



Congressional Record

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

Vol. 1

Wednesday, August 1, 2018

No. 6

CALL TO ORDER

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

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

NATIONAL ANTHEM

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

Everybody rose to sing the Philippine National Anthem.

PRAYER

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

Everybody remained standing for the silent prayer.

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

ROLL CALL

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

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

The Secretary General will please call the roll.

*The Secretary General called the roll, and the result is reflected in Journal No. 6, dated August 1, 2018. **

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. Mr. Speaker, the roll call shows that 204 Members responded to the call.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). With 204 Members responding to the call, the Chair declares the presence of a quorum.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

REP. NOEL. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve Journal No. 4 dated July 30, 2018.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. NOEL. Mr. Speaker, may we acknowledge the presence of the guests of Rep. Frederick "Erick" F. Abueg, Rep. Franz E. Alvarez, and Rep. Gil "Kabarangay" P. Acosta, all from the province of Palawan, who are in the gallery today. They are: Mayor Mary Jean Feliciano of Brooke's Point, Palawan, Hon. Rebecca Gadayán, Hon. Francelita Llado, Hon. Krist Joseph Cadlaon, Hon. Nedencio Macles, Hon. Anthony Philip Llado, Hon. Freddie Bacobo, Hon. Marivic Caboteja, Hon. Editha Rebaya, Hon. Violeta Dela Cruz, Hon. Ma. Teresita Paragas, Hon. Melchor Inog Jr., Hon. Rhodora Rasimo, Hon. Federico Dagwat Jr., Hon. Romel Mahinay, Hon. Edmund Sadang, Hon. Dave Cayabo, Hon. Richard Baleán, and Hon. Vic Bagona.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Guests of Congressmen Abueg, Alvarez, and Acosta, please rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. NOEL. May we also acknowledge the presence of the guests of the Hon. Alex "AA" L. Advincula from the Third District of Cavite, who are

also in the gallery. They are his constituents from Imus City led by Roda Miranda.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Guests of Cong. Alex Advincula, please rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. NOEL. Mr. Speaker, also in the gallery are the guests of COOP NATCCO Party- List Representatives Sabiniano S. Canama and Anthony M. Bravo, PhD. They are from the Digos City National High School Teachers and Employees Multi-Purpose Cooperative, namely: Rosemarie Migue and Merceditas Taruc.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Guests of Congressmen Canama and Bravo, please rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. NOEL. And also, in the gallery are the guests of Cong. Scott Davies S. Lanete, MD, from Masbate. They are Sangguniang Bayan Members Renato Cabatingan and Marcel Fontelar from Uson, Masbate.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Guests of Cong. Scott Lanete, please rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

REP. NOEL. Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

The Secretary General will please read the Reference of Business.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

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

BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 7940, entitled:

“AN ACT REGULATING THE USE OF GOVERNMENT AMBULANCES,

PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREFORE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Vargas
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 7941, entitled:

“AN ACT RECOGNIZING NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAYS IN THE PHILIPPINES, CREATING ANATIONAL SCENIC BYWAYS PROGRAM, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Vargas
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 7942, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING SUSTAINABLE COASTAL TOURISM, PROVIDING MECHANISMS FOR ITS INSTITUTIONALIZATION, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Vargas
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

House Bill No. 7943, entitled:

“AN ACT TO EXPAND THE COVERAGE OF MICRO ENTERPRISES AS BENEFICIARIES OF THE MAGNA CARTA FOR MICRO, SMALL, AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES OR REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6977, AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8289 AND FURTHER AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9501”

By Representative Vargas
TO THE COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT

House Bill No. 7944, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF UNDERWATER CULTURAL HERITAGE IN PHILIPPINE WATERS”

By Representative Vargas
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 7945, entitled:

“AN ACT TO PROTECT MARINE MAMMALS AND ENSURE THEIR SURVIVAL FOR THE BENEFIT OF FUTURE GENERATIONS”

By Representative Suansing (E.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

House Bill No. 7946, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING RESTAURANTS

AND OTHER SIMILAR FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS TO DISCLOSE AND DISPLAY NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION OF FOOD AND BEVERAGES ON THEIR MENUS AND MENU BOARDS”

By Representative Suansing (E.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 7947, entitled:

“AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR A STUDY AND FOR DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS REGARDING CASES OF HEPATITIS C AMONG FIREFIGHTERS, PARAMEDICS, EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIANS AND OTHER EMERGENCY RESPONSE EMPLOYEES”

By Representative Sy-Alvarado
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 7948, entitled:

“AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A NATIONAL CENTER FOR INFORMATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RELATING TO ALL TYPES OF FAMILY RESOURCE AND SUPPORT PROGRAMS”

By Representative Sy-Alvarado
TO THE COMMITTEE ON POPULATION AND FAMILY RELATIONS

House Bill No. 7949, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTING A PHILIPPINE LABOR FORCE COMPETENCIES COMPETITIVENESS PROGRAM, AND ESTABLISHING FREE ACCESS TO TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMS”

By Representative Sy-Alvarado
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 7950, entitled:

“AN ACT EMPOWERING THE PHILIPPINE INSTITUTE OF TRADITIONAL AND COMPLEMENTARY HEALTH CARE BY VESTING UPON IT REGULATORY POWERS, PROVIDING IT WITH AUGMENTED HUMAN RESOURCES AND UPGRADED EQUIPMENT, ESTABLISHING TESTING LABORATORIES AND FIELD OFFICES, AMENDING CERTAIN SECTIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8423 AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREOF”

By Representative Estrella
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 7951, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING AN ADDITIONAL

TWO (2) METROPOLITAN TRIAL COURT BRANCHES IN THE CITY OF PARAÑAQUE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Olivarez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 7952, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE MODERNIZATION OF THE PHILIPPINE NUCLEAR RESEARCH INSTITUTE, DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (PNRI-DOST), AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Mangaoang
TO THE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

House Bill No. 7953, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE GUIMARAS STATE COLLEGE IN THE PROVINCE OF GUIMARAS INTO A STATE UNIVERSITY TO BE KNOWN AS THE GUIMARAS STATE UNIVERSITY AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Nava
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 7954, entitled:

“AN ACT PRESCRIBING GUIDELINES AND PARAMETERS IN INFORMATION DISCLOSED BY THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE TO THE MEDIA REGARDING PERSONS SUSPECTED OF COMMITTING CRIMINAL ACTS AND FOR OTHER SIMILAR PURPOSES”

By Representative Gatchalian
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ORDER AND SAFETY

House Bill No. 7955, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGAY BAGONG BUHAY IN THE CITY OF PALAYAN, PROVINCE OF NUEVA ECIJA”

By Representative Vergara
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 7956, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING THE FRANCHISE OF THE TANDAG ELECTRIC AND TELEPHONE COMPANY, INC. GRANTED UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8715, AND

RENEWING/EXTENDING THE TERM THEREOF TO ANOTHER TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS FROM THE DATE OF EFFECTIVITY OF THIS ACT”

By Representative Pimentel
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE FRANCHISES

House Bill No. 7957, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING COMPENSATION TO SANGGUNIANG KABATAAN OFFICIALS FURTHER AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT 10742, ENTITLED ‘SANGGUNIANG KABATAAN REFORM ACT OF 2015’ ”

By Representative Erice
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 7958, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE PHILIPPINE PARTICIPATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS OF THE VENICE BIENNALE IN VENICE, ITALY AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Durano
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 7959, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE PARTICIPATION OF THE YOUTH IN ANTI-DRUG ABUSE COUNCIL IN ALL LEVELS”

By Representative Sy-Alvarado
TO THE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

House Bill No. 7960, entitled:

“AN ACT PROMOTING RESEARCH ON DYSTONIA”

By Representative Sy-Alvarado
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 7961, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE SUM-AG NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL (SNHS) IN THE CITY OF BACOLOD, PROVINCE OF NEGROS OCCIDENTAL, INTO A STATE COLLEGE TO BE KNOWN AS THE SUM-AG STATE COLLEGE (SSC) AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Gasataya
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 7962, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE BED CAPACITY OF CORAZON LOCSIN MONTELIBANO MEMORIAL REGIONAL HOSPITAL IN THE CITY OF BACOLOD, PROVINCE OF NEGROS OCCIDENTAL FROM FOUR HUNDRED (400) TO ONE THOUSAND (1,000)-BED CAPACITY, AUTHORIZING THE INCREASE OF ITS PERSONNEL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Gasataya
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 7963, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES CAMPUS IN THE CITY OF BACOLOD, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Gasataya
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 7964, entitled:

“AN ACT EXEMPTING SENIOR CITIZENS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES FROM TRAVEL TAX”

By Representative Gasataya
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

House Bill No. 7965, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE ORIENTAL MINDORO CENTRAL DISTRICT HOSPITAL IN PINAMALAYAN, ORIENTAL MINDORO TO PROVINCIAL HOSPITAL TO BE KNOWN AS ORIENTAL MINDORO PROVINCIAL HOSPITAL AND TO INCREASE THE BED CAPACITY TO ONE HUNDRED (100) BEDS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Umali
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 7966, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING BURNHAM PARK IN THE CITY OF BAGUIO AS A NATIONAL HERITAGE PARK AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR ITS CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Go (M.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 2019, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING CONCERNS

ABOUT THE DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE CHURCH IGLESIA NI CRISTO IN RELATION TO THE ASSASSINATION OF MAYOR FERDINAND BOTE OF GENERAL TINIO, NUEVA ECIJA”

By Representative Robes
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ORDER AND SAFETY

House Resolution No. 2020, entitled:

“RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING SEN. MANNY ‘PACMAN’ PACQUIAO FOR WINNING THE WBA WELTHERWEIGHT CROWN OVER ARGENTINIAN LUCAS MATTHYSSEVIATECHNICALKNOCKOUT IN THE SEVENTH ROUND”

By Representative Vargas
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 2021, entitled:

“RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING THE IGLESIA NI CRISTO FOR A VERY SUCCESSFUL STAGING OF THEIR ‘LINGAP LABAN SA KAHIRAPAN’ OUTREACH PROGRAM HELD LAST 15 JULY 2018”

By Representative Vargas
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 2022, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE STATUS OF PRE-DEPARTURE, ON-SITE AND OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES PROVIDED BY GOVERNMENT AGENCIES TO SEAFARERS”

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

House Resolution No. 2023, entitled:

“RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE WEST VISAYAS STATE UNIVERSITY FOR PRODUCING EIGHT TOPNOTCHERS IN THE 2018 PHILIPPINE NURSING LICENSURE EXAMINATIONS BRINGING HONOR AND PRIDE TO ILOILO AND TO THE REST OF THE WESTERN VISAYAS REGION”

By Representative Treñas
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Resolution No. 2024, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE IGLESIA

NI CRISTO IN CELEBRATION OF ITS 104TH FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY”

By Representative Silverio
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 2026, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING SECRETARY MENARDO I. GUEVARRA FOR BEING APPOINTED AS THE NEW SECRETARY OF JUSTICE”

By Representatives Villarica, Robes, Pancho, Silverio and Sy-Alvarado
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 2027, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BAMBOO LIVELIHOOD PROGRAM IN RELATION TO THE GOVERNMENT’S NATIONAL GREENING PROGRAM (NGP)”

By Representative Velasco
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 2028, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION URGING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID LEGISLATION, CONCERNING THE COMPLIANCE BY THE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES OF LAWS, RULES AND REGULATIONS ON THE CONDITIONS FOR THE RELOCATION OF THE RESIDENTS OF TEMPORARY HOUSING IN BARANGAY 105, TONDO, CITY OF MANILA”

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

House Resolution No. 2029, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION HONORING FILIPINO TEACHERS ON THE OCCASION OF THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL TEACHERS’ MONTH (NTM) - ‘GRATITUDE IN 10 SIFIED’ ”

By Representative Del Mar
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Resolution No. 2030, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING HON. EMMANUEL ‘MANNY’ D. PACQUIAO FOR HIS EXEMPLARY PERFORMANCE IN HIS

FIGHT LAST JULY 15, 2018”

By Representatives Nieto, Maceda, Martinez,
Sandoval and Malapitan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

MALACAÑAN PALACE
MANILA

21 July 2018

HON. PANTALEON D. ALVAREZ

Speaker
House of Representatives
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

Dear Speaker Alvarez:

In compliance with the President’s constitutional duty, I have the honor to transmit to Congress, through the House of Representatives, the following budget documents:

1. The President’s Budget Message for FY 2019;
2. FY 2019 National Expenditure Program (Volumes I, II and III);
3. FY 2019 Budget of Expenditures and Sources of Financing; and
4. FY 2019 Staffing Summary.

Very truly yours,

RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE
President of the Philippines

Encls.: a/s

cc: Hon. Vicente C. Sotto III
President
Senate of the Philippines

Hon. Loren B. Legarda
Chairman, Committee on Finance
Senate of the Philippines

Hon. Karlo Alexei B. Nograles
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

MESSAGES FROM THE SENATE

Message dated July 24, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that the Senate on July 23, 2018 approved the Conference Committee Report of the Bicameral Conference Committee on the disagreeing provisions of Senate Bill No. 1717, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE BASIC LAW FOR THE AUTONOMOUS REGION OF THE BANGSAMORO AND ABOLISHING THE AUTONOMOUS REGION OF 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”

and House Bill No. 6475, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE BASIC LAW FOR THE AUTONOMOUS REGION IN THE BANGSAMORO 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”

TO THE ARCHIVES

Message dated July 24, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that the Senate on even date passed with amendments House Bill No. 639, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A DISTRICT HOSPITAL IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SANTA ELENA, PROVINCE OF CAMARINES NORTE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Message dated July 24, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that the Senate on even date passed with amendment House Bill No. 1955, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE BED CAPACITY OF RIZAL MEDICAL CENTER IN PASIG CITY FROM THREE HUNDRED (300) TO FIVE HUNDRED (500) BEDS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Message dated July 24, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that the Senate on even date passed with amendments House Bill No. 5556, entitled:

“AN ACT EXTENDING FOR ANOTHER

TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO ISLA COMMUNICATIONS COMPANY, INC., PRESENTLY KNOWN AS INNOVE COMMUNICATIONS, INC., AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7372, ENTITLED ‘AN ACT GRANTING THE ISLA COMMUNICATIONS CO. A FRANCHISE TO INSTALL, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES WITHIN THE TERRITORY OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES AND INTERNATIONAL POINTS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES’ ”

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Message dated July 24, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that the Senate on even date passed with amendment House Bill No. 5880, entitled:

“AN ACT UPGRADING THE AMAI PAKPAK MEDICAL CENTER IN MARAWI CITY, PROVINCE OF LANA DEL SUR AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Message dated July 24, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that the Senate on even date passed with amendment House Bill No. 6294, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE BED CAPACITY OF THE BILIRAN PROVINCIAL HOSPITAL IN ITS PROPOSED RELOCATION SITE IN BARANGAY LARRAZABAL, MUNICIPALITY OF NAVAL, PROVINCE OF BILIRAN, FROM SEVENTY-FIVE (75) TO TWO HUNDRED (200) BEDS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Message dated July 24, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that the Senate on even date passed with amendment House Bill No. 6311, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE BED CAPACITY OF THE NARRA MUNICIPAL HOSPITAL IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF NARRA, PROVINCE OF PALAWAN FROM TEN (10) TO ONE HUNDRED (100) BED CAPACITY, AND NAMING IT AS THE GOVERNOR ALFREDO MENDOZA ABUEG, SR. MEMORIAL HOSPITAL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Message dated July 24, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that the Senate on even date passed with amendment House Bill No. 6618, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A ONE HUNDRED (100)-BED CAPACITY HOSPITAL IN

BARANGAY HABAY 2 IN THE CITY OF BACOR, PROVINCE OF CAVITE TO BE KNOWN AS THE BACOR DISTRICT HOSPITAL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Message dated July 24, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that the Senate on even date passed with amendments House Bill No. 6620, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE BED CAPACITY OF ST. ANTHONY MOTHER AND CHILD HOSPITAL IN CEBU CITY FROM TWENTY-FIVE (25) TO ONE HUNDRED (100), AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Message dated July 24, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that the Senate on even date passed with amendments House Bill No. 6740, entitled:

“AN ACT UPGRADING THE LABUAN PUBLIC HOSPITAL IN ZAMBOANGA CITY INTO A LEVEL II HOSPITAL TO BE KNOWN AS THE LABUAN GENERAL HOSPITAL, INCREASING ITS BED CAPACITY FOR GENERAL CARE SERVICES TO ONE (100), AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Message dated July 25, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that the Senate on July 24, 2018 passed the following House Bills without amendment:

House Bill No. 2849, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE BED CAPACITY OF VETERANS REGIONAL HOSPITAL IN BAYOMBONG, NUEVA VIZCAYA FROM TWO HUNDRED (200) TO FIVE HUNDRED (500), UPGRADING ITS SERVICES, FACILITIES AND PROFESSIONAL HEALTH CARE, AUTHORIZING THE INCREASE OF ITS MEDICAL PERSONNEL CHANGING ITS NAME TO REGION II TRAUMA AND MEDICAL CENTER, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”;

House Bill No. 4274, entitled:

“AN ACT UPGRADING THE SOUTHERN ISABELA GENERAL HOSPITAL IN SANTIAGO CITY, PROVINCE OF ISABELA INTO A TERTIARY GENERAL HOSPITAL TO BE KNOWN AS THE SOUTHERN ISABELA MEDICAL CENTER AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”;

House Bill No. 6389, entitled:

“AN ACT UPGRADING THE SERVICES AND

FACILITIES OF THE LA UNION MEDICAL CENTER IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF AGOO, PROVINCE OF LA UNION BY INCREASING ITS BED CAPACITY TO THREE HUNDRED (300) AND ESTABLISHING A TRAUMA CENTER THEREIN, AUTHORIZING THE INCREASE OF ITS PERSONNEL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”;

House Bill No. 6619, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE BED CAPACITY OF THE BAGUIO GENERAL HOSPITAL AND MEDICAL CENTER FROM FIVE HUNDRED (500) TO EIGHT HUNDRED (800) BEDS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”; and

House Bill No. 6711, entitled:

“AN ACT UPGRADING THE DR. PAULINO J. GARCIA MEMORIAL RESEARCH AND MEDICAL CENTER EXTENSION HOSPITAL IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF TALAVERA, PROVINCE OF NUEVA ECIJA, TO A LEVEL II HOSPITAL AND INCREASING ITS BED CAPACITY FROM FIFTY (50) TO ONE HUNDRED (100) BEDS TO BE NOW KNOWN AS THE TALAVERA GENERAL HOSPITAL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Message dated July 25, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that on July 24, 2018, the Senate designated Senators Francis “Chiz” G. Escudero, Ralph G. Recto and Paolo Benigno “Bam” Aquino IV as conferees to the Bicameral Conference Committee on the disagreeing provisions of House Bill No. 5780, entitled:

“AN ACT RENAMING THE DON HONORIO VENTURA TECHNOLOGICAL STATE UNIVERSITY (DHVTSU) IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BACOLOR, PROVINCE OF PAMPANGA AS THE DON HONORIO VENTURA STATE UNIVERSITY (DHVSU), AND EXPANDING ITS CURRICULAR OFFERINGS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9832, ENTITLED ‘AN ACT CONVERTING THE DON HONORIO VENTURA COLLEGE OF ARTS AND TRADES IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BACOLOR, PROVINCE OF PAMPANGA INTO A STATE UNIVERSITY TO BE KNOWN AS THE DON HONORIO VENTURA TECHNOLOGICAL STATE UNIVERSITY (DHVTSU) AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR’”

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Message dated July 25, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that on July 24, 2018, the Senate

designated Senators Francis “Chiz” G. Escudero, Ralph G. Recto and Paolo Benigno “Bam” Aquino IV as conferees to the Bicameral Conference Committee on the disagreeing provisions of House Bill No. 6030, entitled:

“AN ACT INTEGRATING THE CEBU CITY MOUNTAIN EXTENSION CAMPUS AS A SATELLITE CAMPUS OF THE CEBU TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9744, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ‘AN ACT CONVERTING THE CEBU STATE COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY SYSTEM IN THE CITY OF CEBU AND ALL ITS SATELLITE CAMPUSES LOCATED IN THE PROVINCE OF CEBU INTO A STATE UNIVERSITY TO BE KNOWN AS THE CEBU TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY (CTU) AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR’”

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Message dated July 25, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that on July 24, 2018, the Senate designated Senators Francis “Chiz” G. Escudero, Ralph G. Recto and Paolo Benigno “Bam” Aquino IV as conferees to the Bicameral Conference Committee on the disagreeing provisions of House Bill No. 6031, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING THE INTEGRATION OF THE MAASIN CITY COLLEGE INTO THE SOUTHERN LEYTE STATE UNIVERSITY (SLSU)”

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Message dated July 25, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that on July 24, 2018, the Senate designated Senators Francis “Chiz” G. Escudero, Joseph Victor G. Ejercito and Paolo Benigno “Bam” Aquino IV as conferees to the Bicameral Conference Committee on the disagreeing provisions of House Bill No. 6202, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE SOUTH COTABATO STATE COLLEGE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SURALLAH, PROVINCE OF SOUTH COTABATO, INTEGRATING THEREWITH THE SURALLAH NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL LOCATED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SURALLAH, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Message dated July 25, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that on July 24, 2018, the Senate designated Senators Francis “Chiz” G. Escudero, Grace Poe and Paolo Benigno

“Bam” Aquino IV as conferees to the Bicameral Conference Committee on the disagreeing provisions of House Bill No. 6203, entitled: “AN ACT CONVERTING THE SORSOGON STATE COLLEGE IN THE PROVINCE OF SORSOGON INTO A STATE UNIVERSITY TO BE KNOWN AS THE SALVADOR H. ESCUDERO III STATE UNIVERSITY AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Message dated July 25, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that on July 24, 2018, the Senate designated Senators Francis “Chiz” G. Escudero, Ralph G. Recto and Paolo Benigno “Bam” Aquino IV as conferees to the Bicameral Conference Committee on the disagreeing provisions of House Bill No. 6465, entitled:

“ANACTCONVERTINGTHE NORTHWESTERN MINDANAO STATE COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (NMSCST) IN THE CITY OF TANGUB, PROVINCE OF MISAMIS OCCIDENTAL INTO A STATE UNIVERSITY TO BE KNOWN AS THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHWESTERN MINDANAO (UNM) AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

COMMUNICATIONS

Letter dated April 20, 2018 of Undersecretary Eduardo M. Año, Officer-in-Charge, Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), submitting the 1st Quarter 2018 Reports on Project Fund Utilization and Accomplishments of the following Nationally Funded Projects of the DILG:

1. FYs 2013-2016 Bottom-Up Budgeting (DILG Fund);
2. FY 2016 Bottom-Up Budgeting (BuB) (LGSF);
3. FY 2017 Assistance to Disadvantaged Municipalities (ADM); and
4. FYs 2012-2017 Sagana at Ligtas na Tubig sa Lahat (SALINTUBIG).

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated April 30, 2018 of Allan S. Borrromeo, Regional Director, Regional Office No. XI, Department of Public Works and Highways, submitting to the House of Representatives the Monthly Project Status Report for the month of April 2018 for projects implemented by their office within the 1st Legislative District of Davao del Norte.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

Letter dated 2 May 2018 of Francisco T. Duque III, Secretary, Department of Health, submitting the final version of the 4th Annual Report on Republic Act No. 10354, otherwise known as the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act of 2012.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Letter dated May 4, 2018 of Mildred Lagbas-Mondigo, Municipal Mayor, Municipality of Sugbongcogon, Province of Misamis Oriental, submitting their Report on Fund Utilization and Status of Program/Project Implementation for the Quarter ended March 31, 2018 on the Local Government Support Fund – Financial Assistance to LGUs 2017.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated May 9, 2018 of Sylvanna O. Reusora, MSWDO, Municipality of Libertad, Province of Misamis Oriental, submitting the Partial Liquidation of the LGSF FY 2017 – Assistance to Indigent Individual and Families of the said municipality as of May 7, 2018 and a copy of Report of Receipts and Disbursements as received by LGU resident COA on May 9, 2018.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated May 14, 2018 of Austere A. Panadero, Officer-in-Charge, Department of the Interior and Local Government, submitting the Statement of Allotments, Obligations and Balances (SAOB) of the Office of the Secretary, this Department, as of April 30, 2018, in compliance with Section 95 of Republic Act No. 10964.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated May 15, 2018 of Bobby B. Balicao, Municipal Mayor, Municipality of Wao, Province of Lanao del Sur, submitting the Fund Utilization Posting Documents and Progress Report for the concreting of Junction National Road Barangay Panang to Sitio Pulacan Barangay Park Area Farm to Market Road Phase I.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated May 16, 2018 of Ferdinand B. Trinidad, Municipal Mayor, Municipality of Iguig, Province of Cagayan, submitting the Report on Fund Utilization and Status of Program/Project Implementation for the 1st Quarter of 2018 of the Local Government Support Fund – Financial Assistance to Local Government Units of said municipality.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated 16 May 2018 of Alicia dela Rosa-Bala, Chairperson, Civil Service Commission, submitting

to the House of Representatives a copy of the Commission's 2017 Annual Report.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE
AND PROFESSIONAL REGULATION

Email dated May 23, 2018 of Regina Mora of DOTr, submitting a list of DOTr Ongoing and Planned Projects as of April 2018.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION

Letter dated 23 May 2018 of Ernando S. De Leon, Director, Currency Issue and Integrity Office, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, submitting to the House of Representatives the Consolidated Accomplishment Report from January 2010 to December 2017 of the Currency Integrity Staff (Investigation Division), Currency Issue and Integrity Office, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND
FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

Letter dated May 23, 2018 of Emmanuel C. De Guzman, President, Polytechnic University of the Philippines, submitting the Status Report regarding Tulong Dunong Program (TDP) and Expanded Students' Grants-in-Aid Program for Poverty Alleviation (ESGP-PA) for School Year 2017-2018.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated May 25, 2018 of Atty. Usmin P. Diamel, Director IV, Regional Director, Regional Office No. XIII, Commission on Audit, submitting Annual Audit Reports/Management Letters for CY 2017 on the following Water Districts (WDs):

A. Annual Audit Reports:

1. Buenavista Water District, Buenavista, Agusan del Norte;
2. Bayugan Water District, Bayugan City;
3. Prosperidad Water District, Prosperidad, Agusan del Sur;
4. Bacuag Water District, Bacuag, Surigao del Norte;
5. Del Carmen Water District, Del Carmen, Surigao del Norte;
6. Metro Siargao Water District, Dapa, Surigao del Norte;
7. Bislig City Water District, Bislig City, Surigao del Sur;
8. Hinatuan Water District, Hinatuan, Surigao del Sur;
9. Tandag Water District, Tandag, Surigao del Sur;
10. Cantilan Water District, Cantilan, Surigao del Sur;
11. Lianga Water District, Lianga, Surigao del Sur; and
12. Madrid Water District, Madrid, Surigao del Sur.

B. Management Letters:

1. Barobo Water District, Barobo, Surigao del Sur; and
2. Sibagat Water District, Sibagat, Agusan del Sur.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated 28 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 Letter No. CL-2018-040 dated 23 May 2018.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND
FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

Letter dated May 28, 2018 of Noel C. Galvez, President/CEO of Vanguard Radio Network Co., Inc., submitting additional documents to update their reportorial requirements for Republic Act No. 7529 and Republic Act No. 8069 and providing an update of their development plans.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE
FRANCHISES

Letter dated May 30, 2018 of Benjamin E. Diokno, Secretary, Department of Budget and Management, transmitting the consolidated Statement of Appropriations, Allotments, Obligations, Disbursements and Balances (SAAODB) of the national government agencies for the quarter ending March 31, 2018.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated May 30, 2018 of Juarlito V. Garcines, President, Agusan del Sur State College of Agriculture and Technology (ASSCAT), submitting the ASSCAT Journey Towards University Status (2018-2020).

TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND
TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Letter dated June 1, 2018 of Allan S. Borrromeo, Regional Director, Regional Office XI, Department of Public Works and Highways, submitting to the House of Representatives the Monthly Project Status Report for the month of May 2018 of projects implemented by their office within the First Legislative District of Davao del Norte.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS
AND HIGHWAYS

Letter dated June 6, 2018 of Arnel R. Patatag, Audit Team Leader, Mactan-Cebu International Airport Authority, Commission on Audit, furnishing the House of Representatives a copy of the 2016 Annual

Audit Report on the Mactan-Cebu International Airport Authority.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated June 6, 2018 of Jesus Clint O. Aranas, President and General Manager, Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), submitting to the House of Representatives the Report on the GSIS Investment Portfolio as of December 31, 2017.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ENTERPRISES AND PRIVATIZATION

Letter dated 7 June 2018 of Delfin N. Lorenzana, Secretary, Department of National Defense, submitting the monthly report on the implementation of Martial Law in Mindanao covering the period April 1-30, 2018.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY

Letters dated June 7 and 13, 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. 1005 dated 31 May 2018;
2. Circular No. 1006 dated 1 June 2018;
3. Circular No. 1007 dated 6 June 2018;
4. Circular Letter No. CL-2018-041 dated 31 May 2018; and
5. Circular Letter No. CL-2018-042 dated 6 June 2018.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

Letter dated 11 June 2018 of Nestor A. Espenilla Jr., Governor, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, submitting their Report on Economic and Financial Developments in the Philippines, First Quarter 2018, pursuant to Section 39(a), Chapter I, Article V of Republic Act No. 7653.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

Letter dated 22 June 2018 of Ivanna G. Dela Peña, First Vice President and Head Regulatory Management, MERALCO, providing the House of Representatives a copy of MERALCO's 2017 Annual Report, pursuant to Section 14 of Republic Act No. 9209.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY

Letters dated 25 June 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. 1008 dated 14 June 2018;
2. Circular Letter No. CL-2018-043 dated 19 June 2018; and
3. Circular Letter No. CL-2018-044 dated 18 June 2018.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

Letter dated July 27, 2018 of Salvador C. Medialdea, Executive Secretary, Office of the President, Malacañang, transmitting two (2) original copies of Republic Act No. 11054 which was signed on even date by President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, entitled:
“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE ORGANIC LAW FOR THE BANGSAMORO AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6734, ENTITLED ‘AN ACT PROVIDING FOR AN ORGANIC ACT FOR THE AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO,’ AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9054, ENTITLED ‘AN ACT TO STRENGTHEN AND EXPAND THE ORGANIC ACT FOR THE AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO.’”
TO THE ARCHIVES

Project Status as of April 30, 2018 of the Province of Zamboanga del Sur on the DILG-KALSADA Program.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Quarterly Financial Report of Operations for the 1st Quarter of 2018 of the Province of Kalinga on the DILG-CMGP, attested by Jocel C. Baac, Provincial Governor.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Quarterly Physical Report of Operations for the Quarter ending March 31, 2018 of the Province of Zamboanga del Norte on the DILG-CMGP.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Quarterly Physical Report of Operations for the 1st Quarter of 2018 of the Province of Kalinga on the DILG-CMGP, attested by Jocel C. Baac, Provincial Governor.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Quarterly Financial Report of Operations for the Quarter ending March 2018 of the Province of Lanao del Sur,

- on the Local Government Support Fund—Conditional Matching Grant to Provinces, attested by Bedjoria Soraya Alonto Adiong, Provincial Governor.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
- Quarterly Financial Report of Operations for the Quarter ending March 31, 2018 of the Province of Davao del Sur, on the Local Government Support Fund – Conditional Matching Grant to Provinces, attested by Douglas RA. Gagay, Provincial Governor.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
- Annual Audit Report on the University of Southeastern Philippines for the year ended December 31, 2017.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
- Annual Audit Report on the Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology, Cabanatuan City, for the year ended December 31, 2017.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
- Annual Audit Report on the Zamboanga City State Polytechnic College for the year ended December 31, 2017.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
- 2017 Annual Report of the Department of Budget and Management.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
- 2017 Accomplishment Report of the Philippine Sports Commission.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT
- 2017 Annual Report of the Bohol I Electric Cooperative, Inc., Cabulijan, Tubigon, Bohol.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY
- 2017 Annual Audit Report on the Aurora Pacific Economic Zone and Freeport Authority, Casiguran, Aurora Province.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
- 2017 Annual Audit Report on the Subic-Clark Alliance for Development.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
- 2017 Annual Report of the Career Executive Service Board.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL REGULATION
- Report on Fund Utilization and Status of Program/ Project Implementation for the First Quarter ended 2018 of the Province of Compostela Valley on the DILG-KALSADA Program, attested by Jayvee Tyron L. Uy, Provincial Governor.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
- Report on Fund Utilization and Status of Program/ Project Implementation for the 1st Quarter ended 2017 of the Municipality of San Isidro, Province of Bohol on the LGSF, attested by Jacinto B. Naraga, Municipal Mayor.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
- Report on Fund Utilization and Status of Program/ Project Implementation for the Quarter ended December 31, 2017 of the Municipality of Toboso, Province of Negros Occidental on the LGSF-ADM, attested by Richard M. Jaajoco, Municipal Mayor.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
- Report on Fund Utilization and Status of Program/ Project Implementation for the 1st Quarter ended 2018 of the Municipality of Albuquerque, Province of Bohol on the LGSF-ADM, attested by Elpren Charles M. Tungol, Municipal Mayor.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
- Report on Fund Utilization and Status of Program/ Project Implementation for the Quarter ended June 2018 of the Municipality of Medellin, Province of Cebu on the Local Government Support Fund – Assistance to Disadvantaged Municipalities, attested by Joven Mondigo Jr., Municipal Mayor.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
- Reports and supporting documents for Conditional Matching Grant to Provinces for Road Repair, Rehabilitation and Improvement:
1. Monthly Physical Report of Operations from September to December 2017 / Monthly Financial Report of Operations from November to December 2017 of the Province of Camarines Norte on the LGSF-CMGP for Road Repair, Rehabilitation and Improvement;
 2. Fund Utilization Reports on the Upgrading of the Daet - San Lorenzo Ruiz Road and the Labo-Fundado-Bakal Road; and
 3. Certification of the OIC - Provincial Accountant of Camarines Norte on the disbursement of funds for the projects.
- TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
- 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. 1444 and House Bill No. 6772, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING PROTECTED AREAS AND PROVIDING FOR THEIR MANAGEMENT, AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7586, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘NATIONAL INTEGRATED PROTECTED AREAS SYSTEM (NIPAS) ACT OF 1992’, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

(Now Republic Act No. 11038)

2. House Bill No. 833, entitled:

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

(Now Republic Act No. 11041)

3. House Bill No. 1425, entitled:

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

(Now Republic Act No. 11042)

4. House Bill No. 2656, entitled:

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

(Now Republic Act No. 11043)

5. House Bill No. 2785, entitled:

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

(Now Republic Act No. 11044)

6. House Bill No. 4782, entitled:

“AN ACT RENAMING THE KAY TIKLING-ANTIPOLO - TERESA - MORONG NATIONAL ROAD IN THE PROVINCE OF RIZAL, TRAVERSING THROUGH BARANGAY DOLORES IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF TAYTAY UP TO BARANGAY MAYBANCAL IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF MORONG, AS CORAZON C. AQUINO AVENUE”;

(Now Republic Act No. 11045)

7. House Bill No. 4947, entitled:

“AN ACT RENAMING THE ROAD TRAVERSING

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

(Now Republic Act No. 11046)

8. House Bill No. 5001, entitled:

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

(Now Republic Act No. 11047)

9. House Bill No. 5002, entitled:

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

(Now Republic Act No. 11048)

10. House Bill No. 5123, entitled:

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

(Now Republic Act No. 11049)

11. House Bill No. 5356, entitled:

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

(Now Republic Act No. 11050)

12. House Bill No. 5643, entitled:

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

(Now Republic Act No. 11051)

13. Consolidated House Bill No. 6714 and Senate Bill No. 1269, entitled:

“AN ACT REGULATING THE PRACTICE OF FOOD TECHNOLOGY IN THE PHILIPPINES, CREATING FOR THE PURPOSE THE BOARD OF FOOD TECHNOLOGY, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”;

(Now Republic Act No. 11052)

14. Consolidated Senate Bill No. 108 and House Bill No. 6782, entitled:

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

(Now Republic Act No. 11040)

15. Consolidated Senate Bill No. 1461 and House Bill No. 7054, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES EMERGENCY AND RESILIENCY FUND AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”;

and

(Now Republic Act No. 11039)

16. Consolidated Senate Bill No. 1662 and House Bill No. 6573, entitled:

“AN ACT PROHIBITING HAZING AND REGULATING OTHER FORMS OF INITIATION RITES OF FRATERNITIES, SORORITIES, AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS, AND PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8049, ENTITLED ‘AN ACT REGULATING HAZING AND OTHER FORMS OF INITIATION RITES IN FRATERNITIES, SORORITIES, AND ORGANIZATIONS AND PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREFOR’”.

(Now Republic Act No. 11053)

TO THE ARCHIVES

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. 1103 and House Bill No. 6915, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A CAMPUS OF THE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES (PUP) IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SABLAYAN, PROVINCE OF OCCIDENTAL MINDORO TO BE KNOWN AS THE PUP-SABLAYAN CAMPUS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”;

2. House Bill No. 1875, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE (LTO) EXTENSION OFFICE LOCATED IN MUNTINLUPACITY INTO A REGULAR LTO DISTRICT OFFICE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”;

3. House Bill No. 2708, entitled:

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

4. House Bill No. 3188, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE CALOOCAN CITY EXTENSION OFFICE OF THE LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE (LTO) LOCATED IN MALABON CITY, METRO MANILA INTO A REGULAR LTO DISTRICT OFFICE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”;

5. House Bill No. 6603, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE KALBAY NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ANNEX IN BARANGAY SUGAL, MUNICIPALITY OF JOSE ABAD SANTOS, PROVINCE OF DAVAO OCCIDENTAL FROM THE KALBAY NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS EMELIANO S. FONTANARES SR. NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”;

6. Consolidated House Bill No. 64 and Senate Bill No. 1317, entitled:

“AN ACT STRENGTHENING COMPLIANCE WITH OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH STANDARDS AND PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF”;

7. Consolidated House Bill No. 6221 and Senate Bill No. 1738, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM”;

8. Consolidated House Bill No. 6578 and Senate Bill No. 1762, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A RETIREMENT BENEFIT SYSTEM IN THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN, AUGMENTING

ITS EMPLOYEE BENEFITS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”; and

9. Consolidated House Bill No. 6907 and Senate Bill No. 1459, entitled:

“AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE SECURED TRANSACTIONS LEGAL FRAMEWORK IN THE PHILIPPINES, WHICH SHALL PROVIDE FOR THE CREATION, PERFECTION, DETERMINATION OF PRIORITY, ESTABLISHMENT OF A CENTRALIZED NOTICE REGISTRY, AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTERESTS IN PERSONAL PROPERTY, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report by the Committee on Labor and Employment (Committee Report No. 802), re H.B. No. 7973, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE REMEDY OF FILING A PETITION FOR CERTIORARI TO THE SUPREME COURT TO REVIEW THE DECISIONS OF THE NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS COMMISSION AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE ARTICLES 229 AND 230 OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 442, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘LABOR CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES’”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 1358

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

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Higher and Technical Education and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 803), re H.B. No. 7978, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING AND ACCREDITATION CENTER IN BARANGAY CAMAMAN-AN, CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY, TO BE KNOWN AS THE CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY TESDA TRAINING AND ACCREDITATION CENTER, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 2574

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

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Higher and Technical Education and the Committee on Appropriations

(Committee Report No. 804), re H.B. No. 7979, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING AND ACCREDITATION CENTER IN THE CITY OF ANTIPOLO, PROVINCE OF RIZAL, TO BE KNOWN AS THE ANTIPOLO CITY TESDA TRAINING AND ACCREDITATION CENTER, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 2036

Sponsors: Representatives Hofer, Nograles (K.A.) and Roa-Puno

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Local Government (Committee Report No. 805), re H.B. No. 7987, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE SITIO OF ASCOMO FROM BARANGAY PULUNG MASLE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF GUAGUA, PROVINCE OF PAMPANGA AND CONSTITUTING IT INTO A DISTINCT AND INDEPENDENT BARANGAY TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGAY ASCOMO”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 4260

Sponsors: Representatives Acharon and Macapagal-Arroyo

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Transportation and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 806), re H.B. No. 6319, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN EXTENSION OFFICE OF THE LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE (LTO) IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF TUBIGON, PROVINCE OF BOHOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval without amendment

Sponsors: Representatives Sarmiento (C.), Nograles (K.A.) and Relampagos

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

REP. NOEL. Mr. Speaker, may we acknowledge the presence of the guests of Rep. Jorge “Bolet” Banal of the Third District of Quezon City. They are Grade 12 students from Miriam College, with their teacher, Ms. Ana Maria Theresa Japlos.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Guests of Cong. Bolet Banal, please rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

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

REP. NOEL. Mr. Speaker, may we also acknowledge the presence of the guests of the honorable Deputy Speaker Raneo “Ranie” E. Abu of Batangas. They are members of the Sangguniang Kabataan Federation of Bauan, Second District of Batangas, headed by Ms. Bernalyn Dalangin, the SK Federation President.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Guests of Deputy Speaker Ranie Abu, please rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*
The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7735
Continuation

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. NOEL. Mr. Speaker, under the Calendar of Unfinished Business, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 7735, as contained in Committee Report No. 739, as submitted by the Committees on Agriculture and Food, Ways and Means, and Appropriations. And for this purpose, may I ask that the Secretary General be directed to read the title of the Bill.
I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7735, entitled: AN ACT REPLACING THE QUANTITATIVE IMPORT RESTRICTIONS ON RICE WITH TARIFFS AND CREATING THE RICE COMPETITIVENESS ENHANCEMENT FUND.

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

REP. NOEL. Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary status of the Bill is that it is in the period of sponsorship and debate. I move that the Chairperson of the Committee on Agriculture and Food, the Hon. Jose T. Panganiban Jr., be recognized.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. NOEL. Mr. Speaker, as the first interpellator, I move that we recognize the Hon. Ariel “Ka Ayik” B. Casilao of the Party-List ANAKPAWIS.

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

REP. CASILAO. Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, I would like to put on record that I was included in the Committee Report of House Bill No. 7735 as one of the coauthors. I want to put on record that I withdrew my coauthorship last May 29, 2018, as officially received by the Office of the Secretary General, for the record, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

Unang-una po, bago ko po umpisahan ang ating talakayan at ang aking mga katanungan hinggil sa usapin ng panukalang batas na ito—na magtatanggal sa kasalukuyang kalakaran ng pagpasok ng bigas sa pamamaraan ng paglalagay ng quantitative restriction, at bagkus, papalitan ito sa usapin ng paglalagay ng taripa—nais ko pong ilatag na sa mahabang panahon, tayong mga Pilipino, bilang pangunahing kinokonsumo natin ay bigas, ang Philippines is a rice-consuming country, 99 percent of its population ay kumakain po ng bigas sa almusal, sa tanghalian at sa hapunan. Being said, rice is the basic staple of the Filipino-consuming community.

Our rice industry, the existing rice industry also has 2.4 million rice farmers. Ibig sabihin po, dependent ang mahigit dalawang milyon na mga magsasaka ng palay sa anuman ang kinokonsumo ng kanyang bansa. At hindi lang po ang direktang mga magsasaka ng palay, kundi ang mga manggagawa nito. Ibig sabihin, ang mga rice farmworkers—mula sa pagtatanim, pagmementina, pagha-harvest hanggang sa post-harvest, eventually, hanggang sa mapunta ito sa mga merkado. Dahil nga numero uno itong staple food ng ating mamamayan, kinakailangang siguraduhin natin na ang gobyerno at ang kaniyang polisiya ay nararapat pangunahing pumapabor sa interes ng mga magsasakang lumilikha ng palay at bigas na kinukunsumo natin, at ang mamamayan na kumukunsumo mula sa nilikha ng ating mga magsasaka.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, this Bill, House Bill No. 7735, will decide the fate of the 2.4 million direct rice farmers and the more than one million rice farmworkers, and this Bill will decide the fate of the 99 percent of our populace consuming rice for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Unang ilalatag ko po ang aking oposisyon sa panukalang batas na ito sa panahon ng deliberasyon ng panukalang batas na ito. Nairehistro ng Kinatawang ito na, una, this Bill will take a greater toll and eventually eliminate or even kill the 2.4 million rice farmers’ livelihoods.

Distinguished Sponsor, may I know, prior to the entry of the Philippine government as a signatory to the World Trade Organization-General Agreement

on Tariffs and Trade, before 1995, among volume ang inaangkat ng Pilipinas or rice importation?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, may I answer.

In 1995, the total actual imported rice arrivals to the Philippines, into the Philippines, was 252,000 metric tons.

REP. CASILAO. Total arrival in 1995?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes po.

REP. CASILAO. My question, distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, prior to the entry of the Philippine government to World Trade Organization-GATT, ano ang bilang ng importasyong pumapasok sa ating bansa?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Iyon na nga po—252,953 metric tons, Mr. Interpellator.

REP. CASILAO. Maraming salamat, distinguished Sponsor.

Sa pananaliksik po ng Kinatawang ito at ng aking opisina, nais ko pong ipaalam, aking mga kasamahan sa Kongreso, noong 1991 hanggang 1995, the average imported rice na pumasok sa ating bansa ay humigit-kumulang 93,000 metric tons lamang. Mula noong 1995, noong tayo ay pumasok sa GATT-WTO, at naipasá itong quantitative restrictions, lumaki nang lumaki ang volume na pumasok dito sa ating bansa. Eventually, from 2008 to 2010, mahigit-kumulang 1.3 million metric tons, at noong 2008, umabot po ng 2.2 million metric tons ang pumasok—bumaha ang mga imported na bigas.

Now, my basic question, distinguished Sponsor, ang palayan ba natin sa kasalukuyang latag, kung ikukumpara mo noong before 1995, at ang kasalukuyang antas, totoo nga ba na kulang ang pino-produce ng 2.3 million rice farmers para sa konsumo ng kanyang mamamayan? Kung may datos po ang ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor, maaari ba nating ibahagi sa ating mga kasamahan sa Kongreso ang comparative production in the last, let us say, 20 years kung bakit tumaas nang ganito na umabot sa puntong kinakailangang mag-import ng bigas na 1.3 million metric tons? Dahil nga ba ito sa kakulangan ng local production, distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Interpellator, I have here with me data showing the total production of rice from 2008 to 2017.

In 2008, the total production was 16.8 million

metric tons; in 2009, 16.2 million metric tons; in 2010, 15.7 million metric tons; in 2011, 16.6 million metric tons; in 2012, 18.18 million metric tons; in 2013, 18.4 million metric tons; in 2014, 18.9 million metric tons; in 2015, 18.1 million metric tons; in 2016, 17.6 million metric tons; and in 2017, 19.2 million metric tons.

I also would like, by way of replying, Mr. Speaker, that in 2016, the total actual imported rice was 681 metric tons—in 2016 and in 2017—916 thousand metric tons, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator.

REP. CASILAO. Maraming salamat distinguished Sponsor. Ako po ay hihingi ng kopyang iyan para sa ating dagdag na impormasyon sa ating mga kasamahan sa Kongreso.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Okay po.

REP. CASILAO. Will the distinguished Sponsor agree with me that the enactment of R.A. No. 8179, the Foreign Investments Act of 1991, eventually downgraded the function of the National Food Authority? Nang tinanggal po ang ilang mga mahahalagang function ng National Food Authority o kaniyang mandato na kontrolin ang presyo ng palay at bigas, dahil nga in compliance with our entry to the 1995 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and World Trade Organization, the structural adjustment program should harmonize liberalization in full as mandated in Republic Act No. 8179. Sa tingin po ba ng ating Kagalang-galang na Sponsor, malaking kawalan ba sa bahagi at ahensya ng National Food Authority na matanggalan ng isa sa mga mahahalagang mandato niya sa usapin ng pagkontrol, strict monitoring of the prices of palay and bigas—locally produced?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Pagdating po sa mandato o structural change na sinasabi po ng ating kagalang-galang na interpellator, hindi naman po malaking kawalan iyon sa NFA because as it is, controlled pa rin—ang NFA pa rin ang nagkokontrol ng presyo ng mga bigas na pumapasok sa NFA. Pagdating naman po sa production, of course, ang tanging nagagawa lamang po ng NFA ay iyong magkaroon ng support sa buying price na galing po sa magsasaka.

REP. CASILAO. Maraming salamat. One of the arguments when this Bill was deliberated on in the Committee level, ang parati pong ibinabandera na pangkumbinse sa ating mamamayan, kapag inaprubahan po ang panukalang batas na ito, House Bill No. 7735, and replace the quantitative restriction to tariffication, may malayang kompetisyon which eventually will result in lower prices of rice especially the imported ones.

Distinguished Sponsor, please enlighten this

Representation and our colleagues. Ano ba ang ebidensya at maaaring ilatag ngayon na magiging batayan na bababa ang presyo, for the record, dahil nandito naman ang ating mga kasamahan sa Kongreso na mag-aapruba nito?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, ...

REP. CASILAO. Pakikinggan natin si distinguished Sponsor. Ano ang magiging rason at kadahilanan na sasabihin niyang bababa ang presyo kapag ito ay naaprubahan?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator, ayon po sa datos na galing mismo sa National Food Authority, ang presyo po ng bigas na imported, the landed cost of an imported rice is P27 per kilo. Ang ibig pong sabihin noon, kapag po nag-angkat po tayo ng bigas, ang presyo po ng isang kilong bigas ay P27 lamang, samantalang kapag po tayo ay nag-produce po ng bigas, ang initial na production cost po natin ng palay is P13 per kilo. Bago po maging bigas ang palay, marami pong prosesong pinagdadaanan ito, at ang nagiging presyo po ng bigas pagdating po sa merkado ay iyong commercial rice po, at least, ay P37 hanggang P38.

Kaya malaki po ang kaibahan, bale P10 po ang diperensya ng local commercial rice natin kaysa sa bigas na inaangkat natin magmula pa sa ibang bansa. Kaya po kapag po nag-angkat po tayo ng bigas, sigurado po na bababa ang presyo ng bigas sa merkado dahil mas mura nga po ang imported na bigas kaysa sa local na bigas po natin.

At this juncture, Deputy Speaker Castro (F.H.) relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Raneo "Ranie" E. Abu.

REP. CASILAO. I cannot—the sentiment of the reply of the distinguished Sponsor, while it is factual, ngayon nga may presyo nga, P38, pero po sa kaalaman ng ating distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, may tatlong yugto na po mula noong pumasok tayo sa GATT-WTO. There are three eras of monitoring the prices of the imported and the local rice produce or the local palay produce. May tatlong insidente po ng pag-spike at pagtaas ng presyo. Mula po sa P13 per kilo before the 1995 ang regular-milled rice, ngayon, umaabot na po ngayon sa P38, gaya ng sinabi ng ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor.

Ang mga yugto-yugtong ito na kung saan nakaranas ng tatlong yugto ng pagtaas ng presyo ng kilo ng bigas ay dahil na rin sa influx at papalaking bilang ng pagpasok ng tone-tonelada at milyun-milyong imported rice. And, in fact, doon sa sinabi ko kanina na prior to 1995, 1991 to 1994, na 93,000 metric tons

lamang ang pumasok na imported rice, but when even with the quantitative restriction, at umabot na sa 1.3 million metric tons ang yearly na pumapasok, taunang pumapasok sa ating bansa na mga imported na bigas, it did not stop the spike of prices per kilo of rice. From P13 to P25 to P38—malaking halaga po ang itinaas sa tatlong yugto ng pagtaas na iyan.

Ngayon, ang itinatanong po ng Kinatawang ito, distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, what are the specific guarantees of this Bill that will prevent from spike of prices or to maintain the affordability of per kilo of rice in the market now? Ang garantiya pong sinasabi ng Kinatawang ito distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, were the same guarantees that we asked about during the deliberations on and the approval of Oil Deregulation Law.

Remember, colleagues, when Congress deliberated on the Oil Deregulation Law, it was the same promise of free market competition of oil products to enter in the Philippine economy. Dahil nga sa kompetisyon na iyan, bababa ang presyo ng mga produktong petrolyo. These are the same promises, my dear colleagues.

Now, I am asking, distinguished Sponsor, what are the specific guarantees na sinasabi natin sa panukalang batas na ito na magmementina ng affordability ng presyo ng bigas?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator, malaki po ang pagkakaiba ng deregulation ng langis sa deregulation na mangyayari dito sa panukalang batas na ito, kasi po, doon sa langis, that is full deregulation. Dito po sa panukalang batas na ito, hindi po natin inaalis ang ahensya ng NFA, ang National Food Authority, na mag-angkat ng bigas para matugunan iyong ating tinatawag na buffer stock. Ano po ang ibig sabihin ng buffer stock? Ang ibig sabihin po ng buffer stock ay dapat mayroong laging nakabodega na bigas sa bodega ng mga NFA na magagamit sa kalamidad, sa emergency situation, at lalung-lalo na sa Price Stabilization Fund.

Kaya nga po kahit na payagan nating mag-import, let us say, ang mga private sector ng bigas, hindi po natin winawala, and in fact, binibigyan natin ng mandato ang NFA na mag-import ng bigas para sa karampatang 15 days na consumption. Kaya po, kung ikukumpara po sa langis, hindi po puwedeng ikumpara dahil nga ang sabi ko, iyong langis po, full deregulation, samantala po itong bigas na ito, nandyan pa rin ang NFA na mag-aangkat po ng bigas para kung kinakailangan ay mailabas para makontrol iyong presyo.

REP. CASILAO. Meaning to say, distinguished Sponsor, the specific guarantee that the price, the affordability of the price of rice in the market dahil lang dito sa fund or may iba pang mga component ang panukalang ito na magsasabi ng "No." In layman's

terms, distinguished Sponsor, sabihin natin sa ating mga mamamayan, sa ating mga constituents, kapag naipasá ang batas na ito, are we really sure that the current price of rice, let us say, the P38 NFA rice per kilo at the market today, dapat nga mas mababa pa diyan e, pero tila mayroong mahikang nangyayari sa institusyon at ahensya ng NFA na mula sa P25 dapat kada kilo, ngayon ay naging P38 na.

Sabihin nating kung hindi kayang babaan, is there a guarantee coming from our distinguished Sponsor and the principal authors of this Bill na kapag ito ay naipasá, aasahan ba natin, ng mga mamamayan, na mananatili sa P38 kada kilo ang bigas o ang NFA rice at hindi na ito tataas? Dapat nga inaasahan nating mas bumaba as per the promise of this Bill dahil sa malayang kumpetisyon ng mga importer at mga imported na bigas na papasok.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator, we could not provide the specific guarantee being asked or clarified by the interpellator. However, in Section 9 of the Bill, there is—we provided for the power and authority of the President na kapag mayroong sudden fluctuation, ang bigas puwede niya—puwedeng ang Presidente, in the interest of the general welfare and national security, the President may increase, reduce, revise or adjust existing rates on import duty, including necessary change in classification applicable to the importation of rice.

So, ibig sabihin, kapag may mga unnecessary na paggalaw ang presyo ng bigas, mayroong power and authority, binibigyan natin ng power and authority ang Presidente para ideklara o kaya magbigay ng mga safeguards para bumaba o kaya lumebel iyong presyo ng bigas sa kasalukuyang lebel, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator.

REP. CASILAO. Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, napakagandang pakinggan po. Tila, di ho ba, sa kasalukuyang setup mayroon nang ganyang kapangyarihan ang Presidente bilang umuupong Chairperson ng NFA Council. Hindi ho ba, sa kasalukuyang setup ngayon, mayroon nang ganoong kapangyarihan ang ating Pangulo?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mayroon nga po, kaya nga po, the President, no less than President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, noong ayaw ng NFA Council na mag-import ng bigas, sinabihan sila ni Presidente Duterte na mag-import kayo ng bigas, kaya walang nagawa iyong NFA Council, kaya sumunod at nag-import nga ng bigas.

REP. CASILAO. Kaya nga po, distinguished Sponsor, halos kalampagin na ang mga NFA outlets ng ating mga mamamayan na naghahanap ng murang bigas

mula sa NFA. Pero dahil nga sinasabi, ang stock at ang warehouse ay halos wala nang laman, kaya napipilitan ang ating mga mamamayan na bumili doon sa bigas na mula sa mga komersyal.

Tila mayroon na pong matinding kahirapan doon pero hindi natin naririnig, o siguro hindi ko lang napapansin, na ang dapat ginawa ng Pangulo ay i-invoke noong panahon, noong sinasabi kong tatlong yugto ng pagtaas ng presyo ng imported rice, mula sa P13 to P25 to P28, bakit hindi po ginamit ang ganyang kapangyarihan? Not only to regulate, but of course, iba pa pong usapin ang nagiging papel ng mga rice smugglers, ang nagiging papel ng rice cartel—mamaya ko pa po iyan tatalakayin—pero doon lang po tayo sa sinasabing safeguard and special provision at power ng Pangulo, na hindi naman po iyan bago at mayroon na niyan sa kasalukuyan.

Hindi po natin naramdaman na sa kahaba-haba ng panahon, tila tinanggap na lang, o ayaw ko mang sabihing tinanggap dahil mayroon naman talagang nagpoprotesta, may nag-iingay sa bawat pisong pagtaas ng presyo ng bigas. Malaking bagay na po iyan sa karaniwang tao. Malaking bagay na po iyan sa mga minimum wage earners, at malaking bagay na po iyan sa mga hindi nga nakatakda ang kanilang sahurán kada araw, o iyong mga tinatawag nating “informal workers,” na hindi minimum ang batayan ng kanilang sahurán kada araw. Pero sa ganitong kalagayan po, from P25 to P38, P13 po ang itinaas—malaking bagay po iyan. Pero, bakit tila tanggap ng ating gobyerno, pangunahin ng Ehekutibo, na hayaan ang ganiyang kalakaran at isubo nang pilit sa kaniyang mamamayan ang ganitong presyuhan ng bigas?

Kaya bumabalik po ang Kinatawang ito, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, to the specific guarantees because a promise can be a promise today; but in actuality, upon the enactment of this Bill into law, at mararanasan ng mamamayan na tataas pa rin at iyong sinasabing affordability ng bigas ay tila nakasulat lamang sa papel pero sa aktwal na karanasan ay mahal pa rin ang kada presyo ng bigas. Sino po ang sisihin ng taumbayan? Hindi ho ba tayong mga Mambabatas na nandito sa kapulungang ito, na nagtalakay sa panukalang batas na ito? Tiyak ako, dahil ang nakaupong Speaker ang siyang pangunahing principal sponsor ng panukalang batas na ito, maipapasá ito sa Kongreso. Pero kapag umabot pa sa punto that the same promise of Oil Deregulation Law, at sinabi sa mamamayan na bababa ang presyo ng mga produktong petrolyo, at kapag dumating ang panahon na hindi kayang imentina ang presyo ng bigas sa P38 at tataas sa darating na mga panahon, dahil alam natin the internal and external factors of how the pricing of the basic commodities play in our economy today, asahan po natin na marami po

ang lalaro at makakaapekto sa pagtakda ng presyo na iyan.

Now, what I am trying to insist, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, is that we convince the people of the specific guarantees that in the event this Bill will be passed and be implemented, we can no longer expect a spike in the price of rice per kilo in the market to achieve the objective of affordability of our consuming public. That is precisely the very reason we asked for the specific guarantees, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

May I go to another point, distinguished Sponsor.

In the bill, there is the provision of anti-dumping. Am I correct?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Can I ask the interpellator for the specific provision he is referring to in the Bill?

REP. CASILAO. Well, what I am asking is, is there any, provisions in House Bill No. 7735, that reiterates the provision on the current quantitative restriction in the event of dumping? Therefore, there should be a provision in the Bill that ensures the anti-dumping provision. So, I am asking now if there is a provision in the Bill, an anti-dumping provision?

REP. PANGANIBAN. As it is now, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator, I could not see any provision that relates to anti-dumping.

REP. CASILAO. Why?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Actually, I do not understand the point of the interpellator. If the interpellator insists on putting an anti-dumping provision, then, I guess and I believe that he should just propose it as an amendment, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASILAO. Precisely, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor. The very objective of this Bill is to liberalize the entry of imported rice in the country from quantitative restriction to tariffication. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the proponents of this Bill to expect the influx or entry, deluge or flooding of imported rice in the country, because importation nga eh. Ang papasok, tariffication na lang iyong kaniyang ibibigay o kaniyang iko-comply bago makapasok sa bansa.

Ngayon, because in the Bill, as I understand, there is still the limit, the 350,000 metric tons minimum access volume (MAV), mayroon pa rin iyan. Pero, dahil nga ang kinakailangang abutin from the supply at iyong demand na kinukunsumo ng kaniyang mamamayan, we still have 1.3 million metric tons na parang sinasabi ngang kakulangan na pupunuan ng pagpasok ng imported na bigas na ito, the tendency of dumping is inevitable.

Hindi pa po kasama diyan ang diskarte cartel at mga smuggler. Even in the compliance with the required volume entry to the Philippines, iyong dumping po ay mangyayari at mangyayari pa rin.

Now, what I am asking for is the provision specifically stating anti-dumping in this Bill.

REP. PANGANIBAN. As I have said, Mr. Speaker, there is no specific provision containing anti-dumping in this Bill. However, I would like to point out, Mr. Speaker, that we have a number of anti-dumping laws already in place, and these cover all commodities. They are not specifically for rice, but they cover all commodities, and I am referring to Republic Act No. 8752, Republic Act No. 8751 and Republic Act No. 8800.

REP. CASILAO. It will clearly affect because, distinguished Sponsor, remember, before the enactment of this Bill, bago po maipasá ito, iyong anti-dumping provision is applicable to all agricultural products dahil nga papasok tayo sa bagong moda from quantitative restriction to tariffication. Again, although as I understood, sinasabi ng ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor, maaari naman niyang ipasok, my point is, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, rice importation should be regulated. It is clear. However, when tariffication is in place, then therefore, sino po ba ang makakapigil sa mga pribadong trader, local or even iyong mga big players, na hindi makaka-comply dito dahil kaya naman niyang bayaran ano man ang itinatakang tariffication rate.

The only real limit to private sector importation, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, is the ability to pay the tariffs, at chicken lang po iyan. Napakaliit na bagay lang po iyan dahil kaya naman niyang abutin at kaya naman niyang i-comply iyan. Pero, iyon nga, may point is, distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, ano na ngayon ang mangyayari sa percentage of purchase ng NFA sa ating mga local palay producers? Will it still remain at 10 percent of the local produce to be bought by NFA?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, as the Bill is crafted, okay, the NFA will continue to buy palay from our farmers at the subsidized price of P17 per kilo. Wala po tayong inilagay na maximum or minimum kung ilan ang bibilhin ng NFA.

REP. CASILAO. Hindi po iyan totoo, Mr. Speaker, because in our research, ang mandato ng NFA ay bilhin sa mga lokal na magsasaka ang average of 10 percent na kabuuang lokal na produksyon. Alam po ng NFA iyan. Ngunit sa karanasan at sa nagdaang mga dekada, kahit kalahati ay hindi ito naabot ng NFA dahil nga doon sa pagtakda ng kanyang buying price na napakaliit. Currently, the approved NFA Council buying price,

before President Duterte ordered it to increase from P17 to P20, is P17 per kilo.

Inalmahan po iyan ng ating mga magsasaka dahil hindi nila kayang ibenta ang kanilang palay sa ganyang presyo dahil nga sa production cost pa lang ng ating mga magsasaka sa palay ay lugin-lugin na at inutang pa niya ito sa trader. How much more kung ibebenta niya sa ganyang presyo ay talagang papatayin ang kanyang kabuhayan. From 2000 to 2009, distinguished Sponsor, mayroon po lamang 2.3 percent buying percentage ang NFA. Mas maliit po ito noong 2010 to 2017 na umabot lamang sa 1.6 percent. Ibig sabihin, sa mandato niyang 10 percent, ang na-comply lamang niya at nagawa lamang niya ay 1.6 percent.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Aasahan po natin talaga iyon dahil ayaw na pong magbenta ng ating mga magsasaka sa NFA dahil nga mas mataas ang presyo kapag mga private traders na ang bumili. Kaya nga po, kung halimbawa, iyong private trader ay bibilhin ang palay sa presyong P22 per kilo at iyong NFA ay P17 per kilo lang ang bili, siyempre ibebenta mo sa private trader.

REP. CASILAO. Totoo po at hindi po natin dapat sisihin ang mga magsasaka kung hindi sila magbenta sa NFA dahil nga sa barat pa ang presyo, maliit, hindi siya makakabawi doon sa kanyang kapital, sa kanyang inutang sa trader. Kaya naman, sana punuan ito ng ating gobyerno sa pamamagitan ng, for example, for this year, NFA has a P7 billion budget for purchase. Kung sa P17 ang kanyang buying rate ay nirekomenda niya kay Pangulong Duterte as early as the third or the second quarter of 2017, sinabi na niya kay Pangulong Duterte na ang alokasyong ito by 2018, dapat taasan na natin from P17 to P20, P21 or even P22. Malaking bagay po na ibuhos ang bilyun-bilyong perang ito sa pagbili sa ating mga lokal na mga palay producers. Pero hindi po iyan ginawa at hinayaan na lang na paliit nang paliit ang porsyento ng compliance sa mandato ng NFA sa pagbili sa kanyang mga magsasaka.

Now, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, in the Bill, tariffication sets the bound rates for rice imported into the country, where in letter a), for rice imports from non-ASEAN WTO member countries, 40 percent rate is for the most favored nation (MFN) if the volume is within the 350,000 metric tons MAV. Am I correct, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes. Under Section 5 of the Bill, it sets the bound rate for rice imported to the Philippines:

- (1) Forty percent (40%) MFN rate for importation within 350,000 MT x x x; and
- (2) One hundred eighty percent (180%) MFN out quota x x x.

For the ATIGA, our imported rice originating from ASEAN member-states, it shall be the ATIGA rate.

REP. CASILAO. If the volume is over the MAV, the tariff rate according to the Bill is 180 percent. Am I correct?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes.

REP. CASILAO. So, let us say, kapag ang ipinasok ng isang negosyante ay 400,000 metric tons at inaprubahan ito ng hiningian niya ng import permit, papasok ang 400 metric tons. Ibig sabihin po ba nito, kahit na sa MFN ito manggaling ay lagpas na sa 40 percent at ang kanyang itatakdang koleksyon ay nasa 180 percent na?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes.

REP. CASILAO. For rice imports from ASEAN member-countries, we have zero tariff in accordance with the commitments of the country in the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement. Sa ATIGA po, ibig sabihin, saan nga po nanggagaling ang pangunahin o malaking bahagi sa nagdaang mga taon itong 1.3 million metric tons? Di ho ba nanggaling ito sa Vietnam at Thailand?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes, distinguished interpellator.

REP. CASILAO. Then, therefore, kung nanggaling sa Vietnam and Thailand, if my understanding is correct, they are members of the ASEAN. Am I correct?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator.

REP. CASILAO. Therefore, the ATIGA is being enforced.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes.

REP. CASILAO. Now, mas lalo pa pong nakakabahala, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, kung ganito po ang aplikasyon, and in fact, in the years to come, from the 50th ASEAN gathering held in our country which we hosted, sabi nga, ONE ASEAN, itutulak sa darating na mga panahon pa o mga dekada pa. Eventually, hindi ho ba nakakabahala na zero tariff?

REP. PANGANIBAN. As it is now, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator, the ATIGA rate for rice is 35 percent. Now, assuming going by the interpretation of the distinguished interpellator, assuming that in the future it will become zero percent, well, I would like to believe that kung saka-sakaling zero percent iyong

imported rice, iyon naman iba nating ini-import o ini-export ay magkakaroon ng karampatang balancing equation, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator.

REP. CASILAO. Naku po! Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, huwag po nating ikumpara ang ganyang kumputasyon. Alam naman po natin ang bigas bilang pangunahing kinukunsumo natin. The eventual effect, if we submit our Philippine economy as the policy being recommended by the economic managers to comply with the ATIGA full-blown, ONE ASEAN cooperation, eventually, igigiit nila, bahagi diyan ng compliance ng ATIGA, is the zero tariffication. Ibang usapin pa po iyong produktong ini-export natin not only to our ASEAN member-countries, the neighboring countries, but also to other parts of the continent. Pero ang usaping ito ay magkakaepkto nang malaki sa pang-araw-araw na kinukunsumo ng kanyang mamamayan.

Ano po ba ang magiging epekto kapag wala na pong tariffication in compliance with the ATIGA? Ang pagpasok ng bigas ay talagang sesementuhan na natin ang lapida ng ating mga magsasaka ng palay. Sino pa ang bibili sa napakamahal na per kilo ng palay ng ating mga magsasaka sa kanyang sariling kayod kumpara sa imported na bigas na mas mura dahil nga wala ng taripikasyon? Hindi ho ba kataksilan sa interes ng ating mamamayan kung ito ay hahayaan at pahihintulutang mangyari ito ng kanyang gobyerno?

Remember, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, kapag umabot po sa punto now that the policy of our government itself is the perpetrator of killing one particular sector of our society, naku po, hindi na nakakapagtaka na ang mga magsasaka ng palay ay maglalaho at maglalaho, at aasa na lang tayo lahat sa importasyon. That I do not want to happen, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, and precisely, why this Representation opposes the full liberalization of our economy vis-à-vis protecting the welfare and interest of its people.

Maiba po tayo, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, noong binasa ko po ang panukalang batas na ito, the NFA is still the regulatory agency for private rice importation, but regulation is limited to licensing. Sa praktikal po ngayon, hindi naman siguro lingid sa kaalaman ng ating distinguished Sponsor na mayroong import permit for sale. Hindi po ba? Mayroon na pong ganiyang kalakaran sa nagdaang mga panahon. Pumutok nga iyan, nailabas at natalakay iyan sa mga naging pagdinig ng Senado at Kongreso, iyong import permit for sale na ini-issue pangunahin ng ahensyang ito on imposing and collecting fees and charges, but it has no power to regulate the quantity or volume because that is against the tariffication. Therefore, hindi lang iyang P350,000. Kaya po nilang mag-import more than what is the minimum access volume being implied.

Deregulation as to restricting volume rests on the power of the President, but he can only exercise this power during rice shortage and when there is an urgent need to act on it. Ibig sabihin po, distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, gagawin lamang ito ng Pangulo kapag sinabing mayroong rice shortage. Pero, iyon na nga, hindi magkakaroon ng rice shortage. In fact, the flooding of imported rice is the inevitable situation in the future. Sino ba ang magre-regulate at wala na pong pipigil sa mga pribadong negosyante o negosyo na magpapasok ng milyun-milyon o hundreds of thousands of metric tons of imported rice?

The flaw in that provision, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, is that during rice shortage, if there is any, nagkakaroon ng abnormal high prices. I will return to the point of my argument, distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, the guarantees—kasi nga po, iyong pagtakda ng presyo at iyong paggalaw ng presyo na iyan will not only matter on the statistics of supply and demand. Pangunahin, sabihin natin, the key player of setting the price is essentially the movement between the supply and the demand, pangunahin po iyan. But let us consider, my colleagues, that there are laws that currently affect the pricing of basic goods and commodities—the food and non-food items. Sabihin na nating ang clear example, my dear colleagues, is the enactment of the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion Law. Why? Bakit po sa panahon noong unang araw ng Enero nang ipinasá ang batas na TRAIN ay nagkaroon ng epekto, domino effect in the setting up of prices sa bigas, not only the NFA rice, dahil pansinin po ninyo, nandito naman ang staff at kaya po nila i-research iyan. Ilang beses pong tumaas ang presyo ng bigas, ng NFA and commercial rice from January 1, 2018 up to June of 2018? Maraming beses po.

In fact, for the record, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, I have here a clipping of the announcement of the NFA that because of the TRAIN Law, they were forced to set a P2 increase per kilo in the price of the NFA rice. Ibig po sabihin, distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, magiging dagdag na pabigat at magiging dagdag na pasanin ng mamamayan kapag dumagdag ang panukalang ito, at hindi lang po sa usapin na mas lulubha ang kalagayan ng ating mga magsasaka ng palay. Worse, I cannot understand the alignment of priorities of this government. Instead of expanding rice lands for local production and consumption, tila бага mas prayoridad ng gobyernong ito na bigyang pabor ang mga lupain para sa mga mas malalaking negosyo, agribusiness, tulad ng mga plantasyon ng palm oil, saging, pinya, rubber at iba pa, imbes na pangunahing dagdagan at palawakin ang mga lupain para sa konsumo ng kanyang mamamayan. Hindi ko po maintindihan na hinahayaan ng gobyernong ito na mas paliitin pa ang mga lupang dapat ang kanyang iniluluwal ay sa gamit at konsumo ng kanyang mamamayan.

In the provision of this Bill, the President, upon the recommendation of the NFA, has the power to restrict the volume, using the rice safeguard tariff to prevent rice import surges.

Again, I think this provision is clearly stated in my previous argument, not only in the existing Republic Act on Anti-Dumping of Agricultural Products, but also, specifically, in this proposed Bill; however, tariff adjustment will not have the effect of preventing dumping. If the importers can pay the adjusted tariffs from 350,000 metric tons MAV of 40 percent, and even if they can pay the 180 percent tariffication of more than the minimum access volume, sino po ang makakapigil sa pagtakda ng presyong iyan? Would we not expect na magkakaroon ba ng murang presyo? Papaano mababawi noong trader kung ang binayaran niya ay 180 percent tariffication rate at magmementina siya sa presyong, sabihin nating P38, lugin-lugi siya. Hindi siya magnenegosyo niyan. Therefore, the pricing, the setting of price per kilo, is within his or her dictates. Hindi pa po incorporated diyan, distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, ang galawang cartel. How would this Bill ensure na hindi mag-uusap-usap ang mga importer to set the price sa ganitong presyuhan? For example, sabihin nating kahit na umabot po iyan sa two million metric tons ang pagpasok ng imported rice sa Pilipinas, mag-uusap-usap sila na dapat ang presyo nito sa merkado, deducted by all the expenditures na nagawa o nakuha sa kanila o nagastos nila, ano po ang makakapigil o ano ang mekanismo ng ating gobyerno na ang pagtatakda ng presyong ito ay nasa range ng affordability and accessibility? Hindi po ba luluhod na lang ang gobyerno sa dikta ng key players na ito kung ano ang itatakdang presyo?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Please wind up your interpellation, you only have two minutes remaining.

REP. CASILAO. Akala ko po, Mr. Speaker, sa pagbabago ng liderato ng Kapulungang ito, magbabago na rin ang pagtrato ng ating interpelasyon.

I have a lot of questions to raise. In fact, hindi ko pa po naipaliwanag at nahihingan ng paliwanag ang ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor sa iba pang mahahalagang usapin. Pero dahil nga mayroon na lang akong dalawang minuto ...

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Iisang minuto na lang.

REP. CASILAO. ... iisang minuto—in closing, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, again, this Bill cannot convince this Representation of the specific guarantees in protecting the welfare of our farmers and the consuming populace.

Imbes na po unahin ang panukalang batas na ito sa usapin ng compliance with our agreement on agriculture provision of the World Trade Organization commitment, nakikita ko na po na sa hinaharap ...

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Pagpasensyahan po ng ating kagalang-galing na Ka Ayik, at tapos na po ang ...

REP. CASILAO. I am winding up, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). ... oras ng pag-i-interpellate.

REP. CASILAO. One minute to ascertain my point.

Imbes po na unahin ng ating gobyerno ang pagpapalakas ng mekanismo at mga batas na magsisiguro sa pagpapalakas ng kakayanan ng ating mga magsasaka ng palay, ang panukalang batas na ito ang magsesemento sa lapida ng ating mga magsasaka. Ito po iyong unli rice na hindi katanggap-tanggap sa mamamayang Pilipino. Ang unli rice na imported na babaha sa merkado, ang sasaya lamang nito ay ang cartel, foreign and local cartels, na may key element sa larong ito.

Maraming salamat.

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

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

REP. NOEL. Mr. Speaker, the next to interpellate is the Hon. Tomasito “Tom” S. Villarín from the Party-List AKBAYAN.

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

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. NOEL. May we suspend the session, Mr. Speaker.

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

It was 5:33 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:34 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

Congressman Villarin you may now proceed with your interpellation.

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

May the good Sponsor be open to some questions with regard to this proposed policy measure.

REP. PANGANIBAN. I would gladly clarify any questions from the Gentleman, Mr. Speaker.

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

To elucidate on this policy measure, which I think affects the great majority of Filipinos, the policy now is that we have non-tariffed restrictions imposed on rice coming from the outside so that we could protect the local producers of rice. In gist, that is the objective of this policy measure. Am I correct, good Sponsor?

REP. PANGANIBAN. It is the other way around because we are moving from non-tariffed to tariffed policy, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague.

REP. VILLARIN. No. What I am saying, good Sponsor, is that the existing measure now that we want to change also has that objective—to protect our local producers. The non-tariffed measures also have that objective. I would like to go into a comparison between the benefits of moving from non-tariffed to tariffed measures as a policy shift in terms of addressing the need to have rice for the consumers and, at the same time, the need to protect our local farmers.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, whether it is tariffed or non-tariffed, the ultimate objective of the Bill or any law for that matter, is the protection of rice producers and rice consumers.

REP. VILLARIN. Definitely, the existing regime of QR and MAVs also would address this objective. But this Bill would like to suggest that the QR and the MAVs are not enough to protect the rise in the price of rice, a basic commodity, as it would not address as well the needs of farmers to be protected from competition coming from imports. Is that true, I mean, for the QR and MAVs?

REP. PANGANIBAN. On the QR and MAV, tariffed or non-tariffed, the ultimate objective of any law or this Bill for that matter is the protection of the rice farmers and the rice consumers.

REP. VILLARIN. Okay. Now, in this latest series of events related to inflation, what we are saying, one

classic example of the restrictions or the limitations of the existing policy regime on rice importation based on QR and MAV is precisely what happened. Na-delay iyong pagpasok ng rice imports, so nag-spike ang prices. Do you have any data to say that how much was the contribution in the inflation dahil nga na-delay iyong pagpasok ng imported rice?

Ibig sabihin, kung sana naka-import tayo noong May or June, masasabi mo ba na hindi sana nagkaroon ng spike o pagtaas ng presyo ng bigas at presyo din ng other commodities because precisely our economic managers were saying that nakatulong doon sa pag-spike sa importation itong delay sa rice importation?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, the recent spiking of the price of rice is a confluence of several events. It is not only attributed sa sinasabi ng ating distinguished colleague na na-delay iyong pagpasok ng imported rice. Isa rin po sa naging dahilan dito ay iyong ating pag-cartel o iyong hoarding ng bigas ng mga malalaking trader ng bigas because as it is, ayon po sa ating kagalang-galang na Secretary ng Department of Agriculture, hindi dapat mangyari iyon dahil mayroon tayong sapat na local production ng bigas, at hindi dapat mangyari na tataas ang presyo ng palay kung hindi sana na-ward o nagawang pigilin ng ating private traders ang pagbenta o paglabas ng bigas sa merkado.

So, hindi lamang po ito dahilan na na-delay iyong importation ng NFA rice.

Gusto ko rin lamang pong sabihin na dalawang klase po kasi ang bigas natin dito sa Pilipinas, ang commercial rice at ang NFA rice. Kapag sinabi po kasing NFA rice, iyon po iyong murang bigas. Iyon pong hindi nakapasok ay iyong murang bigas. Pero marami po tayong supply doon na commercial rice o may presyong P38 o P41. Ang wala po sa atin is iyong imported rice na mas mura, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator.

REP. VILLARIN. So, in effect, what you are saying, good Sponsor, is that if the delay in the coming of the rice imports did not contribute to the spike in the inflation rate, because you are saying ...

REP. PANGANIBAN. Hindi ko po sinasabi na hindi. Isa po iyan sa mga naging dahilan, pero hindi lamang po iyon ang tanging dahilan.

REP. VILLARIN. Yes, what I want to know is, kung isa iyan sa dahilan, do we have studies or data which say how much in the part of the inflation rate hike iyong na-contribute doon sa delay? Because they say that other contributory factors were the spike in the global prices of oil, iyong TRAIN Law, which supposedly, also

caused the inflation rate to hike. Again, sunud-sunod iyong pagtaas din ng presyo nga ng mga bilihin.

So, iyon lang, hinahanap natin ...

REP. PANGANIBAN. Wala, wala. Wala po kaming datos. Kaya sa kagalang-galang na ...

REP. VILLARIN. Wala tayong datos? Okay.

REP. PANGANIBAN. ... interpellator, kung mayroon man na na-contribute sa pag-spike ng inflation rate, iyong delay ng imported na NFA rice.

REP. VILLARIN. Well, I am going to this line of questioning, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, because precisely, we say that the D and E classes which were hit largely by inflation, 30 to 50 percent of household expenditures ay nasa bigas. At sinasabi nga natin na malaking bahagi na ang rice is basically a big part in the expenditure item of each household. So, ang sinasabi din ngayon ay ang nawala sa market during those times was the NFA rice.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes.

REP. VILLARIN. The NFA rice which supposedly should come from the imports—so most of the imports are the NFA rice, at hindi naging available sa D and E, the poor consumers. In effect, we could say na ang talagang natamaan dito sa spike, sa inflation, are the poor consumers. Precisely, you are saying now that, para hindi madyal—okay, iyong importation, then, you need to liberalize importation by having this, iyong tariffication na lang. So, ibig sabihin, we will leave it to a policy of imposing tariffs ...

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes.

REP. VILLARIN. ... rather than having restrictions in terms of the volume that would come.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator, but again, this Bill was crafted not because of the delay of the imported NFA rice. Hindi lamang po iyon ang dahilan kaya natin isinasagawa itong panukalang batas na ito.

REP. VILLARIN. You are right, but what I am pointing out is that, it is one of the factors that you are citing that should be cured with this, supposedly with this tariffication measure. And now, going into what you said earlier, good Sponsor, that mayroong mga cartel, I thought you—or did I hear it wrong when you said that there is a cartel of rice hoarders or producers? Iyon ang sabi mo kanina ...

REP. PANGANIBAN. Alam naman po nating lahat iyan.

REP. VILLARIN. Alam nating lahat?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Oo, hindi ko lang alam na hindi ninyo po alam.

REP. VILLARIN. Mayroon yata sa Tondo.

Well, anyway, again, when we go to tariffication, can the issue of rice cartel be addressed? How would that come into the picture given that, again, it is still the NFA that would control—that would be the regulatory power to ...

REP. PANGANIBAN. With the tariffication Bill, the NFA can no longer control the volume of imported rice that would come into the Philippines.

REP. VILLARIN. But still all those who want to import would go through the NFA ...

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes, yes.

REP. VILLARIN. ... regardless of volume.

REP. PANGANIBAN. For licensing purposes, yes.

REP. VILLARIN. Okay, for licensing and whatever. So, it is still our regulatory agency. What has been taken out is the ...

REP. PANGANIBAN. The volume.

REP. VILLARIN. ... yes, the restrictions ...

REP. PANGANIBAN. ... of volume.

REP. VILLARIN. ... in terms of the access.

Now, I am pointing to this issue of governance in rice trading, in rice importation because the basic problem here is that, in the supply chain of rice from the producers or even from the imports, something is wrong, something is skewed. On this policy measure with tariffication, how can you assure that these issues on governance in the rice industry can be addressed squarely and can be addressed definitively na hindi mangyayari iyong sudden spike in prices of rice? Kasi, ang sinasabi mo, well, the President has the authority to limit the imports in a situation or, I mean, to limit the imports through higher tariffs. Pero, again, in the supply chain, the basic problem of control over this distribution and, of course, the market for rice, ano iyong mga guarantees, mga measures that would be put in place?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Again, that was the point of

Congressman Casilao's line of questioning a while ago. He was asking for the specific guarantees that would be in place in order to maintain the price of rice. Again, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator, as far as the Bill is crafted, there are no specific guarantees that were placed as provisions in the Bill. However, rice tariffication would mean that we can no longer control the volume of rice coming into the Philippines. And we all know that imported rice is much cheaper than our local rice. In fact, the landed cost of imported rice ranges from about P27 to P28 per kilo.

So, dito pa lang, makikita natin na kapag pinabayaan nating pumasok ang imported rice, alam na kaagad natin na ang puhunan ng trader is P27 or P28 lamang. Kaya, halimbawa, iyong trader, bibigyan natin ng margin o tubo na P5, dapat ibebenta niya iyong bigas niya nang P32 hanggang P33 lamang.

REP. VILLARIN. Well, there is the study conducted by the PIDS or the Philippine Institute for Development Studies, saying that, of course, the rationale or the best reason for tariffication is really to improve governance and the investment climate for the rice supply chain. So, meaning, the rationale, the reason for tariffication, as what you have said, wala na tayong limit—papasok ang ilang milyong tonelada ng bigas kung sino ang gustong magpasok, as long as accredited ng NFA, pasok lang nang pasok. So, hindi ba, iyon iyong kuwan eh—if you flood the market with rice and, precisely, the question now is, dahil nga may anomaly doon sa supply chain, may anomaly doon sa how these cartels have been controlling the supply chain, when you are saying that wala kang guarantees, wala kang assurance because, as you have said, it would be the market forces that would regulate the supply chain. But it is a given fact, and you even admitted na halos alam ng buong bayan, alam ng taumbayan na may rice cartel.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes, but the existence of the cartel is because of the regulation. Tanggalin mo iyong regulation, mawawala iyong cartel because everybody now will have the opportunity to import rice.

REP. VILLARIN. So, that is your guarantee, you are saying, because ...

REP. PANGANIBAN. It is not my guarantee but it is the market forces, it is a market play. So, kaya nagkakaroon po tayo ng cartel because mayroon lamang 10 o ilang indibidwal o ilang organisasyon ang nakakakontrol kasi nga, unang-una, regulated iyong pagpasok ng bigas. Ngayon, kapag in-open mo iyan, lahat puwedeng mag-import, so I cannot see the cartel controlling, kung lahat puwedeng pumasok. Second, it will be a force of supply and demand. I could not believe that mag-i-import nang marami, ida-dump nila dito sa

bansa natin. Kung ilan lang ang puwedeng ikonsumo ng bansa, hindi pupuwede silang mag-import nang mas marami kaysa sa demand, dahil kapag ginawa nila iyon, mas lalong babagsak ang presyo. Ngayon, kung mas malaki ang demand, kaunti ang supply, doon tataas ang presyo. But if you open up, marami ang supplies, ang demand mo is hindi, I mean, ano lang, hindi siya tumataas, hindi siya bumababa; siguradong bababa ang presyo.

REP. VILLARIN. Well, again, as I have said, tariffication and guarantees are the marks placed sa market forces, and, in a way, what you are saying, in effect, is that iyong smuggling, mai-eliminate din. Would I be right? Because, I mean, anybody can now play and not ...

REP. PANGANIBAN. But, smuggling is a different thing, okay. Kasi, even if ...

REP. VILLARIN. Well, because if the NFA can provide all these importers with the necessary permits to enforce, then why—and prices would ultimately go down. With prices of rice going down, what is the rationale for me to smuggle, for example?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Well, you do not pay tariff. You will not pay tariff kapag smuggled. That is precisely the point. Kapag ini-smuggle mo, mas mababa ang presyo mo. Mas malaki ang kita, I should say. Dahil hindi ka nagbayad ng taripa, ang presyo ng bigas mo is presyo ng merkado, kaya smuggling is a different play dito po sa tariffication Bill.

REP. VILLARIN. So with tariffication, you do not eliminate smuggling.

REP. PANGANIBAN. With tariffication, with QR, the smuggling is a different face.

REP. VILLARIN. With tariffication, smuggling would not be curbed by a little, so hindi mangyayari.

REP. PANGANIBAN. We do not have any data, because as I have said, smugglers resort to smuggling because ayaw nga nilang magbayad ng taripa.

Now with, iyon nga ang sinasabi namin dito, baka kapag i-open mo, mas maraming mag-smuggle dahil ayaw nilang magbayad ng taripa. Kaya nga iyong isang panukala namin dito is for the DOF and the Bureau of Customs na dapat higpitan nila iyong pagpasok ng mga smuggled na bigas or any agricultural products for that matter.

REP. VILLARIN. So, again, what you are saying, the issue of smuggling, the issue of this cartel would not be resolved even with this ...

REP. PANGANIBAN. I believe the issue of cartel will be resolved because we do not control the volume. Okay. We do not control the individual or institution who could import rice. Kaya nga natin io-open e. That will, precisely, curb the cartel. But, as far as smuggling is concerned, hindi ko po masabi na itong Bill na ito ay puwedeng makabawas sa smuggling.

REP. VILLARIN. Well, I will leave you at that, good Sponsor. Of course, it is an honest admission that we just focus here on the issue of what would be the benefits of tariffication. What I am just pointing out is that there should be other complementary measures to address this issue of, again, loss of revenues. If ever we have tariffication, that would accrue to the benefit of farmers.

Now, on the issue of governance, because here, we would be setting up or strengthening the NFA Council under the proposed measure, the strengthening of the NFA Council, then, of course, there is this rice fund ...

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes.

REP. VILLARIN. ... rice fund that would exist for six years. Can you provide us with the rationale, as to why the tariffs from rice importation would just be there for six years and not for a longer period?

REP. PANGANIBAN. That will be just for purposes of evaluation. So, the Bill is crafted that the RCEF or the rice competitiveness enhancement fund will be good for six years unless extended by law. So, meaning, after the six-year period, sa fifth year, under the Congressional Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization or the COAFM, kung makita natin na kailangan ba talaga itong RCEF na ito, then itutuloy natin by way of amending the law.

REP. VILLARIN. So, it is an open-ended provision, meaning, the six years is just some sort of, well, a period of that, in a way, would address immediately the concerns of the rice farmers.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes, boss.

REP. VILLARIN. Now, when we do tariffication, do you have projections? How much will be collected ...

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes.

REP. VILLARIN. ... from tariffs for the first year, second year, third year, fourth year, fifth year?

REP. PANGANIBAN. The Department of Finance

has submitted calculation of at least between P6 to P7 billion during the initial year and about P8 billion moving forward. So, in a span of six years, we are looking at around P28 to P30 billion.

REP. VILLARIN. P28 to 30 billion from the rice tariffication?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes.

REP. VILLARIN. So, these are estimates that are on the baseline or on the upper ...

REP. PANGANIBAN. Those are estimates given by the Department of Finance.

REP. VILLARIN. So, conservative estimates not—I mean, ...

REP. PANGANIBAN. I believe ...

REP. VILLARIN. ... given the ...

REP. PANGANIBAN. ... I believe that is the conservative calculation from Department of Finance.

REP. VILLARIN. Okay.

Now, with tariffication, according to a study by the PIDS or the Philippine Institute for Development Studies, immediately on the first year of tariffication, there would be a drop in local palay production by two million metric tons. Do you know of that study and how would that factor in?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator, as of this time, I do not have the study being mentioned by the interpellator, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VILLARIN. Well, this is important, Mr. Speaker, because what we are saying here is that there would be a loss of income of our farmers, because if they cannot compete, and practically they cannot compete with cheap imported rice, then, of course, the tendency is really to shift to crops, either to shift to crops or practically leave behind their farmlands. And, again, based on that study, two million metric tons of losses in local palay production would also be highly significant and it would also mean that we would be losing more of our rice lands and our rice farmers.

Consequently, with the P7 billion tariff, the revenues from the tariff, or the income from tariffication supposedly for the rice farmers, the big question now is, who would benefit from the rice farm if we would lose our local rice farmers?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Again, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Speaker, the Bill under Section 15 provides for the usage of the fund, and it includes those farmers who would possibly be displaced if and when this Bill becomes a law because Section 16 states that the beneficiaries of the Rice Fund shall be those rice farmers and rice farmworkers and their dependents listed in the RSBSA of the Department of Agriculture, including those who would be possibly displaced.

REP. VILLARIN. So, again—well, of course, there are good objectives for that fund, but the point here, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, is that, *parang aanhin pa ang damo kung wala na ang kabayo? Maraming kasabihan, ano?* So, do we have studies or do we anticipate that situation if and when, because of tariffication and the volume of rice coming in, there would be a loss in palay production? Again, does the DA have these projections, data on how much we would lose in local palay production with tariffication?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator, as regards the study on whether or not there will be possible displacement if, for example, imported rice will be coming into the Philippines, the assumption will be on the reverse because even if we open up, the fear that we will be flooded with imported rice would not be imminent because China will be importing rice starting next year. Therefore, *kapag po iyong volume ng global rice ay hindi nadagdagan at mayroong nag-import from China, hindi rin po tayo babahain ng imported rice kaya hindi po kami naniniwala na mababawasan po iyong ating mga rice farmers o rice land dahil sabi ko nga, iyong agam-agam na babahain tayo po ng imported rice ay hindi po mangyayari because of market forces outside of the Philippines.*

REP. VILLARIN. So, again, as what you are saying, there are external forces, like China would be buying more. The danger of us being flooded with cheap rice will not happen. So, that is your conclusive statement.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes.

REP. VILLARIN. Okay. Now, two years ago, I think the good Secretary Piñol requested that we extend the QR regime precisely because our rice farmers were not yet ready and the objective for that two-year period was to provide the necessary support for our rice farmers in terms of addressing the issue of cost of production, because we all know that one of the major factors why our local palay or our palay's price is higher compared to Vietnam and Thailand is the high cost of production. So, that two-year extension, what happened, what is the assessment of that two-year period? Of course, this year

would be included in that two-year period, meaning, two years back, we requested for an extension. So, *ang tanong ko po, what has been significantly achieved in the past two years?*

REP. PANGANIBAN. In fact, we have not requested for any extension at all, but we, I mean, President Duterte issued Executive Order No. 23 as an interim solution. So, with the advent of Executive Order No. 23, *tuloy pa rin po iyong—naging status quo, iyong ating importation.*

REP. VILLARIN. Yes.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Then again, when this Bill becomes a law, the cost of the tariff that will be collected, this tariff will now or the RCF fund will now be used to subsidize our rice farmers. It will be spent for hybrid seeds, farm inputs, mechanization, and that will effectively lower the cost of production. And with the lower cost of production and then increased productivity, we will end up with a competitive farmer, I mean, competitive position *vis-à-vis* our neighbors, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Gentleman.

REP. VILLARIN. Well, thank you for that.

Mr. Speaker, good Sponsor, there were also, just recently, I think, COA came up with a report saying that the National Irrigation Administration was not spending or there was underspending or did not use the funds allocated for irrigation in the sum of billions. So, meaning, the necessary support infrastructure, I am afraid, have not been given, especially on irrigation because, again as I have said, COA came out with that report.

Likewise, there were these NEDA reports stating that *kumokonti* iyong agricultural labor. Although it could be a result of mechanization, as what the good Secretary has been doing, it could also be the result of other factors like, well, like 4P beneficiaries in rural areas enrolling their children to school so there is less agricultural labor, or simply that our agricultural labor has been moving out of the rural areas and going to much higher-paying jobs in the manufacturing and even in the service sector. So, what I am pointing out is that the state of our agriculture at present, while there could be an increase in production, an increase in terms of productivity per hectare, the question of sustaining these gains especially in rice production, what is your projection or forecast with regard to our rice farmers? Are we getting more rice farmers? Are we having more farmers interested in producing our basic commodity? Or for the next few years, would you be having less rice farmers and less hectares planted with rice?

REP. PANGANIBAN. I believe, Mr. Speaker, even

with the advent of rice tariffication, the production of rice will continue to increase. Because as I have said, in the world market or in the global rice market, there are only 39.5 million metric tons rice traded and 38 million tons have already been committed. So, there is only about 1.5 to 2 million that is free. So, we cannot, of course, depend on imported rice alone. Even in the advent of rice tariffication, we should not stop increasing our rice production because of our imminent fear that an event that would happen globally would affect rice, will affect us. What I am saying is that kahit na po mag-tariffy tayo, dapat hindi natin pabayaang bumaba iyong ating rice production kasi nga po hindi tayo nakakasiguro at hindi dapat tayo maging dependent sa imported rice.

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

I fully agree with that statement. In terms of evidence-based data, in terms also of budget for the DA, for the past two or three years, are we saying now that the share from the DA's budget for the rice sector is increasing, decreasing, or has it levelled off?

REP. PANGANIBAN. As far as the GAA is concerned, we should understand that in addition to the budget allocated for the DA, specifically for rice, we will now have a complementary budget coming from the rice tariff, and this is the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund. So, ang sinasabi natin dito, bukod po doon sa budget na ina-allocate ng Department of Agriculture para sa ating rice sector, meron tayong sigurado na pantulong sa ating rice farmers na manggagaling dito sa Rice Tariffication Act na ito.

REP. VILLARIN. So, it would be an add-on to the existing GAA?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes. So, ang sinasabi namin dito, kung halimbawa may P10 bilyon ang DA, Department of Agriculture, ngayon para sa rice sector, makakasiguro tayo na every year, meron siyang additional P7 billion to P8 billion na manggagaling dito sa Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund na galing ito sa taripa ng mga imported rice, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator.

REP. VILLARIN. That is good to hear, Mr. Speaker, good Sponsor.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes, because with the implementation of this Act, it does not follow na hihinto na po iyong Department of Agriculture sa pagkakaroon ng budget para sa ating rice farmers. Because ito pong pera o pondo na malilikom dito would complement the

DA's program for our rice farmers. Iyon nga lang, ito sigurado na dahil ito ay galing sa taripa.

REP. VILLARIN. Yes, thank you for that.

The existing budget, habang wala pa iyong tariffication, ang itinatanong ho natin, halimbawa 2015 to the present, iyong atin bang allocation sa rice sector, tumataas ba, 2015 to 2018, or bumababa?

REP. PANGANIBAN. In the past five years, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator, the DA budget allocated for rice alone was about P10 billion.

REP. VILLARIN. So, P10 billion?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes.

REP. VILLARIN. Excluding the P11 billion for irrigation?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes po.

REP. VILLARIN. Okay.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Just rice alone.

REP. VILLARIN. Yeah, but irrigation practically is...

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes.

REP. VILLARIN. ... mainly for rice.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes po.

REP. VILLARIN. And also, most of the farm-to-market roads that the DA is allocating budget for, most of them are also geared for the rice sector, I assume.

REP. PANGANIBAN. For the farm-to-market, the FMR projects, they encompass all sectors in agriculture. So, it includes rice, corn, coconut, fisheries, and others.

REP. VILLARIN. Okay. So, I think, good Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, the questioning that I have taken, well, in a way, that educates us on how we approach tariffication from the perspective of—again, the main objective is really to protect our local producers and not to eliminate our local rice farmers because of the fear that imported rice might flood the market. The good Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, has been very helpful in elucidating the concerns of the common people. Surely, while he could not state the guarantees, we are hoping that with the strengthened NFA Council, the participation of the rice farmers in that Council, and of course, the

details—as I have said, the devil is in the details—in terms of the implementation of the Rice Fund how it should be disbursed. Well, they are all too important to be left out simply because we need to pass this law. So, thank you for the time, Mr. Speaker, good Sponsor. Thank you, Majority Leader, too. Magandang hapon, maraming salamat.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Thank you, distinguished interpellator.

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

REP. NOEL. Next to interpellate, Mr. Speaker, is the Hon. Cecilia Leonila V. Chavez of the BUTIL Party-List.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). You may proceed, distinguished Lady.

REP. CHAVEZ. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to make a manifestation on House Bill No. 7735, which proposes to impose tariff in lieu of quantitative restriction on the importation of rice.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, the immediate lifting of quantitative restriction on rice importations would bring economic woes to our rice farmers.

This Representation and the BUTIL Farmers' Party believe that our rice farmers are not prepared to compete locally and globally or at least to maintain its present production capacity given the high cost of production and the lack of government support that would guarantee our rice farmers' welfare. While this Representation is aware of our country's commitment to the WTO, I submit that it is incumbent upon Congress to put in place first the safety nets that would protect our farmers with the imposition of the tariff in lieu of the quantitative restriction on rice importations, as well as the strengthening of our rice self-sufficiency program. This, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues should come first.

Rice is the most important food crop, a staple food in most of the country. It is produced extensively in Luzon, in Western Visayas, in Southern Mindanao and Central Mindanao. This means that millions of farmers and their families are dependent on rice production.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, in 2017, the total palay rice output netted 93 percent of the country's annual requirement. As such, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, this Representation and BUTIL Farmers' Party submit that we can achieve rice self-sufficiency and this should come first before we embark on rice importation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues.

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

REP. NOEL. The last one to interpellate in our list, Mr. Speaker, is the Hon. Edcel C. Lagman of the First District of Albay.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Gentleman from the First District of Albay, Congressman Lagman, is recognized.

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Will the distinguished Sponsor yield to some questions?

REP. PANGANIBAN. I will gladly accede to the clarificatory questions to be espoused by the distinguished Gentleman from Albay, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. May we know, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, what the principal objective of the policy of quantitative restriction on the importation of rice is?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator, I believe that the foremost objective of the setting of the QR, when the Philippines joined the WTO in 1995, is to protect our rice farmers from the influx of rice—ah, imported rice, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. It is for that reason, distinguished Sponsor, that the Philippines repeatedly requested for the extension of the policy on quantitative restriction. Is that correct?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes, honorable interpellator, that is correct.

REP. LAGMAN. Now, distinguished Sponsor, are we adopting the rice import tariffication because the government is not anymore keen on negotiating for another extension?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator, the Philippine government had already negotiated for two extensions starting in 1995. We extended it in 2012, and another extension in 2017. However, with these extensions, we—of course, as trade negotiating balance, we have acceded to the increase of the volume of MAV or the minimum access volume, because, originally, the MAV in 1995 was set at 298,000 metric tons, and when we extended it in 2012, it had increased to 350,000 metric tons, and in the last extension, it was increased to 805,200 with a reduced tariff from 50 percent, 40 percent, 40 percent and now, 35 percent.

Now, aside from this trade negotiating balances, we have also acceded to some of the tariff imposed on other agricultural products, there is always a trade-off. So, in the final analysis, when we were about to ask for another extension, we were apprehensive because the WTO might ask us for some concessions on our other agricultural products, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator.

REP. LAGMAN. Will these trade-offs terminate if we forego with the policy of quantitative restriction?

REP. PANGANIBAN. I believe so, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator.

REP. LAGMAN. Why is it that you said, distinguished Sponsor, that you believe so? You are not certain.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes. When we had the hearing, I mean, the technical working group, I specifically asked the Department of Finance under the WTO, what would happen if, for example, we ask for another extension or renegotiate this QR. Unfortunately, the answer we were able to solicit from the people of the DOF is that: number one, it is high time that we now proceed from QR, from quantitative restriction to tariffication; number two, there is what you call an apprehension that we might be sanctioned in our other agricultural products, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator.

REP. LAGMAN. My question is, once we abandon the quantitative restriction policy and embark on rice importation tariffication, will the trade-offs imposed on us by the WTO countries be lifted or will they continue because they are already there?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes. It will be, I mean, all those concessions will revert to the original tariff level, distinguished Sponsor, honorable Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. And what is our authority in saying that all of these trade-offs will be terminated and we will revert to the former situation?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator, I mean, the trade-off will be lifted or will revert to its original level, as are all embodied in Executive Order No. 23.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, Executive Order No. 23 is a unilateral issuance by the Philippine government. What I would like to know is whether under any agreement with the concerned countries, there is a stipulation that once we abandon the quantitative restriction policy, these trade-offs will also terminate.

REP. PANGANIBAN. It is incorporated in the Waiver Agreement under AO, I mean—in Annex 5 of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator.

REP. LAGMAN. Can we read into the records the pertinent stipulation to that effect?

REP. PANGANIBAN. I will, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator. I will provide a copy of that particular provision in the WTO Agreement.

REP. LAGMAN. I do not need a copy, Mr. Speaker. All I want is the distinguished Sponsor reading into the records the stipulation that once we abandon quantitative restriction, these trade-offs will also be terminated and will revert to the condition prior to the imposition of these trade-offs.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, I have here with me a decision of the World Trade Organization General Council dated 25 July 2014. And it decided, under Item 7, thereof, it says:

The concessions referred under paragraph 2 and Annex A herein, and all other concessions entered into by the Philippines under this waiver shall cease to exist upon the termination or expiration of this waiver.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay. Well, to me that is very explicit. Thank you so much, distinguished Sponsor for reading that into the records. That is an assurance that these trade-offs will be obliterated.

Now, let me go to my next question.

In contrast, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, what is the principal objective of tariffication of rice importation?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator, one of the major objectives of the rice tariffication, of course, is the protection of our rice farmers and rice consumers that even if we engage into the regime of tariffication, we will have to provide specific measures for the protection of our rice farmers. This is, therefore, provided under the relevant provisions of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

REP. LAGMAN. If the objective of rice tariffication on the protection of the rice farmers is the same as that of quantitative restriction, now what is the difference between the two?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, it is so unfortunate that when the waiver on the special treatment provision has expired in

June 30, 2017, we were left with no recourse but to introduce legislation on rice tariffication, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator.

REP. LAGMAN. In other words, what triggered the proposed Bill on tariffication of rice importation is the expiration of that policy of quantitative restriction?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor—distinguished interpellator.

REP. LAGMAN. Not for the purpose of protecting our rice farmers in the same manner that quantitative restriction had that objective. Now, what will be the effect of rice tariffication on the gate price of palay?

REP. PANGANIBAN. As I have said a while ago, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator, with respect to the farm gate of palay, it would not have any effect because the local production of palay, as it is, without any additional subsidy from the government is still P13 per kilo. With the introduction of this Bill—when this Bill becomes a law, there is the possibility that the production cost of palay will be lowered because of the subsidy that will be given to our rice farmers from the rice competitiveness enhancement fund, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator.

REP. LAGMAN. So, what the distinguished Sponsor is saying, even with this rice tariffication policy, is that there will be no effect at all on the farm gates of palay?

REP. PANGANIBAN. There will be, as I have said, there will be an effect. It will lower the cost of production and so, therefore, the farm gate of palay will decrease.

REP. LAGMAN. I do not see the consistency. When you lower the cost of production, how will the farm gate decrease?

REP. PANGANIBAN. It is now a play of market forces, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor. So, with respect to the farm gate, there is a correlation between the cost of production. So, if the cost of production is lower, of course, we could not expect the farm gate to stay at this level but then again, as I have said, there will be a support price coming from the NFA because the NFA is mandated to buy the rice—I mean the palay produce from our farmers at P20 per kilo, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator.

REP. LAGMAN. Are there empirical studies

conducted by the appropriate agency of the government which would validate and document that this statement—that effectively there are no adverse effects on the farm gate of palay even if we already have a regime of rice tariffication?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator, I do not have with me any study that would provide empirical data on the effect of the price of the farm gate price of palay when we will be under a regime of tariffication, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay. Well, the distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, said that he does not have the copy of that empirical study. But my question is, is there an empirical study?

REP. PANGANIBAN. I believe, Mr. Speaker, the study was done by the PIDS, but I do not have a copy with me.

REP. LAGMAN. When can we have a copy of that study if ever there exists one?

REP. PANGANIBAN. I will, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator—may I request for at least 24 hours and I will give a copy of that study to the distinguished interpellator.

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

REP. LAGMAN. In other words, pending the submission of that empirical study, we will have to defer any further action on this measure after the interpellations are terminated.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator, I have the copy with me now and I can give it to the distinguished interpellator.

REP. LAGMAN. No, in essence, in essence, Mr. Sponsor, what does the empirical study point to or conclude?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, there is a part of this study, and I would like to read it into the record. It says that tariff revenues are expected to be around P27 billion—P28 billion during that period from 2017 to 2022. Meanwhile, farm-gate and retail prices are projected to decrease by P4.56 per kilo and P6.97 per kilo, respectively.

REP. LAGMAN. Now, does this study say why the farm-gate price would decrease to that amount

you have stated? Because that is important, it is not a mere statement, but it should be supported by empirical data.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, with the kind indulgence of the interpellator, we will have to consult with the PIDS for the data that they used in arriving at this conclusion.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, thank you for that commitment, then we will await the submission of that data before we approve this measure on Second Reading.

Now, let me go to my next question. What will be the effect of rice tariffication on the government's program on rice sufficiency?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator, as we have espoused a while ago, under a regime of rice tariffication, the Department of Agriculture will not abandon the program on rice sufficiency.

Again, we should not depend on imported rice, because any event that would happen in the global rice market would affect our rice industry if we depend on the imported rice alone. Therefore, even if we allow or we liberalize the entry of imported rice into our country, the Department of Agriculture would still support plans and programs for our rice sufficiency, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator.

REP. LAGMAN. The question, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, is not whether or not the Department of Agriculture would abandon or continue the rice sufficiency program, because I think, it is important that the Department of Agriculture pursue that rice sufficiency program. My question is, what is the effect of rice tariffication on rice sufficiency? Will it be beneficial or will it be adverse? That is the question.

REP. PANGANIBAN. I believe, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, that with the advent of rice tariffication, it will be beneficial for the plans and programs of the Department of Agriculture, because at the end of the exercise, we should have an efficient and competitive rice farmer and rice sector, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, what is the basis of the distinguished Sponsor for saying that at the end of the exercise, we will have a more self-reliant rice farmer and rice sufficiency will be enhanced?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Because of the additional fund that would be given to the rice sector, so aside

from the plans and programs under the budget of the Department of Agriculture, we will have another source of fund specifically to be used for the rice sector and rice farmers, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay. Aside from the inherent negative geographical factor of the Philippines, what other factors derailed the rice sufficiency program of the government for so many administrations already?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator, with respect to the rice program, it is very unfortunate that if we compare our situation with our neighbors—for example, India, Thailand and Vietnam—the cost of production of palay in the Philippines is much higher than in our neighbors. And so, therefore, we could not compete with our neighbors in terms of cost of production, in terms of yield, Mr. Speaker, because in our case, if we compare hired labor, the contribution of hired labor to our cost of production is almost P4 as compared to Thailand which is P0.66, and to Vietnam, P0.46 centavos. And, with this alone, for the labor, it is almost 30 percent of the cost of production. So, if we could mechanize, then we could decrease the cost component of hired labor through mechanization, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator.

REP. LAGMAN. That study referred to by the distinguished Sponsor indicates that the cost of production of palay in the Philippines compared to India, Vietnam and Thailand is principally due to the geographical factor, because in India, Japan and Thailand, there are vast plains of lands suitable to rice production. Moreover, they have big rivers which would give irrigation year-in and year-out to farmlands. But, that is not the point I was asking for. Because I said, aside from the inherent geographical disadvantage of the Philippines, what other causes derailed the rice production of this country which has been pursued by practically all administrations?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator, one of the main reasons maybe is the lack of appropriate funding from the government. Because, as it is now, if we compare the budget of our agricultural sector with the other departments, our agricultural sector is only receiving around, about P50 billion in 2018, Mr. Speaker. From this budget, only P10 billion is allocated for the rice sector. So with a meager budget of P10 billion, I believe that even if we wanted to expedite or to speed up our rice self-sufficiency program, the amount of budget appropriated for the rice sector is not enough, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator.

REP. LAGMAN. In other words, one of the principal

factors would be deficiency or lack of funding to support the policy of the Department of Agriculture to achieve rice sufficiency. And considering that we are now, again, in the budget season, I think it is relevant to again review the budget being allocated to the Department of Agriculture so that it should be increased or enhanced, so that we will be able to pursue this program on rice production sufficiency.

Aside from lack of funding, do you think that lack of incentives to farmers would also contribute to the failure of the rice sufficiency program?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator, I also believe that the lack of sufficient incentives given to our rice sector is one of the reasons.

REP. LAGMAN. Then, what incentives should we grant or give to our rice farmers so that they can help in the government's program of achieving rice sufficiency?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Well, in the form of input subsidy, crop finance, hybrid seeds and subsidizing crop insurance, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator—I believe those things would be good incentives to be given to our rice farmers.

REP. LAGMAN. When you say, distinguished Sponsor, that the incentives should be crop insurance, more input subsidy, that would include fertilizers, et cetera, all of these would require funding.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes, distinguished interpellator.

REP. LAGMAN. In other words, what is really required is adequate funding for the Department of Agriculture, and most probably, earnest and sincere efforts on the agencies concerned to really pursue that program of rice sufficiency. Now, let me go to another question. Under the regime of rice tariffication, does the government still retain the power to control the volume of imports?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator, under the section—that power and authority is given to the President, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator, that in the event there is an increase or surge in volume or in prices, the President has the power and authority to adjust the applied rate and number two, to temporarily regulate or restrict the volume of imported rice for temporary period.

REP. LAGMAN. In other words, even with the regime of rice import tariffication, we still have the

vestiges of the quantitative restriction policy because the volume of rice imports would still be subject to the control and restriction of the government through the President. Is that correct?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator.

REP. LAGMAN. Now, talking about the President and his powers under this Bill, Mr. Speaker, can the distinguished Sponsor enumerate the various powers of the President under the regime of rice tariffication?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Section 9, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator, provides:

To fulfill the objective of the law to safeguard the Filipino farmers, consumers, and the national interests, the President is hereby empowered to act with full delegated authority in the following circumstances:

(a) Adjustment of Applied Rate. – In the interest of the general welfare and national security, the President, upon the recommendation of the NFA Council, may increase, reduce, revise or adjust existing rates of import duty, including any necessary change in classification, applicable to the importation of rice.

The power herein delegated to the President as provided for in the above paragraph shall be exercised only when the Congress is not in session.

Any order issued by the President adjusting the applied tariff rates shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication. In the event of any imminent or forecasted shortage, or such other situation requiring government intervention, the President is empowered, for a limited period of time and/or a specified volume, to allow the importation of rice at a lower applied tariff rate, to address the situation. Such order shall take effect immediately and may be issued even when Congress is in session; and

(b) Regulation of Rice Exports. – Whenever there is a critical shortage in the supply of rice and there is an urgent need to act, as certified by the NFA Council, the President may temporarily regulate the export of rice for a limited period of time.

Section 10, under “Special Rice Safeguard” provides:

In order to protect the Philippine rice industry from sudden or extreme price

fluctuations and/or unexpected surges of import of the volume of rice, the President may, following a recommendation from the NFA Council, impose temporary regulations or restrictions on the volume of imports of rice for a temporary period through the imposition of a rice safeguard tariff sufficient in level to address the situation.

Within ninety (90) days upon the effectivity of this Act, the NFA Council shall issue such rules and regulations as may be necessary to implement this special rice safeguard provision.

And under Section 11, it is provided:

The President, in the interest of the Philippine rice industry, as well as Philippine consumers, may, upon the recommendation of the NEDA and the DA, enter into trade negotiations or renegotiations of the country's international trade commitments on rice.

REP. LAGMAN. Those are vast powers granted to the Chief Executive. And under Section 9(a), that would even repudiate, for a time being, the provisions of this Bill once it becomes a law when Congress is not in session.

Now, even if Congress is in session, the President can still exercise some powers with respect to the rice tariffication and the volume of rice importation and to answer any expected or imminent shortage, even if Congress is in session. Is that correct?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator.

In the event of any imminent or forecasted shortage, or such other situation requiring government intervention, the President is empowered, for a limited period of time and/or a specified volume, to allow the importation of rice at a lower applied tariff rate $x \times x$. Such order shall take effect immediately and may be issued even when Congress is in session; $x \times x$.

So, this power is granted to the President when there is an imminent shortage or forecasted shortage of rice, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, who has the authority to say that there is an imminent or forecast shortage of rice?

REP. PANGANIBAN. It would be the NFA Council, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. It does not say here. So, most probably, we should be able to make a necessary amendment to say that it should be the NFA Council that should make that forecast.

REP. PANGANIBAN. The Sponsor is amenable at the proper time, Mr. Speaker, to make that as an amendment.

REP. LAGMAN. Then also, we should delimit the period of the effectivity of the President's declaration because here, that declaration is being made while Congress is in session. As a matter of fact, I think we should be able to study whether there is any constitutional infirmity in this particular provision because Congress is in session. So, I would submit that the sponsoring Committee make a study whether this particular provision is free from constitutional infirmity.

Now, these provisions under Section 9 also talks of critical shortage in the supply of rice. I was under the impression that we are adopting the policy of rice tariffication and abandoning the regime of quantitative restriction because we would like to assure that there is sufficient rice supply. Is that correct, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator, yes, that is one of the objectives of this measure. Unfortunately, we could not control events outside of our jurisdiction. For example, in the global trading of rice, the total number of—I mean, the total rice traded globally is around 39.5 million metric tons and 38 million metric tons have already been committed to buyers. So, in effect, there is only about two million metric tons free for trading.

The imminent danger, Mr. Speaker, of a possible imminent shortage is when China starts to buy; second, the effect of climate change; and third, when suddenly our rice exporting neighbors, for example, India, Vietnam and Thailand, make some legislation prohibiting the exportation of their rice. With that, there will be an imminent danger of rice shortage even if we are already under a regime of rice tariffication, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague.

REP. LAGMAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, in other words, the regime of rice tariffication is not an assurance of adequate supply of rice because it is subjected to external factors beyond the control of the Republic. Is that correct?

REP. PANGANIBAN. I fully agree, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague.

REP. LAGMAN. Now, during the regime of

quantitative restriction, what was the annual volume of rice importation of the country?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, from 1996, the total imported rice, I mean, of rice arrivals into the Philippines was about 893,654 metric tons; in 1997, 733,380 metric tons; in 1998, 2,126,513 metric tons; in 1999, 833,148 metric tons; in 2000, 631,640 metric tons; in 2001, we imported 656,067 metric tons; in 2002, 1,190,205 metric tons; in 2003, 875,715 metric tons; in 2004, 886,801 metric tons; in 2005, 1,783,342 metric tons; in 2006, 1.6 million metric tons; in 2007, 1.8 million metric tons; in 2008, 2,390,000 metric tons; in 2009, 1,842,000 metric tons; in 2010, 2,369,000 metric tons; in 2011, 940,000 metric tons; in 2012, 815,470 metric tons; in 2013, 345,662 metric tons; in 2014, 1,700,000 metric tons; in 2015, 1,900,000 metric tons; in 2016, 681,000 metric tons; and in 2017, 916,000 metric tons.

REP. LAGMAN. Or an average of how many metric tons of imported rice?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Of about 1 million metric tons, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague.

REP. LAGMAN. So 1 million, okay. Now, under the regime of rice tariffication, what is the expected volume of rice imports annually?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Under the regime of rice tariffication, we are expecting an average influx of imported rice of about 1.2 million metric tons, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator.

REP. LAGMAN. So, there is really not much difference under the regime of quantitative restriction and under the policy of rice tariffication. So, what are we talking about? Principally, it is because we are not interested in seeking an extension of the quantitative restriction, not because rice tariffication is superior to quantitative restriction as a policy. Is that correct?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, I would like to recast my previous answer that the 1.2 million metric tons is based on the assumption that we will provide enough, I mean, adequate subsidy to the 57 provinces that produce rice. However, without the subsidy, we will be importing about 2 million metric tons of rice, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague. In that case, we will be doubling the volume of imported rice coming into the country.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay. I wonder what is the empirical basis of such projection. But I suppose that should also include the increase in the population of

the country. By year end, the Population Commission said that our population would balloon to 105 million Filipinos. But there are other factors to consider, not because the tariffication is superior to quantitative restriction, but some other factors would have to be taken into consideration.

Now, let me go to another question, Mr. Speaker. What is the effect of rice tariffication on the smuggling of rice?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, as I have said earlier, the case of smuggling is a different sphere. As far as tariffication is concerned, my belief is that there will be no effect on the sphere of smuggling because the objective of tariffication and smuggling is on the opposite. In tariffication, we will tariffy rice importation but in smuggling, the smugglers do not pay tariff or duty. So, I would not think that under the regime of tariffication, it would have an effect on rice smuggling, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague.

REP. LAGMAN. I think there should be an empirical study on the effect of rice tariffication on the smuggling of rice because it would be easier for smuggled rice to enter the country. With a liberalized importation policy, smugglers would take advantage of the arrival of rice imports. I think that factor should be studied because it could be a reality.

We expect rice smuggling to worsen if rice tariffication will push through because more private traders are allowed to import, resulting in the flooding of imported rice, in making the monitoring of rice imports more difficult, including smuggling. So, there would be an effect on the smuggling of rice with the liberalization of importation. I think that should be considered and should be studied very well by the proper agency.

Now, can the distinguished Sponsor again enumerate the safety nets or safeguards protective of our rice farmers under this Bill?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, aside from Section 9, Section 10, Section 11 and Section 15, under the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund, it provides for the usage of the fund for the benefit of the rice farmers. There are no other provisions specifically provided for the protection of the rice farmers.

REP. LAGMAN. Does the distinguished Sponsor not think that there should be more safety nets, more safeguards to protect the rice farmers in this Bill other than those already included, so much so that in the period of amendments, we should be able to introduce the necessary requisites, safeguards.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, if our

distinguished colleague has some proposed amendments, the Sponsor would gladly consider them at the proper time, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Since my time is about to expire, just like the quantitative restrictions, let me go to the last aspect of my interpellation.

Under Section 6 of the Bill, the National Food Authority Council is sought to be reconstituted. Is that correct?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, in Section 6, yes, the NFA Council, the membership of the NFA Council shall be reconstituted.

REP. LAGMAN. In other words, in this Bill, we are amending the Charter of the NFA. Is that correct?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, the NFA Council was originally constituted under Presidential Decree No. 4, and under this particular Bill, we are amending the composition of the NFA Council.

REP. LAGMAN. Yes, that is correct. But Presidential decrees like Presidential Decree No. 1770 on the National Grains Authority, which is now the NFA, is a legitimate legislative issuance. No less than the transitory provisions of the 1987 Constitution provides for that.

If that is so, my question is: Can this Bill by itself amend a legislative Charter granted to the NFA? Will that be constitutional? Would that not defy the prohibition that no bill should include more than two subject matters, so much so that there is a need to amend the Charter of the NFA because under this Bill, there are inclusions which are not found in Presidential Decree No. 1770, like for example, the inclusion in the membership of the NFA Council of the NEDA, the DSWD, the DILG, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, and two farmer representatives? Effectively, this Bill amends a legislative Charter granted to the NFA which I think we cannot do without violating the Constitution.

Earlier this morning, we had a bicameral Conference Committee meeting on the Coco Levy Trust Fund. There was an attempt to amend the composition of the PCA, the Philippine Coconut Authority. We resisted that because there should be a separate bill to amend a legislative charter. I think that is the proper way rather than amending the NFA Council in this Bill. Would you agree to that proposition, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Gentleman?

REP. PANGANIBAN. I would gladly agree with the

proposition of our distinguished colleague, Mr. Speaker. The Sponsor would gladly accept any amendment on that matter.

REP. LAGMAN. The amendment should be a deletion of Section 6.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay.

I now terminate my interpellation with the reservation that the documents in previous study, I am asking that this Representation, in the soonest possible time, should be allowed time to formulate our amendments. This is a very important measure and we should not approve it in haste. Haste would make imperfect laws or statutes.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, distinguished Sponsor, for accommodating my interpellation.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Thank you, distinguished colleague.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, for his interpellation, I move that we recognize the Hon. Victor A. Yap from the Second District of Tarlac.

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

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

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

Would the Gentleman-Sponsor, my partymate, be amenable to some questions?

REP. PANGANIBAN. I would gladly accede to clarifications to be espoused by our distinguished colleague, Mr. Speaker.

REP. YAP (V.). Yes, I would like to make this brief. Time is of the essence and a lot of us have missed our dinner already. I cannot help the fact we are passing this very important Bill, one that is a priority to this government and future governments. I would like to raise some points or manifest some points that I think may help clarify certain matters or, hopefully, would add to, if it is meritorious, improving the Bill some more.

At this point, do you think, since this Bill pertains to a very political product, rice or palay, do you think that certain situations would apply where management tools and economics could help the government in improving this Bill?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator, we have already conducted several Committee meetings, technical working groups, and we have already invited all the stakeholders in the rice sector. And we believe that with all the propositions, counter-propositions of the stakeholders and from our agencies which are involved in the rice sector, we believe that all the propositions were already incorporated in the crafting of this Bill. However, if the Gentleman from Tarlac would introduce some points or some proposals for the refinement or improvement of the Bill, then this, I mean, the Sponsor will be willing to consider, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator.

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

My point would be on the safe side of any government. I believe that tariffication would be, perhaps, a better medium having had the regime of quantitative restriction, not really up to this point that farmers are still in a position that still the poor are lagging behind and, at the same time, inflation is now a very timely problem for the nation. So, it has always been a debate between consumers and producers. Would you say that this Bill—where would an administration put itself? Does it really go pro-farmer or pro-producer, or does it protect the farmer from the middleman or vis-à-vis the consumer as well, or does it go to prioritizing the entire country, being more sensitive to inflation rather than the prices of palay?

REP. PANGANIBAN. As I have said earlier, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator, whether we are in the regime of quantitative restrictions or in the regime of rice tariffication, first and foremost, of course is the protection of the interest of the Filipino rice farmers and rice consumers, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator.

REP. YAP (V.). Then you would say that an administration can always be burdened or hostaged by a double-edged sword, as I would probably say, that the producers would always lambast the government because there is always an incentive to do so because, siyempre, sasabihin nila, itaas pa iyong presyo, itaas pa iyong taripa, kasi iyong taripa pupunta sa kanila, at the same time, it protects the prices. But the end in point may be a situation wherein like now, prices of rice are too high, and the pockets of the businessmen get bigger especially that tariffication would lead us into a situation of more forces of demand and supply, right? Market forces, we yield into market forces. So, would this not be something that would lead the government or future governments into a situation where it cannot win?

In that matter, Mr. Speaker, my point is that, I think it would be wise as Sponsor and as coauthor

of this Bill that we indicate a situation or a price point, a nominal or rather a real price point, at this point of our prices of palay or rice in our country and this will protect either way—the administration, the consumer, and the producer—as a reference point in the future wherein situations, as mentioned by previous speakers, may happen and will always be there to happen.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator, the only price reference point we have now is the support—I mean the buying price supported or the support buying price of palay from the NFA which is P20 per kilo. Other than that price, everything is now controlled by market forces.

REP. YAP (V.). Correct. I think you are referring to a price point that supports both sides and I think that is the price that I am referring to that will be more formalized as a reference price when prices of tariff are considered in the Council or in the President's ano. As you said, marami na kayong ginawang study and nakakalungkot na parang NFA lang ang involved doon sa pricing, and aminin natin, ako, I come from a sensitive agricultural province of rice in Tarlac. For many past years, I was a governor for nine years, maraming mga panahong mas malungkot sila doon sa presyo.

Well, mayroon kayong pino-produce o mayroon kayong ibinibigay na presyo, hindi rin nasusunod. So, ngayon, nakita ko iyong wisdom. Punta tayo sa tariffication pero kung hindi malinaw iyong reference point na iyan, na hindi nakalagay sa Bill, I am afraid, Mr. Speaker, that the future administrations will always be hostaged to certain forces kasi walang talo eh. There is always an incentive for the producers to say and demand, kasi kapag tumaas iyong presyo ng taripa, protektado iyong presyo nila, at the same time, sa kanila rin pupunta ang bigger part of the subsidy. Eh di parati na lang away iyan, parati na lang kayong guguluhin. Iyon ang aking punto po rito, Mr. Speaker.

So, I am not saying any price point, but I commend our good Secretary at this point. Doon po sa amin sa Tarlac, masaya ang rice farmers ngayon. Maganda ang handling ninyo dahil nakokontrol ninyo siguro ngayon ang supply or ang tamang supply, kasi ang Customs, nakikipag-cooperate sa inyo. But we will never know the future, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chairman. Kinakailangan nating magkaroon, at habang ngayon, maganda ang price point, puwedeng ito ang gamitin ng inyong nagsasangguni na itong Bill na ito na maipasa para magkaroon ng reference. And I do this, Mr. Speaker, for the good of this administration and future administrations.

So, if I may, Mr. Sponsor, can this be part of an amendment that...

REP. PANGANIBAN. If the distinguished interpellator would propose any amendment, then the Sponsor would consider that at the proper time.

REP. YAP (V.). Thank you. Last, one more point, maybe, I believe that there is enough research and analysis. As you have said, rice is the most important product that we consume and—do you have a study, more or less, that calculates why our rice is not competitive or is burdensome to both producers and even those who consume it? One way or another, I believe that at this point, our Executive branch, as well as our researchers, should have come up with a list of the reasons bakit hindi competitive ang price ng palay all the way to the rice.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Well, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator, we have a study indicating, benchmarking Philippine rice economy vis-à-vis our competitors. And with respect to the production cost of rice per kilogram, in the Philippines, our cost of production per kilogram is P12.41. This is way high if we compare it to our neighbors like India, Thailand and Vietnam, because in India, the cost of production per kilogram of rice is only P8.87; in Thailand, it is P8.85; and in Vietnam, P6.53.

This, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator, is a confluence of several factors. One is the geographical location, because in Thailand, Vietnam, they have the Mekong River and vast tracks of land suitable for rice. But in our case in the Philippines, 30 percent of our cost—I mean, what contributes to the cost of production is hard labor, meaning, we are lagging behind our neighbors in terms of mechanization because we, as it is now, are resorting to manual labor, Mr. Speaker. The other factor is the amount of the rent of our land. The amount of land rent is about P2.11. So, for hard labor alone and land rent, it is P6 already and that is 50 percent of the total cost of production. So, if we cannot address this issue, we could not be as competitive as Thailand, Vietnam and India in terms of cost of production of per kilo of palay.

REP. YAP (V.). In the Bill, there is a mention of a roadmap of our strategy towards agriculture. Would you say that at this point, as a nation, as a country, and as our experts would see and deem it, that mechanization is a great part of that additional cost that you have mentioned? I do not recall the exact percentage or amount.

REP. PANGANIBAN. About 30 percent.

REP. YAP (V.). Would you say that that is the greatest cause of why it is costly in our country in terms of producing rice—palay?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator, because if we compare labor with our neighbors, in Vietnam, hard labor is only P0.46; in Thailand, it is only P0.66; and in the Philippines, hard labor represents P3.76. So, we are way, way up in terms of hard labor. So, in the drafting of the roadmap, mechanization is one of the focus areas, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator.

REP. YAP (V.). Now, through the years, iyong mechanization na iyan, talagang inasahan ng mga farmers. Ito bang tariffication na ito, huwag naman sanang sumobra, pero kung doon sa nakikita ninyong volumes, doon sa nakikita ninyong dapat na taripa, talaga bang masosolusyunan iyong mechanization on this point? Ako, naniniwala ako, 25 years ago, a great part of the reason some of our beloved countrymen are poor remain to be poor because of underemployment in agriculture, and mechanization, somehow, would push these people towards more permanent job opportunities, hopefully, if this country manages to do so.

Sa tingin mo ba, Mr. Sponsor, na iyong inyong kalkulasyon at inilagay dito ay talagang maa-address at ...

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes, Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator, because doon po sa utilization ng Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund, na kung saan dito lahat pupunta iyong malilikom na taripa, 20 percent ng total na pondo ay specifically pupunta sa pambili o pantulong na farm equipment at mechanization sa ating mga magsasaka.

REP. YAP (V.). Hindi pa ako governor, I think, vice mayor pa lang ako, iyan na iyong naririnig ko. After 30 years, sa tingin mo ba may pagbabago lalo na nagmahal na iyong mga equipment? Tumaas ang dollar, eh papaano ba talaga magkakasya iyan? Iyan ba talaga ay mayroon tayong inaasahang bago or would I rather pose my question, have there been initiatives, especially now we claim “pagbabago”? Mayroon na ba talagang nabago doon sa approach kung papaano tayo makapag-mechanize? Mayroon bang existing na naiisip ang ating Executive Department in terms of utilizing the mechanization, iyong approach? Kasi, iyong dating sinasabi na iyan, bugoy pa ako iyan na iyong sinasabi noon, hanggang ngayon wala pa ring inasenso.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator, ang kagandahan po dito sa Bill na ito kapag naging batas ito is magkakaroon po ng dagdag pondo ang Department of Agriculture. Kasi, as of now, out of the P50 or P60 billion budget ng Department of Agriculture, only P10 billion goes to rice sector—P8.9 billion lang pala ang pupunta sa rice sector. Kapag po

naipasá natin itong Bill na ito, magkakaroon po tayo ng koleksyon sa mga taripa ng papasok na bigas at ito po ay gagamiting pantulong sa ating mga magsasaka. At, dito nga po, isa sa mga nakasaad dito is iyong farm equipment and farm mechanization. At, iyon nga, I was talking to the good Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, mayroon naman silang mga programa dapat dito sa farm equipment and mechanization kaya lang hanggang programa na lang dahil wala namang karampatang pondo. So, kapag may pondo, maaaring magawa o maging ganap na iyong pangarap ng ating Secretary ng Department of Agriculture para ma-address itong pagbibigay o pagiging mechanized na ng ating mga farmers.

REP. YAP (V.). Salamat, Mr. Sponsor, pero siguro hindi naman sa pakikialam o panghihimasok, puwede ba akong mag-suggest na ...?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished interpellator, as I have said, the Sponsor is very open to considering all the proposals coming from the distinguished interpellator, and such proposal for amendment or any improvement on this Bill should be espoused at the proper time, in the period of amendments, Mr. Speaker.

REP. YAP (V.). Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker. I would like to manifest na ganoon ang nasabi, baka puwedeng tingnan ng ating Executive Department na para mayroon namang pagbabago siguro sa approach ng mechanization, sapagkat kung talagang aasahan natin ang ating labor pumunta sa mga industriya at serbisyo, at ang agriculture, liliit ang populasyon at doon lamang mangyayari iyong talagang productivity at bumaba iyong presyo. Pero, dahil nag-i-import pa tayo, halos lahat ng nakita kong bansang umasenso sa agrikultura ay gumagawa ng sarili nilang mga farm equipment.

Sana panahon na, itong oras na ito, ay gamitin na rin natin siguro iyong strategy ng China na magkaroon talaga ng isang kumpanya na malaki, mag-technology transfer dito tatala may tariff naman tayo kahit wala na silang ipasok na kapital at magamit naman iyan. Ang gusto ko lamang, Mr. Speaker, ma-exhaust iyong ibang paraan, papaano tayong umasenso sa larangan na ito, at maging specific naman sana ang pagbanggit dahil kapag pumasá na ito nang ganito, raw, pagdating na naman doon sa Council at doon sa Ehekutibo at doon sa mga ibang branches, nawawala iyong mga ganitong klaseng mga pananaw, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor. Thank you for indulging.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Thank you, distinguished interpellator.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, there being no other Member who wishes to interpellate our Sponsor, I move that we terminate the period of sponsorship and debate.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7735

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 7735.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

It was 7:40 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 7:40 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ANDAYA. Yes, Mr. Speaker, with leave of the House, I move that we set the commencement of the daily sessions of the House at three o'clock in the afternoon starting Monday, August 6, 2018.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

CONSIDERATION OF H. CT. RES. NO. 19

REP. ANDAYA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Concurrent Resolution No. 19.

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Concurrent Resolution No. 19, entitled: CONCURRENT RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR FOR THE THIRD REGULAR SESSION OF THE SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE PHILIPPINES.

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

REP. ANDAYA. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adopt the said Resolution.

ADOPTION OF H. CT. RES. NO. 19

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

ELECTION OF REP. ABELLANOSA TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

REP. ANDAYA. Mr. Speaker, on the part of the Majority, with the resignation of Chairman Arnel U. Ty, we would like to elect, on the part of the Majority, Cong. Rodrigo A. Abellanos as Chairman of the Committee on Natural Resources.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

ELECTION OF REP. VELOSO TO THE COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

REP. ANDAYA. Likewise, Mr. Speaker, on the part of the Majority, with the resignation of Cong. Roger G. Mercado from the Majority, in his stead, we move to elect, on the part of the Majority, Cong. Vicente "Ching" S.E. Veloso to the Committee on Constitutional Amendments.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

REP. ANDAYA. Mr. Speaker, at this point, I move to adjourn until Monday, August 6, 2018, at three o'clock in the afternoon.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

It was 7:43 p.m.

* See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)