING THE KAY TIKLING-ANTIPOLLO-TERESA-MORONG NATIONAL ROAD IN THE PROVINCE OF RIZAL, TRAVERSING THROUGH BARANGAY DOLORES IN THE

MUNICIPALITY OF TAYTAY UP TO BARANGAY MAYBANCAL IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF MORONG, AS CORAZON C. AQUINO AVENUE”;

House Bill No. 2708, entitled:

“AN ACT RENAMING THE GUREL-BOKOD-KABAYAN-ABATAN ROAD IN THE PROVINCE OF BENGUET TO CONG. ANDRES ACOP COSALAN ROAD”;

House Bill No. 5643, entitled:

“AN ACT NAMING THE POBLACION-CANIOGAN NATIONAL ROAD TRAVERSING BARANGAY POBLACION AND BARANGAY BARAKANAS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF TUBOD, PROVINCE OF LANA DEL NORTE AS THE ARSENIO ARCELO QUIBRANZA HIGHWAY”;

House Bill No. 2785, entitled:

“AN ACT RENAMING THE WAWA ROAD AT BARANGAY SAN RAFAEL, MUNICIPALITY OF RODRIGUEZ, PROVINCE OF RIZAL AS GENERAL LICERIO I. GERONIMO HIGHWAY”;

House Bill No. 5001, entitled:

“AN ACT RENAMING GOVERNOR'S DRIVE, TRAVERSING SORO-SORO BRIDGE IN THE CITY OF BIÑAN, PROVINCE OF LAGUNA AND THE MUNICIPALITY OF TERNATE, PROVINCE OF CAVITE, AS JUANITO R. REMULLA, SR. ROAD”;

House Bill No. 4946, entitled:

“AN ACT RENAMING PANGLAO ISLAND CIRCUMFERENTIAL ROAD TRAVERSING BARANGAYS TANGNAN, BIL-ISAN, LOOC, POBLACION, DANA, TAWALA, BOLOD AND LIBAONG IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF PANGLAO AND BARANGAYS TOTOLAN, SONGCULAN, TABALONG, BINGAG, DAO, SAN ISIDRO, BIKING 1, BIKING 2, CATARMAN, MAYACABAC, POBLACION AND UNION IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF DAUIS, AS ANOS FONACIER CIRCUMFERENTIAL ROAD (DAUIS-PANGLAO)”;

House Bill No. 4660, entitled:

“AN ACT NAMING THE BY-PASS ROAD STRETCHING FROM BARANGAY BENG CAG, CITY OF LAOAG, TO BARANGAY BUYON, MUNICIPALITY OF BACARRA, PROVINCE OF ILOCOS NORTE, AS THE RODOLFO G. FARIÑAS, JR. BY-PASS ROAD”;

House Bill No. 4947, entitled:

“AN ACT RENAMING THE ROAD TRAVERSING

BARANGAYS SAN JOSE, TOLENTINO WEST, TOLENTINO EAST, FRANCISCO, SUNGAY WEST, (LEFT SIDE), SUNGAY EAST (RIGHT SIDE), SUNGAY EAST, IRUHIN WEST, IRUHIN CENTRAL, IRUHIN EAST AND DAPDAP WEST IN THE CITY OF TAGAYTAY, PROVINCE OF CAVITE TO ISAAC O. TOLENTINO AVENUE”.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Message dated March 13, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that the Senate designated the following to the Congressional Oversight Committee on the Philippine Competition Act:

1. Senator Juan Miguel “Migz” F. Zubiri – Chairperson, Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship
2. Senator Win Gatchalian – Chairperson, Economic Affairs
3. Senator Loren B. Legarda – Chairperson, Finance
4. Senator Sonny Angara – Member
5. Senator Paolo Benigno “Bam” Aquino IV – Minority Member

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

#### COMMUNICATIONS

Letter dated February 19, 2018 of Sofronio C. Apat, Municipal Mayor, Municipality of Dagohoy, Province of Bohol, submitting their 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.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated February 23, 2018 of Ronald Lowell G. Tirol, Municipal Mayor, Municipality of Buenavista, Province of Bohol, submitting their 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.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Report on Fund Utilization and Status of Program/Project Implementation for the 4th Quarter Ended 2017 of the Assistance to Disadvantaged Municipalities under the Local Government Support Fund attested by Jacinto B. Naraga, Municipal Mayor, Municipality of San Isidro, Province of Bohol.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Report on Fund Utilization and Status of Program/Project Implementation for the Fourth Quarter of 2017 of the Assistance to Disadvantaged Municipalities under the Local Government Support Fund attested by Rainfredo C. Buslon, Sr., Acting Mayor, Municipality of Sierra Bullones, Province of Bohol.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Report on Fund Utilization and Status of Program/Project Implementation for the Quarter Ended October 22, 2017 of the Local Government Support Fund attested by Christopher B. Tutor, Municipal Mayor, Municipality of Candijay, 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 attested by Danilo M. Guivencan, Municipal Mayor, Municipality of Dimiao, Province of Bohol.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Report on Fund Utilization and Status of Program/Project Implementation as of February 20, 2018 of the Local Government Support Fund attested by Rene B. Borenaga, Acting Mayor, Municipality of Bien Unido, Province of Bohol.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Report on Fund Utilization and Status of Program/Project Implementation for the 4th Quarter Ended 2017 of the Assistance to Disadvantaged Municipalities under the Local Government Support Fund attested by Elpren Charles M. Tungol, Municipal Mayor, Municipality of Alburquerque, 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 attested by Allen Ray Z. Piezas, Municipal Mayor, Municipality of Clarin, Province of Bohol.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated March 5, 2018 of Zenaida T. Tan, Director IV, Assistant Regional Director, Regional Office XI, Department of Public Works and Highways, furnishing the House of Representatives the Monthly Progress Status Report for the month of

February 2018, for projects implemented by their office within the First Legislative District of Davao del Norte province.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS  
AND HIGHWAYS

Letter dated March 5, 2018 of Eugene U. Caballero, Municipal Mayor, Municipality of Manukan, Province of Zamboanga del Norte, submitting their Report on Fund Utilization and Status of Program/Project Implementation for the Quarter Ended December 2017 of the Local Government Support Fund-Assistance to Disadvantaged Municipalities.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letters dated 8 March 2018 of Roger E. Dino, Deputy Director, Office of the General Counsel and Legal Services, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), furnishing the House of Representatives with duly certified and authenticated BSP issuances, to wit:

1. Circular Letter No. CL-2018-016 dated 2 March 2018;
2. Circular No. 998 dated 1 March 2018; and
3. Circular Letter No. CL-2018-017 dated 2 March 2018.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND  
FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report by the Committee on Labor and Employment (Committee Report No. 668), re H.B. No. 7402, entitled:

“AN ACT PROMOTING TELECOMMUTING AS AN ALTERNATIVE WORK ARRANGEMENT FOR EMPLOYEES IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bills Numbered 5630, 5779, 5841, 5843, 6322 and 7349

Sponsors: Representatives Ting, Villafuerte, Tugna, Vargas, Nieto, Sy-Alvarado and Del Rosario

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Justice and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 669), re H.B. No. 7405, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING TWO (2) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURT IN CITIES FOR BIÑAN CITY IN THE FOURTH JUDICIAL REGION, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 29 OF BATAS PAMBANSA BILANG

129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ‘THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980’, AS AMENDED”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 2746

Sponsors: Representatives Umali, Nograles (K.A.), Veloso, Alonte, De Vera, Sandoval, Cuaresma, Quimbo, Batocabe, Villafuerte and Nieto

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, may we acknowledge the presence of some guests in the gallery. They are the guests of Hon. Cheryl P. Deloso-Montalla, and they are the following Councilors from the municipality of San Felipe, province of Zambales, headed by their Vice Mayor Leo John M. Farrales: Alden Ladrangan, Maryann Quiba, Ramil Ablan, Anthony Micalat, Manuel Abiva, Bonifacio Fortin, Napoleon Domingo, Ferdinand Famuleras and Dante Flores.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

REP. GULLAS. May we also acknowledge the presence of the guests of Honorable Deloso-Montalla from the National Food Coalition, and the Food First Information and Action Network, namely: Reynaldo Dela Cruz, Marietta Agapito, Carmelo Javines, Alberto Dela Cruz, Ronilo Agapito, Natividad Javier, Lory Togano, Alvin Dela Cruz, Romeo Magdaleno, Mary Jane Ybañez, Rowena Cañete, Daily Desilva, Lito Reboles, Meliton Guinto, Paul Alamares, and all guests in the gallery.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Welcome to the House of Representatives.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, we would also like to acknowledge the presence of our guests in the gallery from the Office of the Solicitor General: Jose Calida, Assistant Solicitor General Renan Ramos, Ma. Antonia Edita Dizon, Marissa Dela Cruz-Galandines, Bernard Hernandez, Vida San Vicente, John Emmanuel Madamba, Rex Bernardo Pascual, Magtanggol Castro, Eric Remegio Panga, Ellaine Rose Sanchez-Corro, Ma. Cielo Se-Rondain, Herman Cimafranca, Thomas Laragan, Anna Esperanza Solomon, Myrna Agno-Canuto, Derek Puertollano, Marissa Macaraig-Guillen, Hermes Ocampo, Nyriam Susan Hernandez, Raymund Rigodon, Maria Hazel Acantilado, Angelita Miranda, Henry Angeles, Penafrancia Carpio-Devesa, Alexander Salvador, and Joseph Guevarra.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Welcome to the House of Representatives.

REP. GULLAS. Also, in the gallery, Mr. Speaker, are the guests of Hon. Erlpe John “Ping” M. Amante from the Second District of Agusan del Norte. They are Bernard Paul Teanio, Mariza Collado, Eva Milan, Ludivina Gaid, Rey Dultra, and Patcholou Abalo.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Welcome to the House of Representatives.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, also in the gallery are the guests of Hon. Rogelio “Ruel” D. Pacquiao from the Lone District of Sarangani. They are Mayor Atty. Ma. Theresa Constantino of Malungon, Sarangani; Mayor Victor Salarda of Alabel, Sarangani; Mayor Utoh Salem Cutan of Maasim, Sarangani; Mayor Tito Balazon Sr. of Maitum, Sarangani; and the Municipal Local Government Operations Officers of DILG of Sarangani Province.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Welcome to the House of Representatives.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker I move that we consider for approval on Third Reading certain House bills, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 7378 ON THIRD READING

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 7378 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). 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 14, 2018, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.*

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.

*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 nominal voting on Third Reading\* on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 76, dated March 19, 2018.*

REP. ALEJANO. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, my vote is “No” and I will explain my vote later, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, we are voting “No” and we would like to be given the chance to explain our vote.

What is the reaction of the Speaker?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Gentleman from Manila shall be allowed to explain his vote after the votation.

REP. ATIENZA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BIAZON. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Yes, the Honorable Biazon is recognized.

REP. BIAZON. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I vote “No” and I reserve my right to submit a written explanation of my vote.\*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). That is duly noted.

REP. BORDADO. Mr. Speaker, I am voting “No” and kindly allow me to explain my vote later.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). That is duly noted.

REP. CASILAO. Mr. Speaker, my vote is “No” and I would like to explain my vote later.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). That is duly noted.

\* See ANNEX (printed separately)



REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Mr. Speaker, my vote is “No” and I will explain my vote later.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). That is duly noted.

REP. DE JESUS. My vote is “No” and I will make a very brief explanation of my vote later.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). That is duly noted.

REP. DEL MAR. Mr. Speaker, I vote “No” and I will explain my vote later.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). That is duly noted.

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, my vote is “No” and I reserve my right to explain my vote later. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). That is duly noted.

REP. TINIO. Mr. Speaker, I vote “No” and I would like to explain my vote later.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). That is duly noted.

REP. ZARATE. Mr. Speaker, my vote is “No” and I reserve my right to explain my vote.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). That is duly noted.

#### RESULT OF THE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The result shows 211 affirmative votes, 29 negative votes and zero abstention.

House Bill No. 7378 is approved on Third Reading.

#### EXPLANATION OF VOTES

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Hon. Jose “Lito” L. Atienza Jr., you are recognized. You have three minutes to explain your vote.

#### REP. ATIENZA EXPLAINS HIS VOTE

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, salamat po. I voted “No” for the very basic reason that the barangays are very essential to Philippine democracy. Mapalad po tayo na mayroon pang

mga community leaders na nais maglingkod upang tumulong sa paghahatid ng serbisyo publiko sa ating mga mamamayan, and we know that the barangay, the smallest political unit, is recognized by no less than the Constitution, and as such, we should not be postponing the elections to give our people the right to choose their local community leaders.

Ako ay hugot sa barangayan. Ako po ay naglingkod bilang isang kagawad, bilang isang punong barangay, and I know that the barangays, when they are effective, they bring the government closer to their people. Now, if they are not effective, they should be replaced immediately. Ang eleksyon ay paraan upang ang lahat na nagtatrabahong punong barangay ay magantimpalaan muli ng tiwala ng bayan, subalit iyong mga nang-abuso o iyong mga hindi nagtrabaho ay hindi dapat binibigyan ng anumang extension.

When we interpellated the Sponsor, he did not agree to our suggestion that those who have pending cases of graft, corruption and are merely out on bail should not be part of this extension. We mentioned that there are many suspected pushers in the barangays. They should not be included in this extension. I am sorry to say that they did not agree to the views of this Representation.

Ako ay naniniwala na itong postponement na ito ay hindi tama. Hindi po ito magpapalakas sa ating barangayan sa Pilipinas. Mapalad tayo, katangi-tanging bansa na mayroon tayong mga community leaders, ready to serve and even offer their lives, if necessary, to protect our democratic system in the lower echelon, in the lower grassroots level.

Ang pinakamahirap pong trabaho, para sa akin, ay maging Punong Barangay, much more difficult than being a Member of Congress, much more challenging than even being a Mayor. Ako po ay nagtagumpay sa aking siyam na taong paglilingkod bilang Mayor sa tulong ng barangayan.

If we had improved the economic conditions of Manila, I give credit to the barangays who helped me do that. If we had improved the peace and order condition, if we had eradicated the drug problem during our time, it was because the barangays worked with me.

Itong ating horrendous, chaotic traffic condition ay hindi mananatili kung ang mga barangay ay hihingan lamang ng tulong ng mga local government unit at ng national government. Pero kung ganito ang ating trato na bibigyan natin sila ng postponement, blindly, we cannot even explain to the people why we are postponing the barangay election, hindi po magpapalakas ito. Ito po ay magpapahina sa pinakaugat ng ating demokrasya. Kaya bumoto po ang inyong lingkod; we are against this postponement and I hope, our colleagues are guided accordingly by their conscience.

Salamat po.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Honorable Cong. Gary C. Alejano, you are now recognized. You have three minutes to explain your vote.

#### REP. ALEJANO EXPLAINS HIS VOTE

REP. ALEJANO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I voted “No” on the proposed measure to postpone the barangay elections for the third time. The arguments to justify the postponement are shaky at best.

Number one, the proponents of the measure suggest that the elections be held instead in October to synchronize them with the possible plebiscite for the amendment of the Constitution. First and foremost, there is no assurance that the plebiscite will push through in October. We are pitching on an indefinite. Should the plebiscite not materialize in October, are we suggesting another postponement? This sends an impression to the Filipino people of abuse of discretion on the part of Congress.

Number two, the proponents also argue that the COMELEC lacks time and resources to conduct the barangay elections as scheduled. However, the COMELEC and the DILG have assured the public that preparations continue to run in anticipation of the May 14 local election. The COMELEC even said that the preparations are almost through. Time and resources supposedly impeding the conduct of elections is cheap argument, vis-à-vis the compelling significance of elections.

Number three, another argument that floated in this Chamber is the involvement of barangay officials in illegal drug trade. This argument has been presented since the first call for postponement, and even on the second time. I would like to reiterate that the answer to this issue is to file charges against those involved, not the postponement of elections. If, indeed, the current barangay posts are compromised by drug-tainted personalities, then it is imperative to push through with the barangay elections to remove such officials, kahit po i-campaign pa ng gobyerno na huwag na po silang iboto.

Election is a fundamental requirement of a democracy. It is a manifestation of democracy in action as it affirms to the citizens that the right to choose their leaders is intact. As Representatives of the people, we are charged to protect and promulgate this right, not trample upon it, Mr. Speaker.

Maraming salamat.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Honorable Cong. Gabriel H. Bordado Jr., you are hereby recognized. You have three minutes to explain your “No” vote.

#### REP. BORDADO EXPLAINS HIS VOTE

REP. BORDADO. Mr. Speaker, for the past few months, I have been consulting my constituents in the Third District of Camarines Sur particularly the barangay officials and the youth leaders, Mr. Speaker. Most of them are pushing for the conduct of the barangay and SK elections on May 14, 2018. This position has, I understand, the support of the OIC-DILG Secretary who, as a member of the Cabinet, is the President’s alter ego.

More than anything else, however, Mr. Speaker, we must now give our people the power to choose or determine who should be their barangay officials and SK leaders through the right to suffrage which is the very cornerstone of democracy, Mr. Speaker. I am, therefore, voting “No” to the postponement of the elections.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The honorable Cong. Ariel “Ka Ayik” B. Casilao, you are recognized. You have three minutes to explain your “No” vote.

#### REP. CASILAO EXPLAINS HIS VOTE

REP. CASILAO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Sa pangatlong pagkakataon ng pagsususpinde o postponement ng barangay and SK elections, ang Kinatawang ito ay mahigpit pa ring bumoto ng “No,” or on the negative side. Dahil nga isang malaking kalapastanganan sa karapatan ng ating mamamayan, sa kanilang constitutionally guaranteed right to select their local leaders to an electoral process na makikita doon at malalaman natin doon kung sino ba talaga iyong mga leaders ng barangay o ng mga SK ang performing at non-performing.

Pero mas malaki po ang hindi katanggap-tanggap na mga kadahilanang binanggit ng Komiteng ito ay isasang-ayon doon sa paparating na plebisito. Mas kaduda-duda, Mr. Speaker, na para bang luto na pala ang mga panukalang pag-amyenda ng Konstitusyon, kung mayroon nang sinasabi o binabanggit na specific na timeline to conduct a plebiscite. The danger, Mr. Speaker, ibig sabihin po, kung may nakahanda na, iraratsada na lang ito para abutin ang schedule ng plebiscite sa Oktubre. Mas malaking pagkabahala po ng Kinatawang ito ang ibinahaging kadahilanan ng Komite na nagpanukala ng postponement ng barangay election. Maiintindihan ko pa kung binabanggit ng Komite na ito ay dahil sa walang preparasyon o kulang sa preparasyon. Pero malinaw po na sinabi na ng COMELEC, 80 to 85 percent all systems go. Kung mapo-postpone ito, mas malaki sa pera ng taumbayan ang mawawaldas o masasayang. Ang COMELEC na mismo ang nagsabi niyan. Ibig sabihin po ba, ang Kongresong ito ay

pumapayag na mawaldas ang pera ng taumbayan dahil sa panukalang postponement?

Kaya po, Mr. Speaker, sa pangatlong pagkakataon, garapalan na po iyan at dapat ay hindi na po natin payagan. Maraming salamat po.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Honorable Cong. France L. Castro, you are now recognized. You have three minutes to explain your “No” vote.

#### REP. CASTRO (F.L.) EXPLAINS HER VOTE

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker.

Ang Kinatawang pong ito ay hindi nasasapatan sa mga dahilan at rason kung bakit—sa panukala ng Komite na i-postpone ang barangay election at SK election. So, unang-una po ay sobra na po iyong pangatlong beses na kung saan dini-deprive po natin ang karapatan ng ating mga mamamayan na i-express ang kanilang karapatan sa pamamagitan ng pagboto.

Wala pong basehan ang mga binanggit na mga dahilan kung bakit gusto nating i-postpone ang eleksyon—unang-una, ang preparasyon. Nilinaw na po ng COMELEC na handang-handa na ang COMELEC sa darating na barangay and SK eleksyon. Handa na iyong mga form. So, ibig pong sabihin ba nito ay kung isasabay ito doon sa plebisito ay babaguhin pa? Lalo tayong hindi makakatipid sa ganoong pamamaraan. Bakit natin aantayin ang plebisito? Hindi pa naman tiyak kung kailan ito magaganap, sa October ba, sa 2019 ba, or sa mga susunod pang mga panahon?

Mr. Speaker, ang taumbayan na ang sa tingin natin ay dapat na magpasya. Sa tingin ko po ay napaparusahan ng mga mahuhusay na posibleng lingkod-bayan na puwedeng tumakbo sa barangay election at nabibigyan naman ng pabor o premyo ang mga hindi karapat-dapat. Kung ang dahilan po ay iyong tinatawag nating korapsyon o iyong droga na involved ang 40 to 60 percent ng ating mga barangay officials, dapat ito ay kasuhan at hindi iyong pagpo-postpone ng barangay election. Kaya po, Mr. Speaker, ang Kinatawang pong ito ay bumoboto ng “No.”

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Honorable Cong. Emmi A. De Jesus, you are recognized.

REP. DE JESUS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). You have three minutes to explain your vote.

#### REP. DE JESUS EXPLAINS HER VOTE

REP. DE JESUS. Salamat, Mr. Speaker. Dalawang punto na lamang po ang idadagdag ko dito sa ilang nabanggit na sinasang-ayunan ko rin.

Sa ilalim ng panukalang ito, magkakaroon ng maling konsepto ang publiko. Ano ba talaga ang diwa ng exercise of democracy? Ibig sabihin, ang inaasahan nilang petsa na muli nilang itatala ang kanilang paninindigan sa pamamagitan ng pagboto ng kanilang lokal na lider, ay nawala o na-delay.

Ang ikalawang punto, ang five-month delay, ay maaaring magbigay pa ng maraming oportunidad para sa lalong pagpapalakas ng kapangyarihan ng mga kasalukuyang nakaupo na maaaring magamit sa kanilang sariling interes o di kaya, pagbibigay ng pabor sa kasalukuyang gobyerno bilang kapalit ng extended term. Kaya ang boto ko po ay “No.”

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Cong. Raul V. Del Mar, you are recognized. You have three minutes to explain your “No” vote.

#### REP. DEL MAR EXPLAINS HIS VOTE

REP. DEL MAR. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This will be the third time that the barangay elections will be postponed. I voted against the first postponement which was one year—from October 2016, to October 2017. I voted “No” again to the second postponement—from October 2017, to May 2018. Now, I am voting against this postponement—from May, to October 2018.

Totally, Mr. Speaker, it will be a total term of additional two years for the barangay officials. In a representative democracy, we elect our representatives in the barangay, in the city—in the governors, the provincial mayors, and all. Even we here in Congress, we are elected for a specific period of time. We call that “term of office.” That is a covenant between our electorate and us, when we ran for that office. Our constituents elected us and there is a covenant between them and us, and that we will serve only for the specific term of office we are elected to. So, that is what I am objecting to. Mr. Speaker, because they extend the postponement, in effect, they extend the term of the barangay officials.

So, it is what was bruited about that perhaps we will have no elections in May next year; but in advance, I am saying, I will also vote against any law or any provision that will postpone or say that there will be no election because of the overriding transitory provisions. When the time comes for us to extend it, I will also vote against my own extension.

Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Congresswoman Elago, you are recognized. You have three minutes to explain your “No” vote.

REP. ELAGO EXPLAINS HER VOTE

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, KABATAAN Party-List expresses our vehement opposition to this nefarious move of postponing the barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan elections for the third time in a row. We did not subscribe to the reasoning used for the first time, that there was an election fatigue. We did not subscribe to the reasoning used for the second time, that drug money would only seep into the electoral process.

When will the proponents of postponement run out of excuses, Mr. Speaker? More so, now that we do not subscribe to a hypothetical and speculative proposition na ang atin pong barangay at SK election ay isasabay sa planong plebisito para sa pagbabago o sa pagtatakda ng amyenda ng ating Konstitusyon.

Mr. Speaker, we have warned before that this could be a mind-conditioning campaign to justify yet another poll postponement. Noong unang pagkakataon pa lamang, sinabi na natin na ang mga dahilan na nasabi ay maaari na namang gamitin iyan para magkaroon na naman ng postponement. Ito ay sinabi na natin noong October 2017, na maaaring hindi na naman matuloy ang May 2018 election. At ngayon nga, nakikita na naman natin na napakarami na namang dahilan para lalo pang ipagkait ang karapatan sa pagpili ng kanilang mga lider mula sa ating mga kababayan at ng mga kabataan, lalung-lalo na doon sa mga pinakamalalapit sa kanila, ang kanilang mga lider sa barangay at Sangguniang Kabataan.

Mr. Speaker, nangyari na ngayon, at nababahala tayo na mangyari na naman ulit. This is a telltale sign of laying the pretext for term extension and the use of poll postponement as a tool for political leveraging, just as other measures are railroaded towards a looming dictatorship.

At sa mga kadahilanang ito, Mr. Speaker, ang KABATAAN ay mayroong malakas na oposisyon sa postponement ng barangay at Sangguniang Kabataan sa pangatlong pagkakataon.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Congressman Tinio, you are recognized and you have three minutes to explain your “No” vote.

REP. TINIO EXPLAINS HIS VOTE

REP. TINIO. Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker.

Bumoto po ako ng “No” sa panukalang postponement na naman ng barangay election dahil sa susunod na mga dahilan: una, malinaw na wala pong anumang matinong batayan na binanggit ang mga nagtutulak ng panukalang ito para i-postpone muli ang barangay election.

Iyong COMELEC, hindi raw handa ang COMELEC, eh malinaw nang narinig mula sa COMELEC mismo na handang-handa sila sa anumang preparasyon na kinakailangan. Sa katunayan, sinabi pa nga nila na ang anumang postponement, halimbawa sa Oktubre o maging sa Disyembre o sa susunod na Mayo, ay makakagulo pa nga sa paghahanda naman nila para sa national and local elections sa 2019. So, iyong dahilan pong iyon ay malinaw na walang batayan.

Iyong ikalawang dahilan ay ang, sabi daw, kaya sa Oktubre itinakda ay dahil isasabay na raw sa plebisito para sa pagbabago ng Konstitusyon. Sa kasamaang palad po, Mr. Speaker, nasa guni-guni pa lamang ang panukalang plebisito na ito, na wala sinuman dito sa atin ang makapagsasabi na tiyak na magkakaroon nang plebisito para sa pagbabago ng Konstitusyon sa Oktubre ng taong ito. Kaya muli, wala na namang saysay ang batayang ito.

Ikalawang dahilan kung bakit tayo tumututol at yamang nabanggit na rin ng mga Sponsor ang Chacha, malinaw po na, hindi tulad noong una at maging noong pangalawang postponement, ngayon po ay malinaw na nakaugnay sa mas malaking agenda nga na pagbabago ng Konstitusyon ang postponement ng barangay election na ito. Malinaw din po sa amin na kung ang panukala ngayon ay para sa no election at term extension sa mga barangay official, nakakawing po at magiging unang hakbang tungo sa no election at term extension para sa iba pang mga national official ang susunod, kabilang po ang mga Congressman, Senador, at mga Mayor at Governor. Hindi lang po haka-haka ito, nakapaloob mismo ang ganiyang panukala sa mga dokumento, sa mga sub-committee reports ng House Committee on Constitutional Amendments. Sabi po roon, the moment na maaprubahan po sa isang plebisito ang bagong Konstitusyon, wala na pong eleksyon ang mga incumbent sa pwesto sa Kongreso, sa Senado, sa local government units, at mananatili sila sa pwesto sa ilalim ng bagong porma ng gobyerno. Iyan po ang “no-el,” iyan po ang term extension.

Panghuli po, ay malinaw na malinaw po ang kagustuhan ng taumbayan na matuloy na ang eleksyon. Hindi na sila papayag sa postponement pa ng barangay election, kaya po tumitindig tayo para sa tunay na kahilingan ng taumbayan sa pagboto natin ng “No.”

Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Congressman Zarate, you are recognized. You have three minutes to explain your “No” vote.

REP. ZARATE EXPLAINS HIS VOTE

REP. ZARATE. Maraming salamat, G. Ispiker.

Ang Kinatawang ito po ng BAYAN MUNA ay bumoboto ng “No” sa panukalang pag-postpone na

naman ng barangay election at ng SK election. Hindi ho ito ang hinihingi ng ating mga mamamayan na i-postpone na naman ang kanilang karapatang pumili ng kanilang mga lider sa antas barangay. Ito po ay napakasamang precedent. Sinabi na namin noon, noong unang i-postpone ang barangay election at SK election, na ito ay magiging parang nakasanayan na at nagbabadya ito ng marami pang postponements sa mga darating na panahon, at ito nga ang nangyayari ngayon.

Sinasabi ni Pangulong Duterte na napakaraming barangay sa buong kapuluan ang impluwensyado ng problema sa droga. Maraming opisyal ang sangkot sa problema sa droga. Kung magkaganoon, G. Ispiker, ang solusyon diyan ay papalitan na itong mga opisyal na ito at huwag na silang hayaang manatili pa sa poder. Parang binibigyan natin sila ng gantimpala na i-extend pa ang kanilang pagtatamasa, ang kanilang pagsasamantala sa kanilang posisyon dito sa panukala ho nating postponement na naman ng barangay election.

G. Ispiker, malinaw nang lumalabas ngayon na ang tunguhin talaga ng postponement ng barangay and SK election ay nakasaad na rin doon sa sinabi ng ating mga tagapagtaguyod nito na isasabay ito sa plebisito ng pagbabago ng Saligang Batas, at ito ang mas nakababahalang rason kung bakit ipo-postpone na naman ang barangay election.

Sinabi ko kanina, bad precedent at posibleng maging precedent din ito, hindi lang para ma-postpone ang barangay at SK elections, kung hindi precedent para manatili pa sa kapangyarihan, manatili sa posisyon ang mga nakahalal ngayong mga lingkod-bayan dahil mapo-postpone din ang local election sa 2019. May mga panukala pang in the interim habang walang eleksyon in 2019 up to 2022. Ito ay magbibigay ng dagdag na kapangyarihan kay Pangulong Duterte.

Kaya ito po ang mga ikinakabahala at malaking dahilan kung bakit natin tinututulan ang muling pag-postpone ng barangay election, dahil hindi ito ang kagustuhan ng mamamayan. Ang kagustuhan ng mamamayan at ng ating mga kababayan ay pumili ng kanilang mga lider sa antas-barangay na siyang mamumuno sa kanila at hindi tuwi-tuwina na lamang, sa kagustuhan ng Kongreso, ay pigilan ito.

Maraming salamat, G. Ispiker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Congressman Erice, you are recognized. You have three minutes to explain your “No” vote.

REP. ERICE EXPLAINS HIS VOTE

REP. ERICE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, good afternoon.

The barangay might be our smallest political subdivision but it does not mean that it is less important.

In fact, it is in the frontline of providing services to our people. Ang barangay po ang unang dinudulugan ng mga pinakamaliliit hanggang sa pinakamalalaking suliranin ng ating mga mamamayan kaya’t mahalaga na laging buo ang pagtitiwala ng bayan sa mga nakaluklok na pinuno ng barangayan.

Pangatlong ulit na po nating ipagpapaliban ang barangay elections. Buo po ang aking tiwala, dinig na dinig ko ang panaghoy ng aking mga kababayan sa Ikalawang Distrito ng Caloocan na sa tingin nila ay pinaglalaruan na lamang natin ang kanilang karapatan, ang kanilang sagradong karapatan na pumili ng kanilang mga lider sa kani-kanilang mga komunidad.

Pangalawa po, tatlong taon na rin na walang mga lider ang mga Sangguniang Kabataan. Mayroon po tayong ipinasang SK Reform Law na nagbabawal ng political dynasty, nagbibigay ng kakayahan sa pananalapi, at nagbibigay ng pagsasanay sa ating mga kabataan. Panahon na po para ibigay natin ito sa ating mga kabataan.

Pangatlo po, we are postponing the barangay elections for the wrong reasons. Ang barangay elections po ay para sa barangay. Pino-postpone po natin iyong barangay election para sa ating sarili dahil may interes tayo na magkaroon ng plebisito, dahil may interes tayo na i-postpone ang May 2019 elections. Ito pong batas na ito ay hindi para sa barangay; ito pong batas na ito ay self-serving kaya ako po ay bumoboto ng “No” sa panukalang ito.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). In the tally of votes on House Bill No. 7378, the Secretariat has submitted the following: affirmative votes – 211, negative votes – 29, and no abstention. But this tally was corrected by the Secretariat, having committed an honest mistake: instead of 211 affirmative votes, the Secretariat has reported that it should be 164 affirmative votes; instead of 29 negative votes, the Secretariat has reported 27 votes; and the abstention remains the same.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker.

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7378  
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). With 164 affirmative votes, 27 negative votes and no abstention, House Bill No. 7378 is hereby approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker.

REP. GULLAS. What is the pleasure of the Sr. Dep. Minority Leader?

REP. ATIENZA. We would like to manifest a very critical issue that is now on the floor. The Secretariat announced very clearly that there were 211 who voted in the affirmative, at the first instance, and 29 against. Now, the Majority is correcting what is very obviously a manufactured figure because there were not more than 170 Members on the floor when we were voting. We did not question that, but now that you are the one bringing up the issue, when we were voting, there were not 240 Members if we follow the count of the Secretariat of 211 in favor and 29 against.

So, it is very clear, Mr. Speaker, as we keep on pointing out, the count coming from the Secretariat and the staff is not always accurate. This is a clear manifestation of an erroneous count hoisted on all of us. So, we should be very careful, Mr. Speaker. The point of this manifestation this Representation is delivering is just to remind the Secretariat. Let us be more accurate in our count because we will be very vigilant when it comes to attendance, voting, and scores registered after the vote.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Is there any reaction on the part of the Majority Leader as to the manifestation of Congressman Lito Atienza?

REP. FARIÑAS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In fact, it was in the interest of accuracy that they made the correction, to make the records speak correctly.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Chair subscribes to the manifestation of the Majority Leader.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 7303  
ON THIRD READING

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 7303 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. Castro, F.H.). 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 15, 2018, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.*

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

*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. 76, dated March 19, 2018.*

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, we vote “No” and we would like to explain our vote after the voting.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Noted.

REP. ATIENZA. Thank you.

REP. BAGUILAT. Mr. Speaker, our vote is “Yes” and I would like to be given a chance to explain my vote later.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Noted.

REP. BIAZON. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Hon. Rozzano Rufino B. Biazon is recognized.

REP. BIAZON. Yes, Mr. Speaker. I vote “No” and will submit my written explanation at a later time.\* Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Noted.

REP. BORDADO. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Hon. Gabriel H. Bordado Jr. is recognized.

REP. BORDADO. My vote is “No” and, again, kindly allow me to explain my vote later.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Noted.

\* See ANNEX (printed separately)

REP. CAGAS. My vote is “No” and I hope I will be given a chance to explain later.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Noted.

REP. CASILAO. Mr. Speaker, my vote is “Yes” and I will be submitting the explanation of my vote.\*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Noted.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Mr. Speaker, my vote is “Yes.”

REP. CHIPECO. Mr. Speaker, my vote is “No” and may I be allowed to explain my vote later.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Noted.

REP. DE JESUS. Mr. Speaker, ang boto ko po ay “Yes” at nais ko muling itala kung bakit “Yes” ang aking boto mamaya.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Noted.

REP. DEL MAR. My vote is “No” and may I explain my vote later.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Noted.

REP. ERICE. My vote is “No” and may I be allowed to explain my vote later.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Noted.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mr. Speaker, taliwas po ang divorce sa Constitution. I vote “No.”

REP. TINIO. Mr. Speaker, I vote “Yes.”

REP. VELARDE. Mr. Speaker, my vote is “No” and I would like to submit my explanation. Thank you.\*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Noted.

REP. VERGARA. Mr. Speaker, I vote “Yes” and I would like to explain my vote later.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Noted.

REP. ZARATE. G. Ispiker, paminsan-minsan po bumoboto rin ang BAYAN MUNA ng “Yes.” (*Laughter*)

REP. ZUBIRI. Mr. Speaker, my vote is “No” and may I be given the chance to say my speech for my vote. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Noted.

#### RESULT OF THE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The result shows 134 affirmative votes, 57 negative votes, and 2 abstentions.

House Bill No. 7303 is approved on Third Reading. (*Applause*)

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Before we proceed, we would like to manifest again that the count of the Secretariat is again erroneous. We have only 160 Members on the floor, and there could not have been 191 as their score is announced. We want that on record in this proceeding.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). It is noted.

#### EXPLANATION OF VOTES

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Gary C. Alejano for his three-minute explanation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Representative Alejano is hereby recognized. You have three minutes to explain your vote.

#### REP. ALEJANO EXPLAINS HIS VOTE

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

I voted “No” on House Bill No. 7303 or the Divorce Bill because it will open all the more the floodgates to failed marriages in the country. I expect that the Divorce Law, once passed, will bring with it a great deal of injury that shall inflict itself upon women, families, and to the whole of the Filipino society.

The Divorce Law has been primarily forwarded as a pro-woman legislation. Accordingly, with divorce,

\* See ANNEX (printed separately)

women can afford to free themselves from the clutches of evil men. They have failed to mention, however, that divorce would most likely force Filipino women to destitution. A British study has shown that divorce has an even positive effect on men's finances that it can even lift them out of poverty, while women are more likely to suffer indigence. Separated women have a poverty rate of 27 percent, three times more than that of their former husbands. Moreover, only 31 percent of separated mothers received payment from the father of their children. We must remember that divorce is a two-way street. If women can easily afford to leave their husbands, so can men easily afford to leave their wives also. In the end, how can the divorce process be pro-woman if it is the men that benefit the most?

Aside from the harm a Divorce Law would inflict upon women, more disconcerting is the danger it exposes a child to. There is a general consensus among academic circles that children are affected by the sudden change in their familial environment including the influences that accompany the divorce process. The divorce process affects the mental state of children, which includes the development of behavioral problems, negative self-concept, social problems, and difficulties in relationship with the parents. More alarming is the higher frequency of depression, violence, learning and social deterioration, and a high-risk of committing suicide.

Am I to suppose that the convenience of easily dissolving marriages holds greater importance than that of our children's well-being? I recognize that there are irreparable marriages or otherwise invalid ones. To address these, we already have pre-existing legal remedies like annulment, the only criticism of which is the time and resources it takes to undergo such process. The point of contention then is to make annulment an expedient process and a more affordable one especially for the poor.

We should not haphazardly pass a Divorce Law without considering its adverse ramifications. Bagkus, dapat lalo pa nating pagtibayin ang pamilyang Pilipino na siyang nagpapalago at nagpapanatili ng ating pag-uugali at kultura. We should instead educate our young people on the inherent responsibilities of a married life that await them once they get married.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Chair reminds....

REP. ALEJANO. Kung may divorce law...

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). ... Congressman Alejano that his three minutes is over.

REP. ALEJANO. I am rounding up, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ALEJANO. Kung may Divorce Law na po noong ako ay naka-detain nang pitong taon, baka wala na akong limang anak at isang masayang pamilya ngayon. In view of the foregoing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to manifest my "No" vote on House Bill No. 7303. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Congressman Atienza is hereby recognized. You have three minutes to explain your vote.

#### REP. ATIENZA EXPLAINS HIS VOTE

REP. ATIENZA. Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker. I vote emphatically "No" on this proposed law for several reasons: una, ito po ay ang imposisyon—alam ko at alam namin—ng mga banyagang makapangyarihang bansa sa ating minamahal at naghihirap na Pilipinas. Bakit? Sapagkat sila ay nagkamali na. Wasak na ang kanilang lipunan, madilim na ang hinaharap nila, at ang mga bata ay hindi na po maililigtas kailanman. Pinapatay nila ang kanilang kamag-aral, pinapatay nila ang kanilang mga guro sapagkat sila ay wala na pong pamilya. Ang kanilang ama at ina ay hiwa-hiwalay na. Ang kanilang lipunan ay mahinang-mahina na at madilim ang kanilang hinaharap. Gusto nila na ang Pilipino ay magaya rin sa kanila.

Ito pong Representasyong ito ay gising na gising. Mulat po ang aking mata na hindi tayo dapat nagpapadala sa mga banyaga. Kung mahal natin ang ating sarili, dapat sana ay naninindigan tayo ngayon.

Pangalawa, itong panukalang batas na ito ay labag sa ating Saligang Batas. What is stated in Article XV, Section 2, on Marriage, is very clear. Marriage as an inviolable—alam ba ninyo ang ibig sabihin ng "inviolable"? It cannot even be touched and should be protected. It should not be downgraded by any Congress in our country. Palitan ninyo ang ating Saligang Batas bago tayo magpasá ng ganitong uri ng batas.

Pangatlo, ito po ay labag sa utos ng Diyos sapagkat naniniwala pa rin ako sa kaniyang sinabi, "Whom God hath put together, let no man put asunder." Ito po ang ating kapalaran. Sabi nila, tayo na lang ang katangitanging bansa na hindi tumatanggap ng diborsyo. Iyan ay ipagmalaki natin at hindi natin dapat ikahiya na ang lahat ng mamamayan ay may respeto sa kanilang pagiging Pilipino.

Makinig tayo sa tinig ni Gat Andres Bonifacio na hanggang ngayon ay umaalingawngaw pa sa aking tainga.

Mag-isip tayo bilang Pilipino. Gumalaw tayo bilang Pilipino. Mahalin natin ang ating pagiging Pilipino kaya hindi dapat ibinoto itong batas na ito.

Maraming salamat po.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Rep. Teddy Brawner Baguilat Jr., you are recognized. You have three minutes to explain your vote.



## REP. BAGUILAT EXPLAINS HIS VOTE

REP. BAGUILAT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I support the Divorce Bill as a means of recognizing and legitimizing the traditional practice of divorce among indigenous peoples, and also as an extreme measure of protection against domestic violence, especially, violence against women.

Let there be no doubt that I do sternly defend the family as the basic unit of society and the foundation of morals of all Filipinos. However, there are instances when the ties that bind have to be rendered asunder in order to achieve a greater good. One such good is the recognition of the culture of our indigenous brothers and sisters. Some ethnic groups recognize divorce as part of their marital practices. Indeed, the Philippine Statistics Authority has attributed cultural beliefs among Muslims and indigenous peoples as one of the major reasons for dissolved families that it has documented.

This is no minor matter for ethnic groups concerned. The traditions of cultural minorities have been built up over generations and they are there for a reason, such as the preservation of overall harmony in the community. These tribes believe that there is a greater good that is served by allowing husband and wife to go their separate ways under certain circumstances.

To be clear, not all indigenous groups subscribe to this practice, but I submit that where a group condones this practice, the conventional legal framework should afford them the means to implement their belief. After all, we do not want our indigenous brothers and sisters to be integrated into the major legal system. That can be achieved by allowing fundamental elements of their culture to be preserved.

Another reason I support the Divorce Bill is that it can be a means to stop violence against women perpetrated by one spouse against the other, commonly against the wife, but it can go either way. In those extreme situations, divorce becomes a viable solution to end violence and abuse. Divorce offers a way out for the maltreated spouse. The State has an interest in preserving the health and safety of its citizens, and if divorce is the only means left for a State to dispense this responsibility, then we must grant the State that opportunity.

For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, my colleagues, I cast my vote in support of the Divorce Bill.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Rep. Gabriel H. Bordado, Jr. you are recognized. You have three minutes to explain your vote.

## REP. BORDADO EXPLAINS HIS VOTE

REP. BORDADO. Mr. Speaker, aside from the fact

that the majority of my constituents in the Third District of Camarines Sur, the seat of Catholicism in Bicol, are against divorce, I am also keen on upholding Sections 1 and 2 of Article XV of the 1987 Constitution which states that, "The State recognizes the Filipino family as the foundation of the nation. Accordingly, it shall strengthen its solidarity and actively promote its total development", and that, "Marriage, as an inviolable social institution, is the foundation of the family and shall be protected by the State."

In other words, Mr. Speaker, it is about maintaining the sanctity of the family and promoting the welfare of the children who will be caught in the cross-fire in case the warring parents initiate divorce proceedings.

Mr. Speaker, I am therefore, voting "No" to divorce.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Rep. Mercedes "Didi" C. Cagas, you are recognized. You have three minutes to explain your vote.

## REP. CAGAS EXPLAINS HER VOTE

REP. CAGAS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am a firm believer that the family is a fundamental building block of any civilization, created by God as the first institution even before we were all born. Hence, I am for protecting the sanctity of marriage.

Remember the time when our elders used to tell us na ang pag-aasawa ay hindi parang kaning mainit na kapag isinubo mo at napaso ka ay iluluwa mo. Unfortunately, today, marriage and the family are regularly viewed as a social convention that can be entered into and severed by the marital partners at will. But may I emphasize that marriage is not an institution created by humans. This means that humans are not free to renegotiate marriage and the family in any way that they want, but they are to preserve and respect what has been divinely instituted. When two people get married, they are making a commitment to one another to stay together how bad it may seem at the moment. If you are not ready to make that kind of commitment, then do not get married in the first place. Mr. Speaker, sacrifice is an essential element of a strong marriage.

Mr. Speaker, instead of giving an opportunity for families to break, let us focus on strengthening families. This can be done by promoting healthy marriages. Couples who find themselves in an unhappy marriage should be given support by the community and be forewarned of the consequences of breaking apart such a sacred bond. In addition, Mr. Speaker, decades of studies using large samples and robust research methods show that children tend to grow at their best when raised by a mother and a father. So why will we approve this

Bill when the vast majority of divorced couples with children faced years of emotional upheaval that the legal process, single parenthood, remarriage and step-families caused?

The future of this country depends on our understanding of marriage and its role in upholding an upright and stable society. Just imagine living in a country where half of the children grow without their fathers or mothers on their side. Divorce would not only deny the importance of the role of family, it will also deny children an opportunity to be nurtured in an environment with the love and care of parents, which is vital in the development of children.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, may I point out that it is the mandate of Congress to protect our country's legally and morally declared social and sacred institutions, and by passing this measure, we are not adhering to our mandate.

Mr. Speaker, at this juncture, may I express my sincere apology to the authors of this measure for voting "No" on the Divorce Bill.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Congressman Chipeco, you are recognized. You have three minutes to explain your vote.

#### REP. CHIPECO EXPLAINS HIS VOTE

REP. CHIPECO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, my explanation would last more than three minutes that is why may I be given a chance to explain my vote in a written explanation to be submitted to the Secretariat?\*

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, sa aking palagay, narito po ako para isaboses ang nilalaman ng kaisipan at puso ng aking mga kababayan. Marami pong pagkakataon na ako ay nagtanong sa kanila, itinanong ko po sa lahat, sa bawat sulok ng aking distrito, kung ano ba talaga ang nasa puso at isip nila. Pabor ba sila o hindi dito sa paghihiwalay ng ating mga mag-aasawa? Ang narinig ko po ay halos 90 porsiyento ay kontra dito.

Kaya bilang Kinatawan at sumasaboses ng mga tinig ng aking mga kababayan, palagay ko ang aking tungkulin ay ilagay ang pagboto dito sa kanilang nagugustuhan at talagang nararamdaman sa kanilang mga puso. Kaya, Mr. Speaker, sa kadahilanan pong ito, at sa mga iba pang mga dahilan, na sa aking palagay ay hindi po kayang matapos ng tatlong minuto, hayaan ninyo pong ipamarali ko pa ang aking pagboto ng "No" sa pamamagitan ng isang written explanation.

Marami pong salamat, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The desire of Congressman Chipeco to submit a written explanation of his vote is noted.

Congresswoman De Jesus, you are recognized. You have three minutes to explain your vote.

#### REP. DE JESUS EXPLAINS HER VOTE

REP. DE JESUS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Walang dapat ikatakot sa panukalang ito at dapat na ngang maipasá ang batas na ito dahil ito ang ikaapat na magiging remedyo doon sa mga relasyong may paglabag na sa kontratang kanilang pinasok. Ang pagpasok sa kontrata ng kasal na kinikilala naman ng ating Estado ay isang karapatan—karapatang kinikilala ngunit dapat tandaan na may karampatang obligasyon na dapat tuparin ng magkabilang panig. Sabi nga, at kahit ito ay nasa Constitution, dapat naroon ang pagmamahalan, paggalang, suportang factors na magbibigay ng kaligayahan at kalusugan sa kanilang relasyon. Kapag may paglabag sa mga obligasyong ito, na kung minsan ay umaabot pa ang paglabag sa puntong nakataya na ang buhay at katinuan sa pagitan ng mag-asawa, marapat lamang na kilalanin din ng Estado ang karapatan na wakasan ang kontrata at umalis doon sa relasyon.

Ito ay hindi religious Bill, ngunit gusto ko ring banggitin na ang GABRIELA Women's Party at ang Makabayan Bloc ay maraming basis of unity sa iba't ibang relihiyon, primarily pa nga sa Catholic Church.

Ano ang bottom line ng aming basis of unity? Ang paglaban sa injustice; kawalang katarungan sa isyu ng EJK; demolisyon ng mga mahihirap; militarisasyon ng mga lumads; pagmimina ng mga dayuhan na sumasalanta sa mga katutubo; at palagay naming mauunawaan ng Simbahan. Hindi ba may nagaganap na injustice sa mga relasyong umiiral ang pagkasuklam na sa isa't isa, umiiral ang violence sa pagitan ng mag-asawa? Hindi ba inhustisya sa mga bata na magiging saksi doon sa loob ng pamilya? Ang pamilya sa kasalukuyang panahon na ating itinuturing ngayon ay nagbago na rin dahil sa socio-economic situation na napakarami na, na ang pamilya ngayon ay hiwalay na dahil obligado nang pumunta at mangibang-bayan para maghanapbuhay ang isa sa kanilang magulang.

Para sa mga maliligaya at para sa mga may mga malulusog na relasyon, na katulad ko, ...

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Chair reminds the Lady that her three minutes is over.

REP. DE JESUS. ... gusto ko lang pong sabihin na ito ay hindi para sa atin. Huwag tayong mafa-file ng divorce dahil maligaya, malusog ang ating relasyon.

\* See ANNEX (printed separately)

Ngunit para sa marami at paparaming stakeholders na lumalapit, na gusto nang kumawala at gumamit ng bagong remedyo, ibigay na po natin sa kanila ito, kaya ako po ay bumoboto ng “Yes” sa panukalang ito.

Maraming salamat po.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Congressman Del Mar, you are recognized. You have three minutes to explain your vote.

#### REP. DEL MAR EXPLAINS HIS VOTE

REP. DEL MAR. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This Representation has interpellated and debated against this measure extensively, but I would just like to restate the main points against this measure.

First, it is against the Constitution. It has been pointed out by several Members that it violates Article XV, Sections 1 and 2 of our Constitution, and let me just restate: “Sec. 2. Marriage, as an inviolable social institution, is the foundation of the family and shall be protected by the State.” Divorce does not protect the State. Divorce even harms and destroys the family.

Second, in the same Article XV of the Constitution, Section 1 states: “The State recognizes the Filipino family as the foundation of the nation. Accordingly, it shall strengthen its solidarity and actively promote its total development.” Again, divorce does not strengthen the solidarity of the family. It destroys and weakens instead the solidarity of the family.

Even in the declaration of principles of this measure, Mr. Speaker, it is given here on the first part, these are two parts—the first part recognizes that the State continues to protect and preserve marriage as a social institution and as a foundation of the family. We have no quarrel there. But the second portion provides that it shall also give opportunities to spouses in irremediably failed marriages to secure an absolute divorce under limited grounds. This is not true as you read the measure. Limited grounds is not few in number; there are 21 grounds here. Do you call that limited grounds? Why, Mr. Speaker? Because all the grounds where legal separation and annulment which are existing today are all lumped together and more grounds are added to make this so-called limited grounds for divorce. This is inconsistent, Mr. Speaker.

Let me just say that we do not need this. We need this like a hole in the head, Mr. Speaker. It harms and destroys the family instead of protecting and solidifying the family.

I would like to appeal to everyone, even if we lose the vote, I hope the news comes out today that the President is against divorce. I do not know why our Members who are supportive of the President are voting “Yes.” That is your problem because we belong to the

Liberal Party. I am just pointing it out because of the many inconsistencies in this measure.

Right now, we already have the legal separation and annulment, which are restated as grounds also for divorce. What this measure perhaps emphasizes is that legal separation...

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F. H.). The Chair reminds the Gentleman that his three minutes is over.

REP. DEL MAR. I will just wind up, Mr. Speaker.

While legal separation does not allow the couples to remarry but annulment does and we already have annulment, what we need to do is just introduce amendments on annulment to minimize the period that they are complaining of. They want a shorter period and less expense; we have to address those two points and that will be the time that we can support annulment on this basis.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F. H.). Congressman Erice, you are recognized. You have three minutes to explain your vote.

#### REP. ERICE EXPLAINS HIS VOTE

REP. ERICE. Mr. Speaker, my Catholic faith would require me to defend the sacrament of marriage. There is nothing wrong with marriage, there is nothing wrong with the sacrament. Wala pong mali sa sakramento ng kasal. Ang mga pagkakamali po ay ang mga taong pumapaloob dito na gumagawa ng katakut-takot na kapalaluan. Sa halip na ang lipunan, sa halip na ang mga leader ng lipunan ay payagang masira ang kasal, sa palagay ko ay marami pang ibang mga batas na puwede nating gawin upang protektahan ang mga naaapi sa loob ng kasal. Marami pa tayong mga batas na puwedeng gawin upang parusahan iyong mga nagkakamali na pumapaloob sa sakramento ng kasal. Marami pa pong mga batas na puwede nating gawin para mapalakas ang pagsasama ng mga taong pumapaloob sa sakramento ng kasal.

In the final analysis, Mr. Speaker, I firmly believe that my God is infallible. Hindi po Siya nagkakamali kaya naniniwala po ako sakasagraduhan ng sakramento ng kasal.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Congresswoman Vergara, you are hereby recognized. You have three minutes to explain your vote.

#### REP. VERGARA EXPLAINS HER VOTE

REP. VERGARA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While I recognize the sanctity and inviolability of

marriage, and the duty of the State to uphold it, I also believe that it is the State's responsibility to provide a remedy to our countrymen who are in irremediably failed marriages, and had previously no recourse but to be trapped in such unhappy unions.

No less than Pope Francis, in 2015, overhauled the rule for church annulment to make the process more user-friendly, to allow couples whose relationships have broken down to be able to explore, and if necessary, avail of a church annulment.

A core element was a new expedited process where, when the evidence is clear and both spouses do not contest each other, a church annulment may be secured. This Bill provides the grounds in a strict procedure to ensure that absolute dissolution, divorce, is not resorted to nonchalantly.

I fully support this Bill, and I vote "Yes."

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Congressman Zubiri, you are recognized. You have three minutes to explain your vote.

#### REP. ZUBIRI EXPLAINS HIS VOTE

REP. ZUBIRI. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Dear colleagues, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, the very root or core of the family starts with the bond between two individuals.

To me, marriage is sacred as sacred can be, and with this comes the responsibility of making this bond work, not just through thick or thin, but through thick or thin. Things happen, people change, but this bond should be protected at all cost. Some say irreconcilable differences, but these differences happen everywhere; it happens everywhere even when marriage is not present.

Mr. Speaker, we are sending the wrong signal to our children and our youth; hence, my "No" vote. I know, nevertheless, God will bless our nation and this country.

That is all, Mr. Speaker. Mahal kita, Pilipinas.

Thank you.

REP. RODRIGUEZ (M.). Mr. Speaker, may I also explain my vote.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Chair would recognize Congressman Almario first because he is ahead in the list. Unless the Gentleman is not here, then the Chair recognizes Cong. Maximo. B. Rodriguez Jr. to explain his vote.

#### REP. RODRIGUEZ (M.) EXPLAINS HIS VOTE

REP. RODRIGUEZ (M.). Mr. Speaker, my colleagues, I register my "No" vote on the basis

of Article XV, Section 1 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution which provides:

Section 1. The State recognizes the Filipino family as the foundation of the nation. Accordingly, it shall strengthen its solidarity and actively promote its total development."

In other words, Mr. Speaker, the family is the foundation of this nation, and this nation could not afford to destroy the family.

The State should also strengthen solidarity and promote the family's development. All programs, Mr. Speaker, should be geared towards strengthening the family.

Section 2, Article XV, also of the Philippine Constitution states: "Marriage, as an inviolable social institution, is the foundation of the family and shall be protected by the State." By all means, the family should be protected by all the forces of the State. And so, I submit, Mr. Speaker, my colleagues, for a "No" vote on the said measure.

Thank you.

#### APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7303 ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). With 134 affirmative votes, 57 negative votes, and 2 abstentions, House Bill No. 7303 is approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, we would like to acknowledge the presence of the guests of Hon. Gerald Anthony "Samsam" V. Gullas Jr. and Raul V. Del Mar of Cebu. These are Mr. Arman Baruel, President of JCI Cebu; Mr. Wai Kit Chan, Member of JCI Cebu; and Mr. Joshua Keanne Carredo, Member of JCI Cebu. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Welcome to the House of Representatives.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we take up the Unfinished Business and resume the consideration of House Bill No. 7376 on Committee Report No. 658, and that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, before we proceed,

it is very, very, very, very noticeable that we do not have a quorum anymore. We move that we call the roll to determine ...

REP. GULLAS. I move to suspend the session.

REP. ATIENZA. ... the quorum before we proceed to tackle any sensitive matter, Mr. Speaker.

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. GULLAS. I move to suspend the session.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The session is suspended.

*It was 6:42 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 6:44 p.m., the session was resumed.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The session is resumed.

#### CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7376

##### *Continuation*

#### PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 7376, contained in Committee Report No. 658, and that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). 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. 7376, entitled, AN ACT FURTHER STRENGTHENING THE OFFICE OF THE SOLICITOR GENERAL (OSG) BY INCREASING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, AND REDEFINING, EXPANDING, AND RATIONALIZING ITS ORGANIZATION, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9417, REPUBLIC ACT NO. 2327 AND EXECUTIVE ORDERS NO. 1 AND 2, S. 1986, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary status of the Bill is that it is in the period of sponsorship and debate. With that, Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the honorable Sponsor, the Honorable Veloso.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Cong. Vicente "Ching" S.E. Veloso is hereby recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Antonio L. Tinio who wishes to interpellate.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Congressman Tinio is hereby recognized for his interpellation.

REP. TINIO. Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, narito tayo ngayon para talakayin ang panukala ng mga kagalang-galang na Sponsor ng House Bill No. 7376. Sa title, kapag babasahin ninyo po, "An Act Further Strengthening the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) by Increasing its Powers and Functions, and Redefining, Expanding, and Rationalizing its Organization, and Repealing" certain laws and Executive Orders xxx.

Kung babasahin ninyo po, pagpapalakas ng OSG, at kung titingnan nga natin, mayroon ditong section on Reorganization, mayroong section on Standards Qualification, Salaries and Benefits of Officials and Employees of the Office of the Solicitor General, increasing their benefits and privileges, including retirement benefits. However, nakapaloob din po pala rito ang abolition ng dalawang opisina ng gobyerno. So, hindi lang po Office of the Solicitor General ang pinag-uusapan dito, kung hindi abolition ng Office of the Government Corporate Counsel at ito ang gusto kong pagtuunan ng pansin ngayon, ang Presidential Commission on Good Government, so iyong PCGG.

So, Mr. Speaker, doon pa lang sa title, kung hindi natin susuriin ay maaaring malusutan tayo. Ang isang napakamakasaysayang ahensya ng gobyerno, ang PCGG, kapag ipinasá natin ito, ay malalansag at mawawala, mabubura sa kasaysayan. Bakit ko po sinabing makasaysayan?

Alam naman po natin noong napatalsik ang diktador na si Marcos noong February 1986 at naitatag ang bagong gobyerno, sa revolutionary government na pinamunuan ni Pangulong Corazon Aquino, ang unang dalawang batas ng kanyang gobyerno, Executive Orders No. 1 and No. 2, ay nagpapatungkol sa PCGG.

Ipinakikita nito na isa sa mga pangunahing layunin ng bagong gobyerno ay ang paghahabol sa nakaw na yaman ng diktador na si Marcos, ng kanyang pamilya, at ng kanilang mga crony.

Alam din po natin na sa kasaysayan ng Republika ng Pilipinas, walang kapantay po ang pandarambong na ginawa ng diktador na si Ferdinand Marcos, ng kanyang mga pamilya, at ng mga cronies nito. Sa estimate po mismo ng gobyerno, umaabot sa \$9 to \$10 billion ang halaga ng plunder o ninakaw na yaman ni Marcos sa ilalim ng kanyang diktadura. Kaya po isa sa mga unang-unang tungkulin ng bagong gobyerno ay ang paghahabol at ang pagbawi sa nakaw na yaman nito. Kaya po nababahala tayo na ipinapanukala ng ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor ang abolition ng Presidential Commission on Good Government. Kaya ang unang tanong ko po, bakit? Ano po ang paliwanag ng mga nagpapanukala, ano po ang paliwanag ng Sponsor? Why abolish the PCGG, Mr. Speaker?

REP. VELOSO. Mr. Speaker, 32 years have already lapsed since we had this PCGG. In my experience in our place, the PCGG did not really leave a good mark. Instead of preserving the assets of the government, ninakaw pa.

Anyway, to address the point of the Honorable Tinio, isang pakay ng House Bill No. 7376 na ito ay ma-rightsize ang bureaucracy by eliminating redundant, duplicative and overlapping functions and organizations in the Executive branch. For example, sa 2018 Budget natin, ang PCGG ay binigyan ng P124,551,000 kasama ang OGCC with P131,777,000. All in all, mayroon tayong P256 million na gagastusin ng gobyerno for the year 2018. But with the abolition of the PCGG alongside the OGCC, dahil ang trabaho ng OGCC ay gagampanan ng OSG, pati iyong PCGG ay gagampanan din ng OSG, magkakaroon po tayo ng savings na P150 million.

Ang concern ni Honorable Tinio na magpatuloy tayo sa paghahanap ng mga so-called “nakaw-yaman” ay ipagpapatuloy, but this time, ang gaganap niyan is the Office of the Solicitor General, Mr. Speaker.

REP. TINIO. So, Mr. Speaker, ang tanging dahilan na binabanggit ng kagalang-galang na Sponsor para daw sa abolition ng PCGG ay rightsizing, streamlining ng bukrasya. Talaga, iyon lang? At...

REP. VELOSO. Okay.

REP. TINIO. Sige po, baka mayroon pa.

REP. VELOSO. Pangalawa, ganito po ang problema natin sa field. Ang PCGG, pag nagkaroon ng asunto na umaabot sa Korte Suprema, ang kinukuha niyang abogado ay mula sa Office of the Solicitor General. This time, dahil ang Office of the Solicitor General na mismo

ang magiging “party in interest” doon sa mga nakaw na yaman na iyan, sa representation of the Republic, hindi na po tayo ganoon kagastos in pursuing a case.

Marami pa ring rason but I am just being brief in answering the query of the Honorable Tinio.

REP. TINIO. Well, Mr. Speaker, nabanggit ng kagalang-galang na Sponsor na ang pangunahing dahilan daw ay pagtitipid na kapag in-abolish na ang PCGG, ipapailalim na lang sa Office of the Solicitor General ang kanilang mga tungkulin at makakatipid daw po ng 100, pakiulit lang po, magkano po iyong nabanggit ninyo?

REP. VELOSO. P150 million plus.

REP. TINIO. P150 million sa kasalukuyang budget. Mr. Speaker, mayroon po tayong datos dito. Actually galing mismo ito sa PCGG dahil alam nga nila na mayroon nang panukalang batas na ia-abolish sila. Aba, ay syempre tutol ang PCGG dito at naglalabas din sila ng sarili nilang mga pahayag upang ipagtanggol ang kanilang ahensiya at ang naging track record ng kanilang ahensiya. Ngayon, mayroon pong datos sila kaugnay sa budget. Ang presentation nila rito “Cost to Recovery Ratio.” So, magkano raw iyong budget na inilalaan taun-taon sa General Appropriations Act at magkano naman iyong nabawing nakaw na yaman?

By the way, Mr. Speaker, medyo nais ko lang magrehistro ng pagtataka at pagtanong. Bakit ang Sponsor po natin, sinabing “nakaw na yaman” ng mga Marcos at tila may pagdududa sa pagiging nakaw na yaman na dinambong ng Marcos dictatorship? Ang gusto ko lang pong idiin na sa batas mismo na umiiral ngayon, specifically, Executive Order No. 1 and Executive Order No. 2 of 1986 ay malinaw na malinaw po na itinatakda doon, dini-define ang ill-gotten wealth.

If I may read for the record, malinaw po ang definition sa batas, this is from Executive Order No. 1, February 28, 1986. Executive Order No. 1 is the law that created the Presidential Commission on Good Government (Section 1. Definition). This is under the Rules and the Regulations pursuant to Executive Order No. 1, the Definition of Terms of “Ill-gotten wealth,” and I quote:

It is hereby defined as any asset, property, business enterprise or material possession of persons within the purview of Executive Orders Nos. 1 and 2, acquired by them directly, or indirectly through dummies, nominees, agents, subordinates, and/or business associates by any of the following means or similar schemes:

(1) Through misappropriation, conversion, misuse or malversation of public funds or raids on the public treasury;

(2) Through the receipt directly or indirectly of any commission, gift, share, percentage, kickbacks, or any other form of pecuniary benefit from any person and/or entity in connection with any government contract or project or by reason of the office or position of the official concerned;

(3) By the illegal or fraudulent conveyance or disposition of assets belonging to the government or any of its subdivisions, agencies or instrumentalities or government-owned or controlled corporations;

(4) By obtaining, receiving or accepting directly or indirectly any shares of stock, equity or any other form of interest or participation in any business enterprise or undertaking;

(5) Through the establishment of agricultural, industrial or commercial monopolies or other combination and/or by the issuance, promulgation and/or implementation of decrees and orders intended to benefit particular persons or special interests; and,

(6) By taking undue advantage of official position, authority, relationship or influence for personal gain or benefit.”

So, malinaw po, Mr. Speaker, sa Executive Order No. 1 at sa Rules and Regulations nito, na tinuturing ang yaman ng mga Marcos bilang ill-gotten wealth.

If I may read further from Executive Order No. 1, and I quote:

xxx vast resources of the government have been amassed by former President Ferdinand E. Marcos, his immediately family, relatives and close associates, [both here and abroad] and there is an urgent need to recover all ill-gotten wealth.

So, malinaw na malinaw po ito. Kaya po, hindi ko nakikita ang dahilan kung bakit sasabihing “nakaw na yaman” ang mga ito, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VELOSO. Mr. Speaker, iyong definition na binasa niya is covered by the proposed law, House Bill No. 7376. Sa Section 3, paragraph (c), “ill-gotten wealth” has been defined to refer to “any asset, property, business enterprise or material possession” of the persons referred to in Executive Orders No. 1 and 2, Series 1986, “acquired by them directly, or indirectly through dummies,” et cetera.

The problem, Mr. Speaker, is that, until such time that a final judgment has been rendered, say by the Supreme Court, lahat ng ito ay allegations, allegedly nakaw na yaman. That is why I am saying, quote-

unquote. Mahirap naman sabihin na talagang nakaw na yaman iyan, e wala pa namang final judgment on the matter.

Ngayon, doon sa trabaho ng PCGG, inilipat po ito sa Office of the Solicitor General. I am referring to paragraph (m) of Section 5, on Powers and Functions.

REP. TINIO. Well, Mr. Speaker, ...

REP. VELOSO. Nakalagay po dito that the OSG shall have the following specific powers and functions, among them, “(m) Exercise and perform the following powers and functions of the PCGG which are hereby transferred to the OSG,” at naka-enumerate po, 1 to 4. In paragraph (n), it states that the OSG should represent, upon the instruction of the President, the Republic of the Philippines in international litigations, et cetera. In fact, sa paghihimay ko po, Mr. Speaker, itong paragraphs (m) up to (s) ay tumutukoy sa mga powers ng PCGG na inilipat po sa Office of the Solicitor General. Wala pong mawawala sa gobyerno by the abolition of the PCGG and by the transfer of the powers and functions of the PCGG to the OSG.

REP. TINIO. Well, Mr. Speaker, I will come to that. Iyong binanggit pong proposed transfer of powers, supposedly, of the PCGG to the Office of the Solicitor General as contained in this Bill, babalikan po natin.

Let me just go back to the original point I was making, which is iyong makakatipid daw ang gobyerno kapag in-abolish na ang PCGG at ipailalim na lang ito sa SolGen. May datos po tayo, galing po ito sa PCGG mismo. Ang presentation nila ay in terms of cost to recovery ratio. Ibig nilang sabihin, magkano po iyong nakalaang budget para sa taong iyon ng PCGG, at magkano iyong halaga ng ill-gotten wealth na kanilang na-recover. So, let me just read this for the record:

- 2012, ang budget po ng PCGG ay P93 million at ang na-recover nila ay P57.10 billion po. Kaya ang cost recovery ratio—for every peso ng budget, pera ng taxpayer, P613 po ang nakaw na yaman na naibalik sa taumbayan;
- 2013, there was a P102-million budget for the PCGG, and the recovered ill-gotten wealth was P631.34 million. So the cost to recovery ratio was 1:6;
- 2014, there was a P106-million budget and the recovered ill-gotten wealth was P1.57 billion. The cost to recovery ratio was 1:14;
- 2015, P101-million budget, recovered ill-gotten wealth – P14 .01 billion, ratio – 1:138; and
- 2016, there was a P104-million budget and the recovered ill-gotten wealth was P481.9 million. The ratio was 1:4.

So, Mr. Speaker, kahit lang sa datos na ito, malinaw na malinaw po na walang basis iyong sinasabi na makatitipid kapag i-abolish na ito dahil malinaw naman—kahit nga ang binabanggit lang natin ay data from 2012 to 2016—malinaw po na sa bawat piso na inilalaan para sa budget ng PCGG, at hindi natin sinasabing napakagaling o napakahusay na nila, ngunit malinaw po na sa bawat piso na inilalaan ay higit na malaki po ang nababawi ng isang ahensya na nakatutok o dedicated sa trabaho ng pag-recover sa nakaw na yaman ng mga Marcos at ng kanilang diktadurya.

REP. VELOSO. Mr. Speaker, dalawang bagay po: number one, pag-iisahin ang dalawang ahensya—OSG and PCGG—so makakatipid talaga tayo. Kapag pinag-isa ang dalawang ahensya, isa lang ang gastos kaya talagang makakatipid tayo. Pangalawa, iyong sinasabi na recovery ratio eh number one, the least that can happen here, Mr. Speaker, kung talagang makupad ang OSG is ganoon din, ang recovery ratio mame-maintain. But let me explain, Mr. Speaker, na hindi po ito mangyayari. Why? In the recovery of ill-gotten wealth, isa sa component na magastos doon ay iyong hiring of lawyers. Kung sinu-sino at umaabot pa nga tayo sa mga foreign lawyers to assist the PCGG in recovering ill-gotten wealth.

Dito, Mr. Speaker, from step one hanggang sa Korte Suprema, ang OSG na po ang magtatrabaho sa recovery ng ill-gotten wealth. In fact, I do not know if the Honorable Tinio is aware na kaya nga nagkaroon tayo ng—o kahit kalahati lang ang trabaho ng OSG dito, naka-recover ang PCGG ng ill-gotten wealth because of the work of the OSG. Kung walang OSG, talagang hindi sila makaka-recover ng ill-gotten wealth.

REP. TINIO. Well, Mr. Speaker, iyong pagbanggit po na ang PCGG ay kumuha naman ng foreign lawyers—Mr. Speaker, kahit po ilipat pa sa OSG ang functions ng PCGG, may mga sirkumstansya at sitwasyon po na ang OSG rin ay kailangang kumuha ng foreign lawyers, Mr. Speaker. For example, sa kaso ng pag-recover noong P10 billion from the Swiss banks, iyong mga Marcos Swiss bank accounts, eh natural pong kailangang kumuha ang gobyerno ng Republika ng Pilipinas ng mga foreign lawyer, unless sasabihin ninyong ang mga lawyer ng OSG ay maaaring mag-practice sa Switzerland o sa US o kung saan pa man na nakatago o itinago ang mga hidden wealth ng Marcos at ng kanilang mga cronies. So, hindi po maaaring gamiting dahil dahil alam din naman ng Sponsor na kinakailangan iyon.

REP. VELOSO. Mr. Speaker.

REP. TINIO. May mga kaso na hindi mo maiiwasan iyon, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VELOSO. Mr. Speaker, para maliwagan lang po, I am not saying na hindi kailangan ng foreign government lawyers. Ang punto ko lang is this, in the recovery of ill-gotten wealth, talagang kailangan mo ang abogado, it would involve legal issues kaya kailangan mo ang abogado. And under existing rules, hindi puwedeng kumuha ng ibang abogado kung hindi ang OSG. Now, even if abogado na nga itong OSG—mga abogado na iyan, pagdating kasi sa mga ill-gotten wealth na nasa labas ng bansa, maraming mga procedures doon na kailangang sundin mo to the point na kailangan mo ng foreign lawyers. But, in the appreciation of which foreign lawyer should be hired, hindi kaya ng PCGG to fully appreciate iyong puntong iyan. Kailangan mo ng abogado which, I again reiterate, OSG lang po ang may kapasidad diyan. So, uulitin ko po, pagdating sa abolition ng PCGG, talagang malaki po ang savings because instead na kliyente lang po ang PCGG, ang OSG na po ang magtatrabaho in its capacity as the tribune of the people and as the lawyer of the Republic of the Philippines.

REP. TINIO. Well, Mr. Speaker, sa ilalim ng kasalukuyang mga batas, malinaw po ang ipinag-ibang responsibilidad at tungkulin ng PCGG at saka ng Office of the Solicitor General pagdating sa issue o usapin ng ill-gotten wealth ng mga Marcos. Malinaw po sa batas iyon, ang PCGG ay nilikha bilang espesyal na Komisyon na may mga espesyal at partikular na kapangyarihan, at mamaya, babalikan po natin iyon. Ang tungkulin nila ay, una, mag-identify, hanapin, at tukuyin kung nasaan ang hidden wealth. At para rito, binibigyan sila ng mga partikular na kapangyarihan—mamaya, papasukin po natin iyon—para, among others, makapag-build up ng kaso.

Pero sinasabi rin, malinaw doon, Executive Order No. 1, at sa mga rules and regulations ng PCGG na pagkatapos po nito, talagang ipapasa sa Office of the Solicitor General bilang attorney ng gobyerno ng Republika ng Pilipinas ang aktuwal na ligal na paghahabol. Iyon na po ang trabaho ng Office of the Solicitor General. May dedicated role and function ang PCGG tapos may hiwalay na trabaho ang Solicitor General. Sa proposal po ninyo, pag-iisahin iyon. Sa halip na padaliin ang trabaho ng Office of the Solicitor General ay, actually, pinabibigat ninyo pa dahil iyong dating trabaho ng isang dedicated na ahensya ay ipapasa ninyo sa Office of the Solicitor General. So, on the contrary, Mr. Speaker, sa halip na palakasin ang Office of the Solicitor General, sa totoo lang, pinahihirap ninyo pa ang trabaho nila, Mr. Speaker.

Ngayon, I would just like to further put on record na dahil nga bunga ng Executive Order No. 1 at Executive Order No. 2 noong 1986, sa ilalim pa ng Pangulong Corazon Aquino, ay itinatag ang PCGG, mahigit 30 taon na ang lumipas, at kung tatanungin ang marami,



hindi natin masasabi na masaya ang lahat sa naging resulta, hanggang sa ngayon, ng mga pagtangka ng gobyerno ng Pilipinas na mabawi ang ill-gotten wealth ng mga Marcos.

Ayon mismo sa PCGG, mayroon pa raw limang bilyon, \$5 billion in ill-gotten wealth na hindi pa nababawi ng gobyerno ng Pilipinas. Mayroon pa raw \$5 bilyon na ninakaw si Ferdinand Marcos bilang diktador, ang kanyang pamilya at ang kanyang mga crony, nandiyan pa iyan— nakatago, hindi nakatago, hindi pa nagagalaw. Sa tatlong dekadang mahigit na nakatayo ang PCGG, so far, nakapag-recover po sila, ayon sa mga datos, ng \$3.6 billion or P170 billion in over three decades of the history of the PCGG.

Kung tutuusin, mas malaki pa ang hindi nababawi kaysa sa na-recover, pero hindi rin naman natin masasabing zero ang naging accomplishment ng PCGG. Kaya nga po, Mr. Speaker, gayong may \$5 bilyon pa na nakaw ang mga Marcos, sa halip na i-abolish ang PCGG, hindi ba dapat nga lalo pang palakasin ito, lalo pang bigyan ng poder, hindi i-abolish, tanggalan ng pangil at ipasa sa OSG? Iyong pagtanggap ng pangil, palalalimin po natin iyon. Bakit natin sinasabing ang ipinapanukala po ng mga Sponsor dito ay tanggalan na ng pangil ang gobyerno sa kaniyang responsibilidad, tungkulin na bawiin, habulin, at bawiin ang nakaw na yaman ng mga Marcos, Mr. Speaker?

REP. VELOSO. Mr. Speaker, this will not involve only pagtatanggal ng pangil. The PCGG will be abolished at ang powers and functions ng PCGG ay ililipat natin sa OSG. But, Mr. Speaker, kung mayroon tayong more than \$5 billion pa na kailangang ma-recover, iyan ay precisely mare-recover din ng OSG. Ang punto dito is, gaano katagal o gaano kabilis?

Uulitin ko, Mr. Speaker, kung ako ay mayroong katiwala whom I expect to finish the job in five years pero umabot na po ng 32 years eh hindi pa niya natatapos, alangan naman ipagkakatiwala ko pa iyong trabaho sa kaniya? E di papalitan ko talaga siya. Uulitin ko, mas malaki ang savings ng gobyerno dito dahil instead of two agencies working on recovering the wealth, isa na lang po, and an expanded and strengthened OSG ang magtatrabaho nito, at hindi po siya handicapped. Ito lang ang punto ko ho, Mr. Speaker, na ang daming hindi puwedeng gawin ng PCGG na kayang gawin ng OSG. On the other hand, pagdating sa trabahong ligal, ang daming puwedeng gawin ng OSG na hindi kayang gawin ng PCGG.

REP. TINIO. Well, Mr. Speaker, ...

REP. VELOSO. Budget wise, isa na lang po ang ating gagastusan. Patuloy na gagastusan natin ang OSG, savings po ang gastos natin sa PCGG, Mr. Speaker.

REP. TINIO. Well, Mr. Speaker, babalikan natin iyong mga mapangahas na pahayag ng ating Sponsor—marami raw magagawa ang OSG na hindi magagawa ng PCGG. We shall see at hihimayin po natin ang mga probisyon sa kanilang panukalang batas. Pero bago ako tumuloy doon, Mr. Speaker, gusto ko lang balikan po iyong punto na ito, what is at stake? Bakit po ba napakalaking bagay nito? Bakit ba sa bahagi ko at ng ilan sa aking mga kasamahan dito, hindi kami makapapayag na pumasá ito, partikular ang abolition ng PCGG, lalo na sa ganitong paraan na ipinapanukala nila, na ipapailalim na lang bilang isa na sa napakaraming mga trabaho at responsibilidad ng Office of the Solicitor General ang pagbawi sa nakaw na yaman ng mga Marcos?

Mr. Speaker, matagal na po ito, pero lalo na sa ilalim ng administrasyong Duterte, nakita naman po natin kung paanong aktibo ang mga tangka ng administrasyon para ibalik sa poder at baguhin ang kasaysayan, baguhin ang husga ng kasaysayan kaugnay sa mga Marcos. Nagsimula iyan doon sa pagpayag ni Pangulong Duterte na ilibing si Marcos bilang bayani sa libingan ng mga bayani. Tapos, kasama rin ang patuloy na mga pahayag ni Pangulong Duterte na ang totoong Vice President daw niya si Bongbong Marcos kahit ang iprinoklama ng Kongreso mismo, bilang National Board of Canvassers, ay ang kasalukuyang Bise Presidente, si Bise Presidente Robredo.

Ngayon po, mayroong ganitong panukala na nanggagaling din sa administrasyon at ito naman ay abolition na ng PCGG, gayong kinikilala din naman ng lahat na maryoon pang \$5 billion na nakaw na yaman ang mga Marcos na hindi pa nababawi at dapat pang bawiin.

Let me just read, for the record, an article written by Phillip M. Lustre Jr., “*Recovering Marcos’ ill-gotten wealth: After 30 years, what?*” So, this was published in *Rappler.com*, on February 25, 2016, on the 30th Anniversary of the PCGG. Even though this is more than a year old, ito ay para magka-ideya tayo kung gaano kalaki pa ang trabaho na kailangang gawin ng gobyerno, at partikular ng PCGG, para bawiin ang mga nakaw na yaman. Sabi rito:

To this day, the PCGG continues to receive tips and leads about the unknown but remaining illegal assets of the Marcoses, according to Danilo Daniel, head of the PCGG research department.

For instance, daughter Imee Marcos, now the Ilocos Norte Governor, was reported 4 years ago to have links to secret offshore trusts and an offshore company. She was listed as one of the beneficiaries of the Sintra Trust which was formed in June 2002 in the British Virgin Islands (BVI). Other beneficiaries were Imee

Marcos' adult sons with estranged husband Tomas Manotoc: Ferdinand Richard Michael Marcos Manotoc, Matthew Joseph Marcos Manotoc, and Fernando Martin Marcos Manotoc.

Documents showed that Imee Marcos was also a financial advisor for the Sintra Trust as well as for a company in which the Sintra Trust was a shareholder, ComCentre Corporation, which was formed in January 2002 in the BVI. The PCGG had investigated this matter, but the results of its probe have yet to be reported publicly.

So, iyon lang po ang punto. 2016 na po, hanggang ngayon, may mga bagong impormasyon pa po na natatanggap ang PCGG hinggil sa mga nakatagong yaman. British Virgin Islands, alam naman natin po, this is a haven for ill-gotten wealth all over the country, for money laundering, and so on, and so forth. So, muli, idinidiin po natin, this is what is at stake in this proposal. Ang gusto pong mangyari ng mga nagpapanukala nito ay i-abolish na iyong ahensiya na ang tanging dahilan kung bakit siya nilikha ay para nga habulin ang nakaw na yaman ng mga Marcos. Ngayon, ipapailalim na sa OSG. Ang OSG, alam naman natin, sabi nga, "Tribune of the People." Iyan ang karaniwang kataga, lawyer po ng gobyerno ng Pilipinas. Lahat po ng mga kasong ligal na involved ang gobyerno, OSG ang nandiyan. From a dedicated agency focused on the recovery of the ill-gotten wealth of the Marcoses, to the Office of the Solicitor General, one of the functions na lamang po ito. So, napakalinaw po ng intensiyon: palabnawin, pahinain, tanggalan ng pangil ang gobyerno ng Pilipinas para sa pagbawi ng yaman.

Kaya, kailangang i-connect po natin sa efforts ng Duterte administration para ipanumbalik, full rehabilitation ng mga Marcos—hindi lamang political and historic rehabilitation, kung hindi pati iyong problema sa ill-gotten wealth, aba ay mawawala na, kung matutuloy po ito, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VELOSO. Mr. Speaker, let me point it quite clearly.

I am not a defender of the Marcoses here. As early as 1984, there was one Atty. Ching Veloso who went underground because he fought the Marcoses in Leyte. Siya ang nag-lead ng public school teachers' strike against the Marcoses. Mr. Speaker, siguro bata pa itong si Congressman Tinio at that time. Punta lang po siya sa Leyte, tanungin lang po kung ano ang role ni Atty. Ching Veloso against the Marcoses during the dark days of martial law. Pero iba po itong pinag-uusapan natin ngayon, Mr. Speaker. Gusto ng gobyerno na magtipid. Instead na gagastos sa dalawang ahensiya, gusto natin na gumastos na lang sa isang ahensiya na competent naman.

I was the Presiding Officer in the committee hearings sa proposed batas na ito. I have been asking the PCGG, "Kailan pa ba ninyo matatapos ang trabaho ninyo in connection with ill-gotten wealth?" Walang matinong answer e. Nagdududa pa nga ako na sadyang pinatatagal kasi sumasahod naman sila. Members of the board ng mga companies are suspected to be pinaglalagyan ng mga pondo ng mga Marcoses, para bang helping ourselves.

Ang hirap, I hate to say this, but ito po ang impression namin sa Leyte. Ang mga taga-PCGG na pinagkatiwalaang mag-recover ng ill-gotten wealth, sila mismo ang nagnanakaw. Look at the Sto. Niño Shrine, ang daming paintings namin doon, nagkawalaan, ang dami. Sino ang kumuha niyan? Ang may direct custody sa mga ill-gotten wealth na ito ay PCGG. Have they been prosecuted? Wala. Sana nandoon na si Honorable Tinio noong panahong iyon. But let me tell you as the Presiding Officer of the Justice Committee. Nag-hearing po kami dito, uulitin ko po, kung ako ang employer ng dalawang ahensiya na ito, talagang ia-abolish ko ang PCGG. It has outlived its usefulness. Ang OSG ay nandiyan, ipagpapatuloy ang trabaho ng PCGG at a lesser cost especially na ang trabaho niyan would be basically legal work.

REP. TINIO. Mr. Speaker, again, for the record, just to be objective, ito po ang accomplishments ng PCGG. Again, hindi natin sinasabi na napakahusay nila at nagawa na nila ang kanilang trabaho. The mere fact that more than 30 years after the PCGG was formed ay, sabi nga kanina, mas marami pa rin iyong nakatagong nakaw na yaman ng mga Marcos kaysa sa nabawi na. Pero dito, hindi lang PCGG ang dapat nating singilin at sisihin. Sunud-sunod na mga administrasyon ay nandiyan ang napakabagal na takbo ng hustisya sa ilalim ng mga korte natin, isang malaking factor din iyon. Maraming iba't ibang factors dito but, to be objective, ito po iyong record ng recovery nila, sabi ko nga kanina—P170.45 billion total amount recovered by PCGG. This is as of 2016 pa nga ang data ko, Mr. Speaker, so maaaring nadagdagan pa ito. Of that, P78.1 billion funds were remitted so far to the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program or CARP, and P10 billion funds from Swiss Bank accounts were set aside for the reparation of the martial law victims. May batas pong ipinasá ang Kongreso para sa compensation for human rights victims of the Marcos dictatorship. May mga binabayaran na pong compensation. Saan nanggaling ang pondo? Mula sa nakaw na yaman na ni-recover through the efforts of the PCGG, P93.748 billion coco levy assets, identified and accounted for. May panukalang batas na ipinasá ang Kongresong ito. Kami mismo, hindi tumutol sa partikular na bersiyon ng batas na iyon pero ang punto ko lang, kaya nga mayroong ganoong panukalang batas

dahil na-identify ang P93 billion mahigit. And so, iyon po, among others.

As of now, may mga pending civil cases before the Sandiganbayan versus Marcos and his cronies. A quick rundown: Cases against *Marcos, et al.*; *Genito, et al.*; *Lucio Tan, et al.*; *Cruz Jr., et al.*; *Jimenez, et al.*; *Tantoco, et al.*; *Africa Nieto, et al.*; *A. Romualdez, et al.*; *Silverio, et al.*; *Enriquez, et al.*; *Cuenca, et al.*; *Ver, et al.*; *A.R. Romualdez, et al.*; *Sabido, et al.*; *Argana, et al.*; *A. Lim, et al.*; *Cojuangco, et al.*; *B. Romualdez, et al.*; *Remulla*—a total of 19 civil cases as of December 2015 with a total assets or ill-gotten wealth amounting to P32 billion, Mr. Speaker.

I made a point of reading out the names of the cases para masariwa din po sa atin iyong extent noong pandarambong na pinangunahan ni Ferdinand E. Marcos at ng kanyang pamilya, pero marami rin pong mga cronies dito. Kaya binanggit ko rin po iyong mga pangalan para masariwa din tayo. Huwag nating makalimutan na nandiyan pa po iyan, at malaki pa po ang trabaho dito. So, as I said earlier, this is what is at stake here.

Now, puntahan na po natin iyong binanggit kanina ng kagalang-galang na Sponsor na sabi raw, “Aba’y mas mainam. Makakatipid and gobyerno pag in-abolish na natin, isara na natin itong PCGG, ilipat na natin sa OSG.” Mas marami daw silang magagawa, ang OSG kaysa sa PCGG. Pero ganoon nga ba talaga, Mr. Speaker?

Sa kanilang panukalang batas, particularly, let us go to the Powers and Functions, Section 5 of the proposed Bill. Ang nagpapatungkol po sa PCGG ay itong letter (m). Letter (m) lang po. Iyon lang po ang specific sa functions ng PCGG na malilipat sa Office of the Solicitor General. Ano po ang sabi dito? “Exercise and perform the following powers and functions of the PCGG which are hereby transferred to the OSG.” And you have one, two, three and four. Notice even the phrasing of the subsection (m), “Exercise and perform the following powers and functions of the PCGG which are hereby transferred to the OSG.”

So, hindi po lahat ng kapangyarihan ng PCGG na nasa E.O. No. 1 at E.O. No. 2 ang ita-transfer sa SolGen, only the following powers and functions. Doon pa lang, malinaw na malinaw na po eh. Itong apat na lamang ang magiging kapangyarihan ng Office of the Solicitor General na may kaugnayan sa paghahabol ng nakaw na yaman ng mga Marcos.

Anu-ano iyan? Una pa lang ay mukhang malabo na iyong sinasabi ng Sponsor kanina. Sabi niya, mas marami raw magagawa ang OSG kaysa sa PCGG ngayon, eh dito pa lang kitang-kita na eh. “Only the following,” at ginawang apat na lamang. O, mamaya, iisa-isahin po natin ano iyong mawawalang powers and functions kapag isinabatas po ito.

Pero dito ang sabi dito:

(1) File and prosecute all cases investigated by the PCGG under Executive Order No. 1, dated February 28, 1986, Executive Order No. 2, dated March 12, 1986, and Executive Order No. 432, dated May 26, 2005, as may be warranted by its findings;

Okay. So, iyong mga kasong naimbestigahan na ng PCGG ay puwedeng ipagpatuloy, hanggang sa filing and prosecution, ng Office of the Solicitor General.

(2) Continue handling cases relative to the recovery of ill-gotten wealth and behest loans;

So, iyong mga nakasampa nang kaso katulad noong mga pending cases, civil cases na binanggit ko po kanina, malilipat po sa OSG.

(3) Grant immunity from criminal prosecution to any person who provides information or testifies in any investigation previously conducted by the PCGG or in future cases investigated by the OSG involving ill-gotten wealth, to establish the unlawful manner in which any respondent, defendant or accused has acquired or accumulated the property or properties in question in any case where such information or testimony is necessary to ascertain or prove the latter’s guilt or civil liability. The immunity thereby granted shall be continued to protect the witness who repeats such testimony before the Sandiganbayan when required to do so; and

(4) Call upon any department, bureau, office, agency, instrumentality or corporation of the government, or any officer or employee thereof, for such assistance as it may need in the discharge of its functions relative to recovery of ill-gotten wealth and behest loans.

So, iyong number one and number two po, Mr. Speaker, nagpapatungkol sa mga kaso na nasimulan na o naka-file na kontra sa mga Marcos with respect to ill-gotten wealth. Iyon po iyong number one and number two. Puwede daw ipagpatuloy ng OSG whether investigations of cases already initiated or iyong mga kaso na nakasampa na sa korte.

Ito namang number three, nagpapatungkol sa mga posibleng bagong kaso. So, kung may mga bagong impormasyon na lumitaw, \$5 bilyon pa ang hindi nababawi, napakarami pa po niyan. Kung may bagong impormasyon na lumitaw ngayon, ano ang mangyayari? Well, ito po iyon, iyong number three.

Now, my question is, what power is granted by

this law to the OSG and in what way is this superior to the powers granted to PCGG by existing laws na hindi Executive Order No. 1 and Executive Order No. 2? Ang nakikita ko lang po dito, Mr. Speaker, the OSG is given the power to grant immunity from criminal prosecution for persons providing testimony or information. Iyon lang po, Mr. Speaker. Tama po ba o mali ang aking intindi sa number three ng letter (m) of Section 5?

REP. VELOSO. Mawalang galang lang po, mali po si Honorable Tinio. Kasi pagdating sa paragraph 1, item number one rather ng paragraph (m), sinasabi dito that: “x x x the following powers and functions of the PCGG which are hereby transferred to the OSG,” enumerated as, “File and prosecute all cases investigated by the PCGG under Executive Order No. 1.” Lahat niyan, Executive Order No.1, Executive Order No. 2. Now, anuman ang kulang diyang, tingnan lang po natin sa letter (s): “Perform such other functions as may be provided by law.” Kung ano po ang nandiyan, ipagpapatuloy iyan ng OSG. Number two, “Continue handling cases relative to the recovery of ill-gotten wealth and behest loans;” saka hindi lang po iyan, the OSG has been empowered to: “Call upon any department, bureau, office, agency, instrumentality or corporation of the government, or any officer or employee thereof, for such assistance as it may need in the discharge of its functions relative to recovery of ill-gotten wealth and behest loans.”

In short, ang magagawa ngayon ng PCGG ay gagawin ng OSG as a matter of mandate at hindi lang po ito, it can under paragraph (p):

Represent the Republic or the people before any court, tribunal, body, or commission in any matter, action, or proceeding that, in his opinion affects the welfare of the people as the ends of justice may require; x x x.

In short, catch-all po itong paglilipat ng trabaho from PCGG to the OSG. Hindi lang po iyong past, hindi lang iyong present, pati iyong future po.

REP. TINIO. Mr. Speaker, pupunta po ako sa Executive Order No. 1, the act that created the Presidential Commission on Good Government, particularly Section 3, “The Commission shall have the power and authority,” mga kapangyarihan po ng PCGG sa ilalim ng kasalukuyang batas: “(a) To conduct investigation as may be necessary in order to accomplish and carry out the purposes of this order.” Puwede po bang gawin din iyan ng OSG sa ilalim ng inyong panukala? Puwede daw. Okay. “(b) To sequester or place or cause to be placed under its control or possession any building or office wherein any ill-gotten wealth or properties may be found ...”

REP. VELOSO. Puwede po.

REP. TINIO. “... and any records pertaining thereto, in order to prevent their destruction, concealment or disappearance which would frustrate or hamper the investigation or otherwise prevent the Commission from accomplishing its task.”

Puwede po bang mag-sequester ang Office of the Solicitor General?

REP. VELOSO. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. TINIO. Saan po nakalagay iyan?

REP. VELOSO. Paragraph (s) ng Section 5, “Perform such other functions as may be provided by law.” In short, kung ano ...

REP. TINIO. And which law are you referring to, Mr. Speaker?

REP. VELOSO. Pakitingnan lang po sa ..

REP. TINIO. No. Yes, I see it is letter (s), “Perform such other functions as may be provided by law.”

REP. VELOSO. Iyong binasa mo kanina.

REP. TINIO. Iyong binasa ko po ay Executive Order No. 1.

REP. VELOSO. Correct.

REP. TINIO. Mr. Speaker, puntahan po natin ang repealing clause ninyo, Mr. Speaker, at saka iyong title mismo ng inyong panukalang batas, the title itself and you can also refer to the repealing clause. The title itself here says, “An Act Further Strengthening the Office of the Solicitor General and Repealing for the Purpose Republic Act No. 9417, Republic Act No. 9237 and Executive Orders No. 1 and 2.” Section 24 of your Bill expressly repeals Executive Orders No. 1 and 2.

Iyong sinasabi ninyong may kapangyarihan pa rin ang OSG, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, nire-repeal ninyo mismo sa batas na ito. Inaalis ninyo ng kapangyarihan ang gobyerno na mag-sequester. Kaya po, hindi lang iyon, itutuloy ko na dahil ito na po iyong punto. Aalis ninyo ng kapangyarihan, mawawala iyong kapangyarihan ng PCGG na mag-sequester sa mga ill-gotten wealth, to provisionally, letter (c):

(c) To provisionally take over in the public interest or to prevent its disposal or dissipation, business enterprises and properties taken over by the government of the Marcos

Administration or by entities or persons close to former President Marcos, until the transactions leading to such acquisition by the latter can be disposed of by the appropriate authorities.

(d) To enjoin or restrain any actual or threatened commission of acts by any person or entity that may render moot and academic, or frustrate, or otherwise make ineffectual the efforts of the Commission to carry out its tasks under this order.

“To enjoin or restrain,” in other words, may kapangyarihan na mag-issue ng mga restraining order, ...

(e) To administer oaths, and issue subpoena requiring the attendance and testimony of witnesses and/or the production of such books, papers, contracts, records, statements of accounts and other documents as may be material to the investigation conducted by the Commission.

(f) To hold any person in indirect contempt and impose the appropriate penalties, following the same procedures and penalties provided in the rules of court. x x x

So, the power to administer oaths, issues subpoenas and then contempt power, and then to seek and secure the assistance of any office, agency or instrumentality of the government, so nandiyan po iyan sa letter (h) ninyo, to promulgate such rule-making power, “To promulgate such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the purpose of this order.”

In the Rules and Regulations promulgated by the PCGG, dinedetalye pa po nila iyong sequestration power, iyong pag-issue ng mga freeze order, ng hold order at saka iyong pag conduct ng mga hearing. The PCGG can conduct hearings.

Tapos sabi pa nga po rito, Section 8 of the Rules and Regulations of the PCGG, states:

The Commission, in the exercise of its powers to investigate or hear cases within its jurisdiction shall act according to the requirements of due process and fairness, and shall not be strictly bound by the technical rules of evidence. The hearing shall be open to the public.

Mr. Speaker, kapag ipinasa ninyo ba sa SolGen ito, kapag in-abolish ang PCGG at ibinigay sa SolGen, ang SolGen ba ay may sequestration power, at puwedeng mag-freeze ng mga assets? Puwedeng mag-issue ng mga hold orders? Puwedeng mag-issue ng mga subpoena?

REP. VELOSO. Mr. ...

REP. TINIO. Puwedeng mag-conduct ng mga hearing? Hindi po. Bakit hindi, dahil inire-repeal ninyo na itong EO Nos. 1 and 2; wala na pong legal basis ang ganoon mga kapangyarihan. Nakita naman natin iyong PNP, para magkaroon ng subpoena power ay kailangan ng batas. Ngayon, ano ang mangyayari?

Kaya po, Mr. Speaker, napakalinaw po na taliwadoon sa sinabi ng ating Sponsor na mas marami pa raw pong magagawa kung ipapasa na sa Office of the SolGen. Mas marami pa raw magagawa ang OSG kaysa sa PCGG ngayon, kabaliktaran po ito. Sabi ko nga kanina, ito ang ibig kong sabihin, na tatanggalan ng pangil ng panukalang batas na ito ang gobyerno ng Pilipinas para epektibong makapaghabol sa mahigit limang bilyong dolyar pang yaman ng mga Marcos, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VELOSO. Mr. Speaker, didiretsuhin ko na lang po. Section 27, the last sentence states: “All laws, among others, all laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof which are contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby amended, repealed or modified accordingly.”

Iyon lang pong salungat ang nire-repeal. Itong power to sequester, ipagpapatuloy nang trabaho ng PCGG. Nasa paragraph (m), OSG shall “Exercise and perform the following powers and functions of the PCGG which are hereby transferred to the OSG”:

(1) File and prosecute all cases investigated by the PCGG under Executive Order No. 1, dated February 28, 1986; Executive Order No. 2 dated March 12, 1986; and, Executive Order No. 432 dated May 26, 2005 as may be warranted by its findings.

In short, inililipat, klarung-klaro po. Hindi po inconsistent iyan sa batas na ito. Ngayon, anuman ang iniisip niya na batas na kailangang mag-empower sa OSG in performing the present task of the PCGG, nandiyan po sa paragraph (s), “The OSG shall perform such other functions as may be provided by law.”

Wala po tayong problema diyan. Siguro, tingnan na lang po uli ng kagalang-galang na Representative Tinio. Ang statutory construction eh hindi mo pa nga kailangang gamitin dito eh, ang rules doon sa statutory construction.

REP. TINIO. Mr. Speaker, I am aware that my time is up. Let me wind up, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, huling punto na lang po. I think napakalinaw naman po na hindi natin kailangan ang statutory construction. The text is very clear. Pipilayin, tatanggalin ang pangil, at tatanggalan ang gobyerno ng

karapatan na maghahabol sa mga nakaw na yaman ng mga Marcos kung maipasa ito.

Huli na lang po. Ang SolGen po natin ngayon ay kilala naman natin, ang kagalang-galang na si Solicitor General Jose C. Calida. Mr. Speaker, I have to mention this on record.

Noong panahon po ng kampanya, national elections 2016, siya po ay kilala pong supporter ng mga Marcos, in particular, ni Vice Presidential candidate Ferdinand “Bongbong” R. Marcos Jr., si now SolGen Calida. At that time, he was one of the known leaders of the Alyansa Duterte-Bongbong or AIDuB. That is of public record, Mr. Speaker, and let me quote in an interview, at may video pa po niyan, at makikita po ninyo sa *YouTube*.

In an interview he gave on February 20, 2016, ang sagot niya sa tanong noong reporter, “So what are you fighting for, Sir? Why do you support Bongbong and Duterte as a tandem?” The answer of Mr. Calida was, “Personally, I am not a member of any party. I volunteered for this job because I believe that the Philippines needs real change and the best tandem so far would be Mayor Duterte from Davao, Davao representing Mindanao, and Senator Bongbong Marcos, representing Luzon, especially Northern Luzon.”

“Why, Sir, these two?”, follow-up noong reporter. “These two, well, they have the charisma, the vision, and they are sincere in their quest for change to effect change in the Philippines.”

Ang punto ko lang po, Mr. Speaker, ay ipapailalim sa SolGen, ia-abolish ang PCGG, at ipapailalim sa SolGen. Is it a coincidence, Mr. Speaker, na ang SolGen ng Pilipinas ngayon, si SolGen Calida ay kilalang Marcos loyalist, kinampanya ang anak ng isa sa mga personalities na binabanggit ng Executive Orders No. 1 and No. 2 na sangkot sa ill-gotten wealth, supporter, campaigner for Senator Bongbong Marcos, at ngayon ipapailalim sa opisina niya ang paghahabol sa nakaw na yaman ng mga Marcos?

Mr. Speaker, tatapusin ko na po diyan. Marami pa po akong maaaring sabihin dito, pero hindi po maaaring pahintulutan ng Kongresong ito ang pagpasá ng panukalang batas na ito. Nakatago po sa seemingly innocuous at parang harmless po. Papalakasin daw ang SolGen sa pamamagitan ng batas na ito. Ang hindi sinasabi sa taumbayan ay ia-abolish ang PCGG, tatanggalan na ng pangil ang gobyerno, at hindi lang ngayon, kundi moving forward, mawawalan na ng kapangyarihan para mahabol pa ang natitirang \$5 billion na nakaw na yaman ng mga Marcos. Dapat pong tutulan at ibasura ang panukalang ito, Mr. Speaker.

Maraming salamat po.

REP. VELOSO. Two things lang po, Mr. Speaker, baka makaligtaan tayo.

Itong House Bill na ito ay hindi Calida Bill. House

Bill No. 7376 is expected to outlive SolGen Calida, and we cannot inject political consideration into this Bill because this is a Bill that is designed to enrich the wealth of the Filipino people.

Maraming salamat po.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7376

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 7376. I so move, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

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

The consideration of House Bill No. 7376 is hereby suspended.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

#### CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7302 *Continuation*

#### PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 7302 on Committee Report No. 639, and that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure. I so move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). 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, 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.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary status of the Bill is that it is in the period of sponsorship

and debate. With that, Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the honorable Sponsor, the Hon. Joey Sarte Salceda.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The honorable Sponsor, Rep. Joey Salceda, is hereby recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Honorable Edcel C. Lagman for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Representative Lagman is hereby recognized for his interpellation.

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

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. But before I go to my interpellation, I am informed that today, March 19, 2018, the President certified this Bill as “urgent” pursuant to Section XII, no Article VI, Section 26 (2) of the 1987 Constitution. It appears, Mr. Speaker, that this certification violates the Constitution because under the Constitution, the three readings on separate days of a bill is the general rule and the exception is and I quote: “Except when the President certifies to the necessity of its immediate enactment to meet a public calamity or emergency.”

May we know from the leadership of the House what public calamity or emergency would be addressed by this certification of this Bill?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Majority Leader, do you have any reaction on the query of Congressman Lagman?

REP. SALCEDA. Mr. Speaker, could the Honorable Lagman kindly repeat his query?

REP. LAGMAN. Well, my question is, this Bill has been certified by the President as “urgent”, today. Under the Constitution, the three-day rule on separate readings on different dates will not be followed when the President certifies to the necessity of its immediate enactment to meet a public calamity or emergency. My question is, what public calamity or emergency is this Bill supposed to be addressing so much so that there is no need for the three-day rule?

REP. SALCEDA. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The

distinguished Sponsor will reply to the question of the Gentleman from Albay.

REP. SALCEDA. A previous ruling of the Supreme Court, under G.R. No. 184450 refers to the same issue when we tackled the increase in personal exemption, and therefore benefited are the ordinary wage earners. In this case, Your Honor, the test or the standard is really the impact on the welfare, not just of the people, but also the welfare of the State, of the entire society, because this Bill is intended to create substantial, significant, urgent and critical benefits to our society, through the various elements of the Budget Reform Act as proposed by Congress.

REP. LAGMAN. We all know, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, that the rulings of the Supreme Court are not cast in stone. And there should be no blind adherence to precedence, and it could be questioned in a proper case. But my question really is, what public calamity or emergency is the Bill supposed to address?

REP. SALCEDA. As I have said, Your Honor, the particular case in the Supreme Court that recognized the welfare of a broad set of constituency in our society, including, of course, the strength or the capacity of the State to bring forth positive changes as a result of a particular bill before Congress is enough standard by which a President can issue a certification. Under that particular case in the Supreme Court, wherein it was a proposal to increase personal exemption and therefore redound to lower taxes for ordinary wage earners, that was allowed by the Supreme Court as basis for issuance of a certification as urgent for Congress to tackle that particular measure.

In other words, it need not be a calamity. It must be significant, substantial and urgent changes that a particular bill can bring forth to society. And just like the budget reform which is, in effect, Your Honor, probably one of the most important jobs of Congress—to enact the budget, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. The Constitution is unequivocal and clear that there should be a necessity to meet a public calamity or emergency, unless, of course, the distinguished Sponsor would subscribe to the position that budget reform is equivalent to a public calamity or emergency.

REP. SALCEDA. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, my understanding of the behavior of the Supreme Court in this case is that when a particular measure before Congress is brought forth and there is substantial and

significant benefits that may redound to society by its immediate passage, I do not know whether reducing personal income taxes is a calamity. It does not address so. By analogy, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, I think the test that can be had from the Supreme Court ruling is that for as long as it is substantial, significant, urgent, and critical to positive consequences on the lives of ordinary people, including our society, then I think the President can certify it as urgent. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, for example, the postponement of the barangay elections has been certified by the President as urgent two times already; therefore, it does not address any calamity, but it does indeed create a certain positive aspect at least in the purview or in the optic of politics. In other words, that was the basis, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, for the issuance of the certification of urgency by the President.

REP. LAGMAN. I will not belabor this point any further, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, but I would like to place on record that the need to enact budget reform cannot be equated with public calamity or emergency. So much so, in a proper case, most probably it would be important for the Supreme Court to revisit its ruling on this particular aspect.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The manifestation of Congressman Lagman is noted.

REP. LAGMAN. Mr. Speaker, last Wednesday, when the Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations was defending this measure, this Representation asked him whether he would know of present practices which would tend to derogate or diminish the power of Congress over the purse, and after some time, he volunteered an answer. He said, "Use of savings could be one of the present practices which demean the Congressional power of the purse." May we know whether the distinguished Sponsor, a former Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations and now an incumbent Vice Chairman, would share the position of the now Chairman Nograles?

REP. SALCEDA. I would, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, clarify that in the sense that as a notion, the use of savings before without the appropriate conditions can certainly be abused by the Executive or by offices which are allowed by the Constitution to essentially use savings and augment others, but under the proposal, it is very clear that for the first time we are putting not just another special provision or general provision in the GAA that savings would be defined henceforth as: (1) It should be released. Unlike before, even if an appropriation is not released for as long as in the determination by the Executive, kahit hindi pa po released, puwede nang gawing savings; (2) It is very clear that it should have

been abandoned or completed; and (3) If that particular item in the appropriation is declared as savings, it can no longer be used to justify any funding in the next two years, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. Therefore, this entire nexus of savings and augmentation, under the proposed Budget Reform Act, in fact, puts a logical framework by which the power of Congress over the purse is not only secured, but also enhanced.

REP. LAGMAN. The use of savings has been incorporated as a general provision in every year's General Appropriations Act since the time of the late Rep. Rolando Andaya, a budgetary wizard. But it would not, in any way, make the use of savings as a means of not derogating the power of the purse of Congress.

While it is true that constitutional offices like the President, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House and the head of the constitutional commissions, are granted, under the Constitution, or authorized under the Constitution to augment any item in the General Appropriations Law for their respective offices from savings in other items of their respective appropriations, this should be authorized by law.

Presently, is there any law which would authorize these constitutional officers to use savings and augment any item in the General Appropriations Act under their respective appropriations?

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, it is EO No. 292 which has the equivalent effect of a law. It has been issued during the Freedom Constitution.

REP. LAGMAN. If we check the provision of EO No. 292 with respect to the use of savings, it is a verbatim restatement of the Constitution. It does not add anything or reduce anything from what the Constitution says. But the Constitution says "by law," in other words, there should be an exercise of discretion on the part of Congress in promulgating that law pursuant to the constitutional authority for certain constitutional officers to use savings.

Would the distinguished Gentleman agree that this provision in EO No. 292 is a verbatim reproduction of the constitutional provision?

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, but Section 39 of EO No. 292 is not in the Constitution. The authority to use savings and appropriations to cover deficit begins with the phrase "except as otherwise" and ends with "increasing the total outlay of Personnel Services."

Section 49 of EO No. 292 provides for authority to use savings for certain purposes. It is a long line and essentially enumerates 13, for which, the President



or authorized heads of offices are allowed to use savings for such enumerated purposes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. In other words, it may be that EO No. 292 covers that particular constitutional provision, but nonetheless, it clarifies and edifies how such constitutional provision provides guidelines through Section 39 and Section 49 of EO No. 292, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, this Bill is entitled, among others, “to strengthen Congress’ power of the purse.” So, there must be, at least, an attempt to provide, under this Bill, a protection to the congressional power of the purse. For example, can we include in this Bill that only X amount of the savings could be used by the authorized constitutional officers to augment any item in their appropriation?

REP. SALCEDA. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, I think the amount should be determined by need. Therefore, if you put an *ex ante* condition or limitation, it may have the counterproductive effect on the inability of the Executive to confront or to address certain requirements of the people, or by a particular project. That is precisely the purpose of why you wanted to use savings because you need to augment a particular item. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, putting an *ex ante* limitation on the amount of savings as a means of percentage or magnitude may be counterproductive, because as far as possible, Congress sets a more conducive atmosphere for good people to do their job, but enough limitations for bad people not to abuse the authority given to them or entrusted to them.

Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, doon po sa ganoong klaseng analysis, naniniwala ako na ang paglalagay ng *ex ante* limitation ay hindi maganda kasi nalilimitahan iyong kakayahan ng executive officers dahil nga gusto nilang gamitin iyong savings. Precisely, mayroon po silang hinaharap na kondisyon para sa kabutihan at kapakanan ng bayan.

REP. LAGMAN. Mr. Speaker, the use of savings is an exception to the congressional power of the purse. It is liberating a huge amount of funds out of the control of the Congress without any specific appropriation. That is why the Constitution authorizes Congress to pass a law in connection with the grant of authority to constitutional officers to augment any item in their budgets.

REP. SALCEDA. Tama po iyan.

REP. LAGMAN. That is why we are saying that we should protect the power of the purse, and let us not allow the Executive to generate savings, whether

truly or not, in order to use the same to augment an item in their budget now without Congress having any say or control or without prior specific appropriation by Congress. I think we should be consistent with the title of the Bill which says, “to strengthen the power of Congress over the public purse.”

REP. SALCEDA. I agree.

REP. LAGMAN. In previous years, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, the Executive reports on an annual basis the overall savings generated from the General Appropriations Act. In 2017, may we know whether there was an item in the report of the Executive with respect to the totality or overall savings of the government?

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. SALCEDA. May I ask for a suspension of the session, so I can give a more accurate answer, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The session is suspended.

*It was 8:15 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 8:17 p.m., the session was resumed.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The session is resumed.

REP. SALCEDA. I do not know whether it will suit the very specific purpose of the Honorable Lagman, but these are balances in particular accounts which may serve, though not so perfect a proxy, but nonetheless, it gives their direction on the state of expenditures of the government.

In 2017, we had a P3.35 trillion adjusted program. Out of that, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, the actual balance, may I just give you a complexion of these balances allocated for departments. There was a P57.88 billion balance as of the end 2017: Special Purpose Funds, P127.256 billion; and estimates on Automatic Appropriation, instead of P918 billion, we only spent P893 billion, where P24 billion was not necessarily a balance, but it is under-expenditure vis-à-vis target or program. In short, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, if you consider all these balances, out of the P3.35 trillion, we spent only P3.14 trillion. I do not know whether you want to call it “savings,” but the balances, fiscal balances, amounted to P209.797 billion. To me, it gives me a rough—but there may be some accounting

mismatch, but it does give you a flavor of how much we did not spend last year.

REP. LAGMAN. To the question of how much was the overall savings of the government in 2017, coming from those balances, how much would that be?

REP. SALCEDA. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, I have to go back to these people. But I guess we need to have a detailed breakdown because some of these were released but were not disbursed; therefore, they were still within the balances. So, within the purview of this law, or the existing legislative framework, they are or may not be savings in that sense. Your Honor, just to give you an idea or an example. Last year, we only used savings to augment one particular item once. We used the P10 billion savings in PGF, Pension and Gratuity Fund, to increase the P10 billion for Contingent Fund. So, in short, Your Honor, our Contingent Fund last year was P5.5 billion, but we used the savings, as authorized by law, we recognized it as savings as such and used it to augment the Contingent Fund. So, that was the only use of savings, Your Honor, last year.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay.

Well, I hope that the Committee or the Department of Budget and Management would come out with the total savings in 2016 and 2017, so that Congress will be properly informed of how much savings have been generated and also where the savings were expended.

REP. SALCEDA. Correct, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. So, we would like, we would appreciate it if we will be given that report as soon as possible.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay. Thank you.

REP. SALCEDA. I think the DBM is around, ...

REP. LAGMAN. Yes.

REP. SALCEDA. ... especially their policy staff and, therefore, I think, they are so instructed.

REP. LAGMAN. We will await that report, distinguished Sponsor.

Now, the last question on the use of savings, can savings be used for new projects, programs and activities?

REP. SALCEDA. No, because they are not legislated appropriation items, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay.

Were there instances in the past, as far as the distinguished Sponsor would know, whether new projects, programs and activities were funded out of savings?

REP. SALCEDA. As you see, Your Honor, it depends really on the definition, on what an item is all about. If you use item as being the least indivisible, the last indivisible unit of PAP or program, activity and project, Your Honor, under this administration—none, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. In previous years?

REP. SALCEDA. I would guess, Your Honor, that the last one would be covered by the Supreme Court ruling, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. It is not difficult to determine because the operative word is “new,” so it is not an item in the appropriation. But, anyway, again, we would like to request for a categorical answer with respect to this from the Committee on Appropriations or the Department of Budget and Management.

REP. SALCEDA. The only way, really, Your Honor, is for Congress to appropriate that new item, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, you know, Congress has the oversight function and it would be necessary for Congress to know ...

REP. SALCEDA. Correct.

REP. LAGMAN. ... on an annual basis how much was the overall savings generated by government and where the savings went. That is why I am asking these questions.

REP. SALCEDA. You see, Your Honor, they will be going against their self-interest. You see, if I ask them, “Did you do that?” Of course, it is unconstitutional and illegal and, therefore, you would not like the answers they will give. I guess, Your Honor, we need to do some review, study, inspection—Congress itself in the pursuit of its oversight functions, and I think we can very well do that, Your Honor. But for me to tell the DBM to say “Did you commit a sin by funding, by using savings for a new project and which was not appropriated by law?” Therefore, Your Honor, the answer would be “No.”

REP. LAGMAN. Well, the distinguished Sponsor is preempting the Department of Budget and Management because, I think, government officials and personnel should be candid and transparent particularly to this Chamber.

REP. SALCEDA. Well, Your Honor, you have my best efforts and commitment that as far as possible and within our powers in Congress that we will utilize the facilities of the Committee on Appropriations and all the other committees in Congress in order to find out whether there has been a deviation from this. I think it is essentially a very sacred tradition that the only way to fund the project is by legislation. There is no other way. There is no shortcut, especially if you use savings, because it is very clear that you can only use savings to augment, but not to fund new projects, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Yes. Well, I am asking these questions because we will have to take the opportunity in this Bill to strengthen the power of Congress over the public purse, and I think, it would be very enlightening and instructive to get all of these data.

Mr. Speaker, the talent of the distinguished Sponsor in answering my questions will be wasted on empty chairs.

REP. SALCEDA. Huwag naman.

REP. LAGMAN. So, ...

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. SALCEDA. Your Honor, may I ask for a one-minute suspension of the session.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The session is suspended.

*It was 8:26 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 8:29 p.m., the session was resumed.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The session is resumed.

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

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration on House Bill No. 7302.

I so move, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

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

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

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

The Secretary General will please read the Additional Reference of Business.

#### ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

*The Secretary General read the following Committee Reports and the Deputy Speaker made the corresponding references:*

#### COMMITTEE REPORT

Report by the Committee on Justice (Committee Report No. 670), re H.B. No. 7163, entitled:

“AN ACT PENALIZING THE ACT OF THROWING HARD OBJECTS AT MOTOR VEHICLES”

recommending its approval without amendment

Sponsors: Representatives Umali, Fariñas and De Vera

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Higher and Technical Education (Committee Report No. 671), re H.B. No. 7422, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING THE INTEGRATION OF THE NATIONAL BUILDING CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES AS ONE OF THE MAJOR SUBJECTS IN THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE COURSES IN CIVIL ENGINEERING, MECHANICAL ENGINEERING, ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING, SANITARY ENGINEERING AND ARCHITECTURE AND ITS INCLUSION AS A TOPIC IN THE LICENSURE EXAMINATIONS FOR THESE COURSES”

recommending its approval substitution of House Bill No. 5908

Sponsors: Representatives Hofer and Gonzales (A.D.)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Youth and Sports Development (Committee Report No. 672), re H.R. No. 1793, entitled:

“RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE CONTINUED SUPPORT OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE UNDER ITS NEW LEADERSHIP”

recommending its adoption in substitution of House Resolution No. 1746

Sponsors: Representatives Estrella and Roa-Puno  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

DESIGNATION OF MEMBERS TO THE  
BICAM. CONF. CTTEE.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we designate the following as members of the bicameral Conference Committee on the disagreeing provisions of House Bill No. 6782 and Senate Bill No. 108, declaring April 27 of every year as a special nonworking holiday in the city of Lapu-Lapu, province of Cebu, to honor the heroism of Lapu-Lapu in defending Mactan against foreign aggression:

1. Rep. Marlyn L. Primicias-Agabas
2. Rep. Aileen C. Radaza
3. Rep. Ferdinand L. Hernandez
4. Rep. Eugene Michael B. de Vera

I so move, Mr. Speaker..

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

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we designate the following members to the bicameral Conference Committee on the disagreeing provisions of House Bill No. 5745 and Senate Bill No. 1233 regarding coconut farmers and Industry Development Trust Fund Act:

1. Rep. Jose T. Panganiban, Jr., CPA, LLB.
2. Rep. Sharon S. Garin
3. Rep. Jericho Jonas B. Nograles
4. Rep. Celso L. Lobregat
5. Rep. Manuel T. Sagarbarria
6. Rep. Edcel C. Lagman
7. Rep. Angelina T “Helen” D.L. Tan, M.D.
8. Rep. Conrado M. Estrella III
9. Rep. Cecilia Leonila V. Chavez

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

CONSIDERATION OF CONF. COMM. RPT.  
ON H.B. NO. 7054 AND S.B. NO. 1461

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, we are in receipt of the bicameral Conference Committee Report reconciling

the disagreeing provisions of House Bill No. 7054 and Senate Bill No. 1461.

May I ask that the Secretary General be directed to read only the titles of the measures.

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

The Secretary General is directed to read only the titles of the measures.

*With the permission of the Body, and since copies of the bicameral Conference Committee Report have been previously distributed, the Secretary General read only the titles of the measures without prejudice to inserting the text of the report in the Congressional Record.*

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7054, entitled: AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES EMERGENCY AND RESILIENCY FUND, PROVIDING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR; and Senate Bill No. 1461, entitled: AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES EMERGENCY AND RESILIENCY FUND AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

RATIFICATION OF THE CONF. COMM. RPT.  
ON H.B. NO. 7054 AND S.B. NO. 1461

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, in accordance with our rules, I move that we ratify the said bicameral Conference Committee Report.

I so move.

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

The bicameral Conference Committee Report is approved.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we transmit to the Senate all bills approved on Third Reading. I so move, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

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

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO COMMITTEES

REP. FARIÑAS. Mr. Speaker, I move for the election of the following Members in the respective Committees:

\* See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)

*The Majority Leader read the names of the House Members elected to the various Committees, per Journal No. 76, dated March 19, 2018.*

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
REORGANIZATION

As members:

Rep. Mohamad Khalid Q. Dimaporo  
Rep. Maria Valentina G. Plaza  
Rep. Jose “Pingping” I. Tejada  
Rep. Manuel F. Zubiri

COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND URBAN  
DEVELOPMENT

As member:

Rep. Manuel Monsour T. Del Rosario III

COMMITTEE ON METRO MANILA  
DEVELOPMENT

As member:

Rep. Manuel Monsour T. Del Rosario III

COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE AND  
SECURITY

As member:

Rep. Manuel Monsour T. Del Rosario III

COMMITTEE ON WAYS  
AND MEANS

As member:

Rep. Franz E. Alvarez

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON PEACE,  
RECONCILIATION AND UNITY

As Vice Chairperson:

Rep. Amihilda J. Sangcopan

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

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn the session to tomorrow, Tuesday, March 20, at four o'clock in the afternoon.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The session is adjourned, to resume tomorrow, March 20, 2018, at four o'clock in the afternoon.

*It was 8:34 p.m.*