



Congressional Record

PLENARY PROCEEDINGS OF THE 17th CONGRESS, SECOND REGULAR SESSION
House of Representatives

Vol. 4

Tuesday, March 20, 2018

No. 77

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.

PRAYER

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F. H.). Please remain standing for a minute of prayer and meditation.

Everybody remained standing for the silent prayer.

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

ROLL CALL

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. 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. 77, dated March 20, 2018.**

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. Mr. Speaker, the roll call shows that 219 Members responded to the call.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). With 219 Members responding to the call, the Chair declares the presence of a quorum.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we now proceed to the 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 is hereby directed to read the Reference of Business.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

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

BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 7390, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING ADDITIONAL BENEFITS TO SOLO PARENTS AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT 8972, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘SOLO PARENTS WELFARE ACT OF 2000’ ”

By Representative Calixto-Rubiano
TO THE COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF LAWS

House Bill No. 7391, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A FREE BASIC MEDICINE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN ALL GOVERNMENT HEALTH FACILITIES NATIONWIDE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Calixto-Rubiano
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

House Bill No. 7393, entitled:

“AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE MAGNA CARTA FOR BARANGAYS”

By Representatives Nograles (K.A.) and Nograles (J.J.)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 7394, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE MALABON NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL (MNHS) – CONCEPCION TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL ANNEX IN BARANGAY CONCEPCION, CITY OF MALABON, METRO MANILA FROM THE MALABON NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS CONCEPCION TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFORE”

By Representative Sandoval

TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 7395, entitled:

“AN ACT REGULATING THE IMPOSITION OF FEES FOR THE USE OF PARKING SPACES AND FACILITIES IN SHOPPING MALLS, HOSPITALS, SCHOOLS AND SIMILAR ESTABLISHMENTS, INCLUDING VACANT LOTS USED EXCLUSIVELY FOR PARKING AND PRESCRIBING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION THEREOF”

By Representative Nieto

TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND INDUSTRY

House Bill No. 7396, entitled:

“AN ACT TO REGULATE ORGAN TRANSPLANTATION AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Nieto

TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 7397, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE EXTENSION OFFICE OF THE LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE (LTO) LOCATED IN PONTEVEDRA NEGROS OCCIDENTAL INTO A REGULAR LTO DISTRICT OFFICE AND APPROPRIATE FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Ferrer (J.)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 7398, entitled:

“AN ACT EXTENDING FOR ANOTHER

TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO THE IGLESIA NI CRISTO, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 4339, ENTITLED ‘AN ACT GRANTING THE IGLESIA NI CRISTO A FRANCHISE TO ESTABLISH RADIO STATIONS FOR PRIVATE TELECOMMUNICATION,’ AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7225 AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Dalipe

TO THE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE FRANCHISES

House Bill No. 7399, entitled:

“AN ACT EXPANDING THE MANDATE OF THE WESTERN VISAYAS SANITARIUM IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SANTA BARBARA, ILOILO INTO A SANITARIUM AND GENERAL HOSPITAL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Gorriceta

TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 7400, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING MENTAL HEALTH WELLNESS BREAK TO ALL EMPLOYEES AND STUDENTS AND INTEGRATING MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS IN THE CURRICULUM OF ALL SCHOOLS”

By Representative Antonio

TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 7401, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE BED CAPACITY OF EASTERN VISAYAS REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER IN TACLOBAN CITY FROM FIVE HUNDRED (500) TO ONE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED (1500), AUTHORIZING THE INCREASE OF ITS MEDICAL PERSONNEL, UPGRADING ITS SERVICES, FACILITIES AND PROFESSIONAL HEALTH CARE SERVICE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND RENAMING IT TO EASTERN VISAYAS MEDICAL CENTER”

By Representative Romualdez

TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 7403, entitled:

“AN ACT DEVELOPING THE PILI INDUSTRY, CREATING FOR THE PURPOSE THE PILI SUBSIDY FUND AND THE PILI RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER, AND DECLARING THE PROVINCE OF

SORSOGON AS THE PILI CAPITAL OF THE PHILIPPINES”

By Representative Escudero
TO THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

House Bill No. 7404, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE (LTO) EXTENSION OFFICE LOCATED IN CAUAYAN CITY, PROVINCE OF ISABELA INTO A REGULAR DISTRICT OFFICE, CREATING LTO CAUAYAN CITY DISTRICT OFFICE, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Dy and Panganiban
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 7406, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A DISTRICT ENGINEERING OFFICE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS IN THE 7TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OF THE PROVINCE OF CEBU AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFORE”

By Representative Calderon
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 7407, entitled:

“AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY OF THE PHILIPPINES (‘CAAP’), ABOLISHING THE CIVIL AERONAUTICS BOARD (‘CAB’) AND TRANSFERRING ITS FUNCTIONS TO THE CAAP, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Alvarez (P.), Fariñas, Suarez and Sarmiento (C.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ENTERPRISES AND PRIVATIZATION AND THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 7408, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING INTERNATIONAL COASTAL CLEAN-UP DAY IN THE PHILIPPINES PRESCRIBING EVERY SECOND SUNDAY OF SEPTEMBER A NATIONAL COASTAL CLEAN-UP DAY”

By Representative Nieto
TO THE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY

House Bill No. 7409, entitled:

“AN ACT PROHIBITING

TELECOMMUNICATION COMPANIES FROM IMPOSING AN EXPIRATION PERIOD ON THE VALIDITY OF PREPAID CALL AND TEXT CARDS AND THE FORFEITURE OF LOAD CREDITS THEREOF”

By Representative Nieto
TO THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

House Bill No. 7410, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING THE WIRELESS TELECOM COMPANIES TO TRANSFER FIVE YEAR OLD CELL TOWERS TO REIT CORPORATIONS”

By Representative Yap (A.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

House Bill No. 7411, entitled:

“AN ACT TO PROMOTE RURAL HEALTH BY PROVIDING FOR AN ACCELERATED PROGRAM FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A POTABLE WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM IN EVERY BARANGAY IN THE COUNTRY WITHIN THREE YEARS”

By Representative Sy-Alvarado
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 7412, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING THE SOCIAL NETWORKS IN THE REGISTRATION AND REGULATION OF ALL THE SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS FOR RESPONSIBLE SOCIAL JOURNALISM TO STOP THE PROLIFERATION OF FAKE NEWS, FALSE INFORMATION, HARASSMENTS AND OTHER FORM OF CYBERCRIME AND PROMOTE RESPONSIBLE AND ETHICAL SOCIAL MEDIA FOR THE BETTERMENT OF OUR COUNTRY”

By Representative Sy-Alvarado
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INFORMATION

House Bill No. 7413, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE PROVINCES OF PALAWAN DEL NORTE, PALAWAN ORIENTAL, AND PALAWAN DEL SUR, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Alvarez (F.), Abueg and Acosta
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 7414, entitled:

“AN ACT LOWERING THE PERCENTAGE REQUIREMENT FOR THE VOLUNTARY DISSOLUTION OF CONDOMINIUM CORPORATIONS FOR CONDEMNED PROJECT AND PROJECTS IN EXISTENCE FOR MORE THAN THIRTY (30) YEARS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 4726 ENTITLED ‘THE CONDOMINIUM ACT’ ”

By Representatives Castelo and Batocabe
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 1780, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION URGING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON METRO MANILA DEVELOPMENT, AND HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOOD GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, REGARDING THE PROPRIETY, NECESSITY AND REASONABLENESS OF THE PROPOSED SALE OF THE TWO PROPERTIES OF THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE SYSTEM IN THE PORT AREA OF TONDO, MANILA”

By Representative Lopez (M.L.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1781, entitled:

“RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE NATIONAL INTEREST THROUGH THE REJECTION OF FOREIGN LOAN CONTRACTS WHICH CONTAIN PROVISIONS THAT REQUIRE THE PHILIPPINES TO PUT UP AS COLLATERAL THE COUNTRY’S NATURAL RESOURCES”

By Representative Biazon
TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

House Resolution No. 1782, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION TO INVESTIGATE IN AID OF LEGISLATION THE ILLEGAL AND FRAUDULENT PRACTICE OF CEBU AIR, INC., OPERATING UNDER THE TRADE NAME CEBU PACIFIC AIR, IN THE MANAGEMENT OF ITS AIRLINE BUSINESS”

By Representative Teves
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1783, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES TO INVESTIGATE IN AID OF LEGISLATION THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF THE NEGROS ETHANOL PLANT OF UNIVERSAL ROBINA SUGAR MILLING CORP. (URSMC)”

By Representative Teves
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1784, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION TO INVESTIGATE IN AID OF LEGISLATION THE TAX LIABILITIES OF CEBU AIR, INC., OPERATING UNDER THE TRADE NAME CEBU PACIFIC AIR, IN THE COLLECTION OF TERMINAL FEES”

By Representative Teves
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1785, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION URGING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON SUFFRAGE AND ELECTORAL REFORMS TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE ALLEGATIONS OF ELECTORAL FRAUD, SPECIFICALLY, THE USE OF FALSE ADDRESSES OF REGISTERED VOTERS”

By Representative Sarmiento (E.M.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1786, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE TOP 10 GRADUATES OF THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE ACADEMY ‘MARAGTAS’ CLASS OF 2018”

By Representative Alejano
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ORDER AND SAFETY

House Resolution No. 1787, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE TOP 10 GRADUATES OF THE PHILIPPINE MILITARY ACADEMY ‘ALAB TALA’ CLASS OF 2018”

By Representative Alejano
TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY

House Resolution No. 1788, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR AN INVESTIGATION IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM’S ACQUISITION OF SHARES IN MEGAWIDE CONSTRUCTION CORPORATION”

By Representative Cua
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1789, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING DR. JERALD LALAGUNA Pelayo for topping both the 2018 Physician Licensure Examinations and the 2011 Nursing Licensure Examinations”

By Representative Kho
TO THE COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL REGULATION

House Resolution No. 1790, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES AND OTHER APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE UNILATERAL ACT OF CERTAIN BANKS TO CLOSE THE ACCOUNTS OF REMITTANCE AGENTS, FOREIGN EXCHANGE DEALERS AND MONEY CHANGERS”

By Representatives Pineda, Belmonte (R.), Lopez (B.), Villarín, Montoro, Belaró, Salón, Lacson and Lopez (M.L.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

MALACAÑAN PALACE
MANILA

March 19, 2018
SPEAKER PANTALEON D. ALVAREZ
House Speaker
House of Representatives
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

Mr. Speaker:

Pursuant to the provisions of Article VI, Section 26 (2) of the 1987 Constitution, I hereby certify to the necessity of the immediate enactment of 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”

to address the immediate need for budget reforms and to remedy the gaps in public spending which hamper the ability of the government to deliver direct, immediate, and substantial services to the people.

Best regards.

Very truly yours,

(SGD.) RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE

Copy Furnished:

Sen. Aquilino “Koko” Pimentel III
Senate President
The Philippine Senate
Pasay City

Sec. Adelino B. Sitoy

Head
Presidential Legislative Liaison Office
2/F New Executive Bldg.
Malacañang, Manila

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

COMMUNICATION

Letter dated 5 March 2018 of Alain Del B. Pascua, Undersecretary, Department of Education, transmitting to the House of Representatives the Aide Memoire on the Status of School Building Program under the Basic Education Facilities Fund for 2017-2019.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report by the Committee on Tourism (Committee Report No. 673), re H.R. No. 1087, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION URGING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE ROADMAP, PROGRAMS, PROJECTS AND ACTION PLANS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM THAT AIM TO REGULATE TOURIST SPOTS IN ORDER TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY”

and H.R. No. 1277, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM AND OTHER APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTED IRRESPONSIBLE DUMPING OF WASTEWATER BY SOME ESTABLISHMENTS IN BORACAY ISLAND,

MALAY, AKLAN TO THE DETRIMENT OF THE CLEAN AND CLEAR WATERS OF THE WORLD CLASS TOURISM DESTINATION WITH THE END IN VIEW OF ENACTING REGULATIONS THAT WILL ENSURE THE SUSTAINABILITY OF TOURISM ACTIVITIES IN THE ISLAND AND THE PRESERVATION OF ITS CHARM AND BEAUTY”

informing the House of its findings and recommendations

Sponsors: Representatives Gomez, Sarmiento (E.M.), Marquez, Pineda and Romero
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Tourism and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 674), re H.B. No. 7429, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING THE MALUBAL FALLS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ROSELLER T. LIM, PROVINCE OF ZAMBOANGA SIBUGAY AN ECOTOURISM SITE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 4846

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

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Tourism and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 675), re H.B. No. 7430, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING THE UNDERGROUND TIPAN CAVE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF NAGA, PROVINCE OF ZAMBOANGA SIBUGAY AN ECOTOURISM SITE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 4979

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

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

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

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7302

Continuation

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 7302, as contained in Committee Report No. 639 and for this purpose, may I ask that the Secretary General be directed to read the title of the Bill.

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 the title of House Bill No. 7302.

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. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary status of the Bill is that it is in the period of sponsorship and debate. I move that the Hon. Joey Sarte Salceda of the Second District of Albay be recognized.

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.

Cong. Joey Salceda is hereby recognized.

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

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

Cong. Edcel Lagman from Albay is hereby recognized.

REP. LAGMAN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday before the session was adjourned, I was requesting from the distinguished Sponsor the necessary data to show the overall savings of the Philippines in Fiscal Year 2017. I wonder whether the data would now be available.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

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

It was 4:26 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:27 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

REP. SALCEDA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

These are documents from the Department of Budget and Management. Well, yesterday, we were talking about a P209-billion outstanding balance in various accounts, but as I had said and clarified very clearly, this did not refer to savings but rather to balances. Now, based on the actual recorded accounting of the so-called savings, for example, in 2016, the recorded savings for 2016 stood at—from the 2016 GAA, the total savings was posted at P9.532 billion.

REP. LAGMAN. Can we get that again, Mr. Speaker?

REP. SALCEDA. It was P9.532 billion and this amount was used to augment the NDRRMF based on the approval of the Office of the President on October 30, 2017 virtually of the same amount. This was split into two categories: MOOE, P4.985 billion and Capital Outlays, P4.546 billion. I can give you a copy of this.

For last year, Your Honor, for GAA 2017 or Republic Act No. 10924, the recorded savings was from the Pension and Gratuity Fund (PGF). In short, this was the unutilized balance of terminal leaves and retirement gratuity funds of P10 billion which I mentioned yesterday, and this was used essentially to augment the Contingent Fund: P5.376 billion for MOOE and P4.623 billion for Capital Outlays, totaling P10 billion. In short, Your Honor, if you will just look at the 2017 General Appropriations Act, only P10 billion was saved and the P10 billion, which was recognized as savings, was used to augment the Contingent Fund.

REP. LAGMAN. In other words, for last year, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, the P10 billion in overall savings had been completely used for augmentation.

REP. SALCEDA. That is correct.

REP. LAGMAN. Where is this figure reflected in the report of the Executive, or are we just getting this figure because I requested for it?

REP. SALCEDA. No, Your Honor, very clearly, it is stated here, the PGF savings per Office of the President's approval dated September 27, 2017. So, the usual tendency is to date it by year end, but it is very clear that this was almost like a random date in the

calendar last year, Your Honor. September 27, 2017—that was the date wherein the savings was recognized and the savings was used to augment. So, it is not like just another fancy footwork on December 31 of the prior year, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. In 2016, the more than nine billion pesos...

REP. SALCEDA. It was recorded, Your Honor, ...

REP. LAGMAN. ... total savings, was this total amount completely used for augmentation?

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor, October 30, 2017.

REP. LAGMAN. So, can we get the copies of this disclosure of overall savings and augmentation?

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, we will do that, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. At the proper time, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, we would propose an amendment that the Executive, through the Department of Budget and Management, shall disclose the total savings at the end of the year, including the utilization or augmentation of items from the savings.

REP. SALCEDA. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, I think that is a very reasonable request, in the exercise of the oversight functions of Congress, to require such a report on within a reasonable period, let us say, of 30 days after the year end, of all such savings recognized and where the savings were used to augment. This can be reported to the House of Representatives, to its appropriate committee.

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you so much for accommodating such a proposed amendment because this would strengthen the power of Congress in the appropriation of funds. Now, let me go to a logical question which was not fully answered by the Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations. What other practices would derogate or diminish the power of Congress over the public purse?

REP. SALCEDA. I guess, Your Honor, when we fail to enact the budget, it derogates from the power of Congress to enact a new budget ...

REP. LAGMAN. I did not get the answer.

REP. SALCEDA. Re-enactment, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Re-enactment.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, that would be, to me, as a former Chairman of the budget, I can tell you that, probably, we lose much of our powers over the budget when we allow this—when we fail to approve the budget and therefore, we lose control over the budget, Your Honor.

Therefore, during the more turbulent times, during the two prior administrations, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, I saw that, virtually, it was the Executive that controlled the complexion of the budget. The Budget Reform Act, as being proposed right now, presents itself as a way of recovering much of the powers of Congress by setting certain conditions and limitations whenever Congress fails to approve the budget. Therefore, during the re-enactment, Your Honor, there are certain limitations as to what the Executive can do with the prior year's budget as basis for the re-enacted budget.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, I fully agree with the distinguished Sponsor that having a re-enacted budget would derogate from the power of Congress to appropriate and as a former Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, I also hold that position. It is said, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, that in a re-enacted budget, there are three budgets, namely: the re-enacted budget; then, the special budget undertaken by the Executive Department; and subsequently, the approved budget for the current year. So, that makes three budgets in all.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes.

REP. LAGMAN. Is that observation correct?

REP. SALCEDA. The prior year's budget, the proposed NEP and, of course, the re-enacted budget as allowed, yes, that will be correct.

REP. LAGMAN. Yes.

REP. SALCEDA. So, in other words, there are three animals although legally there are only two: the prior year's budget which was approved by Congress and therefore, because I do not tend to agree that the proposed NEP having failed to pass muster with Congress, can be legally recognized as being such a document, Your Honor. I would recognize only the re-enacted budget as done by the President and the prior year's budget, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, is this aberration of three animals addressed in this Bill?

REP. SALCEDA. I think so, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker. First, in this BRA or Budget Reform Act, the

aggregate level of the re-enacted budget is specifically limited to the total aggregate appropriated in the preceding year and so, there is no way, when the President makes or formulates the re-enacted budget, that the re-enacted budget will be higher than the prior year's. Second, the appropriations for certain items such as for ongoing programs, activities and projects, will be limited to the amounts authorized under the re-enacted budget but in no case will they exceed the amount, as you said, of that special animal called "the proposed NEP."

In short, when the President enacts this new budget or the re-enacted budget, the amounts specified cannot be higher than the amounts he proposed in the NEP which we failed to enact as GAA; and, of course, appropriations for completed programs, projects and activities which are always there, which has been the practice but now, it will not just be a practice but will now be a particular provision in the BRA, that appropriations for completed projects, activities and projects are excluded from the re-enacted budget, of course, commonsensically. In short, Your Honor, you cannot do that where, quantitatively or numerically, the prior year's budget will be higher than the re-enacted budget based on these provisions, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay. Aside from those innovations which, in fact, would strengthen the power of Congress over the purse, are there other amendments which the distinguished Sponsor could mention, other proposals which will further strengthen the hand of Congress in the event of a re-appropriated budget?

REP. SALCEDA. It is clear, Your Honor, that the BRA proposes that there will only be three special funds and these are the NDRRMF, the Contingent Fund and—in short, Your Honor, I would like to know now, where there is a proliferation of funds, the BRA, although it is a self-imposed limitation by the Executive on us. In short, because Congress, in its total wisdom and by the powers vested in us by the Constitution, can certainly create new funds, nonetheless, from a directional perspective, Your Honor, the Executive seeks to limit itself to only three special funds, three lump sums: essentially, una, iyong ALGU po na para sa mga death benefits ng mga barangay officials; pangalawa, para po doon sa NDRRMF; at pangatlo, Contingent Fund po. Your Honor, ang mga ito, sa paggawa ng budget, ay hindi po naman natin mapo-forecast lahat nang mga biglang pangyayari katulad ng Yolanda o Marawi siege, kung saan kailangan din naman po ng Ehekutibo, para po maharap o matugunan ang mga pangangailangan ng bayan, ng flexibility na manggagaling po dito. I think the existence of these three funds is necessary

essentially to allow the Executive a sufficient operating flexibility in addressing the emergence of needs that are not predictable during the budget period.

REP. LAGMAN. Irrespective of whether there is a re-enacted appropriation or budget, this delimitation of the Special Purpose Funds will have to be maintained. But my question is, other than the ones you had mentioned, are there other proposals which you think would be necessary to strengthen the power of Congress in the appropriation of public funds in the event that there is a re-enactment of the budget?

REP. SALCEDA. Sa tingin ko, iyong pinaka-importante dito, kasi akala ko po, Your Honor, ay napag-usapan na ito noong ating Chairman, dahil siguro kung pag-uusapan itong BRA, ang pinakasentro o ang pinakapuso po nito ay patungkol po sa pag-shift po natin mula sa obligation-based to cash-based po, Your Honor. So, ito po ang pinakasentro na reporma na isasagawa dito po sa Budget Reform Act dahil unang-una, binibigyan po ng pagkakataon ang Kongreso na aprobahan o gawin mas epektibo ang budget dahil sa ngayon po, kapag hindi nila nagastos, ang isa pong Executive agency ay kailangan i-obligate niya ito kahit hindi pa niya nagagamit. Dito po sa bagong cash-based framework instead of obligation-based, halimbawa, kung one billion pesos iyong project at P500 million ang nagamit, iyong P500 million po ay mawawala na po sa kamay ng Ehekutibo and therefore, mababalik po notionally under the same cutting-edge knife of the power of the purse of Congress, Your Honor.

So, isa po iyan sa nakikita ko na pinakabuod o pinakapuso ng pagbabago na ginagawa po nitong Budget Reform Act kung saan po it imposes greater pressure on the Executive na, unang-una, dapat naplano nila nang maigi ang isang budgetary item para po naman iyong amount na nilalaan para doon—ako po, bilang isang dating governor, masasabi ko po sa inyo na itong shift po mula sa obligation-based papunta po sa cash-based ay napakalaki po ng epekto sa behavior ng mga players po sa national government agencies.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay. Now, other than the use of savings and in the case of a re-enacted budget, what other practices would derogate from our power over the purse?

REP. SALCEDA. Alam po ninyo, kung minsan, kapag hindi kaya—kasi hindi pinag-isipan ng Executive iyong budget kaya, “Sige, isaksak mo na lang lahat kung saang programa, tatal mat-trigger naman po nito kung may bagong revenue or may bagong utang”—subalit dito po sa batas na ito, iyong Unprogrammed Funds ay magkakaroon po ng tatlong limitasyon na wala po noon.

Unang-una, hindi na ho siya puwedeng lumampas sa two percent noong aggregate proposed National Expenditure Program. In other words, to me, unlike before na nagsimula iyan sa 24, noong pag-alis natin, naging 78. In other words, there was no rhyme or reason except that probably to my mind, there were pending projects that had no right of way, where probably loan negotiations are still ongoing and therefore, sabi ng Executive, “Sige, isaksak mo na lang iyan diyan sa programa para naman mayroon tayong leeway na pagkukunan kung ang mga pondong iyan ay ma-free up.” Pangalawa po, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, iyong expenditure diyan ay hindi na ho katulad ng dati na isang malaking lump sum. Katulad ng sinabi ko kanina na tatlo na lang po iyong Special Purpose Funds na lump sum, ito po ngayong Unprogrammed Funds ay dapat individually nakalista po, detalyado, kung ano po iyong mga sinasabi na ini-expect ng Executive na iyong mga may naka-pending na right-of-way, iyong naka-pending po ang negosasyon sa Japan o sa China. Samakatuwid, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, nakalaan, nakalagay po ang mga iyon doon sa Unprogrammed Funds. Pangatlo, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, nilalagay doon nang klaro na itong mga Unprogrammed Funds ay hindi pupuwedeng gamitin kung ang mga ito po ay lalampas o magba-violate ng declared fiscal targets o ng deficit targets, then, iyan po ang pinaka-constraining factor sa lahat po ng operasyon natin bilang isang gobyerno.

So, para sa akin po, ito ay napakahalaga na reporma na isinasagawa po nitong Budget Reform Act, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, we agree that another practice which would derogate from the power of Congress to appropriate would be the Unprogrammed Funds, in addition to the use of savings, and to the eventuality of a re-appropriated budget. Are there other practices which would diminish the power of Congress to appropriate funds?

REP. SALCEDA. Dinadala mo talaga ako doon sa paborito mo, which is the automatic appropriations, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Yes, automatic appropriations.

REP. SALCEDA. Alam ko kanina pa, kaso, iniwasan ko naman dahil alam ko parang pupunta tayo doon, mapag-uusapan iyong iba pang may mga elemento. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, dito po ay nagkakaroon tayo ng konting pagiging—hindi naman practical dahil iyong requirements po, ang Pilipinas po ay nag-o-operate ng ating ekonomiya sa loob po ng tinatawag nating global financial market, nasa loob po

ng domestic capital market na, actually, kung iisipin mo, ang atin pong domestic debt ay halos 60 porsiyento po. In other words, iyong mga small savers po. So, importante po sa kanila na kapag nagpautang sa gobyerno, kapag bumili sila ng T-bills, ay automatic po na mababayaran sila. Kaya importante po itong presence noong P.D. No. 1177 na magkaroon po ng automatic appropriations para po sa mga debt payments, both for interest as well as for principal repayment, para naman po iyong ating credit markets and capital markets ay naa-assure po na kung sila ay magpapautang sa gobyerno, sa oras na itinakda natin na babayaran ito, sila ay mababayaran po natin.

So, isa lang ito na—hindi ko sinasabi na ibinibigay natin o sinu-surrender natin pero siguro, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, kapag tiningnan po natin iyong kasaysayan ng P.D. No. 1177, makikita po natin na in 1985, noong mga unang years ni Pangulong Cory Aquino, umaabot po ng halos 45 percent ang atin pong debt service pero noong pagpasok ng 2005, ito po ay bumaba sa 28. Sa ngayon po, ang debt service as a percentage of total budget ay 10 percent na lang. Hindi ko sinasabi po na, kasi kahit 10 percent iyan, malaki pa rin iyan. Ang sinasabi ko po ay iyong kahalagahan po na ang Kongreso ay in control ng isang appropriation at para sa akin po, hindi naman pragmatic kung hindi realistic lang po, na ang probisyon na ito ay magkaroon po ng automatic appropriations para po doon sa tinatawag nating debt service or debt repayment—debt repayment po na ginagawa po ng ating gobyerno para po mapondohan ang atin pong pang-araw-araw na gawain ng Estado.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay. Before the advent of P.D. No. 1177, a Marcos decree, how was the debt service appropriated?

REP. SALCEDA. Ang pagkakaalam ko, ito ay automatic. I ask for a one-minute suspension of the session, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, para mas accurate po ang sagot ko.

REP. LAGMAN. Sige, okay.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

It was 4:51 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:52 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

REP. SALCEDA. May series po ng mga batas kung saan napapaloob po talaga iyong intensiyon kung saan masasabi po natin na, dahil tayo po nakapaloob sa isang sistema ng kapitalismo, hindi po maiiwasan kung ano po ang mga patakaran o mga practices. Ang una po diyan, siguro, kung saan nakapaloob po ito, na kapag ang Presidente ay nangutang, automatic appropriated na po iyan under Republic Act No. 245 noong 1948. Ito po ay subsequently na-amend under Republic Act No. 4860 noong 1966 kung saan po—kasi dalawa po ang pinag-uusapan po dito. Alin ba iyong automatically na ina-appropriate mo—iyong pag-utang o iyong proceeds ng utang? Samakatuwid, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, iyong P.D. No. 1177, kino-cover niya po na kapag ang Presidente ay nangutang, para po magbayad ng isang utang ay automatically appropriated na po iyon.

REP. LAGMAN. Iyong tanong ko, really, is—bago iyong sistema ng automatic appropriation under P.D. No. 1177, paano ba natin binabayaran ang ating mga utang? Kongreso ba ang nag-a-appropriate kahit walang automatic appropriation?

REP. SALCEDA. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, hindi mo siguro kakailanganin ang PD kung hindi pa iyon—iyong bagong patakaran, tama po ba?

REP. LAGMAN. Yes.

REP. SALCEDA. Samakatuwid, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor ...

REP. LAGMAN. Bago ng panahon ng automatic appropriation, paano ba binabayaran ng gobyerno ang utang?

REP. SALCEDA. By authorization of Congress, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. By authorization of Congress.

REP. SALCEDA, Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Oo, iyon lang naman ang gusto kong sagot, na iyong Kongreso ay nag-a-appropriate ng funds for the payment of the national debt, whether foreign or domestic.

REP. SALCEDA. Tama po iyan.

REP. LAGMAN. Hindi, tama iyan.

REP. SALCEDA. Kaso, noong lumobo na po...

REP. LAGMAN. Tekang muna, bago iyan lumobo, imposibleng lumobo iyan sapagkat wala nang

partisipasyon ang Kongreso sa pag-appropriate ng debt service. Kaya't tinatanong namin kung bakit ba ang presumption natin ay mukhang hindi responsible ang Kongreso to appropriate the necessary funds for debt service kaya ina-automatic appropriation without the scrutiny of Congress. We should not presume a responsibility on the part of the Congress, but we should presume good faith on the part of the Members of Congress that once it is needed to fund debt service, Congress will appropriate, but it should be given the right to scrutinize the details, the amounts of the debt service.

You know why, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor? Both P.D. No. 1177 and Executive Order No. 292 which reiterate automatic appropriation in P.D. No. 1177, are legislative measures by presidential fiat, without the participation of Parliament or Congress. Iyong P.D. No. 1177 was issued when Marcos was both the Executive and the Legislative so, walang partisipasyon doon iyong Parliament at that time. Ito namang E.O. No. 292 was issued by President Aquino under her revolutionary government in which she exercised legislative functions. You will agree with this Representation that in both cases, there was no participation on the part of Parliament or of Congress in the passage of P.D. No. 1177 and E.O. No. 292.

REP. SALCEDA. Tama po.

REP. LAGMAN. Tama. Kaya ngayon, we are going to revisit P.D. No. 1177 and E.O. No. 292 so that Congress should be the one to determine whether we repeal P.D. No. 1177 as reiterated in E.O. No. 292, or we are going to provide for certain provisions which would enable Congress to scrutinize debt service, both domestic and foreign, as well as interest payment and principal amortization. This is just a very reasonable request that, since Congress has the power of the purse, then it should be given the power to scrutinize debt service and appropriate the necessary amounts for debt service.

Would the distinguished Sponsor agree to that proposition?

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor, kaya nga po doon sa BRA, for the first time po, very clear kung ano po iyong mga kagyat na gawain o iyong congressional imperative patungkol po sa financing operation ng gobyerno. Unang-una sa Section 14, sinasabi doon na klaro, there are fiscal rules being legislated na dapat ang national government should maintain prudent levels of public debt. Tapos po, sinasabi rin po dito na kapag ang mga—in other words, there are now very specific processes and mechanisms by which the government can borrow, whether it borrows domestically or it

borrows abroad, it borrows from bilateral or it borrows from ODA, kung saan po ay mas klaro na at hindi katulad noong panahon ni Marcos na umutang siya sa World Bank, pinadaan niya sa DBP, naibigay niya sa—they ended up in certain companies.

Ngayon po, sa batas na ito, mukhang nahihirapan po akong makita, dahil nga po may Kongreso at siguro naman, ang masasabi ko na iyong oversight functions of Congress are not being repealed by this law. In short, Your Honor, continuous watchfulness ay naroon pa rin naman po dahil ang Kongreso ay isa pa ring dynamic institution with very active committees, whether sa Committee on Appropriations o Committee on Ways and Means na sumusuri po kung saan nanggagaling ang pera—iyong Committee on Appropriations at ang iba pang mga committee na tumitingin kung papaano po ang pera ng gobyerno ay nagagamit sang-ayon po ito sa Constitution na ang Kongreso ay may power of the purse, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. All of these questions would be evading the issue. The issue is, must we revisit P.D. No. 1177 and E.O. No. 292 so that we could recapture the power of Congress over the purse? Because both of these issuances were made without the participation of Congress and this Bill gives us the opportunity to really find out whether P.D. No. 1177 and E.O. No. 292 should be retained, should be amended, should be modified or completely repealed. Was there any study made by appropriate agencies of the government on these particular questions, or do we just assume that it is necessary that the P.D. No. 1177 and E.O. No. 292 should prevail because we cannot trust Congress to appropriate the necessary funds for debt service and we are going to frighten the lords of international and domestic finance that they may not be paid what is owed to them once they accommodate our country with foreign loans or domestic debts?

REP. SALCEDA. Hindi naman po, Your Honor, kasi kapag tiningnan ninyo po, in fact, iyong mga lessons learned po nito na hango po sa applications po ng paggamit ng P.D. No. 1177 at saka E.O. No. 292, kapag tiningnan mo, halimbawa, iyong Section 57, ito po ay hango sa o patungkol po sa local government borrowings. Samakatuwid, Your Honor, na hindi naman natin ina-anticipate na magkakaroon tayo ng crisis tulad ng Brazil or Argentina kung saan po nangutang na lang ng nangutang iyong LGU.

Iyong Section 58, po, dalawang buong paragraphs tungkol po sa debt reporting, at ang nakalagay:

...in a timely way to the President, Congress, and COA and in accordance with the reporting requirements in this Act.

Each LGU and GOCC shall maintain records and provide reports to the DOF on loans as required by relevant laws, rules and regulations.”

—and therefore, to Congress, on loans as required by law.

Section 59, ito po iyong isa sa pinaka o paulit-ulit na inaabuso, dahil noon nangutang ang gobyerno, ginantiya natin iyong mga utang ng PNB at DBP, so, iyong garantiya po ay hindi na natingnan at hindi nasuri. In that sense po, tama po kayo kasi iyong BOT, halimbawa, ito ay garantiya din at iyon din ang dahilan kung bakit lumobo ang utang ng gobyerno noong 2004 at 2005, dahil nga po iyong mga guarantees natin ay biglang naging due. Nandoon po, buong Section 59, ito ay patungkol po sa isang NGA or GOCC na naga-grant o nabibigyan po ng sovereign character ang kanilang pag-utang para sa isang proyekto.

Section 60 po, Limitation on the Liability of the National Government for Debts of Other Entities. Samakatuwid po, katulad ng GSIS, SSS, PhilHealth, dahil ito po ay nagiging mga malalaking dambuhala na pagdating na po sa atin pong financial system.

Section 61. Payments Made for Contingent Liability. Very clear po dito, “Any money paid by the DOF pursuant to any guarantee, indemnity, or security authorized by law and the expenses associated with the same shall constitute a debt due the National Government from the entity for whose benefits...” So, we go beyond the reporting, Your Honor. Sinasabi dito na ang pera na ito, kung sakali mang bayaran ng gobyerno ay magiging utang at samakatuwid, kapag iyan ay nabayaran sa atin ay magiging under po ng power of the purse ng Kongreso.

Lastly po, Section 62, Information on Contingent Liabilities—again, this is a reiteration, Your Honor, kasi much of the abuse, if you look at our history under President Marcos, it is the same. These are borrowings guaranteed by the government, these are not actually NG liabilities but actually, consolidated public sector deficit and therefore, contingent liabilities. During the time, let us say of Ramos, going into his administration where the BOT—panahon po ng BOT kung saan po lumobo again iyong contingent—naka dalawang phase na po tayo dumaan kung saan po ang contingent liabilities ay siya talaga ang sumisira at hindi naman po talaga iyong diretsang pag-utang ng gobyerno, kung hindi iyong mga utang na ginantiyahan natin dahil po hindi dumaan nga sa Kongreso—tama po kayo dahil ang gumastos ay DBP, dahil ang gumastos ay NAPOCOR, dahil ang gumastos ay BOT po. Samakatuwid, Your Honor, kino-correct na po ng batas na ito, para sa pagbibigay o pagkilala po sa inherent power of the purse of Congress, by limiting so many provisions that will enable Congress to precisely exercise its structural imperative na kontrolin po or to exercise the power of the purse, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. With all those safeguards enumerated by the distinguished Sponsor which would ascertain and ensure the payment of the country’s debts, why are we still adamant in granting Congress the power to scrutinize debt service, both principal amortization and interest payments,...

REP. SALCEDA. I think ...

REP. LAGMAN. ...so that we can completely restore to Congress the power over the purse and preclude automatic appropriations for behest loans like the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant.

REP. SALCEDA. Alam ninyo, Your Honor, ...

REP. LAGMAN. Are behest loans covered by automatic appropriations?

REP. SALCEDA. Wala ho siyang character. Ang ibig sabihin ay pera iyon. Ang ibig sabihin, wala namang nakapangalang behest or non-behest iyon and so, ang pagkilala po bilang isang behest loan is a moral determination, Your Honor. Pero ang sinasabi ko, Your Honor, bakit mo kokontrolin po iyong gira? Ano ang gira sa English? Ito iyong truck kaya kontrolin mo po iyong traveler. Una, ang sabi ko nga, Your Honor, dati, ang debt service is 41 percent of the budget pero ngayon ay 10 percent na lang. Pangalawa, the bulk of the fiscal sin of omission are really contingent liabilities. Kung ako, Sir, Your Honor, hindi ko kokontrolin ang debt service pero kokontrolin ko po ang capacity of the government to enter into contingent liability because that is the demon that bedevils our society, especially our economic life. So, why control the truck? Control the traveler. In short, Your Honor, the sin is in contingent liability, not in the payment of the debt service that they have created.

REP. LAGMAN. We are not saying that repayment of debt is a sin. It is a contractual obligation of the government. What we are saying is, let Congress appropriate the funds necessary for debt service so that we will not have for example, instances where behest loans are covered by automatic appropriations. I suppose the distinguished Gentleman is aware of the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes.

REP. LAGMAN. We paid ...

REP. SALCEDA. Fully paid.

REP. LAGMAN. ... fully, through automatic appropriation, this behest loan and in fact, until now,

we are still appropriating sums of money for the maintenance of this snowballed facility.

REP. SALCEDA. Tama po.

REP. LAGMAN. Tama. So, let us preclude the payment of behest loans through automatic appropriations. In the Appropriations Act of 2008, that is on page 956.

REP. SALCEDA. Kayo po ang Chairman noon.

REP. LAGMAN. Yes, I was the Chairman and for the first time, we gave the citizens the opportunity to ventilate their positions with respect to the budget.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, the People's Budget.

REP. LAGMAN. The People's Budget which was a tradition—which subsequent chairmen maintained until it was stopped recently. Last year, civil society was not given the opportunity to ventilate its position with respect to the budget. That is true.

Now, let me refer to some behest loans which we said should not be paid—the Austria Medical Waste Project, the Small Coconut Farm Development Project, the Second Social Expenditure Management Program, the Philippine Merchant Marine Academy Modernization Project, the Telepono sa Barangay Project, the Power Sector Restructuring Program, the Power Sector Development Program, the Angat Water Supply Optimization Project, the Procurement of Search and Rescue Vessel, and the Pampanga Delta Development Project, and some remaining unsecuritized loans incurred during the term of former President Ferdinand Marcos.

We listed all these. We took time so that we could impress on our Members and the public that we are trying to regain the power of the purse and we should not use automatic appropriations to pay behest loans. I am mentioning this, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, because at the proper time we may propose amendments towards the recapturing of the power of the purse by Congress, more particularly the House of Representatives.

Now, aside from those practices already mentioned up to automatic appropriations, are there still practices which would demean the congressional power of the purse?

REP. SALCEDA. Impounding, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. I beg your pardon.

REP. SALCEDA. Impounding.

REP. LAGMAN. Impounding. Very precise—

impounding. Well, the principle is that once the appropriations made by Congress are enacted under the General Appropriations Act and these items of appropriations are not subject to items vetoed by the President, it is incumbent upon the Executive to release these approved appropriations. It is not the right of the Executive to impound these appropriations unless with the consent of Congress and, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, this prohibition against impoundment of appropriations is found in Section 67 of the General Appropriations Act of 2010.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. The question is, are we ready to provide additional safeguards against impoundment?

REP. SALCEDA. In fact ...

REP. LAGMAN. Additional safeguards—in addition to what has been stated in the Bill.

REP. SALCEDA. Two safeguards, Your Honor. Ang impoundment mo ngayon, kailangan po ng act of Congress. Ang ibig sabihin, iyong Presidente ay magpropose po ng impoundment proposal to Congress, subalit magkakaroon po ng parang negative period, kapag hindi natin inaprobahan in 45 days, kung saan iyong impoundment proposal is automatically approved.

In short, Your Honor, there is that affirmative act on the part of the Executive if it wishes to essentially overturn an act of Congress, which is a one-line item. They may be tasked to propose to Congress an impoundment proposal. For the sake of—not presumption of goodwill but rather, the continuity of government operations, then that impoundment, if not approved by Congress in 45 session days—30 session days— will be deemed approved if Congress does not act on it, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay. Now, will these provisions cover specific instances where, for example, an approved appropriation not vetoed by the President, let us say for a P10 million project in the district of Congressman A, is not released by the President or by the DBM and thus, effectively impounded? Would that be included in the limitations? No, it is not?

REP. SALCEDA. Your Honor, kasi iyong nakasaad po dito sa cash-based framework, na iyong budget po is its own release document, samakatuwid, Your Honor, kapag nakalista ho doon, the only way for it to be suspended or held is for the President to say to Congress or to make a proposal to Congress na “I am impounding it because it is unnecessary, or I need this fund curtailment because of unmanageable deficit, ”

which are the two provisions for which an impoundment can be made. Your Honor, in general, every single item in the budget is automatically released because the budget is its own release document as provided for already in the Budget Reform Act, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. That is more theoretical than real. We all know that there are certain items of appropriations, despite the fact that these are supposed to be automatically released, that are not actually released.

REP. SALCEDA. I would rather think, Your Honor, that that would be an exception rather than the rule.

REP. LAGMAN. Yes, but there are exceptions and these are cruel exceptions.

REP. SALCEDA. *(Laughter)* Your Honor, they have not been cruel to me.

REP. LAGMAN. Most probably at the proper time, we are going to make a proposal that, outside of those authorized to be impounded, no other impoundment of appropriations should be made by the Executive.

REP. SALCEDA. Well, may I know, Your Honor, a possible wording of such a proposal?

REP. LAGMAN. We will craft the necessary wording.

REP. SALCEDA. Okay, thank you, Your Honor. In other words, in the appropriate time.

REP. LAGMAN. Now, one more thing on this impoundment. If Congress fails within a period of time to make a resolution disapproving the request for impoundment, then the impoundment is deemed to be approved by Congress, yes?

REP. SALCEDA. Yes.

REP. LAGMAN. Why do we not reverse it? If Congress does not make any action with respect to the proposal of the President, then it is deemed to be disapproved.

REP. SALCEDA. Your Honor, kasi lumilipat tayo sa isang cash-based appropriations, samakatuwid, kung pag-aantayin ho natin, then it defeats the overall logic of a cash-based appropriations framework. Samakatuwid, habang hindi tayo nag-a-act, ipi-presume na hindi dapat puwedeng i-impound iyan. Samakatuwid, Your Honor, tumatakbo iyong oras, and under a cash-based appropriations, Your Honor, ang hinahabol po diyan ay

oras kasi nga kung hindi mo maubos iyong one million pesos at P500 million lang ang nagamit, iyong P500 billion na hindi nagamit ay babalik sa National Treasury, which may, of course, undermine the ability of the State to serve the people, their welfare, or to create economic wealth for the people, Your Honor.

Samakatuwid, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, iyong reverse, sa tingin ko, mas praktikal pa rin po na ang burden ay nasa atin kasi nga itong cash based appropriations is an act of Congress. Dahil ito ay act of Congress, ang presumption po na pagdaan dito sa atin, except kung may mga—let us say, in the attack of Trump against North Korea, pagkatapos ay humiwalay siya o inaway niya ang EU—maraming economic repercussions, na kakailanganin naman po ng Presidente, na sasabihin niya, “Uy, baka kailangan ho natin na itong mga hindi pa nagagamit, ay huwag munang gamitin.” So that requires the act of impoundment, but it is still subject to 30 days. Thirty session days, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, is a long time for Congress because that is virtually 10 weeks.

REP. LAGMAN. Yes.

REP. SALCEDA. In other words, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, that is a reasonable and sufficient time for Congress to act on an impoundment proposal because we only meet three session days every week.

REP. LAGMAN. I made that proposal because in the title of the Bill, we are saying thereat that we trying to strengthen the congressional power of the purse and this is one way we are strengthening that power.

Now, let me go to the last activity or practice which would be detrimental to the power of Congress over the purse because it segregates huge amounts of money from the specific appropriations of Congress. I refer to the lump sums and the Special Purpose Funds. It is true that under the proposed Bill, the Special Purpose Funds has been limited to ...

REP. SALCEDA. Three.

REP. LAGMAN. ... three, but there is an open-ended provision which says “...other SPFs not falling under any of the preceding purposes, the details of which could not be determined during the budget preparation stage and based on the parameters to be set in the IRR.” What is the import of this open-ended provision?

REP. SALCEDA. Una, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, kagagawan din natin iyan sa Kongreso. Halimbawa, iyong TRAIN, naglagay po tayo doon ng trust fund para sa mga sugar farmers. So, ito po iyong fiscal indication ng mga ibang gawain ng Kongreso na hindi mo naman

ma-predict ang indibiduwal na detalye kung papaano po ang paggamit nito. Pangalawa po, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, kung saka-sakali man po na ito ay isang inisyatibo ng Ehekutibo o ng isang national government agency, ito ay subject to the scrutiny natin iyan during the appropriations hearings where we can demand that these should be in details, what are proposed. Second, definitely, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, these will be subject to congressional scrutiny and approval. So, hindi naman ho mawawala iyon dahil, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, although hindi ko alam pero nakita ko naman po na simula sa tradisyon na atin pong sinunod, bilang two former Chairmen of the Committee on Appropriations, hindi ho natin ito pinapalampas, na basta na lang mayroong isang malaking lump sum na hindi natin alam o hindi natin tinitingnan kung ano ang laman nito, saan gagamitin, sino ang makikinabang, sino ang gagamit.

Samakatuwid, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, we cannot preclude na hindi magkaroon ng mga bagong Special Purpose Funds, first, as a consequence of the act of Congress; and second, based po sa operating requirements ng ating national government, na kung minsan po ay may mga gawain na talagang kinakailangan ito because of the specificity, urgency, criticality and substantiality. In other words, hindi mo ito mapi-pinpoint isa-isa.

Samakatuwid, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, kinakailangan pa rin na magkaroon ng Special Purpose Funds. In the first place, it is called “Special Purpose Fund” and therefore, there is enough specificity with respect to it being a Special Purpose Fund, by looking at why it is a Special Purpose Fund.

REP. LAGMAN. In this open-ended provision, it says that, “...the details of which could not be determined during the budget preparation stage.” Why could it not be determined?

REP. SALCEDA. Ang sinasabi lang naman po, iyong detalye ng expenditure kung minsan ay hindi talaga ho ma-determine, pero ang sinasabi naman po dito, puwede naman nating tanggalin iyan.

REP. LAGMAN. Tanggalin natin.

REP. SALCEDA. Hindi po, pagdating na ho—alam po ninyo, naiintindihan ko po na napakaganda noong signal, na tatlo na lang ang Lump-Sum Funds.

REP. LAGMAN. Hindi nga po.

REP. SALCEDA. Iyon na nga po pero...

REP. LAGMAN. Elastic naman ito, mayroong open-ended provision.

REP. SALCEDA. Ang kalaban po ninyo dito ay napaka-unpredictable po ito. Katulad ng climate change o terorismo, bakit mo naman itatali ang dalawang kamay mo, por medio, dahil gusto mo lang ng elegance pagdating po sa budgetary framework? It is so elegant to hear that there are only three Special Purpose Funds, three Lump-Sum Funds, but in the meantime, you are essentially precluding the ability of the government to confront rising and, in fact, urgent threats, not just to the national security but even to our national economy.

Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, sinasabi lang po—paano ba ito? Hindi ko naman sinasabing pre-nup ito. Ang sinasabi ko lang ay kinakailangan pa rin po ng measure of flexibility pero dadaan din naman ito sa atin, sa Kongreso. Halimbawa, maraming rehabilitation funds at sa tingin ko naman, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, walang aayaw ho dito na kailangan natin ng maraming special funds. Samakatuwid, hindi ho natin alam naman kung gaano kalaki iyong kinakailangan, na hindi ho basta-basta maiisa-isa ang mga ito, na ito ay para sa housing, ito ay para sa ganito. Kung minsan kasi, hindi sa nagpabagu-bago ang pangangailangan natin kung hindi iyong ating determinasyon po kung ano ang kailangan ang nagbabago.

So, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, I think this is a tolerable leeway and in fact, the directive or the directional message is that there should be less, not more, of these Special Purpose Funds. In other words, ang mensahe, tatlo na lang ito pero hindi ibig sabihin na hindi na po tayo puwedeng mag-create.

REP. LAGMAN. Tatlo na lang pero marami pang puwedeng sumunod because of that open-ended provision. Let me go to the phrase, “based on the parameters to be set in the IRR,” ano ang gustong sabihin nito? Will the IRR supplant the GAA with respect to Special Purpose Funds?

REP. SALCEDA. I guess, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, puwede nating lagyan ng adjective iyan na iyong default is “congressional control.” In other words, kahit sinasabi nating “subject to IRR” pero dapat iyong congressional control should be preserved and enhanced rather than diminished. In short, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, kapag sinabing IRR, lahat naman po ng batas natin ay dumadaan sa IRR. Ang isang batas lang siguro na hindi magawan ng napakalaking IRR ay itong GAA dahil kung gagawa ng IRR ang lahat ng mga dokumento diyan, wala o hindi na ho tayo makakapag-implement.

Ang sinasabi lang ho dito, sa normal practice that when there are laws, there are IRRs, and because this is in the nature of a special item in the GAA, precisely, it is called Special Purpose Funds and therefore, ang paggamit nito ay puwedeng ipadaan na. In fact, we can put specific provisions or general provisions on

the section on these Special Purpose Funds, determine already the intent of Congress with respect to their use and therefore, guide the preparation of the IRRs. In other words, kapag may IRR, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, mas klaro po sa buong bansa kung papaano iyong paggamit kaysa walang IRR.

REP. LAGMAN. Hindi ko sinasabing walang IRR. Ang sinasabi ko lang, itong parameters to be set in the IRR ay mukhang delegation ng Kongreso to the Executive who makes the IRR. In other words, we should be able to delimit these parameters.

REP. SALCEDA. Tama po, kaya nga ang sinasabi ko po doon sa general provisions, kasi ito namang mga Special Purpose Funds, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, lagi naman na may special provision kung saan po nakapaloob sa seksyon ng ating GAA. Samakatuwid, iyong reference siguro sa IRR, dahil hindi ho tayo ang magsusulat ng IRR, puwedeng sabihin ho natin na this may be an unreasonable delegation on the part of Congress again, lalung-lalo na kung malaki iyong pondo. Para sa akin po, in the spirit of transparency, mas maganda po na may IRR. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, puwede ho nating lagyan ng guidance kung papaano susulatin itong IRR.

REP. LAGMAN. My time is about to be up. I have a number of questions yet to ask but anyway, let me just look at the Contingent Fund of the President at ito ay talagang namaga na.

REP. SALCEDA. Opo.

REP. LAGMAN. Namaga nang namaga—it has been increasing to so much amount. In 2005, it was only P800,000 and that was up to 2009 and 2010; then, in 2011, it went up to P1 billion; 2012, P1 billion; 2013, P1 billion; 2014, P1 billion; 2015, P2 billion; 2016, P2.5 billion; 2017, P5.5 billion; and now in 2018, it is P13 billion pesos, 1–3. As you said, as the distinguished Sponsor said, in 2017, the Contingent Fund was even augmented from savings.

Well, we are just concerned that the amounts included in the lump sums, like the Contingent Fund and the Calamity Fund, have been increasing by so much percentage. The Calamity Fund, in 2005 it was only P700,000 and now it is P19,000,600,000 for 2018. These are very huge amounts of money which are excluded from specific appropriation by Congress. So, I think we should be able to review and realize how these funds have increased inordinately through the years.

Since my time is limited, I will not wait for the answer of the distinguished Sponsor, but let me go to a last point. For several years now, and for several Congresses, we have this practice of creating a small

committee after the General Appropriations Bill is approved on Second Reading, and the small committee is empowered to effect amendments to the GAB for purposes of Third Reading, without the active participation of Members of Congress except to submit proposed amendments and many of which are not approved by the small committee. Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, I think we should also review ...

REP. SALCEDA. The House Rules.

REP. LAGMAN. ... how legal is this practice of the House of making a small committee and depriving the membership here of the right to propose amendments on the floor.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SALCEDA. Thank you very much, too.

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you, distinguished Sponsor.

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. MERCADO. I move that we recognize the Hon. Anthony M. Bravo PhD from the Party-List COOP-NATCCO for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Cong. Tony Bravo is hereby recognized.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, everyone.

Will the distinguished Sponsor yield to some questions and clarification from this Representation.

REP. SALCEDA. Are you proposing a Bicol festival?

REP. BRAVO (A.). It could be a combination, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, because all of us are Bicolanos, and so, willingly, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, to a fellow Bicolano legislator.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, distinguished Sponsor.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, I will go directly to Part II of the proposed Bill that is contemplated to strengthen the power of the purse of Congress. Part II is entitled, "Additional Roles and Responsibilities." Will you please educate this Representation in

addition to what particular provision of laws this is referring to because the title is “Additional Roles and Responsibilities”?

REP. SALCEDA. I think we can accept an amendment that will essentially just convert, instead of “Additional,” to clarify this because these are mere enunciations of what are already the implied roles of Congress by ...

REP. BRAVO (A.). If I will be the one to interpret this, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, if we are not going to change the title, “Additional Roles and Responsibilities,” would it mean that there will be additional roles and responsibilities in the provisions that were already defined under Executive Order No. 292?

REP. SALCEDA. I think, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, the reference to “additional roles” should really be more of clarifying or highlighting the roles of Congress essentially, because if you will look at the enumerated roles, those are implied roles of Congress that pertain to us by virtue of the constitutional provision on our power of the purse as well as our oversight functions.

Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, I think the Committee would definitely accept that instead of the term “Additional,” it would merely be a clarifying provision with respect to our roles. In other words, parang reminder lang sa atin sa Kongreso na ito ang mga gawain natin kasi paminsan-minsan, sa rush natin na tingnan iyong budget, nakakaligtan natin na may mga bagay tulad ng oversight o katulad, halimbawa, ang pag-review ng nakaraang performance. Tinitingnan kaagad natin kung magkano po iyong budget at ang utilization nito pero iyong mga specific outcomes, iyong specific operating indicators ay nakakalimutan natin.

So, kapag sinasabi ang title na ito, probably, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, maybe it is just an overstatement. I am willing and receptive to a more elegant articulation on the title.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Actually, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, if you are going to look at the title “Additional Roles and Responsibilities” as stated in the proposed legislation, it has been captured already by our Philippine Constitution, specifically Article VI, Sections 21 and 22.

REP. SALCEDA. Tama po. Ito lang po iyong reminder sa atin. Paminsan-minsan, puwede naman natin i-remind ang ating sarili na trabaho natin ito.

REP. BRAVO (A.). It has been explicitly defined already under Executive Order No. 292, the

Administrative Code of 1987, specifically Book 2, Chapter 2.

REP. SALCEDA. Tama po iyan.

REP. BRAVO (A.). So it is a redundant provision, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague.

REP. SALCEDA. Reiteration, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, rather than redundancy, pero kung gusto mo ipatanggal, I am willing to accept it.

Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, at the appropriate time because to my mind, my own analysis of this specific section that you are referring to, it is already well-known or well-decided jurisprudence that these are the roles of Congress with respect to this particular activity of the State.

REP. BRAVO (A.). So, if there are provisions that have been captured already by the Philippine Constitution itself, including Executive Order No. 292, why propose that provision if they are already defined?

REP. SALCEDA. Ang tawag po diyan ay reiteration. Alam po ninyo may prinsipyo tayo, lalung-lalo na sa pagpatakbo ng isang kumpanya, na paminsan-minsan ay nire-reiterate natin na ito ang trabaho natin. Alam natin trabaho ng Presidente iyan pero paminsan—katulad nito po, para sa akin, maganda rin naman ho na mapaalala sa bawat Congressman at sa atin sa Kongreso bilang isang institusyon na ito ang trabaho natin.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, in the line of your reasoning, the way I look at it, we do not need a bill like this.

REP. SALCEDA. Tama po. I will ...

REP. BRAVO (A.). We need a manual of operation as far as preparation of the budget is concerned.

REP. SALCEDA. That is correct. I will accept that. So, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, if you are proposing at the appropriate time that we delete this portion, I am willing. Definitely, I am willing to accept that.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague.

May I proceed to Section 7, Mr. Speaker, on the Commission on Audit. It states here: “The COA, in coordination with the DBM, shall ensure the proper enforcement of timely accounting and reporting of public finances.” What if, Mr. Speaker, distinguished

colleague, the COA will not coordinate with the DBM? Is it not that this provision diminishes the power of an independent branch of government as far as reporting is concerned?

REP. SALCEDA. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, there are certain affirmative laws that are merely directional in character. Ibig sabihin, it is a statement of the goal na sana ang COA ay makipag-coordinate sa DBM para mas lalo nilang magawa ang trabaho nila, pero dahil ito ay isang reiteration, tanggalin natin, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, I would like to bring you to the provision in our 1987 Philippine Constitution, Article IX-D, Section 2, and may I read:

(1) The Commission on Audit shall have the power, authority, and duty to examine, audit, and settle all accounts pertaining to the revenue and receipts x x x

(2) The Commission shall have exclusive authority, subject to the limitations in this Article, to define the scope of its audit and examination, establish the techniques and methods required therefor, and promulgate accounting and auditing rules and regulations, including those for the prevention and disallowance of irregular, unnecessary, excessive, extravagant, or unconscionable expenditures, or uses of government funds and properties.

There is no any provision that states that the COA should coordinate with the DBM.

REP. SALCEDA. Pero hindi naman po iyon—this is not repugnantly contradictory, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, to the goals of our society. This is not repugnantly contradictory, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, to the Constitution. This is not repugnantly contradictory, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, to a lot of other laws we had passed. Sure, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, it can stand but I guess, to my mind, like Congress does coordinate with COA for example. In other jurisdictions like the US Congress, its Commission on Audit is part and parcel of the oversight functions of Congress, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker. In other words, there is automatic release, automatic sharing of the data and information between COA and the US Congress, between its own Department of Budget and Management and its own COA. So, in short, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, we lose nothing. To my mind, Your Honor, ...

REP. BRAVO (A.). So, you are assuring this Representation that never in any way will this diminish

the power of COA as an independent branch of government so that there will be checks and balances.

REP. SALCEDA. Ma-enhance pa nga sila kasi kung minsan, gumagawa sila ng kanilang analyses na hindi nila nakikita kung ano po iyong mga budgetary documents na pumasok bago po ginawa ang isang item. Kung minsan po, sa atin, para sa isang item na andiyan sa libro na binabasa natin taun-taon, isang kuwarto na ang mga dokumento. So, iyong pag-access doon, kailangan ho ba na sumulat ang COA sa DBM Secretary asking for access to the documents for one particular item inside the GAA?

Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, it makes sense that this is already part of the new, not new but rather, good practices around the world, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, wherein both Congress and the COA, where Congress is an oversight agency, COA is an oversight agency, DBM is an oversight agency. In other words, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, hindi naman ito mandatory coordination. Ito lang po, it sets the basis for the COA to coordinate with DBM, lalung-lalo na kung gumagawa sila ng mga analyses.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Actually, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, coordination is already well-entrenched in the provisions of our Constitution, including Executive Order No. 292. In practice, that is being done by COA.

REP. SALCEDA. Hindi.

REP. BRAVO (A.). So, for me, this is a redundancy again.

REP. SALCEDA. Hindi nga.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Again, a redundant provision, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SALCEDA. Unang-una, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, sasabihin ko sa inyo, ni minsan hindi nakipag-coordinate ang COA sa Kongreso. Kung kinakailangan ho natin ang mga report nila, itinatago nila ang mga ito. Gusto kaagad nila na ma-file nila sa Ombudsman. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, papano tayo makagagawa ng magandang patakaran? Samakatuwid, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, ang ganitong klaseng probisyon, it is an affirmative action, in part, for transparency and good policy-making, and for the good of the country.

So, hindi ho ito isang malaking dagok sa independence ng COA. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, when I was the Chairman of the Committee on Oversight, hirap na hirap akong makakuha ng mga report ng COA kasi mas gusto nilang mag-file ng kaso, hindi para

mapalitan ang patakaran. Hindi ho ba ang prevention ng malfeasance, misfeasance, nonfeasance ay mas mahalaga kaysa makasuhan ang mga tao?

In other words, it is preemptive on the part of Congress to ensure good policy-making, because sometimes good policy-making virtually does away with the need for all these corrective measures, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. Pero sabi ko nga kanina, kung gusto mong ipaalis iyan, I will go for it.

REP. BRAVO (A.). So, you will be accepting amendments in the future at the proper time.

REP. SALCEDA. That is correct.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, may I proceed to a case because there is, being established, a one-year validity. Am I correct?

REP. SALCEDA. Ano po?

REP. BRAVO (A.). One-year validity for budget?

REP. SALCEDA. Opo.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Now, we have a very good example of a budget program that is being implemented by the DepEd wherein it clusters projects on a multi-year basis, and Congress appropriates on a particular fiscal year of expenditure. So, if you are going to effect this one-year validity, what will happen now in the case of DepEd?

REP. SALCEDA. Unang-una po, kapag binasa mo po ito, iyong dati pong general provision lang na—I am proud na nasimulan noong chairmanship ko— ito po iyong Multi-Year Obligational Authority. Dapat ho kasi kung ganyan po ang nature na ang isang activity sa isang public program, importante po na makita natin kung anong oras o period kinakailangan para ma-implement ito ng tama. Samakatuwid po, nangangailangan ito, halimbawa, ng pag-estimate, demographically, ng demand for classrooms. Pangalawa, on the availability of land and its safety, importante po ang soil analysis, halimbawa. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, dapat mas mahaba-habang panahon ang ginugugol para dito. Samakatuwid, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, ang sagot po diyan sa inyo, they need to avail of the Multi-Year Obligational Authority that is provided for and guided and controlled by this proposed Budget Reform Act.

REP. BRAVO (A.). So, meaning, that is not only applicable to the DepEd but to other agencies to include DOH.

REP. SALCEDA. Ay opo. Hindi lang ho PPP kasi usually po ang mga PPP, ang mga ito po ay may Multi-Year Obligational Authority, katulad po noong sa DepEd na palagi naman pong kinakailangan na magkaroon ng mga bagong kapasidad for learning resources ay kailangan pong mag-avail sila. Katulad din, halimbawa, sa DOH na sinasabi po ninyo, kung minsan po iyong kapasidad ng ating fiscal space, kahit ang isang ospital ay 1.8 bilyon, nagiging tingi-tingi—600, 600, 600. Samakatuwid, bago po—kung minsan po, iyong continuity at saka iyong logical fit between Phase 1 and Phase 2 ay nakokompromiso. Samantala, kung ginamit mo iyong Multi-Year Obligational Authority, iyong buong 1.8 bilyon dapat na-bidding mo na at hihintayin mo na lang iyong obligational authority na mabayaran ito through our annual General Appropriations Act.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you for the concern, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague.

Last question, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague. On Section 23, Budget Priorities Framework, this is about, and I read:

The DBCC shall present to the President and Cabinet, on or before April of each year, a Budget Priorities Framework which shall guide the formulation of the Budget for the following year by stating the medium-term fiscal strategy and targets underlying the budget; the priority areas for government spending reflected in the PDP and PIP, estimated amount and planned allocation of the fiscal space; and other requirements laid down in the IRR.

So, meaning, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, we will be allowing the DBCC to define according to the IRR and the implementation related to this matter. Take note, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, it has been defined clearly and comprehensively in Executive Order No. 292, Administrative Code of 1987, Book V, Subtitle Chapter 2, Section 7, which is as defined by the National Economic and Development Authority Inter-Agency Committees.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, this is a more comprehensive provision than letting the DBCC define what should be done. I am proposing that we retain the provision as comprehensively presented.

REP. SALCEDA. Salamat. So, tama po ito.

REP. BRAVO (A.). So, Section 23, I suppose, should capture that—not to give the DBCC the power to design the IRR, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague.

REP. SALCEDA. Should I—sino po ang gusto mong gumawa ng IRR?

REP. BRAVO (A.). Actually, it has been clearly defined already in Executive Order No. 292, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague.

REP. SALCEDA. Opo. Sige po.

REP. BRAVO (A.). With that, thank you, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague. That ends my interpellation.

REP. SALCEDA. Salamat po.

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

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, there being no other Member who wishes to interpellate the Sponsor or speak against the measure, I move that we terminate the period of sponsorship and debate.

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

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

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

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, there being no Committee amendments, I move that we now proceed to consider the individual amendments. For this, I move that we recognize the Hon. Magnolia C. Antonino of the Fourth District of Nueva Ecija for her individual amendments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Cong. Magnolia Antonino is recognized.

INDIVIDUAL AMENDMENTS

REP. ANTONINO. Mr. Speaker, honorable colleagues, I would like to propose the following amendments to House Bill No. 7302, as contained Committee Report No. 639:

On Section 58, page 21, line 17, after the word “regulations” and the period (.), to add the sentence THE DOF SHALL SUBMIT TO CONGRESS THE STATUS OF LGU LOANS CONTRACTED AND THE REPAYMENTS MADE BY EACH LGU UPON EFFECTIVITY OF THIS ACT.

I so move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). What does the Sponsor say?

REP. SALCEDA. It is accepted.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). On the part of the House, is there any objection? (*Silence*)

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker

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

REP. MERCADO. There being no other individual amendments, I move that we close the period of amendments.

REP. LAGMAN. Masyado kang mabilis.

REP. BRAVO (A.). I object, Mr. Speaker.

REP. FARIÑAS. There are other individual amendments, Sir.

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Edcel Lagman of Albay.

REP. LAGMAN. Since, Mr. Speaker, ...

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Chair has not ruled yet on the proposed amendment of Cong. Magnolia Antonino.

REP. SALCEDA. Sige.

REP. ANTONINO. Has the Committee ...

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). What is the pleasure of Congressman Lagman?

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since this is a very important measure pertaining to the budget, may we request that we be given up to tomorrow to prepare our individual amendments and if we could also be given copies of the Committee amendments so that we could peruse the same and make deliberate consideration of whether to object to or to agree to said amendments?

REP. SALCEDA. May tao ba tayo?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). What does the Majority Leader say?

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, we would like to request for consideration from the Honorable Lagman, considering that this Bill is of utmost importance and has been certified by the President as urgent.

REP. LAGMAN. We were only asking up to tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, so that we can go over the proposed Committee amendments and we can also prepare our individual amendments because we have just terminated the period of sponsorship and debate.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

It was 5:55 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

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

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

REP. ANTONINO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to reiterate my motion to approve my proposed amendment.

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Honorable Antonino to continue.

REP. ANTONINO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to reiterate my motion to approve that proposed amendment.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Chair is asking the Sponsor for his reaction on the proposed amendment of Cong. Magnolia Antonino.

REP. SALCEDA. I already accepted it.

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

REP. MERCADO. It was accepted. The Committee accepts the amendment, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. ANTONINO. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to propose that on Section 81, page 26, lines 25 to 27, we delete the last sentence and in lieu thereof insert a new paragraph to read as follows: THE TRANSITORY PLAN SHALL LIKEWISE INCLUDE INTERIM MEASURES TO ENSURE A SMOOTH TRANSITION INTO A REGIME OF ANNUAL CASH-BASED APPROPRIATIONS. IN

ADDITION, FOR THE INITIAL YEAR OF THE IMPLEMENTATION IN FISCAL YEAR 2019, THE CASH-BASED APPROPRIATIONS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS SHALL BE AVAILABLE FOR RELEASE, CONTRACTUAL COMMITMENT, AND DISBURSEMENT UNTIL DECEMBER 31, 2020.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). What does the distinguished Sponsor say about the proposed amendment?

REP. SALCEDA. The Committee accepts the amendment, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ANTONINO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session for one minute.

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

It was 6:00 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 6:14 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, I move that we continue with the consideration of House Bill No. 7302.

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

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, our parliamentary status is that we are now in the period of amendments. There are no Committee amendments and so, we are now considering individual amendments.

I move that we recognize the Hon. Anthony M. Bravo, PhD for his amendments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Cong. Tony Bravo is recognized.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to propose an amendment, specifically, on Section 7, distinguished colleague. On the phrase “The COA, in coordination with the DBM,” to delete the words “in coordination with the DBM” and so, it will now read this way: “The COA shall ensure the proper enforcement of timely accounting and reporting of public finances.”

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). What does the Sponsor say?

REP. SALCEDA. The Committee accepts, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague. That is all.

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

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, with no other colleague proposing individual amendments, I move that we close the period of amendments.

REP. LAGMAN. Mr. Speaker.

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Edcel C. Lagman.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Congressman Lagman is recognized.

REP. LAGMAN. We will be proposing amendments, but because of lack of time to prepare the amendments, this will not be on a chronological basis.

On Section 28, page 11, line 43, between the acronym “NDRRMF” and the word “include,” to change the word “may” to SHALL.

REP. SALCEDA. The Committee accepts, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay. On the same section and page, line 46, between the word “possible” followed by the period (.) and the word “the,” to insert a new sentence to read as follows: THE QRF SHALL BE PROVIDED IN THE BUDGETS OF THE IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES IN SUCH AMOUNTS DEEMED APPROPRIATE BASED ON PRIOR YEAR’S DATA TO MEET PUBLIC CALAMITIES/EMERGENCIES.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). What does the Sponsor say?

REP. SALCEDA. The Committee accepts, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

On page 22, line 38, to insert a new section to read as follows, then renumber succeeding sections accordingly: REPORT ON SAVINGS AND AUGMENTATION. – THE DBM SHALL SUBMIT TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE OF THE SENATE ON OR BEFORE THE 31ST OF JANUARY EVERY YEAR AN ANNUAL REPORT ON THE OVERALL SAVINGS AND ALL AUGMENTATIONS IN THE USE OF SAVINGS OR AT SUCH TIME OR INTERVAL AS MAY BE REQUIRED BY SAID COMMITTEES.

REP. SALCEDA. The Committee accepts the amendment, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

On page 13, line 10, to provide for a new section which shall read as follows: AMENDMENTS TO THE GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS BILL. – ALL AND ANY AMENDMENTS TO THE GAB SHALL BE INTRODUCED, ADOPTED OR REJECTED DURING THE PLENARY CONSIDERATION OF THE GAB IN THE PERIOD OF COMMITTEE AND INDIVIDUAL AMENDMENTS.

REP. SALCEDA. The Committee does not accept the amendment, Your Honor. We reject the amendment.

REP. LAGMAN. On the same page, to provide for a new provision which shall read as follows: CONSIDERATION OF THE GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS BILL BY THE BICAMERAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE IN THE EVENT THAT THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES HAS NO AMENDMENT TO ANY SPECIFIC ITEM IN THE GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS BILL AS APPROVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, THE SAME ITEM SHALL NOT BE SUBJECT TO ANY AMENDMENT BY THE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES SITTING IN BICAMERAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE TASKED TO RECONCILE ONLY THE CONFLICTING PROVISIONS OF THE HOUSE AND SENATE VERSIONS OF THE GAB.

REP. SALCEDA. The Committee rejects the amendment, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, I will not anymore appeal the rejection of my amendment, considering it is a foregone conclusion that the Committee will be sustained by the majority in the House. Let me just go to another provision. I am looking at the provision on Special Purpose Funds. On page 11, lines 32 to 34, to delete the semicolon (;) after the acronym "LGUs" and in lieu thereof, place a period (.); then, the subsequent provision should be deleted altogether.

REP. SALCEDA. In short, Your Honor, the entire provision is deleted, the entire section is deleted.

REP. LAGMAN. I beg your pardon.

REP. SALCEDA. In short, the entire section is deleted.

REP. LAGMAN. No, not the entire section. It is maintained up to "Shares of LGUs." What is being deleted would be after the word "LGUs"; we are retaining the phrase "(1) the NDRRMF; (2) the Contingent Fund; and (3) Statutory Shares of Local Government Units."

REP. SALCEDA. The Committee rejects the amendment, Your Honor. The purpose is really operating flexibilities needed to confront rising volatility and unpredictability of events that may require such other special funds, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. I will not anymore appeal the rejection of my proposed amendment because it is a certainty that the Committee will be sustained by the majority, but I am thankful for the distinguished Sponsor's acceptance of my other amendments.

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

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, I move now that the Plenary ratify the decision of the Sponsor, the Honorable Salceda, regarding the approval or disapproval of the individual amendments as proposed by the Honorable Lagman.

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. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, there being no other individual amendments, I move that we close the period of amendments. 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. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve House Bill No. 7302, as amended, on Second Reading. 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. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, in line with Article VI, Section 26, paragraph 2 of our Constitution, this Bill being certified as urgent by the President, I move that we approve on House Bill No. 7302, as amended, on Third Reading. Could the Secretary General be directed to call the roll for nominal voting.

Mr. Speaker, before that, I reiterate my previous motion earlier for the approval of House Bill No. 7302, as amended, on Second Reading.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). As many as are in favor of House Bill No. 7302, as amended, please say *aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

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

FEW MEMBERS. *No*.

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7302, AS AMENDED, ON SECOND READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The *ayes* have it; the motion is approved.

House Bill No. 7302, as amended, is approved on Second Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 7302 ON THIRD READING

REP. BONDOC. As earlier stated, Mr. Speaker, this is a Bill certified urgent by the President in line with Article VI of the Constitution, Section 26 (2).

Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 7302 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, pursuant to Article VI, Section 26(2) of the Constitution.

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 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. 77, dated March 20, 2018.*

REP. LAGMAN. Mr. Speaker, I abstain and I will explain later my abstention.

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

REP. ZARATE. Mr. Speaker, my vote is "No." May I be allowed to explain my vote later.
Thank you.

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

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7302 ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). With 158 affirmative votes, eight negative votes and one abstention, House Bill No. 7302 is approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, we have important guests in the gallery, guests of the—I move that we recognize the Hon. Edcel C. Lagman to explain his vote.

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

Cong. Edcel Lagman is recognized to explain his vote. You have three minutes.

REP. LAGMAN EXPLAINS HIS VOTE

REP. LAGMAN. Mr. Speaker, I abstained because I cannot entirely jettison this Bill after I had been given the opportunity to interpellate and some of my amendments have been accepted. However, I cannot completely embrace this measure because, despite its title which includes strengthening the congressional power of the purse, this Bill does not recapture in its entirety the congressional ascendancy over public funds. Moreover, more salient amendments were not accepted. I am, therefore, constrained to abstain and await developments in the bicameral conference.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Carlos Isagani T. Zarate.

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

REP. ZARATE EXPLAINS HIS VOTE

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this Representation voted "No" on the substitute Bill to reform the budget process. I voted "No," Mr. Speaker, because first, the proposed Bill, as approved, continues to legitimize highly-criticized budget practices in the past. For example, this Bill limited supposedly the Special Purpose Funds to three or four but the same provision in Section 27, is also saying that "other SPFs not falling under any of the preceding purposes, the details of which could not be determined during the budget preparation stage, and based on the parameters to be set by the IRR."

This is a very dangerous proviso, Mr. Speaker, first, because it allows the inclusion of other and maybe unlimited number of budget items and appropriations that will not be subject to congressional scrutiny during the budget legislation, and may also possibly include lump-sum appropriations. Second, Mr. Speaker, the amended Bill, as approved, further enlarges the power of the Executive, the Office of the President, over the national budget. It provides for more mechanisms for the Executive to have more control over funds even under the Appropriations Law approved by Congress. For example, Section 19 provides for the deviation from fiscal objectives, the purpose of which does not deviate much from the Contingent Fund and the NDRRMF. However, in the same breadth, it is silent

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

as to the implications on the approved Appropriations Law except that there is given now an obligation to the Executive to submit a report to Congress. Third, also in that expansion of powers in Section 34, the Bill provides for a Special Appropriations Bill which is the President's proposal to Congress to provide, among others:

1. Authorization for expenditure for a specific purpose not included or not covered under the annual appropriations. It may only be proposed, this supposed Special Appropriations Bill, after the passage by Congress of the Appropriations Law.

2. Authorization for an additional appropriation by the Executive for existing or new Programs, Activities or Projects or PAP that may be sourced from approved appropriations, from reverted funds resulting from slow-moving PAPs.

In a way, Mr. Speaker, the approved Bill, to the mind of this Representation, even further corrodes the power of Congress over the purse. It does not at all reform totally the budget system such that it will truly serve and cater to the needs of our people. That is why, again, I reiterate my "No" vote on the said Bill, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Sarah Jane I. Elago of KABATAAN to explain her vote.

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

REP. ELAGO EXPLAINS HER VOTE

REP. ELAGO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

While we support the urgent need to promptly address weaknesses in our national government budgeting process, the impoundment provision embedded in the Budget Reform Bill heavily outweighs the positive impact of the proposed measure on budget reform. Thus, this Representation casts a negative vote. The impoundment provision creates a situation wherein the President can withhold fund releases when he deems the appropriations no longer necessary. If this provision is enacted, the President will have the power to discontinue funding for programs and projects deemed no longer required and will in effect usurp the congressional power of the purse. This power can be used as a leverage by the President to control the release of funds based on political motivation.

As it is, Mr. Speaker, the President already enjoys a wide latitude of discretion when it comes to the national budget with our Constitution granting the Chief Executive the power of line-item veto. If Congress really passes this impoundment provision, we fear that it may open a situation wherein the President and the Department of Budget and Management will be able to circumvent the General Appropriations Act by impounding the release of public funds at any time of the year and thus, subvert the will of Congress as expressed in the General Appropriations Act. This can result in a situation wherein billions of pesos in public funds may be spent on items not appropriated by Congress in violation of the provisions of the Constitution.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, may we be allowed to acknowledge the presence of the following guests of the Hon. "Kuya" Jose Antonio R. Sy-Alvarado: Ms. Cecilia N. Gascon, President of Bulacan State University; Mr. Edgardo M. Santos, Vice President; Ms. Angelita Salvacion, Secretary; Mr. John Michael Gonzales, Protocol Officer; Ms. Gloria Lulu, Dean; Ms. Gina Lopez, Dean; and Ms. Dolly Maroma, Dean.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we also acknowledge the presence of the following officers of the municipality of Bantayan, Fourth District of Cebu. They are the guests of the Hon. Benhur L. Salimbangon: the honorable Mayor Ian Christopher Escario; Vice Mayor Honorable Antonio Montemar; SB members, the Honorables Jerome Mata, Miguel Angelo Pacheco, Leopoldo Umbao, Eddielin Mae Mansueto, Janet Hubahib, Danilo Despi, and Josette Tan; Barangay Affairs Consultant, Danilo Quiamco; Executive Assistant Beryl Anne Escario; Department Heads, Dorivic Espina, Mylen Pacquiao, Liza Rivera, Alexander Joseph Fernandez, Reina Fatima Batiancila; and Administrative Officer Mrs. Cruzella Delima.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we also acknowledge the presence of very important

officers of the Office of Solicitor General headed by Solicitor General Jose C. Calida; Assistant Solicitor General Renan E. Ramos; Assistant Solicitor General Ma. Antonia Edita C. Dizon; Assistant Solicitor General Bernard G. Hernandez; Assistant Solicitor General Vida G. San Vicente; Assistant Solicitor General John Emmanuel F. Madamba; Assistant Solicitor General Rex Bernardo L. Pascual; Assistant Solicitor General Magtanggol M. Castro; Assistant Solicitor General Eric Remegio O. Panga; Assistant Solicitor General Ellaine Rose A. Sanchez-Corro; Assistant Solicitor General Ma. Cielo G. Se-Rondain; Assistant Solicitor General Herman R. Cimafranca; Assistant Solicitor General Thomas M. Laragan, Assistant Solicitor General Anna Esperanza Solomon, Assistant Solicitor General Myrna N. Agno-Canuto, Assistant Solicitor General Derek R. Puertollano, Assistant Solicitor General Marissa Macaraig-Guillen, Assistant Solicitor General Hermes L. Ocampo, Assistant Solicitor General Nyriam Susan S. Hernandez, Assistant Solicitor General Raymund I. Rigodon, Assistant Solicitor General Maria Hazel V. Acantilado, Assistant Solicitor General Angelita V. Miranda, Assistant Solicitor General Henry S. Angeles, Assistant Solicitor General Peñafrancia C. Carpio-Devesa, Assistant Solicitor General Alexander S. Salvador, and Assistant Solicitor General Joseph L. Guevarra.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Solicitor General Jose Calida and his Assistants and other officers of the Office of the Solicitor General are welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

REP. GARIN (O.). Mr. Speaker, let us also acknowledge the presence of our guests in the gallery: the constituent and guest of the Hon. Mercedes “Didi” C. Cagas from the Lone District of Davao del Sur, Architect Arby Arante of Davao del Sur from the DPWH District Engineering Office.

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

REP. GARIN (O.). Mr. Speaker, let us also acknowledge the presence of the guests of Rep. Benhur L. Salimbangon of the Fourth District of Cebu Province, officials of the Municipality of Bantayan, Cebu: Mayor, Honorable Ian Christopher Escario; Vice Mayor, Honorable Antonio Montemar; SB Members, Honorable Jerome Mata, Honorable Miguel Angelo Pacheco, Honorable Leopoldo Umbao, Honorable Eddielin Mae Mansueto, Honorable Janet Hubahib, Honorable Danilo Despi, Honorable Joseph Tan; Barangay Affairs

Consultant, Mr. Danilo Quiamco; Executive Assistant II, Ms. Beryl Anne Escario; Department Heads, Mrs. Dorivic Espina, Mrs. Mylene Pacquiao, Dr. Liza Rivera, Mr. Alexander Joseph Fernandez, and Mrs. Reina Fatima Batiancila.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). They have earlier been recognized and welcomed to the House of Representatives but nonetheless, for the second time, welcome to the House of Representatives.

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker.

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

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7376

Continuation

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. MERCADO. I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 7376 as 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: ANACT 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 ORDER NOS. 1 AND 2, S. 1986, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I move that the honorable Gentleman, Rep. Vicente “Ching” S.E. Veloso, of the Third District of Leyte be recognized.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The distinguished Hon. Vicente Veloso is recognized.

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we proceed to the interpellation.

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

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from the Party-List BAYAN MUNA, the Hon. Carlos Isagani T. Zarate, for his interpellation. I so move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Representative Zarate is hereby recognized.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good evening to all our colleagues.

Will the good Sponsor entertain some questions and interpellation, Mr. Speaker?

REP. VELOSO. Willingly, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor.

Last night, Mr. Sponsor, during the interpellation of the honorable Congressman Tinio, I think it was already explicitly admitted by the Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, that the purpose of this Bill is actually, if I get the term right, to rightsize the Office of the Solicitor General. Is that correct, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. VELOSO. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. Rightsizing would mean, as admitted by the Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, not only to expand the powers of the Office of the Solicitor General but in fact, included in this Committee Report No. 658 on House Bill No. 7376 is the abolition of at least two offices or agencies, the Presidential Commission on Good Government as well as the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel. Is that correct, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. VELOSO. That is correct, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. Now, as a preliminary, may the good Sponsor enlighten us. At present, how many permanent positions are under the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel?

REP. VELOSO. Mr. Speaker, the OGCC in the DBM record has 62 positions as of January 17, 2018, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. Sixty-two permanent positions, is that correct, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. VELOSO. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. Well, I think the number is not correct because I just accessed the website of the DBM, and DBM thereat said that the OGCC has 126 permanent positions, not only 62, Mr. Speaker, as of 2018.

REP. VELOSO. What was given me were the administrative positions, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. I am not on the ...

REP. VELOSO. They are making further research on that, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. At any rate, I hope the good Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, can give the total number of permanent positions afterwards. May I also inquire, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. VELOSO. Mr. Speaker, on plantilla positions, it appears that there are 135 plantilla positions, 126 of which has been filled up—57 for legal and 69 for administrative.

REP. ZARATE. Okay. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker. Actually, there are 126 positions filled up out of the approved plantilla positions of 135. What about the Presidential Commission on Good Government, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, how many plantilla positions and how many are occupied as of this date?

REP. VELOSO. Mr. Speaker, as far as the PCGG is concerned, it has 147 positions, but only 61 had been filled up.

REP. ZARATE. May I get that again, the number?

REP. VELOSO. For the PCGG, it has one-four-seven positions but six-one had been filled up, 61.

REP. ZARATE. Only 61 out of the 147 permanent positions.

REP. VELOSO. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. Under the proposed Bill, in all these positions—what will happen to all these permanent positions now within the OGCC and the PCGG?

REP. VELOSO. Those that will be accommodated under the Office of the Solicitor General, meaning the lawyers, they will be absorbed as long as they meet the minimum qualifications. On the other hand, those that cannot be accommodated, if they are already 60 years of

age, they will be retired under the GSIS Law, and those below 60 will be subjected to the following benefits: For one to 10 years of service, they will be getting one-half separation pay or retirement benefit, if you may, equivalent to one-half of the actual monthly basic pay or salary for every year of government service; those who worked for at least 11 years up to 20 years will be getting three-fourths of the actual monthly basic salary for every year of government service, computed starting from the first year of service; those with 21 up to 30 years of service will be getting separation pay of actual basic salary for every year of government service; and those with 31 years of service up, will be getting one and one-fourth of the actual monthly basic salary for every year of government service, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. So, it means that other than this retirement package as enumerated in Section 19, there is no assurance actually, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, that all the affected employees from the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel as well as the PCGG, will be absorbed in the reorganized Office of the Solicitor General. Is that correct, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. VELOSO. Mr. Speaker, Section 19 of the proposed law provides for the absorption, retirement or separation of personnel benefits, and it says in that subparagraph, “x x x (a) Retirement gratuity provided under Republic Act No. 1616 x x x” will be given to those who will be covered or qualify under Republic Act No. 1616.”

Also, in subsection (b), it states, “to those who will qualify under Republic Act No. 660 will also be extended the retirement benefit” and so on. In addition to the foregoing, regarding the retirement benefits, they will be entitled to separation pay of what I had earlier mentioned, Mr. Speaker, one-half month salary for those with one to 10 years of service; three-fourths of actual monthly salary for those who served already for 11 to 20 years; one month actual basic salary for those who served from 21 to 30 years; and one and one-fourth of the actual monthly salary for those who served the government for 31 years and up.

REP. ZARATE. Yes, here.

REP. VELOSO. It says here, “in addition to the aforementioned retirement benefits.”

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

Tinanong po natin iyan dahil kahit na po sabihin natin dito sa Section 19, totoo naman po, mayroong parang napaka-hefty, considerate na retirement package na ino-offer dito pero sa katotohanan, G. Isponsor,

Mr. Speaker, dahil sa panukalang batas na ito, in this proposed Bill, practically, ang isang epekto nito ay nabolish mo iyong 126 plus 147 positions na napapaloob sa dalawang ahensiyang ito. Is that correct, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. VELOSO. The thrust of the law, Mr. Speaker, as earlier mentioned by the Honorable Zarate, is really to rightsize these particular agencies. For example, I earlier said, that was last night, that the government is paying, for example, for the PCGG and the OSG, two groups of personnel—groups of employees for two agencies—when these two agencies can be lumped up into one. I mentioned last night that in doing so, especially if we will include the OGCC in the rightsizing, the government will be saving P150 million in one year, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you.

REP. VELOSO. The effect, of course, is that there will be dislocation, but this dislocations of affected government employees will be extended in what we call in the private sector as the golden handshake. They will be receiving a pay and in addition to that, they will be receiving an added separation pay, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you.

REP. VELOSO. The thrust is towards a more efficient and effective government service, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker. It is easy to say but in reality, this is really an attack on the job security of our government employees. Instead of strengthening and giving them job security, strengthening their position, we are now actually attacking their tenurial security by providing, absorbing them into this expanded jurisdiction or expanded Office of the Solicitor General. In fact, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, kaya nga sabi ko kanina kahit na napakagalante noong sinasabi nating retirement and separation package, after that, wala na silang trabaho, tapos na sila sa gobyerno at walang katiyakan or there is no assurance that they will be rehired or be absorbed by the OSG. Section 7 is very clear and very subjective na ang may kapangyarihan kung sino ang maiiwan or iha-hire ng OSG ay talagang naiiwan iyan doon sa Office of the Solicitor General or sa Solicitor General mismo. Itong mga empleyado ng PCGG at empleyado ng OGCC ay talagang at the mercy.

Sa ngayon, sigurado, malinaw na mayroon silang trabaho at mayroong batas na gumagarantiya sa kanilang trabaho pero dito nga, ibang mga opisina ito. Hindi naman ito nasasakupan ngayon ng OSG

ay gusto nating pakialaman ang mga opisina ng ito. May kanya-kanya silang batas na gumawa sa kanila. Halimbawa, ang PCGG, ginawa ito ng Executive Order No. 1. Ang OGCC naman ay by virtue of Republic Act No. 2327. May sarili silang mga Charter pero dito ngayon, gusto nating pag-isahin sila, bigyan natin ng napakalaking kapangyarihan ang Office of the Solicitor General, na ibang opisina, at gusto nilang ipasok natin sila dito. Alien sa Charter ng OSG ang, sa tingin ko, gawain ng PCGG at ng OGCC, kaya nga sila ginawa ng magkakaibang batas, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

Hindi po ba lumalabas na rider ito? Gusto natin ang title ng panukalang batas: 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 ORDER NOS. 1 AND 2, S. 1986, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.” Here, this is no longer just strengthening the Office of the Solicitor General, at inamin na rin ng kagalang-galang na Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, na in reality ay gusto nitong buwagin, baklasin ang dalawang batas na gumawa ng dalawang opisina, ang OGCC at ang PCGG.

REP. VELOSO. Mr. Speaker, let me point out, with the permission of the Honorable Zarate, that 10 lawyers per division, or 20 new divisions with 10 lawyers each for a total of about 200 lawyers will be accommodated in this new law. Remember that there are only two sets of employees who will be affected here, the lawyers and the non-lawyers. With the creation of 20 new divisions with 10 lawyers per division, 200 legal positions will be created. This will be more than enough, in my view, to accommodate lawyers from both the OGCC and the PCGG. On the administrative side, remember, as we create 20 new divisions, we will be needing—just like any law office—a lot of administrative clerical staff. They too will be accommodated by the creation of 20 new divisions.

On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, let me point out that the OSG as of March 2, 2018 has 271 plantilla legal positions actually filled up. There are 391 authorized plantilla legal positions, yet, only 271 were filled up; meaning, we have about 120 vacant positions. With 200 that are supposed to be created by the proposed law, we will be having 320 lawyer positions that can accommodate any of the displaced members of the legal staff in the OGCC and the PCGG. On the administrative aspect, Mr. Speaker, the OSG as of now has administrative plantilla positions authorized at 597, yet, only 448 were filled up. We have 149 unfilled vacant positions. Let me explain further, Mr. Speaker, because I asked the Solicitor General about this: Why

is it that if you have 391 authorized plantilla positions, only 271 had been filled up? The Solicitor General, Mr. Speaker, explained that because of the low pay given to the lawyers of the OSG, a lot of lawyers left the OSG to work in the private sector, given the fact that they offer better pay compared to the Office of the Solicitor General.

Two things, Mr. Speaker, uulitin ko po. Ang pakay po natin dito ay ayusin ang opisina ng OSG, buwagin ang PCGG which is now about 32 years old at parang halos wala na tayong nakukuha diyan for the money we spent every year for its operation. Itong OGCC naman, the problem really is that if there are cases that go as far as the Supreme Court, it is the OSG that represents the government-owned and controlled corporations, so, pag-isahin na lang at ang abogado na ginagamit sa Supreme Court will be the surviving law office or agency na magtatanggol sa ating pamahalaan.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker. Pupunta tayo diyan mamaya pero gusto ko lang puntuhin uli dito—sinasabi po ninyo na gusto nating ayusin ang Office of the Solicitor General. Nabanggit ninyo doon sa 390 authorized plantilla positions na for legal, only 271 were filled up at totoo nga, ano, napakaraming kasong hinahawakan ng OSG. There was one report that said 730,000 cases were pending before the OSG and out of these, 374,424 are active cases. So, if there are only 260 lawyers, talagang kukulangin iyan, tama naman iyon. Kung kulang ang mga abogado ng OSG, mag-hire tayo ng dagdag na abogado para sa OSG. Kung maliit ang suweldo nila, ipanukala na taasan ang suweldo nila. Dapat lang na taasan ang suweldo nila.

Ang hindi ko lang maintindihan, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, at ibalik ko ito sa aking nasabi kanina na sa titulo ng panukalang batas, “x x x TO STRENGTHEN THE OFFICE OF THE SOLICITOR GENERAL x x x”. What we are doing here is, rather than strengthening the Office of the Solicitor General, ang ginagawa natin ay ina-abolish natin, binabaklas natin iyong dalawang opisina. Why can you not hire new lawyers from the new bar passers? Bakit kailangang baklasin, bakit kailangang buwagin ang Office of the Government Corporate Counsel at ang PCGG? Napabulaanan na po natin iyan kahapon na walang katuturan. Sinabi ninyo na ang PCGG magastos lang, but Congressman Tinio yesterday pointed out facts and figures na mayroon itong nagawa, at sa katunayan ay pupunta ako in detail mamaya doon sa napakalaking trabaho pa na dapat gawain ng PCGG.

Inuulit ko, itong ginagawa nating batas, it is not just strengthening the Office of the Solicitor General na mabigyan ng magandang benepisyo ang ating mga kawani sa Office of the Solicitor General. Ang ginagawa natin dito ay may ibinibigay tayo sa kaliwang

kamay pero sa kanang kamay natin ay pinapatay, tinatangalan natin ng hanapbuhay ang ibang mga kawani sa pamahalaan, ang mga kawani ng OGCC at ng PCGG. It is easy to say that they will receive a hefty separation pay, et cetera, that they can still find work somewhere else, but after this, after spending years in government service, walang katiyakan na maa-absorb sila sa bagong OSG at kung maa-absorb man sila, walang katiyakan na iyong kanilang years of service will still be by the OSG. Baka puwedeng bumalik sila doon sa lower level dahil nabuwag na, na-dissolve na nga iyong kanilang mga positions sa OGCC and PCGG. That is why I mentioned earlier na it appears that this proposed law is a rider dahil ang purpose natin is to strengthen the OSG, but what we are doing here, pinakikialamanan natin iyong dalawang batas na distinct ang kanilang gawain, the PCGG and the OGCC, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor.

REP. VELOSO. Mr. Speaker, let me cite the case of a 31-year old lawyer from either the OGCC or the PCGG. By this time, palagay mo na lang naging lawyer siya at the age of 28 and so, after 31 years, medyo may katandaan na siya. He would be already 59 years old. Isang taon na lang at 60 years old na siya at malapit-lapit na siya talaga sa retirement age. Still, looking at the figures, Mr. Speaker, unless talagang mahina ang abogado ng ito, I am almost certain na maa-absorb siya ng OSG because naghahanap nga sila—lalo na kung seasoned lawyers na—ng mga bagong abogado na ipinapanukala ni Honorable Zarate.

I have been in-charge at one time, kasama ako sa grupo na nag-screen ng potential hirees in one of the biggest law firms noon, hindi ko na lang pangangalanan. Ang hirap talaga, kasi kapag bata ka, kapag bagong pasa ka ng bar, parang ang trabaho nga na ibinibigay namin sa mga bagong pasado ng bar is more of clerical work than legal, kasi ang dami pa niyang pag-aaralan na nitty-gritty in the field of actual practice. Ang point ko, Mr. Speaker, if we have lawyers from both the OGCC and the PCGG, they would certainly be accommodated in the expanded OSG kasi naghahanap tayo ng effective legal service para sa ating government agencies, para sa pamahalaan.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor.

Ang masasabi ko lang po diyan, talagang I reiterate na, dahil na-abolish nga iyong mga posisyon, atake pa rin iyan sa job security. At any rate, pupunta ako sa ibang punto.

The good Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, mentioned earlier na kailangan i-abolish na rin iyan, especially ang OGCC, dahil kung pupunta naman sa Supreme Court iyan, ang kanilang abogado ay ang OSG pa rin. May I just inquire from the good Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, how many pending cases do we have now in the OSG

which the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel represents, for example, in the Supreme Court or any other court?

REP. VELOSO. Mr. Speaker, we have a total of 728,904 cases as of January 29 of this year. The breakdown, well, taking the lion's share of this number are the special proceeding cases. It will be noted that the PCGG, Mr. Speaker, has only 315 cases. The next to special proceeding cases are marriage-related cases. In fact, here is an area na sa tingin ko kailangang pasukan na ng Seventeenth Congress and I think this will be tackled by my Sub-committee on Judicial Reform, dahil iyong mga marriage-related cases ay dapat hanapan natin ito ng another vehicle para mabawas-bawasan naman ang trabaho ng OSG.

REP. ZARATE. I beg the indulgence of the Sponsor, Mr. Speaker. I am specifically inquiring about cases now being handled by the Office of the Solicitor General representing government corporations which should have been represented by the OGCC, because you mentioned earlier that it is the OSG that is actually representing these OGCC cases before the Supreme Court.

REP. VELOSO. On the civil cases, because they are basically civil cases, we have about 116,245. So, the OGCC there would be about—hindi naman ganoon karami.

REP. ZARATE. No data.

REP. VELOSO. No data yet on these cases.

REP. ZARATE. So, iyon ho, mahirap hong sabihin natin na i-abolish natin iyan dahil, anyway, gagawin naman ng Office of the Solicitor General ang gawain ng OGCC. On another point.

REP. VELOSO. Mr. Speaker, functionally lang, ano, ang mga kaso nasa OGCC ay ililipat lang sa OSG para makabawas tayo sa gastos.

REP. ZARATE. Okay, I will go to that point. Is it not a fact, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, even as we speak now, that there are cases being litigated by the OSG and the opposing counsel is the OGCC? Is that a fact, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. VELOSO. Yes, Mr. Speaker. In fact, this was tackled in the Committee hearing which I presided. The OGCC was arguing from the standpoint of conflict of interest.

REP. ZARATE. Yes.

REP. VELOSO. For example, on the BIR cases, ang kalaban daw ng PAGCOR is the BIR and the OSG will be defending...

REP. ZARATE. BIR.

REP. VELOSO. ...the BIR. Of course, this is not really a hard and fast rule because the PAGCOR, being a government agency, can also be defended by the OSG. Ang point lang diyan, as we gathered from the Committee hearings, is this: Kasi iisang katawan lang naman ito, government, but with two pockets. Ang isang bulsa, sa isang pocket is the PAGCOR; and in another pocket is the BIR. Now, you have one lawyer handling the dispute between the two. The OSG is in the best position to ascertain which of the two is really right. It is the OSG which is in the best position to tell the agency na medyo hindi tama, na sayang lang ang pera ng taumbayan. Idudulog natin ito hanggang sa Korte Suprema, matatalo ka lang naman. Aayusin na lang natin ito because, after all, pera din ito ng taumbayan. Ang kinikita nang PAGCOR ay papasok sa bulsa ng pamahalaan, at ang nakokolekta ng BIR ay pumapasok din sa bulsa ng pamahalaan.

So, with this setup, Mr. Speaker, with the absorption by the OSG of the OGCC, medyo maraming maaayos, marami ang mase-save po ng government.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker. Para ho ang sinasabi natin ngayon, ang OSG ay magiging transactional na lang ang kanyang gagawin. Pag-uusapan na lang natin ito lahat at hindi na natin pag-uusapan dito ang points of law, iyong mga factual milieu kung bakit nagdemandahan ang isang government corporation at ang isang ahensiya ng gobyerno. Pag-uusapan na lang natin. Transactional na lang ito. Tayo-tayo na lang ang mag-uusap even if there are really questions of law that need to be litigated.

That is why Republic Act No. 2327 was passed by this Congress to separate from the Office of the Solicitor General the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel because, really, there are proprietary functions of the government that cannot be represented by the Office of the Solicitor General. Now, we are trying to simplify everything, simplistic solution, usap-usapan na lang natin, istoryahan nalang natin, pag-uusapan na lang.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, you mentioned earlier that the OSG, under this measure, will now become a big law office. Is it not a fact, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, under our canons, our code of ethics, it is unethical for a law office to represent conflicting interests of clients and now, we are saying that it is okay for the OSG? Anyway, pag-uusapan na lang natin dahil isang katawan

lang naman iyan na may magkabilang bulsa, even if their positions or their Charters are entirely different from each other, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VELOSO. Mr. Speaker, far from being transactional, ito po ang mangyayari ryan: Here is a conflict, for example, between the PAGCOR and the BIR. That conflict, if it will not go through a judicial proceeding, will be settled amicably. There will be an agreement between the PAGCOR and the BIR. There will be an agreement which is in a form of—which, for intents and purposes, will actually be in the nature of a contract between the two. But let us remember that agreements or contracts can only be valid if these are not contrary to law, morals and public policy.

So, the first thing that the OSG will look into is: sino sa inyo ang tama legally? So, it cannot be a case of just a transactional effort or arrangement because the law will still be followed. Again, nothing can be supreme than the law, and no agreement can be entered into that is contrary to law, morals and public policy.

REP. ZARATE. Yes, if they will agree. What if both corporations, the PAGCOR and the BIR, cannot agree on a point of law, what will now the OSG do?

REP. VELOSO. Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. It will assign one lawyer from the OSG to defend PAGCOR and another OSG lawyer to defend BIR. That is the point we are trying to raise, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker. It is unethical for this big law office to represent two conflicting interests in litigation.

REP. VELOSO. Precisely, Mr. Speaker, there will be no conflict of interest because, remember, the BIR is under the Department of Finance and the Secretary of Finance is the alter ego of the President. On the other hand, the PAGCOR is, for example, under the Office of the President. Now, between the two, as I said, the guiding argument would be, what is the law? Who is correct?

Let me go to another point. Both the OSG and the OGCC champion the interest of only one client and that is the Republic of the Philippines. Any perceived conflict is more imaginary than real because as I said, at the end of the day, it will be the Office of the President that will tell them “Sundin ninyo ang batas.”

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, and I can also say the same. It is more imaginary to say that all these conflicting interests can be settled by just lumping them together before the OSG because ang reyalidad po talaga, talagang nagdemandahan din ang mga magkakaiba’t ibang ahensiya ng pamahalaan. Kaya

ako nagtanong kanina—can you cite, can you give me the data now? Ilang kaso ba ang pending ngayon between the OSG and government corporations? There are a lot.

REP. VELOSO. Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. That is, precisely, hindi natin puwedeng sabihin na kapag mayroon nang ganitong batas, naipasa na natin ito, ay wala nang conflict. Sasabihin lang ng OSG, “ito ang interpretation ko sa law,” ay naging Supreme Court na ngayon ang OSG dahil ito na ang nag-i-interpret. Ano ang batas? In our Constitution, the final interpreter of the law and how the law is to be implemented is the Supreme Court and now, the good Sponsor is saying “No.” In conflicts between agencies, between government corporations and agencies, it is the Solicitor General who will interpret what the law is. Is that what you are saying, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. VELOSO. Mr. Speaker, the bottom line here is, there is a right that is being violated, be it a right of the PAGCOR, for example, versus the right of the BIR. Now, Rule II, Section 2 of the Rules of Court defines a “Cause of Action”. There can be no case that will be a proper subject of adjudication without a cause of action. Rule II, Section 2 defines a “cause of action” as a right that is being violated.

Uulitin ko po, ang OSG makikita niya, “o, it is the right of the PAGCOR that is being violated by BIR” and so, pagsasabihan niya iyong BIR, “I am sorry, pagdating natin sa Korte Suprema ay matatalo kayo dito.” Hindi na ho ito magkakaroon ng mga transactional negotiations dahil maa-avert, precisely, iyong adjudication. Hindi na ito aabot po sa Korte Suprema because right from the start ay makikita kung sino ang may cause of action.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

Again, it is more imaginary than real ang solusyon na binibigay natin. Theoretical ang sinasabing solusyon natin samantalang sa ngayon ay malinaw na may kanya-kanyang papel ang OGCC at ang OSG para hindi na nagiging subjective at binibigay lang natin sa isang kagawaran ang pag-determine ng batas. Kayo na rin ho ang nagsabi, after this proposed law is passed, after this Bill is passed, it is the Solicitor General who determines what is the law kaya i-abolish na natin lahat dahil maalam at maraming alam ang Solicitor General. As far as the government is concerned, dahil siya ang abogado ng gobyerno, alam niya kung ano ang tama at kung ano ang mali. Iyon ang gusto nating palabasin dito.

Taliwas ito—doon nga, ibalik ko uli—bakit ba ipinasa ng Kongresong ito ang Republic Act No.

2327 noon? Dahil nakita nito na talagang may kanya-kanyang papel dito pero ngayon, gusto nating bumalik at gusto nating pag-usapan na lang ang problema. Malinaw naman kaya ipinasa ang R.A. No. 2327 dahil separate ang functions ng SolGen at ng Office of the Government Corporate Counsel—distinct and separate ang kanilang gawain.

At any rate, Mr. Sponsor, ang Kinatawagang ito, ako ay naninindigan pa rin na there is a conflict of interest here, at hindi lang ho theoretical iyong sinabi ng ating mga kawani, ng mga empleyado ng mga government corporations, na there are conflicts of interest na haharapin dito sa pagdating ng—kung ito man ay maipasa na batas.

I will go to another point.

REP. VELOSO. Sagutin ko lang po, Mr. Speaker. Iyong, halimbawa, dalawa rin naman ang puwedeng maging agrabyado doon—ang BIR kapag pinagsabihan na ng OSG, “Mali ka dito dahil ito po ang batas,” cannot get another counsel because there is a lot of jurisprudence saying that only the OSG can defend a government agency. Pag dating naman sa PAGCOR, of course mayroon silang OGCC. Dito nga nagkakaproblema because puwede silang kumuha ng abogado na bayad din ng gobyerno, pero kung ang OSG na rin mismo ang abogado ng PAGCOR, then, talagang wala o hindi magkakaroon ng conflict of interest because na-avert natin ang conflict between two government agencies.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

On another point, sinabi ninyo ho, tinuran ninyo kanina na pagsamahin na natin itong tatlong ahensiya para makatipid ang gobyerno dahil magastos. Tatlong opisina, pare-pareho ang ginagawa, puwede namang gawin ng isang opisina. May I inquire from the good Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, for 2018, how much is the budget of the Office of the Solicitor General? How much is the budget of the OGCC as well as the PCGG?

REP. VELOSO. For Fiscal Year 2018, the total new appropriations for the OSG is P991,975,000; for the OGCC, it is P131,777,000; and for the PCGG, it is P124,551,000, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. For a total of?

REP. VELOSO. For a total of P1,248,303,000.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker. We have a slight difference lang in number. I also accessed this from our General Appropriations Act. My total is P1.185 billion for the three agencies—P939 million for the OSG; P125,492,000 for the OGCC; P120,411,000 for the PCGG, for a total of P1.185

billion. Now, kung i-abolish ho natin itong dalawang opisina at pag-isahin natin, magkano naman po ang budget na kailangan ng expanded super law—itung big law office na OSG, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker? Mas malaki ba o mas mababa sa kabuuang total budget ng tatlong ahensiya sa kasalukuyan?

REP. VELOSO. Magiging mas maliit. Kahapon ko pa ito na-compute. There will be savings of P150 million kasi ang full complement ng 50 legal divisions would be P1.8 billion and as of now, they have only 30 divisions. Hindi pa ito full complement dahil may mga bakante. We have P1,081,000,000 and then minus P256 million—combination ito ng OGCC and PCGG—we have a savings of about more or less P150 million.

At this juncture, Deputy Speaker Castro relinquished the Chair to Rep. Arthur R. Defensor Jr.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker. So, it appears na mas malaki pa pala ang kakailanganin ng bagong OSG, ano? Sa kasalukuyan, iyong tatlong opisina, which are performing distinct and separate functions, ang total na budget for 2018, kahit na iyong total budget ninyo ang susundin natin, it is P1.2 billion. Here, after we pass this law, the full complement—lahat ng kailangang posisyon, we will spend P1.8 billion—so P1.8 billion as against P1.2 billion ngayon sa tatlong opisina. Akala ko ba, at sinabi ninyo kanina, na makakatipid tayo ng P150 million, ay mas gumastos pa pala tayo ng dagdag na halos P0.8 billion sa panibagong opisina na ito? Saan ho ang pagtitipid doon? Saan ang rightsizing doon?

REP. VELOSO. Uulitin ko po, Mr. Speaker, hindi P1.8 billion ang ginagastos nating ngayon but P1,081,000,000 kasi marami tayong bakante. Mayroon tayong space for filling up. In fact, we are increasing that space by 20 additional divisions because we expect that, after the inventory of cases, there will be a need for hiring more lawyers. Itong ginagawa po natin, even if we will be coming up with 50 divisions under the proposed law, this does not mean that automatically mapi-fill-up lahat ito because, as of now nga, they have 30 divisions, yet, hindi nila na-fill-up ito.

As earlier mentioned, marami tayong unfilled positions sa OSG. Now, it is not P1.8 billion but P1,081,000,000, kasi ang P1.8 billion is P1,800,000,000.

REP. ZARATE. Well, thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

Tama na ho iyong P1.8 billion. Hindi ho kayo mali doon. In fact, inamin din ito ni Director Gerald Handa ng DBM that once this law is implemented, ang

kinakailangan ay P1.8 billion para maipatupad ang batas na ito doon sa pagha-hire ng dagdag na mga abogado, 50 legal divisions with 10 lawyers per division, et cetera. Kaya iyong sinasabi ninyong nakakatipid tayo ay hindi totoo dahil as of now, even as we speak now, ang approved budget ng tatlong kagawarang ito ay P1.2 billion. Hindi pa nila napi-fill-up din iyong full complement. Gaya ng sinabi ninyo rin kanina, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, ang OSG ay 390 authorized plantilla para sa legal, but there are only 271 that had been filled up. Ganoon din po iyong tinitingnan na magiging budget for the full complement, and whether that is already filled-up or not, ang kailangan hong budget ay P1.8 billion.

So, saan ho natin pinulot iyong P115 million na sinabing matitipid natin, pero sa katunayan, dagdag P600 million ang kakailanganin natin para maipatupad ang batas na ito, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. VELOSO. Mr. Speaker, inamin na po at inaamin ko na na ang full complement of 50 legal divisions will bring about a budget of P1.8 billion—50 legal divisions.

REP. ZARATE. Yes.

REP. VELOSO. Meaning, we will have 500 lawyers here, plus mayroon pa tayong mga administrative support staff. As of now, we only have 30 divisions na hindi pa nga na-fill-up lahat kaya P1,081,000,000 ang ginagastos natin. Now, if we are to deduct the savings dahil iko-collapse natin itong OGCC at saka PCGG and have them absorbed by the OSG, dito sa ibinigay sa akin na figures, about P150,052,828 po ang magiging savings.

At this juncture, the Rep. Defensor relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Fredenil “Fred” H. Castro.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker. Those are phantom savings dahil in reality, gagastos ka rin talaga, kapag fully implemented na ang panukalang batas na ito, ng P1.8 billion. So, iyong mga sinasabi ho natin na rightsizing, na pagtitipid, puro panaginip lang iyan, phantom iyan, hindi totoo iyan, dahil ang talagang direksiyon ng panukalang batas na ito, atakihin, i-abolish ang posisyon ng dalawang ahensiya na sa tingin ng Office of the Solicitor General sa ngayon ay kakompetensiya nito at walang kabuluhan ito. Kaya ipapasok na kayo sa kanyang opisina at gagawin nang makapangyarihan ang Office of the Solicitor General, kaya babaklasin na, aalisin na iyang OGCC at PCGG.

Kung titingnan mo naman talaga, kung pagtitipid at pagtitipid din lang, if we maintain the current staff complement ng OGCC at ng PCGG, whether filled-

up na lahat iyan, at maging sa OSG, P1.2 billion ang naka-budget sa 2018, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker. So, again, ipino-point out lang natin dito na iyong isang dahilan kaya ipapasa ang batas na ito, iyong usapin na rightsizing, ay malayo ho sa katotohanan iyon dahil hindi makakapagtipid ang gobyerno rito. Sa katunayan, mas gagastos pa ng malaki ang gobyerno dahil kailangang i-implement ang batas na ito, kailangang mapunan iyong 50 legal divisions na inaambisyon ng batas na ito.

I will go now, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, to my ...

REP. VELOSO. Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. Yes.

REP. VELOSO. Kaunting response lang po. Nalilito na po ako. Kung phantom ito, di walang gagastusin ang gobyerno kasi imaginary lang ito. Tama po si Honorable Zarate, we are just coming up with a structure of 50 divisions and until such time na na-fill-up ang mga ito, talagang phantom iyan. We will not be appropriating any amount for nonexisting positions. On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, isa pang rason kung bakit sinasabi kong magkakaroon tayo ng savings, ang isang masama—because I was able to gather this in the course of the Committee hearings—is that ang OGCC ay sumisingil ng 20 percent ng cash value ng hinahawakang kaso. My God, binabayaran na natin siya, at kapag nanalo siya o natalo man, mayroon siyang sinisingil pa na additional 20 percent.

Anyway, I am prepared to respond to the next point of the Honorable Zarate.

REP. ZARATE. Well, thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

On the side, wala naman ho sigurong masama na may pondong kinokolekta ang OGCC to augment its funds. In fact, in this proposed Bill, in Section 21, there is also a proviso on the augmentation of funds and how funds will be shared. For example, according to Section 21, “Twenty percent (20%) of monetary awards or 10 percent (10%) of the value of assets upon liquidation adjudged by the Courts or tribunals to client departments, x x x” ay mapupunta to augment the funds of the expanded OSG. I think there is nothing wrong with that, because if it is wrong, then Section 21, Augmentation of Funds, should be deleted—all of it—from this proposed Bill, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VELOSO. Mr. Speaker, kalahati po ang bawas dito kasi 10 percent lang ang masingil ng OSG, whereas ang OGCC is 20 percent. Iyong 20 percent na tinutukoy sa Section 21, paragraph (a), it refers to the monetary award. Magkaiba kasi ang monetary award sa cash value ng assets.

REP. ZARATE. Just the same, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, the idea of—you know, whether that is cash or a portion of the monetary award, it is there, it is still in this law. Kung talagang masama iyan, then we will delete this entire Section 21 of the proposed Bill.

Since I have only a few minutes left, I will go to another point. Last night, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, isang major na napag-usapan doon ay ang abolition ng PCGG, and I support the contention of my colleague, Congressman Tinio, na itong abolition of the PCGG ay atake talaga ito doon sa diwa kung bakit ba itinatag ang PCGG, at ito ay ang anti-diktadurang executive order para habulin ang mga ninakaw na yaman ng diktador na si Marcos, ng kanyang pamilya, at ng kanyang naging cronies. Dito sa panukalang batas, ito ay ginawa na lang isang task force. Ito ay pagsasalaula doon sa diwa kung bakit itinatag ang PCGG. It is not just because you want to create an agency, but it is a clear manifestation ng People Power Revolt na hindi natin dapat pakawalan, hindi natin dapat isawalang-bahala ang napakalaking krimen na ginawa ng diktador na si Marcos, ng kanyang pamilya at ng mga cronies niya, na hanggang ngayon ay, in fact, namamayagpag pa sila na para bang wala silang ginawang kasalanan sa mamamayang Pilipino.

Kagabi, napag-usapan na halos kalahati pa ng ninakaw na yaman ni Marcos, \$5 billion dollars, ang hindi pa naisasauli sa kaban ng bayan. Ngayon, ang gusto nating gawin ay i-abolish na, tanggalin na itong Presidential Commission on Good Government at gawin na lang siyang, ayon dito sa ating panukalang batas, isang task force with limited powers because not all powers under Executive Order No. 1 and the amendatory executive order are included in this proposed Bill, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VELOSO. Mr. Speaker, Section 3, paragraph (c), defines “ill-gotten wealth” and exclusively, it refers only to:

any asset, property, business enterprise or material possession of former President Ferdinand E. Marcos, his immediate family, relatives, subordinates and close associates, whether located in the Philippines or abroad, acquired by them directly, or indirectly through dummies, nominees, agents, subordinates, and/or business associates by any of the following means or similar schemes: x x x,

And then, we have one to six. Now, the fact alone that this Bill, this proposed law still embodies the thrust of the government to recover ill-gotten wealth as mandated in Section 26, Article XVIII of the 1987 Constitution, at iyong sequestration aspect of that, Mr. Speaker, does not end with the passage of this Bill into

law. In fact, under Republic Act No. 1379, long before we had this Constitution in 1986, we already had a law, an act declaring the forfeiture of ill-gotten wealth at sakop pa rin ito ng OSG, Mr. Speaker.

So, it is not correct, Mr. Speaker, for us to say na we are relegating the function, the thrust of the government to recover ill-gotten wealth to the back burner, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

Last night, the good Sponsor already admitted, for example, in paragraph (m) of Section 5 of the proposed law which states, “Exercise and perform the following powers and functions of the PCGG which are hereby transferred to the OSG”—malinaw naman po na kahit na pagbabaliktarin-baliktarin ko itong paragraph (m), talagang ito na lang ang magiging power noong task force na iyan dahil ang kabuuang kapangyarihan na inilagag at ibinigay ng revolutionary government sa Executive Order No. 1 ay napalabnaw na dito. In fact, wala na nga rito iyong power to subpoena, to cite in contempt at iba pang mga kapangyarihan na malinaw na naisabatas at na-enumerate sa Executive Order No. 1. Kaya sinabi ho natin na pinalabnaw ito dito.

Ito ay walang ibang tunguhin kung hindi ituloy-tuloy na i-rehabilitate ang mga Marcoses at bigyangdaan pa ang rebisyonismo ng kasaysayan, na wala silang kasalanan sa mamamayang Pilipino at wala rin silang ninakaw sa mamamayang Pilipino. Ito ho ang nakikita natin dito dahil kung gusto nating i-strengthen lamang ang Office of the Solicitor General, bakit kailangan pang palabnawin ito? At the very minimum, ay sana na-cut and paste na lang ninyo iyong E.O. No. 1 at inilagay dito, kasama ang paragraph (m) na ito, pero talagang ni-limita sa apat na kapangyarihan na lang o poder ang iniwan sa task force na supposedly ay hahabol sa mga nakaw na yaman ng mga Marcoses, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VELOSO. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Chair would like to remind the good Gentleman from the Party-List BAYAN MUNA that he has exceeded the one-hour limit for his interpellation.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I am now winding up and ...

REP. VELOSO. May isang point lang po ako. constitutional provision po ito and so, we do not have to put, in this proposed law, something that is already provided for in the Constitution. Dito sa Article XVIII po natin, Section 26, nakalagay po diyan that with Proclamation No. 3 dated March 25, 1986,

the government was given, within 18 months from ratification, to recover ill-gotten wealth and after that, mayroon pa rin tayong six months. The government still is under obligation to issue a freeze order or a sequestration order on the condition that within six months, magpa-file po sila ng action in court. Hindi po ito nawawala kaya hindi na kailangan natin pong ilagay dito dahil nasa Konstitusyon po ito.

Ngayon, doon sa task force, I am reminded by the ComSec that during the Committee meeting, it was the Honorable Zarate who even agreed to the creation of this special task force. Just so masiguro lang po natin na kahit nandiyan na po sa Konstitusyon, iyong special task force na ito ay maghahabol sa kung anong mga ill-gotten wealth na medyo nakakaligtaan.

REP. ZARATE. Yes, that is true, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, I can remember that in one Committee hearing, naninindigan ako na hindi kailangan i-abolish ang PCGG, if at all. I reminded—because in the original draft bill ay wala ngang nabanggit doon kung ano ang gagawin sa mga kaso ng PCGG kaya naipasok itong sinasabing probisyon creating a special task force assigning several divisions for the PCGG. But, again, pagdating sa paragraph (m) ay ganoon pa rin, nilimita na ang powers ng task force na ito.

At any rate, tapos na po ang aking oras. Salamat sa ating butihing Sponsor para sa mga sagot niya pero malinaw pa rin po ang aming tindig na, una, ang batas na ito is not just to strengthen the OSG, but it is an attack on the security of tenure of our government employees, specifically ang mga kawani natin sa OGCC at sa PCGG. Second, iyong usapin na nakakapagtipid, on the contrary, hindi makakapagtipid dito dahil mas gagastos pa ng malaki ang ating pamahalaan sa expanded OSG. Third, this is part and parcel, ako ay naniniwala, kabahagi ito sa tuloy-tuloy na rehabilitasyon ng pamilya ng diktador na si Marcos at ng kanyang mga crony na ginagawa ng kasalukuyang pamahalaan at administrasyon. Sana ay huwag nating payagan ito, G. I sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker. Salamat po, Mr. Sponsor.

REP. VELOSO. Mr. Speaker, mailagay lang po sa record ...

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

REP. VELOSO. ... na nasa batas po natin, sa Konstitusyon, inilipat na po, nasa husgado na, at ang husgado can issue hold departure orders, subpoena, freeze orders, et cetera.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. GARIN (R.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Rep. France L. Castro from the Party-List ACT TEACHERS for her interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Cong. France Castro is hereby recognized.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Thank you po, Mr. Speaker. So, ang atin po bang kagalang-galang na Sponsor ay tatanggap ng mga question mula sa Representasyong ito? Ilan lang pong mga paglililaw.

REP. VELOSO. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Una po, Mr. Speaker, hindi rin po ako maalam sa batas pero parang pinakasimple lang, halimbawa po, hindi ba mayroon po tayo sa batas na one bill, one subject rule? Dito po sa batas na pino-propose, itong House Bill No. 7376 po, it is 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 ORDER NOS. 1 AND 2, S. 1986, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.” So, hindi po ba, mayroon po itong violation doon sa tinatawag nating rider law?

REP. VELOSO. Kagaya ng sinabi po kanina ni Honorable Zarate, iyon na nga ang punto mo rin at sinagot ko na po ito na hindi ito puwede maging rider dahil it is an abolition of two agencies at ang functions nila inililipat dito sa OSG and it becomes the strengthening of the OSG. You cannot strengthen, under the proposed law, the OSG without collapsing the offices of the PCGG and the OGCC kasi magkakaroon tayo ng duplicitous function ng dalawang grupo ng mga abogado, o tatlo pa nga magiging grupo ng abogado.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay. So, sa tingin ninyo po ba, iyong pagbubuwag ng PCGG at ng OGCC ay makakapagpa-strengthen po ng OSG samantalang itong tatlong magkakaibang ahensiya na nilikha ng tatlong batas ay magkakaiba po talaga iyong functions nito? Kasi kanina, talaga pong parang hindi ko po matanggap iyong inyong katwiran, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, iyong tungkol doon sa katulad po ng sinasabi ni Congressman Zarate kanina na iyong conflict of interest, magkakaroon po dito o maaaring mangyari kaugnay noong—alam naman natin na ang tatlong

ahensiya na ito, ang katungkulan nito ay pag-aabogado sa iba't ibang cases po.

REP. VELOSO. Example po diyan, Mr. Speaker, is this: PAGCOR, ang abogado nila is OGCC. From the initial stage ng legal problem, OGCC ang humahawak instead of the OSG. Sinasahuran natin ang OSG, yet, hindi sila makapasok sa problema dahil mayroon tayong OGCC. So, dalawa pong abogado ang binabayaran ng gobyerno. Ngayon, kung ang OGCC ililipat ngayon ang function sa OSG, iyong OSG na binabayaran natin ay patuloy na magtatrabaho dahil binabayaran natin. On the other hand, makakatipid po tayo doon sa sahod natin sa OGCC which, in the first place, ay kinukuha naman din ang OSG as the lawyer ng OGCC pagdating ng asunto sa Korte Suprema or even sa Court of Appeals. So, iyon po ang punto ng batas na ito. Nagtitipid po tayo. Naghanap tayo ng paraan na makapag-save.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Kanina ...

REP. VELOSO. More qualitative work for the same pay.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Opo. Kanina po nakita naman doon sa palitan ng argumento ninyo po at saka ni Congressman Zarate na talagang hindi naman po makakapagtipid. Halimbawa po, iyong sinasabi ninyong matitipid natin na one million something pero papalitan naman ito. Sabi ninyo kasi, hindi ba, iyon pong mga unfilled position doon sa OSG na hindi nafill-up ay ipi-fill-up ninyo rin para nga po makagampan ng mga trabaho na gagawin po doon sa PCGG at iyong isa pa pong ahensiya, hindi po ba?

REP. VELOSO. Uulitin ko po, Mr. Speaker, para bang isang bahay, mayroon tayong plano para sa two-storey house, pero we will start with one storey kasi kaya pa naman. Pagdating ng panahon na talagang kailangang-kailangan dahil lumaki na po ang pamilya ay magdadagdag tayo ng pangalawang storey.

Ganito po rin ang mangyayari dito. We are coming up with a structural reorganization in the sense na iko-collapse natin, ia-abolish ang PCGG, iyong mga abogado nila ililipat when necessary, to qualify. Sa OSG, ang OGCC ia-abolish din, ililipat sila dito dahil ang dami naman talagang kaso. Ang bentahe lang po dito, ang advantage po is, hindi na tayo nagkakaroon ng duplicitous tasking at saka nagkakaroon tayo ng savings in terms of pay.

So, itong 50 divisions, ano lang iyan, gaya ng sinabi ni Honorable Zarate, phantom pa nga ito from the 31st to the 50th division. Phantom pa iyan. Imaginary pa lang iyan pero inilalagay na po natin sa batas na authorized

for purposes of budgeting na ang OSG ay magkaroon ng 50 divisions.

After this kasi, kapag naging batas na po ito, magkakaroon ng case inventory. Ilan po ba talaga ang active files natin? Ilan ang active cases? Ilan ang puwede nating ayusin na because this involves two government agencies? Tatal, hindi naman talaga ito magiging transactional discussion dahil no agreement can be entered into between the two agencies that is contrary to law, morals and public policy.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Thank you, Mr. Sponsor. Sa ngayon po ba, ilan po ba iyong mga kaso na active under the OSG, iyong kaso na active under the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel? At saka siyempre po, gaano pa po karami iyong hinahanap nating hidden wealth o iyong nakaw na yaman ng mga Marcoses?

REP. VELOSO. Case status: active cases are 374,424; kasi decided cases na ang 181,191, terminated—because the decision on a case does not terminate the case kasi aantayin mo pa iyong entry of judgment, et cetera. Mayroon tayong terminated cases, 161,400. So, kung active cases ang pag-uusapan natin, we have 374,424.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Iyan po ang sa OSG?

REP. VELOSO. Iyan po.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Iyong nasa Office of the Government Corporate Counsel?

REP. VELOSO. Ang hirap talaga, Mr. Speaker, parang nagkaroon tayo ng problema in getting the actual profile ng active cases sa OGCC because understandable naman ang posisyon ng OGCC. They are not really that cooperative dahil ayaw nila na ma-abolish ang posisyon nila but we will get to that, Mr. Speaker. Magsa-submit na lang kami siguro—susulatan na lang po si Honorable Castro.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Iyon nga po, Mr. Speaker. Ang punto po dito, paano po talaga magagampanan ng isang superpower na law office na katulad ng OSG ang ganito samantalang iyong separate na nga na isang ahensiya ay nahihirapan pa tayo? Kung ito ay nasa isang ahensiya, ito iyong OSG, paano pa natin mapapabilis iyong pagre-resolve ng mga kaso involving ang mga government corporations natin and at the same time, iyong nasa OSG, at iyong pangatlo po at ang mahalaga ay iyong paghahanap pa noong mga natitirang ill-gotten wealth ng mga Marcoses?

REP. VELOSO. Ang PCGG ...

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). So, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, hindi yata appropriate na parang strengthening iyong Office ng Solicitor General? Pahihinain pa po nga nito, babagal iyong takbo ng cases dahil sa ganitong sitwasyon.

REP. VELOSO. There are 315 PCGG cases, iyon na lang po ang natitira. Now, itong government-owned and controlled corporation cases, iyon po ang wala dito, pero hinahawakan iyan ng OSG, so, obviously maisasama iyan dito sa civil cases. So, it is about 116,245, iyon po.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). So, ano po iyong pinaplano ng OSG para po, halimbawa, mas magiging efficient po iyong pagre-resolve ng mga kaso na ito na iba't ibang subjects?

REP. VELOSO. Under Section 18 ng proposed law, magkakaroon tayo ng case migration. As the Bill is passed into law, magkakaroon ng imbentaryo ng cases and then maglilipitan iyan from PCGG to OSG, OGCC to OSG, and then, I would like to, by experience, maganda kasi iyong experience ang ginagamit natin na inspiration. For example, when I joined the Court of Appeals in 2004, iba-iba ang cases. Mayroong criminal cases, mayroong labor cases, mayroong land title cases, et cetera. I had four court attorneys, so, ang ginawa ko, iyong bawat court attorney ay binigyan ko ng isang grupo ng kaso. Sabi ko, “Sa iyo ang lahat ng labor cases. Sa iyo, lahat ang criminal cases.” So, instead na ako ay mag-aantay noon, nang iaakyat lang ng Division Clerk of Court namin, ipinaakyat ko lahat ng cases na nakatoka sa akin, nag-imbentaryo po ako and then in two years po, nag-zero backlog po ako. Why? Dahil makikita mo kaagad gaano ba kabigat itong mga kaso na naka-assign sa akin, and as a court attorney, for example, in criminal cases, who handles this group of cases, nagkakaroon na siya ng expertise kung anong kailangang batas ang i-a-apply dito, nagkakaroon na lang ng problema on the facts. Ang missing gap na lang ay iyong facts pero kapag na-gather na iyong facts ay makukumpuni na po ang desisyon. Ganito po sa OSG, ganito din po ang mangyayari diyan. Abogado sila kaya they will have to see to it that they will be winning their cases. Titingnan nila kung ano ba talaga ang meritorious cases, ano ba talaga ang mga cases na nandiyan dahil, halimbawa, no offense naman sa PCGG, gusto naman ng PCGG na medyo relevant pa sila kaya ipagpapatuloy na mabubuhay itong mga kasong ito. Makikita mo kung alin ang mga kasong kailangang tapusin at ano ang kaso na kailangang pabilisan, at iakyat as far as the Supreme Court. This can only be handled if we have only one lawyer attending to all the government cases that we have.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Parang napakadali po na ma-

imagine iyong sinasabi ninyo na proseso under ng OSG pero kung titingnan po natin, halimbawa po, sa Office of the Government Corporate Counsel, on the average po, ilan pong araw or buwan natatapos ang isang kaso? O iyong isang kaso po sa OSG, for example, on the average, ilang araw o buwan o taon ba ang nagagamit na time para matapos po ito?

REP. VELOSO. Okay. Sa government-owned and controlled corporations, basically, ang laban mo diyan is corporate or mayroong labor cases. Pagdating kasi sa labor cases, madali mong tapusin iyan dahil in a matter of days ay kailangang matapos ang kaso sa arbiter level. Then, aakyat na ito sa NLRC and in a matter of few months, tapos na rin iyan. Then, aakyat ito sa Court of Appeals at kung talagang masigasig ka, matatapos mo rin iyan. Medyo magtatagal sa Supreme Court pero binigyan mo lang ng character ang urgency ng kaso, trabaho iyan ng abogado, kaya napipilitan din ang Korte Suprema na i-resolve kaagad iyan. In short, iyan ang tinatawag na case disposition technique in case handling.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay po. Ito po, halimbawa, doon sa PCGG na alam naman natin na mahalaga iyong ginagampanan nito, hindi po ba iyong pag-recover noong ill-gotten wealth ng mga Marcoses, kung maaabolish po iyong PCGG, sa tingin po ninyo po na iyong momentum noong recovery itself ay mapapabilis o mawawala ito? Ibig sabihin, unti-unti itong—ibig sabihin, iyong momentum nito ay mawawala. So, sa tingin ninyo, kapag napaloob po siya sa OSG ay mapapabilis po ba ito or mapapabagal lalo? O baka hindi na po natin ma-recover o makuha iyong hidden wealth o iyong tinatawag nating ill-gotten wealth. Sinasabi na po ba natin na goodbye to recovery?

REP. VELOSO. Mr. Speaker, the fact alone na binigyan ng importansiya po itong ill-gotten wealth under Section 3, paragraph (c), by definition, and the definition refers only to the ill-gotten wealth of the Marcoses, kasama iyong mga dummies, ito ay nagbibigay ng focus sa atin na hindi po natin nakakalimutan ang ill-gotten wealth problem ng gobyerno. In fact, we cannot pass a law that would allow us to forget the ill-gotten wealth of the Marcoses kasi naka-fix na po iyan sa Article XVIII, Section 26 ng Konstitusyon. From the time na nagkaroon tayo ng Proclamation No. 3 on March 25, 1986, binigyan po tayo ng 18 months to sequester and file cases. Now, after the 18-month period, embedded na rin po, nakalagay po dito na “You are to issue a freeze order, a sequestration order,” kondisyon lang po and within six months from the time you issued a sequestration order, ia-akyat mo ito sa husgado. This is a continuing concern of the government which we can never abolish under any legislation.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.) Okay, balik po tayo, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, doon sa transfer of powers. Paglilina lang po doon mula sa ating Sponsor. Iyan po bang mga sumusunod na powers like investigation power, power to administer oath/subpoena, power to declare in contempt, injunctive power, TRO, power to provisionally take over businesses, quasi-legislative powers, subordinate legislation—saan po ba sila explicitly nakalagay dito sa ating proposed Bill?

REP. VELOSO. Uulitin ko po—because of the provisions of our Article XVIII, Section 26 na inililipat talaga ang function ng sequestration to the regular courts, with the passage of this proposed law, it behooves now the OSG to issue sequestration orders and see to it that these cases are filed within six months in appropriate courts; and the courts have the power to freeze assets, properties, issue writs, and they can also issue injunctions and can even issue hold-departure orders. In short, ano man ang nasa PCGG under Executive Order No. 1 at saka sa Executive Order No. 2, iyan ay nasa husgado na po.

So, hindi po ito mawawala kahit hindi natin ipinasok dito and precisely dahil nandiyan na po iyan, hindi na natin kailangan pong gawin ito dito. Ang punto na lang po natin is lawyering kasi itong PCGG, may powers sila that are being performed now by the courts and at the same time, sila pa rin ang nagiging abogado dahil mayroon silang mga abogado sa PCGG.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, kaya nasabi ninyo kanina na ipapasok sa judge, tama po ba iyon, na iyong mga kaso na under dito sa PCGG. Sa tingin ninyo po ba, at ako personally ay hindi ko naman po talagang ipinagtatanggol ang PCGG dahil nakita naman po natin na may mga kakulangan, may mga kahinaan ang PCGG. So, mabagal na sila noon, at sa tingin po ninyo ba ay bibilis sila under the OSG? Sa mangyayari ngayon, mas magiging mabagal po, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, ito doon sa sinasabi ninyong proseso.

REP. VELOSO. Article XVII, ito na ba iyong ano? Anyway, nakalagay po sa Section 26, Article XVIII:

The authority to issue sequestration or freeze orders under Proclamation No. 3 dated March 25, 1986 in relation to the recovery of ill-gotten wealth shall remain operative for not more than 18 months after the ratification of the Constitution. However, in the national interest, as certified by the President, the Congress may extend such period.

Sa second paragraph po, nakalagay:

A sequestration or freeze order shall be issued only upon showing of a prima facie case. The order and the list of the sequestered or frozen properties shall forthwith be registered with the proper court. For orders issued before the ratification of this Constitution, the corresponding judicial action or proceeding shall be filed within six months from its ratification.

Ito po iyong bago mag-ratification, may mandato na po na kasuhan ninyo within six months.

Now, for those issued after such ratification—meaning tuloy-tuloy po ito after the ratification of this Constitution—the judicial action or proceeding shall be commenced within six months from the issuance thereof. The sequestration or freeze order is deemed automatically lifted if no judicial action or proceeding is commenced as herein provided. What I am saying, Mr. Speaker, is that the Constitution is already complete in the procedural details on how the matter of sequestration must proceed and so, it does not have to be injected into the proposed law.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). So, hindi po ba, Mr. Speaker, puwede kayong pumosisyon na instead of i-abolish ang PCGG, para mas mapabilis iyong pag-recover po natin ng mga ill-gotten wealth, hindi po ba puwedeng palakasin na lang natin iyong PCGG instead na i-abolish ito at ilagay doon sa OSG?

REP. VELOSO. The PCGG could not be stronger than what it used to be. Noong nag-issue ng Proclamation No. 3, March 25, 1986, even before the ratification of the 1987 Constitution, nandiyan na po ang kalakasan ng PCGG and what happened? Ako, on record I will tell you, ang daming ninakaw ng mga taga PCGG na properties sa ill-gotten wealth ng mga Marcoses. Sasabihin ko lang po iyong Sto. Niño Shrine. Noong pagpasok ko sa Sto. Niño Shrine, ang daming mga mamahaling paintings, iyon po ay hundreds of millions of pesos worth. May mga guwardiya doon. Inalis lang ng PCGG ang mga guwardiya ay naglaho iyong mga paintings. Nasaan na? The PCGG, as you propose now, cannot be stronger than the PCGG that we used to have, and if the strong PCGG we used to have was made a subject of abuse, paano natin masisiguro na ito ay hindi maaabuso?

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Sa tingin ko po, hindi po solusyon iyong pag-abolish sa PCGG at baka dapat mas iyong power ng government dito para mas maprotektahan ito, dahil pinalakas nga po iyong PCGG. So, paano ba mapoproteksiyunan sana itong mga sinasabi ninyo pong mga ninakaw ng mga sinuman doon sa mga na-recover?

Dapat po iyong government natin in the past na kung talaga pong nagpapahalaga sila doon sa ating—na ito po ay para sa mga mamamayan, dapat ginawa po ng mga nakalipas na government ay pinalakas lalo iyong PCGG. So, iyong gagawin nating ito ay, sa tingin natin, nagre-reflect lang ito doon sa priority or paniniwala ng administrasyon na talagang parang wala nang kwenta sa atin na ma-recover pa iyong mga ill-gotten wealth na ito. Kaya parang token na lang na ilagay na lang sa OSG para lang masabi na mayroon pa rin. Tingin po ninyo—tama po ba iyong aking pananaw doon?

REP. VELOSO. This Representation respects the opinion of the Hon. France Castro.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay. Tungkol po doon, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, malaki din po iyong aking kalungkutan sa mga manggagawang kawani ng ating gobyerno mula po sa PCGG at saka sa OGCC na mawawalan po ng trabaho, so, na-evaluate po ba ninyo kung paano, halimbawa po, iyong ilan po ba dito na ma-absorb o iyong iba po talaga dito—talagang totally mawawala na po sila o hindi ia-absorb ng OSG ay bibigyan na lang ng retirement package, separation package or ano po?

REP. VELOSO. Mr. Speaker, nakalagay po kasi dito iyong retirement pay and separation pay. Sa private sector, tinatawag ito na golden handshake. Kinakabahan ako, if this will be taken as a precedent, sasabihin, “Bakit po itong PCGG,” I am sorry, “binigyan ng retirement pay, binigyan pa ng separation pay.” Wala po iyan sa private sector, Mr. Speaker.

Imagine, kung babasahin natin, nakalagay po dito sa Section 19 na “Affected personnel of the OGCC and the PCGG who will not be absorbed into the new staffing pattern of the OSG”—meaning, the first thrust of the OSG will be to absorb those who can be absorbed coming from PCGG and OGCC but those who will not be absorbed—“due to redundancy or failure to comply with the standard of competence and proficiency, shall be given the option to avail themselves of any of the following, whichever is more beneficial to them, if qualified: (a) Retirement gratuity provided under Republic Act No. 1616 x x x; (b) Retirement benefit provided under Republic Act No. 660 x x x; (c) Retirement, separation or unemployment benefit provided under Republic Act No. 8291 x x x.”

“In addition,”—nakalagay po dito—“to the abovementioned retirement benefits, the affected personnel who would opt to retire or be separated shall be entitled to the following applicable separation incentives:” Ito iyong sinabi ko kanina—one-half month for every year of service kung one to 10 years ang service mo; then, three-fourths of your actual monthly basic salary for every year of service if you are 11 to 20 years in service; then you have one month actual basic salary for every year of government service kung 21 to

30 years ang service mo; and then, one and one-fourth of the actual monthly basic salary for 31 years up.

So, as I said, I am almost certain that with these benefits, iyong sa tingin nila na mas kikita pa sila sa negosyo, they will opt for retirement and separation benefits. Especially, as I said, kung ikaw ay nagkaroon na ng 31 years of service at lawyer ka, naging lawyer ka at the age of 28, by that time you are already 59 and so, isang taon na lang ay 60 ka na, i-a-avail mo na lang ito kaysa magkano lang ang matatanggap mo.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). So, ito po ay magiging voluntary.

REP. VELOSO. Yes.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Napansin ko po dito sa—iyong “opt” po ay mayroon po tayong mga provisions dito about gratuity/retirement benefit, pero nakita ko na very discriminating ang panukalang-batas na ito kasi ang na-improved ninyo dito, pati mga salary grade, iyong mga position na mga pinakamatataas under the Office of the Solicitor General. So, tama po ba iyong pananaw ko na mas sa kapakanan ng mas nakatataas o iyong mga high-ranking officials ng OSG ang pinaboran dito kaysa po doon sa ating mga mas maliliit at mas mabababang posisyon na mga kawani?

REP. VELOSO. Mr. Speaker, in any organization, mayroon tayong hierarchy of positions, and the higher your position, the greater is your responsibility, kaya in terms of benefits, sila po ang binibigyan naman ng mas malalaking benefits.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Opo, kasi talagang grabe po iyong pag-i-improve ninyo doon sa salary benefits noong mga nasa mas matataas na position at the expense naman po noong mga maliliit na mga kawani under dito sa tatlong ahensiya na ito.

REP. VELOSO. Mr. Speaker, ako mismo ay abogado. Yet, kapag may mga kaso ang pamilya ko, naghahanap ako ng abogado. Hirap na hirap akong maghanap ng abogado, especially iyong abogado na, sa tingin ko, ay kayang ipagtanggol ang karapatan ng pamilya ko. I similarly would see that it is difficult for the Office of the Solicitor General to recruit lawyers na magagaling unless binigyan mo ng matataas na compensation at saka benefits. Ngayon, iba na. In fact, sa ngayon, with the pay ng mga fiscals, prosecutors, judges, municipal trial court judges na matataas na, ang hirap maghanap ng trial lawyers. Mahirap talaga kasi ang trial lawyera sa mga law offices, sila ang pinag-aagawan. Biro mo, pagtatawanan ka lang. Magkano lang sahod nito, kaya pala nasa OSG ka lang dahil mahina kang abogado. Nagiging benchmark na kasi ang sahod ng abogado in terms of kagalingan kaya dapat

lang po ay tulungan po natin ang ating mga abogado. After all, the OSG is also our lawyer.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.) Okay. So, naniniwala po ako doon sa inyo na talagang dapat bigyan ng sapat o appropriate compensation ang mga kawani, kabilang na po iyong mga abogado natin. Ang problema natin dito po ay iyong pasuweldo sa ating gobyerno—ang isa sa mga solusyon sa sinasabi po ninyong problema na mahirap po talaga na maghanap ng mga abogado at mga qualified, competent na mga abogado po.

Siguro, winding up na lang, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker. Naniniwala po ang Kinatawan na ito na hindi solusyon po iyong pagbubuwag ng PCGG at ng OGCC para po ma-strengthen iyong OSG. Ang tingin po natin dito ay lalo pang pahihinain ang pag-absorb ng dalawang ahensiya na ito na ipapaloob sa OSG dahil sa tingin natin ay iba-iba iyong function ng bawat ahensiya—iyong OSG, iyong OGCC at iyong PCGG po—at dapat ay pagtuunan ng pansin na hindi dapat i-absorb lang ito, dapat hiwalay ang mga ito at palakasin ang bawat ahensiya na ito. Doon sa magiging tanggapan, naniniwala ang Kinatawan ito na dapat mas lalo pa po natin sanang palakasin iyong pagbibigay ng incentive o pagpapaayos ng salary standardization dito sa ating mga kawani dahil nakikita natin na talagang hindi po sapat ang suweldo na tinatanggap po sa gobyerno.

So, ito lang po, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, salamat po.

REP. VELOSO. Ulitin ko po. Nire respeto ko po ang opinyon ng Kagalang-galang na France Castro.

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

REP. GARIN (R.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Rep. Sarah Jane I. Elago, Party-List KABATAAN for her interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Congresswoman Elago is recognized.

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, much of the concerns and issues of this Representation from KABATAAN were already addressed by the previous interpellators. Thus, I yield the floor to the next interpellator. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Ariel “Ka Ayik” B. Casilao.

Mr. Speaker, I move to withdraw my motion. There being no other Member who wishes to interpellate the Sponsor or speak against the measure,

I move that we terminate the period of sponsorship and debate.

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

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

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

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

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

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on House Bill No. 7376 on Second Reading.

REP. TINIO. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Congressman Tinio is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the session.

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

It was 8:55 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 8:58 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I reiterate that we vote on House Bill No. 7376 on Second Reading.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). As many as are in favor of House Bill No. 7376, please say *aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

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

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7376 ON SECOND READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The *ayes* have it; the motion is approved.

House Bill No. 7376 is approved on Second Reading.

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. MERCADO. 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 House Resolutions on First Reading, Messages from the Senate and Committee Reports, and the Deputy Speaker made the corresponding references:

RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 1791, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION CALLING ON THE APPROPRIATE HOUSE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION IN AID OF LEGISLATION REGARDING THE DISBURSEMENT OF FEES AND CHARGES COLLECTED FROM TOURISTS BY THE MUNICIPALITY OF MALAY FOR THE PURPOSE OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION OF THE BORACAY ISLAND”

By Representative Gatchalian
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1792, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS TO INVESTIGATE IN AID OF LEGISLATION AND OTHER PURPOSES, THE UNDESIRABLE, OBJECTIONABLE, AND NEFARIOUS PRACTICES OF CONTRACTORS OF GOVERNMENT PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED BY THE

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS, WHICH INCLUDE AMONG OTHERS, ABANDONMENT OF PROJECTS, NEGATIVE SLIPPAGE, USAGE OF SUBSTANDARD CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS, AND PROFFERING UNREASONABLY LOW BIDS ('BID DIVING'), BORROWING/RENTING OF LICENSE OF ONE CONTRACTOR FROM ANOTHER CONTRACTOR, TO COMPEL THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS TO IMMEDIATELY PROMULGATE ADDITIONAL PRE-QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS TO AVOID, ARREST, AND CURB THE ABOVE-MENTIONED IMPROPRIETIES AND MALPRACTICES TO THE PREJUDICE, DISADVANTAGE, AND DETRIMENT OF GOVERNMENT PROJECTS"

By Representatives Castro (F.H.) and Garcia (G.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

MESSAGES FROM THE SENATE

Message dated March 14, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that on March 13, 2018, the Senate designated Senators Richard J. Gordon, Juan Miguel F. Zubiri and Paolo Benigno "Bam" Aquino IV as conferees to the Bicameral Conference Committee on the conflicting provisions of Senate Bill No. 108, entitled:

"AN ACT DECLARING APRIL 27 OF EVERY YEAR AS A SPECIAL WORKING PUBLIC HOLIDAY THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY TO COMMEMORATE THE VICTORY OF LAPU-LAPU AND HIS MEN OVER THE SPANIARDS LED BY FERDINAND MAGELLAN IN THE HISTORIC BATTLE OF MACTAN ON APRIL 27, 1521, TO BE KNOWN AS LAPU-LAPU DAY OR ADLAW NI LAPU-LAPU"

and House Bill No. 6782, entitled;

"AN DECLARING APRIL 27 OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL NONWORKING HOLIDAY IN THE CITY OF LAPU-LAPU, PROVINCE OF CEBU, IN HONOR OF THE HEROISM OF LAPU-LAPU IN DEFENDING MACTAN AGAINST FOREIGN AGGRESSION DEPICTED ESPECIALLY IN THE HISTORIC BATTLE OF MACTAN WHEN HE LED FILIPINOS IN FIGHTING FERDINAND MAGELLAN AND HIS FORCES"

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Message dated March 19, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that the Senate on even date passed with amendments House Bill No. 5160, entitled:

"AN ACT CONVERTING THE MUNICIPALITY OF STO. TOMAS IN THE PROVINCE OF BATANGAS INTO A COMPONENT CITY TO BE KNOWN AS THE CITY OF STO. TOMAS"

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report by the Committee on Natural Resources (Committee Report No. 676), re H.B. No. 7432, entitled:

"AN ACT DECLARING AS AGRICULTURAL LAND CERTAIN PARCELS OF LAND OF THE PUBLIC DOMAIN SITUATED WITHIN THE CITY OF SURIGAO, PROVINCE OF SURIGAO DEL NORTE"

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 6320

Sponsors: Representatives Ty and Barbers
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Natural Resources (Committee Report No. 677), re H.B. No. 7433, entitled:

"AN ACT DECLARING AS AGRICULTURAL LAND PORTIONS OF FORESTLAND LOCATED IN BARANGAY MANOC-MANOC, MUNICIPALITY OF MALAY, PROVINCE OF AKLAN, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE PROCLAMATION NO. 1064, ENTITLED 'CLASSIFYING BORACAY ISLAND SITUATED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF MALAY, PROVINCE OF AKLAN INTO FORESTLAND (PROTECTION PURPOSES) AND INTO AGRICULTURAL LAND (ALIENABLE AND DISPOSABLE) PURSUANT TO PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 705 (REVISED FORESTRY REFORM CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES)' "

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 6491

Sponsors: Representatives Ty, Marquez and Aggabao
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Natural Resources (Committee Report No. 678), re H.B. No. 7435, entitled:

"AN ACT RECLASSIFYING CERTAIN PUBLIC LANDS WITHIN THE STRIP OF LAND FIVE (5) KILOMETERS FROM EITHER SIDE OF THE ASPIRAS HIGHWAY, FORMERLY KNOWN AS MARCOS HIGHWAY, FROM AGOO, PROVINCE OF LA UNION

TO TUBA, PROVINCE OF BENGUET COVERED BY PROCLAMATION NO. 1754 AS ALIENABLE AND DISPOSABLE LANDS”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 678

Sponsors: Representatives Ty and Eriguel
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Government Reorganization, the Committee on Public Works and Highways and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 679), re H.B. No. 7436, entitled:

“AN ACT ABOLISHING THE ROAD BOARD AND PROVIDING FOR THE DISTRIBUTION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE MOTOR VEHICLE USER’S CHARGE COLLECTIONS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8794”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bills Numbered 6236, 3278, 3855, 4466, 5683 and 2394

Sponsors: Representatives Romualdo, Lobregat and Nograles (K.A.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

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

RATIFICATION OF CONF. CTTEE. RPT.
ON H.B. NO. 5269 AND S.B. NO. 1279

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, we are in receipt of the bicameral Conference Committee Report reconciling the disagreeing provisions of House Bill No. 5269 and Senate Bill No. 1279 on institutionalizing the National School Feeding Program for Public Kindergarten and Elementary Pupils.

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 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. 5269, entitled: AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE NATIONAL SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAM FOR PUBLIC KINDERGARTEN AND ELEMENTARY PUPILS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR; and Senate Bill No. 1279, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL FEEDING PROGRAM TO COMBAT HUNDERNUTRITION AMONG FILIPINO CHILDREN, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

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

The bicameral Conference Committee Report is approved.

DESIGNATION OF REP. ESCUDERO TO THE
CONF. CTTEE. ON H.B. NO. 5745
AND S.B. NO. 1233

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move for the designation of the honorable Rep. Evelina G. Escudero as additional member of the bicameral Conference Committee on the disagreeing provisions of House Bill No. 5745 and Senate Bill No. 1233 on the Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Trust Fund Act. 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. Escudero is so designated.

CHANGE OF REFERRAL

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move for the change of referral of the following measure: House Bill No. 6090, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING AND CONSTRUCTING A HOSPITAL FOR THE PHILIPPINE COAST GUARD, ITS PERSONNEL AND DEPENDENTS TO BE KNOWN AS THE PHILIPPINE COAST GUARD GENERAL HOSPITAL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, from the Committee on Health to the Committee on Transportation.

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

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

RECOMMITMENT OF H.B. NO. 2050 TO THE CTTEE. ON NATURAL RESOURCES

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, as requested by the Committee on Natural Resources, through its Chairperson, the honorable Rep. Arnel U. Ty, I move that we recommit House Bill No. 2050, under Committee Report No. 297, to the Committee on Natural Resources. I so move.

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

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we include additional coauthors of House Bills No. 3177, 5236, 6429, 6769, 7355, 7387, 7388, 7392, 7422, and House Resolution No. 1757 as contained in the lists to be submitted by the Committee on Rules.

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

CONSIDERATION OF H.CT. RES. NO. 16

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Concurrent Resolution No. 16, as reported out by the Committee on Rules.

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

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

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

It was 9:04 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 9:04 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The session is resumed. The Secretary General is hereby directed to read only the title of House Concurrent Resolution No. 16.

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Concurrent Resolution No. 16, entitled: CONCURRENT RESOLUTION AMENDING THE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT, ENTITLED "AN ACT PROMOTING EASE OF DOING BUSINESS AND EFFICIENT DELIVERY OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9485, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS 'THE ANTI-RED TAPE ACT OF 2007,' AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES."

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

ADOPTION OF H.CT.RES. NO. 16

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we adopt House Concurrent Resolution No. 16.

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

House Concurrent Resolution No. 16 is adopted.

CONSIDERATION OF H. RES. NO. 1764

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Resolution No. 1764, as reported out by the Committee on Rules.

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

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 directed to read only the title of the measure.

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

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

* See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)

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

ADOPTION OF H. RES. NO. 1764

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we adopt House Resolution No. 1764.

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

House Resolution No. 1764 is adopted.

CONSIDERATION OF H. RES. NO. 1766

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Resolution No. 1766, as reported out by the Committee on Rules.

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

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 title of the measure.

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Resolution No. 1766, entitled: RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FAMILY OF THE LATE ANTHONY P. DEQUIÑA, FORMER REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FIRST DISTRICT OF COTABATO DURING THE NINTH, TENTH AND ELEVENTH CONGRESSES.

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

ADOPTION OF H. RES. NO. 1766

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we adopt House Resolution No. 1766.

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

House Resolution No. 1766 is adopted.

CONSIDERATION OF H. RES. NO. 1779

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Resolution No. 1779, as reported out by the Committee on Rules.

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

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 title of the measure.

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Resolution No. 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.

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

ADOPTION OF H. RES. NO. 1779

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we adopt House Resolution No. 1799.

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

House Resolution No. 1779 is adopted.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

REP. MERCADO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve Journal No. 76, dated March 19, 2018. I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

* See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7233
ON SECOND READING

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 7233, contained in Committee Report No. 621, as reported out by the Committee on Information and Communications Technology.

May I ask 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 directed to read only the title of the measure.

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7233, entitled: AN ACT REQUIRING THE REGISTRATION OF ALL USERS OF SUBSCRIBER IDENTITY MODULE CARDS.

REP. YAP(V). Thank you, Mr. Speaker, good evening.

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, I move for the recognition of our esteemed Sponsor, the Gentleman from the Second District of Tarlac, the Hon. Victor A. Yap. 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 Hon. Victor Yap of Tarlac is recognized.

REP. YAP (V). Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the interest of time, may I move that my sponsorship speech be considered read into the Record, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, we second the motion of the honorable Sponsor that his sponsorship speech be considered read into the Record. 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.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION
OF H.B. NO. 7233

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 7233. 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 consideration of House Bill No. 7233 is hereby suspended.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7321
ON SECOND READING

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 7321, contained in Committee Report No. 644, as reported out by the Committee on Information and Communications Technology.

May I ask 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 directed to read only the title of the measure.

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7321, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE “NO CALL AND NO TEXT REGISTRATION” SYSTEM, PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF.

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

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, for his sponsorship of

* See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)

said measure, I move that we recognize the esteemed Gentleman from the Second District of Tarlac, the Hon. Victor A. Yap. I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Hon. Victor Yap is hereby recognized.

REP. YAP (V.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Likewise, in the interest of time, may I move that my sponsorship speech be read into the Record, 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.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7321

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 7321. 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. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, I move that

measures approved on Third Reading be immediately transmitted to the Senate. 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. BONDOC. Likewise, Mr. Speaker, I move that House Concurrent Resolution No. 16 previously adopted be immediately transmitted to the Senate. 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.

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn the session until four o'clock in the afternoon of Wednesday, March 21, 2018. I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the session is adjourned until Wednesday, March 21, 2018, at four o'clock in the afternoon.

It was 9:11 p.m.