



Congressional Record

PLENARY PROCEEDINGS OF THE 17th CONGRESS, THIRD REGULAR SESSION

House of Representatives

Vol. 3

Tuesday, October 9, 2018

No. 25

CALL TO ORDER

At 3:00 p.m., Deputy Speaker Sharon S. Garin called the session to order.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The session is now called to order.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

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

Everybody rose to sing the Philippine National Anthem.

PRAYER

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

Everybody remained standing for the silent prayer.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin S.). Thank you.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. SALO. Mme. Speaker, I respectfully move that we now proceed to the Reference of Business.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

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

BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 8356, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING SURVIVORSHIP BENEFITS TO THE SURVIVING LEGITIMATE SPOUSE OF A DECEASED CHAIRPERSON, COMMISSIONER OR LABOR ARBITER OF THE NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS COMMISSION”

By Representative Sy-Alvarado

TO THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

House Bill No. 8357, entitled:

“AN ACT TRANSFERRING THE NEW BILIBID PRISON FROM BARANGAY POBLACION, MUNTINLUPA CITY TO BARANGAY CUYAMBAY, MUNICIPALITY OF TANAY, PROVINCE OF RIZAL”

By Representative Biazon

TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 8358, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL FLOOD CONTROL ACT, TO PROMOTE AND EXTEND LIFE-SAVING MECHANISMS, TO AUGMENT THE DEMANDS FOR SUPPORT, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Romero

TO THE COMMITTEE ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT

House Bill No. 8359, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL BROADBAND DEVELOPMENT ACT, TO FOSTER THE DEVELOPMENT OF ICT INFRASTRUCTURES AND MECHANISMS, TO AUGMENT THE DEMANDS FOR INTERNET SPEED AND NETWORK CONNECTIVITY, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Romero
TO THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION AND
COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

YEAR AS THE NATIONAL DAY AGAINST
HOMOPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA, AND
FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

House Bill No. 8360, entitled:

“AN ACT PROHIBITING ALL
TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPANY
(SERVICE PROVIDER) TO CHARGE AND
COLLECT MONTHLY SERVICE FEES (MSF)
DURING THE PERIOD OF SUSPENSION OF
ANY POSTPAID SUBSCRIPTION (PERIOD
OF TEMPORARY DISCONNECTION),
TO FOSTER CONSUMER-SUBSCRIBER
PROTECTION AND WELFARE, PROVIDING
PENALTIES AND SANCTIONS, AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Nieto
TO THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND
GENDER EQUALITY

RESOLUTIONS

By Representative Romero
TO THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION AND
COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

House Resolution No. 2221, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND
CONGRATULATING THE IGLESIA NI
CRISTO FOR SUCCESSFULLY HOLDING
INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH PROGRAMS
IN NEW YORK AND CONNECTICUT LAST
SEPTEMBER 14, 2018”

By Representative Castelo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Bill No. 8361, entitled:

“AN ACT PROHIBITING THE DISPOSAL OF
ELECTRONIC DEVICES AT SOLID WASTE
MANAGEMENT FACILITIES”

By Representative Nieto
TO THE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY

House Resolution No. 2222, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION URGING THE PROPER
COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES TO CONDUCT AN
INQUIRY AND/OR INVESTIGATION
IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE
MALFEASANCE OF BOTH THE GSIS
AND DEPED OFFICERS IN RELATION
TO THE NON-DEDUCTION OF THE GSIS
LOAN PREMIUM FROM THE SALARIES
OF PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS”

By Representative Romero
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Bill No. 8362, entitled:

“AN ACT PROMOTING LOCAL ARTS AND
ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY BY
PROVIDING THE LOCAL MOVIE AND
FILM INDUSTRY CORPORATE TAX
BREAKS AND EXEMPTING VENUE
OPERATORS FROM THE PAYMENT OF
AMUSEMENT TAX WHEN SHOWING
LOCALLY PRODUCED FILMS AND
MUSIC EVENTS FEATURING FILIPINO
ARTISTS”

By Representative Nieto
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC
INFORMATION

House Resolution No. 2223, entitled:

“RESOLUTION COMMENDING MRS. JENNY
MARIE D. BLANCAFLOR FOR WINNING
THE BEST ORAL PRESENTER AWARD
AT THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON ADVANCE PHARMACY AND
PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES (ICAPPS)
IN INDONESIA”

By Representative Treñas
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Bill No. 8363, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING BEREAVEMENT LEAVE
OF TWELVE (12) DAYS PAY TO ALL
EMPLOYEES IN THE PRIVATE AND
PUBLIC SECTORS AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES”

By Representative Nieto
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND
EMPLOYMENT AND THE COMMITTEE
ON CIVIL SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL
REGULATION

House Resolution No. 2224, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING
AND COMMENDING FILIPINO SPORT
SHOOTERS WHO COMPETED IN THE FAR
EAST ASIA INTERNATIONAL PRACTICAL
SHOOTING CONFEDERATION HANDGUN
CHAMPIONSHIP 2018”

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

TO THE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH AND
SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

House Bill No. 8364, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING MAY 17 OF EVERY

MESSAGES FROM THE SENATE

Message dated October 3, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that on even date the Senate approved the Conference Committee Report of the Bicameral Conference Committee on the disagreeing provisions of Senate Bill No. 1363 and House Bill No. 7402, entitled:

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

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Message dated October 3, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that on October 2, 2018, the Senate designated Senators Risa Hontiveros, Loren Legarda, Joseph Victor G. Ejercito, Grace Poe and Francis N. Pangilinan as conferees to the Bicameral Conference Committee on the disagreeing provisions of Senate Bill No. 2023, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING SPECIAL PROTECTION OF CHILDREN IN SITUATIONS OF ARMED CONFLICT AND PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREOF”

and House Bill No. 7442, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE SPECIAL PROTECTION OF CHILDREN IN SITUATIONS OF ARMED CONFLICT AND PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF”

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Message dated October 4, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that on October 3, 2018 the Senate approved the Conference Committee Report of the Bicameral Conference Committee on the disagreeing provisions of Senate Bill No. 1305 and House Bill No. 4113, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE MATERNITY LEAVE PERIOD TO ONE HUNDRED FIVE (105) DAYS FOR FEMALE WORKERS WITH AN OPTION TO EXTEND FOR AN ADDITIONAL THIRTY (30) DAYS WITHOUT PAY, AND GRANTING AN ADDITIONAL FIFTEEN (15) DAYS FOR SOLO MOTHERS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Message dated October 4, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that on October 3, 2018 the Senate adopted House Concurrent Resolution No. 21, entitled:

“CONCURRENT RESOLUTION AMENDING THE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT

ON THE DISAGREEING VOTES ON 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, PROVINCE OF SOUTH COTABATO, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR’ ”

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report by the Committee on Dangerous Drugs (Committee Report No. 886), re H.B. No. 8378, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 4200, ENTITLED, ‘AN ACT TO PROHIBIT AND PENALIZE WIRE TAPPING AND OTHER RELATED VIOLATIONS OF THE PRIVACY OF COMMUNICATION’ ”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bills Numbered 289, 587, 1868, 3406, 3616, 3627, 3733 and 4151

Sponsors: Representatives Barbers, Acop and Pineda

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Justice (Committee Report No. 887), re H.B. No. 8380, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING PHILIPPINE CITIZENSHIP TO HANS GUENTER SCHOOF”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 6679

Sponsors: Representatives Leachon and Umali

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Justice (Committee Report No. 888), re H.B. No. 8381, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING PHILIPPINE CITIZENSHIP TO MARGARITA MELIAN ORTIGAS”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 8182

Sponsor: Representative Leachon

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Justice (Committee Report No. 889), re H.B. No. 8382, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING PHILIPPINE CITIZENSHIP TO KITSON SORIANO KHO”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 8192

Sponsors: Representatives Leachon and Zubiri

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Transportation (Committee Report No. 890), re H.B. No. 8394, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE FULL AND EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL MARITIME INSTRUMENTS OF WHICH THE PHILIPPINES IS A STATE-PARTY”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bills Numbered 456 and 1286

Sponsors: Representatives Sarmiento (C.) and Manalo

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. SALO. Mme. Speaker, I respectfully move that we defer the calling of the roll.

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

REP. SALO. Mme. Speaker, I respectfully move that we defer the approval of the Journal.

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

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. SALO. Mme. Speaker, I respectfully move that we suspend the session.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The session is suspended.

It was 3:07 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:35 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The session is resumed.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 8244 ON SECOND READING

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 8244 under the Calendar of Business for the Day contained in Committee Report

No. 863, as reported out by the Committee on Women and Gender Equality.

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

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 8244, entitled: AN ACT EXPANDING THE DEFINITION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT, STRENGTHENING THE MECHANISMS TO MONITOR COMPLIANCE WITH POLICIES AGAINST SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE AND IN EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING INSTITUTIONS, AND PRESCRIBING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7877, ALSO REFERRED TO AS THE “ANTI-SEXUAL HARASSMENT ACT OF 1995.”

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that the Chairperson of the Committee on Women and Gender Equality, the Hon. Bernadette “BH” Herrera-Dy, be recognized to begin her sponsorship of the measure.

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

The Honorable Herrera-Dy is recognized to sponsor the Bill.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. Mme. Speaker, I move that we consider the Explanatory Note as the sponsorship speech on this particular measure.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

* See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Lady from GABRIELA Party-List, the Hon. Emmi A. De Jesus, to deliver her sponsorship speech.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

The Honorable De Jesus is recognized.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF REP. DE JESUS

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

Unang-una, kinikilala namin ang pagbubukas para sa Second Reading ng amendment na ito under Committee Report No. 863, sa pinagsama-samang mga panukala para higit na bigyan ng pagbabago o amendments doon sa ating existing Sexual Harassment Law at pagkilala doon sa pagsisikap ng Committee na finally ay maupuan ito at hanggang mapagtagumpayan na umabot sa yugto ng Second Reading.

Kinikilala rin namin ang mga naging praktika mula sa karanasan ng iba't ibang women's organizations with regard to their difficulty in getting justice for the victims of sexual harassment. Kaya isa pong naalala kong karanasan ay iyong lumalapit noong ako po ay wala pa sa Kongreso at bahagi ng GABRIELA Alliance, kung saan habang bagsak na bagsak ang morale at pagkatao ng mga biktima ng sexual harassment, lalung-lalo na kung ang perpetrator ay hindi nanggagaling doon sa higit na mataas ang authority doon sa kanya, hindi talaga makakuha ng justice o katarungan ang victim.

Isang mayor na pagkilala rito sa amendment ay ang definition ng sexual harassment at kung ang higit na magiging mapagpasya ay iyong nararamdaman ng biktima doon sa nangyari sa kanya at hindi rin nangangailangan na ang perpetrator ay may higit na mataas na posisyon doon sa kanya.

Pangalawang punto na nais naming kilalanin sa pag-e-expand ng batas ay kaugnay kung saan nangyayari ang seksuwal na panliligalig sa biktima dahil malinaw na ang kinikilala lamang ay kapag naganap ang seksuwal na panliligalig o sexual harassment within the vicinity of the training or academic institutions or doon sa place of employment.

Dito sa ating panukalang batas, kapag magkakilala o mayroong relasyon bilang magkaempleyado o within the institution ng akademya or ng training at nagkaroon ng seksuwal na panliligalig sa isang biktima, ito ay maaari nang mabigyan ng proteksyon.

Tinitiyak din ng batas na ito ang pagkakaroon talaga, ang pagtitiyak ng pagkakaroon ng kodigo sa lahat, pampubliko man o pribado, ng Committee on Decorum para tiyakin na kung mayroong magreklamo, magkakaroon ng kagyat na masusumbungan ang sinumang magiging biktima.

Ilan lamang ito sa nakikita naming dapat itulak na progresibong hakbang. Sa bahagi ng Gabriela Women's Party, pagkilala muli sa ating Chair at sa mga kasapi ng Committee on Women and Gender Equality na sa Ikalabimpitong Kongreso, isa na sana ulit itong legacy ng Seventeenth Congress sa pagkakaroon ng higit na progresibong batas kaugnay ng sexual harassment. Iyon lamang po, Mme. Speaker, at maraming salamat.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Thank you, Honorable De Jesus.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, there being no Member who wishes to interpellate any of the Sponsors or speak against the measure, I move that we close the period of sponsorship and debate.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that we open the period of amendments. However, there being no Committee or individual amendments, I move that we close the period of amendments.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that we approve House Bill No. 8244, as contained in Committee Report No. 863, on Second Reading.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

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

As many as are in favor of House Bill No. 8244, please say *aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

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

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 8244 ON SECOND READING

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

House Bill No. 8244 is hereby approved on Second Reading.

Congratulations.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Maraming salamat, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 8282
ON SECOND READING

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 8282, contained in Committee Report No. 876, as reported out by the Committee on Agriculture and Food.

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

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

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 8282, entitled: AN ACT DECLARING THE PROVINCE OF CATANDUANES AS THE ABACA CAPITAL OF THE PHILIPPINES.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that we open the period of sponsorship and debate.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that the Chairperson of the Committee on Agriculture and Food, the Hon. Jose T. Panganiban Jr., CPA, LLB, be recognized to sponsor the measure.

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

The Honorable Panganiban is recognized to sponsor the Bill. Please proceed.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, I am adopting the Explanatory Note of the Bill as my sponsorship speech.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Thank you, Honorable Panganiban.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that we open the period of amendments.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, there being no Committee or individual amendments, I move that we terminate the period of amendments.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that we approve House Bill No. 8282, as contained in Committee Report No. 876, on Second Reading.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

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

As many as are in favor of House Bill No. 8282, please say *Aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). As many as are against, please say *Nay*. (*Silence*)

APPROVAL OF H. B. NO. 8282
ON SECOND READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The ayes have it; the motion is approved.

House Bill No. 8282 is hereby approved on Second Reading.

Congratulations!

The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session for a few minutes.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The session is suspended.

It was 3:46 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:53 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The session is resumed.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7849
ON SECOND READING

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 7849, contained in Committee Report No. 786, as reported out by the Committees on Indigenous Cultural Communities and Indigenous Peoples, and on Ways and Means.

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

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

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7849, entitled: AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A FREE AND CULTURE-SENSITIVE CIVIL REGISTRATION SYSTEM FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize Rep. Arlene D. Brosas from GABRIELA Party-List to begin her sponsorship of the measure.

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

The Honorable Brosas is recognized to sponsor the Bill. Please proceed.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF REP. BROSAS

REP. BROSAS. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. Good afternoon.

There are only a few countries left in the world with a preserved and somehow intact indigenous population. The Philippines ranks among the countries of Australia, New Zealand, as well as Oceania, Micronesia and other islands in the Pacific, and the few republics in Latin America, as one of those places where modern society exists side by side with indigenous cultural communities. As such, it is one of our duties to spearhead laws and legislation that will protect our indigenous countrymen from the distraction of their own way of life.

Among the three branches of government, the Legislative branch is possibly the most active protector of IP rights when it passed the landmark Indigenous Peoples Rights Act in 1997. Yet, when there are projects for IPs that need funding, the most important question of how much the project costs, more often than not, hinges on an equally important yet unanswerable question—how many IPs are there?

While it is true that there exists a government agency known as the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, an agency tasked with the general welfare of indigenous peoples, the NCIP itself has inaccurate data on the IP population in our country—how many IPs are born every year, how many die, how many die of natural causes, how many die of sickness, how many could have been treated, how many are minors, how many have reached the age of seniority, how many get married ever year, and how many children does an average couple have? While it is true that the NCIP

* See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)

can answer these queries, it would actually be less knowing the answer and more having a general idea. The NCIP's data is estimated to be inconsistent with reality and this inconsistency has a discrepancy too large for any claim of accuracy. All these actually boil down to simple reality.

The IPs need to be counted but they seem to have a natural aversion to anything related to registration. They care not for birth certificates or death certificates because they live and die like their ancestors have done. They care not for driver's licenses for they have no vehicles to navigate and their communities have neither roads nor infrastructure. They care not for casting their ballots and voting for their leaders because the only leaders they know are their elders, and there is nothing a politician can give them that they cannot do for themselves. But these registration procedures are a bureaucratic necessity. They are needed in order to know that the beneficiaries of government services are bona fide citizens of the Philippines. The administration of health, education and other basic social services require at the very least a birth certificate which most IPs do not have and which most IPs do not care about. This indifference, however, should not be a deterrent for the State. If the IPs do not want to leave their ancestral lands for whatever reason, then it is the State that must go to them.

The passage of House Bill No. 7849 ensures that the State provides a free and cultural-sensitive civil registration system for indigenous people. Part of the government's mandate to protect the welfare of its citizens is that they must first feel that they are citizens of the State without losing their identity as IPs. They must feel that they are part of a long history that coexists side by side with their long tradition of indigenous customs. They must feel that they are citizens of the Philippines while still being a part of their indigenous cultural community. They must feel that they are Filipinos and this Bill is the first step on that long journey to self-realization.

Thank you very much, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Thank you, Honorable Brosas.

The Majority Leader is recognized .

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, there being no Member who wishes to interpellate or to speak against the measure, I move that we terminate the period of sponsorship and debate.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we open the period of amendments.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, there being no Committee or individual amendments, I move that we terminate the period of amendments.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we approve House Bill No. 7849 on Second Reading.

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

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). As many as are in favor of House Bill No. 7849, please say *aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

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

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7849 ON SECOND READING

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

House Bill No. 7849 is hereby approved on Second Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7785 ON SECOND READING

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 7785, contained in Committee Report No. 765, as reported out by the Committees on Basic Education and Culture, on Appropriations, and on Ways and Means.

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

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

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7785, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A FRAMEWORK FOR THE SELECTION OF NATIONAL PERFORMING ARTS COMPANIES, DESIGNATING FOR THE PURPOSE CERTAIN PERFORMING ARTS GENRES AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we open the period of sponsorship and debate.

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

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize Rep. Evelina G. Escudero from the First District of Sorsogon for her sponsorship speech.

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

The Honorable Escudero is recognized to sponsor the Bill.

REP. ESCUDERO. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. I move that the Explanatory Note of the Bill be considered as the sponsorship speech on the measure.

Thank you, Mme. Chair.

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

Thank you, Honorable Escudero.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from BUHAY Party-List, Rep. Jose "Lito" L. Atienza Jr., the Senior Deputy Minority Leader, for his interpellation.

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

The Honorable Atienza is recognized. Please proceed.

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

Mme. Speaker, we would like to request the Lady Sponsor to exchange some of our questions on the well-intended measure.

REP. ESCUDERO. I agree, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

Of course, at the outset, we agree with the intentions of this measure that it is about time that the Philippines develop its own National Performing Arts Companies. But I would like to ask the Sponsor though, how does she define a National Performing Arts Company?

REP. ESCUDERO. Yes, thank you for the question. The National Performing Arts Company would be a company that would consist of five different cultural companies like the company for ballet, company for theater, company for orchestra or music, company for choral music, and company for a string ensemble, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Tinatangap po ng inyong lingkod itong definition nila. Nais ko lang liwanagin, iyon po bang National Performing Arts Company ay kinakailangang mayroong minimum members or minimum participating members or a brief history of public record that they have been doing or performing arts in the country? Mayroon po ba noong mga minimum requirements o anybody can apply, immaterial if they were just organized yesterday?

REP. ESCUDERO. Mme. Speaker, it would consist of members whom the CCP and the NCCA would select from the members of different companies that I have mentioned and there would be one representative from each company.

Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Ang tanong ko po ay, mayroon po bang requirement on the experiences, record of such companies applying for this subsidy offered by

* See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)

the government and through this law or anybody can apply, as I mentioned, stressing the obvious, anybody organized yesterday can just apply today?

REP. ESCUDERO. Mme. Speaker, mayroon po silang selection committee that would give criteria to be members of this particular National Performing Arts Company. Mayroon pong gagawin silang committee that would select different performers from different companies. Mayroon dapat silang artistic excellence in their own particular field, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Samakatuwid, Mme. Speaker, ibinibigay na natin iyong laya sa mga iba't ibang ahensya like Cultural Center of the Philippines, the National Commission on Culture and the Arts iyong requirements as envisioned by this law? Ganoon po ba iyon?

REP. ESCUDERO. Opo, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Hindi ba ho mas magandang ilagay na natin sa batas para po naman iyong discretion ng mga NGOs involved with the arts are somehow contained and measured? Hindi puwedeng according to them, "He is good, he is good. They started yesterday and therefore, we will recommend them for the P10-million subsidy a year." We are talking about P50-million subsidy here. And do you not think, they would be more prudent and more accurate in our objectives of genuinely promoting arts in the Philippines if we put in the law that they have to have some track record in the field that they are applying for? In other words, you cannot apply for this particular benefit only because you have friends in the National Commission on Culture and the Arts or friends in the Cultural Center of the Philippines. The law would immediately disqualify you if you are hurriedly organized or organized only yesterday and will apply for P10 million today. Hindi po ba mas maganda? Tatanggap po ba ang ating Sponsor ng provision that will define the good intentions of the proposed law that it will go to the deserving and sacrificing NGOs, groups who have already been rendering the promotion of the arts and culture without any subsidy from the government? This is the first time we are going to subsidize their activities. Hindi po ba mas magandang siguruhin natin na ang makikinabang dito ay iyong mga namuhunan na at matagal nang nagpo-promote ng ating kultura?

REP. ESCUDERO. Yes, Mme. Speaker, maganda po ang suggestion ng ating interpellator. Siguro po idadagdag na lang natin itong probisyon na ito na gusto ninyong ilagay na mayroon silang track record before they are even selected to be members of the National Performing Arts Companies, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Maaari po bang tumanggap ang ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor ng dagdag na probisyon kapagka nandoon na po tayo sa period of amendments?

REP. ESCUDERO. Sige po, Mme. Speaker, tatanggapin po namin siguro iyong probisyon na iyon.

REP. ATIENZA. My next clarificatory question is pertaining to the classifications of the groups mentioned. One is the qualified applicant for ballet and contemporary dance, one qualified applicant for theater, one qualified applicant for orchestral music, one qualified applicant for choral music, and one qualified applicant for string ensemble. Ito po ay bumabanggit ng iba't ibang category, pero hindi po tayo naglalagay ng bilang na maaaring bumuo sa isang potential beneficiary of this subsidy. In other words, puwedeng dalawa lang ang member, puwedeng 20 ang member. Puwede po bang 200 ang member? Hindi po ba mas magandang ilagay natin ang ating pinagsama-samang karanasan na kailangan ay mayroon tayong minimum number ng mga miyembro para matiyak nating mas marami ang makikinabang dito sa napakagandang measure ninyo?

REP. ESCUDERO. Actually, po, Mme. Speaker, dito po sa Section 5 letter "e", nakalagay po doon, select additional 15 members, or three (three) members from each of the different companies mentioned to be included also as members of this particular National Performing Arts Company.

REP. ATIENZA. Is the Lady Sponsor envisioning the benefits of this measure to reach to the individual or to the group where he or she belongs? Ito po ba ay limitado sa mga grupo o puwede namang mag-apply ang isang sa palagay ninyo ay napakagaling na piyanista, a solo pianist or a violinist? Will he qualify to get a share of this fund that we are appropriating or he has to belong to a company?

REP. ESCUDERO. Puwede po, Mme. Speaker, dahil nandito po naman—each company would have at least three from each company, so three from string ensemble kaya puwede pong pumasok dito iyong magaling na biyolinista, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Siguro, maganda rin pong liwanagin natin iyon in the period of amendments, so that we will ensure that the individual Filipino artist also gets qualified to benefit from this subsidy which we are discussing. Iyong isang magaling na public school student na talagang bertuso sa biyolin ay hindi

kailangang mapabilang sa anumang grupo, pero maaari pa rin siyong mag-apply nang siya ay matulungan ng gobyerno, makapag-aral pa ng advance schooling in the art of playing the instrument of violin so that his God-given talent is given an opportunity for full development or you would rather that he applies to be a member of a company.

REP. ESCUDERO. Sa batas po ay he should be a member of the company of that particular performing arts.

REP. ATIENZA. Is it not that limiting, Mme. Speaker, limiting the accessibility of this fund to possibly hundreds or maybe even thousands of Filipino artists who are not members of any company but they struggle to learn, to exercise, to practice their art and are excelling, thereafter, without any government support whatsoever? Hindi po ba magandang isama na natin dito iyan?

REP. ESCUDERO. Puwede rin po, Mme. Speaker, kaya nga po they are encouraging all these artists to join this particular company so that they can be accredited or they can be qualified to be members of this National Performing Arts Company. Kumbaga, each company like, for example, the Ballet Contemporary Dance Company would encourage all these dancers to join the company so they can be qualified to enter into the National Performing Arts Company, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Is it not that putting a barrier between the benefits of this measure and to the individual God-given talent of a poor Filipino boy or girl who needs further training and education with her or his art? Eh kung siya ay ire-require nating magmiyembro muna ng isang kumpanya, eh baka hindi po mangyari iyon sapagkat kung siya ay walang paraan upang pumunta roon sa lugar ng kumpanyang iyon dahil siya ay a-tagá Samar, ay hindi siya aabutin nitong measure na ito.

The intention of this Representation is to make sure that the benefits of supporting financially performing arts companies reach down and trickle down to benefit the individual Filipino artist struggling with his art. Marami po kasi tayong alam na magaling, talaga namang may God-given talent, pero hindi po siya miyembro ng anumang grupo sapagkat wala siyang estado sa lipunan at hindi po siya masali doon sa mga pinipili. At hindi ko naman inaakusahan ang Cultural Center of the Philippines or the NCCA, but he will not qualify simply because he has no money to go and practice at the CCP because he is from Catbalogan, Samar. Hindi po ba magandang bigyan natin ng pagkakataon ang mga bata sa probinsya? Kapag nabalitaan nilang ipinasá natin itong batas na ito, aba

ay mae-encourage sila. “Pupunta kami sa Maynila ng anak ko. Ia-apply ko iyan sa magandang benepisyo na mabigyan ng training ang aking anak.” Twelve years old but very, very good in piano playing. Walang nagturo, walang teacher, pero nauupo sa piano, naglalaro ng mga Rachmaninoff, Chopin na walang nagturo, marami pong ganiyan. At kung hindi po natin sila maisasama ay parang mamomopolize noong mga grupo at not necessarily reaching out to the individual talents of young artists today. Not to mention that if you belong to a company, chances are, the company will control the funds and in the management of funds, there will come into play weaknesses of human nature.

Mayroon din po silang paborito diyan, mayroon silang inaalagaan, e kaawa-awa po iyong si Juan Dela Cruz, graduate ng public school, magaling talagang tumugtog ng violin, pero hindi po siya kinikilala sapagkat hindi siya nakasakay sa kotse. Kapag praktis nila, umuwi po siyang naglalakad. Marami pong ganiyan eh. Iyan ang inaalala kong maiiwanan kung ang ating bibigyan ng tulong ay iyong kumpanya, iyong organisasyon at rather than the individual who also comprises and makes up the organization in the company. But just to make sure that the benefit of P50 million subsidy for one group ay in five years ay pakinabangan din naman noong mga bata na wala po naman silang talagang yaman at wala silang koneksyon. Kung malapit sila sa isang Congressman, baka puwede po silang matulungan ng Congressman. Pero kung hindi rin po sila matutulungan ng mga Congressmen nila, maiiwanan po nitong magandang layunin na ito na tulungan na natin once and for all ang galing ng Pilipino.

REP. ESCUDERO. Tama po kayo diyan, Mme. Speaker, at Congressman Atienza, pero dito po sa Section 4, nandito po ang roles and functions of this particular National Performing Arts Company. Isinasaad din po dito that they will develop and build a repertoire of original Filipino workers in the performing arts para ma-uplift po lahat ng mga magagaling na talents dito sa ating bayan, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Kaya ko po nilinaw iyong Section 5(d), where you enumerated about those who are qualified and you talked about (a), one qualified applicant. Ano po ba ang iyong pakahulugan sa “one applicant”—one applicant applying company or one applying individual?

REP. ESCUDERO. No, ang sinasabi naming applicant, this is for the selection committee na magbubuo ng National Performing Arts Committee. Ito po iyong selection na sinasabi namin dito. Pero iyong selection po ng performers, hindi po iyan limited. It would be for all who are in the field of performing arts.

REP. ATIENZA. Mme. Speaker, will the Lady also accept certain adjustments on the provisions, on how to implement this well-intentioned measure just to make sure that the individual artist is not controlled by this measure, na kung hindi ka sasali sa kumpanya ay wala kang qualification, you will not be entertained. Ang nais po ng Representasyong ito ay buksan natin ang pinto ng pagkakataon. Since we are appropriating millions of pesos and for the first time, maybe really offering the government subsidy to develop the God-given talents of our children, rich or poor, ay gawin na natin dito sa batas na ito. Huwag nating iaasa sa mga NGOs because the NGOs could have their own beneficiaries in mind and the Lady will no longer be able to control the decisions once we pass this law. But if in the law it is so provided, it will be very clear and no organization will dare violate the intentions clarified and mentioned clearly in the letter of the law.

REP. ESCUDERO. Mme. Speaker, ano po ang gustong amendment ng ating kagalang-galang na interpellator, Congressman Atienza.

REP. ATIENZA. Pagdating po ng period of amendments, ...

REP. ESCUDERO. Ah, sige po. So, ...

REP. ATIENZA. ... I will ask for a meeting with the Lady and we will put one by one all the provisions that we would want to be included to protect precisely the good intentions of the proposed law because the way we look at it, it is too general. You are practically giving the organizations full control of the scholarship fund that you are providing. Mas maganda po siguro na ilagay natin sa batas kung papaano ang bawat isa ay maaaring makinabang dito at hindi para sa grupo lang, na maaari ito para sa sinumang may galing at siya ay matutulungan nitong batas na ito.

With the kind permission of the Lady, at the proper time, we will work out the amendments that you are working on.

REP. ESCUDERO. Salamat po, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Now, I just would like to ask, you have five categories, one, for Ballet and Contemporary Dance. Ano po ba iyong difference between ballet and contemporary dance?

REP. ESCUDERO. Ang contemporary po iyong mga modern dances natin. Iyong ballet po iyong ballet. *(Laughter)* Ballet, iyong ganoon. Sir, alam naman ninyo siguro iyon. *(Laughter)*

REP. ATIENZA. Ang ibig po ba ninyong sabihin nito, ito ay isang ballet company at isang contemporary o ...

REP. ESCUDERO. Hindi, isa lang po sila.

REP. ATIENZA. Isa lang.

REP. ESCUDERO. Opo.

REP. ATIENZA. In other words ...

REP. ESCUDERO. One representative for both.

REP. ATIENZA. If there is an excellent ballet company at napasabay sila sa excellent contemporary dance company ...

REP. ESCUDERO. Dance company, opo.

REP. ATIENZA. ... isa lang ang pipiliin natin?

REP. ESCUDERO. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. I would like to ask why we are limiting it to such a situation wherein isa lang ang makikinabang, samantalang iyong contemporary dance group, eh palagay ninyo ay lumabas na sa theater—the world theaters of Las Vegas and America's Got Talent, at Pilipinas Got Talent at disqualified sila kapag naunahan sila noong ballet. Ganoon ba iyon o gusto ninyong paghiwalayin natin iyon? Dahil iba po iyong ballet e, hindi po ba?

REP. ESCUDERO. Opo.

REP. ATIENZA. Iba po naman iyong contemporary?

REP. ESCUDERO. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Iyong ballet, there is no such thing as modern ballet.

REP. ESCUDERO. No, wala po.

REP. ATIENZA. Kapag nag-modern ka ay contemporary ka na. Kapag classical ka, ballet ka.

REP. ESCUDERO. Pero ito po ang ginawa sa Bill. Isa lang po ang representante para sa dance, which includes both ballet and contemporary para hindi ho masyado maraming miyembro sa kumpanya, sa Performing Arts Company.

REP. ATIENZA. Kapag nanonood po ako ng television at nakikita ko ang galing ng mga Pilipinong

nagpe-perform sa mga programang binanggit ko, ito ay kahanga-hanga at pinapalakpakan ng buong mundo, pero sila ay disqualified kapag may nakapasok na pong ballet. Bakit hindi natin gawing dalawa, contemporary, ballet...

REP. ESCUDERO. Magiging anim ...

REP. ATIENZA. ... classical, modern?

REP. ESCUDERO. Mme. Speaker, magiging anim na po iyong miyembro, hindi po lima. Kailangan pong magdagdag pa ng isa pa po.

REP. ATIENZA. Kung kailangan pong magdagdag, eh bakit naman tayo magtitipid pa at this point? Tulungan na natin lahat ng kwalipikado. In the same manner, saan po pumapasok iyong folk dance or cultural folk dance companies, sa ballet po ba sila o contemporary?

REP. ESCUDERO. Baka papasok ho iyon sa classical or folk dance. Iba po, iba pa rin po iyon.

REP. ATIENZA. Iyong Philippine folk dance, papasok sa ballet, ganoon po ba iyon?

REP. ESCUDERO. Hindi po, baka ho sa contemporary papasok or another category.

REP. ATIENZA. Hindi po ba mas maganda kung mayroon tayong ballet company, mayroon tayong contemporary, at mayroon din po tayong folk arts company dahil iba po iyong folk arts at iba po naman iyong ballet? In fact, wala naman tayong originally Filipino ballet. Iyan po ay creation nila. Pero iyong Filipino folk arts, iyan po ay bahagi na ng ating pagkatao bilang Pilipino. Kaya lang ang malungkot na katotohanan ay hindi na alam ng mga bata ngayon kung ano iyong mga folk arts. Noong araw ay itinataguyod ng marami ito pero hindi po sila nagpatuloy dahil siyempre nauubusan ng pera o kaya ay nag-iiba na ang concentration noong institution, so therefore, today, if you want to see traditional folk dancing, you would not know where to go and that is a very sad commentary on our country.

In the Philippines, dito po sa ating bansa, kung gusto ninyong manood ng ating mga katutubong sayaw na galing sa Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao ay wala po kayong mapupuntahan dahil wala na po iyong training process, the quality shows that are enjoyed by audiences.

Itong batas na ito, makatutulong po ang P10 million a year. Malaking bagay po ito sa mga nagsisikap at gumagawa ng paraan upang ang mga bata ay mabigyan ng special training on folk dancing. Ang inyong lingkod, ako po ay naging folk dancer kaya alam ko po itong aking binabanggit na parang nakalimutan na naman

natin iyong ating sarili. Naalala natin iyong ballet, naalala natin iyong contemporary, pero nakakalimutan natin na mayroon tayong sariling katutubong Pilipinong kultura sa pamamagitan ng sayaw. Hindi po ba magandang isama natin iyong folk arts, that it also to be included?

Alam ninyo ang kadalasang pintas sa mga humahawak ng kultura ng ating mga iba't ibang sektor at ng ating mga organisasyon, at hindi ko po naman nilalahat at huwag sana silang magalit, subalit marami sa kanila ay nabibilang po sa elitista, na kapag ikaw ay ordinary folk dancer, either ikaw ay abnormal o kaya ay binabae o kaya ay—marami pong itinatawag sa mga folk dancers. Ito na ang pagkakataon na bigyan natin ng opisyal na pagkilala ang lahat ng mga nagsisikap magtanghal ng mga sayaw at kantang Pilipino na kinagigiliwan ng buong mundo. Pero hindi rito sa atin dahil walang pagkilala ang gobyerno at ang batas.

Now that we have a law and that is the reason why I am supporting this law, this is now an opportunity to give all art forms—in dance, in singing, and in instrument playing, an opportunity to develop, pero huwag nating kalilimutan po iyong ating kulturang Pilipino. Kung hindi po naman ay sayang at tayo ay baka gumaling sa ballet, gumaling tayo sa stage, o gumaling tayo sa chorale group. Papaano po iyong mananayaw ng ating sining at kalinangang Pilipino? Pupuwede po ba nating isingit iyong isang categoryang iyon? Magkaroon din tayo ng scholarship or support for those engaged in folk arts presentation para po maraming maengganyo.

Ang panaginip po nating lahat ay ang Pilipino ay nagpapalakpakan sa pagtatanghal doon sa ating sariling kultura. Hindi po iyong galing ko sa hip-hop, hindi po iyong galing ko sa contemporary dancing, kundi iyong galing ko sa pagsasayaw ng tinikling at ng pandanggo sa ilaw. Hindi po ba maganda iyon? Para matuto rin ang ating mga bata na mag-appreciate ng ating tunay na pagkatao; otherwise, this measure will be lame and lacking if we do not include that particular sector. Iyong mga grupo na nagsisikap sa kanilang research, sa kanilang training, sa kanilang disiplina at kanilang pagpunta sa mga communities upang humanap ng mga batang mayroong tunay na galing, upang sila naman ay mabigyan ng supisyenteng training at mabigyan sila ng suporta dahil bibigyan natin ng P10 million eh.

REP. ESCUDERO. Opo.

REP. ATIENZA. This P10 million support per year is more than enough to train a special group of performers.

REP. ESCUDERO. Mme. Speaker, siguro puwede nating idagdag iyon po pero sa amendments na lang po natin gagawin ito dahil po magiging pito na po

itong miyembro kapag nagdagdag po tayo ng isa pa at ihiwalay natin ang ballet at contemporary dance company, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Mme. Speaker, am I to understand that the Sponsor is open to adjustments in the different beneficiary groups that are intended by this law? And we strongly recommend na isama natin iyong sariling nating kultura, sa kagustuhan nating turuan ang ating mga kababayan na ma-appreciate at ma-enjoy ang ating sariling kanta, sayaw at tugtugin. Ngayon ay lumalaki ang mga bata ng hindi nila kilala iyong kundiman at hindi na nila kilala iyong harana. Kaya ako ay medyo nababagabag dahil gumagawa na rin tayo ng mga pelikulang hindi natin ginagamitan ng mga tunay na himig na hango sa mga nilikha ng ating mga batikang composers of yesteryears—ang mga harana nating with the golden memories of yesteryears to rekindle among the young today the love for our own at nang makilala nila ang Pilipino, na hindi tayo mangmang, hindi tayo nagkulang, at hindi tayo masasabing lumaki ng walang kultura.

Malalim pong masyado itong problemang ito eh. I am just taking the opportunity to bring out my own sentiments on what is lacking in our country. Ang kulang po sa atin ay appreciation noong sariling atin. Kaya itong batas na ito ay susuportahan ko kung lalagyan ninyo ng probisyon din para tulungan ang mga grupong nagsisikap na talagang magtanghal ng mga palabas na Pilipino sa sayaw at sa entablado.

REP. ESCUDERO. Maraming salamat po. Maraming salamat din po, Mme. Speaker.

Mme. Speaker, since I am not the main Sponsor of this particular Bill, iyong amendments po, I think I would have to ask the main author.

Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Mme. Speaker, with that manifestation, I would like to move that we...

REP. ESCUDERO. Suspend.

REP. ATIENZA. ... temporarily set aside this measure and we will sit with the Sponsors no matter how many they are and I will officially recommend what I have just mentioned for the record na para naman maging maganda ang epekto nitong batas na ito at ang nilalaanan nating pera ay magbunga po naman ng pagbabago sa pananaw at sa pag-iisip ng mga batang Pilipino ngayon na lumalaking hindi na nila kilala kung sino sila. Mas kilala nila si Lady Gaga na napapanood nila sa kanilang iPad, pero kung tatanungin ninyo sila sa mga tugtuging nagbigay inspirasyon sa mga Pilipino sa ating mga digmaan at rebolusyon, marami tayong dinaanang mga yugto ng ating kasaysayan bilang isang

bansa na galing sa kultura natin. Ngayon, wala na pong inspirasyong ganon sapagkat masyado tayong nalibang sa mga banyaga, samantalang sila ang dapat gumaya sa atin, ngunit tayo ngayon ang gumagaya.

I would like to take that opportunity of sitting down with the Sponsors so that we can work out specific amendments to this particular Bill.

REP. ESCUDERO. Maraming salamat po, Congressman Atienza. Maraming salamat po, Mme. Speaker.

We will sit down with the Honorable Atienza for these amendments. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Nagpapasalamat po ako sa ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor, Kongresista Escudero, sa kaniyang maganda at napapanahong panukala. Kailangan lang nating pagtulung-tulungan upang ito ay maging tugma sa hamon ng panahon ngayon. Tayo ay gutom at ang ating mga kabataan ay uhaw sa kultura, pero unahin natin iyong kulturang Pilipino.

Salamat po.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Thank you. Thank you, Honorable Atienza.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7785

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 7785.

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

The consideration of House Bill No. 7785 is hereby suspended.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we proceed with the Additional Reference of Business, and direct the Secretary General to read the same.

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

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

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

The Secretary General read the following Resolution and the Deputy Speaker made the corresponding reference:

RESOLUTION

House Concurrent Resolution No. 22, entitled:

“CONCURRENT RESOLUTION RECALLING FROM THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT THE ENROLLED COPIES OF SENATE BILL NO. 1233 AND HOUSE BILL NO. 5745 ENTITLED ‘AN ACT CREATING THE COCONUT FARMERS AND INDUSTRY TRUST FUND, PROVIDING FOR ITS MANAGEMENT AND UTILIZATION AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES’”

By Representative Andaya
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we acknowledge the presence of the guests of Rep. Ma. Lourdes Acosta-Alba from the First District of Bukidnon, composed of 26 Senior High School students and four Faculty members of the Holy Cross High School, Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, ...

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Thank you.

REP. HERRERA-DY. ... I move that we acknowledge the presence of the guests of the Hon. Gabriel H. Bordado Jr. from the Third District of Camarines Sur. They are the graduate students from the College of Public Affairs and Development of the University of the Philippines, Los Baños, headed by Prof. Aileen V. Lapitan, PhD.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Please rise. *(Applause)*

Welcome to the House of Representatives.
The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H. CT. RES. NO. 22

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we consider House Concurrent Resolution No. 22, and that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Concurrent Resolution No. 22, entitled: CONCURRENT RESOLUTION RECALLING FROM THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT THE ENROLLED COPIES OF SENATE BILL NO. 1233 AND HOUSE BILL NO. 5745 ENTITLED “AN ACT CREATING THE COCONUT FARMERS AND INDUSTRY TRUST FUND, PROVIDING FOR ITS MANAGEMENT AND UTILIZATION AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.”

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

ADOPTION OF H. CT. RES. NO. 22

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we adopt House Concurrent Resolution No. 22.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

DESIGNATION OF MEMBERS TO THE CONF. CTTEE.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we designate the following as members of the Conference Committee on House Bill No. 5745, the Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Trust Fund Act, and Senate Bill No. 1233, the Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Act: Reps. Jose T. Panganiban Jr., CPA, LLB; Sharon S. Garin; Celso L. Lobregat; Manuel T. Sagarbarria; Edcel C. Lagman; Angelina "Helen" D.L. Tan, MD; Cecilia Leonila V. Chavez; Evelina G. Escudero; Arthur C. Yap; Danilo E. Suarez; and Majority Leader Rolando G. Andaya Jr.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 8110
ON SECOND READING

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 8110, contained in Committee Report No. 824, as reported out by the Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs.

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

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

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 8110, entitled: AN ACT MANDATING THE PHILIPPINE OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT ADMINISTRATION (POEA) TO DEVELOP, PUBLISH, DISSEMINATE AND UPDATE A HANDBOOK ON THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MIGRANT WORKERS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8042, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "MIGRANT WORKERS AND OVERSEAS FILIPINOS ACT OF 1995," AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10022.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we open the period of sponsorship and debate.

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

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize Rep. Jesulito A. Manalo from the ANGKLA Party-List to sponsor the measure.

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

The Honorable Manalo is recognized to sponsor the Bill. Please proceed.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF REP. MANALO

REP. MANALO. Mme. Speaker, I have the distinct honor to sponsor House Bill No. 8110 which amends the Workers' Act that will now require a handbook for all our OFWs so that they can have a pre-departure handbook that will determine their rights, their personal information so that this could also give them the programs that are available for them under existing laws such as financial literacy. This also would, in one way,

conform with the ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers, signed last 14th November of 2017. This, Mme. Speaker, shall ensure that our workers will be able to have an easy reference everywhere they go whenever they depart for a foreign land to seek out employment.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Thank you, Honorable Manalo.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, there being no Member who wishes to interpellate or to speak against the measure, I move that we terminate the period of sponsorship and debate.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we open the period of amendments.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, there being no Committee or individual amendments, I move that we terminate the period of amendments.

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

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we approve House Bill No. 8110 on Second Reading.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). There is a motion to approve House Bill No. 8110 on Second Reading. As many as are in favor, please say *Aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). As many as are against, please say *Nay*. (*Silence*)

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 8110 ON SECOND READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The

ayes have it, House Bill No. 8110 is hereby approved on Second Reading.

Congratulations!

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 1700
ON SECOND READING

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 1700, contained in Committee Report No. 837, as reported out by the Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs.

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

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

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 1700, entitled: AN ACT GRANTING THE OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS THE RIGHT TO EQUAL PROTECTION ON MONEY CLAIMS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE THE FIFTH PARAGRAPH OF SECTION 10 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8042, AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10022.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we open the period of sponsorship and debate.

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

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize Rep. Jesulito "Jess" A. Manalo of ANGKLA Party-List to sponsor the measure.

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

Honorable Manalo is recognized. Please proceed.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF REP. MANALO

REP. MANALO. Mme. Speaker, Majority Leader, my dear colleagues, good afternoon.

House Bill No. 1700 seeks to put into legislation the Supreme Court's landmark decision in *Antonio M. Serrano versus Gallant Maritime Services, Inc. and Marlow Navigation Co., Inc.* This would put to rest the issue that all our OFWs shall be paid the unexpired portion of their term if they are terminated during their contractual period of employment. This would now, in effect, amend Section 10 of R.A. No. 8042 which limits only the three-month labor wage that they are entitled to. This is a recognition to give more rights to our OFWs so that they will be paid the full unexpired portion of their salaries in case of unlawful termination.

This, Mme. Speaker, will again benefit our OFWs and assure them that they will be paid their due in case of illegal termination while they are working abroad.

With this, Mme. Speaker, I move that this Bill be considered for approval.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Thank you, Honorable Manalo.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, there being no Member who wishes to interpellate or speak against the measure, I move that we terminate the period of sponsorship and debate.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we open the period of amendments.

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

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, there being no Committee or individual amendments, I move that we terminate the period of amendments.

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

* See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we approve on Second Reading House Bill No. 1700.

REP. DAZA. Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. DAZA. Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). All those ...

REP. DAZA. Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DAZA. I have no objection.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I reiterate my motion, I move that we approve on Second Reading House Bill No. 1700.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Well-taken, Majority Leader, I have already approved your motion.

Now, as many as are in favor of House Bill No. 1700, please say *Aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). As many as are against, please say *Nay*. (*Silence*)

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 1700 ON SECOND READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The *ayes* have it, House Bill No. 1700 is hereby approved on Second Reading.

Congratulations!

The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. HERRERA-DY. I move that we suspend the session, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). The session is suspended.

It was 4:44 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:46 p.m., the session was resumed with Deputy Speaker Mercedes K. Alvarez presiding.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is resumed.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we acknowledge the presence of the guests of Cong. Leopoldo N. Bataoil from the Second District of Pangasinan, and the guests of Cong. Christopher “Toff” Vera Perez de Venecia—the Barangay Officials of Barangay Paul, Mangatarem, Pangasinan, headed by Kapitan Juleous Cruz and Josephine Escaño, and also by the Barangay Kagawad, Barangay Treasurer and Secretary, and SK Chairman Mac Erick Mari.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Please rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives (*Applause*), the guests of Cong. Bataoil and Cong. Toff de Venecia.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7820 ON SECOND READING

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 7820, under the Calendar of Business, contained in Committee Report No. 776, as reported out by the Committee on Government Enterprises and Privatization, and the Committee on Appropriations.

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

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

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7820, entitled: AN ACT GRANTING SURVIVORSHIP BENEFITS TO THE DEPENDENT CHILDREN

* See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)

OF A DECEASED RETIRED MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION ON AUDIT, CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION, COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS, AND THE OMBUDSMAN, WHO IS A SOLO PARENT, OR THE SURVIVING PARENTS OR NOMINATED PERSONS OF SUCH DECEASED RETIREE, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10084, ENTITLED, "AN ACT GRANTING SURVIVORSHIP BENEFITS TO THE SURVIVING LEGITIMATE SPOUSE OF A DECEASED RETIRED MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION ON AUDIT, CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION, COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS AND THE OMBUDSMAN, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES."

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we open the period of sponsorship and debate.

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

REP. HERRERA-DY. I move that we recognize Rep. Jesus Nonato Sacdalan from the First District of North Cotabato for his sponsorship speech.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Honorable Sacdalan is now recognized for his sponsorship speech.

REP. SACDALAN. Mme. Speaker, I move that—to get the support of this august Body for the approval of the House Bill No. 7820, ...

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. HERERRA-DY. Mme. Speaker, there being no Member who wishes to interpellate or speak against the measure, I move that we terminate the period of sponsorship and debate.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we open the period of amendments.

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

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, there being no Committee amendments and there being no Member who wishes to introduce individual amendments, I move that we terminate the period of amendments.

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

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we approve on Second Reading House Bill No. 7820.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). There is a motion to approve House Bill No. 7820 on Second Reading. All those in favor, please say *Aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). As many as are against, please say *Nay*. (*Silence*)

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7820 ON SECOND READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The *ayes* have it, House Bill No. 7820 is approved on Second Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. HERRERA-DY. I move that we suspend the session, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is suspended.

It was 4:50 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:56 p.m., the session was resumed with Deputy Speaker Mercedes K. Alvarez presiding.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is resumed.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 8204
ON SECOND READING

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 8204, under the Calendar of Business for the Day, contained in Committee Report No. 850, as reported out by the Committee on Youth and Sports Development.

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

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

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 8204, entitled: AN ACT REDEFINING THE CRIME OF GAME-FIXING AND PRESCRIBING STIFFER PENALTIES THEREFOR.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that we open the period of sponsorship and debate.

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

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that one of the authors of the said Bill, the Hon. Enrico A. Pineda from 1-PACMAN Party-List, be recognized to sponsor the measure.

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

Honorable Pineda is now recognized to sponsor said Bill.

REP. PINEDA. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

Mme. Speaker, may I request that the Explanatory Note of House Bill No. 8204 be considered as my sponsorship speech.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. NOEL. We so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the period of sponsorship and debate is hereby terminated.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that we open the period of amendments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the period of amendments is now open.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that we vote on Second Reading House Bill No. 8204. I so move, Mme. Speaker.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). There is a motion to approve House Bill no. 8204 on Second Reading.

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

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

* See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). As many as are against say *Nay*. (*Silence*)

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 8204
ON SECOND READING

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

House Bill No. 8204 is approved on Second Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session for a few minutes.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is suspended.

It was 4:59 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:03 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is resumed.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

PRIVILEGE HOUR

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, with leave of the House, I move that we open the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the Privilege Hour is now open.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that the Lady from the GABRIELA Party-List, the Hon. Arlene D. Brosas, be recognized to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Honorable Brosas is now recognized for her privilege speech.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. BROSAS

REP. BROSAS. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

Kaning among mga kasilingan dia dire, na ang among tuyo—dili man ni parti sa bagyo, parti man ni sa quarry. Moa na ang akong gipangayo, na i-stop sa Apo-Cemex ang quarry sa tibook Naga. Mao gyud ni

ang among gipangayo. Maski sila inyo pangutan-on tanan. And the crowd erupted in approval. Sheila Eballe went after Goliath.

Mme. Speaker, I stand before you to urge this Chamber to stand with Sheila Eballe, call for an end to the Apo-Cemex quarry in Cebu and hold DENR Secretary Cimatu accountable for the death of the 72 individuals.

“I fear for my safety now, they are looking for me. I was first alerted when the security personnel from Apo-Cemex were looking for me. Have I committed any wrongdoing? I only expressed what is true,” said Sheila Eballe. Mahigit isang linggo matapos ng matapang na paninindigan ni Sheila Eballe at paglalahad ng paninindigan ng komunidad sa pagpapatigil sa quarry sa harap ni President Duterte noong dumalaw ito sa Apo Quarrying Landslide Evacuation Center, ang babae ngayon ay nagtatago at nangangamba para sa buhay nito.

Instead of addressing the community’s concern, Duterte simply joked and tagged her as “well-trained” by the New People’s Army. Because of this, Eballe was forced to seek refuge in a religious organization to protect her security after facing intimidation and harassment from security personnel of Apo-Cemex Corporation a day after the dialogue.

Gabriela is one with the call to protect and defend Sheila Eballe from all-out attacks of President Rodrigo Duterte on women civilians and activists, along with Apo-Cemex Management’s attempt to silence the demands of the people affected in calamities through harassment and intimidation.

In times of calamities, women and their children are among the sectors most vulnerable to different kinds of human rights violations including hunger, intimidation, threat, harassment, sexual assault, rape, and even death. Hence, women in the community play a vital role in the recovery process through putting forward legitimate demands that enable government actions. Ngunit ang macho-pasistang pamumuno ni Duterte ay hindi lamang enabler ng panggagahasa at eksploytasyon sa mga kababaihan sa pamamagitan ng mga sexist statements nito, ito rin ay pumapayag sa panggagahasa at eksploytasyon ng kalikasan sa pagpapayag sa operasyon ng foreign mining companies dala ng neoliberal na polisiya nito. Under the macho-fascist rule of Duterte, women like Sheila Eballe who speak not only for herself but also for the welfare of the community are branded with names and labels to silence their legitimate demands. Sa administrasyon ni Duterte ay takot na ang matatapang na boses na nananawagan ng hustisya para sa mga kababaihang kagaya ni Sheila ay babasag sa ilusyon at maghahayag ng pagkainutil ng gobyerno sa pagtugon sa mga krisis kagaya ng sa Naga City, Cebu.

Gabriela condemns Duterte's policies that put a premium on capitalist greed and environment plunder over the welfare of the community and its people. Inuuna ng administrasyong ito ang pagkaganid sa kita at isinaalang-alang ang kapakanan ng komunidad. Duterte prioritized profit over people when he appointed the warmonger military general Frank Cimatú as DENR Secretary over former Secretary Gina Lopez. The Duterteonomics neoliberal policies opened the gates for mining and quarrying plunderers like the Apo Land and Quarry Corporation to exploit the natural resources of the community for the benefit of profit while leaving the immediate community impoverished and deprived of the government's basic social services.

We seek accountability from the Apo Land and Quarry Corporation which, despite the increasing death toll due to their large-scale quarrying operations and the DENR order to indefinitely ban the quarrying operations in Central Visayas, continues to operate their cement plants located in other regions of the country.

The DENR and the Mines and Geoscience Bureau agency must also be held accountable for allowing exploitative mining and quarrying operations to proliferate in communities, not just in Cebu but also in other regions in the Philippines, especially in Mindanao where indigenous peoples are driven away by the Armed Forces of the Philippines and its paramilitary.

We sustain that genuine development is geared towards the protection of lives and the environment, not its destruction through foreign and capitalist environment plunder.

Justice to all the survivors of the Apo Quarrying Landslide!

Stop the environmental plunder!

Stop Apo Quarrying!

Hold Apo-Cemex accountable!

Hold Duterte ug DENR Secretary Cimatú accountable!

Magandang hapon po, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, there being no Member who wishes to interpellate the Lady on her Privilege Speech, I move that we refer her speech to the Committee on Rules.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Bernadette "BH" Herrera-Dy of the BH Party-List to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Hon. Bernadette Herrera-Dy is now recognized for her Privilege Speech.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. HERRERA-DY

REP. HERRERA-DY. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. Good afternoon to all my colleagues and all our guests.

It is an honor for me to stand before all of you to deliver a Privilege Speech in line with the celebration of the International Day of the Girl on October 11.

I would like to acknowledge that yesterday, we had with us young people from Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, the National Capital Region, and representatives of Oxfam, Al Mujadillah Development Foundation, United Youth of the Philippines-Women, PBSP, YPEER Philippines, Barangay Culiát, Virilanie Foundation, Pasay Youth Development Office, and the College of Saint Benilde Center for Social Action to celebrate this occasion with us.

Seven years ago, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a Resolution designating October 11 as the International Day of the Girl. This celebration aims to highlight and address the unique needs and challenges of girls and also to promote girls' empowerment and the fulfillment of their human rights.

As an active member of the Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development or PLCPD, a non-government organization advocating for human development legislation, and together with my fellow Legislator-Members, we are committed to ensure that everyone, adult and children, regardless of their sexual orientation, gets an equal opportunity towards an improved quality of life. As a woman and a children's rights advocate, I ensure that this includes the promotion, protection, and fulfillment of women and children's rights and welfare.

The celebration of the International Day of the Girl provides us an avenue to discuss several issues of girls such as education, equality, access to sexual and reproductive health information and services, and child marriage. Child marriage is the fundamental human rights violation which has a negative impact on girls' health and development. It denies a girl of her childhood, disrupts her education, limits her opportunities, increases her risk of being victimized by violence and abuse, and poses risks to her health. Child marriage also denies both girls and boys the right to choose when and whom to marry, a decision that should be made freely.

To reiterate the impact of child marriage: according to the UNFPA, 9 out of 10 adolescent births are vulnerable to pregnancy-related complications, which are among the leading causes of death among adolescent girls aged 15 to 19. According to UNICEF, women and

girls' development is hindered by child marriage as married girls are most likely to drop out of school and lose the chance to gain skills and knowledge, which will help her gain a good job and earn for herself and her family.

To present to you data and studies on child marriage, let us zoom in on several reports and studies. According to the 2016 State of World Population report of the UNFPA, 47,000 girls around the world are married before the age of 18 every day. In the Philippines, 15 percent of women aged 20-24 years old were first married or in union before 18. And, according to the 2017 State of the World's Children report of UNICEF, the Philippines ranked 12 in the countries with highest absolute number of child marriages.

Child marriage can be prevented. The WHO set recommendations to help address child marriage. This includes a call for policy-makers to put in place and enforce laws that prohibit marriage before the age of 18; a need to increase education opportunities for girls as this has positive effects on their health and also decreases the chance of getting married; a need to work with all stakeholders—cultural and traditional leaders, communities, and parents—to increase their awareness on the negative impact of child marriage and change norms around it.

This information about the prevalence and negative impact of child marriage creates an urgent need for our action. We, as legislators, must ensure that we abide by the several international commitments we ratified that explicitly prohibit child marriage, such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women or CEDAW, the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We must also ensure the full implementation of national laws that protect women and girls from child marriage such as the Family Code of the Philippines, Magna Carta of Women, and the Special Protection of Children against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination. These laws must explicitly prohibit child marriage in all settings. We should also harmonize all legal systems—civil, criminal, family and customary—to ensure that child marriage is prohibited. Thus, together with stakeholders and allies, we believe that there is an urgent need for a national law explicitly prohibiting child marriage and providing programs and services for prevention and response to ensure that all Filipino children, boys and especially girls, will have the opportunity to grow and develop to their full potential and the chance to decide when and whom to marry.

Just yesterday morning, youth advocates in the gallery had a productive dialogue with legislators and expressed their support for a law that will finally address the end of child marriage. And we, legislators, heed the voice of young people who are in the key affected

population. You have my commitment that I will contribute to ushering this bill in the legislative mill.

This year's theme of the International Day of the Girl celebration is "With Her: A Skilled Girl Force." Girls have untapped potential which can contribute to healthy, peaceful and productive communities. When girls have the opportunity to enjoy their childhood, receive quality education to equip them with knowledge and skills, and have their rights and welfare highlighted and protected, they will grow as empowered women who can take care of themselves, the people around them, their society, and our nation. If we address child marriage, girls will be empowered to develop to their full potential. Just imagine what an empowered girl can do.

Let us work together and create spaces for girls to grow as empowered women.

Thank you very much, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Majority Leader.

REP. ATIENZA. Mme. Speaker.

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Honorable Atienza for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Honorable Atienza is now recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. The Lady, Cong. Bernadette Herrera, just delivered a very, very apt, meaningful Privilege Speech, but I do not think there were enough Members on the floor who will learn from her message. So, we move for the adjournment ...

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is suspended.

It was 5:18 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:25 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is resumed.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the Hon. Bernadette “BH” Herrera-Dy to the Committee on Rules.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion to refer the speech of the Hon. Bernadette “BH” Herrera-Dy to the appropriate committee or the Committee on Rules is hereby approved.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that we suspend the Privilege Hour.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 8400 ON SECOND READING

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 8400, contained in Committee Report No. 891, as reported out by the Committee on Ways and Means.

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

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

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 8400, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE FISCAL REGIME FOR THE MINING INDUSTRY.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that we open the period of sponsorship and debate.

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

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the honorable Chairperson of the Committee on Ways and Means, the Hon. Estrellita B. Suansing of the First District of Nueva Ecija, to sponsor the measure.

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

The Honorable Suansing is now recognized for her sponsorship speech.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF REP. SUANSING (E.)

REP. SUANSING (E.). Mme. Speaker, distinguished colleagues in this august Hall, I rise today to sponsor House Bill No. 8400 which seeks to establish the Fiscal Regime for the Mining Industry.

Based on the data of the Department of Finance, the government collected total taxes, fees and royalties from the mining industry in the amount of P32.76 billion in 2014, P30.07 billion in 2015, and P33.43 billion in 2016. In terms of revenues, the mining industry has merely accounted for no more than 0.26 percent of the GDP in 2014 and was reduced to 0.23 percent, both in 2015 and in 2016.

Presently, for large mines, mining contracts offer varying fiscal regimes and, therefore, fiscal burden is differentiated. The fiscal regime depends on whether the mine is operating in a mineral reservation and whether the mine is operated under a Mineral Production Sharing Agreement or MPSA, or Financial and Technical Assistance Agreement. To date, almost all mining contracts are under MPSA, while those in mineral reservations are composed mainly of nickel mines. All FTAA agreements are for mines outside mineral reservations.

Under this measure, there is no more distinction on whether mining exploration is conducted outside or inside a mineral reservation and whether it is large scale or small scale. Equity dictates that fiscal burden should be shared equally by all who explore the natural resources of the country. It provides the following structural changes in the fiscal regime that will govern the mining industry by imposing: a three-percent royalty tax on large-scale mining operations located within mining reservation areas; a margin-based royalty tax on large-scale mining operations outside mining reservations ranging from one to five percent, as the case may be; a royalty

* See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)

tax on small-scale mining operations equivalent to one-tenth of one percent of gross output.

The term “royalty” is based on the concept of *Jure Regalia* or Regalian Doctrine which dictates that “all lands of public domain, waters, minerals x x x and other natural resources belong to the State.” As such, the State should be compensated for the extraction of minerals. Likewise, the State has the duty to assure that the public will benefit from the extraction by others of its natural resources, primarily in the form of taxes which can increase government income and address externalities resulting from mining operations.

The Bill also introduces the right of the State to share in the enjoyment of windfall profit. This share is separate and distinct from the usual taxes, duties and fees paid which are exactions by the State arising from its taxing power. And so, in addition to taxes and royalty, a margin-based tax on windfall profits gained from the mining operations ranging from one percent to 10 percent is imposed.

As an additional safety net to ensure that the State reaps what is due it as owner of mineral wealth, a provision on limitation of interest expense deductions is incorporated. The amount of tax the government collects will depend on the amount of profit a mining company declares. The higher its debt, the higher the amount of interest it pays and, therefore, the lower will be its taxable profit.

This much-needed legislation also ensures that mining companies are exempt from the application of the confidentiality clauses of the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, as amended, in order to comply with the requirements of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative or EITI of the government.

At this juncture, may I urge my esteemed colleagues in this august Chamber to support the immediate enactment of this significant legislation into law.

Thank you, Mme. Speaker. Thank you, honorable Legislators.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 8400

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 8400, as contained in Committee Report No. 891.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H. RES. NO. 2214

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that we consider House Resolution No. 2214, under the Calendar of Business for the Day.

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

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

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Resolution No. 2214, entitled: RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FAMILY OF CIRIACO “ACROY” S. CALALANG, KABAYAN PARTY-LIST REPRESENTATIVE DURING THE SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

ADOPTION OF H. RES. NO. 2214

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that we adopt House Resolution No. 2214 in consolidation with House Resolutions No. 2195, 2196 and 2203.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

House Resolution No. 2214 is adopted.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

PRIVILEGE HOUR

Continuation

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that we resume the Privilege Hour.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

* See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)

REP. NOEL. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the honorable Rep. Gary C. Alejano of Party-List MAGDALO to deliver his privilege speech.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Hon. Gary Alejano is now recognized for his privilege speech.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ALEJANO

REP. ALEJANO. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

To our distinguished colleagues, magandang hapon po.

I stand on the issue on the need to strengthen and promote traditional and alternative medicine in the country. In 1997, then President Ramos signed Republic Act No. 8423 or the Traditional and Alternative Medicine Act.

Traditional medicine is defined by the World Health Organization as the sum total of the knowledge, skills and practices based on the theories, beliefs and experiences indigenous to different cultures, whether explicable or not, used in the maintenance of health as well as in the prevention, diagnosis, improvement or treatment of physical and mental illnesses.

According to the World Health Organization's fact sheet, more than 80 percent of the world's population depend on herbal medicine for health care. The Philippines has several traditional health care methods and with more than 1,000 plant species that are believed to have medicinal properties. The enactment of R.A. No. 8423 opened many doors of opportunities. Republic Act No. 8423 aims to improve the quality and delivery of health care services to the Filipino people through the development of a traditional and alternative health care and its integration into the national health care delivery system. Likewise, Republic Act No. 8423 intends to promote and be able to provide an array of affordable, accessible and effective traditional and complementary alternative health care options for our people to choose from.

This Act gave birth to the Philippine Institute of Traditional and Alternative Health Care or the PITAHC of the Department of Health which is designated to be in partnership with practitioners of traditional and complementary alternative health care modalities and to vigorously pursue the implementation of this policy. To further aid in the promotion of alternative medicine in the country, then President, now Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, issued Proclamation No. 698, series of 2004, declaring the month of November, which is next month, as "Traditional and Alternative Health Month." The Proclamation stated that there are about 2,000 medicinal plants in the Philippines and there is a need to accelerate the research and development of these plants for medical use. In addition, the Department of Labor and Employment encourages the development

of herbal medicine as a source of livelihood. In its Balik Pinay! Balik Hanapbuhay! Program, the agency encourages returning overseas workers to start a home-based business including herbal medicines and food supplements. Likewise, the Department of Health was quoted in *Manila Bulletin* on November 6, 2016 stating:

The annual observance of Traditional and Alternative Health Care Month seeks to heighten public awareness of the availability and accessibility of traditional and complementary medicine and treatment and educates the public on how to best benefit from T&CM that make use of medicinal and pharmacological properties of herbal plants and other natural products which abundantly thrive in the Philippines.

While all these events and activities suggest the overwhelming support of the government in promoting and developing traditional and alternative medicine in the country, recent events led by the Food and Drug Authority presents discrepancies with regard to the intention of Republic Act No. 8423 and how the government is supposed to be promoting natural medicine.

On August 17, the Food and Drug Administration shut down the Dr. Farrah Agustin-Bunch Natural Medical Center in Victoria, Tarlac. The Center was closed for allegedly selling unregistered health products. Dr. Farrah Agustin-Bunch is a well-known licensed medical doctor who specializes in alternative, natural and affordable treatments to persons afflicted with advanced cancers and other serious ailments.

She graduated from St. Louis University in Baguio City with a degree in Medicine. She is PRC-licensed and has received significant international trainings in her field. In 2015, just three years ago, Dr. Farrah and her husband founded the Dr. Farrah Agustin-Bunch Natural Medical Center with a goal of enhancing her practice as a physician, increasing her ability and capacity to service ill and dying persons from all over the country using natural medicine. The center is not a hospital given the lack of emergency services and laboratories, nor does it have specialized machines and equipment, but is simply an outpatient clinic where patients can go for free consultations and treatment for their afflictions.

There, Dr. Farrah manufactures just enough of her herbal products known as Dr. Farrah's Boston C and Vitamin C and others which are especially reserved for, administered and dispensed to her patients, and not to the public at large. She received a license to operate LTO No. 30000247997 for the manufacture of these health products which were eventually applied for registration with the FDA, not to mention having

undergone significant testing at a laboratory accredited by the Department of Health, the Department of Science and Technology, the University of the Philippines and St. Luke's Medical Center. In spite of all these, there have been inexplicable delays regarding the FDA approval.

The Philippine Institute of Traditional and Alternative Healthcare or PITAHC invited Dr. Farrah to have her facility as a showcase for natural medicine in the country, and even host a residency program for natural medicine. Dr. Farrah's treatment facility was patronized by patients from all over the country and elsewhere, received popular support from notable personalities such as the appointive and elective officials, celebrities and even royalties. Her treatments have gained notoriety all over the world with many patients flying in daily from North America and Europe. Dr. Farrah gained a social media following numbering millions and became the largest employer in her municipality.

On April 10, 2018, the presidents of the Philippine College of Physicians, Philippine Rheumatology Association, Philippine Society of Medical Oncology, Philippine Society for Microbiology and Infectious Diseases, as well as the Philippine Society of Nephrology, filed a complaint with Health Secretary Duque through the Health Facilities and Services Regulatory Bureau of the DOH about alleged misconduct by Dr. Farrah in relation to the activities in her treatment facility. No evidence nor aggrieved parties were presented.

Again, on May 4, 2018, these same medical society presidents filed a similar complaint with the FDA against Dr. Farrah. No evidence nor aggrieved parties were again presented. This was the only time in 16 years of medical practice or in the treatment of over 100,000 patients that Dr. Farrah ever faced a professional or legal complaint regarding her practice as a doctor. On June 4, 2018, Dr. Farrah responded to the DOH complaint and argued that the Health Facilities and Services Regulatory Bureau and the DOH do not have jurisdiction over her and also have no jurisdiction over outpatient clinics like her treatment facility. On June 11, 2018, the Regional Office III of the DOH agreed with Dr. Farrah and rendered a decision dismissing the DOH complaint for lack of jurisdiction. On July 24, 2018, the Director of the Food and Drug Administration issued a Summons with Preventive Measure Order or SPMO, directing Dr. Farrah to submit an answer to the FDA complaint within 10 days from receipt of notice. On July 27, 2018, Dr. Farrah received the SPMO with the FDA complaint in her treatment facility, which was served by the FDA, through its Regulatory Enforcement Unit. The summons provided that Dr. Farrah has 10 ten days from receipt, which is July 27, 2018, or

until August 6, 2018, to file an answer to the FDA complaint.

On August 6, 2018, Dr. Farrah, with the assistance of counsel, personally filed her answer to the FDA complaint, which was stamped received and provided with an acknowledgement receipt by the FDA in Alabang. Surprisingly, on August 8, 2018, the director of the FDA rendered a decision for the FDA complaint and imposed upon Dr. Farrah penalties of an administrative fine amounting to more than a million pesos, permanent revocation of her license to operate, and the padlocking of several areas of her treatment facility. The basis for the closure was that Dr. Farrah has not submitted an answer to the FDA summons, but actually she did.

On August 17, 2018, at the precise moment Dr. Farrah was receiving an award at Club Filipino in Manila for her contributions to science and medicine, the REU together with 10 media people, and nearly 50 heavily-armed officers of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group of the Philippine National Police, personnel from the local government units of the Tarlac Province and the Municipality of Victoria, Tarlac, served a copy of the decision dated August 8, 2018 of the Director General of the FDA in Dr. Farrah's treatment facility, and proceeded to seize and confiscate her health products, seal the structures therein, and install closure signages within the compound although the same is also where she resides.

Clearly, Dr. Farrah was deprived of her right to due process. Dr. Farrah was able to submit her response to the FDA on August 6, 2018, well within the 10-day period that the FDA afforded her to file her reply. The FDA completely disregarded the defense and arguments raised by Dr. Farrah and her counsels. What was the reason for the extraordinary haste of the FDA in writing their decision? Did the FDA knowingly ignore the defense and arguments that Dr. Farrah submitted?

The hasty decision made by the FDA neglected the right of Dr. Farrah to due process. It likewise denied Dr. Farrah her right to practice her profession and to earn a living. But more importantly, the decision deprived many of our countrymen access to alternative sources of medicine as promised by Republic Act No. 8423.

On August 20, 2018, Dr. Farrah filed a motion for reconsideration with the FDA on its decision dated August 8, 2018, arguing that her right to due process was violated since she filed an answer to the FDA complaint that was not considered in the resolution of the FDA. Again, on August 29, 2018, Dr. Farrah filed an urgent motion requesting the FDA to resolve her motion for reconsideration dated August 20, 2018. On October 4, after 44 days, and daily follow ups by Dr. Farrah's counsels, the FDA answered the MR but they maintained their oppressive and erroneous decision. They refused to admit that there was no pharmacy inside the facility and maintained the P500,000 fine it imposed

for operating a pharmacy without a license, and P72,000 for each day of operation. The center has no pharmacy, Mme. Speaker. What it does have is a farmacy, which is spelled as f-a-r-m-a-c-y, farmacy, or a central supply center or supply room which dispenses food and herbs. Also, the FDA did not even acknowledge its patent error in its decision stating that Dr. Farrah's Natural Medical Center did not answer, even it did, within the prescribed period of 10 days. Finally, the FDA insists that the center has no pending application. That is false.

It can also be noted that Sanofi Pasteur, the company behind the Dengvaxia vaccine, was only imposed a P100,000 administrative fine and suspension of its sale of the vaccine for a year, while Dr. Farrah was meted out with a penalty amounting to more than a million pesos and permanent revocation of her license to operate, only for allegedly not providing an answer, which is a technical process, within a 10-day period given them

The actions made by the FDA not only prolongs the great uncertainty and hardship faced by the concerned, especially Dr. Farrah, in terms of her right to practice her profession, but also and more importantly, the right of the people who patronize Dr. Farrah to choose the medical professionals and treatments they wish.

While we recognize the mandate of the FDA to ensure that products peddled in the market are safe, and of good quality and efficacy, we should also recognize the right of our countrymen to have access to affordable and effective traditional, indigenous healthcare option backed by science as advocated by the Traditional and Alternative Medicine Act.

In this regard, I urge the appropriate committee of this august Chamber to review the implementation of Republic Act No. 8423 to propose amendments that would improve and hasten the registration of products of alternative medicine advocates in our country. In consideration of the case of Dr. Farrah Agustin-Bunch, to also strengthen the promotion of traditional, indigenous alternative medicine in the country.

With that, Mme. Speaker, maraming salamat po at magandang hapon sa ating lahat.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mme. Speaker, may we now recognize the Hon. Anthony M. Bravo, PhD from COOP-NATCCO Party-List for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Honorable Bravo is now recognized for his interpellation.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you, Mme. Speaker, and good afternoon to our distinguished colleague.

Will the distinguished Representative of Party-List MAGDALO yield to some questions from this Representation?

REP. ALEJANO. This Representation is willing to accept questions from the Honorable Bravo.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

Just for the information of my distinguished colleague, two months ago, I was able to travel with a group to China and I have seen for myself how the government of China embraces alternative medicine. In fact, I was able to visit at least three manufacturing companies where a huge amount of money was infused by the government for the research and manufacturing of alternative medicine. In the same manner, Mme. Speaker, distinguished colleague, alternative medicine in China has been there not just for 500 years but for more than 500 years.

We have this law promoting alternative medicine in the country, but I do not know where are we heading as far as Republic Act No. 8423 is concerned? The issue being raised by our distinguished colleague, Mme. Speaker, brought some controversies involving the Department of Health and its attached agency, the FDA.

Distinguished Sponsor, the FDA compliance letter, because I was able to come across a personnel from the FDA when this issue was raised during the budget hearing, and they said that a compliance letter was issued against Dr. Farrah which includes operating a health establishment without a valid license to operate. Is she not violating a law?

REP. ALEJANO. Mme. Speaker, distinguished colleague, the Honorable Bravo, as I have stated in my privilege speech, the center of Dr. Farrah is an outpatient clinic which does not require a license to operate from the Department of Health. In fact, in the decision of the DOH on the complaints filed with them, they affirmed that kind of findings that the clinic of Dr. Farrah is not a hospital and, therefore, not within the jurisdiction of the Department of Health. Hindi po ito hospital.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Further, Mme. Speaker, distinguished colleague, the FDA personnel informed this Representation that the FDA Registration Enforcement Unit found that Dr. Farrah was operating as a pharmacy without a license. Therefore, this is covered by the FDA. Is this correct?

REP. ALEJANO. Come again, Honorable Bravo?

REP. BRAVO (A.). The FDA Registration Enforcement Unit, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, reported that Dr. Farrah was operating as a pharmacy. If so, she is covered by the FDA.

REP. ALEJANO. Mme. Speaker, Honorable Bravo, it is unreasonable to require Dr. Farrah to have a different and separate license to operate since she offers no pharmaceutical products at all. Ang sa kanya po ay isang central supply room kung saan may food products and not drug products. She has a license to operate as a food manufacturer and not a drug manufacturer.

The operation of the central supply room for food products for the sole use and benefit of the patients of Dr. Farrah, is but a natural consequence of, and presumably linked to her limited manufacturing of food supplements in the medical center. To claim otherwise, is not logical, Honorable Bravo, Mme. Speaker. While Dr. Farrah is allowed to manufacture food, she would not be authorized to reasonably dispose of it. This is just food. This would lead to the situation where the food manufacturing by Dr. Farrah is left idle, open to expiration, and worse, unavailable to be given to sick and dying patients of the medical center.

In fact, it makes no sense at all to penalize a person for not registering their products when they are not yet granted the authority to actually manufacture these food products, while these are still being evaluated. At the time they were closed down, they have applied to the FDA for this kind of food supplement.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you for that clarification, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker.

Does it mean that you are giving the impression to this Body that the report, in fact, is not true or misleading?

REP. ALEJANO. That was the information I have received, Mme. Speaker, Honorable Bravo. In fact, the FDA Enforcement Unit raiding teams in its report stated that the pharmacy was not padlocked because there was no drug found in it. Wala pong drugs kaya walang na-padlock.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Was there any complaint filed by the client or patients of the said Dr. Farrah, as such initiative was made to investigate and close the establishment.

REP. ALEJANO. In fact, in my privilege speech earlier, ang nag-file ng complaints ay mga presidente ng different medical associations, limang medical associations. There was no complaint or even a single complaint from any of the patients na kung saan ay nasaktan sila, nagkasakit sila o namatay dahil sa pangagamot ni Dr. Farrah. That means, hindi po totoo

ang sinasabi na mayroong nasaktan. Dahil sa proseso ng FDA na kung mayroong complaint sa mga produkto, mga supplement o gamot, mayroon kang prosesong dinadaan. Dapat mag-apply, mayroong form na dapat mag-apply dito. State mo doon, fill-up the form at pirmahan. Dapat may proseso at imbestigasyon ng mga tao ng FDA. This did not happen at all, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Mme. Speaker, distinguished colleague, I really wonder why this is happening. There was no complainant at all. What triggered them to close the establishment?

REP. ALEJANO. Sa pagkakaintindi ko, Mme. Speaker, Honorable Bravo, technical issue lamang, hindi nakapag-submit ng sagot within the 10-day required period of the complaint, the same complaint that was dismissed by the Department of Health. Also, by the reason that they are allegedly selling drug products. In reality, nag-apply po sila for food supplement. Gusto ko lang bigyan ng background ito.

When I was briefed on this, because I have so many constituents asking for my help, they are the patients of Dr. Farrah, ang application po ng food supplement na na-submit sa FDA, nakalagay doon na iyong content ng Vitamin C is 160 percent. So, ang sabi ng FDA ay hindi po ito dahil sobra ito ng 150 percent as the recommended energy and nutritional intake. So, ang ginawa po ng grupo ni Dr. Farrah, ibinaba ng 150. Noong nag-comply na sila at ipinakita—in fact, sa shelves sa ating mga stores, in the groceries, makikita natin doon na even iyong mga vitamin C, juices and products, mayroong 200 percent, 250 percent, but they were not classified as drugs. So, therefore, medyo oppression iyon na ito ay specific sa kanya na 150 percent ay hindi siya in-approve. Noong na-approve iyong kaniyang contents on 150 percent, ang inilagay naman doon, hindi ba ito gamot dahil inilagay mo “Dr. Farrah”? Sa tingin ko, dahil nakita ko rin sa kanilang reasoning, in their exchange sa application, maraming mga produkto that contained the name “doctor.” Now, because Dr. Farrah is a doctor, so she has to put there “Dr. Farrah.” So, doon sa mga ibang mga produkto, example, Sulfur Zinc Oxide Dr. Kaufmann. Bakit pinayagan ito ng FDA? Doon sa Dr. Scholl’s Liquid Corn Callus Remover, pinayagan din ito. Mayroon ding Dr. Nutri, this is a green coffee mix, pinayagan, may doctor din naman.

So, noong iyan ay ibinigay na rason, sinabi pa, bakit nakalagay dito doctor recommended, therefore, this is a drug product? Mme. Speaker, Honorable Bravo, maraming produkto po ang naglalagay niyan. In fact, doon sa isang tubig na produkto nakalagay doon recommended by doctors. So, it is just wording, Honorable Bravo. At the end of the day ay nag-comply ho sa requirements and I cannot just understand the

harsh decision of the FDA if they tried to comply with the requirements. I have learned that Dr. Farrah came from abroad and she decided to go home in order to help the Filipino people and, you know, she achieved so much in terms of research and terms of development of alternative medicine.

I asked the Department of Health, in fact, during the budget hearing kung ano ang estado ng ating alternative medicines. Ang PITAHC ay nagbigay ng napakahabang litaniya ng accomplishment ng PITAHC. In fact, resource person pa nila si Dr. Farrah. And why is it na very harsh ang treatment ng FDA when it comes to the application of Dr. Farrah to the point of even revoking her license to operate, Honorable Bravo?

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

Mme. Speaker, you know, our intention of scrutinizing or doing such inspection on establishments is to assure, among others, that if such establishment is in existence or giving services, we are assuring that public is safe. It is included in the report of the FDA that this establishment is prescribing inappropriate health products which allegedly caused the worsening of the condition of the patients and, in fact, citing some death incidents, that is why I am worried. Is this really true because it is part of the report?

REP. ALEJANO. Well, again, I am not questioning the report. But, let us make sense of that report. There was no complainant. It should be specific as to who is or who are the victims. Ano ang nangyari sa kanila? And, katulad po sa debate natin sa Dengvaxia, nagkaroon tayo ng hearing sa Dengvaxia. Ang allegation is that namamatay itong mga batang naturukan ng Dengvaxia, pero hindi automatic na sila ay namatay kaagad dahil naturukan sila. You have to go through the process of determining whether the substance of Dengvaxia caused the death of the patient.

In this case, Mme. Speaker, Honorable Bravo, paano malalaman na itong mga sinasabing ito na wala pang pangalan, walang complainant, paano malalaman that they died because of the food supplements administered by Dr. Farrah? Wala ngang laboratory examination or whatsoever na ginawa to say that the Boston C or Vitamin C offered by Dr. Farrah was the cause of such death.

REP. BRAVO (A.). So, meaning, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, the report that is being shown to public is quite not reflecting the truth which is supposed to be giving us an impression that it is a semblance of fake news, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

REP. ALEJANO. Well, Mme. Speaker, I agree with that because I believe that we need to have a

comprehensive Committee hearing on this so that we can ferret out the truth. Because my concern, Mme. Speaker and Honorable Bravo, is that aside from the injustice, aside from violation of laws and processes, this certain situation discourages scientists, discourages doctors that conduct research on alternative medicine. This is actually encouraged in our country. The fact that we passed Republic Act No. 8423 recognizes the fact that there are so many medicinal plants in the country that can provide cure to the problems. Alam ho natin na kapag magkasakit ka, lalo na cancer, hindi naman mayaman lahat eh, ang daming mahirap na Pilipino. Ang cancer ay hindi lamang sakit ng mayaman, sakit din ng mahirap. Ngayon, kung pupunta ka sa mga doctors na napakamahal ang mga treatments, bayad professional at ang gamot na ibinibigay ay napakamahal, it is but understandable na pupunta ho sila sa alternative medicine dahil wala ho silang kakayanan. Ngayon, nire-regulate natin ang alternative medicine para hindi naman ho sila mapahamak. Ngayon ho, ini-encourage natin ang research. Tama ho iyong sinabi ni Honorable Bravo kanina, in China, herbal medicine traces its roots thousands of years ago in China. In fact, up to now, sa Quiapo, napakarami niyan dahil ...

REP. BRAVO (A.). At hindi isinasara.

REP. ALEJANO. Ano po?

REP. BRAVO (A.). Kung mayroon ho sa Quiapo, mayroon bang ginawang imbestigasyon at naisara?

REP. ALEJANO. Iyon din ang dapat nating malaman because so far in my own investigation ay parang wala ho tayong narinig na—hindi lamang sa Quiapo, sa Greenhills, when I went there, may nakita din akong mga products na ganoon.

So, for me, Mme. Speaker and Honorable Bravo, we should create an atmosphere conducive for our scientists to create and develop medicines for our sick people. Hindi iyong prohibitive iyong process natin at alam ho natin iyong findings natin sa issue ng Dengvaxia, labanan ito ng malalaking pharmaceutical companies. Even on the issue of development of alternative fuels, maghahanap ka ng alternative na ginagawa ng ating nga scientists, hindi po nabibigyan ng support. Why? Ang lakas ng lobby ng oil companies, mawawalan sila ng pagbebenta. Dito rin sa alternative medicine, mawawalan din ng benta ang malalaking pharmaceutical companies and, therefore, tayong Representatives should side with the interest of the Filipino people, not with the profits of big pharmaceutical companies.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Balikan ko lang ho, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, ang pagpapasara ng establishment. Dumaan ba sa tamang proseso? Meaning,

kung mayroong nag-complain o mayroong findings ang isang agency ng gobyerno, bago mo maipapasara ang isang establishment, kailangan may prosesong daanan. Nasundan ba iyong tamang proseso?

REP. ALEJANO. Well, sa tingin ko, Mme. Speaker, Honorable Bravo, ay hindi po sila dumaan sa proseso. Una, very harsh, at technical. We were not able to respond to the summons within the prescribed period which is 10 days but the reality they submitted. There is a receipt, received copy of their response. And aside from that, iyong sinasabing gamot na ilegal daw ay nakaproseso, naka-apply sa kanila. When I asked the Director of the FDA during the budget hearing, kung mayroon bang naka-pending na application sa kanila, ang sabi niya wala. Again, I want to put that on record, Mme. Speaker, Honorable Bravo, na hindi po totoo because Dr. Farrah applied for the approval or accreditation of their products. So, hindi nagsasabi ng totoo ang FDA and aside from that, parang overkill. It was reported in the news. I was able to read from the news na overkill, nagdala ng napakaraming pulis at sinara iyong facility na iyan na parang pugad ng mga terorista.

REP. BRAVO (A). Maraming salamat ho, distinguished colleague, Mme. Speaker. With that comprehensive information you have given us, this Representation fully support for a conduct of investigation as propounded by distinguished Representative of Magdalo, Honorable Gary C. Alejano. Maraming salamat po.

REP. ALEJANO. Maraming salamat Honorable Bravo and maraming salamat, Mme. Speaker. Magandang hapon ho sa lahat.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mme. Speaker, there being no other interpellators, I move that the speech of the Hon. Gary Alejano and the interpellation thereof be referred to the Committee on Rules.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion to refer the speech of the Hon. Gary Alejano as well as the interpellation thereof to the appropriate committee is hereby approved.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mme. Speaker, I now move to recognize the Hon. Xavier Jesus D. Romualdo of the Lone District of Camiguin to avail of the Privilege Hour. I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

The Honorable Romualdo is now recognized for his privilege speech.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ROMUALDO

REP. ROMUALDO. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

Mme. Speaker, dear colleagues, guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, 43 years ago, Presidential Decree No. 603 was issued to give due importance to our children. It called for the creation of a policy-making agency called the Council for the Welfare of Children or CWC, the main task of which is to ensure that every child enjoys his or her rights.

The Board of the CWC is composed of the heads of the seven line agencies—the Departments of Social Welfare, Justice, Health, Interior and Local Government, Agriculture, Education, and Labor and Employment, and three coordinating agencies namely: the National Nutrition Council, the National Economic and Development Authority, and the CWC Secretariat. The CWC is a small agency with no regional office. It has a total staff complement of only 31 plantilla positions, six of which are unfilled and under the 2018 General Appropriations Act, its budget is a mere P94.8 million. The CWC relies heavily on partner agencies at the sub-national levels to monitor the implementation of all significant laws on children. It is also tasked to ensure that appropriate information on children's rights reaches everyone especially those whose primary roles are caring for and rearing these children.

Mme. Speaker, we are no strangers to the stories highlighted by media and the struggles faced by children who are:

1. Victims of sexual abuse – One example is the sexual assault of an 18-month old baby deplorably encapsulated in a horrific video called “Daisy’s Destruction”;

2. Children without parents to care for them – We see children like seven-year olds, Grade 1 pupils from impoverished families forced to take on the huge challenge of rearing her siblings;

3. Children affected by drugs – In Central Visayas, for example, it is alleged that almost 5,000 children have admitted to drug use. One 15-year-old boy was hooked on drugs for two years. He was also a courier and peddled drugs for a top drug suspect in the village of Duljo Fatima. He has been sober for three years now and he is among the 5,000 who need our help.

4. Children who are victims of natural and man-made disasters – In Marawi City alone, more than 160,000 children have been accounted for as part of the affected communities. Children are the most vulnerable sectors in our society whose psycho-social well-being

must be given proper attention. These children are at greater risk to trafficking, prostitution, and other forms of sexual violence, exploitation, and child labor. There are even reports that children receive P200 for working seven hours a day.

A multi-stakeholder approach is needed from government, non-government agencies, civil society, and international development partners to address the growing concern of Filipino children. The answer to this call for support and call to action has been tremendous and this is a clear manifestation of the importance of putting our children in the Priority Executive-Legislative Agenda of the 17th Congress.

In 1990, the Philippines became a state party to the Convention on Rights of the Child. In response, several laws have been enacted to respond to the plight of children based on the provisions of the UN-CRC. There are various inter-agency bodies that deal with the implementation of laws on children, such as the Committee for the Special Protection of Children under Executive Order No. 275; the National Council on Children's Television, as fixed by Republic Act No. 8370; the Early Childhood Care and Development Council, as prescribed by Republic Act No. 8980; the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking, under Republic Act No. 9208; the National Child Labor Committee, as charged by Republic Act No. 9231; the Inter-Agency Council on Violence Against Women and their Children, as directed by Republic Act No. 9262; the Juvenile Justice Welfare Council, which was laid down by Republic Act No. 9344, as amended by Republic Act No. 10630; the National Council on Disability Affairs, under Executive Order No. 709; and, the Inter-Agency Council Against Child Pornography, under Republic Act No. 9775. The question is, how do we ensure that government's efforts on children are not piecemeal solutions?

Filipino children deserve high importance and better treatment. Let us address these gaps and give them a brighter future. As the focal interagency body for children, the member-agencies of the CWC should have the responsibility to ensure that the policies, plans, and programs adhere to the best interests of children.

This, then, poses another question: How can the CWC call out the different line agencies and ultimately, exercise its mandate, when it is not even under the Office of the President? For the Council is currently attached to the DSWD, which is only one of the many agencies providing services for children, although its role includes the welfare of children, the DSWD is also tasked with taking care of persons with disabilities and the elderly.

Mme. Speaker, we need an agency that will provide the appropriate focus on policy formulation and implementation of programs and services to ensure

that the needs of children are met and their basic constitutional rights are protected. There is urgency in providing for an appropriate agency that will handle and prioritize the needs and protection of our children.

And so, let us act now and appeal to the President to certify as urgent the enactment of the Bill creating the Philippine Commission on Children.

Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

Good afternoon.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mme. Speaker, there being no Member who wishes to interpellate the Honorable Romualdo, I move that the speech of the Honorable Romualdo be referred to the Committee on Rules.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion to refer the speech of the Honorable Romualdo to the appropriate Committee is approved.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mme. Speaker, I now move to recognize the Hon. Sarah Jane I. Elago of the Party-List KABATAAN to avail of the Privilege Hour.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Honorable Elago is now recognized for her Privilege Speech.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ELAGO

REP. ELAGO. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

This Representation humbly request that my full speech, which was supposed to be delivered yesterday with student leaders from UP, PUP, EARIST, FEU, UE, UST, Ateneo, and officials from the Sangguniang Kabataan as witnesses be entered into the records. But for tonight, Mme. Speaker, I would like to instead manifest on a personal and collective privilege an excerpt from the unity statement of Southern Tagalog Youth and Faculty Condemning the "Red October" Conspiracy Attacks on Universities. This was signed by over a hundred organizations and institutions of youth leaders, parliamentarians, journalists, cultural workers, faculty, and academic employees across Southern Luzon.

Mme. Speaker, the Manifesto reads: "We, the Southern Tagalog Youth and Professors, believe that it is absurd and even outrageous for the AFP to brand universities who are simply exercising their right to academic freedom for educational purposes, as recruitment grounds for any political or armed

group. These allegations endanger academic freedom, freedom of expression, as well as freedom of access to information as laid out in the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 19 states:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

The "Red October" conspiracy attack of the government is too reminiscent of the grim days of martial law where educational discussions were suppressed and tagged as subversive or communist for the sake of political persecution. These Marcosian tactics only show that the government is not interested in addressing the basic concerns of the youth and the academic sector. Instead, it will stir up inconceivable plots to promote destabilization as a pretext to allow the police and the military to further intervene and silence the dissenting academic community critical of the regime's policies.

We will not allow the suppression of the students and the youth, as well as political discussions and films, particularly those that need the protection of free expression the most. The Philippines strives to be a democratic country. Our democracy lies in the will of the Filipino people. The spirit of democracy shall not be violated or degraded by self-serving policies. We call on the military to uphold its role to serve and protect, not accuse and threaten the people with legitimate and concrete demands. We urge other students, professors, and academicians from other universities to stand with us in our fight against political persecution.

We pledge to uphold and protect academic freedom, freedom of expression, freedom of access to information and various forms of expression. No fearmongering will stop our ranks from standing for what is right, just and democratic.

Dito na po nagtatapos, Mme. Speaker, ang sipi mula sa Manifesto of Unity na ito. At nais kong pasalamatan ang mga Representatives na nagbigay ng kanilang suporta sa kampanya ng mga estudyante, kasama

ng kanilang mga guro, non-teaching personnel, na ipagtanggol ang kanilang mga pamantasan at kolehiyo at itaguyod ang academic freedom sa kanilang mga pamantasan.

Maraming salamat, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mme. Speaker, there being no Member who wishes to interpellate, I move that we refer the speech of the Hon. Sarah Jane Elago to the Committee on Rules.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion to refer the speech of the Honorable Elago to the Committee on Rules is approved.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mme. Speaker, there being no other Member who wishes to avail of the Privilege Hour, I move to terminate the Privilege Hour.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the Privilege Hour is terminated.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

REP. PALMA. Mme. Speaker, there being no other matters in the agenda, I move that to adjourn the session until three o'clock in the afternoon tomorrow, Wednesday, October 10, 2018.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the session is adjourned until Wednesday, October 10, 2018, at three o'clock in the afternoon.

It was 6:23 p.m.