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No. 85

CALL TO ORDER

At 4:00 p.m., Deputy Speaker Raneó “Ranie” E. Abu called the session to order.

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

NATIONAL ANTHEM

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Please rise for the singing of the National Anthem.

Everybody rose to sing the Philippine National Anthem.

PRAYER

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

Everybody remained standing for the silent prayer.

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

ROLL CALL

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). 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. 85, dated May 29, 2018.**

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. The roll call shows that 230 Members responded to the call.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). With 230 Members present, the Chair declares the presence of a quorum.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). What is the pleasure of the Gentleman from BUHAY Party-List?

REP. ATIENZA. Before we proceed, we just would like to put on record that there are only 213 Members present on the floor. Unless the Secretariat can prove that their excess numbers are of Members who are attending a Committee meeting, of which we do not know any, then we will accept their number; otherwise, there are only 2-1-3 Members on the floor.

Thank you.

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

APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move for the approval of Journal No. 84, dated May 28, 2018.

I so move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; Journal No. 84, dated May 28, 2018, is approved.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

* See ANNEX AK (printed separately)

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

The Secretary General will please read the Reference of Business.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

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

BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 7751, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE ORIENTAL MINDORO PROVINCIAL HOSPITAL IN CALAPAN CITY, ORIENTAL MINDORO TO REGIONAL HOSPITAL TO BE KNOWN AS ORIENTAL MINDORO REGIONAL HOSPITAL AND TO INCREASE THE BED CAPACITY TO THREE HUNDRED (300) BEDS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Umali
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 7755, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING SECTION 343 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7160, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991”

By Representatives Lopez (M.L.) and Lopez (C.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 7756, entitled:

“AN ACT RENEWING THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO CACERES BROADCASTING CORPORATION UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8106, ENTITLED ‘AN ACT GRANTING CACERES BROADCASTING CORPORATION A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCASTING STATIONS IN THE ISLAND OF LUZON AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES’, FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS FROM THE EFFECTIVITY OF THIS ACT”

By Representative Villafuerte
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE FRANCHISES

House Bill No. 7757, entitled:

“AN ACT STRENGTHENING VALUES

FORMATION AMONG CHILDREN BY INCLUDING IT IN THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY CURRICULA AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Castelo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 7758, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A MANDATORY FEEDING PROGRAM FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN, ALLOCATING 3% OF THE INTERNAL REVENUE ALLOTMENT (IRA) FOR EVERY CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Romero
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 7759, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A SYSTEM OF REDISTRIBUTING AND RECYCLING FOOD WASTE TO PROMOTE FOOD SECURITY”

By Representative Sy-Alvarado
TO THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FOOD SECURITY

House Bill No. 7760, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE MARINE CORPS, DEFINING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Sy-Alvarado
TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY

RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 1895, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES EXPRESSING WARMEST FELICITATIONS AND CONGRATULATIONS TO THE IGLESIA NI CRISTO ON ITS 104TH FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION”

By Representative Olivarez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1896, entitled:

“RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES (AFP) NORTHERN LUZON COMMAND (NOLCOM), TROOPS FROM BRP TARLAC

(LD601)ANDBRPDAVAODELSUR(LD602),
DIVERS, SCIENTISTS, AND EVENT
PARTICIPANTS FOR THE SUCCESSFUL
PHILIPPINE RISE EXPEDITION OF MAY
15-17, 2018”

By Representatives Sarmiento (C.), Nograles (J.J.),
Bataoil and Biazon
TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE
AND SECURITY

House Resolution No. 1897, entitled:

“RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE
STRONG CONDEMNATION OF CHINA
BOMBER LANDING IN THE SOUTH
CHINA SEA AND INTENSIFIED
MILITARY ENCROACHMENT IN
THE WEST PHILIPPINE SEA AND
THE RESOLUTE COMMITMENT TO
UPHOLD TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND
SOVEREIGNTY”

By Representatives Elago, Zarate, Tinio, Brosas,
Castro (F.L.) and Casilao
TO THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN
AFFAIRS

House Resolution No. 1898, entitled:

“RESOLUTION CONDEMNING IN THE
STRONGEST POSSIBLE TERMS
THE DEADLY ATTACK ON FORMER
CONGRESSMAN EUFRANIO ERIGUEL,
M.D., TO EXTEND ITS DEEPEST
CONDOLENCES AND SYMPATHIES
TO HIS FAMILY AND TO EXPRESS
SUPPORT TO HON. SANDRA YOUNG
ERIGUEL, M.D., IN HER EFFORTS TO
URGE THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL
POLICE (PNP) AND THE NATIONAL
BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (NBI) TO
CONDUCT A SPEEDY AND IMPARTIAL
INVESTIGATION IN SEEKING JUSTICE
FOR THIS HEINOUS INCIDENT”

By Representatives Savellano, Ortega (P.), De
Venecia, Vargas-Alfonso, Singson, Nolasco,
Espino, Cua, Go (M.), Cosalan, Ting, Mangaoang,
Bernos, Ortega (V.N.), Aggabao, Bulut-Begtang,
Dy, Bataoil, Cuaresma, Arenas and Baguilat
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1899, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE
ON ENERGY TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY,
IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE
UNNECESSARY AND UNJUST ANNUAL
UPDATE OF BILL DEPOSIT PROGRAM
OF THE MANILA ELECTRIC COMPANY
(MERALCO)”

By Representatives Brosas, Zarate, Tinio, Castro
(F.L.), Casilao and Elago
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1900, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE
APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE TO
CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF
LEGISLATION, ON THE PROPRIETY OF
THE CONSTRUCTION OF A PARKING
FACILITY WITHIN THE BURNHAM PARK
RESERVATION”

By Representatives Fariñas and Gomez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1901, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE NATIONAL
TOBACCO ADMINISTRATION (NTA),
THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
(DA) AND THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC
AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
(NEDA) TO CREATE AN INTER-AGENCY
COUNCIL TO FORMULATE POLICIES,
PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS THAT WILL
SERVE AS SAFETY NETS FOR THE
TOBACCO INDUSTRY FARMERS AND
STAKEHOLDERS TO MITIGATE THE
IMPACT OF THE INCREASES IN EXCISE
TAXES ON TOBACCO PRODUCTS”

By Representative Savellano
TO THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
AND FOOD

House Resolution No. 1902, entitled:

“RESOLUTION CONVEYING THE
COLLECTIVE RESERVATIONS OF
THE NORTHERN LUZON ALLIANCE
BLOC ON BILLS AND RESOLUTION
SEEKING AMENDMENTS TO THE
TOBACCO REGULATION ACT OF 2003
AND EXPRESSING ITS POSITION(S) ON
PARTICULAR PROPOSED AMENDMENTS
THERE TO”

By Representative Savellano
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND
THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND
INDUSTRY

House Resolution No. 1903, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE
ON WAYS AND MEANS TO CONDUCT AN
INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION,
INTO REPORTED CASES OF RAMPANT
SMUGGLING OF CIGARETTES AND OIL
PRODUCTS AND TO RECOMMEND TO
THE BUREAU OF CUSTOMS (BOC) AND

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE (BIR), THE NECESSARY ACTIONS AND POLICIES TO STOP AND PREVENT THE SMUGGLING ACTIVITIES”

By Representative Savellano
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1904, entitled:

“RESOLUTION CALLING ON FACEBOOK, INC. TO ANSWER QUESTIONS REGARDING PROLIFERATION OF FAKE NEWS IN THE SOCIAL MEDIA SITE”

By Representatives Batocabe, Garbin and Co
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INFORMATION

House Resolution No. 1905, entitled:

“RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING GENERAL MANAGER EDDIE V. MONREAL AND THE OFFICERS AND STAFF OF THE MANILA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY FOR TRANSFORMING THE NINOY AQUINO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT FROM ONE OF THE WORLD’S WORST AIRPORTS INTO THE 10TH WORLD’S MOST IMPROVED AIRPORT”

By Representative Batocabe
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Resolution No. 1906, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION URGING THE NATIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY (NHA) TO DEVELOP MECHANISMS ON THE TRANSFER OF RIGHTS FOR THE HOUSING UNITS UNLAWFULLY DISPOSED BY ORIGINAL BENEFICIARIES TO QUALIFIED BENEFICIARIES”

By Representative Benitez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

House Resolution No. 1907, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE CONDUCT OF A STRATEGIC REVIEW OF THE OPERATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND THE FORMULATION OF A RIGHTSIZING PLAN WITH AN ACCOMPANYING EARLY RETIREMENT INCENTIVE BENEFIT FOR AFFECTED PERSONNEL, AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A ONE-TIME SEPARATE EARLY RETIREMENT

INCENTIVE BENEFIT FOR QUALIFIED PERSONNEL”

By Representatives Benitez, Rodriguez (I.) and Flores
TO THE COMMITTEE ON ACCOUNTS

COMMUNICATIONS

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

1. Consolidated Senate Bill No. 1311 and House Bill No. 6579, 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”;

2. House Bill No. 4660, entitled:

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

3. Consolidated House Bill No. 7007 and Senate Bill No. 1617, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE DAVAO ORIENTAL STATE COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE CITY OF MATI AND ALL ITS SATELLITE CAMPUSES LOCATED IN THE PROVINCE OF DAVAO ORIENTAL INTO A STATE UNIVERSITY TO BE KNOWN AS THE DAVAO ORIENTAL STATE UNIVERSITY, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”;

4. Consolidated Senate Bill No. 1279 and House Bill No. 5269, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING A NATIONAL FEEDING PROGRAM FOR UNDERNOURISHED CHILDREN IN PUBLIC DAYCARE, KINDERGARTEN AND ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS TO COMBAT HUNGER AND UNDERNUTRITION AMONG FILIPINO CHILDREN AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”;

5. Consolidated Senate Bill No. 1354 and House Bill No. 6452, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH POLICY FOR THE

PURPOSE OF ENHANCING THE DELIVERY OF INTEGRATED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES, PROMOTING AND PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS UTILIZING PSYCHIATRIC, NEUROLOGIC AND PSYCHOSOCIAL HEALTH SERVICES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”]; and

6. Consolidated Senate Bill No. 1533 and House Bill No. 5792, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE BALIK SCIENTIST PROGRAM, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report on Fund Utilization and Status of Program/Project Implementation for the Quarter ended March 31, 2018 of the Assistance to Disadvantaged Municipalities under the Local Government Support Fund of the Municipality of Liloan, Province of Cebu, attested by Ma. Esperanza Christina C. Frasco, Municipal Mayor.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated 16 April 2018 of Jesus Emmanuel P. Vargas, Municipal Mayor, Municipality of Abulug, Province of Cagayan, submitting to the House of Representatives the Report on Fund Utilization and Status of Program/Project Implementation for the Quarter ended September 30, 2017 of the Assistance to Disadvantaged Municipalities under the Local Government Support Fund of the said municipality.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated April 23, 2018 of Dino Carlo R. Chua, Municipal Mayor, Municipality of Noveleta, Province of Cavite, submitting to the House of Representatives the Report on Fund Utilization and Status of Program/Project Implementation for the Quarter ended March 31, 2018 of the Assistance to Disadvantaged Municipalities under the Local Government Support Fund of said municipality.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated April 23, 2018 of Nunila Mendez Pinat, Municipal Mayor, Municipality of San Miguel, Province of Bohol, submitting to the House of Representatives the Report on Fund Utilization and Status of Program/Project Implementation for the Quarter ended March 2018 of the Assistance to Disadvantaged Municipalities under the Local Government Support Fund of said municipality.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Transmittal letter dated April 24, 2018 of Ronald Lowell G. Tirol, Municipal Mayor, Municipality of Buenavista, Province of Bohol, submitting to the House of Representatives the Report on Fund Utilization and Status of Program/Project Implementation for the Quarter ended March 31, 2018 of the Assistance to Disadvantaged Municipalities under the Local Government Support Fund of said municipality.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated April 26, 2018 of Jesselita L. Armecein, MSWDO and Alvin Giovanni A. Labis, Municipal Mayor, Municipality of Alubijid, Province of Misamis Oriental, submitting to the House of Representatives a copy of Reports of Receipts and Disbursements as of March 31, 2018 of said municipality.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated April 27, 2018 of Bonifacio C. Lacwasan, Jr., Provincial Governor, Mountain Province, submitting to the House of Representatives their Quarterly Physical Report of Operations for the Quarter ending March 31, 2018 of the Conditional Matching Grant to Provinces.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter of Jennie Rosalie T. Uy, Municipal Mayor, Municipality of Villanueva, Province of Misamis Oriental, submitting to the House of Representatives the Statement of Receipts and Disbursements for the period February 1 to March 31, 2018 of the Assistance to Individuals in Crises Situation of the said municipality.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letters dated 18 May 2018 of Roger E. Dino, Deputy Director, Office of the General Counsel and Legal Services, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), furnishing the House of Representatives with duly certified and authenticated BSP issuances, to wit:

1. Circular No. 1002 dated 10 May 2018; and
2. Memorandum No. M-2018-017 dated 10 May 2018.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

Letter dated 18 May 2018 of Roger E. Dino, Deputy Director, Office of the General Counsel and Legal Services, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, furnishing the House of Representatives with a duly certified and authenticated copy of Circular No. 1003 dated 16 May 2018.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

COMMITTEE REPORT

Report by the Committee on Basic Education and Culture (Committee Report No. 767), re H.R. No. 1908, entitled:

“RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER OF EVERY YEAR AS PHILIPPINE BAMBOO MONTH”

recommending its adoption in substitution of House Resolution No. 232

Sponsors: Representatives Durano, Savellano and Atienza

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

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

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, we would like to acknowledge the presence of some guests in the gallery. In the gallery are the guests of the honorable Deputy Speaker Ranie Abu. They are barangay officials from the municipalities of Bauan and San Pascual headed by ABC President Constancio Diomampo and Barangay Captain Medel Medrano.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). To the guests of Deputy Speaker Ranie Abu, welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

REP. GULLAS. Likewise, Mr. Speaker, may we acknowledge the presence of the guests of the Hon. Jose Enrique “Joet” S. Garcia III. They are department heads of the City of Balanga, Province of Bataan: Rodolfo Mesa, Nerissa Mateo, Engineer Marilen Alonzo, Joer De Mesa, Nelia Castor, Engineer Mariano, Abdul Khayr Alonto, Joselito Evangelista, Engr. Miguel Sanchez, Myrna Roman, Lilibeth Calata, Mariano Banzon, Cristina Apostol, Noriel Dacion, Marilyn Cruz, Atty. Atcheco, Celito Tuazon, Gloria Abejar, Lolita Del Rosario, Abigail Tan and Dr. Billy Samson.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The guests of Representative Garcia from Bataan, please rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

REP. GULLAS. Likewise, Mr. Speaker, may we acknowledge the presence of the guests of the Hon. Jose Christopher Y. Belmonte of the Sixth District of Quezon City. They are Kap. Rex Ambita, Kap. Lamberto Pascual, Kap. Alfredo Roxas, Kagawad Alex Rivera and Kagawad Jim Mahusay.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The guests of Rep. Jose Belmonte, please rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7544
ON SECOND READING

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 7544, contained in Committee Report No. 727, as reported out by the Committee on Revision of Laws.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). 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. 7544, entitled: AN ACT DECLARING THE LAST MONDAY OF JANUARY OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL WORKING HOLIDAY IN OBSERVANCE OF “NATIONAL BIBLE DAY”.

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

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

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Sponsor, the Hon. Marlyn L. Primicias-Agabas of the Sixth District of Pangasinan.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Representative Primicias-Agabas is recognized to sponsor House Bill No. 7544.

* See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Explanatory Note of the Bill be considered as the sponsorship speech on the measure.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on House Bill No. 7544 on Second Reading.

I so move, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). As many as are in favor of House Bill No. 7544, please say *aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

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

FEW MEMBERS. *No*.

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7544 ON SECOND READING

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

House Bill No. 7544 is approved on Second Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

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

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7449

Continuation

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 7449 under Committee Report No. 753 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the Bill.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). 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. 7449 under Committee Report No. 753 for consideration on Second Reading.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7449, entitled: AN ACT APPROPRIATING THE SUM OF ONE BILLION ONE HUNDRED SIXTY ONE MILLION SEVEN HUNDRED TEN THOUSAND PESOS (P1,161,710,000) AS SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR FY 2018 AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

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

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary status of the Bill is that it is in the period of sponsorship and debate. I move that we recognize the Sponsor, the honorable Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, the Hon. Karlo Alexei B. Nograles.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The Hon. Karlo Nograles is recognized to continue the Unfinished Business, to sponsor House Bill No. 7449.

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

I so move, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The Representative from the First District of Albay, the Hon. Edcel Lagman, is recognized to interpellate the Sponsor of House Bill No. 7449.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). We are ready to sponsor the Bill, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The Gentleman from Albay is ready to proceed on his interpellation.

REP. LAGMAN. Mr. Speaker, when we adjourned the session last night, this Representation was asking the distinguished Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations whether or not there is a certification from the National Treasurer on the availability of funds to support this supplemental appropriation. As of last night, there was none but most probably, there is already one today.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes, Mr. Speaker. I have with me the Certification from the Treasurer of the Philippines that the amount of P1,161,710,000 representing the remittance of the Department of Health, Office of the Secretary, to the Bureau of Treasury is actually available in the National Treasury to fund the Supplemental Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2018, House Bill No. 7449, in accordance with Section 25, paragraph 4, Article VI of the 1987 Constitution and this was signed by the Treasurer of the Philippines, Rosalia V. De Leon, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. And the good Chairman is in possession of the original certification?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes, Mr. Speaker, it is in our hands.

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you for that compliance with the constitutional requirement.

Now, let me proceed to some clarificatory questions. Out of the 891 Dengvaxia vaccinees, how many are projected to become afflicted with dengue shock syndrome or vaccine failure within the next five years from April 2016?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). There is really no exact number, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the nearest estimate, based on the WHO study, is that we could probably say, more or less, around five percent of the total number of Dengvaxia vaccinees. We have to also understand that the same WHO report said that the risk of acquiring severe dengue complications will be present in the Dengvaxia vaccinee for a period of five years, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. If the projection, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Chairman, is five percent of 891,000, then how would that translate into the actual number to be afflicted?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Well ...

REP. LAGMAN. That is five percent of 891,000.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). So, 891,000 multiplied by five percent is 44,550, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, definitely, this is a miniscule number of the 891,000 vaccinees. Then, if this is so, why are we allocating P945,828,000 as medical assistance to Dengvaxia vaccinees who may become patients?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Well, Mr. Speaker, it has been the decision of both the Department of Health and the Committee on Appropriations, and I hope it will also become the decision of this august Body, the Congress of the Philippines, to agree with the policy that for all 891,000 vaccinees more or less, kung mayroon man sa kanila ang magkasakit, mangailangan ng laboratory exams, mangailangan ng mga gamot for whatever illness that may afflict them, then the government should be able to help them by paying for their hospital expenses, laboratory expenses, and the medicines that they will be procuring.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, it has been made clear during the hearings that whether or not we can find a medical correlation or connection between the sickness or illness of these children to the Dengvaxia vaccine, it does not matter anymore. We have a responsibility to them, to take care of their health. In the minds of these parents, ang alam lang nila ay naturukan ang kanilang anak. Kung nagkasakit man ang kanilang anak, madali nilang sabihin na ito ay dulot ng Dengvaxia vaccine kaya importante, Mr. Speaker, na nandoon ang gobyerno para alagaan sila at tugunan ang kanilang mga pangangailangang medikal.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, if we divide P945.8 million by 44,500, how much would that translate into cost per patient?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Around P21,254, Mr. Speaker. So, alam naman natin na kung magkasakit ang isang Dengvaxia vaccinee, iyong bata, ay agaran naman nating ipapasok sa Point of Service Program ng PhilHealth at bibigyan natin ng tulong mula sa PhilHealth. Ngayon, may mga limitasyon po ang PhilHealth. Number one, usually nagkakaroon ng pagbawas doon sa billing because of the coverage of the PhilHealth but malimit po na nagkakaroon ng excess. In other words, hindi ito nagsi-zero balance billing for whatever reasons at diyan papasok itong support ng government. Pangalawang limitasyon ng PhilHealth is that, paano kung sunod-sunod ang confinement sa ospital? Maaaring na-cover siya sa first confinement pero dahil masyadong malapit iyong second confinement, baka hindi na magki-kick-in iyong PhilHealth benefits kaya, again, dapat nandoon po iyong gobyerno para tugunan ang mga pangangailangang medikal ng pasyenteng ito. Hindi pa po kasama diyan ang laboratory, hindi pa po kasama diyan ang mga medisina. So, I think the amount of P21,254 per patient would be, you know, we all hope, is enough, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. It is safe to assume, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, that the medical assistance shall be limited to patients, whether hospitalized or outpatient.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes.

REP. LAGMAN. Is that correct?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes, Mr. Speaker, that is correct, hospitalized or outpatient.

REP. LAGMAN. When we say “patient,” it means one who has a medical condition ...

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

REP. LAGMAN. ... who needs professional intervention due to possible ill effects of Dengvaxia inoculation, is that correct?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). That is correct, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Of the 891,000 vaccinees, how many, as of today, have been hospitalized due to the adverse effects of the immunization?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). It is 4,952, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. How many have been released as cured?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). According to the Department of Health, 98 percent naman ang gumaling out of the 4,000 plus patients.

REP. LAGMAN. What happened to the balance, are they still confined?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, we already have 77 deaths. Seventy-seven na po sa mga naturukan ng Dengvaxia ay pumanaw na, namatay na, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. How many were outpatients?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). We will be glad to provide the Gentleman with the figures later, Mr. Speaker. We will have to retrieve the data on outpatients.

REP. LAGMAN. The distinguished Sponsor said, Mr. Speaker, that 77 deaths have been recorded among the vaccinees.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). That is correct, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. May we know whose figure is this?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Sorry, I stand corrected, it is 88 deaths out of 4,952 Dengvaxia patients. Region III reported the most number of deaths at 36, followed by Region IV-A at 32, NCR with 14, and Region VII with six deaths. These numbers were reported to us by the Department of Health Surveillance Office.

REP. LAGMAN. So, these are figures coming from the Department of Health. Is that correct?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). That is correct, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Can we have a copy of such documentation?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes, Mr. Speaker, we will gladly provide the Gentleman the data.

REP. LAGMAN. Is it now available?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). I will have it passed to the Gentleman, Mr. Speaker.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. LAGMAN. May I have a short recess, Mr. Speaker, so that I can peruse this report.

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

It was 4:39 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:41 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize, again, the Hon. Edcel C. Lagman for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Rep. Edcel C. Lagman is recognized to continue his interpellation.

REP. LAGMAN. In this profile of deaths which says 88 deaths, two percent out of 4,952 Dengvaxia reported cases, there is no categorical statement that all of the deaths were related to the Dengvaxia inoculation of the vaccines, but we could assume from this report that only 13 percent was due to dengue and 87 percent was for other health conditions. In other words, these are not related or had no nexus with Dengvaxia inoculation like, for example, heart disease, pneumonia, CLS infection, asthma and even leukemia.

I am pointing out this matter, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, because last night, I was alarmed when I heard the distinguished Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations assert and up to today he also asserted, that the covered patients may have ailments which do not have any causal nexus to the Dengvaxia immunization. Did I hear the distinguished Sponsor correctly?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Let me put it this way, Mr. Speaker. We are not in a position to say whether or not they are related. Studies are still going on in the WHO, the Department of Health; and even the President himself is already forming a special committee made up of experts to discover and find out whether or not there is a causal relation between the deaths and the sicknesses or illnesses of these victims. On the other hand, in the minds of the parents, they would obviously, naturally blame the Dengvaxia vaccine for the health conditions of their children. You could hear parents crying and saying that “malusog pa iyong mga anak namin before naturukan ng Dengvaxia. Pagkatapos naturukan ng Dengvaxia, bumagsak iyong health condition ng aming anak, nagkaroon ng komplikasyon at iba pa.” While we are arguing and waiting for results from the medical

experts, the researchers, and the scientists to determine whether or not there is a causal effect, it is incumbent upon the government to take care of these victims or these vaccinees whenever they need help, particularly medical assistance.

Ang magiging polisiya po ng gobyerno nating ito at kung maaprubahan po ang supplemental budget na ito, ay ganoon na nga. Kung magkasakit sila, tutulungan natin, bibigyan natin ng pang-medical, pang-laboratory at pang-gamot nila, at saka na lang natin isipin whether or not may causal relation. Anyway, karamihan naman po sa kanila ay mga pamilyang nangangailangan din naman ng tulong ng ating gobyerno.

REP. LAGMAN. That posture, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, appears to be flawed because we are appropriating more than a billion pesos for Dengvaxia vaccinees but we are saying that a subsequent ailment of a vaccinee need not be related to the Dengvaxia inoculation. Why is this so?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Ganito na lang, Mr. Speaker. Mayroon naman tayong Medical Assistance Program ng ating gobyerno. Sa Medical Assistance Program ng gobyerno, tinutugunan po natin ang mga pangangailangang medikal ng mga mahihirap na pamilya. Itong paglalaan natin ng pondo from the supplemental budget, dahil galing nga po ito sa refund ng Sanofi dulot nitong pagkakaroon ng issue sa Dengvaxia, sa palagay ko po ay tama rin naman na dahil ito ay mula sa Sanofi para sa refund ng mga hindi natin nagamit na Dengvaxia vaccine vials. Dapat lang naman po na ang maging ultimate beneficiary ng perang ito na isinauli ng Sanofi ay ang mga naturukan ng Dengvaxia vaccine.

REP. LAGMAN. Tama ho iyan kung iyong subsequent ailment ay may relasyon doon sa inoculation. Kung wala naman, bakit hindi na lang ito i-absorb ng regular program ng DOH sa Medical Assistance Program at huwag na gamitin iyong pondo na ito na refund for the unused vials? In other words, this can be used for the purchase of other immunization packages because there is a program of the government with respect to ailments like heart condition, pneumonia, asthma, leukemia, et cetera. Mukhang hindi tama ang ating ginagawa. It is not consistent with the medical policies.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Mr. Speaker, noong 2018 budget, at gagawin natin ulit sa 2019 budget, pinaglaanan naman natin ng pondo iyong mga medical programs ng Department of Health para sa mga ibang pangangailangan tulad ng nabanggit nga po ng ating kagalang-galang na kasamahan dito sa Kongreso, ng

Representative ng Albay. Ito naman po ay nakatutok doon sa mga Dengvaxia victims.

Sa palagay ko naman po, katulad po ng karamihan or siguro ng lahat ng mga kasamahan ko dito sa Kongreso, hindi po natin kayang tingnan ang mga nabiktima ng Dengvaxia at talikuran ang kanilang pangangailangan, lalung-lalo na kung sila po talaga ay humihingi ng tulong mula sa gobyerno. Hindi naman natin kayang talikuran at sabihin sa kanila na ang perang ito ay hindi natin ilalaan para sa kanilang mga pangangailangan at ilalaan natin sa mga ibang pangangailangan na napondohan naman po ng 2018 budget at kaya naman nating pondohan sa 2019 budget, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. If the subsequent ailment of a vaccinee has a causal nexus to the inoculation, then, so be it, let a fund be allocated for that purpose. But if the ailment is not related at all to the vaccination like a heart condition, pneumonia, asthma, leukemia, then, this should be absorbed by the Department of Health under its regular appropriation for medical assistance. I would like to underscore why I think the policy is rather flawed. If we go to the statistics, we consider the 88 deaths, only 13 percent was causal-related and 87 percent are not, and that 87 percent should not be covered by the medical assistance under the supplemental budget.

It appears that we are overacting, just like the over-sensationalized Dengvaxia controversy where the adverse effect was that parents now refuse to have their children vaccinated or even be given immunization for deworming. We should not exacerbate that situation by this undue funding. If we go to the data provided by the Philippine General Hospital, a 10-expert panel which initially investigated 14 deaths, their study showed that only three of the 14 died due to dengue shock syndrome and two of them possibly from vaccine failure. The others died from illnesses unrelated to dengue; so, we should not cover illnesses unrelated to dengue. For example, if a vaccinee would be subsequently afflicted with diabetes, cancer or rheumatism unrelated to the inoculation, then, that should not be covered and we should not spend funds for that. We can use the regular program and funding of the DOH.

Now, there is a proposed amendment to the effect that the amount of P1.16 billion shall be available for release and obligation until fully spent. Is the sponsoring Committee pursuing this amendment?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes, Mr. Speaker. That was discussed during the Committee meeting and the concern was that one year might not be enough. Two years might not be even enough as the risk of complications caused by Dengvaxia would be present among the vaccinees for a period of five years. So, the Committee saw it fit to place in the wording of this Bill that the budget shall remain until fully spent, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, that fear or apprehension is not supported by empirical projection as admitted by the distinguished Sponsor. Well, are we now exempting this supplemental appropriation from the one year effectivity or lifespan of appropriations in the General Appropriations Act?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). The General Appropriations Act is a different law altogether. This Supplemental Bill, when signed into law, becomes a separate law that has its own lifespan, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. This Bill is supposed to be Supplemental Appropriations for the Fiscal Year 2018 Appropriations, so, this is related. This is not a strain or alien to the GAA. It is supplemental to the GAA and must be covered by the provisions of the GAA, more particularly with respect to its effectivity or one year lifespan. If there is a need for additional appropriation, then, that should be covered by a subsequent legislation.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). It is a different law, Mr. Speaker. It serves a different purpose and has a different source of fund, again, from the refund of the Dengvaxia unused vials and so, it has a life of its own.

REP. LAGMAN. It is supplemental appropriation. Supplemental to what, Mr. Speaker? It is supplemental to the GAA for 2018 and so, the rules and regulations of the GAA for 2018 for, particularly, the lifespan or effectivity, must govern the supplement appropriation.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Okay.

REP. LAGMAN. Anyway, that is my position and I respect the position of the distinguished Chairman, but I cannot agree with his position.

There is mention of profiling of vaccinees. What is the scope of this profiling? What standards should be used for the profiling? Nothing is mentioned in the Bill.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Included in the profiling would be—well, looking at the medical history—they will conduct a physical examination.

REP. LAGMAN. That is not in the Bill, Mr. Speaker. As that is not in the Bill, I think that—why not spell this out in the Bill because we are appropriating funds for the profiling?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). We can spell it out in the IRR, Mr. Speaker. Section 3 provides that the DOH will issue the guidelines necessary for the proper

implementation of the activities and/or projects for the benefit of the Dengvaxia vaccinees, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Why do we have to depend on the guidelines to be promulgated by the DOH? Why does the House or Congress not spell out the standards and scope of the profiling? Anyway, we are funding such activity.

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker.

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

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7449

REP. BONDOC. With the indulgence of our honorable Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations and with the indulgence of the Hon. Edcel C. Lagman, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 7449 contained in Committee Report No. 753.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The consideration of House Bill No. 7449 is hereby suspended.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 6475 ON SECOND READING

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 6475, contained in Committee Report No. 758, as reported out by the Committees on Local Government and on Muslim Affairs, the Special Committee on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity, the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Ways and Means.

May I ask that the Secretary General be 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. 6475, entitled: AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE BASIC LAW FOR THE BANGSAMORO AND ABOLISHING THE AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO, REPEALING FOR THE

PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9054, ENTITLED “AN ACT TO STRENGTHEN AND EXPAND THE ORGANIC ACT FOR THE AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO,” AND REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6734, ENTITLED “AN ACT PROVIDING FOR AN ORGANIC ACT FOR THE AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO,” AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

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

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize our Deputy Speaker, the Hon. Bai Sandra Sinsuat A. Sema, Representative from the First District of Maguindanao, to deliver her sponsorship speech on House Bill No. 6475.

I so move, Mr. speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The Deputy Speaker from the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, the Hon. Bai Sema, is recognized to sponsor House Bill No. 6475.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF REP. SEMA

REP. SEMA. *Assalamu’alaikum.*

Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, I stand before you today not only as the voice of my people, the Bangsamoro, but as a citizen of this country longing for peace in our homeland. This is the second time that this Representation is delivering a sponsorship speech on the Bangsamoro Basic Law. The first time was in the Sixteenth Congress when our proposed measure was hijacked by the Mamasapano incident, but our people never relented in our quest for a just and lasting peace in our homeland. We will not stop until peace reigns in the land of promise. No less than His Excellency, Pres. Rodrigo Roa Duterte, who hails from Mindanao, has promised the passage of this measure in his State of the Nation Address to ensure a Bangsamoro government that truly reflects the aspirations of our Muslim brothers and sisters.

In the pursuit of peace and understanding, the expanded Bangsamoro Transition Commission or BTC, composed of representatives from the two revolutionary fronts, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the Moro National Liberation Front, together with representatives from the non-Moro people, the indigenous peoples, and those coming from the national government, had carefully and meticulously poured their diverse and yet collective interests into a document which is known as the BTC version of the BBL. While this Representation had earlier filed House Bill No. 92 which is reflective of the Sixteenth Congress BBL House version, and former President and now Pampanga Rep. Gloria Macapagal-

Arroyo, also filed House Bill No. 6121 reflective of the Sixteenth Congress BBL Senate version, we both agreed to give way to the BTC version as such was solemnly crafted by the major stakeholders of peace in Mindanao, especially the MILF and the MNLF. The BTC version was endorsed to Congress by the President of the Philippines as the administration version in its original state, without addition and without subtraction. It was principally authored by no less than our Speaker, the one who hails from Mindanao, Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez, and co-authored by both Majority Leader Rudy Fariñas, the popular Manong of Ilocos, and Minority Leader Danny Suarez, along with the Bangsamoro legislators and many more.

While it may be considered a local bill, it has far-reaching effects that other lawmakers outside the Bangsamoro territory cannot avoid but be part of its crafting. We welcome the suggestions that are meant to improve rather than destroy the Bill. We welcome the ideas that are meant to strengthen rather than weaken the constitutionally guaranteed autonomy. We welcome the opinions that are meant to carry into effect what had been agreed upon in Tripoli and in Malacañang between the government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Bangsamoro people. We welcome the warm embrace of our colleagues who consider the Bangsamoro people as citizens of this country whose rights must be respected and whose voices must be heard; and we pray that in the chaos of all of these deliberations, ideas, suggestions and opinions, we do not lose our path towards peace, unity and prosperity.

Mr. Speaker, honorable colleagues, the Joint Committee worked hard not only in the committee conference rooms of this House, but also in meetings outside the halls of this august Chamber to listen to those who may be affected by this proposed legislation. Several amendments were proposed by some of our colleagues to change the tenor of the BTC version which is our working draft. The number of amendments reached a level that the BTC version looked beyond recognition. It did not reflect anymore the sentiments of those who the President gathered to craft a document that reflects their aspirations and so, through an omnibus motion filed by this Representation, the Joint Committee approved to revert the amended version back to the original BTC version. The Joint Committee finally reports out a version with minimal changes for the consideration of this august Body. This proposed measure will be the epitome of real autonomy in this country. This is the precursor of the regional autonomy or federal state that we may consider in the future. This will be the proof that when the government negotiates with its people, it is honest, serious and committed to carry out its promises.

In this holy month of Ramadan, the Bangsamoro people await the dawning of peace in the Moroland. This is the month when the Holy Qur'an was first revealed. This is the month when the gates of heaven are open and the gates of hell are closed, and devils are chained in hell. This month is not a coincidence that we are deliberating this legislative measure with the hallmark of peace, for it is Allah, Subbhan Allah, who guides the destiny of the people. As we humble ourselves by abstaining from food and water during daylight for 30 days during this holy month of Ramadan, may our brothers and sisters pray with us for peace in our country.

Today, all of us here in this august Chamber will make a choice. Regardless of our place of abode, regardless of culture, regardless of tradition and regardless of belief, we come together today to chart our destiny as a nation of many nations. Our destiny is determined by our choices. Allah, Subbhan Allah tells us that those who believe in goodness and choose to do righteous acts, such as being charitable, will have the path to goodness and paradise made easy for them. Allah, Subbhan Allah also tells us that those who reject belief in goodness and are miserly and arrogant, will have the path to misery and hell made easier for them. For Moses also said in the Bible that: "This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now, choose life."

This proposed measure is a blessing to all of us for this came at a time when we have a President who comes from Mindanao, who knows the situation on the ground. We choose life rather than death, blessings rather than curses. This is our opportunity to make things right as our leaders in the past provided a military solution to a non-military problem. Now, we solve this political problem with a political solution, and all of us here will go down in history as being part of those who helped peace reign in Mindanao, and put a closure to the centuries of war in our homeland.

Thank you very much and may peace be with all of us.

Maraming, maraming salamat po.

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

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, next to deliver her sponsorship speech is the Chairperson of the Special Committee on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity, the Hon. Ruby M. Sahali from the Lone District of Tawi-Tawi.

I move that she be recognized.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Rep. Ruby Sahali from the Lone District of Tawi-Tawi is recognized to sponsor House Bill No. 6475.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF REP. SAHALI

REP. SAHALI. *Bismillahirrahmanirrahim assalamu'alaykum wa rahmatulla-hi ta'ala wa Baraka-tuhu!*

Mr. Speaker, Majority Leader, distinguished colleagues: assalamu'alaykum.

I rise before you today as Chairman of the Special Committee on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity, as a Bangsamoro woman, and as the Representative of the people of Tawi-Tawi, to sponsor the passage of House Bill No. 6475, under Committee Report 758, otherwise known as the Bangsamoro Basic Law. The last six months have been tedious but an overwhelming teaching and learning experience not only for me personally, but for all of us members of the Joint Committee, including our legislative staff, the Secretariat, and everyone else who have been working hard to reach this point. Despite the busy schedules in our respective districts and legislative work, we have journeyed far and wide during the public consultations to be with the people on the ground to listen to their aspirations and sentiments, to answer questions and address their fears. We owe it to the people, Mr. Speaker. It is both a teaching and a learning journey because as we teach ourselves and each other on how to refine the Bangsamoro Basic Law Bill, we learned to be patient and respectful of each other's opinions and sentiments. We have deepened our analysis of the laws to guide us so that we can enact a law that is more inclusive and people-oriented, a law that is truly from the people and for the people we serve and lead.

Personally, Mr. Speaker, it has been an emotional journey because I have learned so much of our history and culture as a Bangsamoro people. Travelling to mainland Mindanao for the public consultations had given me a different perspective on the cry for self-determination. It is not just about political self-governance and independence, but of being able to determine for ourselves a future that is our own, without external compulsions, a future for our children's children to benefit from. Our unique history and aspirations are a key to opening the doors of opportunities that are uniquely Bangsamoro. There was a point along the way when I almost cried in an outburst of emotions, not only really knowing what to do or say to the people of Tawi-Tawi who may lose employment in jobs that feed their families and send their children to school under the current ARMM setup. There are 41,184 positions in the ARMM and 34,472 of which are from Department of Education teaching and non-teaching personnel.

Fear can be overwhelming too. Change can give us that kind of feeling, the idea of the unknown can give us frightening chills, the kind that can make us want to give up the fight and just be comfortable with what we already have. Magsandal na sadja kita bah un nain katu magtitiis na lang tayo kung ano na lang ang mayroon sa atin, forgetting that our forefathers before

us fought hard for a dream, the kind that makes us hopeful today. We felt the people's pulse, Mr. Speaker, both the Bangsamoro and non-Bangsamoro. They all want peace, they all want the conflict in Mindanao resolved, and they all want Congress to pass this law soonest.

Mr. Speaker, I am convinced that resolving these issues is just a matter of will. The overriding consideration is the desire for a political settlement in a region that has been in pain and suffering for so long already. We, as legislators, cannot allow the peace process to default back into uncertainty and chaos, merely because of technicalities. Mr. Speaker, my dear colleagues, I am truly grateful to be a part of this toilsome but priceless journey. I am thankful to be a part of this groundbreaking realization of attaining peace in Mindanao. I am confident that when history will come to judge us for what we are doing now, we will be long remembered for taking a valiant stand to fight for the legacy of our forebears and the future of our children.

Now, we are at the crossroads of our legislative journey as the proposed Bill is now in the hands of Congress. Before you make your final stance, let me appeal to you to remember the historical injustices that the Bangsamoro people have endured throughout the centuries, injustices which have subjugated our religion and our culture, injustices which have stunted our economic and social growth, injustices which have cost countless innocent lives, and injustices which have obviously fueled the rise of a new breed of radicalism. My dear colleagues, a vote for the Bangsamoro Bill is not only a vote for the Bangsamoro people. It is a vote for the entire nation, a vote for the Filipino people regardless of religion, culture and political persuasion. In passing this Bill, it will be an affirmative action to correct centuries of neglect and injustices on our people in Mindanao. The success of the Bangsamoro is the success of the Filipino people because we, the Bangsamoro people, are an indispensable part of our national identity.

Those who say that the Bill caters to regionalism and favors only a small segment of the Filipino society have a myopic view of our common heritage. Cultural distinction has been a hallmark of our national identity since time immemorial. It is time to nurture this asset and make it work to achieve our common goal of national unity, as well as genuine peace and development. This is the kind of legacy that we would want to bequeath to our children, Mr. Speaker and our dear colleagues, so that our nation will continue to endure until the end of time.

Magkaisa po tayo sa kapayapaan. Onward now to peace, reconciliation and unity.

Wa billah-hit tawfiq wal hida-yah! Assalamu'alaykum warah matullahi ta'ala wabarakatuh.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Thank you very much, Chairperson of the Special Committee on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Maanyag “Jun” B. Papandayan Jr. from the Second District of Lanao del Sur, the Chairman of the Committee on Muslim Affairs, for his sponsorship speech.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The Chairman of the Committee on Muslim Affairs and the Representative from the Second District of Lanao del Sur, Representative Papandayan, is recognized to deliver his sponsorship speech.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF REP. PAPANDAYAN

REP. PAPANDAYAN. *Audhu billah min ‘sh-shaytani rajeem bismillahi rahman rahim.*

Mr. Speaker, dear colleagues, it is my honor to present to this august Body, House Bill No. 6475, otherwise known as the Bangsamoro Basic Law, which I fully support for the sake of peace, unity and reconciliation. Mr. Speaker, my colleagues, the establishment of the Bangsamoro political entity is envisioned to address the Bangsamoro people’s long-held clamor for a genuine and meaningful governance of self-determination, based on their distinct historical identity in their ancestral homeland. As an Organic Act, the Bangsamoro Basic Law gives life to the Peace Agreement signed between the government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in 2014, at the end of peace talks held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. It was the last of 32 peace talks between the two parties which spanned a period of nine years. Even before this, there were already so many years of talks and preparation for an agreement that should have been enacted into law.

I now earnestly request each and every Member of this House of Representatives to look into his heart, to seek an answer to the problem of a national and cultural divide that has plagued our country for the past 400 years.

After our deliberations on this Bill, we, the Representatives of the Filipino-Muslim people of the Philippines, earnestly ask each and every Member of this legislative Body to approve the BBL as the solution now being proposed, for which we have labored so hard and so long to formulate, to give it a chance to succeed. I understand that there are concerns on some provisions of the Bill, but this is not and should not be a deterrent. We have a period of amendments wherein our collective wisdom as a lawmaking Body will be put into play.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues, what is on hand is not just any proposed law. It is so important that the decision we shall take on this proposed measure will be equivalent to life and death, literally and figuratively speaking. Its approval will equate to life, to hope finally realized for the Muslim-Filipino people after centuries of injustice. Its disapproval will mean death—death to unity, to peace, and to reconciliation. We brothers and Filipino-Muslims, we have already lost so much in terms of human life and limb, personal and real properties, and of missed opportunities for making life a little better, a little more prosperous, and a lot safer. If this Bangsamoro Basic Law is not approved, the grim prospect would be the continuation of armed conflict.

It has already been recorded that the Mindanao war has cost an estimated P640 billion in economic loss over a period of 31 years, from 1970 to 2001, in terms of damages to business and properties. The war between the government and MNLF from 1970 to 1996 claimed nearly 120,000 lives, Muslims and Filipinos alike, civilians and military, but these records pale in comparison to what has transpired in Marawi. At present, Marawi looks like the center of devastation or ground zero. Although it was a foreign element that started the war, the ISIS faction could stir up the conflict between the Muslim and the Filipino, and they can infiltrate and exploit the dissatisfaction of the Muslim people and turn them into Islamic extremists. If this happens, then we will not see peace anymore in our lifetime and we shall have given our children a hateful inheritance, a legacy of war.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues, there has been so much time and effort looking for the right recipe for peace. It is certain that we shall not have peace through war; it is certain that there is a historical injustice against the Muslim people that we in government are bound to correct; it is certain that the time to do this is now, or the consequences of inaction will weigh heavily on us who are duty-bound to steer the course of our country to the road of peace and prosperity. We have continued what the Sixteenth Congress began but was not able to finish. With the government’s and the people’s support, it is now the time to come together and make this piece of proposed legislation a reality. With determination, earnest efforts and willing hearts, it is upon us to steer the course of our nation into peace, prosperity and brotherhood.

Mr. Speaker, my dear and esteemed colleagues, history awaits us. Let us prove ourselves equal to the challenge. Let us approve the Bangsamoro Basic Law.

Thank you. *Shukran Wassalam.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Maraming salamat po, kagalang-galang na Kinatawan Papandayan. The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Amihilda J. Sangcopan of the Anak Mindanao Party-List for her sponsorship speech.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Representative of Anak Mindanao Party-List, the Hon. Ami Sangcopan is recognized to deliver her sponsorship speech.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF REP. SANGCOPAN

REP. SANGCOPAN. *Audhu Billah mina 'sh-shaytami rajeem. Bismillahi rahmani Rahim.*

Assalamu alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuhu.

Mr. Speaker, dear colleagues in this House of the People, I stand before you today as a Moro who only wants peace and development in her homeland—peace in which to live, and development so that we can keep this peace for generations. We, of the Bangsamoro, pray for peace in Mindanao. We pray for the passage of the Bangsamoro Basic Law that will give us security—security of domicile and a place in which we can tend to the roots we have long grown in this nation.

Mr. Speaker, dear colleagues, for centuries, before the Philippine Republic came to be, our history as a people was written by colonizers. The Spaniards and the Americans told versions of our history, and these were the versions carried across the world. They wrote our history as a colony of their imperial states, not as a nation built by the hands of our people, and their records served their agenda, not ours.

Mr. Speaker, dear colleagues, the time is right for our story as Mindanaoans, as Bangsamoros, to be told from our own viewpoint. We are a people who stood against colonial rule and were never conquered by any colonizers. We are an essential part of the proud history of this beautiful nation, and our story must be heard, and that story can be heard through the passage of the Bangsamoro Basic Law. We pray for the opportunity to address the historical injustices against the Bangsamoro people, to change the narrative of oppression that is one of the most visible threads that run throughout our history. We seek to weave in narratives of social justice, respect and recognition from hereon. It is time that the rest of the Philippines, Mr. Speaker, dear colleagues, learn what we have been taught as the history and narrative of the Bangsamoro, and to acknowledge it as part of their own. This is our contribution to this diverse and colorful country we are all part of. It would be so good to know that we, too, have a place alongside all of you.

May our Ramadan prayers for peace be answered with the good news of the passage of the BBL into law, *in sha' Allah*. Mr. Speaker, dear colleagues, with the passage of the Bangsamoro Basic Law, we, of the Bangsamoro, are given the time and place in which to set the record straight. In setting that record straight, we

hold on to a strong and abiding hope that the Filipino people will listen to and understand the stories of our people, rather than simply judge us based on stereotypes and misconceptions. We share the stories in our narrative that attests to our strength as a community linked by our faith in Allah. These stories are what have kept our light burning bright, even in times of frightening and oppressive darkness. Our people's shared history is our deep well of strength in times of extreme need and difficulty.

Mr. Speaker at mga kasamahan sa Mababang Kapulungan, we share these stories as part of the history of the country we all love and call home, in hopes that what give us hope and strength will do the same for you, our countrymen. But, in sharing our narrative, we must be precise and truthful in its telling. We have been blessed with this wonderful opportunity to speak stories, to set the record straight, to make known to the rest of our country the narrative we have passed down to the generations of Bangsamoro families. We have been offered much hope in the form of the BBL, including the hope that you will listen to and share in the lessons of our narrative. We have been offered the hope of finding the understanding and acceptance that comes with peace. We pray, Mr. Speaker, and dear colleagues, that this law, once passed, would bring the peace we wish for our communities and would strengthen our kinship with the rest of the nation. It is in this peace, we pray, that our history and narrative as part of this proud nation will grow and will be heard by the rest of the country, as well as our children and their children. With this peace, we can add stories of community and kindness to that history we have kept faithfully passing on to the next generation.

The BBL is for those who have shed blood. We offer this to our *mujahideen*, our honored dead who sacrificed their very lives for the Bangsamoro's right to self-determination. They died so we may live with a hope that carries us through time of our struggle for peace, so that our children and our children's children may soon have this precious gift of a homeland, one that is built on just and lasting peace. The price the Bangsamoro has paid and continues to pay, Mr. Speaker and dear colleagues, for the BBL, its journey, is steep and it was not paid lightly. This Bill is not just for this generation. It is not just for my generation. It is for our children and our children's children and so, we should not fail in passing a meaningful Bangsamoro Basic Law.

Failure is not an option, as failure to finally pass this law will have repercussions that will resonate through the generations that follow ours. Echoes of these repercussions are now being felt across the region, with threats of terror and violent extremism making their mark on recent history, including the Marawi siege. We cannot afford, Mr. Speaker and dear colleagues,

to lose more lives in our struggle for peace, and we cannot afford to lose this rare opportunity to win this struggle through the passage of the Bangsamoro Basic Law. Our future depends on passing a BBL that gives us the tools to build and sustain the peace we all pray for. The Bangsamoro people have done their part and have waited long enough for this groundbreaking piece of legislation, but we cannot do this on our own. We need you, Mr. Speaker and dear colleagues, to stand up for us and to stand with us in passing the Bangsamoro Basic Law.

Assalamu Alaikum Warahmatullahi Ta' Ala Wabarakatuhu.

Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker, my fellow colleagues in this House of the People.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Thank you very much.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, next to deliver his sponsorship speech is the Hon. Pedro B. Acharon Jr. of the First District of South Cotabato and General Santos City, also the Chairman of the Local Government Committee.

I move that he be recognized.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The Representative from the First District of South Cotabato and the Chairman of the Committee on Local Government, Rep. Jun Acharon, is recognized to deliver his sponsorship speech.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF REP. ACHARON

REP. ACHARON. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished guests, our colleagues, esteemed cochairpersons—the Hon. Ruby M. Sahali of the Special Committee on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity, the Hon. Mauyag Papandayan Jr. of the Committee on Muslim Affairs—and our colleagues from the Committee on Local Government, other members of the Joint Committee on the Bangsamoro Basic Law, ladies and gentlemen:

Magandang hapon po sa ating lahat.

I stand before you today in this august Chamber to submit to the collective wisdom of the majority, one of the most important pieces of legislation ever proposed in Congress. Though local in nature, this has far-reaching implications to our national consciousness and the future of this nation. It has been three years since a similar measure was sponsored in these august halls on June 1, 2015. So much has happened since that day that, for better or for worse, draw much attention to the second largest island in the country, its more than 24 million inhabitants, its contribution to the economy and

admittedly, in the second largest conflict ever recorded in history. In one way or another, in varying degrees, we are all aware of the hostilities that transpired and the costs we incurred. The rural landscape and urban centers bore witness to the damages and sufferings that resulted from these hostilities, both in terms of human lives, wasted opportunities and broken dreams. As history tells us, a purely military solution to the problem is definitely not the answer.

Mr. Speaker and distinguished colleagues, we are now at the point where a vital decision must be made, a decision that will greatly impact the lives of our countrymen in Muslim Mindanao who only wish to defend their families and give their children a better future than theirs in harmony with their neighbors and the well-being of their community. Philippine law and jurisprudence, including agreements by the government of the Philippines with the MNLF and MILF, recognize the indigenous Muslim communities in Mindanao, Basilan and Tawi-Tawi as the Bangsamoro people. Their culture, religion, history and civilization appear distinctly unique from the rest of the country colonized and homogenized by Spain, and later on by America. However, this uniqueness does not make them separate from us Filipinos because they are also Filipinos. This distinction does not make them separate from or protagonists of the rest of all other Filipinos or the Philippine state that has equal historic communities that must coexist and work together to strengthen a sovereign state.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, the compromise that we seek, our commitment to a just and lasting peace in the South—as evidenced by the agreements that the government signed and what the 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines states, specifically Article X, Sections 15 to 21—is the challenge that faces all of us today. Let us open our minds and broaden our understanding of the aspirations of the Bangsamoro people because it is our solemn duty to find ways to bring about a just and lasting peace.

House Bill No. 6475 under Committee Report No. 758, entitled: AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE BASIC LAW FOR THE BANGSAMORO AND ABOLISHING THE AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9054, ENTITLED “AN ACT TO STRENGTHEN AND EXPAND THE ORGANIC ACT FOR THE AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO,” AND REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6734, ENTITLED “AN ACT PROVIDING FOR AN ORGANIC ACT FOR THE AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO,” AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES,” was approved on May 15, 2018 by the Joint Committee on the Bangsamoro Basic Law by a vote of 2 to 1. Under the Internal Rules of Procedure adopted by the Joint Committee during its meeting

on January 31, 2018, specifically Rule V, Section 12 thereof, states that, “Each committee shall vote on a motion separately.” Thus, upon the proposition of the Hon. Jose Christopher Belmonte of the Sixth District of Quezon City to approve and adopt the Committee Report to House Bill No. 6475 without amendments, the Joint Committee voted in the following manner: by a vote of 27 for and three against, the Committee on Muslim Affairs, chaired by the Hon. Mauyag Papandayan Jr. of the Second District of Lanao del Sur, approved the Committee Report; by a vote of 27 for and three against, the Special Committee on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity chaired by the Hon. Ruby Sahali of the Lone District of Tawi-Tawi, approved the Committee Report; and by a vote of 32 against and three in favor, the Committee on Local Government, chaired by this humble Representation, disapproved the Committee Report. Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, the Committee on Local Government voted against the motion not because of opposition to the proposed measure per se, but mainly because several of our Committee members intend to introduce amendments to House Bill No. 6475.

Mr. Speaker, inasmuch as many of our esteemed colleagues have broadened their understanding of the spirit and intent of House Bill No. 6475 and are willing to stand up and support the same, we do hope that, in like manner, the amendments that will be introduced will also be given the same latitude of understanding and acceptance that these amendments deserve because at the end of the day, all of us have only one common objective and that is to stop the cycle of violence and bring a just and lasting peace. War must stop so that we can achieve the peace that we all seek.

Mr. Speaker, esteemed colleagues, it will be so thoughtless of this Representation if I do not take this opportunity to express my sincerest gratitude, personal and in behalf of the Joint Committee, to all those who worked to complete our assigned task:

To the Joint Subcommittee chaired by the Hon. Wilter Wee Palma II and his members, maraming salamat po.

To our colleagues who walked the extra mile and joined us in all the public hearings in different provinces in Mindanao, thank you very much.

To our Secretariat, our Directors, Committee secretariat and staff, including our debate stenographers, maraming salamat din po.

To the House leadership headed by our Speaker, Majority Leader, and Chairman of the Committee on Accounts, maraming salamat po sa suporta na ibinigay ninyo.

To Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., our new AFP Chief of Staff, who then commanded Western Mindanao Command, to Brig. Gen. Jeff Estoesta of the Philippine Air Force, as well as the men and women of the Armed

Forces of the Philippines under their command; to the PNP through Police Chief Supt. Daniel Macatlang; and the Philippine Coast Guard, our sincerest gratitude to all of you for our safety, security and mobility without which we could not have efficiently conducted the public consultations.

To the BTC Commissioners and OPAPP, our heartfelt gratitude for your cooperation and assistance.

Distinguished colleagues, I delivered this manifestation not just because I am one of the cochairpersons of the Joint Committee but because I am a Mindanaoan born and raised in a community where faith and belief in our Creator is multifaceted, words are multilingual, ethnicity, culture and traditions are as varied as they come, but firm in the belief that all of us are Filipinos and shall remain so for all times.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for your attention and God bless us all.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Maraming-maraming salamat din po sa inyong lahat na bumubuo ng Joint Committee na iyan.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, before we proceed with the debate, we would like to acknowledge the presence of guests in the gallery, with your permission.

First are your guests, the barangay officials from the municipalities of Bauan and San Pascual headed by ABC President Constancio Diomampo and Barangay Captain Medel Medrano, respectively.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Akin pong pinakikiusapan ang mga barangay officials po ng Bauan at San Pascual na tumindig para naman po kayo ay makilala ng mga kasamahan ko sa Kongreso. *(Applause)* Marami pong salamat at welcome sa House of Representatives.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, our next set of guests are the guests of the Hon. Amihilda J. Sangcopan They are from the We Act 1325 – Luzon, the secretariat headed by Ms. Dawn Marie “Demi” Castro and Ms. Elizabeth U. Yang. Their members are Kharis Sumaguina, Abdul Mohaimen Laguindab, Juhra Kiman, Lennie Handang, Myrna Aboniawan, Rochelle Mordeno, Elizabeth Laurico, Nasser Matula, Shirley Daniel, Joshvyne Daniel, Angelita Padilla, Christine Flores, Edna Velasco and Ms. Karen Tañada of GZO.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The guests of Rep. Ami Sangcopan from Anak Mindanao Party-List, please rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Finally, Mr. Speaker, the guests of the Hon. Reynaldo Umali. They are from the National Economic and Development Authority - MIMAROPA, the members are Atty. Raul Anlocotan, Susan Sumbeling, Bernardino Atienza Jr., Sheryll Sarabia, Amalia Tuppil, Beltisezara Garcia, Joel Paule, Ma. Victoria Marcos, Ryan Manrique, Hans Rhenzie Cueto, Judy Mae Masangkay, Keizher Marasigan, Jobelle Cruzado, Kenneth Joy Orteza and Joel Tobias.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The guests of future senator Reynaldo Umali from the NEDA MIMAROPA, welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the honorable Gentleman from BUHAY Party-List, Jose "Lito" L. Atienza Jr., for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The Representative from BUHAY Party-List, the Hon. Lito Atienza, is recognized to interpellate the Sponsor, if the Sponsor wishes to.

REP. ACHARON. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I am ready to answer questions.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). You may proceed, Hon. Lito Atienza.

REP. ATIENZA. Salamat po.

Thank you, Mr. Majority Leader. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor.

At the outset, let me make it very clear that I am in support of giving our Muslim brothers a better deal than what they had been having before. I am in support of us Filipinos in recognizing the fact that we were, once upon a time, all Muslims in a Muslim nation.

Noong ako po ay Mayor ng Maynila, kami po ang nagsaayos ng lahat ng pamumuhay at kailangan ng aming mga kapatid na Muslim. Pinagawa namin ang pinakamagandang parke sa Malate and named it after Rajah Sulayman, the last Muslim ruler of Manila before we were subjugated by the Spaniards. Kami rin po ang nagbigay ng pahalaga sa mga okasyon ng ating mga kapatid na Muslim sa Ramadan na hindi po alam ng ating mga kababayan noon, binigyan po namin ito

ng wastong pag-alaala at ang Eid'l Fitr ngayon po ay nase-celebrate na nang tama sapagkat kami po ang nagpasimuno noong mga gawaing iyon. At the moment, we have a pending bill that will establish a Bagsamoro Trade and Cultural Center in the city of Manila today and hopefully, this Congress will approve it so that we will be able to have our Muslim brothers assimilate more closely with the Christians of Luzon and other parts of the nation.

Ngayon po, ito pong ating pinag-uusapan, where everybody terms it as the solution to peace, the solution to the lopsided lives of our Muslim brothers, eh tatanungin ko lang po ang ating G. Isponsor ng mga ilan upang liwanagin natin kung talagang ito ay magbubunga ng kapayapaan, peace, definitely or we would hope, permanently. Truth, justice and equality are the foundations of a lasting peace, at hindi po tayo magkakaroon ng tunay na kapayapaan kung maraming mga probisyon ang panukalang ito na hindi magdudulot ng truth, equality and justice for our people, Muslim and non-Muslim.

Ang unang tanong ko po sa ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor, bakit po kailangang mayroong sariling Saligang Batas ang Bangsamoro? Hindi po ba sapat na magkaroon tayo ng isa lang na Saligang Batas sa buong kapuluan ng Pilipinas?

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, we need to legislate the establishment of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao as initiated by our Constitution. It is mandated under our Constitution that we shall establish the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and that is why kailangan natin ng batas upang ito ay maging ganap na regional government under the Republic of the Philippines.

REP. ATIENZA. Ang tinutukoy ko po, Mr. Speaker, ay Konstitusyon, Saligang Batas na ibinibigay natin sa ating mga kapatid na Muslim. Hindi po ba mayroon tayong Saligang Batas sa buong kapuluan?

REP. ACHARON. Yes, Mr. Speaker, we only have one Constitution.

REP. ATIENZA. And you would rather give them another Constitution which may contain shaded and gray areas as to the definition of our rights and privileges and duties as citizens of the Republic of the Philippines.

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, hindi po natin sila binibigyan ng iba pang Konstitusyon o bagong Konstitusyon. We only have one Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines.

REP. ATIENZA. Nandito po sa harapan ko na mayroon silang sarili nilang Preamble. Mayroon po

tayong Preamble sa ating Saligang Batas, kabisado po natin lahat iyon, pero dito po sa kanila ay malinaw na nakasulat ito.

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, ang Preamble na nakasaad po dito sa Bangsamoro Basic Law, ito po ay isang statement of the Bangsamoro, of their purpose. Hindi po ito inilagay dito, Mr. Speaker, it was not placed here because they have their own constitution but this is a statement of the Bangsamoro people of their desire, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. You are saying that they will not have their own constitution.

REP. ACHARON. Yes, Mr. Speaker. They do not have their own constitution. We only have one Constitution under the Republic of the Philippines.

REP. ATIENZA. But they have their own Preamble. Ito po ay statement noong kanilang ...

REP. ACHARON. As I have said, ...

REP. ATIENZA. ... pagiging autonomous area or region,...

REP. ACHARON. Yes, Mr. Speaker. It is just a statement, as I have said, of the Bangsamoro's aspirations.

REP. ATIENZA. ...na nandito po lahat ng kapangyarihan, lahat ng pribilehiyo, lahat ng kanilang maaaring gawin sa kanilang area of coverage.

REP. ACHARON. Nandito po, Mr. Speaker, totoo iyan, but it is under the Republic of the Philippines' Constitution.

REP. ATIENZA. I would like, therefore, to be clarified. Mayroon po dito sa Preamble na nakasulat, it may sound minor, maliit na bagay, subalit we believe that it establishes precisely the fact that we are establishing something that we may not be able to sustain later on. Ito po, "With the blessing of the Almighty, do hereby promulgate this Bangsamoro Basic Law as the fundamental law of the Bangsamoro"—as the fundamental law of the Bangsamoro—ang ibig sabihin po noon Constitution—"that establishes our asymmetrical political relationship with the Central Government x x x."

May I ask the Sponsor if he is familiar with the word "asymmetrical."

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, according to the law that we are discussing, "asymmetrical" refers to

a relationship where there is one government which is higher and another local government which is lower. In this case, Mr. Speaker, the relationship between the national government or central government and the Bangsamoro regional government is asymmetrical, meaning, not the same, where the national government is higher than the Bangsamoro regional government.

REP. ATIENZA. Not the same, in other words, ang itinatag natin ay hindi kapareho ng ating sariling Saligang Batas, kaya nakasulat po rito under Section 3, and you may want to clarify it:

Bangsamoro Symbol. – The Bangsamoro Parliament shall adopt the official flag, emblem, and anthem of the Bangsamoro.

Ibig sabihin ay magkakaroon sila ng sarili nilang bandila, simbolo, national anthem. Ito po ba ay magbubunga ng pagkakaisa, pagkakaintindihan at tatagal sa habang panahon kung mayroon tayong hiwa-hiwalay na national anthem?

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, we only have one national anthem. Local government units are allowed to have their own emblem, they also have their flag and it is even being displayed by our local government units. They also have what they call "hymn" or local government hymn, Mr. Speaker. Kahit naman doon po sa amin ay mayroon kaming GenSan march, but that is not a national anthem. We only have one national anthem, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Naintindihan po ng ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor ang tinutukoy ko. Kami po ay mayroon ding Manila hymn. Mayroon din kaming emblem, subalit wala kaming national anthem at wala kaming national flag dahil ang bandila sa buong kapuluan, upang ating maitulak palagian ang pagkakaisa, ay isa lamang ang kulay, isa lamang ang hugis. Isa lamang ang ating bandila. When you say they are free to have their own flag and their own emblem, it does not say here "hymn," it says "anthem." Meaning, magkakaroon sila ng national anthem that will promote immediately asymmetry, asymmetrical results. Sabi nga ninyo, ang "asymmetrical," ang meaning nito ay hindi pare-pareho. Ang gusto natin ay gawing pare-pareho—Muslim, Christian, Filipino, pero gagawin pala nating Muslim-Muslim, Christian-Christian, at sabi nga ninyo, "okay lang iyong magkaroon sila ng sariling anthem." Hindi po siguro tama iyan at baka hindi po pinapayagan ng Konstitusyon iyan. Dapat ang ating bandila ay isa lang para sa Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao.

So, this question, I am sure, will be brought all the way to the Supreme Court. So, what we should pass in this Body today or tomorrow is something that should

also be agreeable to the Senate. Hindi naman po tayo lang ang gagawa ng batas dahil dadaan po iyan sa Senado, dadaan po iyan sa korte. Hindi naman lahat papayag dito sa ating pinag-uusapang ito, kaya tiyakin na natin ngayon pa lang na hindi tayo makukwestiyon at kung magkaroon man ng legal question, ay maipapanalo natin itong ating pinag-uusapan at gusto nating ipasa sa gabing ito.

Anyway, let me shift to another topic on the matter of the questionable organization of a police force of their own. Papayagan po ba natin na ang Bangsamoro ay magkaroon ng kanilang sariling police organization?

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, in this proposed House Bill, the Philippine National Police is still under the national police of the Republic of the Philippines. We only have one police force, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Nabasa ko rin po iyan. Sa ating Saligang Batas, malinaw po ang probisyon that covers all police forces in the country. We should have only one police force that is national in scope and civilian in character. Dito po sa Bangsamoro Law na inyong panukala ay nakalagay po na civilian in character but regional in scope. Meaning, iyong police nila ay police nila, appointed by the Chief Minister, answerable to the local communities. They are not answerable to Crame or to the PNP. Probably, in words they are but in reality they will not be. Will that promote unity, equality, justice in the long run? I think otherwise.

At this point in time, I have serious doubts as to the full realization of our common aspiration. We want peace, we want progress for our Muslim brothers, we want to recognize our historical roots as Filipinos. Kung tawagin tayo ay Pilipino pero nakakalimutan natin na tayo ay Muslim noong nakaraang mga siglo.

Iyan po ay ipinaglalaman ng inyong lingkod magmula't simula pa. Doon sa Batasang Pambansa, iyan na rin po ang aking ipinaglaban—ang magkaroon ng pagkilala sa ating mga kapatid na Muslim. Sila ay agrabyado dito sa ating sistema subalit hindi po ako nagpanukala kailanman na bigyan sila ng paraan upang magkaroon sila ng sariling organisasyon na labag sa ating Saligang Batas, na magkaroon sila ng identity na totally theirs. Hindi po. Ang dapat na identity po ng ating mga kapatid na Muslim ay Pilipino. Sila ay Muslim subalit Pilipino. Hindi po maaaring magkaroon ng Pilipinas pero iba po sa Luzon, iba sa Visayas at iba sa Mindanao.

The Constitution provides precisely the creation of autonomous regions so that we may be able to promote local identities, local history, local ancestry. It never envisioned—the Constitution today does not

allow segmentation of the country in the guise of creating an autonomous region. Kaya po, again, on the issue of security, malinaw po dito sa inyong panukala na papayagan natin silang magkaroon ng exemption from the constitutional ban on police forces. Kami po, matagal na kaming naghuhumiyaw sa Maynila na bigyan kami ng paraan upang magkaroon kami ng sarili naming kapulisan. What is the answer given to us? Always, you cannot because you cannot violate the Constitution. The Constitution is very clear—national in scope, civilian in character. So, all officials, the officers and men of the Bangsamoro police force should be appointed from Crame, the way the police officers in other cities and provinces do it. Why should they be given a special way of securing themselves? Will this produce lasting peace? Sabi ko nga sa inyo, peace that is not anchored on truth, equality and justice will not last. I look at this document and I tell myself, I am for the intentions of my brother Muslim-Filipinos. I have always aspired that they be given more opportunities, but not to violate the Constitution.

Thank you.

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

REP. ACHARON. Thank you, Honorable Atienza.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, before we recognize the next interpellator, we would like to acknowledge the presence of a special guest in the gallery, our distinguished colleague, the Hon. Sitti Hataman.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Rep. Sitti Hataman is recognized. (*Applause*) Welcome once again.

REP. DE VENECIA. Next to interpellate, Mr. Speaker, is the distinguished Lady from KUSUG TAUSUG Party-List, the Hon. Shernee Abubakar Tan. I move that she be recognized.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Rep. Shernee Tan from the KUSUG TAUSUG Party-List is recognized to interpellate the good Sponsor, if the Sponsor wishes to.

REP. ACHARON. Yes, Mr. Speaker, gladly.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). You may proceed, Rep. Shernee Tan.

REP. TAN (S.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to put on record that I

am not against the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law. However, I am expressing a grave concern over the possible disregard of the free choice of the people because Article XV, Section 3(a) of House Bill No. 6475 explicitly provides that:

If the majority of the votes cast in the entirety of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao voted in favor of the approval of this Basic Law, the Bangsamoro is hereby established and all the provinces and cities of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao shall be part of the Bangsamoro.

The crystal-clear import of this provision is that, once the majority in the entirety of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region vote in favor of the approval of the BBL, the Bangsamoro will be established and all the provinces and cities, including those provinces and cities that will reject the BBL, shall still be part of the Bangsamoro. The aforementioned provision runs contrary to the second paragraph of Section 18, Article X of the Constitution which states that “Only provinces, cities, and geographic areas voting favorably in such plebiscite shall be included in the autonomous region.” Mr. Speaker, if the Supreme Court will declare this plebiscite provision in the BBL as unconstitutional, the entire law will be invalid and all our time, efforts and valuable resources spent on this process will just go to waste.

May I inform this august Body that the Bangsa sub-consensus held in Zamboanga, which was attended by different sectors from Zamboanga, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi, had also expressed alarm that their voices will not be heard if House Bill No. 6475 will not be amended. The large number of voters from Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur will effectively outvote those in the provinces of Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi, thereby forcing them to join the Bangsamoro notwithstanding their strong dissent. This should not be done in a democratic country like the Philippines where consultation is an essential part of the legislative process and the free choice of the people is always respected. If the intention of the BBL is to respect the free choice of the people, then why not encourage the people to vote then only those who voted favorably to join the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region shall be part of the Bangsamoro and those who will reject it shall not be included.

It is for these reasons, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to propose amendments to Article XV, Section 3(a) of House Bill No. 6475 during the period of amendments. The amended provision will now read as follows: “For the present geographic area of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao: If the majority of the

votes cast in provinces and city or cities, voted in favor of the approval of the Basic Law, the Bangsamoro shall be established and only the provinces and cities of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao that voted favorably in such plebiscite shall be part of the Bangsamoro.”

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I so move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The Hon. Edcel Lagman from the First District of Albay is recognized to interpellate the good Sponsor, if the Sponsor wishes to be interpellated by Honorable Lagman.

REP. ACHARON. Yes, Mr. Speaker, gladly.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Rep. Edcel Lagman, the floor is yours.

REP. LAGMAN. Before I go to my interpellation, let me underscore the following, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor: I am not against peace, reconciliation and unity. I am not against giving our Muslim brothers and sisters the freedom of choice and the opportunity to progress and development. I am not against a reasonable and vibrant autonomy for Muslim Mindanao. However, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, Congress and our people must respect and uphold the majesty of the Constitution. I regret that enacting the BBL without first amending of the Constitution and as such, is a flawed and unconstitutional process because it is the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao-ARMM which has been ordained and created by the Constitution. Consequently, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, this has been my firm position and conviction when the previous administration attempted to enact the BBL, indeed, in the past Congress.

Will the distinguished Sponsor yield to some questions?

REP. ACHARON. Yes, Mr. Speaker, gladly, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. The creation of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao or ARMM was ordained under the 1987 Constitution. Is this correct?

REP. ACHARON. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Section 15 of Article X unequivocally provides and I quote:

There shall be created autonomous regions in Muslim Mindanao and in the Cordilleras consisting of provinces, cities, municipalities, and geographical areas sharing common and distinctive historical and cultural heritage, economic and social structures, and other relevant characteristics within the framework of this Constitution and the national sovereignty as well as territorial integrity of the Republic of the Philippines.

Is this an accurate quotation of the Constitution, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. ACHARON. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Section 18 of Article X mandates that, and I quote:

The Congress shall enact an organic act for each autonomous region with the assistance and participation of the regional consultative commission composed of representatives appointed by the President from a list of nominees from multi-sectoral bodies. The organic act shall define the basic structure of government for the region consisting of the executive department and legislative assembly, both of which shall be elective and representative of the constituent political units. The organic acts shall likewise provide for special courts with personal, family, and property law jurisdiction consistent with the provisions of this Constitution and national laws.”

Is this, again, an accurate restatement of the Constitution?

REP. ACHARON. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Under Section 18 of Article X, the Congress which was mandated to enact the Organic Act for ARMM was the Eighth Congress in 1987. Is that correct?

REP. ACHARON. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. The second paragraph of Section 18 of Article X provides, and I quote:

The creation of the autonomous region shall be effective when approved by majority

of the votes cast by the constituent units in a plebiscite called for the purpose, provided that only provinces, cities, and geographic areas voting favorably in such plebiscite shall be included in the autonomous region.

Again, is this an accurate restatement of the Constitution?

REP. ACHARON. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. The immediacy of enacting the Organic Act for ARMM was underscored by the Constitution when it directed under Section 19 of Article X that, and I quote:

The first Congress elected under this Constitution shall, within eighteen months from the time of organization of both Houses, pass the organic acts for the autonomous regions in Muslim Mindanao and the Cordilleras.

Again, is this an accurate restatement of the Constitution?

REP. ACHARON. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. May I hear the answer, please.

REP. ACHARON. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Again, the Congress that was mandated to enact the Organic Act for the ARMM was the Eighth Congress. Is that correct?

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, it only provides that Congress will enact the Organic Act, but there was no mention about the Eighth Congress, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Let me go to the specific provision of the Constitution which, according to the distinguished Sponsor, is a verbatim restatement of the Constitution. Under Section 19 of Article X, it says:

The first Congress elected under this Constitution shall, within eighteen months from the time of organization of both Houses, pass the organic acts for the autonomous regions in Muslim Mindanao and the Cordilleras.

It is very specific that it is the first Congress, and the first Congress under this Constitution, the 1987 Constitution, was the Eighth Congress. Is that correct?

REP. ACHARON. Yes, correct, Mr. Speaker. It is stated here in Section 19.

REP. LAGMAN. The Eighth Congress enacted on August 1, 1989, Republic Act No. 6734, entitled, and I quote: AN ACT PROVIDING FOR AN ORGANIC ACT FOR THE AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO. Following the parameters on the extent of the powers of the ARMM, is this historically accurate?

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

REP. LAGMAN. Considering all of the foregoing, the ARMM is verily created by the 1987 Constitution. It has been elevated to a constitutional entity which could only be abolished by a constitutional amendment. Is that correct?

REP. ACHARON. May I request the Honorable Lagman, Mr. Speaker, to repeat the question, please.

REP. LAGMAN. Considering all of the foregoing provisions of the Constitution which the distinguished Sponsor admitted to be accurate verbatim restatements, the ARMM as created by the Constitution was elevated to a constitutional entity. Is that correct?

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, I believe the answer is no.

REP. LAGMAN. Why is it “no”? May we know.

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, in our Constitution, what was created was the autonomous region. So, you will note that in this House Bill, the autonomy is still present, Mr. Speaker. The autonomous government was not replaced, was not removed; that was the government granted by the Constitution—the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. In this case, we are still having the autonomous region through the Bangsamoro regional government, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, is it not that the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao was ordained to be created by the 1987 Constitution?

REP. ACHARON. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. It is.

REP. ACHARON. As I have said, the autonomous government was the one created by our Constitution, Mr. Speaker, and this BBL is the autonomous region or is the autonomous government that we are creating, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. This BBL is completely

supplanting and abolishing the ARMM which was ordained to be created by the 1987 Constitution. I submit, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, that we cannot legislate the BBL through an ordinary legislation because we cannot abolish a constitutional entity like the ARMM by mere legislation.

Consequently, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, it is the firm position and conviction of this Representation that this Congress is following a flawed procedure in abolishing the ARMM as ordained by the 1987 Constitution and substituting it with another body known as the BBL without first amending the Charter. I submit to that proposition, Mr. Speaker, and with that submission, I terminate my interpellation because there is no need to discuss the other provisions or amendments to the Bill without first resolving this prejudicial question on the constitutionality of enacting, by mere legislation, the BBL and replacing a constitutional entity, the ARMM.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu.) Thank you, Honorable Lagman.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Before we recognize the next interpellator, Mr. Speaker, may we be allowed to acknowledge the presence of some guests in the gallery. They are the guests of Speaker Pantaleon D. Alvarez and Rep. Maria Carmen S. Zamora: the Office of the Secretary of the Sanggunian, Davao del Norte Province visitors/heads of delegation Dennis Dean Castillo, Eden Lumbré, Marivic Lirazan, Tita Jumao-as, Ma. Adelfa Olazo, Jane Ivy Cosmod, Susan A. Pinluan, Lyn Bebero, Rudolfo Abapo, Aurelio Isidro, Jr., Neldie Tuyac, Herminigildo Alcoran, Jr., Cheryll Radaza, Christine Palomo and Rhoderick Pono.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu.) The guests of our distinguished Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez and Rep. Carmen Zamora, please rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize our next interpellator, the Hon. Mohamad Khalid Q. Dimaporo from the First District of Lanao del Norte.

I so move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu.) Rep. Mohamad Khalid Q. Dimaporo is recognized to interpellate the distinguished Sponsor, if he wishes to.

REP. ACHARON. Yes, Mr. Speaker, gladly.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu.) The Hon. Mohamad Dimaporo, you now have the floor to interpellate the Sponsor.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and my apologies. It is 6:21 p.m. and I have to break my fast.

First and foremost, *assalamu alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuhu. Ramadan Mubarak* to each and every one here today. I would like to thank and acknowledge our Chairman of the Joint Committee and the different Chairmen of the other Committees for their hard work in shepherding the Bangsamoro Basic Law from its initial filing here in the Seventeenth Congress to its approval in the Joint Committee and finally, its birth here in the plenary upon Second Reading. Having said that, I would like to put on record, Mr. Speaker, that for us in Lanao del Norte, before there will be peace, there has to be war; and in Lanao del Norte, that was exactly what happened to us. The MILF attacked us and an all-out war erupted. It started in the province of Lanao del Norte over land conflict. The Muslims and Christians are fighting with one another. *Iyong mga Christians, tumakbo sila sa pulis; iyong mga Muslim, tumakbo sila sa MILF.* They went to that one piece of property and ended up facing one another. There you go, there erupted an all-out war. Thousands of families were evacuated in Lanao del Norte. Even my own mother and father were there—ground zero, preventing the Armed Forces of the Philippines from dropping artillery shells, like they did in Marawi City, in our poblacion of Kauswagan. That was our experience of war in Lanao del Norte.

Five years later, the MILF, more or less, had a spat with a municipal mayor in the Municipality of Maigo. *Anong ginawa nila? They came down from Munai, they stopped all the commuter jeeps and buses, unloaded civilians and executed them from the back of their heads. Pati iyong isang mama, a mother, at saka iyong anak niya, a little boy, was executed.*

In 2007, we had the MOA-AD, the Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain. I was serving as the Governor of Lanao del Norte then. Among all the governors here in the Philippines, I was the only Muslim governor who was supporting the peace agreement, supporting the MOA-AD, *pero ano ang ginawa ng MILF? They came down from Munai—from Lanao del Sur, they converged in Munai and Tangcal and attacked the Municipalities of Kauswagan and Kolambugan. In Kolambugan, I saw—and I had to wrap her in newspaper— a little girl, not even eight years old, because an MILF combatant emptied out a full clip of an M16 on her body. Hinati niya ang bata na iyan, a little girl. Why? Because her father was a barangay tanod and he defended his barangay and he killed several MILF rebels who were trying to attack the Municipality of Kolambugan. That is the face of war.*

On the other side of Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, all of these people are harassing and killing my Christian constituents in the Province of Lanao del Norte, they called them *mujahideens*, freedom fighters. Again, that is the face of war.

So, I am standing here today just to put it on record that if anybody here is to benefit from the Bangsamoro Basic Law, then first and foremost, it will be us in the Province of Lanao del Norte. If the Almighty, Allah subhanahu wa Ta'ala, will grant us a path of peace, no man can stop the movement of peace for our region. We are not like the Moros who claim social injustice and continue fighting for social injustice. *Kami sa lalawigan ng Lanao del Norte, we look forward that, if there is a path towards peace, a path for peace, then, we will take it.*

But what is the cost of peace? That is the big question that we must address here. I would like to put it on record, first and foremost, in Lanao del Norte, and I have to do this to my good friend, our Chairman of the Joint Committee, as the former Governor of Lanao del Norte and now as the First District Congressman, I have to defend my province naturally, so I would like to ask about my six municipalities. Now, I would like to thank, again, the good Chairman of the Joint Committee because when we started the Joint Committee, *ang original schedule is just like the Sixteenth Congress, na wala plano to go to the Province of Lanao del Norte even though we are the ones directly affected. In the Sixteenth Congress, hanggang Cagayan de Oro lang sila when it comes to the public hearing, but in the Seventeenth Congress, at least, the Representatives of this House now heard the position of the Province of Lanao del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, Ozamiz City and Pagadian City.*

So, I would like to ask the good Sponsor, in that public hearing, four out of the six municipalities submitted local resolutions asking that they not be incorporated in the Bangsamoro. What is the status of their resolutions? Will they even be entertained, Mr. Speaker?

May I have the answer of the good Sponsor.

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, all the petitions or communications sent to the Joint Committee were entertained, Mr. Speaker.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). Will there ...

REP. ACHARON. They were discussed in the subcommittee meetings, but unfortunately, the good Representative from Lanao del Norte knew that we were ready to entertain amendments during our Committee hearings, in the Joint Committee hearings. But during the votation, Mr. Speaker, it was adopted by the two Committees—the original version or House Bill No.

6475 will be adopted without amendment. He knows that, Mr. Speaker.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, I am not trying to debate or contradict our Chairman of the Joint Committee on the Bangsamoro Basic Law, but my purpose here is, again, to put everything on record. Yes, it is true that we worked very hard for so many months in the Joint Committee, studying the constitutionality, the local and national problems concerning the Bangsamoro Basic Law. We went to many different towns, including the Province of Lanao del Norte, and heard the different positions of the people in the locality, but in one sweeping motion, all that hard work was thrown to the garbage bin.

REP. ACHARON. Amen.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). I simply wanted to put that on record because that is what really happened, and who am I to question the will of the majority here in the Seventeenth Congress? At least, nandiyan sa record na nagtrabaho kami and we did what we can for our local constituents.

Ngayon, I would like to put also on record, Mr. Speaker, if I read the definition of a core territory, Section 2 (b), and this is for Lanao del Norte. It reads as follows:

The Municipalities of Baloi, Munai, Nunungan, Pantar, Tagoloan, and Tangcal in the Province of Lanao del Norte, and all other barangays in the Municipalities of Kabacan, Carmen, Aleosan, Pigkawayan, Pikit, and Midsayap that voted for the inclusion in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao during the 2001 plebiscite.

These are the identified municipalities and barangays that will be, by legislation, defined the core territory of the Bangsamoro. Am I correct in saying that, Mr. Speaker?

REP. ACHARON. Yes, Mr. Speaker, that is in the proposed Bill, Mr. Speaker.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). Thank you.

I would like to put emphasis, Mr. Speaker, on the last sentence—the last words on this provision, “... voted for the inclusion in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao during the 2001 plebiscite”. May I ask the good Sponsor to put on record what happened in our Joint Committee when we asked the BTC, and also, we wrote the COMELEC if they have official records of the 2001 plebiscite to confirm if they really did win in those municipalities and barangays? And, maybe, also

for us to study what is the margin between those that voted “Yes” and those that voted “No,” in terms of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. May I get from the good Speaker to, at least, let us put it on record, kung ano iyong findings natin sa Joint Committee.

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, I cannot accept or I cannot deny that because according to the COMELEC, the records of that plebiscite were burned down.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, there are no official records that can be used in court that say that these municipalities and barangays had won or voted for the ARMM in the 2001 plebiscite. So, should anybody want to contest that, by all means, once we pass the BBL, they are free to file in court and to let the court decide the interpretation of that specific provision in our Bangsamoro Basic Law.

Now, I would like to ask another question for clarification and also to put it on record, Mr. Speaker, that we had a very good interaction with the resource speakers in terms of constitutionality, and one of them was Justice Mendoza. We argued about legislating court territories, and he asked, “Why should Congress already define by form of legislation the territories that go inside the Bangsamoro. Should it not be the people that decide the core territory of the Bangsamoro?” Am I wrong in saying that, Mr. Speaker? I would just like to clear this up and place it on record. May I hear from our good Sponsor?

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, the ARMM or the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao is already a political unit established and ratified by Congress. In that law, the territory had already been specified, including the six municipalities of Lanao del Norte and the 39 barangays of North Cotabato. This is the same territory that will be given to the Bangsamoro regional government and so, that is the reason these six municipalities and 39 barangays were also included in the core territory.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). So, Mr. Speaker, if I understand the good Sponsor properly, that is the decision of the Seventeenth Congress. Bahala na ang mga tao. Bahala na if they will vote “Yes” or “No” on whether to be incorporated in the core territory of the Bangsamoro. But we, the Seventeenth Congress, will legislate it and define that pasok na kayo sa Bangsamoro. I just want to place that on record, Mr. Speaker. Am I correct in my understanding of your answer, Mr. Chairman? Can I get that from the good Chairman?

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, we do not force any issue here, Mr. Speaker. I just want to clarify that in the Joint Committee hearing, we deliberated, we approved,

and so, we have to respect the decision of the majority, Mr. Speaker.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). Yes, I understand but, Mr. Speaker, I am trying to put on record the decision of the majority, a simple confirmation. The decision of the majority is to define the core territory of the Bangsamoro regardless of the will of the people living in those territories. Sana lang, they vote whether or not they want to be part of the core territory, instead of us here in Congress merely by the stroke of a pen, legislating na pasok na kayo diyan sa Bangsamoro and so, there is very little that you can do.

I just want to put this on record, again, to clarify things. If I am not wrong, I can move on to the next question, Mr. Speaker. So, I am assuming that I am not wrong, Mr. Speaker and so, I would like to ask now regarding the plebiscite.

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, in answer, Mr. Speaker, I cannot speak for and in behalf of those Members who voted in favor to include these six municipalities and 39 barangays in the core territory of the proposed Bangsamoro regional government, Mr. Speaker. As the Chairperson of the Joint Committee, Mr. Speaker, I just have to respect the decision of the majority.

REP. DIMAPORO (K.). I will accept that, Mr. Speaker. Again, the definition of the core territory of the Bangsamoro is, “legislated, not voted upon by the people.” It is a decision of the majority here in Congress.

I would like to move on, Mr. Speaker, and ask questions about Article XV, on the plebiscite. Now, in Article XV, the PLEBISCITE, again, my issue is, isinama nila kami sa lalawigan ng Lanao del Norte. I go around my province since the start of the Duterte administration and as early as that, I keep telling the people: “Isuporta natin ang Bangsamoro Basic Law. We will rally the Province of Lanao del Norte to support the Bangsamoro Basic Law, basta lang hindi kasama kami sa Bangsamoro.” That is what I keep saying and that was, in general, my theme of being a Congressman here. Sana lang ay tanggalin natin iyong six municipalities ng Lanao del Norte. Unfortunately, I failed, and the will of the majority had overridden my preference that the six municipalities of Lanao del Norte not be included.

I would like to ask the good Chairman for clarification, again, so we can put this on record. Our concern and my understanding as to why the six municipalities were not included when the ARMM plebiscite was conducted, is because of a constitutional issue. When the ARMM was thrown to the plebiscite, it was only for provinces and cities that had to vote as a whole; and the municipalities were not allowed to vote

alone to join the ARMM. I believe the reason for that is, the wisdom of that Congress, which looked into our Constitution and found under Article X, Section 18, the second paragraph which reads:

The creation of the autonomous region shall be effective when approved by majority of the votes cast by the constituent units in a plebiscite called for the purpose, provided that only provinces, cities, and geographical areas voting favorably in such plebiscite shall be included in the autonomous region.

That is what our Constitution says.

Now, I would like to ask our good Sponsor, because after we pass this Bangsamoro Basic Law, if our House chooses to be deaf to what the Constitution says, then the BBL has to pass the test of constitutionality. I would like to ask the good Sponsor on his position—are we complying with the Constitution in the Bangsamoro Basic Law, including barangays and municipalities? Or are we, in good conscience, violating the Constitution here in the House of Representatives, Mr. Speaker?

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, this is not my own decision, this is the decision of the majority of the members of the three committees acting as the Joint Committee. During the discussions, it was mentioned that the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao was created under Republic Act No. 6734, that was I think in 1989, and during that time, the core territories were already identified. It was then expanded under Republic Act No. 9054 and so, here in this House Bill, Mr. Speaker, the core territories of the existing ARMM were just adopted. That is why the six municipalities and the 39 barangays are included, Mr. Speaker. Besides, Mr. Speaker, RA 9054 had been passed and therefore, we presume that it is constitutional, this inclusion of the six municipalities as part of the core territories within the basic law, our Constitution, Mr. Speaker.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). Mr. Speaker, thank you for the answer, again, to the Sponsor, because if his answer to my question, whether or not including municipalities and barangays is constitutional, if the answer is, dahil pinasa na natin ang ARMM and they voted for it in the plebiscite, then my understanding is, look at the six municipalities of Lanao del Norte, where do they lie? Not in the ARMM, but they still reside in the Province of Lanao del Norte under Region X, Northern Mindanao.

So if that is the answer, then, for me ay parang mali ito, but again, if we cannot resolve it here in Congress, then we let the Supreme Court resolve it. I

do not wish to argue with my good friend and a very accommodating Chairman of the Joint Committee. More likely, his answer is also my answer, but let us just put this on record.

If we can move on, Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about money.

REP. ACHARON. Yes, go ahead please.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask questions about the block grant. Ako naman I am a Muslim, I reside, I governed in Lanao del Norte, right on the other side of Lanao del Sur. I was a local chief executive from the outside looking in and I know the billions and billions and billions that had been poured into the Province of Lanao del Sur versus the Province of Lanao del Norte. We simply have to ask the people. Compare our two provinces, Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur. Compare the development over the last 10 years between Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur. Compare the funds that had been into Lanao del Sur versus the meager funds that had been poured into the Province of Lanao del Norte.

We have accomplished so much in the Province of Lanao del Norte. Let the people decide on how much they have accomplished in Lanao del Sur. For me, having seen and knowing this, being a former Governor, I would like to talk about money because when we talk about block grant, more for them means less for us in Northern Mindanao. How much exactly is the block grant, Mr. Speaker, if the good Sponsor may answer.

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, according to this House Bill, it is six percent of the net national internal revenue production of the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs, but I believe there will be an amendment to this figure as stated here.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). Thank you. I would appreciate it. I do not want to defy my former Chairman. Well, actually still my chairman because I am still in the Committee on Local Government. To expedite things, based on our deliberations and the resources that were submitted to the Joint Committee, please correct me if I am wrong, the DBM submitted to us their position paper and a forecast on how much the block grant will cost based on the existing provisions of House Bill No. 6475. Please correct me if I am wrong, but this does not include the collections from Customs which, for next year, 2019, it is already P50 billion— P50 billion, without Customs—plus the P10 billion, that is the Special Development Fund.

Based on the resources submitted to the Joint Committee, we are looking at about P60 billion minimum, not including Customs, but P60 billion

minimum for the Bangsamoro government. Am I correct or wrong in saying this, Mr. Speaker?

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, I have here a copy of the communications sent by Sec. Benjamin Diokno and in one of the annexes, according to their funding projection for 2019, it stated there that the projected share of the Bangsamoro regional government, if we compute it at six percent, is P49 billion, Mr. Speaker. That is correct, almost P50 billion.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). Mga almost P50 billion.

REP. ACHARON. Yes.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). Thank you. May I now ask, Mr. Speaker, how much exactly is the tax collection of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao?

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, I have here a copy of the statement of collection from the Office of the Regional Treasury. The ARMM, for 2017, their total collection is P1.822, I am sorry, it is P1.8 billion, Mr. Speaker.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). Mr. Speaker, just to make the mathematics easy, let us just assume P2 billion. For the year 2019, the DBM has projected that P60 billion will go to the Bangsamoro, and what the existing ARMM produces in terms of tax generation is only roughly P2 billion. What we are looking at is roughly P48 billion worth of taxpayer's money that will be used to—I stand corrected—P58 billion worth of taxpayer's money that will be used to subsidize the self-determination of the Bangsamoro people. Am I correct in saying this, Mr. Speaker?

REP. ACHARON. According to the computation, Mr. Speaker, more or less, that is correct, but it is not only the Bangsamoro regional government or the ARMM that is receiving this money. More than their collection, but I guess the DBM can present a computation that there are also some other areas in the Philippines where the financial assistance of the national government is much, much bigger than their tax collection, Mr. Speaker.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). Mr. Speaker, if there is, may we get an example. We are talking about, and—I have not even included the IRA, because if you add the IRA, the projected amount for 2019 can go up to P70 billion, maybe even P80 billion, not including Customs. So, Mr. Speaker, if there is an example that this is same type of treatment where a large sum of money, P58 billion worth of taxpayer's money, from the hardworking

taxpayers from Ilocos, the hardworking taxpayers from Metro Manila, the hardworking taxpayers from the Bicol Region, Cebu, the Visayas, Davao, they are all going to chip in for the self-determination of the Bangsamoro people, please let me know what are the other regions that this is happening.

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, the reason the national government is giving financial assistance to all the regions is for equitable sharing of the national wealth. Mr. Speaker, this is to help develop the area of the ARMM which has one of the highest poverty incidence in the country. While our country in 2015 had a poverty incidence of 16.5 percent, the ARMM had a 48.2 percent poverty incidence, Mr. Speaker. That is why we need to pour in additional resources and financial assistance to develop the area more in the spirit of countryside development which is the program of the national government.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). Mr. Speaker, thank you again for the answer of the honorable Sponsor because it reminds me of a good friend I had when I was a Governor, my counterpart in Misamis Occidental, Gov. Leo Ocampo. When Misamis Occidental was removed from the 10 poorest provinces of the Philippines, he came out in our Governors League saying, “Sana lang, I wish we are forever poor kasi kung forever poor kami, maraming pondo ang bumababa galing sa itaas.” That is something similar to what is happening now. How lucky it is to be one of the poorest regions in the country, na we are going to pour a lot and not even a lot, but even more money. Which brings me to the next question, Mr. Speaker—how much exactly is the existing appropriations of the ARMM for calendar year 2018?

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, we have here a copy of the ARMM budget allocation up to 2017. The ARMM has a budget allocation of P33.3 billion, Mr. Speaker.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). It is P33 billion?

REP. ACHARON. Yes, for 2017.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). That is P33 billion and we are projecting almost P60 billion, double the appropriations that was given to the ARMM is what the Bangsamoro is going to get. How lucky are they that they are poor. Secondly, unlike the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, that will pass through the scrutiny of this House, it will pass through the scrutiny of the House of Representatives. Now, if they are not doing their job, tanggal ang appropriations nila. Well, let us give it to free education, but with this Bangsamoro

Basic Law, we are doubling the appropriations of the ARMM at the expense of the hardworking taxpayers, the Filipino people, and allowing them to use the money as they please. It will not pass through the very scrutiny of the House of Representatives. Am I correct in saying this, Mr. Speaker?

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, we are trying to give them a chance to improve their area, that is why we are increasing their appropriation or allocation as we can observe here in the budget allocation by region. If the honorable Sponsor would allow, if we will look at their allocation, in 2015, the ARMM only had an appropriation of P34 billion while Region IX had P31 billion; Region X, P36 billion; Region XI, P31 billion; and Region XII, P31 billion also. In 2016, the budget allocation of the ARMM was P28 billion while for Region IX, it is P42 billion; Region X, P49 billion; Region XI, P41 billion; and Region XII, P38 billion.

You will note, Mr. Speaker, that the ARMM just received minimal amounts as far as allocation was concerned in the past few years. Now, if you look at the other regions, Mr. Speaker, in today’s current allocation, which was asked by the honorable Gentleman from Lanao del Norte, in 2018, the budget of the ARMM is P48.7 billion. If we compare that to the CARAGA Region, it has a budget allocation of P86.84 billion.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). Mr. Speaker.

REP. ACHARON. So, if you are saying that we will be giving them P60 billion, P60 billion is still smaller than P86 billion.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). I beg to differ, Mr. Speaker. From what I heard, the budget for Northern Mindanao, which is my region, is roughly P30 billion. Of course, I am going to be upset. Wala silang ginagawa diyang sa ARMM tapos with all of the hardworking taxpayers, especially in Cagayan de Oro, Iligan City, Bukidnon, all of a sudden, doble ang budget ng ARMM compared to Northern Mindanao. That is a little bit unfair.

I would like to move forward if the good Sponsor will allow me, considering that I have already exhausted 30 minutes. Now, I would like to ask, this is the point that I am trying to drive at, Mr. Speaker, the block grant, is it a critical part of the peace agreement with the MILF?

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, as we understand it, the block grant is a fund that can close the gap between budget and development in the area. As I said, we are trying to give them a chance to develop and that is why we are increasing their budget. This block grant will represent their allocation although it is bigger than the

previous allocation. According to our Representative from Lanao del Norte, that is unfair or this is not fair but to me, Mr. Speaker, if we will help this area to develop, if the majority will approve this and will grant this financial assistance, then it will become fair.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). Mr. Speaker, I would like to move forward and rather ask questions, just to put on record, what exactly does the peace agreement say? What exactly does the comprehensive agreement on the Bangsamoro say? It reads, “Annex on the Revenue Generation and Wealth Sharing, Article V, Fund Transfer.—(a) The central government shall provide a block grant to the Bangsamoro”—that is in the peace agreement—“The Bangsamoro block grant shall be based on a formula provided in the Bangsamoro Basic Law”—check—“which, in no case, shall be less than the last budget received by the ARMM immediately before the establishment of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority.”

So, based on the Comprehensive Agreement of the Bangsamoro, actually, if you are going to comply with the peace agreement, all you have to give them is what the ARMM is giving them now, which is roughly P30 plus billion, then you do not violate the peace agreement. What the BTC has given to us is a wish list to maximize what they can get from Congress, and they have succeeded to maximize what they want.

In the peace agreement, it says, pwede na iyang P30 billion, but what we are approving or what we have approved in the Joint Committee, okay na iyang P60 billion—P60 billion or P30 billion less for your individual local communities which could have been used for development. But again, let us share our wealth and let us just hope that these funds will not be wasted.

I would like to move on.

REP. ACHARON. Yes, Mr. Speaker. His hope is also my hope.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). Yes, and I would like to move on by stating my disappointment and again, I am airing my frustration on why we could not amend House Bill No. 6475 because I filed my bill for the Bangsamoro Basic Law. There are four basic provisions in my bill—it is exactly the same as the Bangsamoro Basic Law but with four exceptions: one, tinanggal ko lang ang Municipality ng Lanao del Norte, naturally. Two, the President said it pero I experienced it, the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the PNP must stay with the national government. I was so happy when the President said, “One Nation, One Police” and “Armed Forces, x x x akin iyan.” I would no longer have to fight for those two provisions which I filed here in Congress. The last was a Deputy Ombudsman for the

Bangsamoro. It would not matter to me, sana lang, if we give them P100 billion, P60 billion, P30 billion, but at least, sana naman ay may Deputy Ombudsman for the Bangsamoro. Look at the Bangsamoro Basic Law, and I challenge all Congressmen here, I challenge the people to read the Bangsamoro Basic Law, House Bill No. 6475. They asked for heaven and earth—all the constitutional bodies, human rights, civil service, education, accountability, auditing, but they do not ask for their own Ombudsman. That is kind of scary for me, and me being there in front of Lanao del Sur, there is a big question mark on what they are really up to.

So, I would like to move forward because I am running out of time. My general drive, Mr. Speaker, is that we have no problem as this was my personal experience. On peace and order, for as long as there is a lack of good governance, there will always be poverty and social unrest. If we fail in governing, there will always be insurgency and there will never, never be peace. So, what the BBL should be is not only about the right to self-determination, but it should be about improving the failures of the past.

Look at the ARMM and ask why the former President called it a failed experience. Why, after we gave them their freedom of self-determination pero hanggang ngayon, it is still one of the poorest areas in the country? That is a very important question that we have to ask. And put an end to the ghost projects. Ako, you know what my first experience was, Mr. Speaker, here in Congress? I would like to thank our Speaker, Speaker Bebot Alvarez for putting me there in the Committee of Appropriations with the Chairman of the ARMM, and listening to the budget deliberations of the ARMM. Iyong first meeting ko, we were arguing already about mga ghost projects in the ARMM, accusing the regional governor of ghost projects. The regional governor, turning around and pointing, said, “Hindi, iyong mga ghost projects, iyan ang ghost projects ninyo, we found that you are implementing from DPWH Regions 9, 10 and 12 into the Autonomous Region ng Muslim Mindanao.” Ako naman, we need to put an end to these things, and that is what I would like to ask in my next series of questions and, Mr. Speaker, I cannot find it. *(Laughs)* I would like to read, and anybody can google this from the Internet—I am reading an article from CNN Philippines dated January 6, 2017, written by Regine Cabato. The title reads, “Budget Secretary: Eight ARMM Congressmen requested eight billion transferred to DPWH” and then it reads, continuing:

Eight congressmen from the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao requested that P8.5 billion worth of funds from their districts be transferred to the budget for public works, the budget secretary disclosed Thursday.

“Sabi nila I might as well take away the one allocated to their district and ibibigay nalang namin sa Public Works,” Diokno told *The Source*. “Kasi sa tingin nila mas transparent yung Public Works kaysa sa ARMM.”

These are the things that we need to stop. We need to ensure that there is transparency inside the Bangsamoro; otherwise, if there is a continuation of these alleged ghost projects, walang mangyayari diyan. The people there will say, “Oh, malaki ang nakukuha ng politician. If we do not get our share, let us fight the government.” That is what is going to happen.

So, I would like to ask the good Sponsor, in this case, we have an issue of transparency. In the DPWH, public works or big infrastructure projects are being allocated for Region IX, Region X, and Region XII, to be implemented inside the ARMM. I only found this here, in this Seventeenth Congress. In the entire nine years I have served as Governor, I never realized that the ARMM projects were being funneled through Regions IX, X and XII. I asked around, iyong mga retired DPWH employees, “Ano ba talaga ang nangyayari diyan? Bakit iyan ang ginagawa ninyo?” Ang answer nila sa akin was, “We cannot do anything about it. Iyan ang gusto ng mga Congressman.” Then, my next question, “Mino-monitor mo ba iyan?” This retired DPWH employee answered me, “Are you crazy? MILF territory iyan. Hindi ako suicidal.” Then I went to the COA and I asked, “COA, are you aware of these DPWH projects being implemented, the funds are being put in Regions IX, X and XII?” “Yes.” “So, when it has been completed inside the ARMM, are you the ones also auditing it?” He said, “No.” Informally, he told me, “No.” Then Who is auditing it? “It falls in another region.” “So, the other region needs to audit it?” Iyan ang magulo. Sana lang, this Bangsamoro Basic Law will correct deficiencies like these.

Now, we are providing the Bangsamoro Basic Law and under the peace agreement by the way, the Comprehensive Agreement for the Bangsamoro, it stated that all public works are exclusive for the Bangsamoro. So, I would like to know from the good Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, what is the intention of House Bill No. 6475? Are we going to do away with that questionable form of implementing projects in the ARMM through Regions IX, X and XII? Will the funds be directly downloaded to the Bangsamoro government and will there be proper accountability?

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, the Bangsamoro regional government will have its own engineering department, Mr. Speaker, while the DPWH will continue to take charge of the construction and development of projects under the national government like national

highways, drainage and other infrastructure projects that are funded out by the national government and are considered national projects, Mr. Speaker.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker, because now, we have found out na may dagdag pala para sa Bangsamoro. On top of the block grant na P60 billion, we also have funding from the national government and all of us have experienced—in your respective districts, what is the ratio of infrastructure versus other programs? Malaki, hindi ba? Malaki, and so, how is the P60 billion going to be used if the national government will be funding national roads, national bridges, irrigation projects? What will be the infrastructure where the P60 billion be used for? How lucky it is to be in the Bangsamoro, they are better treated than the district Congressman sitting here outside of the Bangsamoro.

I would like to move on to my next question, Mr. Speaker. My next question is about Marawi. You know, we had the hardest time. I was screaming my lungs out at the former DSWD Secretary, I was screaming my lungs out at any Secretary that had to do with the rehabilitation of Marawi City when we had our 2018 budget appropriations, because from what I heard from the President, there is P25 billion, tapos when I asked the different Secretaries, wala, they cannot find it. I got scared. You displaced—we displaced an entire city and we cannot find the budget needed to rehabilitate Marawi City. Thankfully, with our Chairman Karlo Nograles of the Appropriations Committee and the good leadership of our Speaker Bebot Alvarez, we were able to find P15 billion for the Marawi rehab here in the 2018 budget.

REP. ACHARON. My congratulations.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). Now, I would like to ask, is the Bangsamoro, with their oodles of funds, going to help in the rehabilitation of Marawi, Mr. Speaker? I would like to ask the good Chairman.

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, Marawi City, being within the area of the Bangsamoro regional government, I believe it is the responsibility of the Bangsamoro regional government to help rehabilitate Marawi. The block grant that will be given to them is not only for infrastructure projects or programs, but it will be used to appropriate funds for all services such as shelter, health, education, environmental protection, development of peace and order, and other social development programs that they need in order to improve the area, Mr. Speaker.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker, because that is exactly what I wanted to hear. You know, I am speaking now so that everybody from

Lanao del Sur can hear. We have an Appropriations Bill—as correctly said by Senator Recto, this is also an Appropriations Bill— P60 billion was given to the Bangsamoro. Whereas, in the 2018 budget, we had to scrape the GAA to find P15 billion to give to Marawi City. At this point in time, the legislators, especially the legislators of Lanao, can move to amend the Bangsamoro Basic Law para sigurado na tayo that the Bangsamoro government will take care of Marawi City. We can even legislate here na kailangan may P50 billion para sa Marawi over a period of five years. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the good Sponsor, are we going to do that?

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, I think it is the responsibility of the Bangsamoro government to appropriate funds for the areas within their jurisdiction. If and when the Congress or this House appropriates funds, then that will be the collective decision of this Chamber, Mr. Speaker. As far as mandatory appropriations or allocations are concerned, it is the responsibility of the Bangsamoro regional government. If we will allow them to be given, to receive, rather, P60 billion, and the P50 billion will be allocated to Marawi development, then, the Bangsamoro Regional government will no longer be able to sustain their administration with P10 billion. So, like any other local government units or regional offices, I believe we receive also extra budget allocation coming from different national government agencies, not only DPWH, but also the Department of Agriculture, Department of Health, and other departments, Mr. Speaker.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). So, Mr. Speaker, am I correct in saying that the good Sponsor is going to allow me to propose all of these as individual amendments, and let the House decide if we will allow ...

REP. ACHARON. We will ...

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). ... Marawi to be provided with substantial rehabilitation funds by the Bangsamoro.

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, we have to discuss that during the ...

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). I will accept that, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ACHARON. ... period of amendments, Mr. Speaker.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). I will accept that, Mr. Speaker. I am running out of time, at least I can stand here and face my relatives in Lanao del Sur that I

spoke on behalf of the Maranaos here in the House of Representatives, not just sitting silently here in my desk doing nothing.

Ngayon, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move to the next issue and because I only have 10 minutes, maybe I will just make a manifestation.

Really, what is this peace deal about? This peace deal is about peace with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, but if you look at the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, saan ang puwersa nila? Undeniably, sa Lanao del Sur, nandiyan sila. Undeniably, Lanao del Norte, may kampo sila. How about Maguindanao? Do not forget that Commander Umbra Kato splintered away from the MILF. You are no longer dealing with the MILF here. You are dealing with two factions, the MILF and the BIFF. So, kalahati na ang puwersa. Secondly, inside Basulta, Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, I even heard it from one of our colleagues from that area na you can count the MILF with your left hand. The rest of the rebels that you will see there are MNLF members, so, really when you are talking now of the peace agreement, you are talking about a peace agreement with the fighters in Lanao and half of the fighters in Maguindanao. You are not talking about a peace agreement with majority of the fighters in BaSulTa, especially if Nur Misuari is upset with the Bangsamoro Basic Law and chooses to return to fight against the government. You are not talking about a peace agreement with the BIFF. We are already fighting them.

Even if we pass the Bangsamoro Basic Law, there will still be fighting with the BIFF and they are the ones that the President mentioned to be always sniping at our checkpoints. Walang sniping sa amin sa Lanao. I have double-checked with our brigade commanders. Walang sniping sa amin sa Lanao. What is there is massive recruitment—massive recruitment for the ISIS or the Islamic State Movement among the youth. Why? Because of what happened in Marawi. So long as Marawi is not rehabilitated properly, there will always be massive recruitment for the Islamic State in Lanao del Sur. There is no question about that.

So, this peace agreement that we are talking about is actually just the combatants in Lanao del Sur and half the combatants in Maguindanao, and not the rest who are fighting against our government. Secondly, we have asked this and I hope I can get the good Sponsor to concur, we asked this in the Joint Committee. If I am not mistaken, one of our colleagues asked it na—they asked the OPAPP, “Can you give us a database of the MILF combatants?” Ang sagot nila is, “No, we do not have it.” So, when will we know exactly what the force of the MILF is? In the news, they say they are 80,000 in Lanao. I concur with our brigade, hindi sila aabot ng 8,000. Imagine that? We are going to give away P60 billion because you are scared of 8,000 insurgents. What is the real number of the rebel forces? It was never submitted in our Joint Committee because that does

not exist. The MILF will submit the real database of their MILF combatants after we pass the Bangsamoro Basic Law, and that could be their relatives, supporters, noncombatants, even the entire population of the ARMM so that they can benefit from the legislation that this good House of Representatives will soon pass.

I would like to close, Mr. Speaker, by saying, this BBL has a lot of expectations and a lot of uncertainty. Sana lang the leadership will strongly consider leveling off these expectations, leveling off this uncertainty, so if there is a failure to fully implement the Bangsamoro Basic Law, the people on the ground will not be offended. Even if this passes Congress, this still has to pass the test of constitutionality; it still has to pass the Supreme Court and if the Supreme Court will say “No”—for example, “Hindi puwede iyan, iyong six municipalities, it has to be a province-wide plebiscite”—papayag ba ang MILF or will they scream that you violated the peace agreement? Iyan ang problema.

I hope that the path to where we are leading this country, that we are leading—actually, not this country but this region—our small corner in Mindanao towards is sustainable peace, not questionable peace, not peace upon the demands of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and their ground troops or ground leaders.

That is what I hope for the Bangsamoro Basic Law, Mr. Speaker. If this is undeniably constitutional, then so be it, but it still has to pass the Supreme Court, and that is the big question mark for me. Will Commander Bravo accept the decision of the Supreme Court?

Last but not the least, peace at the expense of justice. This is something that I hope the leadership here in the House will strongly consider. Are you throwing away justice for those who had been massacred by the MILF at the expense of peace? Now, we will turn our backs na lang on those victims of Mamasapano. We will turn our backs na lang on those victims of the attacks of the MILF in Lanao del Norte, in North Cotabato, and also those victims in Zamboanga City who have been kidnapped by the members of the MILF. We turn our backs na lang because we want peace.

Is that what our Congress is going to do? I hope the leadership will strongly consider this because that is what they believe, that once the Bangsamoro Basic Law will be approved—I wish I had more time to answer this, once the Bangsamoro Basic Law will be approved, there will be amnesty for the rebels. Sana lang our leadership will make it very clear to the people, that if you have a case in court, you need to see your time in court. If you have an arrest warrant because you kidnapped someone in Zamboanga City and you surrendered to the government, you go straight to the court and you are innocent until proven guilty. You do not simply walk around chanting “*Alhamdullilah*, we won the Bangsamoro and I won my freedom, and I have escaped

justice.” Peace at the expense of justice—I hope that will not prevail here in the Seventeenth Congress.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Majority Leader. Thank you to our good Sponsor.

REP. ACHARON. Thank you also, good Gentleman from Lanao del Norte.

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

REP. ACHARON. Please take good care of your heart.

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

REP. FARIÑAS. Mr. Speaker, before we acknowledge the next interpellator, may I just read into the records a communication we received from the President of the Republic of the Philippines. I will read, dated today, May 29, 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. 6475, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE BASIC LAW FOR THE BANGSAMORO AND ABOLISHING THE AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9054, ENTITLED ‘AN ACT TO STRENGTHEN AND EXPAND THE ORGANIC ACT FOR THE AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO’, AND REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6734, ENTITLED, ‘AN ACT PROVIDING FOR AN ORGANIC ACT FOR THE AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO’ AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, ”

in order to advance the creation of a new autonomous region in Muslim Mindanao. The passage of this measure is a manifestation of the government’s commitment to address the diverse needs of the people in Bangsamoro and all communities and constituents of Mindanao, towards a just and lasting peace in Mindanao and in the Philippines as a whole.

Best regards.

Very truly yours,

(Sgd.) RODRIGO DUTERTE

This is copy furnished the Senate President of the Philippines and Secretary Sityo, Head of the PLLO.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). To the Committee on Rules for proper disposition.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Celso L. Lobregat from the First District of Zamboanga for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The Representative from the First District of Zamboanga, the Hon. Celso Lobregat is recognized, if the good Sponsor wishes to be interpellated.

REP. ACHARON. Yes, Mr. Speaker. I would like to request that the honorable Chairman of the Committee on Muslim Affairs be recognized.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Noted. Honorable Lobregat, you now have the floor.

REP. LOBREGAT. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Sponsor, I noticed that the Sponsor has changed.

I would like to state, I have always stated, that I am for peace. I am not anti-peace, but we need a Bangsamoro Basic Law that is just not only for the Bangsamoro but to everybody, especially the other people in Mindanao. A Bangsamoro that is fair not only to the Bangsamoro, but fair to everybody. That is acceptable not only to the MILF, but acceptable to the people of Mindanao. That is feasible and more important, consistent with the Constitution and existing laws.

At this juncture, Deputy Speaker Abu relinquished the Chair to Rep. Eric D. Singson

I only have one hour and I have many issues. So, I know I will not finish all the issues but I will, more or less, state the issues as we go along.

The first issue is the issue of creeping expansion. Under the Plebiscite, Article XV, Section 4, there is Delimitation of the Bangsamoro; Periodic Plebiscite, wherein:

Five years after the ratification of the Basic Law and every five years thereafter for a period of 25 years, a plebiscite shall be held in the cities, municipalities, and other geographic areas which were not able to join the Bangsamoro as a result of the plebiscite mentioned in the three preceding sections, to determine whether they desire to join the Bangsamoro.

The contiguous provinces, cities, municipalities, barangays, and other geographic areas particularly mentioned in the 1976 Tripoli Agreement and 1996 Final Peace Agreement, other than those mentioned in the preceding three sections, may opt to join the Bangsamoro through the periodic plebiscite provided that a petition signed by 10 percent of the registered voters or a resolution of the local government unit of each province, city, municipality, or other contiguous geographic area opting to join
x x x.

Mr. Sponsor, what is the intent of having the ratification and five plebiscites every five years?

REP. PAPANDAYAN. Magandang gabi, Mr. Speaker.

The intention of the BTC is to, iyong hindi po kasama sa ngayon sa BBL, ito ay para magkaroon po sila ng pagkakataon sa darating na panahon na masali din sa BBL.

REP. LOBREGAT. Ibig sabihin, kung hindi masali ngayon pero contiguous, pasasali sa next plebiscite. Kung hindi pa rin makuha, pasasali sa naman sa next plebiscite. Pero kung nakuha iyong hindi contiguous ngayon, magiging contiguous na, ano ang intensiyon ho nito, kunin ang buong Mindanao?

REP. PAPANDAYAN. Kapag na-ratify ang BBL, the BBL will govern. Kapag maganda iyong pamamaraan nila, then mai-engganyo iyong hindi pa nakasali na sumali na doon sa next plebiscite. Kaya po magpapakita ng magandang gobyerno ang isang BBL para po makumbinsi nila na sumali na sila sa next plebiscite.

REP. LOBREGAT. Ah, ganoon, pero iyong katabing local government unit, hindi puwedeng kumuha ng area ng autonomous region. Maghihintay na lang kami ng ilalagay ng BBL, ng Bangsamoro, na project, magma-migrate na iyong tao and so, in a period of 25 years ano ang mukha ng Mindanao?

REP. PAPANDAYAN. Kapag ho maganda ang pamamaraan ng BBL, lalaki at lalaki iyan dahil kahit na iyong hindi contiguous area, kapag nakita nila na maganda ang BBL, baka sumali rin sila.

REP. LOBREGAT. Okay. May probisyon ba na puwedeng umalis?

REP. PAPANDAYAN. Wala.

REP. LOBREGAT. Wala and so, talagang one-sided. Talagang ang ibang local government unit ay maghihintay na lamang hanggang makuha sila, pagkatapos ay

sasabihin nila, “Wala tayong magawa dahil iyan ang batas na ipinasa ng Seventeenth Congress.”

REP. PAPANDAYAN. Kapag hindi po maganda ang pamamaraan ng BBL, hindi ho ito lalaki at hindi ito sasalihan ng iba pa, kaya huwag kang mag-alala diyan. Kapag maganda ang pamamaraan ng BBL, bakit ayaw mong sumali? Kung maganda naman kaysa sa Pilipinas, bakit ayaw mo? Kung pangit, hindi maganda iyong pamamaraan, walang sasali, pero kung sasali iyong mga tao, wala tayong ...

REP. LOBREGAT. Pero walang puwedeng umalis.

REP. PAPANDAYAN. Wala.

REP. LOBREGAT. Parang nasa preso ka, hindi ka puwedeng umalis.

REP. PAPANDAYAN. Hindi puwede kasi wala sa batas na umalis ka.

REP. LOBREGAT. Alam mo, iyan ang problema. If you want peace, you have to have stability. If you want peace, you have to have tranquility. If you want peace, you have to have certainty. Iyan ang problema. Pagkatapos ng ratification, maglalaban-laban iyan. Siyempre, gaya ng Lanao del Norte, they will fight tooth and nail to try to preserve their territorial integrity. Ang BBL naman, ang Bangsamoro, nandiyan sa batas, puwedeng magbigay ng tulong, magbigay ng project sa labas. So, ano ang mangyayari? Iyan ang problema. So, every time you have a plebiscite, maghahanda na iyan, parang boksing. Sinasabi mo, “Okay, kung matalo ngayon itong boksingero, after five years, bakbakan ulit. After five years, bakbakan ulit.”

Alam mo ba, Mr. Sponsor, last Congress ay binuo iyong Peace Commission ni President Aquino para pag-aralan iyong Bangsamoro Basic Law. Pabor na pabor sila sa kung ano ang gusto ni Presidente Aquino pero isa lang ang recommendation nila: Tanggalin ninyo iyong creeping provision ng BBL. Isa pa, anong karapatan natin, itong Seventeenth Congress, na we will impose this, and we will impose on other Congresses this expanding plebiscite? Hinirit doon sa caucus, sabi nila, “Okay, hindi na, wala nang five years, sa 25 years. Isa na lang after five or 10 years.”

Hindi ba bumoto tayo? Andoon ka ba sa caucus, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. PAPANDAYAN. Opo, nandoon ako sa caucus.

REP. LOBREGAT. Nakita mo ...

REP. PAPANDAYAN. Ganito po ang pangyayari ...

REP. LOBREGAT. Sandali. Nakita mo ba na tatlo lang ang pumabor sa may pangalawang plebiscite at ang buong kuwarto ay puno ng Congressmen na nag-oppose? Sabi nila ay isang plebisito lang. Akala namin tapos na pero ngayon, nandiyan pa rin sa Bill na-submit sa atin. Anong karapatan natin magpasa ng batas na lampas na pero magdi-dictate pa rin ng plebiscite way after our term?

REP. PAPANDAYAN. Kung iyan po ang gusto ng karamihan, wala po tayong magagawa pero bakit po kayo matatakot sa plebiscite? Hindi ba every three years ay nag-eeleksiyon tayo?

REP. LOBREGAT. Eleksiyon iyon.

REP. PAPANDAYAN. Nag-eeleksiyon tayo, parang plebiscite din iyon.

REP. LOBREGAT. Hindi ho. Iba iyong eleksiyon ng opisyal sa isang probinsiya, sa isang siyudad, sa isang munisipyo, sa isang barangay. Dito, kinukuha mo, you are expanding at the expense of other local government units. Saan ka makakakita ng batas na isang local government unit lang ang puwedeng kumuha ng area sa ibang local government unit pero iyong isa ay hindi puwede?

Kagaya ng—ano ang boundary ng Makati, Manila? Ano kung may batas na sasabihin na iyong Makati ay puwedeng kumuha ng barangay ng Manila pero iyong Manila, hintay nila iyon kung makuha iyong barangay ninyo. Ganoon ang batas, to put it in layman’s language, you are expanding at the expense of another local government unit. There are no “ifs” and “buts.”

REP. PAPANDAYAN. Hindi po ba nasa batas na kapag ang isang barangay, halimbawa isang barangay ng Quezon City ang gustong lumipat sa Manila, pupuwede iyon sa batas, hindi po ba? Ganoon din po iyon. Bakit ka matatakot sa plebiscite kung ang BBL ay mara-ratify, e kapag mag-eeleksiyon, matatalo din naman iyong ano ...

REP. LOBREGAT. Walang ...

REP. PAPANDAYAN. Bakit ka matatakot?

REP. LOBREGAT. Walang problema. Nasa Local Government Code kung may municipality, may barangay na gustong lumipat sa ibang local government unit, mayroong proseso. Hindi mo dinidiktahan na bawat limang taon o bawat kailan kailangan ay may plebisito at iyong mga barangay lang ay puwedeng sumali sa isang munisipyo o sa kabilang siyudad pero iyong ibang siyudad ay hindi puwede. Kaya sabi ko, just to be fair to everybody, hindi lang para sa Bangsamoro.

REP. PAPANDAYAN. Alam po ninyo idadaan din sa plebiscite iyan kaya huwag na kayong matakot.

REP. LOBREGAT. Hindi sa takot, reality iyan.

REP. PAPANDAYAN. Kung iyan ang gusto ...

REP. LOBREGAT. Alam ba ninyo, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, ano iyong three Gs? Guns, goons and gold.

Okay. Bigyan kita ng halimbawa. Iyong normalization process nitong kasunduan, hindi pa maisauli iyong mga firearms ng MILF, matagal pa iyan. In fact, hanggang hindi natupad lahat ang nasa agreement, hindi makukumpleto iyan. So, may baril.

Gold. Kung ibibigay natin iyong six percent o five percent, bilyun-bilyon, pagkatapos ina-allow pa natin na puwedeng maglagay ng proyekto, puwedeng maglagay ng programa sa labas ng Bangsamoro, ano na iyong isang barangay diyan, palagay mo ilang milyon? Diyan sa barangay ilagay mo. O iyong tao, ipalipat mo doon.

O, ano iyong goons? Mayroon naman iyong BIFF. Sabi ninyo hindi kasali sa MILF.

So, tatlo, kumpleto na iyan—guns, goons and gold. So, iyong ibang local government unit, maghihintay na lang.

So, siguro 14 minutes, isang topic pa lang iyon. So, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, nagpalit na naman ang Sponsor. Okay. Mr. Sponsor, I will ask you a question directly.

REP. ACHARON. With the authority of the Gentleman from Zamboanga, Mr. Speaker, can I respond to his question. He was asking about the plebiscite being stipulated in our proposed House Bill. Mr. Speaker, if the Honorable Lobregat has in mind some amendments to the proposed plebiscite being stipulated in the House Bill, then let them be discussed in the period of amendments.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor.

I was going to ask a question. Were you in the caucus?

REP. ACHARON. Which one?

REP. LOBREGAT. The first caucus when there was a vote on whether it is one plebiscite or two plebiscites.

REP. ACHARON. Yes, I was there.

REP. LOBREGAT. Were you one of those who stood up in favor of only one plebiscite?

REP. ACHARON. I think so, Mr. Speaker. I favor the recommendation to have one plebiscite.

REP. LOBREGAT. So, I will no longer delay this discussion because I have only 44 minutes. I am very happy that the Sponsor is in agreement with me, that he is favoring only one plebiscite, and I think you know why. Aside from the plebiscite, there is the issue of territory. You have a core territory, the ARMM area; the six municipalities, Lanao del Norte; 39 barangays of North Cotabato; you have the cities of Isabela and Cotabato; and then you have what you call the contiguous area. Mr. Speaker, many people said, “Anyway, hindi naman kasali ang Zamboanga City. Bakit ka nagku-question? Bakit ka tumatayo?” I will ask the Sponsor, is Zamboanga City contiguous or not?

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, the question is, if Zamboanga is contiguous to the ARMM?

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes.

REP. ACHARON. I think so, Mr. Speaker, but since they voted “No” during the plebiscite, then they are excluded from the core territory of the ARMM.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes, but if that is your definition of contiguity and you are saying Zamboanga is contiguous, that is where the problem lies. In the course of our caucus, I asked and I was told by the House leadership that contiguity will only be by land. If contiguity is only by land, then Zamboanga City is not contiguous, but if we define contiguity by sea, by water, by air, by the atmosphere as the definition of the territory of the Bangsamoro is, then not only is Zamboanga City contiguous, but perhaps, so with many parts of Mindanao because the definition of territory under Article III says, “Territory refers to the land mass as well as the maritime, terrestrial, fluvial and alluvial domains, and the aerial domain above it.”

So, if you follow this definition, this is the definition that is in our Philippine Constitution defining the Philippine territory. That is why in the period of amendments, I will definitely propose that the definition of “territory” refer only to land mass as well as waters over which the Bangsamoro has jurisdiction of. Your answer today in plenary, on the floor, is different from the answer given by the House leadership in our small group meeting, in the caucus. They said that “territory” is only contiguous, territory is only by land. That is why I am worried that we are not getting the signals clear because I was told on this not only once, not only twice, but three times. Rest assured that contiguity will only be by land.

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes.

REP. ACHARON. Even if we will accept that the contiguity is by land and by water, the inclusion of any local government unit for that matter, whether it is barangay, municipality or province, will still be decided by the people through a plebiscite, Mr. Speaker. So, even if you are connected or if you are considered contiguous, or even if you have the same boundary but if you will not vote in favor, you will not vote favorably that you be included in the Bangsamoro regional government, then what is the problem, Mr. Speaker? You will not be included.

REP. LOBREGAT. The problem is, we have been subjected already to two plebiscites, not only Zamboanga City, but 13 provinces and nine cities, and the vote was overwhelming. In the first plebiscite of 1989, 95 percent of the people that voted in Zamboanga City voted out of the Bangsamoro. In 2001, 96 percent voted out and I really am confused why those six municipalities of Lanao del Norte and 39 barangays of North Cotabato were included in that core territory when the question in the 2001 plebiscite was, "Do you vote for your province or city to be included?" It did not mention, "Do you vote that your barangay will be included or do you vote that your municipality will be included?" It is like you are changing the rules of the game after the game is finished. Tinanong ninyo, "Gusto ninyo bang sumali ang siyudad ninyo o ang probinsiya ninyo?" Pagkatapos ngayon, isinasali ninyo iyong municipality o iyong barangay. I think Congressman Mohamad Dimaporo had already argued this case but not all of the six municipalities are contiguous. In the case of North Cotabato, not all of the 39 barangays are contiguous, watak-watak sila.

Mr. Speaker, for the record, because many years from now, maybe somebody will file a case or will cite this Congress and they will look at the records, they will look at the plenary debates. So, I would like to read, for the record, the proceedings of the Constitutional Commission of August 19, 1986, and that was more than 20 years ago. Mr. Azcuna, who was Justice Azcuna, said:

MR. AZCUNA. Madam President, Section 2, as amended, will read as follows:

The creation of autonomous region shall be effective when approved by majority of the voters of the constituent units in a plebiscite called for the purpose: provided, that only constituent units voting favorably in the said plebiscite shall be included in the autonomous region.

MR. DE LOS REYES. Madam President, will Commissioner Azcuna agree to an amendment to his amendment?

THE PRESIDENT. Commissioner de los Reyes is recognized.

MR. DELOSREYES. Instead of "constituent units," I suggest province or city, so that it will not include municipality and barangay.

THE PRESIDENT. Is that acceptable?

MR. AZCUNA. It is accepted, Madam President.

MR. DE LOS REYES. Thank you, Madam President.

THE PRESIDENT. What does the Committee say?

Mr. Nolleddo, who was the Chairman, said:

MR. NOLLEDDO. Madam President, we accept the amendment of Commissioner de los Reyes.

THE PRESIDENT. Is there any objection to this proposed amendment on lines 26, 27 and 28?

MR. MONSOD. Madam President.

THE PRESIDENT. Commissioner Monsod is recognized.

MR. MONSOD. May I just ask a clarificatory question? Why are we excluding municipalities as valid constituent units for purposes of a plebiscite?

MR. DE LOS REYES. Madam President, it is not that we are excluding the municipal units x x x but just imagine the anomaly if, for example, the whole province of Zamboanga is agreeable to be a member of the autonomous region, and then one small municipality is against it, and that one municipality will not be a member of the autonomous region. That would be anomalous.

MR. MONSOD. Yes.

MR. DE LOS REYES. It could also be that one barangay will be against being a member

of the autonomous region. So, we should have a certain parameter by limiting it to province or city. That is my reason.

Now more than 20 years ago, the Commissioner even foresaw the problem of Lanao del Norte. To continue:

MR. MONSOD. Madam President, I see the point in the case of the barangay. But let us take the case of Lanao del Norte which, I believe, has 24 municipalities. As I understand it, and I can be corrected, there are 12 or 13 Muslims municipalities and 11 or 12 Christian municipalities. Would that not complicate the issue if we say that the 11 municipalities, if they are really Christian municipalities, can be outvoted in the province, even if individually there is a strong majority not to be included in the autonomous region?

MR. DE LOS REYES. I would think that they should abide by the decision of the majority in the province. Otherwise, if we will allow each municipality to have their say on the matter, then that will defeat the very purpose for which autonomous regions are being created. Then Bishop Bacani stood up and said:

BISHOP BACANI. Madam President.

THE PRESIDENT. Commissioner Bacani is recognized.

BISHOP BACANI. May I inquire from Commissioner Azcuna? Suppose there are six or seven municipalities that are contiguous and adjacent to each other and which all vote against joining the autonomous region, will that not be a sizeable unit or group to warrant being exempted? I would just like to know.

MR. AZCUNA. Madam President, as the provision is presently worded, this would depend on the relative size of population or voter-wise as against the whole province. If it is the majority of the province, then it can turn the vote for that province. But the reckoning of inclusion or exclusion from the region would be on a province-to-province and city-to-city basis as worded. It will be reckoned on the basis of the voting in the province and in the cities included in the proposed autonomous region, not by municipalities.

BISHOP BACANI. Not even by groups of municipalities?

MR. AZCUNA. Not even by groups of municipalities.

BISHOP BACANI. Thank you very much

REP. LOBREGAT. Thank you very much. So, the issue of geographical area was an insertion. There was no discussion because in the end he says, "as many there voted then it says now."

To continue:

MR. NOLLEDO. What has been read, Madam President, is the first paragraph of Section 2. The second paragraph will be read by Commissioner Bennagen.

MR. BENNAGEN. "THE CREATION OF THE AUTONOMOUS REGION SHALL BE EFFECTIVE WHEN APPROVED BY MAJORITY OF THE VOTES CAST OF THE CONSTITUENT UNITS IN A PLEBISCITE CALLED FOR THE PURPOSE PROVIDED THAT ONLY PROVINCES AND CITIES VOTING FAVORABLY IN SAID PLEBISCITE SHALL BE INCLUDED IN THE AUTONOMOUS REGION."

THE PRESIDENT. That was approved already.

Then, on page 513, it read:

THE PRESIDENT. Commissioner Nolleddo may please proceed.

MR. NOLLEDO. It reads: "The creation of the autonomous region shall be EFFECTIVE WHEN approved by majority of the VOTES CAST BY THE constituent units IN A PLEBISCITE FOR THE PURPOSE PROVIDED THAT ONLY PROVINCES, CITIES AND GEOGRAPHIC AREAS VOTING FAVORABLY IN SAID PLEBISCITE SHALL BE INCLUDED IN THE AUTONOMOUS REGION."

THE PRESIDENT. That has been approved already.

MR. NOLLEDO. It was approved but being part of Section 2, I recommend the proposal be approved if there is no objection.

Then Mr. Bengzon stood up and said:

MR. BENGZON. Madam President, did I hear the Chairman correct when he said “GEOGRAPHIC AREAS”?

Biglang sinigit.

MR. NOLLEDO. Yes.

So, that is why, you now have “geographic areas.” It was very clear that it cannot be by barangay, it cannot be by municipality, and if you would look at our Constitution, our Constitution says in Article X, Section 18:

The creation of the autonomous region shall be effective when approved by majority of the votes cast by the constituent units in a plebiscite called for the purpose, provided that only provinces, cities, and geographic areas voting favorably in such plebiscite shall be included in the autonomous region.

“Geographic areas” was never defined but it was clear that it is not by municipality, it is not by barangay. So, you cannot define now a barangay for a municipality as part of being a geographic area. If you say, Mr. Sponsor, “What is the problem, anyway, there will be a votation?”—Article X, Section 10 also talks about “No province, city, municipality, or barangay may be created, divided, merged, abolished, or its boundary substantially altered, except in accordance with the criteria established in the local government code x x x.” So, even if you try to stretch the imagination by saying “puwede sumali ang barangay,” a barangay cannot automatically join unless the municipality or the city gives its consent and a municipality cannot join unless the province gives its consent. So, again, if you say, you will now allow contiguous municipalities and barangays to join, who will vote and when will that vote be taken? Will the entire province of Lanao del Norte vote? Will the entire province of North Cotabato vote?

At this juncture, Deputy Speaker Singson relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Raneo “Ranie” E. Abu.

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, I know that concern of the honorable Gentleman from Zamboanga has been expressed by him repeatedly even during the Committee hearings about the participation of the barangays, municipalities, cities, and provinces but in this case, what was approved, again, by the majority is what is stated here in our proposed House Bill No. 6475. If the Honorable Lobregat would propose some amendments, then those can be discussed in the period of amendments in order to be specific as far as plebiscite is concerned, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LOBREGAT. Definitely, when the period of

amendments comes, this will be one of my amendments.

The third issue, which is very close to the hearts of the Zamboanguenos is the property issue. There are two property issues: one, the properties of the SPDA and the other one is the property called Cabatangan. I will discuss first the property of the SPDA.

Under Fiscal Autonomy, Article XII, Government-Owned and Controlled Corporations (GOCCs) and financial institutions, it talks about the Southern Philippines Development Authority or SPDA and Al Amanah Bank. It says that within six months from the establishment of the BTA, the intergovernmental fiscal policy board shall determine the participation of the Bangsamoro in the ownership and management of the SPDA and the Al Amanah Bank, and the mode of transfer of ownership to the Bangsamoro. Mr. Sponsor, I do not mind if the SPDA wants to give all its properties located in the Bangsamoro to the Bangsamoro, but there should be a provision that states that properties of the SPDA in areas outside the Bangsamoro, if these are going to be given, they should be conveyed, donated or sold to the local government unit. Are you in agreement, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, just like any other local government unit, if you own a property outside of your jurisdiction, that can be sold, that can be donated, of course, depending on the decision of the local government unit, Mr. Speaker. We always respect the decision of the local government unit through the legislative branch of government, whether it is sanggunian or parliament or any legislative Body, Mr. Speaker. So, in that case, Mr. Speaker, we just have to respect whatever decision there will be with the Bangsamoro regional government if they will donate or dispose of property, Mr. Speaker. Of course, we have to ask them.

REP. LOBREGAT. No, Mr. Speaker, this is not yet the property in Zamboanga City. These are properties not owned by the Bangsamoro, still owned by the SPDA but now, they are already talking of the mode of transfer of ownership. That is why I was saying that I do not mind if the SPDA has properties inside the Bangsamoro, they can give these away to the Bangsamoro, but not the properties outside the Bangsamoro.

Mr. Speaker, I have here a list of the properties: in Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte, half a hectare; in Misamis Oriental, 12 hectares; Pagawayan, Manticao, Misamis Oriental, four hectares; Junta, Panaon, Misamis Oriental, .24 hectares; Sinungayan, Don Carlos, Bukidnon, four hectares; Camp 1, Maramag, Bukidnon, 8.9 hectares; Purok 13, Valencia, 1.6 hectares; Malagamot, Davao City, 2.8 hectares; Catitipan, Davao City, 6.7 hectares; Barangay Sasa, Davao City, 1.8 hectares; Barangay Sasa, Davao City, one hectare; you have Pequeño, Davao City, main office complex, one hectare; Pequeño, Davao City, 3.6 hectares—it is a long, long list.

Do you not agree that we should just put a proviso in this section that says, “provided that properties of the SPDA located outside the Bangsamoro geographical area shall be sold, donated or conveyed to the LGUs where these properties are located”? Why are they interested in so many properties outside? Why? We can say, in Zamboanga City, that we are out, but, they are in. Ganoon ba iyan? So, that is why we are saying, let us put that provision so that, at least, they will not encroach on territories outside the Bangsamoro.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I am running out of time, I have to go faster. There is another property in Zamboanga City which is called the Cabatangan Complex. Mr. Speaker, this is the picture of the Cabatangan hostage-taking. We have here the MNLF, the forces of Misuari, in 2001, took hostages and launched from that Cabatangan property. That is why we are very sensitive that there is a provision now, under the present law, that says that in areas that voted “No,” the national government shall purchase these properties and shall sell these properties to the local government unit—that is in Republic Act No. 9054. That is why I am saying that, in the period of amendments, I will ask that provision to be retained. Zamboanga City had been a victim many times over. This is the picture of the Zamboanga siege in 2013. Maawa naman kayo sa Zamboanga City. Pagbigyan ninyo na kami. We want peace but please, leave us in peace.

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, in response to the concern of the honorable Gentleman from Zamboanga, you will note that in Section 32, Article XII on Fiscal Autonomy which he read, Mr. Speaker, that within six (6) months—and I quote, “within six (6) months from the establishment of BTA, the Intergovernmental Fiscal Policy Board shall determine the participation of the Bangsamoro in the ownership and management of *Al-Amanah* Islamic Investment Bank of the Philippines and the Southern Philippines Development Authority.” It is not automatic that these properties will be transferred to the Bangsamoro, but the Intergovernmental Fiscal Policy Board will determine, and this Intergovernmental Fiscal Policy Board is composed of the heads of the appropriate ministries in the Bangsamoro regional government: the Secretary of Finance, of course, of the national government; and other officials that may be necessary in order to discuss appropriately the ownership of that property.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ACHARON. So, if that is the wisdom or the desire of the honorable Gentleman from Zamboanga, then, let that be discussed in the period of amendments, so that we can discuss thoroughly if that will be accepted by the Sponsors, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LOBREGAT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I will do that in the period of amendments.

Mr. Speaker, there is the issue of the Joint Body for the Zones of Joint Cooperation. These are big bodies of water in the Moro Gulf and the Sulu Sea that are not part of the Bangsamoro territory, but it says here, “there shall be a Joint Body for the Zones of Joint Cooperation composed of the Bangsamoro Minister as Chair, at least one (1) representative of a constituent local government unit of the Bangsamoro adjacent to the Sulu Sea, at least one (1) representative of a constituent local government unit of the Bangsamoro adjacent to the Moro Gulf, the Secretary of the Environment,” et cetera. Mr. Speaker, why should there be areas of Joint Cooperation when these are territorial waters belonging to the Philippines? If ever there is a Joint Body, why should it be chaired by the Minister? If there is ever a Joint Body, it should be chaired by, maybe, the Secretary of Agriculture and not by the Minister of Bangsamoro kasi that body of water does not belong to the Bangsamoro.

Anyway, during the period of amendments, I will propose that the Chair be the Secretary of Agriculture and that if ever there is participation of the Bangsamoro, it should be only as regards policy and not regulation because the Philippine Coast Guard, the one that will implement this, is now a reserve power. So, during the period of amendments, I will propose that, maybe, the Joint Body be created, to be chaired by the Secretary of Agriculture, but the participation of the Bangsamoro will be in policymaking and that the regulation be solely done by the national government.

Mr. Speaker, I will also digress a little and go to one very, very important provision that, if this is challenged in the Supreme Court and if this provision is declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court, the whole Bangsamoro Law will collapse. This is the issue brought forward by Rep. Shernee Abubakar Tan because in the old proposed BBL, the five provinces in the ARMM will vote individually and only those provinces that voted favorably will be part of the Bangsamoro. Unfortunately, this has changed because now, the vote is collective. Meaning to say, if the majority of the votes is “Yes” and Sulu or Basilan votes “No,” Sulu and Basilan are still included.

Mr. Speaker, I am bringing this up because if that is challenged in the Supreme Court and declared unconstitutional, there will be no Bangsamoro area to speak of. So, we better be very, very careful because the Supreme Court in the case of the MOA-AD which we filed—the City of Zamboanga, the City of Iligan, and the province of North Cotabato filed—in that decision, this is what the Supreme Court said, “The present components of the ARMM and the above-mentioned municipalities is that—the six municipalities voted for inclusion therein in 2001, however, does not render another plebiscite unnecessary under the Constitution

because precisely, what these areas voted for then was their inclusion in the ARMM and not the BJE.” Fast forward, the Supreme Court will say, “The five provinces and the six municipalities precisely voted to be in the ARMM and not the Bangsamoro,” and this law that we are passing, that we will pass, abolishes the ARMM and repeals RA 9054 and RA 6734.

So, again, if and when that provision is declared unconstitutional, then, there will hardly be any core territory in the Bangsamoro, Mr. Speaker. If you care to comment, okay lang. If not, I will go to the next issue.

Mr. Speaker, I understand, everybody understands, that the President wants this law passed but the President has, time and again, said, and I heard him personally say, “Ang daming problema, maraming unconstitutional. Pero, iyong pulis, pati iyong military, we will not yield.”

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, you are the Chairman of the Local Government Committee. The PNP, the NAPOLCOM, the Department of National Defense, the AFP, testified in our Committee hearing. The PNP not only testified but also submitted a very strong position paper, and so did the NAPOLCOM. So, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, how can we pass this proposed law without any amendments when, in fact, the President himself said, “Iyong pulis, iyong military, hindi puwede”?

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, the Honorable Lobregat was also present during our Committee hearings, public consultations, even during the votation, and he was also one of those proponents of several amendments, including this item, Mr. Speaker, if I can remember it right. Again, I would like to repeat what I had said earlier, that unfortunately, during the votation, the members of the two Committees voted in favor, and one Committee which is the Committee on Local Government did not favor, but of course, with the vote of two to one, the motion to adopt House Bill No. 6475 with no amendments was approved. That is why this is now the House Bill that we are discussing, Mr. Speaker. If the Honorable Lobregat, Mr. Speaker, would like to introduce amendments, then, that can be discussed in the period of amendments.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes.

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, I am one of those who really took time to understand and appreciate the more than 330 proposed amendments of the three Committees but again, we have to respect the decision of the majority during the approval of House Bill No. 6475 in the Joint Committee.

REP. LOBREGAT. Mr. Sponsor, I am running out of time, but I would just like to read certain provisions that the police and the military, they do not want to amend, they want it deleted. In fact, they want the creation of the NAPOLCOM Board, the Police Board, to be not a

NAPOLCOM Police Board but one of the 17 regional offices. They are for the deletion of the composition of the Board because there should be no board and terms of office. They are for the deletion of so many powers that this proposed law is giving to the Chief Minister. The Chief Minister is supposed to select the head of the Bangsamoro police and his deputies, to exercise operational control and supervision, and disciplinary powers over the Bangsamoro police, to employ/deploy the elements, and assign and reassign Bangsamoro police throughout Bangsamoro, and the Bangsamoro Police Director shall not countermand the order of the Chief Minister.

These are all the provisions that the PNP wants deleted. They also want to delete the provision which says that the Chief Minister has the right and function to impose after due notice and summary hearings of the citizen complaint of the Bangsamoro. Then again, the military and the police are also not in favor that the support services of the PNP like the CIDG, the crime lab and all that, will have to pass through an intergovernmental relations body. I thought we had only one PNP, civilian in character and national in scope. Now, the military also was very much against the creation of a Bangsamoro command. They were very much against the need for a protocol for the movement of the military inside the Bangsamoro area to still pass through the intergovernmental body. Mr. Speaker, these are very, very important provisions on public order and safety that really have to be amended, not only because of the position papers of the PNP, the NAPOLCOM, and the manifestations of the AFP and the DND, but also the position of our President.

Mr. Speaker, I have only four minutes left, and I am about to end. The Bangsamoro wants to expand in areas outside of the Bangsamoro. They want all the properties transferred to them. They want everything inside the Bangsamoro. However, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, what does the proposed law say about the ARMM employees? Is it correct that under the present law, all the ARMM employees will be terminated, retired— what is that provision? Mr. Speaker, I have three minutes left. They want everything. How many employees of the ARMM are these 34,000?

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, according to the BTC, our resource persons of the BTC, they have more than 34,000 employees, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LOBREGAT. There are 34,000 ARMM employees and under the proposed BBL, what will happen to them, will they be retired?

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, may I kindly ask for a suspension of the session.

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

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the session for a few minutes.

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

It was 8:23 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 8:25 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Congressman Lobregat to continue with his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Congressman Lobregat may now continue with his interpellation.

REP. ACHARON. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LOBREGAT. Mr. Speaker, what is the provision pertaining to the 34,000 ARMM employees?

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to correct that. I stand corrected that it is not 34,000 but 30,000 employees only.

REP. LOBREGAT. Okay, so it is 30,000.

REP. ACHARON. Yes, Mr. Speaker. Under Section 9, Article XVI, the BTA or the Bangsamoro Transition Authority, the transition government after the abolition of the ARMM, has the power or has been given the authority to reorganize the bureaucracy of the Bangsamoro regional government. Of course during the reorganization, there will be rehiring or there will be employees who will be separated if they are no longer qualified. According to this Bill, Mr. Speaker, employees separated from the service will be given or will receive separation pay equivalent to maximum of three months salary per year of service.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Sorry, Gentleman, the time has expired.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. LOBREGAT. Last manifestation, Mr. Speaker, just one minute.

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

REP. ACHARON. I will just continue with my answer, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LOBREGAT. Just one minute, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. ACHARON. That is all there, Mr. Speaker. As I have said, the Bangsamoro government will be given the authority to reorganize and those employees who will be separated will be given separation pay.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The Gentleman's time has expired.

REP. LOBREGAT. Mr. Speaker, may I ask for just one minute to close my interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Is there any motion from the Majority Leader? Is the Gentleman asking for a one-minute extension?

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move for an additional minute for Congressman Lobregat.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes, I will ...

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

REP. LOBREGAT. I will follow the one-minute extension, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The Gentleman's time is extended for another minute.

REP. LOBREGAT. This is just on the issue of the block grant. Mr. Speaker, on the issue of the block grant, all local government units do not enjoy partaking of the collection of the Bureau of Customs. Why is it that in this law, the Bangsamoro will be given a certain percentage to include the collection of national taxes in Bureau of Customs? That is why I said in the beginning, it should be just, just for everybody; it should be fair, fair for everybody. Mr. Speaker, I am for peace but I am not for appeasement at the expense of the Republic.

Thank you very much.

REP. ACHARON. Thank you, Honorable Lobregat, Mr. Speaker.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. DE VENECIA. I now move that we recognize the Hon. Carlos Isagani T. Zarate from BAYAN MUNA Party-List for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The Representative from BAYAN MUNA Party-List, the Honorable Zarate, is recognized to interpellate the Sponsor, if the Sponsor so desires.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The Honorable Zarate now has the floor.

REP. ZARATE. Maraming salamat, G. Ispiker, at magandang gabi sa ating kagalang-galang na mga Sponsor at mga kasamahan. G. Ispiker, G. Ispiker, bago ang lahat, gustong itala ng Kinatawan ng ito na mula't sapul ay kanyang sinusupportahan ang karapatan ng ating mamamayang Moro sa kanilang sariling pagpapasiya. Ang ating binabalangkas na batas ngayon ay naglalayon na mabigyan ng solusyon ang deka-dekadang, sinasabi nating historical mistakes and historical wrongs sa Bangsamoro. Sa katunayan, G. Ispiker, sa ating paglalayong mabigyan ng solusyon ito, napakarami nang kapamaraan ang ginawa ng mga nagdaang mga administrasyon para supilin ang pag-aalsa at rebelyon ng mga mamamayang Moro.

Natatandaan natin na noong 1976, nagkaroon ng Tripoli Agreement between the government of the Republic of the Philippines and then monolithic Moro National Liberation Front, pero ano ba ang nangyari after the 1976 Tripoli Agreement? Pinagtaksilan ng diktador na si Marcos ang MNLF at unilaterally inimplementa daw niya ang mga provisions ng Tripoli Agreement kaya nagtuloy-tuloy ang rebelyon ng mamamayang Moro. Noong 1996, G. Ispiker, Mr. Sponsor, nagkaroon din ng negotiation at natapos ito sa isang final peace agreement in 1996 sa panig ng gobyerno ng Pilipinas at ng Moro National Liberation Front. Ganoon pa man, nagtuloy-tuloy din ang pag-aalsa at rebelyon ng mamamayang Pilipino hanggang noong 2015 kung saan nagkaroon na nga ng Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro. Ganoon pa man, kung matatandaan ng ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor, at nabanggit na rin ito ng kagalang-galang na Deputy Speaker Sema, noong Sixteenth Congress, ang paglalayong magpasa ng isang batas para in compliance with the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro ay na-hijack noong mga ayaw maipasa ito.

Heto na ulit tayo ngayon, dito sa Kapulungang ito, nagbabalangkas ng isang batas. Sa katunayan, itong panukalang batas natin ngayon ay hindi na lamang ito usapin

ng kasunduan ng Moro Islamic Liberation Front, kung hindi usapin din ito ng nakaraang kasunduan sa Moro National Liberation Front. Kaya nga kung ating matatandaan, ang Bangsamoro Transition Commission ay hindi na lamang, if I am correct, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, nagmumula sa Moro Islamic Liberation Front, sa mga kinatawan ng Moro Islamic Liberation Front, sa mga kinatawan ng pamahalaan, mayroon na ring mga kinatawan dito ang Moro National Liberation Front. Tama po ba?

REP. ACHARON. Tama po iyon, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. Sinabi nga natin kahit na noong mga nakaraang agreement, noong final peace agreement with the MNLF, katulad din ng Tripoli Agreement, hindi naipatupad ng pamahalaan ang nilagdaan niyang kasunduan sa mga Moro revolutionary fronts. Heto na tayo ulit ngayon sabi ko nga kanina, nagbabalangkas tayo ng batas para tumupad dahil ito ay kasunduan. Ito ay produkto ng isang negosasyon at hindi ito negosasyon dahil lamang nag-arms ang ating mamamayang Moro. Nag-arms sila dahil may kadahilanan at ito nga ang mga sinasabi nating historical mistakes at historical wrongs, ang socioeconomic conditions kaya nagtulak ito ng kanilang rebelyon. Magmula pa noon, at palaging halimbawa ito ni Pangulong Duterte, kung paanong kabahagi ng isang historical fact ang, halimbawa, ang naging masaker sa mga kapatid nating Tausug doon sa Bud Dajo in March 1906 sa Sulu, kung matatandaan ng Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

Ang ating binabalangkas, gusto kong ulitin, ay kabahagi ng ating paghahanap ng long, just and lasting solution to the Bangsamoro issue. Bilang panimula, G. Ispiker, puwede po bang matanong natin, ano ang ating kasiguruhan na kung tayo ay magbalangkas ng panukalang batas, kung ating maipasa ang panukalang batas na ito, ang House Bill No. 6475, ay hindi ito magiging katulad lamang noong mga nakaraang ipinasang batas na ng Kapulungang ito at ng Senado at nilagdaan ng mga nagdaang Pangulo na hindi rin nasosolusyunan ang sinasabi nating kamalian ng mga nakaraan sa usapin ng ating mga kapatid na Moro?

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, sa ginawang pag-uusap ng gobyerno at ng mga representante o representatives ng MILF, MNLF at ibang mga ahensiya ng gobyerno, napag-usapan na ito iyong pinakamagandang panukala upang mabigyan sila ng katahimikan doon sa Mindanao. Although, honestly, Mr. Speaker, of course, hindi natin mapa-promise, we cannot promise that 100 percent talagang mangyari iyong inaasam-asam natin because maraming mga ibang grupo din ngayon na bumubuo ng kanilang puwersa. The Honorable Zarate is correct that this is not just an agreement today, but it is an agreement of the government since the 1970s. So, we feel that this

will be a good instrument to achieve the peace that we are looking for, dahil ang panukalang batas na ito ay nagbibigay ng additional powers sa kanila, may perang ibibigay sa kanila from the government through block grant, and we are hoping that through these powers na ibibigay sa kanila from the government and the financial assistance, magiging kuntento sila sa kanilang pamumuhay at ito ang magbibigay daan sa isang tunay na kapayapaan sa Mindanao, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. Salamat po, G. Iponsor, Mr. Speaker. Tama po iyan. Pareho tayong galing sa Mindanao at iyon ang una nating gustong mangyari, at hindi lang sa Mindanao, kundi magkaroon na talaga ng tunay at matagalang kapayapaan sa buong bansa.

Naitanong ko rin iyan, G. Iponsor, Mr. Speaker, dahil talagang nakakalito na rin ang nangyayari sa kasalukuyan. In fact, may mga nagsasabing mga kapatid natin na Moro, “Ilang beses ba kaming dapat tanungin kung gusto naming magkaroon ng tunay na awtonomiya, kung kailangan at kung gusto ba namin na magkaroon ng karapatan para sa sariling pagpapasiya?” Napakaraming beses na po. Ilang plebisito na ba ang naganap, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, katulad ng sinabi ng ating kagalang-galang na Representante Zarate na ito ay agreement ng government at iyong mga previous agreements, mayroon pang naiwanan. So, ito ang pinakahuli. This is the last agreement na ibibigay ng ating gobyerno doon sa agreements entered into by the government and the MILF and the MNLF. Ito na siguro ang huli, Mr. Speaker, dahil nandoon na lahat iyong mga provisions na hinihingi ng both parties.

Humihingi ako ng paumanhin sa ating interpellator, Mr. Speaker, dahil kapos po ang aking tagalog dahil Bisaya po ako. Maayo tag binisaya ni.

Nahirapan tayo ng kaunting kalisod dito, but we will try, Mr. Speaker, na sumagot sa tagalog, dahil tagalog nga ang kanyang tanong. But, of course, sabi ko nga, this is the last portion of the agreement. Hopefully, this will be the last plebiscite.

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

That is why it is very important, mahalaga po na ang ating binabalangkas na batas ngayon—dahil sabi ninyo nga ay mayroon mga kakulangan sa mga nakaraang panahon—ay matitiyak nito na tutugon doon sa aspirations of our Bangsamoro people. Mahalaga na hindi malulusaw iyong kanilang aspirations dahil mataas po ang expectations ng mga kapatid nating Moro dahil there were failures in the past. Napakarami na pong pangako na napako para sa ating mga kapatid na Moro, kaya it is very important, Mr. Speaker, as we are crafting here a law that, I think, even goes beyond that.

Pinagdedebatehan na dati noong identity pa lamang pero beyond that, I think we have to make sure that the very core of the Bangsamoro problem, which is also rooted in socio-economic problems, shall be addressed in this law. Aanhin mo nga naman po iyong batas kung, halimbawa, nagpasa na tayo ng batas na mayroong ARMM, but look at what is happening now. After the Marawi siege, nagkakagulo pa rin sa Marawi. Sino ba ang in charge ngayon sa rehabilitation ng Marawi, ang Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao ba? For example, sa DSWD, sino ba ang namimili ng mga equipment, ng mga pagkain? It is Region XII-DSWD and not the ARMM-DSWD. In fact, even up to now na mayroong ARMM pero nabanggit kanina na ang DPWH national pa rin ang may poder at namamahala sa ilang mga proyekto sa loob ng ARMM, and these are just some instances. We may pass a law now but in reality, wala rin siyang silbi dahil noong napasa na ang batas, it went below the expectations na gusto, halimbawa, noong Tripoli Agreement, noong Final Peace Agreement.

Now, I have some questions at ni-raise ko rin ito noong Sixteenth Congress when we debated on the BBL. Dito ba sa ating panukalang batas, House Bill No. 6475, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, matutugunan ba natin dito ang isang isyu na bumabagabag sa mga kapatid natin sa loob ng Bangsamoro, and I am referring clearly sa presensiya, halimbawa, ng mga dayuhang sundalo sa Mindanao, especially in the Bangsamoro area?

REP. ACHARON. Well, the reason, Mr. Speaker, that they will be given more powers is so that they will have enough elbow room to prescribe their policies in the government inasmuch as when we speak of foreign troops, Mr. Speaker, mayroon naman tayong polisiya diyan na galing sa national government. Kung mayroon mang papasok dito na foreign troops ay covered sila under the policy of the national government and the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Ang gusto ko sanang ipaalam din sa ating kagalang-galang na Honorable Zarate ay, the reason na maraming mga powers na ibibigay sa kanila at bibigyan sila ng pondo is so that they will be able to develop, Mr. Speaker, at magkaroon ng opportunities for employment, opportunities for development, opportunities for them to attract more investors to their area. Kaya ganito po ang ginawa ng gobyerno, ang ibigay iyong mga last provisions ng agreement entered into by this government with the MILF and the MNLF.

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

I specifically asked that question, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, and I cited deliberately the fact that one of the reasons, up to now, why we consider it, iyong tinatawag nating “historical wrong,” ay iyong Bud Dajo Massacre because that massacre was perpetrated by American soldiers at isa iyan sa talagang hindi malilimutan ng

mamamayang Moro kung paano silang inapi. In fact, after that, several massacres were perpetrated against the Moro people pero sa kasalukuyan, at nabanggit na rin ng ating kagalang-galang na Sponsors, kahit na mayroon na tayong ipinangagang batas ay ang may poder pa rin kung papapasukin ba o hindi ang mga foreign troops, American troops or for that matter, even Chinese troops, ng central government. Tama ba ang pagkakaintindi noon, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. ACHARON. Yes, Mr. Speaker. Ang Armed Forces of the Philippines pa rin ang may hawak sa lahat ng armed forces ng Pilipinas, including those who will be assigned in the Bangsamoro regional government.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor. Will the Sponsor agree that we can give the Bangsamoro government powers to determine whether or not they will allow their territory to be used as a staging ground or training ground for foreign military exercises by any country or entity? Can this Congress give that power to the Bangsamoro in their pursuit of the right to self-determination, as we want it to be in the proposed Bill?

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, we believe that it is not possible because that is a reserved power of the national government.

REP. ZARATE. Specifically, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, what reserved power are you referring to?

REP. ACHARON. It is the supervision over the Armed Forces of the Philippines, that we only have one armed forces.

REP. ZARATE. I am not referring, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, to that reserved power. I am referring to the power of the Bangsamoro to determine whether or not they will allow in their territory, because they have control over their territory, the conduct of training exercises, for example, or using the Bangsamoro territory as a staging point for any military action by foreign troops against other countries for that matter.

REP. ACHARON. As I have mentioned, Mr. Speaker, the approval as to whether or not to accept foreign troops is still with the national government. Of course, before that, foreign troops coming to the Philippines, where the Bangsamoro regional government is still under and is an integral part of the Republic of the Philippines, they will still have to negotiate with the national government. So, it is the national government which will decide whether they can conduct exercises, for that matter, in the area of the Bangsamoro regional government, Mr. Speaker.

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

I will go now to another point. This Representation believes, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, that one important component to address the socio-economic roots of the rebellion by the Bangsamoro is agrarian reform. In fact, in Article X of R.A. 9054, there is a provision therein about ancestral domain, ancestral lands and agrarian reform. May I inquire from the good Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, if there is a similar provision related to agrarian reform in House Bill No. 6475.

REP. ACHARON. May I ask for a suspension of the session, Mr. Speaker?

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

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend for a few minutes.

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

It was 8:50 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 8:51 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, to continue his sponsorship, I move that we recognize the Honorable Acharon.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The Honorable Acharon is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, to continue his interpellation I move that we recognize the Hon. Carlos Zarate.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The Hon. Carlos Zarate is recognized.

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, there was a question raised by the Honorable Zarate, and if I may be allowed to answer.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). You may proceed, distinguished Sponsor.

REP. ACHARON. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier the good Gentleman, the Honorable Zarate asked about agrarian reform and in one of the sections of this proposed House Bill, Article XVI, Section 8, there is a Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Agrarian Reform that will be established. The legislative branch of the Bangsamoro regional government, thru the Parliament, will, of course, establish policy guidelines regarding agrarian reform programs in the Bangsamoro regional government.

REP. ZARATE. Yes, thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker. True, there is a Ministry for Agrarian Reform, but there is no proviso, correct me if I am wrong, Mr. Speaker, that mandates the Bangsamoro Parliament to pass its own agrarian reform law specifically. For example, Article X, Section 8 of Republic Act No. 9054 says, "Subject to the provisions of the Constitution, the Regional Assembly may enact an Agrarian Reform Law suitable to the special circumstances prevailing in the autonomous region."

So, ang binabanggit po natin na ito, dahil sa R.A. 9054, may clear mandate to enact an Agrarian Reform Law, pero dito ho sa ating binabalangkas na batas ay nawala siya. So, sa tingin ng karamihan, at ako ay naniniwala sa ating mga mamamayan, sa loob ng Bangsamoro Region ay may mga mahihirap na magsasaka at ang ugat ng kanilang kahirapan ay walang pagkakaiba sa problema ng marami nating magsasaka. It is rooted in the issue of land, in the issue of the concentration of lands in only a few, while many of the Bangsamoro are landless.

So, that it is why, I am inquiring about that, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ACHARON. Yes, Mr. Speaker. Since the law will authorize the Bangsamoro Regional government to create this Ministry of Agrarian Reform, we believe it will now be its responsibility to look into the needs of the Bangsamoro regional government and establish their own policies and enact laws that will allow their people to enjoy the distribution of the lands within the Bangsamoro regional government. So, we will now leave that to the Bangsamoro regional government as we give them the autonomy to design all their policies as far as agrarian reform is concerned, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker. Kung tayo po ay naniniwala na ang rebelyon, ang ugat nito ay nagmumula rin sa socio-economic conditions ng ating mamamayan, hindi po ba mas maigi, katulad ng nakatala dito sa Republic Act No. 9054, na may klarong mandato? Ano ho ang magiging silbi, halimbawa, na mayroon kang sinabi na "Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform" kung wala namang mandatong direkta dito sa ating binabalangkas na batas

na dapat ay ang Bangsamoro Parliament ay maglaan or magpasa ng isang batas para matugunan ang isyung ito ng agrarian reform, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, we believe that it is part of their function. Even if we will not put it specifically in our proposed House Bill, but since they were given that mandate to create that office, then, they will have to since it is their duty. We believe that they will create or establish policies regarding agrarian reform, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, but will the Sponsor explain kung bakit ho dito sa Republic Act No. 9054 ay mayroong explicit na probisyon in Section 8? Hindi ho ba parang mas mainam pa ang RA 9054 dahil mayroon siyang probisyon dito pero wala ito dito sa ating panukalang batas?

REP. ACHARON. Well, Mr. Speaker, Article XVIII, Section 3. Subsisting Regional Laws, states:

All subsisting laws enacted by the Regional Legislative Assembly of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao by virtue of authorities provided under Republic Act No. 6734, as amended by Republic Act No. 9054, shall be deemed in effect, unless inconsistent with this Basic Law x x x .

So, meaning, if the provisions of RA 9054 are consistent with this proposed House Bill, then, it will be implemented, Mr. Speaker. So, there is no need to specify since in that law, it is already explicitly stated that they will establish programs for agrarian reform.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, but will the Sponsor agree that, at the proper time, dapat mayroong explicit provision sa ating panukalang batas on that matter?

REP. ACHARON. Can we request the Gentleman to repeat the question, please.

REP. ZARATE. Papayag po ba ang kagalang-galang na Sponsor that at the proper time, magkaroon ng susog or amendment at ibalik natin or maglalagay ng probisyon katulad ng nakalagay sa Republic Act No. 9054, the provision on enacting an agrarian reform program?

REP. ACHARON. Yes, Mr. Speaker, we will be discussing that during the period of amendments, but I would like to explain further that all the powers of the Autonomous Region or ARMM given under RA 9054 will still continue to be powers of the Bangsamoro under this Bill, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. At any rate, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, pupunta naman po ako sa ibang usapin. Dito ho ba sa ating panukalang batas, ano po ang magiging policy na gusto nating mangyari sa Bangsamoro sa usapin naman ng kung paano lilinangin ang ating mga natural resources, especially sa usapin ng pagmimina, especially sa usapin ng ating mineral resources? Puwede po bang linawin ng kagalang-galang na Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, kung sino ba ang may kontrol ng ating mga mina at mineral resources sa loob ng Bangsamoro?

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, under this proposed House Bill, the management of the natural resources will be under the powers of the Bangsamoro regional government. There are already feelers that some of our Members will be proposing an amendment to make this as a concurrent power or a power shared with the national government. So, we will still discuss or entertain that during the period of amendments, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker. Mayroon po bang malinaw na policy rito sa ating panukalang batas kung paano, halimbawa, ang usapin ng industriyalisasyon sa loob ng Bangsamoro. Para umunlad ang isang rehiyon ay kailangang igpawan niya ang kanyang pagiging isang atrasadong ekonomiya, ang pagiging agrikultural na ekonomiya, papunta doon sa isang abanteng ekonomiya, ang pagiging isang industriyalisado. Alam naman po natin na sa loob ng Bangsamoro territory, nandiyan po ang mga mayaman na mga resources, mga minerals at iba pa, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ACHARON. Sa panukalang ito po, Mr. Speaker, binibigyan ng karagdagang power ang Bangsamoro regional government through giving them a bigger share from the income of all or whatever activities in the Bangsamoro regional government as far as natural resources are concerned. Hindi katulad po ngayon na mas malaki ang share ng national government dahil dito po ay mas malaki ang share nila kaysa share ng national government.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker. Kaugnay or in relation to that question, may I inquire from the Sponsor whether or not, if there is already a Bangsamoro region and a Bangsamoro government, it will accept foreign investments? Or are foreign investors still allowed to invest in the territory of the Bangsamoro?

REP. ACHARON. Yes, of course, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. Are they also allowed, under this proposed Bill, to invest, for example, in the mineral industry?

REP. ACHARON. Of course, Mr. Speaker, I believe, but just like any other requirement that whenever there are investors who would like to invest in a local government unit, that they have to secure permits, local permits and as well as national permits.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor. Will the citizenship requirement still be applicable, for example, in the exploitation and development of our mineral resources or natural resources when there is already a Bangsamoro government?

REP. ACHARON. The requirement for the composition of the ...

REP. ZARATE. The citizenship requirement that, you know, only Filipinos can enjoy.

REP. ACHARON. Yes, Mr. Speaker, there is still a requirement that states that majority of the stakeholders must be Filipino citizens.

REP. ZARATE. Can the good Sponsor state in what particular section or provision is that stated.

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, under our Constitution, I think it is 60 percent.

REP. ZARATE. Is there a clear proviso in our proposed Bill related to that, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, we understand that this House Bill will also adopt the provisions of our Constitution and so it will be 60-40, 60 percent Filipino citizen and 40 percent foreign.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker. Wala na ho akong mga katanungan pero ang akin lamang po siguro iiwanang statement, dahil alam natin na ang ating mga kasamahan sa Kapulungang ito, na marami tayong gustong pagbabago or amendments na gusto natin gawin sa ating panukalang batas. Alalahanin po natin na ang sabi nga ng G. Isponsor natin kanina na ito na ang huli.

I do not know kung ito na nga ang huli pero ang alalahanin po natin ay napakahabang panahon na po at napakaraming buhay na ang nabuwis, ng Bangsamoro, ng mga kapatid natin sa Mindanao, para doon sa tinatawag nating just and lasting peace kaya mahalaga, sabi ko nga kanina, na matugunan natin iyong ugat kung bakit ba nagkakaroon ng rebelyon sa Mindanao, kung bakit nagkaroon ng rebelyon sa buong bansa. Bakit malaganap pa rin ang kahirapan sa Mindanao, sa Bangsamoro, kahit na sa katotohanan na ito ay napakayaman sa usapin ng mga likas-yaman? Dahil sa

ang katotohanan, ang Bangsamoro ay walang kontrol sa kanilang resources. Wala silang kontrol sa likas-yaman. Wala silang kontrol sa kanilang lupa. Patuloy ang kahirapan ng mamamayang Moro dahil sa umiiral na socio-economic and political conditions not only in Mindanao, but sa buong Pilipinas. So, iyon po ang ating iiwang mga pananalita rito bago natin—dahil this is already certified as urgent—pagdesisyonang bukas ang panukalang batas na ito at sana po nasa isip natin na ito ay ang ating attempt to provide a solution to this Bangsamoro issue.

Maraming salamat, G. Isponsor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ACHARON. Maraming salamat din kay Honorable Zarate, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, next to interpellate, I move that we recognize the Hon. Maximo B. Rodriguez Jr. of the Second District of Cagayan de Oro City.

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). What is the pleasure of the Representative from ...

REP. ACHARON. May I request that we recognize also the Hon. Ruby M. Sahali to answer questions.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The Representative from the Second District of Cagayan de Oro City, the Hon. Maximo Rodriguez, is recognized.

REP. RODRIGUEZ (M.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Distinguished Sponsor, will you be willing to address my concerns?

REP. SAHALI. My pleasure, Hon. Maximo Rodriguez.

REP. RODRIGUEZ (M.). Thank you to the beautiful Lady from Tawi-Tawi. It is about the wisdom of the law. Do you think that it is a little bit overdue over the years? Four decades of fighting with thousands dead and still, Mindanao is underdeveloped? Still we go back to the wisdom of the law. Why is the BBL to be passed? That is the thing. In short terms, can you give us an idea why the BBL Law or Bangsamoro Law should be passed.

REP. SAHALI. Technically, Mr. Speaker, honorable Gentleman, why should the BBL be passed now is because the Bangsamoro Basic Law is one of the last pieces of documentation that the national government

should comply with. For the past decades of peace talks between the national government and the MNLF, this is one of those documents or instances in the peace talks that should have been delivered already to the Bangsamoro people officially.

Personally, Mr. Speaker, why the Bangsamoro Basic Law? It is high time already that peace reign in those parts of Mindanao—not the whole Mindanao but MILF and the the Bangsamoro area, Mr. Speaker.

REP. RODRIGUEZ (M.). I know that Mindanao has been the neglected island of the country. For so many decades, budgets have been too little for development, too little for assistance to our people and everything. But why now? Why not in the last Congress, the last two Congresses? Why not in the 1980s or 1970s or 1960s? So, we have to learn, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, what is the truth about it—the truth of the BBL, the truth of the armed struggle, of the injustice for this armed struggle in Mindanao.

I am from Cagayan de Oro. This is only about a two-hour drive from Lanao del Sur, but the fear of another war still lingers. Now we are facing the BBL, hoping that this war would not happen to us. Would this not happen again? That is the question that needs so many answers and in fact, it certainly gives doubts about what is to happen. So, we think about what is to be done in the BBL, what happens to our country, what happens to Mindanao, what happens to our people. We look at the BBL as if it is a solution to everything, but I think it is not. The solution is for the people to be truly governed as one nation, truly governed by their leaders under a democracy.

So, that is the first question—is the BBL based on truth and facts and is really for the development of Mindanao? We have heard that there is threat of war and that is why the BBL has to be passed. We have heard that this war may cause a conflagration in the Mindanao islands, Mindanao provinces, and we have fear of that. I have with me, on my shoulders, the fear of the 20 million Christian brothers and also the fear of about 12 or 15 million Muslim-Christian brothers that this conflagration may happen if the BBL will not be able to deliver. So, it all boils down to another question—in passing the BBL, is it fair and just to us all? The neighboring provinces with Christians would always think about that. If we have to pass the BBL, what will happen to our neighbors, our Muslim brothers who are there and would it be fair to us in a way? That is the question that we also want to ask our Muslim brothers and sisters. Would you treat our Christian brothers, your neighbors, truly your sisters and brothers? No war, discrimination and no oppression. That is the simple question that we have been lingering for us Christians in Mindanao.

REP. SAHALI. Mr. Speaker, I very well understand the predicament of the Hon. Maximo Rodriguez from the Lone District of Cagayan de Oro City on his query on why the Bangsamoro Basic Law will be approved only now, and why it did not happen during the Sixteenth Congress. The only thing that I can say, Mr. Speaker, is most probably it is Allah's will, it is God's will that the Bangsamoro Basic Law will be passed in the Seventeenth Congress under the leadership of our able Pres. Rodrigo Duterte who is also a Mindanaoan, under Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez who is also a Mindanaoan. I think, in all our prayers, in the prayers of all the Bangsamoro people, it is high time that the Bangsamoro Basic Law be approved in these halls of Congress.

Secondly, on the query of Hon. Maximo Rodriguez, on his statement that—siguro, ikaklaro ko lang ito. In the Bangsamoro Basic Law, we do not talk about religion. The Bangsamoro Basic Law is not about religion, it is not really more on the aspect of being Islam, but it is more on the aspect of the delivery of services by the central government to the people of the Bangsamoro.

The BBL, as I am to read, is premised on the five interrelated propositions that: first, the passage of this law that creates autonomous region is a constitutional mandate. It is the performance of a sacred constitutional duty. Second, the passage of an organic law for the autonomous region is compelled by the imperative of correcting the injustices of the past. I think this word "injustices" was also mentioned by the Hon. Maximo Rodriguez, as it refers to the urgency of the socio-economic and political contexts at present and the uncertainty of having a similar opportunity in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is really high time that the Bangsamoro Basic Law be passed because of the credence of violent extremism that is hurling already in our area, in our region. The Bangsamoro Basic Law can very well quell the problem that we are facing right now. Rest assured, Mr. Speaker, Hon. Maximo Rodriguez, the Bangsamoro Basic Law is not Islamic and it is not only for the Muslims. That is why nga we are naming it Autonomous Region in Bangsamoro, not anymore Autonomous Region for the Muslims in Mindanao, Mr. Speaker.

REP. RODRIGUEZ (M.). Yes, well, I may not have delivered the exact question but it is a feeling that we Christians also have. We are your neighbors and for so long a time we have lived peacefully together and then suddenly, there was this conflagration, war and everything, and so, the balance of power has tilted against us Christians in Mindanao. We do not have arms, we do not have ammunition stored in our houses. We are a peace-loving people in Mindanao. Now, we are faced

with the BBL, with many resources as you should be able to acquire, and it gives us a kind of fear. If it has to be successful, it has to be beneficial to all the people in Mindanao, not just the Muslims and the Christians. But it should give an atmosphere of peace not just in the Muslim areas but in the Christian provinces as well—in the cities and provinces where we live, where the Christians live.

So, it is about the wisdom of the BBL, and we feel that it is a matter of realization for each individual, to the people in the provinces, that there should be a feeling of connection between you and the Christians. That for the BBL to succeed, there should be what we call an atmosphere in the whole of Mindanao on how it is to be at peace with our Muslim brothers and Christians. This is what I want to express. We have about so many millions of Christians in Mindanao, and you have a few millions also. The BBL is a law that would empower you, give you resources, give you certainty, a territory, and even expansionism which I have heard from Congressman Lobregat. That is a reality that we are faced with, a reality that for as long as there are differences between Christians and Muslims which may be encountered in the future and which we may not be able to overcome in the future, then this fear will stay on with us Christians in Mindanao.

So, this is about wisdom. What is the truth about it? What is fair and just to all of us living in Mindanao? What is beneficial to all of us? While the BBL is being considered a tool for peace, is it an appeasement for those in power? Is it an appeasement for those who may be able to have power later on with the BBL? Those are the questions that Christians like me would propose to you to consider and answer. It is not for us to answer now or tomorrow, but this is what we feel and we ask that in the coming days, we will be able to take comfort in the thought that this BBL will be beneficial to all of us, Christians and Muslims alike. To my mind, when the President was elected, he got an overwhelming vote of 80 percent in Mindanao but that was because of federalism; that was not about the BBL. It was federalism because there was a sense of the Mindanaoans that for peace to last in Mindanao, federalism should be there, and not just federalism but maybe autonomy in our region, not just for the Bangsamoro, but autonomy in certain areas—Zamboanga, Cotabato, Davao—so that they can grow also, just as we want the Bangsamoro to grow when the BBL is there.

That is the question that I want to pose, to say that the sense of Christians in Mindanao is, we are not prepared for the BBL. BBL may be a tool for peace but in reality, it may not be. We have a feeling, as Christians, that when Mamasapano happened, the result of Mamasapano, the Marawi siege or the war and now, martial law in Mindanao, all these have caused so

much trouble in our land, and to do something that is extraordinary to help Mindanao, through BBL, may not be the proper way, but it may be through federalism.

Federalism because our President was elected on the agenda of federalism. Why not wait for federalism to come in? We have a constitutional mandate for that. We have a committee on that and discussions are going on. For peace to be ushered in all the provinces and cities of Mindanao, it is federalism that we look forward to. What is federalism? It is just about BBL also. Federalism encompasses all the provinces and cities. It may grant autonomy to certain regions; it may grant autonomy to the BBL territory, but federalism is something that we hope can solve what we call “injustices” to Mindanao, not just to Muslim brothers and sisters but also to Christians.

We are looking for a bigger budget for Mindanao. You know, I am the Chairman of the Committee on Mindanao Affairs, but it is high time that we look at Mindanao as equals, Muslims and Christians as well, as brothers, that we deserve this kind of attention from the government. But, for us to go into the BBL, it is something that is a warning to us. I feel that it is a warning to us that it may not be correct for us to be doing it. Look at the ARMM, you have the fragmented armed struggles that have been going on, the armed groups that have been proliferating in Mindanao. We are a nation or a country, or an island at war. We have martial law in our midst and there is a perceived weakness of government that if the BBL is passed, there may be more hardships that will happen in our island of Mindanao.

So, I would like to state that—may I go over the BBL—there are many provisions here that need to be reexamined: first, constitutionality. In any aspect or any office, the Bangsamoro Parliament is deemed to create, is mandated to create a body which is a duplication of the national government. There are many provisions here for which, in due time, I will be proposing my amendments. There is, for instance, the Bangsamoro Parliament where you have a composition of 80 legislators to be considered as Members, and 40 percent of that is for those to be elected by districts. To be sure, the Congressmen here who are district Congressmen already are also in the Batasan, but you have to elect among yourselves another set of District Congressmen and that is a duplication of the functions of legislation. You may function as a Congressman or Congresswoman in Batasan but then, another set of Congressmen will also work in the Bangsamoro Parliament.

Second, you think about ethnolinguistic groups in Bangsamoro but, is there a mechanism where they are aptly considered and represented in the Parliament? It is an election. This Bangsamoro Parliament is akin to a federal government because a federal government is about party affiliations. When a district Congressman is elected to the Bangsamoro Parliament, he comes, he

goes, he brings with him the majority or plurality of votes that is in the party. So, you are left with a plurality of votes to be represented by a Congressman and yet, you will have no voice, even the little minority that is left in the countryside. That is what I would like to ask. How can you assure that the other tribes that do not have the means will be represented? Of course, we have the 10 percent allotment for sectoral groups, but you have 13 ethnolinguistic groups, Muslim groups, that vie for those positions, is it not? How can you divide the positions among the ethnolinguistic groups in Mindanao, not to mention the IPs and other groups that would require a representation also?

That is one point. I do not want to belabor you for an answer to that.

REP. SAHALI. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for a very lengthy question. Mr. Speaker, Hon. Maximo Rodriguez, if I am to wrap up your query, yes, in a Bangsamoro Parliament, there are 80 going to be elected. Forty percent would be direct representation, 50 percent would be party and 10 percent would be representatives from the different stakeholders. All the ethnolinguistics, 13, one-three, are ethnolinguistic Muslims but they are not all in the Bangsamoro territory, for example, the Palawini are in Palawan; the Subanen are in Zamboanga Peninsula. So, of all the ethnolinguistic Muslims that are in the territory, verily, they will be represented. We also have IP representation in the Parliament. Even the Badjaos, the Sama Madilao, the Yakans, the Tausug, the Tidurays—everybody will be represented in that 80-member composition of the Parliament.

REP. RODRIQUEZ (M.). How can they be represented?

REP. SAHALI. Now, it will not be as you said kasi baka there is duplication. There is no duplication because here in Congress, there is a representation from the different provinces of the ARMM. We have the same kind of legislative districts in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. It is composed of 25 members of the legislative assembly, at lalaki na lang po iyong area kaya it is going to be 80 representations already.

REP. RODRIQUEZ (M.). Yes, but the Bangsamoro Parliament is akin to the federal system where the party governs. It is not so much on the election of district Representatives but more on party affiliations in becoming Congressmen or district Representatives. So, I would see a situation where the minor groups, let us say that majority of these ethnolinguistic groups may not be able to afford an election, to put up a political party, to which Bangsamoro Parliament will give access.

So, here is one thing that I want to stress on you, that in due time, there will be amendments, probably tomorrow.

REP. SAHALI. Thank you.

REP. RODRIQUEZ (M.). We will be proposing amendments to that effect, okay? We have also some concerns on any commission or regional office that will now be established. The Parliament is given the power to create a Regional Bangsamoro Office. In any provision you have, especially the concurrent provisions where a majority of the offices will be created by the Bangsamoro Parliament first, on human rights and humanitarian protection and promotion, the Bangsamoro government will organize its own bodies. On auditing, the Bangsamoro auditing body shall have auditing responsibility over public funds utilized. The Bangsamoro government shall develop a civil service. The Bangsamoro government shall have authority to regulate power generation. This is not part of exclusive powers that were proposed to us, but the energy body certainly will be given the same powers in the national government.

We have protection of the indigenous peoples in Bangsamoro, giving them the appropriate office or ministry, but we have the NCIP. What happens to our office in NCIP? Then, we have the creation of other institutions which the Bangsamoro Parliament will be able to create in the guise of serving the general welfare of the people. That is a general clause that should be corrected because in this BBL, in this Bangsamoro Law, it should be specifically mentioned what these groups are. Then, we have also other concerns like possession of lands. We are under a Torrens title system and if we have another procedure for the perfection of a Torrens title on lands, then we are in trouble because there cannot be any interpretation of the Torrens title other than permanent ownership. Okay. So, we have also what we call Bangsamoro Electoral Code. What happens to the Omnibus Election Code we have when the elections shall be governed by the COMELEC? If you will have a Bangsamoro Election Code, would that be influenced by our traditions, by our customs? I know that the BBL somehow has a close relation in its practices with the Qur'an. I know it is also about justice.

So, these are things that are, to my mind, also questionable and in due time, we will be able to give our proposed amendments on these. Another thing—there will be created an office called the Bangsamoro Human Rights Commission which is apart from the Commission on Human Rights that we have, a national body. We have to lay out the organization and see if there is duplication to save government resources, to save the energy of our people and make them responsive bodies. That is just a representation of a body because there is a

mandate which they can lean on. There are those things, and in due time, we will be proposing amendments to your Bangsamoro Law.

I would not take too long, Mr. Speaker, dear colleague. These are concerns which we Christians have. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to express these sentiments of Christians in Mindanao. Somehow, if the BBL has to succeed, the BBL has to be a law for all people in Mindanao.

Thank you and good evening.

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

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I now move that we recognize the Hon. Ariel "Ka Ayik" B. Casilao of ANAKPAWIS for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The Representative from ANAKPAWIS Party-List, the Honorable Casilao, is recognized to interpellate the distinguished Sponsor, if she is amenable to be interpellated.

REP. SAHALI. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASILAO. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). You have now the floor, Representative Casilao.

REP. CASILAO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the beautiful and distinguished Sponsor yield to some clarificatory questions?

REP. SAHALI. My pleasure, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASILAO. Mr. Speaker, let it be known for the record that this Representation supports fully the struggle of the Bangsamoro people for their genuine autonomy and right to self-determination. In whatever path the Bangsamoro people choose to assert this principle, may it be through the path of armed struggle, may it be through the path of a negotiated settlement, who am I to question their long dream of achieving peace in the land that they were deprived of?

Mr. Speaker, paulit-ulit pong binabanggit ng ating mga kagalang-galang na Sponsor ang sinasabing "historical injustices." Mr. Speaker, allow me to share some personal experiences. Kapag ako po ay napupunta dito sa kamaynilaan dahil sa aking trabaho sa isang nongovernment organization, mula sa airport, sa LRT o sa MRT na ako sumasakay papunta sa isang venue na pagdadausan ng aking mga miting na pinupuntahan dito, minsan natatanong ako, lalo pa at kapag ako ay may kausap sa telepono at nagbibisaya ako, may mga

nagtatanong, “Taga- Mindanao ka pala. Di ba magulo doon? Di ba maraming terorista doon? Di ba giyera doon?” Of course, Mr. Speaker, I cannot blame the ignorance or the misinformation of people not from Mindanao dahil nagmumula lamang ang kanilang mga impormasyong nakukuha sa mga bali-balitang biased o sa mga bali-balita o mga kuwentong mayroong makasaysayang pinag-ugatan na tinatawag ngayon in the political parlance, Islamophobia or Mindaphobia. These terms, Mr. Speaker, are not simply a creation of the mind. It is recorded in history books on the historical injustices committed to the Bangsamoro people.

In my understanding of our history, Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of records to prove the assertion as to why historical injustices were experienced by our brother and sister Muslims and the Bangsamoro people—the massacre and the battle of Bud Dajo, the Jabidah massacre, the all-out wars launched by previous regimes like the Marcos regime, the Jabidah massacre which resulted in the creation of the Moro National Liberation Front, the all-out war launched by the Estrada regime and the succeeding regimes, including the Mamasapano and even, in fact, the recent massacre of nine people in Matalam, North Cotabato.

Now, before I dwell on specific provisions of the proposed Bill, Mr. Speaker, Mme. Sponsor, may I know from the Sponsor, how do you define genuine autonomy?

REP. SAHALI. Genuine autonomy, Mr. Speaker, is—even what you were telling a while ago, Islamophobia, Mindaphobia, when there is this feeling that you are not accepted, the feeling of insecurity, the feeling that you are not part of this country, these will eventually be part of history, maging ang pinagdaanan na lamang natin. I think it is genuine autonomy—when we deliver this Bangsamoro Basic Law because we believe that this is the convergence of all the peace agreements.

Kapag lahat ng peace agreements na nagawa ng ating national government with the MILF, with the MNLF, ay ma-de-deliver nila dito, it is one piece of legislation itong Bangsamoro Basic Law, that is genuine autonomy for all of us. Kapag iyong feeling mo, even in this hall of Congress, na mawawala na iyong sasabihin, yayaman sila dahil Muslim sila or dadami ang pera dahil sa mga Moro ito, dapat hindi mas marami ang —pera para sa kanila o sa atin, or dahil may Kristiyanismo, may pagka-Moro, kapag mawawala na iyong ganoong thinking, mawawala na iyong ganoong biases, I think for me, personally, Mr. Speaker, that is a genuine autonomy already for all the Bangsamoro people.

REP. CASILAO. Thank you for that honest opinion and definition that you shared, Mr. Speaker, Mme. Sponsor. I fully agree with that similar definition. Now, how do you define the right to self-determination?

REP. SAHALI. Mr. Speaker, for me, the right to self-determination is when you are able to deliver this Bangsamoro Basic Law and it is eventually accepted by the whole people of the Bangsamoro. Iyong katanggap-tanggap na Bangsamoro Basic Law, at hindi iyong watered-down na Bangsamoro Basic Law. Iyong rights and privileges entitled to the Bangsamoro people are beyond what they have now in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASILAO. It seems, Mr. Speaker, that how the distinguished Sponsor replied to the question of this Representation qualifies the definition of this Representation’s understanding of genuine autonomy and right to self-determination. Mr. Speaker, let it be known that this Representation believes genuine autonomy and the right to self-determination transcend the limitations of the current Philippine Constitution. Genuine autonomy and the right to self-determination is the sole and collective assertion of a people, of a tribe to govern independently without the coercive sanctions on existing limitations even in the current 1987 Constitution.

Mr. Speaker, naniniwala po ako na ang tunay na kahulugan ng awtonomiya at sariling pagpapasya ay higit kailanman hindi dapat mailimita sa kasalukuyang itinatakda ng Saligang Batas, pero naiintindihan ko po and I fully respect the Bangsamoro leaders from both revolutionary fronts, the MNLF, the MILF and even the BIFF who chose to negotiate with the current government. I may be dwelling on the definition of secessionism but let it be known again, Mr. Speaker, the right to secede and the so-called secessionism is in response to the historical injustices experienced by the Bangsamoro people.

Mr. Speaker, hindi man ito ang magiging catch-all solution and pardon me, Mr. Speaker, Mme. Sponsor, this Representation believes that even with the passage of this Bill, if the present social structure and the political economy of the Philippines, which do not exempt Mindanao, will continue to exist so will the conditions of oppression. This may address the national oppression, the question of identity and of the recognition of the right of the Bangsamoro for genuine autonomy and right to self-determination but, undeniably, even within the Bangsamoro people, social classes exist and thus, contradiction continues to exist.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague in the Makabayan bloc mentioned a particular provision—and you know very well that this Representation’s forte is agrarian reform—in particular, Article XIII of the proposed Bill. I may not agree with the previous Sponsor’s reply to Congressman Zarate’s query but maybe at the proper time, what is already the existing provision on agrarian reform on the ARMM Law should be carried over to the current House Bill that we are deliberating on.

Why? Because again, as I have mentioned, the political economy and the social perils do not exempt Mindanao, do not exempt the Bangsamoro people. The question of the monopoly of land and the question of landlessness of the farmers is also the question of landlessness of the poor Bangsamoro farmers. So, as part of that assertion, Mr. Speaker, please do consider, to the proponents and the distinguished Sponsor, reflecting the same provision of the existing law in the proposed Bill. And of course, Mr. Speaker, with regard to labor and employment, in perusing the proposed Bill, while there is a provision on trade and industry, may I know from the Sponsor, how does the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region perceive labor and employment?

REP. SAHALI. According to House Bill No. 6475, Article XVI, Section 8 on the Bangsamoro Transition Authority, under the Interim Cabinet, there shall be composed of 15 primary ministries with sub-offices and one of those listed is, under letter (d), Labor and Employment, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASILAO. So, currently, under the ARMM, the current minimum wage in ARMM is pegged at P265, Mme. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker. This is far from the NCR wage level which is P512, and far from the mandated and the supposed family living wage of P1,170. Of course, this will be a hypothetical question because the policy will be further deliberated by the so-called ministry, but may I know if just wages will be seriously considered and the determination of such in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region will be favorable to our workers?

REP. SAHALI. Yes, Mr. Speaker. I think that, in all other regions, even in Mindanao, we do practice the minimum wage of P265 pesos a day for our workers there, and I still believe that once the Bangsamoro Basic Law, or the Bangsamoro government is already in place, all these things would also be carried over, especially when we will have an office on labor and employment as part of the new Bangsamoro ministries, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASILAO. Thank you for that statement, Mme. Sponsor.

Now, this is just a question because the MNLF, nagkaroon ng faction noong pumirma sa Tripoli Agreement with Nur Misuari. Hindi tinanggap ito ng MILF, ni Chairman Hashim Salamat. Sa pagpasok ng negosasyon ng MILF sa GRP, nagkaroon na rin ng faction sa hanay ng mga commanders ng MILF at ngayon ay tinatawag na BIFF, Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters. May I know from the distinguished Sponsor how the BIFF would appreciate this BBL? Will this appease them? Will this be acceptable to them?

I know you cannot speak for them but, of course, our leaders, the MNLF and the MILF, who sit in the BTC representing various or a wide scale of Moro organizations asserting the passage of this Bill, may I know if she has information on how the BIFF would appreciate this Bill if passed without the so-called term that you used, the “watering down” of provisions?

REP. SAHALI. Mr. Speaker, can you clear it? Are you saying BIFF or BIAF because we have two.

REP. CASILAO. Yes.

REP. SAHALI. The BIFF and the BIAF, the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces ...

REP. CASILAO. Armed Forces?

REP. SAHALI. ... of the MNLF now. You are saying BIFF?

REP. CASILAO. Yes, the group of Ameril Umbra Kato, the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, of course, the BIFF.

REP. SAHALI. Okay. The Bangsamoro Basic Law now is being spearheaded by the MILF and the MNLF. If you are talking about the BIFF, I think this BBL, once we approve this into law, the Bangsamoro Basic Law will address or change the discontentment in the community, especially the discontentment of the BIFF. Kaya po tayo may mga BIFF, mayroon tayong mga extremists because of the non-delivery of the peace agreement to all of these people for quite some time, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASILAO. Well, again, I think we have to capitalize and we have to invest on trust. Again, even the Sponsors may not guarantee our colleagues here in the plenary that this may solve all or this is an absolute solution, but this will help a lot in addressing, again, the historical injustices and the assertion, not only asserting your own but the Bangsamoro people’s government, its policies, kaya babalik po ako sa aking punto, Mme. Sponsor.

Ako po ay naniniwala at nananalig na kapag ito ay itinulak ng buong-buo, wika nga, we will be facing major obstacles on the question of constitutionality, and there had been compromises on powers of exclusive jurisdiction over shared territory and identity. This is the process that we have to go through and eventually, it will be decided by the Plenary and through the plebiscite by the very people who will vote whether to agree or not. Again, Mme Sponsor, thank you for giving honest answers to the specific questions that I brought out and hopefully, let us not just hinge our hope na, while malaki

ang bahagi ng ating pagtitiwala na ito ay maipapasa, pero kapag nagkaroon pa rin ng mga malalaking pagbabago sa mga probisyon na iminumungkahi at magiging hindi ito katanggap-tanggap, this Representation will not lose hope. Kapag mayroon mang nagbago sa mga probisyon at laman ng panukalang batas na ito, ang pakikibaka ng Bangsamoro, at hindi lang ng Bangsamoro, para sa tunay na kalayaan at sariling pagpapasya, ay hindi lamang nakaugat dito sa panukalang batas na ito. Isusulong at isusulong iyan ng mga susunod na salinlahi at henerasyon ng Bangsamoro.

Maraming salamat po.

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

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, next to interpellate is the honorable Gentleman from MAGDALO Party-List, Gary C. Alejano. I move that he be recognized.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The Representative from MAGDALO Party-List, Rep. Gary C. Alejano, is recognized to interpellate the Sponsor, if he wishes to.

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, may I be allowed to answer the questions, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). You have now the floor, Representative Alejano.

REP. ALEJANO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor. Magandang gabi po sa inyong lahat. Before I ask my short questions, I just would like to manifest this, Mr. Speaker. When I was still in the Armed Forces of the Philippines, I was assigned in almost all of the core areas of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao—Maguindanao, Lanao, Basilan, Sulu—at nakita ho natin talaga ang kakulangan ng serbisyo sa ating mga kapatid na Bangsamoro. Kaya naiintindihan ho natin kung bakit mayroong kaguluhan sapagkat nakikita rin natin that they just want to survive. Ang nakikita ho natin ay ang political culture that is not only existing in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, but also in the entire country dahil andoon din ang mga political dynasties, na hindi rin nawawala sa Bangsamoro.

In 2000, during the all-out war in Central Mindanao, I almost died fighting against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, not because I hated them personally, but because it was the duty of the Armed Forces to go against the enemies of the State. Kaya nga po it is very sentimental on my part because I understand na hindi po madali ang giyera sa Mindanao. Maraming kasamahan ko po ang namatay na at mahirap pong ipaliwanag sa kanilang pamilya kung bakit po sila ay namatay

sa pakikipaglaban para sa ating bansa. However, in 2003, bilang dating sundalo, ako rin po ay nagrebelde sa gobyerno at ang unang dahilan kung bakit ginawa po namin ito ay iyong aming nakitang pagbebenta ng baril at bala sa kalaban ng Estado na siya rin naman ang pumapatay sa ating mga sundalo. Ibig sabihin, nandito rin ang corruption sa ating gobyerno na nagreresulta sa kawalan ng maliwanag na security policy direction sa ating bansa.

Ang pangalawang malaking dahilan kung bakit po kami ay nagrebelde ay noong ginamit ang Armed Forces upang gumawa ng mga karahasan katulad ng bombings upang mapagbintangan ang Moro Islamic Liberation Front, para mai-tag po silang terrorist organization, upang ang ating bansa ay makakuha ng suporta sa United States sa kanilang global anti-terrorism campaign. Kaya nga po, naiintindihan ko kung bakit ang ating mga kapatid ay nag-aaklas laban sa gobyerno dahil ito po ay naranasan din po natin.

In the last Congress, the Sixteenth Congress, naging bahagi rin po ako sa Special Committee on Bangsamoro Basic Law at alam ho natin na muntik na itong maipasa, iyong Bangsamoro Basic Law, if not for the Mamasapano incident. Ang Mamasapano incident ay napakalaking dagok sa direksiyon ng pag-consummate po ng Bangsamoro Basic Law bilang resulta ng peace agreement with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

Ito ang pumatay sa Bangsamoro Basic Law—ang Mamasapano incident. I must admit, Mr. Speaker, na iyong trust and confidence between the government and the MILF ay nasira at mahirap po i-recover ito. Ganoon pa man, I believe, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, that there is no other way to achieve peace in the country, in Mindanao, but to talk peace. Kailangan po tayong mag-usap at walang dahilan, walang ibang kaparaanan, because I believe that a military solution alone will not solve the problems in the country.

REP. ACHARON. I agree.

REP. ALEJANO. However, we cannot also escape the reality, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, that in 1996, we had the final peace agreement with the Moro National Liberation Front and in fact, the leaders, not only of the Moro National Liberation Front were given the opportunity to showcase to the Filipino people, to the country—to prove to the Filipino people that they can govern their people, the Bangsamoro. I must admit as well na nakakalungkot din because that opportunity was lost as they bungled that opportunity. Ako ay naniniwala, even if Republic Act No. 9054 is not an ideal and perfect law, na nasa tao po iyan. Nasa lider po ang pagbigay ng solusyon sa problema ng ating bansa. Mula noon, wala ni isang ARMM governor din naman ang hindi Bangsamoro, tama po ba ako, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. ACHARON. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ALEJANO. Ibig sabihin, simula noong naitayo ang Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, lahat po ng leaders sa ARMM, lahat sila ay Bangsamoro. Kaya ang tanong—you were given the chance to lead the Bangsamoro and now the question is—they said—or the previous administration said that the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao is a failed experiment. My question is, was there a comprehensive study/analysis on how the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao or RA. 9054 was implemented? Mayroon po bang talagang masusing pag-aaral diyan? Kasi mahirap pong magkaroon ng konklusyon na ito ay failed experiment kung hindi naman natin pinag-aralan ng masusi kung ano po ang naging problema ng RA. 9054.

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, we believe that there was an evaluation on the performance of the ARMM created under Republic Act No. 9054. That is why this proposed House Bill gives more powers to the local government or the regional government. There is also a proposal to extend a bigger amount of financial assistance to the regional government so that they will be able to really push their economic agenda that will create opportunities, especially on employment and revenue opportunities, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ALEJANO. Mr. Speaker, kung mayroon mang pag-aaral, mayroon po ba tayong formal report upang ating makita itong mga kakulangan sa implementation ng RA 9054?

REP. ACHARON. Yes, Mr. Speaker, there is a report or a review coming from the ARMM Executive Secretary about the problems or the misgivings of the ARMM. Some call it a failed experiment as there were some provisions in RA 9054 that were not implemented, one of which is the inadequate ARMM representation in the national government. Another one is the non-implementation of the retention of the ARMM share from the local revenue; also, the weak fiscal autonomy and revenue generation measures. These are some of the findings of the ARMM itself, Mr. Speaker, that need to be addressed for that regional government to really develop, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ALEJANO. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask for a copy of that report, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor. In relation to that, kasama rin po ba sa study o pag-aaral ng implementation ng Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao kung paano ginamit ang mga bilyun-bilyong pondo na na-allocate sa Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao? In relation to that also, mayroon bang nakasuhan o nakulong

because of misuse or corruption in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao?

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, accordingly, from our resource persons from the BTC, marami pong nakasuhan doon sa ARMM. It is true that there were problems as far as the implementation of projects, as well as the disbursement of funds were concerned, and that is why they wanted to curb that, Mr. Speaker. That is why we are giving them a chance to prove themselves, that given more powers, given the bigger amount through the block grant, they will be able to propel development in their area at this point in time, because they also want to prove, Mr. Speaker, that they still have the capacity to employ good governance in that part of the region.

REP. ALEJANO. I understand, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor. My question is, can we not address those problems without passing another law? Kasi po kung they bungled the opportunity, they were not able to use the resources properly, why are we giving them more powers? Why are we giving them more resources if they cannot use them properly? Is it not wise for us to make them account first on the implementation of the law according to its provisions before we can even elevate ourselves to another step?

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, there were some provisions or agreements which were not included in RA 9054 or the former ARMM Law, for example, the participation of all stakeholders. This time, you will note that the negotiating panel, through the BTC, is composed of the members of the MILF, the MNLF, the indigenous peoples and other non-Moro stakeholders, Mr. Speaker. To us, this is what is lacking in the previous law, Mr. Speaker, because during that time, it was only one group that was negotiating with the government panel. This time, different groups are negotiating with the government, Mr. Speaker. That is why we are hoping that this will really address all their concerns because of the composition of the BTC that will be negotiating with the government, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ALEJANO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor. Although I am not convinced that the kind of culture and how to use the resources and the power would change with the passage of the BBL but again, it is noteworthy to take another shot or chance. Nonetheless, in my previous study of the allocation for the Bangsamoro region, hindi naman po sinasabing nasa kulelat ang Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao. In fact, kahit doon sa ranking ng allocation ay hindi po sila nasa dulo. An average, from 2011 to 2015, because I only have the information up to 2015, out of 17 ay pang-12 po ang Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao. In

per capita and based on the population of 3,256,000, as per 2010 NSCB count, pang-walo po sa per capita ang Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao.

REP. ACHARON. Ano iyon, biggest or lowest?

REP. ALEJANO. From one to 17, Mr. Speaker, so their ranking is that they are not always at the bottom of the allocation and even in the per capita basis. Kaya balik po ako doon sa aking sinasabi, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, that it is about the proper use and implementation of programs and projects in a certain area, doon po. Kaya kanina, na-take up na rin ng ating mga kasamahan, at nakita natin iyong mga problema na puwedeng i-address sa kasalukuyan. Kaya nga how assured are we that those things will not happen with the new Bangsamoro government?

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, of course, we cannot give you 100 percent, to be honest. We relied on the sincerity of the party or the negotiators of the peace agreement with the government. They also acknowledged that there is a tragic problem about governance, Mr. Speaker, but you will note that the ranking, as far as allocation is concerned, is still at the last five. If you look at the 2018 budget, Mr. Speaker, from the DBM, the ARMM is the lowest in per capita allocation as reflected in this report. So, we need to really encourage them to take a bold step in improving the governance and enjoying the real autonomy being given to them, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ALEJANO. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, would you know the present collection of the BIR and the Customs as we will base the computation of the block grant on the collection of the BIR and the Customs. As of now, the basis of the allocation of the Internal Revenue Allotment is from the collection of the Bureau of Internal Revenue, but the collection from the Bureau of Customs is not included.

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, we have a copy of the report of the DBM and they only gave us a funding projection for the proposed Bangsamoro regional government. As I stated earlier, for 2018, where the basis of collection is 2015, the proposed block grant will total to P47 billion.

REP. ALEJANO. That is six percent?

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

REP. ALEJANO. I think we have to clarify that because the collection of the BIR exceeds P1 trillion and the collection of the Bureau of Customs, I think, and from other sources, is equal to P600 billion. That

would total to around P2 trillion plus and so, if we apply the formula of six percent, that would result to around P120 billion. So I want to be clarified on these figures, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor.

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, the computation of six percent as the block grant is taken from the 60 percent share of the national government, excluding the 40 percent share of the local government unit representing the internal revenue allotment. It is not the whole collection of the BIR, only the 60 percent and the collection of BOC because the 40 percent will automatically go to the Internal Revenue Allotment of the local government units.

REP. ALEJANO. So the six percent would be based on the 40 percent of that 100 percent collection of the BIR?

REP. ACHARON. It is 60 percent.

REP. ALEJANO. Sixty percent.

REP. ACHARON. Because that is the share of the national government.

REP. ALEJANO. So, six percent of the 60 percent.

REP. ACHARON. Yes, of the collection of the BIR.

REP. ALEJANO. Is it not that the collection from the Customs is included in the provision of the BBL?

REP. ACHARON. Yes, Mr. Speaker, that is why I said, the collection of the Bureau of Customs plus the 60 percent of the total collection of ...

REP. ALEJANO. The BIR.

REP. ACHARON. ... the BIR. There are also deductions from these collections, Mr. Speaker, it is not all of the collections. They call it the NIT, N-I-T and this is the collection of the BIR less deductions plus the collection of the BIR. So the six percent is not based on the 100 percent collection of the BIR.

REP. ALEJANO. So the projection for 2018 or 2019 is P47 billion. Is that it, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. ACHARON. Yes, for 2018, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ALEJANO. That is P47 billion.

REP. ACHARON. Yes, P47.9 billion.

REP. ALEJANO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor. Now my question is, per the provision of the Bangsamoro Basic Law, the Bangsamoro Assembly has the sole responsibility of allocating the block grant. Is that correct, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. ACHARON. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ALEJANO. Papaano po ang situwasyon kung bibili sila ng arms, ammunitions and explosives? Puwede po ba nilang gawin iyon?

REP. ACHARON. I think they cannot do it, Mr. Speaker, because this is programmatic. Meaning, the block grant will be spent in accordance with the programs which they will also discuss through the intergovernmental relations with the national government.

REP. ALEJANO. The block grant would be sourced from the General Appropriations Act. Is that correct, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. ACHARON. Yes, Mr. Speaker. Of course, there are specific programs that need to be incorporated in that budget. They cannot just receive the money and then spend it on what they want.

REP. ALEJANO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, for that clarification. Is there any provision to make sure that the block grant would be equitably distributed among the different parts of the Bangsamoro? I understand that there are two major areas, the Central Mindanao and the BaSulTa, and if we compare the population of the two areas, talo po iyong BaSulTa dahil malaki lagi ang para sa Central Mindanao. So what is the assurance that the BaSulTa will get the right share from the block grant?

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, we allow the regional government to allocate their funds because this is the reason we are giving them fiscal autonomy. The national government, with the monitoring agencies, will just have to monitor the expenditures of the Bangsamoro regional government. So, we give them the responsibility to appropriate their funds according to their needs, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ALEJANO. I understand, Mr. Sponsor. However, in the past, alam naman ho natin na, because of the voting of Central Mindanao, malulunod talaga iyong resulta dahil kakaunti ho sila. Most likely, in this same setup in the Bangsamoro, the leaders would come from Central Mindanao and if they decide to allocate the bulk of the funds from Central Mindanao and provide a meager amount to BaSulTa, it can happen, Mr. Sponsor.

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, in accordance with the structure, they have two deputy ministers: one for BaSulTa and one for Central Mindanao. So, whenever they will discuss the content, the form, and even the manner of preparation of the budget, the two areas, BaSulTa and Central Mindanao, are well represented, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to add, there is also a provision that states they have to prepare their Bangsamoro Development Plan and it will be approved by their legislative branch of government, Mr. Speaker. So, their budget allocation will be in accordance with their development plan, Mr. Speaker.

At this juncture, Deputy Speaker Abu relinquished the Chair to Rep. Roger G. Mercado.

REP. ALEJANO. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor. I hope na iyong nakaraang karanasan ay hindi na po mauulit, wherein kapag nanalo po ang taga-Central Mindanao, kawawa iyong BaSulTa dahil lahat ay nandoon na sa Central Mindanao. Masama ang loob ng mga areas kung saan na hindi ho sila maka-assert dahil iyong voting power nila ay maliit. I hope, Mr. Sponsor, ay hindi po iyan mangyayari sa Bangsamoro government.

REP. ACHARON. That is also our hope, Mr. Speaker. If you look at the proposed House Bill, everybody is represented—the IPs, the traditional leaders, the BaSulTa area, the Central Mindanao area, and other groups, even the non-Moro. Non-Moro groups are still represented, Mr. Speaker. So, we are also hoping that they will be able to disburse or allocate their funds equally among all the areas of the Bangsamoro regional government.

REP. ALEJANO. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, for that assurance. I will proceed to my next question. I understand that we had a caucus wherein we agreed, majority of those present agreed that the national government should have control, supervision and administration of uniformed agencies of government in the Bangsamoro.

REP. ACHARON. Yes.

REP. ALEJANO. Is that correct, Mr. Sponsor?

At this juncture, the Presiding Officer relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Raneo “Ranie” E. Abu.

REP. ACHARON. Yes. Mr. Speaker, during the caucus, that was agreed upon and as a matter of fact, the other day when we had a caucus with the big members, with the BTC, the Majority Leader, together with the other Chairpersons, we agreed, everybody agreed that those powers will be reserved or retained with the

national government. As I have said, it only happened that during the votation, the proposed House Bill No. 6475 was approved without amendment, but there will be amendments that will be introduced later on and will be discussed, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ALEJANO. It just so happens, Mr. Sponsor, that the present copies distributed to us do not contain such kind of amendment. Is that correct, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. ACHARON. Yes, Mr. Speaker, because that was one approved by the three Committees, but we are looking forward that some Members will really be pushing for some amendments and we expect that, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ALEJANO. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, so that we can recommend or we can propose amendments during the period of amendments. Nonetheless, I would like to clarify further the provision on the Armed Forces. I understand, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, that the responsibility of defense, whether internal or external, is lodged with the national government through the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and that the deployment of any unit to the Bangsamoro would be based on the security needs of the Bangsamoro. Is that correct, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. ACHARON. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. This will also be proposed to be amended—it will be retained by the national government that the defense, the security will be undertaken by the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

REP. ALEJANO. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor. As to the Philippine National Police, while we discussed earlier that it should be with the national government, I would like to clarify that the national police should be civilian and professional and national in scope. Is that correct, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. ACHARON. Yes, that is correct, Mr. Speaker, national in scope and civilian in character.

REP. ALEJANO. The formation or the creation of the police unit in the Bangsamoro Region would be based on established laws like RA 8551 and RA 6975. Is that correct, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. ACHARON. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ALEJANO. Thank you for that answer, Mr. Sponsor. I will proceed to the next topic, Mr. Sponsor. I understand that Malaysia has supported the Moro National Liberation Front before and I believe they

did that in order to distract us, to keep us busy from further claiming Sabah. Now, because the Moro National Liberation Front has declared independence, including the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and Sabah in Palawan, the Malaysian government then supported the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. So, my question is, wala pa po bang conflict of interest na ginamit natin ang Malaysia as mediator between the government and the MILF?

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, as far as we are concerned, we have not observed that there is any other motive except that they wanted to help or, to mediate in order for the two parties, the government and the MNLF, to attain their objectives and proceed with the development in the area. So, Mr. Speaker, it is not for us to decide now or to make a comment on whether they have good motives or not. We are just thankful that the Malaysian government was helpful in achieving the goals of the peace process in the Philippines, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ALEJANO. But, Mr. Sponsor, we should not be naive about what happened before. They supported the Moro National Liberation Front. They provided training areas. They provided arms and resources to the Moro National Liberation Front. So, dapat ho, huwag nating kalimutan iyan because what is announced in public is not necessarily the intention behind the action. Nonetheless, Mr. Sponsor, I understand that we cannot speculate on that, but we should also understand the lessons of the past because there are so many neutral countries that can mediate between the government of the Philippines and the MILF. Why choose the MILF, and the answer given to me in the previous deliberation in the last Congress was that it was demanded by the MILF and so, we acceded to the demand of the MILF. Nonetheless, we are still hoping that the intention is there.

So, Mr. Sponsor, as stated earlier, simula noong ang MNLF, when they negotiated with the government, nagkaroon ng faction, nagkaroon ng MILF and then, nagkaroon ng BIFF. I believe, Mr. Sponsor, na ang objective talaga ng ibang grupo is to have an independent Islamic State and that is the rallying point or rallying issue of the ISIS, and they are providing inspiration and they are providing leadership when it comes to having an independent Islamic State. That is the reason some of our brothers and sisters in the Bangsamoro are recruited or enticed to join the ISIS because of that aspiration. So, what is the assurance now of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front that they would be able to control these groups?

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, we respect the opinion of the honorable Gentleman from Magdalo, he

being a former member of the Armed Forces, but we also have to take into consideration that selecting who or selecting the people who will help us in mediating with the other groups is the decision of the executive branch, Mr. Speaker. We are a legislative body and ours is to determine the functionality and legitimacy of the laws being presented here to us, Mr. Speaker. But he is correct, and I agree with him, that we are just hoping for and expecting the sincerity of the other parties—that is the MNLF and MILF—to make good on their promise or their commitment to help achieve real peace in that part of Mindanao, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ALEJANO. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor. This is another chance for the Bangsamoro, I understand this is another opportunity for them to show to the Filipino people that they can really govern. This is still an experiment because we still have to see what is going to happen, and of course, all of us want this experiment to succeed. I still believe that, regardless of the structure of the Bangsamoro or even the government, because we have already discussed the issue of federalism, I still believe that we need to strengthen the institution of government, to make leaders accountable and to make policies that are sustainable. Otherwise, walang saysay po ang structure para ang ARMM ay palitan ng Bangsamoro kung hindi naman ho gagawin ng mga leaders ang trabaho nila.

So, with that, Mr. Sponsor, thank you very much for the opportunity to interpellate. For this Representation from the Magdalo Party-List, we support the aspiration of our Bangsamoro brothers and sisters because I have stated earlier that there is no other way to address the long-running problem in Mindanao except to talk peace. Maraming salamat.

REP. ACHARON. Mr. Speaker, we also thank the Honorable Alejano.

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

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, with no other Member wishing to interpellate or to speak against the measure, I move that we close the period of sponsorship and debate.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). 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. 6475

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 6475.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7449 ON SECOND READING *Continuation*

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 7449, contained in Committee Report No. 753, and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the Bill.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The Secretary General is hereby directed to read the title of House Bill No. 7449, under Committee Report No. 753, for consideration on Second Reading.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7449, entitled: AN ACT APPROPRIATING THE SUM OF ONE BILLION ONE HUNDRED SIXTY ONE MILLION SEVEN HUNDRED TEN THOUSAND PESOS (P1,161,710,000.00) AS SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR FY 2018 AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

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

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, I would like to manifest that the Hon. Edcel Lagman has indicated that he has no further wish to interpellate the Sponsor and has ended his interpellation.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary status of the Bill is that it is in the period of sponsorship and debate. I move that we recognize the Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, the Hon. Karlo Alexei B. Nograles.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are ready to continue with to answer questions from any interpellators.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Tomasito “Tom” S. Villarin.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The Representative from the AKBAYAN Party-List, Hon. Tom Villarin, is recognized to interpellate the Sponsor.

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

During the long period that we had on these discussions on the BBL, I had time to talk with the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee and most of the issues I raised, we discussed them during this interregnum. So, I have no further issues or questions to propound.

Mr. Speaker, thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Distinguished Sponsor, would you like to reply?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes, we thank the honorable Gentleman from AKBAYAN Party-List, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, with no other Member wishing to interpellate or to speak against the measure, I move that we close the period of sponsorship and debate.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the session for a few minutes, Mr. Speaker.

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

It was 10:38 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 10:39 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, before we suspended, we are in the period of amendments. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, the Hon. Karlo Nograles.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). What is the pleasure of the honorable Sponsor?

REP. NOGRALES (K.). Yes, Mr. Speaker. May I respectfully manifest that the Committee amendments as contained in the Committee Report be approved, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. GULLAS. I move that the amendments contained in the Committee Report be approved, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. There being no more Committee or individual amendments, I move that we close the period of amendments, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on House Bill No. 7449, contained in Committee Report No. 753, on Second Reading.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). As many as are in favor of House Bill 7449 on Second Reading, please say *aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

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

FEW MEMBERS. *Nay*.

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7449, AS AMENDED,
ON SECOND READING

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

House Bill No. 7449, as amended, is approved on Second Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. FARIÑAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker. May I please read into the records the letter of the President dated today:

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. 7449 entitled:

“AN ACT APPROPRIATING THE SUM OF ONE BILLION ONE HUNDRED SIXTY-ONE MILLION SEVEN HUNDRED TEN THOUSAND PESOS (P1,161,710,000) AS SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR FY 2018 AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES,”

in order to support and provide the necessary help and medical assistance to Dengvaxia vaccinees.

Best regards.

Very truly yours,

RODRIGO DUTERTE

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). To the Committee on Rules for immediate action.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 7449
ON THIRD READING

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 7449 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. Abu). 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 Section 26(2), Article VI of the Constitution.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7449, entitled: AN ACT APPROPRIATING THE SUM OF ONE BILLION ONE HUNDRED SIXTY ONE MILLION SEVEN HUNDRED TEN THOUSAND PESOS (P1,161,710,000) AS SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR FY 2018 AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 85, dated May 29, 2018.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7449
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). With 231 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 7449 is approved on Third Reading. (*Applause*)

The Majority Leader is recognized.

DESIGNATION OF MEMBERS TO
CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we designate the following as members of the Conference Committee on the disagreeing votes on House Bill 6203, entitled: AN ACT CONVERTING THE SORSOGON STATE COLLEGE INTO A STATE UNIVERSITY TO BE KNOWN AS THE SALVADOR H. ESCUDERO III STATE UNIVERSITY AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR: Reps. Rodolfo C. Fariñas, Ann K. Hofer, Evelina G. Escudero, Anthony M. Bravo, PhD, and Julieta R. Cortuna.

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

The Members nominated are so designated.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we designate the following as members of the Conference

* See ANNEX AK (printed separately)

Committee on the disagreeing provisions of House Bill No. 6202 and Senate Bill No. 1587, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE SOUTH COTABATO STATE COLLEGE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SURALLAH, PROVINCE OF SOUTH COTABATO: Reps. Ann K. Hofer, Ferdinand L. Hernandez and Julieta R. Cortuna.

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

The Members nominated are so designated.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we designate the following as members of the Conference Committee on the disagreeing votes on House Bill No. 5780, entitled: AN ACT RENAMING THE DON HONORIO VENTURA TECHNOLOGICAL STATE UNIVERSITY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BACOLOR, PROVINCE OF PAMPANGA AS THE DON HONORIO VENTURA STATE UNIVERSITY: Reps. Ann K. Hofer, Aurelio “Dong” D. Gonzales Jr. and Julieta R. Cortuna.

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

The Members nominated are so designated.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we designate the following as members of the Conference Committee on the disagreeing votes on House Bill No. 6030, entitled: AN ACT INTEGRATING THE CEBU CITY MOUNTAIN EXTENSION CAMPUS AS A SATELLITE CAMPUS OF THE CEBU TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY: Reps. Ann K. Hofer, Rodrigo A. Abellanos and Julieta R. Cortuna.

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

The Members nominated are so designated.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we designate the following as members of the Conference Committee on the disagreeing provisions of House Bill No. 6578 and Senate Bill No. 1762, establishing a Retirement Benefit System in the Office of the Ombudsman: Reps. Reynaldo V. Umali, Karlo Alexei B. Nograles, Sherwin N. Tugna, Ann K. Hofer and Alfredo A. Garbin Jr.

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

The Members nominated are so designated.

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we designate the following as members of the Conference Committee on the disagreeing provisions of House Bill No. 6907 and Senate Bill No. 1459, strengthening the legal framework for secured transactions in the Philippines: Reps. Ben P. Evardone, Arthur C. Yap, Henry S. Oaminal, Jose “Pingping” I. Tejada and Alfredo A. Garbin Jr.

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

The Members nominated are so designated.

RECOMMITMENT OF HOUSE BILLS TO COMMITTEES

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, as decided by the Committee on Rules during its meeting on May 29, 2018, I move that we recommit House Bill No. 7507, under Committee Report No. 718, to the Committee on Tourism.

I so move.

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

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, as decided by the Committee on Rules during its meeting on May 29, 2018, I move that we recommit House Bill No. 7736, under Committee Report No. 740, to the Committee on Natural Resources.

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

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we include additional coauthors of House Bills No. 7544, 7735, 7749 and 7753 as contained in the lists to be submitted by the Committee on Rules.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

ELECTION OF REP. DAZA TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND INDUSTRY

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Majority, I move to elect as member of the Committee on Trade and Industry, Rep. Raul A. Daza vice Rep. Jose Christopher Y. Belmonte.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that all bills passed on Third Reading be transmitted to the Senate.

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

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session for a few minutes.

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

It was 10:53 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 10:55 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). 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

RESOLUTIONS

The Secretary General read the following House Resolutions on First Reading, and the Deputy Speaker made the corresponding references:

House Resolution No. 1909, entitled:

“RESOLUTION CONDEMNING THE KILLING OF BAYAN MUNA MEMBER ARIEL MAQUIRAN AND CALLING FOR THE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE SAME”

By Representative Zarate
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1910, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEES ON HUMAN RIGHTS, AGRARIAN REFORM, AND SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON PEACE, RECONCILIATION AND UNITY TO CONDUCT A JOINT INQUIRY ON THE INTENSIFICATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN MINDANAO BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE MARTIAL LAW DECLARATION, AS GATHERED BY THE INTERNATIONAL FACT-FINDING AND SOLIDARITY MISSION IN MINDANAO (IFFSM MINDANAO) CONDUCTED ON APRIL 6 TO 9, 2018, COVERING VARIOUS PEASANT COMMUNITIES”

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

House Resolution No. 1911, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEES ON LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS TO CONDUCT A JOINT INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE VIOLENT DISPERSAL, ILLEGAL ARREST AND DISMISSAL DUE TO END-OF-CONTRACT (ENDO) OF WORKERS UNDER THE KILUSANG MANGGAGAWA NG COCA-COLA (KIMACO) IN BRGY. BAGO APLAYA, TALOMO DISTRICT, DAVAO CITY”

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

House Resolution No. 1912, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEES ON AGRARIAN REFORM AND HUMAN RIGHTS TO CONDUCT A JOINT INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE PLIGHT OF FARMERS AND ABUSES BY THE ARMED GOONS DEPLOYED BY THE LANDOWNER FAMILY OF SANGALANG ESTATE IN BRGY. BALOC, STO. DOMINGO TOWN, NUEVA ECIJA”

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

House Resolution No. 1913, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEES ON AGRARIAN REFORM AND HUMAN RIGHTS TO CONDUCT A JOINT INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE APRIL 25, 2018 – SHOOTING OF FARMERS BY THE ARMED GOONS DEPLOYED BY THE

LANDOWNER FAMILY OF SANGALANG ESTATE IN BRGY. BALOC, STO. DOMINGO TOWN, NUEVA ECIJA”

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

ON THE IMPLEMENTING RULES AND REGULATIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT 10931, UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO QUALITY TERTIARY EDUCATION (UAQTE) ACT”

By Representative Elago
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1914, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEES ON AQUACULTURE AND FISHERIES RESOURCES AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION TO CONDUCT A JOINT INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE DETRIMENTAL IMPACT ON THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF THE COUNTRY’S SMALL FISHERFOLK OF THE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8550 FISHERIES CODE, AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10654 AS SUBSTANTIATION OF THE SECTOR’S DEMAND FOR A MORATORIUM OF ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN THE COUNTRY”

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

House Resolution No. 1918, entitled:

“RESOLUTION CALLING FOR AN INVESTIGATION IN AID OF LEGISLATION BY THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON THE POSSIBILITY OF OUTSOURCING THE INSPECTION AND VERIFICATION OF IMPORTED GOODS FOR THE PROPER AND EFFICIENT VALUATION OF IMPORTED GOODS AND IMPOSITION OF CORRECT TARIFFS BY THE BUREAU OF CUSTOMS”

By Representatives Suarez, Atienza, Garbin, Lee, Bravo (A.), Calalang, Chavez and Salon
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1915, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE(S) TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD ANTI-DOPING CODE AND THE NEED TO EDUCATE ATHLETES AND CONCERNED STAKEHOLDERS ON WADA-PROHIBITED SUBSTANCES”

By Representative Roa-Puno
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1919, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION URGING PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE TO SUSPEND FROM JUNE 1 TO AUGUST 31, 2018 THE IMPOSITION OF THE EXCISE TAX ON PETROLEUM PRODUCTS PROVIDED IN REPUBLIC ACT 10963”

By Representative Romero
TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

House Resolution No. 1916, entitled:

“RESOLUTION TO CONDUCT A JOINT INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON BASES CONVERSION AND COMMITTEE ON LABOR ON THE RAMPANT CONTRACTUALIZATION OF EMPLOYMENT AND OTHER VIOLATION OF WORKERS’ RIGHTS IN THE SUBIC BAY METROPOLITAN AUTHORITY”

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

House Resolution No. 1920, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING MS. JANELLE MICAELA S. PANGANIBAN FOR GRADUATING SUMMA CUM LAUDE FROM THE PRESTIGIOUS NEW YORK UNIVERSITY WITH THREE (3) MAJORS: GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH, PUBLIC POLICY AND SOCIOLOGY”

By Representatives Aggabao, Albano, Go (A.C.), Dy and Ty
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1917, entitled:

“RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

House Resolution No. 1921, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE CITY OF ZAMBOANGA’S OBJECTION AGAINST THE RELEASE OF THE NINETY-SIX (96) MORO NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (MNLF) FIGHTERS INVOLVED IN THE 2013 ZAMBOAGA SIEGE AS A RESULT OF THE PLEA BARGAINING AGREEMENT

ENTERED INTO BY THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND ACCUSED MNLF FIGHTERS”

By Representative Dalipe
TO THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON PEACE,
RECONCILIATION AND UNITY

House Resolution No. 1922, entitled:

“RESOLUTION CONDEMNING IN THE STRONGEST POSSIBLE TERMS THE MURDER OF FORMER REPRESENTATIVE EUFRANIO C. ERIGUEL OF THE SECOND DISTRICT OF LA UNION”

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

House Resolution No. 1923, entitled:

“RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FAMILY OF HONORABLE EUFRANIO C. ERIGUEL, FORMER REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECOND DISTRICT OF LA UNION DURING THE FIFTEENTH AND SIXTEENTH CONGRESSES”

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

House Resolution No. 1924, entitled:

“RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FAMILY OF THE LATE ROQUE R. ABLAN, JR., FORMER REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FIRST DISTRICT OF ILOCOS NORTE DURING THE SIXTH TO TENTH AND TWELFTH TO FOURTEENTH CONGRESSES”

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

House Resolution No. 1925, entitled:

“RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FAMILY OF FORMER SENATE PRESIDENT EDGARDO JAVIER ANGARA, FATHER OF SENATOR

SONNY M. ANGARA AND BROTHER OF REPRESENTATIVE BELLAFLOR J. ANGARA-CASTILLO OF THE LONE DISTRICT OF AURORA”

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

House Resolution No. 1926, entitled:

“RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FAMILY OF HONORABLE FELIX RIGOROSO ALFELOR, JR., FORMER REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FOURTH DISTRICT OF CAMARINES SUR DURING THE TWELFTH, THIRTEENTH AND FOURTEENTH CONGRESSES”

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

House Resolution No. 1927, entitled:

“RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FAMILY OF HONORABLE TEODULO ‘DOLOY’ M. COQUILLA, FORMER REPRESENTATIVE OF THE LONE DISTRICT OF EASTERN SAMAR DURING THE FOURTEENTH CONGRESS”

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

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

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

REP. GULLAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn the session until tomorrow, May 30, 2018, at four o’clock in the afternoon.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The session is adjourned until May 30, 2018 at four o’clock in the afternoon.

It was 11:00 p.m.