



Congressional Record

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

Vol. 3

Monday, November 26, 2018

No. 33

CALL TO ORDER

At 3:00 p.m., Deputy Speaker Munir M. Arbison called the session to order.

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

NATIONAL ANTHEM

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). Everybody will please rise for the singing of the Philippine National Anthem.

Everybody rose to sing the Philippine National Anthem.

PRAYER

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). Everybody will please remain standing for a minute of silent prayer.

Everybody remained standing for the silent prayer.

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

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, I move that we defer the calling of the roll.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). There is a motion to defer the calling of the roll. Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. Objection, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we were all informed that the roll call will be done right after the National Anthem, so, there is no reason we should defer the calling of the roll. We have rules to follow and it is about time that we all do.

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

ROLL CALL

REP. MARCOLETA. Mr. Speaker, I move to call the roll.

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

The Secretary General will please call the roll.

*The Secretary General called the roll, and the result is reflected in Journal No. 33, dated November 26, 2018.**

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. The Speaker is present.

The roll call shows that 209 Members responded to the call.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). With 209 Members responding to the call, the Chair declares the presence of a quorum.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, considering that copies of the Journal of the previous sessions have been distributed to the Members, I move that we dispense with the reading of the Journal.

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

The reading of the Journal is dispensed with.

APPROVAL OF THE JOURNALS

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve Journal No. 31, dated November 20, 2018 and Journal No. 32, dated November 21, 2018.

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

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

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

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

The Secretary General will please read the Reference of Business.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

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

BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 8613, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR AN ‘OPT-OUT’ SYSTEM OF ORGAN DONATION AND TRANSPLANTATION, AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7170 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘ORGAN DONATION ACT OF 1991’, PROMOTING THE RIGHT TO HEALTH, PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Alonte
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 8614, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING NOVEMBER 9 OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL NON-WORKING HOLIDAY IN THE PROVINCE OF EASTERN SAMAR, TO BE KNOWN AS THE ‘EASTERN SAMAR FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY’ ”

By Representative Evardone
TO THE COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF LAWS

House Bill No. 8615, entitled:

“AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE FIGHT TO END TUBERCULOSIS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10767 OR THE ‘COMPREHENSIVE TUBERCULOSIS ELIMINATION PLAN ACT’ ”

By Representative Tan (A.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 8616, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 442, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LABOR CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES, AND PROVIDING FOR THE RATIONALIZATION OF WAGE LEVELS ON A NATIONAL OR INDUSTRIAL BASIS”

By Representative Villarín
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

House Bill No. 8617, entitled:

“AN ACT RENEWING THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO FBS RADIO NETWORK INC. A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, ESTABLISH, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN RADIO AND/OR TELEVISION BROADCASTING STATIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES”

By Representative Chavez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE FRANCHISES

House Bill No. 8619, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING SECTION 24 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8491, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE FLAG AND HERALDIC CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES”

By Representatives Salo and Hernandez (P.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 8620, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING CIVIL SERVICE ELIGIBILITY TO THOSE WHO HAVE RENDERED AT LEAST THREE CONSECUTIVE YEARS OF GOVERNMENT SERVICE, OR AT LEAST FIVE NON-CONSECUTIVE YEARS, WHOSE APPOINTMENT STATUS IS EITHER CONTRACTUAL, CASUAL, OR JOB ORDER”

By Representatives Salo and Hernandez (P.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL REGULATION

House Bill No. 8621, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN ELECTRONIC ANDEXPRESSMODEFORGOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT, AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9184, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Nieto
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

House Bill No. 8622, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING THE ONE WAY FLOW OF VEHICULAR TRAFFIC ALONG BOTH SIDES OF EPIFANIO DE LOS SANTOS AVENUE IN METRO MANILA”

By Representative Nieto
TO THE COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 8623, entitled:

“AN ACT TO INSTITUTE PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (PWDs)-FRIENDLY TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM IN CITIES AND URBAN CENTERS OF THE COUNTRY, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFORE”

By Representative Nieto
TO THE COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
SERVICES

House Bill No. 8624, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING GREEN BUILDING ROOFTOPS ON ALL GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATELY-OWNED BUILDINGS WITHIN THE COUNTRY”

By Representative Nieto
TO THE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY

House Bill No. 8625, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING AND REPEALING REPUBLIC ACT NUMBERED NINE THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED NINETY-SEVEN (R.A. NO. 9297), OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ‘THE CHEMICAL ENGINEERING ACT OF 2004’ ”

By Representative Nograles (J.J.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE
AND PROFESSIONAL REGULATION

House Bill No. 8635, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AS THE INDEPENDENT ECONOMIC AND PLANNING AGENCY OF THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT, DEFINING ITS FUNCTIONS AND AMENDING EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 230 SERIES OF 1987, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Macapagal-Arroyo, Salceda, Yap (A.) and Gatchalian
TO THE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC
AFFAIRS

RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 2308, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE ECONOMIC MANAGERS TO REVISIT SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICES OF BASIC COMMODITIES FOR POSSIBLE ROLLBACK IN VIEW OF THE DECLINING GLOBAL CRUDE OIL PRICES”

By Representative Cua
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND
INDUSTRY

House Resolution No. 2309, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES AND THE COMMITTEE ON GOOD GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION INTO ALLEGED PRIORITIZATION OF PRIVATE LENDING INSTITUTIONS (PLIs) OVER THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE SYSTEM (GSIS), AND TO FURTHER INVESTIGATE THE PROCESS AND BASES OF ACCREDITATION INVOLVING PLIs”

By Representative Teves
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 2310, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION ON THE ALLEGED UNSETTLED ACCOUNTS OF THE PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION (PHILHEALTH) TO PUBLIC AND PRIVATE HOSPITALS ACROSS THE COUNTRY”

By Representative Teves
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

MESSAGES FROM THE SENATE

Message dated November 15, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that the Senate on November 14, 2018 passed Senate Bill No. 1998, entitled:

“AN ACT LIBERALIZING THE IMPORTATION, EXPORTATION AND TRADING OF RICE, LIFTING FOR THE PURPOSE THE QUANTITATIVE IMPORT RESTRICTION ON RICE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

in which it requests the concurrence of the House of Representatives.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Message dated November 15, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that on November 14, 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 November 15, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that on November 14, 2018, the Senate designated Senators Grace Poe, Joseph Victor G. Ejercito, Ralph G. Recto, Joel Villanueva and Risa Hontiveros as conferees to the Bicameral Conference Committee on the disagreeing provisions of Senate Bill No. 1971, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE SPECIAL PROTECTION OF CHILD PASSENGERS IN MOTOR VEHICLES AND PROVIDING APPROPRIATIONS THEREOF”

and House Bill No. 6938, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE SPECIAL PROTECTION OF CHILD PASSENGERS IN MOTOR VEHICLES”.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Message dated November 15, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that on November 14, 2018, the Senate designated Senators Grace Poe, Ralph G. Recto, Joseph Victor G. Ejercito, Francis “Chiz” G. Escudero and Paolo Benigno “Bam” Aquino IV as conferees to the Bicameral Conference Committee on the disagreeing provisions of Senate Bill No. 1749, entitled:

“AN ACT TO IMPROVE LAND TRANSPORTATION TERMINALS, STATIONS, STOPS, REST AREAS AND ROLL-ON/ROLL-OFF TERMINALS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

and House Bill No. 725, entitled:

“AN ACT PROHIBITING THE COLLECTION OF FEES FROM PASSENGERS FOR THE USE OF SANITARY FACILITIES LOCATED IN THE LAND TRANSPORTATION TERMINALS, STATIONS, STOPS AND REST AREAS”.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

COMMUNICATION

Letter dated October 19, 2018 of Salvador C. Medialdea, Executive Secretary, Office of the President, Malacañang, returning herewith the enrolled copies of consolidated Senate Bill No. 1233 and House Bill No. 5745, as requested in view of Concurrent Resolution No. 19, adopted by both Houses of Congress on 09 October 2018, entitled:

“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’ ”

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report of the Committee on Legislative Franchises (Committee Report No. 942), re H.B. No. 8631, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING THE LANA O DEL NORTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN A DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM FOR THE CONVEYANCE OF ELECTRIC POWER TO ALL END-USERS IN THE PROVINCE OF LANA O DEL NORTE”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 4555

Sponsors: Representatives Alvarez (F.), Dimaporo (M.K.) and Dimaporo (A)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Legislative Franchises (Committee Report No. 943), re H.B. No. 8632, entitled:

“AN ACT RENEWING FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO RT BROADCAST SPECIALIST PHIL. INC. UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8126, ENTITLED ‘AN ACT GRANTING THE RT BROADCAST SPECIALIST PHILIPPINES A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, ESTABLISH, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCASTING STATIONS IN MINDANAO’ ”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 7980

Sponsors: Representatives Alvarez (F.), Nograles (K.A.), Nograles (J.J.) and Tugna

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Legislative Franchises (Committee Report No. 944), re H.B. No. 8633, entitled:

“AN ACT RENEWING FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO ULTIMATE ENTERTAINMENT, INC., UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8102, ENTITLED ‘AN ACT GRANTING THE ULTIMATE ENTERTAINMENT, INC. A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, MAINTAIN AND OPERATE RADIO BROADCASTING STATIONS WITHIN THE PHILIPPINES’ ”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 7287

Sponsors: Representatives Alvarez (F.) and Ferrer (J.)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Legislative Franchises (Committee Report No. 945), re H.B. No. 8634, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING THE CADIZ RADIO AND TELEVISION NETWORK, INC. A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, ESTABLISH, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCASTING STATIONS IN THE WESTERN VISAYAS AREA”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 2262

Sponsors: Representatives Alvarez (F.) and Cueva

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Health, the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Ways and Means (Committee Report No. 946), re H.B. No. 8636, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING A NATIONAL INTEGRATED CANCER CONTROL PROGRAM AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bills Numbered 268, 716, 897, 1578, 1743, 1851, 1964, 2579, 2798, 3089, 3365, 3441, 3497, 3500, 4707, 5378, 5387, 5763, 6153, 6210, 6280, 6299, HR No. 786 and PS 195

Sponsors: Representatives Tan (A.), Roman, Vargas, Suansing (E.), Aragones, Escudero, Nograles (K.A.), Nograles (J.J.), Roa-Puno and Zamora (M.C.)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Government Enterprises and Privatization, the Committee on Appropriations

and the Committee on Ways and Means (Committee Report No. 947), re H.B. No. 8637, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE REGIONAL INVESTMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE COORDINATING HUB OF CENTRAL LUZON AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bills Numbered 7139, 7380, 7381 and 7651

Sponsors: Representatives Sacdalan, Silverio, Roman, Sy-Alvarado, Garcia (J.E.), Zamora (M.C.) and Suansing (E.)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Tourism and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 948), re H.B. No. 8642, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING THE TINAKAYANAN FALLS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF LABRADOR, PROVINCE OF PANGASINAN AN ECOTOURISM SITE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 5878

Sponsors: Representatives Nuñez-Malanyaon, Zamora (M.C.) and Batoil

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Tourism and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 949), re H.B. No. 8643, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING SITIO MAPITA IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF AGUILAR, PROVINCE OF PANGASINAN AN ECOTOURISM ZONE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 5886

Sponsors: Representatives Nuñez-Malanyaon, Nograles (K.A.) and Batoil

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Tourism and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 950), re H.B. No. 8644, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING MOUNT SAN ISIDRO LOCATED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF LABRADOR, PROVINCE OF PANGASINAN AN ECOTOURISM DESTINATION AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 5783

Sponsors: Representatives Nuñez-Malanyaon, Nograles (K.A.) and Batoil

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Ways and Means (Committee Report No. 951), re H.B. No. 8645, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING SECTIONS 22, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 34, 37, 38, 39, 42, 51, 52, 54, 56, 57, 73, 108, 121, 122, 123, 174, 176, 179, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, AND 199; AND REPEALING SECTIONS 127, 175, 177, 178, 180, 192, AND 193; ALL UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8424, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE NATIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1997, AS AMENDED, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bills Numbered 8252 and 8323

Sponsor: Representative Suansing (E.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

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

REP. SALO. Mr. Speaker, I respectfully move that we acknowledge the presence of the guests of the honorable Cong. Jeffrey D. Khonghun of the First District of Zambales. They are Barangay Captains from the Municipality of San Marcelino, Zambales; and Firm 24-K Association from Barrio Barretto, Olongapo City.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). The guests of Honorable Khonghun, please rise to be recognized. (*Applause*) Welcome to the House of Representatives.

REP. SALO. Mr. Speaker, I respectfully move that we acknowledge the presence of the guests of the honorable Cong. Florida “Rida” P. Robes of the Lone District, City of San Jose del Monte, Bulacan. They are the City Mayor, Hon. Arturo B. Robes; City Administrator, Dr. Dennis M. Booth; City Legal Officer, Atty. Elmer Galicia; City Assistant Administrator, Atty. Paul Vega; representatives from Prime Water San Jose del Monte and San Jose del Monte Water District; officials of the Sangguniang Barangay and Kabataan from the 59 barangays; Pastoral Sector; Persons with Disability (PWD) Organization; DepEd Public School Teachers; Parent-Teacher Associations; and officers of Homeowners Associations.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). The guests of the Honorable Robes, please rise to be acknowledged. (*Applause*) Welcome to the House of Representatives.

REP. SALO. Finally, Mr. Speaker, I move that we acknowledge the presence of the guests of the Hon. Wilfredo S. Caminero of the Second District of Cebu. They are Bembz Monruid, Marifil Ondiano, Joanne Heredia, Captain Jhun Heredia, Shiela Gamboa, Lourdes V. Amor and Ronald Amor. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). The guests of Honorable Caminero of Cebu, please rise to be acknowledged. (*Applause*) Welcome to the House of Representatives.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H. JT. RES. NO. 32 ON THIRD READING

REP. SALO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Joint Resolution No. 32 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on November 22, 2018, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Joint Resolution No. 32, entitled: JOINT RESOLUTION EXTENDING THE AVAILABILITY OF THE 2018 APPROPRIATIONS FOR MAINTENANCE AND OTHER OPERATING EXPENSES AND CAPITAL OUTLAYS TO DECEMBER 31, 2019, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 61 OF THE GENERAL PROVISIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10964, THE GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT OF FISCAL YEAR 2018.

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 33, dated November 26, 2018.*

APPROVAL OF H. JT. RES. NO. 32 ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). With 194 affirmative votes, six negative votes and no

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

abstention, House Joint Resolution No. 32 is hereby approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 7005
ON THIRD READING

REP. SALO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 7005 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on November 15, 2018, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7005, entitled: AN ACT RECOGNIZING THE EVEREST ACADEMY AS AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION OF INTERNATIONAL CHARACTER AND GRANTING THE ACADEMY CERTAIN PREROGATIVES TO PROMOTE ITS DEVELOPMENT.

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 33, dated November 26, 2018.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7005
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). With 206 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 7005 is hereby approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 7878
ON THIRD READING

REP. SALO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 7878 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on November 15, 2018, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7878, entitled: AN ACT ENHANCING PUBLIC SAFETY AT THE LOCAL LEVEL BY ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING A DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY IN EVERY PROVINCE, CITY AND MUNICIPALITY.

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 33, dated November 26, 2018.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7878
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). With 209 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 7878 is now approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 7973
ON THIRD READING

REP. SALO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 7973 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on November 15, 2018, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7973, entitled: AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE REMEDY OF FILING A PETITION FOR

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

CERTIORARI TO THE SUPREME COURT TO REVIEW THE DECISIONS OF THE NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS COMMISSION, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE ARTICLES 229 AND 230 OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 442, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE “LABOR CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES.”

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 33, dated November 26, 2018.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7973
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). With 215 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 7973 is hereby approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 8145
ON THIRD READING

REP. SALO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 8145 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on November 15, 2018, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 8145, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING MARINE PROTECTED AREAS IN ALL COASTAL MUNICIPALITIES AND CITIES.

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 33, dated November 26, 2018.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 8145
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). With 215 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 8145 is hereby approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

RATIFICATION OF CONF. CTTEE. RPT.
ON H.B. NO. 5236 AND S.B. NO. 2031

REP. MARCOLETA. Mr. Speaker, we are in receipt of the Conference Committee Report reconciling the disagreeing provisions of House Bill No. 5236 and Senate Bill No. 2031.

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

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

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 5236, entitled: AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE RANK CLASSIFICATION IN THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 28 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6975, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE “DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT OF 1990”; and Senate Bill No. 2031, entitled: AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE RANK CLASSIFICATION IN THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 28 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6975, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE “DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT OF 1990.”

REP. MARCOLETA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we ratify the said Conference Committee Report.

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

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

** See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)

The Conference Committee Report on House Bill No. 5236 and Senate Bill No. 2031 is ratified.
The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 8322
ON THIRD READING

REP. SALO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 8322 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on November 15, 2018, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 8322, entitled: AN ACT REQUIRING THE MANDATORY COMPLIANCE BY ALL MOTORCYCLE RIDERS AND OPERATORS TO AUTOMATICALLY TURN ON AND RIDE WITH THEIR HEADLIGHTS ON AT ALL HOURS OF THE DAY AND NIGHT ON ALL ROADS.

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 33, dated November 26, 2018.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 8322
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). With 215 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 8322 is hereby approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 8368
ON THIRD READING

REP. SALO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 8368 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on November 15, 2018, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 8368, entitled: AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE REGULATION OF EMPLOYMENT OF FOREIGN NATIONALS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE ARTICLES 40, 41 AND 42 OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 442, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "LABOR CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES."

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 33, dated November 26, 2018.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 8368
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). With 215 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 8368 is hereby approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. MARCOLETA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we acknowledge the presence of the guests of the Deputy Speaker, the Honorable Arbison, namely: Mr. Abdel Anni and Assemblywoman Rujia Anni who are present in the Plenary Hall today.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). Please rise to be recognized. (*Applause*) Welcome to the House of Representatives.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 8378
ON THIRD READING

REP. MARCOLETA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 8378 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on November 15, 2018, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill 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, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.”

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 33, dated November 26, 2018.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 8378
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). With 216 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 8378 is hereby approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 8370
ON THIRD READING

REP. MARCOLETA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 8370 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on November 14, 2018, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 8370, entitled: AN ACT REQUIRING STATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES (SUCs) TO PREPARE AND IMPLEMENT A LAND USE

DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN THAT SHALL INCLUDE THE CONSTRUCTION OF DORMITORIES FOR STUDENTS AND HOUSING SITES FOR EMPLOYEES.

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 33, dated November 26, 2018.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 8370
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). With 216 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 8370 is hereby approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 8380
ON THIRD READING

REP. MARCOLETA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 8380 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on November 14, 2018, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 8380, entitled: AN ACT GRANTING PHILIPPINE CITIZENSHIP TO HANS GUENTER SCHOOF.

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 33, dated November 26, 2018.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 8380
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). With 216 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

abstention, House Bill No. 8380 is hereby approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 8381
ON THIRD READING

REP. MARCOLETA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 8381 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on November 14, 2018, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 8381, entitled: AN ACT GRANTING PHILIPPINE CITIZENSHIP TO MARGARITA MELIAN ORTIGAS.

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 33, dated November 26, 2018.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 8381
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). With 216 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 8381 is approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

PRIVILEGE HOUR

REP. MARCOLETA. Mr. Speaker, today being a Monday, I move that we open the Privilege Hour.

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

REP. MARCOLETA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Florida “Rida” P. Robes to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). Congresswoman Robes is now recognized to avail of the Privilege Hour.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ROBES

REP. ROBES. Mr. Speaker, my distinguished colleagues, I rise today to address the prevailing water woes in the city of San Jose del Monte which I represent in this Chamber. I remember the English poet, W. H. Auden, having once said, “Thousands have lived without love, but not one without water.” True enough, in this troubled world, love is getting to be more optional, but such is not the case with water. Unlike what most would believe, this world cannot live only on oil and money; as with food, water is indispensable to life. Water is life itself, but for all its worth to the lives of Filipinos, it is a big wonder why such a premier water regulating agency, the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System or MWSS has become too oblivious of the vitality of water.

Let the facts speak for itself. On January 28, 2014, the MWSS, the provincial government of Bulacan, the Local Water Utilities Administration and the San Jose del Monte Water District entered into a memorandum of agreement which stipulated, among others, the grant by the MWSS of an additional 30 million liters per day or 30 MLD to its raw water allocation to the San Jose del Monte Water District. This is on top of the San Jose del Monte Water District’s entitlement of 50 MLD which it had since 1993. The justification for such additional 30 MLD to its allocation was based on the overriding need to cater to the water supply requirements of various housing projects of the National Housing Authority in the City of San Jose del Monte. Prominent among these housing projects are 1.) the medium-rise Pleasant View Residences in Barangay Graceville made of 30 buildings, with 60 units per building and home to 1,800 families. Their primary problem: no water supply; 2.) the Towerville Phase 6 Project located between Barangays Graceville and Gaya-Gaya made of 9,000 housing units and occupied by 9,000 families. Their main problem: limited water supply; 3.) the Heroesville 1 Expansion 1-3 in Barangay Gaya-Gaya with 3,000 units, hosting 3,000 families. Homeless, these families occupied the units even without the certainty of electricity and a sufficient supply of clean and potable water; 4.) the Heroesville III, Phases 1 and 2, in Barangay Gaya-Gaya where 1,000 housing units were constructed and occupied by 1,000 families. They are experiencing water and electricity problems as well; 5.) the San Jose del Monte Heights in Barangay Muzon which has 4,075 families/occupants equivalent to 20,375 individuals, all in a water crisis situation; and 6.) the massive NHA

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

Pabahay 2000 in Barangay Muzon with 7,045 family occupants likewise experiencing shortage of potable water supply for such a long period of time.

This is not all that we worry about, Mr. Speaker, dear colleagues. We now see the replication of a similar, impending problem related to our water woes looming in the horizon—about 5,000 more families are scheduled to be resettled in San Jose del Monte City within the last quarter of the current year. However, to set the records straight, this latest batch of relocation was approved by the previous administration, the national government and the local government of San Jose del Monte City. Yet, again, as with all other relocations, this one is likewise wanting in strategic planning as they did not ensure the semblance of a community in this impending relocation without adequate provision of government infrastructure, schools, hospitals, sources of livelihood, electrification, clean water supply and all others. Thus, we find ourselves again scrambling for solutions to the familiar problem of low supply but higher demand for water because of our people. Consistently, we see the same parade of problems in these relocation projects of the NHA, and they all gravitate towards that one we cannot truly live without—water.

At this point, may I say, and even commendable note, that the present NHA General Manager, Marcelino Escalada, has a clear grasp of the problem and of its equivalent solution. Ang direksiyong aming tinatahak nila GM Escalada ay iisa at ito ay upang maisaayos at mailipat sa Pamahalaang Lungsod ng San Jose del Monte ang pagpapasaayos ng mga nasimulang problema tungkol sa kakulangan ng tubig at sa mga reloksasyon. Sa puntong ito, malugod ko pong ibinabalita, at hindi isang kuwento lamang, na pag-uusapan na, sa kabila ng kakulangan sa water utility service, ang mga relocation projects na nabanggit at ang ilan dito ay naipagkaloob na, ngunit hindi nga po libre, sa mga lehitimong benipisyaryo ng pabahay para maiwasan ang Kadamay. Ito ay naging sanhi rin upang makalikom ng karagdagang pondo ang National Housing Authority. Sa katunayan, ilan sa mga ito ay lupang kinakatayuan ng mga parokya gaya ng Christ the King, Sagrada Familia at Sto. Rosario Parishes na pawang nasa Ikalawang Distrito ng Lungsod ng San Jose del Monte.

Trusting that the MWSS will make good its obligation under the agreement, that is, to provide additional raw water allocation, the San Jose del Monte Water District constructed, in 2017, Water Treatment Plant 3 or the so-called WTP3. However, due to limited funds, the Water District managed only to construct a 10-million liter capacity treatment plant, although the facility may be expanded to 30 MLD as soon as funds would later allow. This is now the saddest part, that despite the completion of the Water Treatment Plant 3, and after sending several request letters, the San Jose del Monte Water District is still unable to draw water from

either the MWSS and the Common Purpose Facilities Operations as of today. There is still no relief in sight for this mounting and compounding water woes in San Jose del Monte City, no thanks to the detachment, if not to the apathy, of this premier water regulating agency of the government. It appears now that our calvary is never-ending. We have long borne the burden of receiving and giving new life to thousands of displaced populace of Metro Manila like Valenzuela, San Juan, Quezon City and other nearby areas, including Makati. Now, here is yet another one that places our endurance on a supreme test—coping with the water crisis.

Let me reiterate for the record, Mr. Speaker, my dear colleagues, that this Water Treatment Plant 3 facility had long been completed and was so designed to augment all these water woes in the city. Katakot-takot na pagbabakbak sa amin sa social media, katakot-takot na mura ang inaabot ng aming pamamalakad pero hindi naman namin kasalanan. The means to achieve this is through the grant of the additional water allocation from the MWSS in its very contractual obligation under the January 28, 2014 memorandum of agreement, but which it continues to ignore by inaction for reasons only known to them. Without the additional 10 MLD raw water supply to the Water Treatment Plant 3 facility, the San Jose del Monte Water District will not be able to farm out water not only to those families mentioned, but to the existing relocatees as well.

Had we not exercised diligence and prudence in all our efforts in addressing the water shortage in our city, we could have understood better where the MWSS was coming from. Needless to say, we had already done everything that was necessary and within the scope of our powers to comply with that memorandum of agreement where the MWSS is a vital party if only to safeguard the interest of our people, but because of the inaction of the MWSS, many of our families are now at risk and bearing the brunt of the water shortage.

I appeal, as I do now to this august Body, that we call upon the MWSS, through Engr. Ramon Fabul, to immediately act on the long-overdue request of the San Jose del Monte Water District for almost two years and 10 months now. Kaya kami po ay nagkukulang sa tubig. Hindi po uubra na porke mahirap ay hindi na sila maliligo. Hindi rin po uubra na porke mahirap ay hindi na sila kakain ng tama at malinis na pagkain. Hindi rin po uubra na, mga kasama ko sa paglilingkod, ang mga nilipat natin sa Lungsod ng San Jose del Monte ay pababayaan na lamang. Ako po ay muling nakikiusap sa lahat po ng aking mga kasama dito na tulungan po ninyo ako at ang aking distrito sa pagtaguyod ng aming pangarap na mabuksan ang WTP3 dahil may problema po kami talaga sa raw water. Hindi po ito karapat-dapat dahil sa amin po nagdaraan ang tubig pero kami mismo sa Lungsod ng San Jose del Monte ay hindi nabibigyan ng tamang supply ng raw water.

I will not make my speech long pero para po sa aking mga kasama at sa aking mahal na mga kababayan, inilagda ko po at inilahad ko ang lahat ng ito dahil gusto ko pong malinawagan ang aking mga kasama. In the words of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte: "In working together, let us build a truly robust society where the prospects for growth abound and where citizens enjoy a prosperous and comfortable life."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, my dear colleagues, Magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat. God bless us all. (*Applause*)

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, next to avail of the Privilege Hour is the Hon. Anthony M. Bravo, PhD. May we recognize the Gentleman for his privilege speech.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). The Honorable Bravo (A.) is recognized to avail of the Privilege Hour.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. BRAVO (A.)

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

Distinguished colleagues, I rise to express my sincere and heartfelt appreciation to all Filipinos who offered their prayers, well-wishes and support after this humble Representation figured in a helicopter accident in Capas, Tarlac along with seven other passengers and four crew members. Before I narrate what happened, allow me to acknowledge the presence of our officers from the Office of Legislative Affairs of the Armed Forces of the Philippines led by Gen. Jess Estoesta who is in the gallery right now. The Office of Legislative Affairs is one of the organizers of the activity in Tarlac.

On Thursday, November 22, I was with the House of Representatives contingent, invited by the Armed Forces of the Philippines, Office of Legislative Affairs, to attend the Legislative Stakeholders Engagement activity in Capas, Tarlac. In the morning, we participated in a record firing event at Camp O'Donnell which rated our marksmanship skills. This was conducted by the Training and Doctrine Command of the Philippine Army. I am a military reservist, Mr. Speaker. This is to set the record straight as to the purpose of my participation in the said activity.

In the afternoon, a live fire demonstration was scheduled at Crow Valley Gunnery Range. We were ferried by a Sokol helicopter from Camp O'Donnell to Col. Ernesto Rabina Air Base or more popularly known as Crow Valley. The helicopter was piloted by Major Mark Delos Reyes and 1Lt. Henry Cabanayan,

both of the Philippine Air Force. Along with me in the helicopter were former House of Representatives Secretary General Atty. Cesar Pareja; Col. Arthur Baybayan, the Sergeant-at-Arms of the Commission on Appointments; Baltazar Reyes; Romeo Almonte; Mario Gene Barretto; 1Lt. Melvin Betia and Daisy Delima. The helicopter was on its final approach when it suddenly turned on its side and fell on the ravine near the helipad. The ravine was about 30 feet deep. In a seeming twist of fate, most of us passengers were spared from serious injuries. Except for minor bruises in my arm, I was completely fine and was able to go home after a physical check-up. The same was true of my companions.

Ako ay lubos na nagpapasalamat sa Poong Maykapal at kami ay prinotektahan Niya sa oras na iyon. Kinailangang basagin ang salamin ng helicopter upang kami ay makalabas. Maraming salamat sa aking mga kasamahan na tinulungan akong makalabas mula sa helicopter na puno ho ng usok. May nakapitan akong isang baging na siyang ginamit ko upang makababa mula sa helicopter. I appreciate the members and officials of the Armed Forces and the organizers of the event who promptly rescued us and brought us to the infirmary and to Camp Aquino Station Hospital for treatment.

Ngayon po, hayaan ninyong ako ay magpapasalamat sa House leadership sa pangunguna ng ating kagalang-galang na Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo sa suporta sa House contingent. Gayundin sa ating Senate counterparts, lalung-lalo na ho kay Senator Ralph Recto, na kasama ko sa nasabing event subalit nasa ibang helicopter, at gayundin ho kay Senator Richard Gordon. I would also like to thank the Hon. Victor A. Yap of the Second District of Tarlac for his graciousness in readily offering assistance during such critical time. To the Chinese community, especially Dr. James Dy, President of the Chinese General Hospital, for offering the facilities of the hospital should I need further medical treatment; and to many others, my family and my friends here in the House who called up and sent messages of concern and expressed willingness to help—thank you very much. I was also deeply touched by the support of our cooperative leaders representing the 14 million-strong cooperative movement who have bombarded me with calls and messages when the news broke out the following day. I could not be happier for the multitude of support that you extended to me.

My sincere apologies to the members of the media if I was not able to grant your requests for interviews. My phone was left in the chopper and it was only recovered on the following day. It was indeed a miracle that we survived the accident almost unscathed. However, I felt bad for the pilot who sustained head injuries and also the chief aircrew Sgt. Byron Deomano whose arm was broken. I later learned from the reports that surgeons had to amputate his arm. I wish for their fast recovery

and I encourage you to continue praying for the safety of our military men.

Ang karanasang ito ay nag-iwan sa akin ng isang mensahe at naniniwala ako na niloob ng Panginoon na walang nangyaring masama sa akin dahil mayroon pa ho akong misyon na kailangang gampanan para sa ating taumbayan. I believe that God has other plans, and that this humble Representative of the coop sector has a bigger mission to fulfill. As a grateful servant of God, I commit myself to continue my service and advocacy on poverty alleviation by strengthening our cooperatives and addressing the plight of marginalized farmers, fisherfolk, urban and rural workers, and other marginalized sectors, and in advancing the welfare of the Filipino in general.

While I rejoice at the second life that God has given all 12 of us in the helicopter, I could not sleep well, knowing that the same incident might happen to others, too. I learned that the crash landing in Tarlac was the third incident involving Sokol helicopters of the Philippine Air Force. In August 2014, a Sokol helicopter crashed in Lanao del Sur which carried then 4th Infantry Division Commander Ricardo Visaya. While he was not injured, two passengers suffered minor injuries. Then on November 8, 2016, another Sokol unit also crashed in Puerto Princesa City where 12 persons were reported injured. Mr. Speaker, I am deeply concerned about the condition of our military aircraft and equipment. We cannot afford to have more incidents or accidents because next time, others might not be as fortunate, as what happened to us.

I learned that the Philippine Air Force purchased eight Polish-made Sokol helicopters as part of its modernization plan. Are these enough to modernize our forces? Mr. Speaker, we cannot afford to lose lives just because our military aircraft, equipment and facilities or the training of our men are way behind. We need quality military assets with maximum capability. Hence, I call on the government to pursue the genuine modernization of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. We need to develop the AFP in all aspects such as personnel capacity building, upgrading of facilities and equipment and their proper maintenance, Mr. Speaker. The first phase of the AFP Modernization Program ended in 2017. For the second phase, President Duterte recently approved a P300 billion AFP modernization plan. I hope that this Congress will help the Executive Department in finding ways and means to fund this program, Mr. Speaker.

We also need to craft a policy that will address the tedious process of procurement of military assets needed for modernization. In fact, in 2017, the COA found out that P3.859 billion of the AFP fund was unutilized, and 78.43 percent thereof or P3.027 billion was intended for the AFP Modernization Program for its acquisition of military equipment. The AFP cited the stringent requirements of Republic Act No. 9184 or the

Government Procurement Reform Act as the reason for such unutilization.

At this point, may I show the audio-visual presentation of some specific concerns of the AFP that need legislative attention. *(Audiovisual presentation)*

Muli po, maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker and distinguished colleagues.

REP. BERTIZ. Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. MARCOLETA. Mr. Speaker, I move that the privilege speech of the honorable ...

REP. BERTIZ. Mr. Speaker, Majority Leader, please. Thank you.

REP. MARCOLETA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Aniceto "John" D. Bertiz III for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). The Honorable Bertiz is recognized to interpellate.

REP. BERTIZ. Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker, the honorable Majority Leader.

Mr. Speaker, this Representation joins the multitude of well-wishers from all around the globe for the well-being of our dear colleague, Deputy Minority Leader Anthony M. Bravo. As we all know, last November 22, while he was attending to an official legislative function in Tarlac, the military helicopter carrying Cong. Anthony Bravo, together with our former Secretary General Atty. Cesar Pareja and a number of legislative personnel, crash-landed and tumbled into a deep ravine. The helicopter pilot, co-pilot, crew and most of the passengers suffered major injuries. Miraculously, Cong. Anthony M. Bravo came out with just minor bruises. Ang tibay mo, Bravo. How he escaped in the midst of extreme confusion, blinded by engulfing smoke from the helicopter up in flames, with only a tree stopping it from rolling down the ravine, and still managed to maneuver out to safety on his own is nothing less than extraordinary.

As news on the accident broke out, I was swamped non-stop by countless calls and messages of concern for Cong. Anthony Bravo from the OFWs around the world. I was so amazed as I witnessed the outpouring of messages of love for Cong. Anthony Bravo passing through me. Indeed, it was an experience to behold.

Mr. Speaker, I was not surprised to see the 14 million members of cooperatives in the country expressing their concern for Cong. Anthony M. Bravo, he being the champion of the cooperative movement

as well as the big difference, in terms of his efforts, in retaining the tax exemption for the cooperatives. But I wonder—what about the OFWs? It occurred to me, Mr. Speaker, that our dear friend, Cong. Anthony M. Bravo, has been working with me in introducing to the OFWs the benefits of being members of a cooperative and assisting them in organizing themselves into becoming cooperatives as well. This is why the OFWs know Cong. Anthony Bravo very well, and this is why they exhibited so much love and appreciation for him. Natatandaan ko po na si Hon. Anthony Bravo ay naging isang OFW din sa UAE.

All told, Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to see Cong. Anthony M. Bravo, dashing and energetic as ever, in the halls of Congress. Congratulations to you for receiving an award as a rifle expert. My hats off to you, my friend, for demonstrating extraordinary courage in an extraordinary time, a trait worthy of emulation. May God continue to protect and bless you, Cong. Anthony Bravo.

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

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you very much, distinguished Representative of the ACTS-OFW Party-List for that support and care. Thank you.

REP. TY. Mr. Speaker, may I be recognized?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). The Hon. Arnel U. Ty is recognized to interpellate.

REP. TY. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the lucky Gentleman be willing to answer some questions?

REP. BRAVO (A.). With honors.

REP. TY. Ang katanungan lang ho ng Representanteng ito ay, during the time that you were riding that chopper, ilang minuto o ilang oras na po ba kayong nasa ere?

REP. BRAVO (A.). I think, if my memory serves me right, it was about five to eight minutes from Camp O'Donnell.

REP. TY. So, hindi ho kalayuan ang inyong pinanggalingan sa inyong pupuntahan?

REP. BRAVO (A.). Hindi ho. Napakalapit lang ho ng Crow Valley.

REP. TY. Ilan po ba kayong nakasakay sa chopper?

REP. BRAVO (A.). Labing-isa ho kaming nakasakay lahat, kasama na ang pilot.

REP. TY. Ito naman pong ating military chopper ay nasa kondisyon at sa pananaw po ninyo ay tama lang ho iyong kargang mga pasahero?

REP. BRAVO (A.). Actually ho, 12 passengers ang capacity niya. Kung 11 ho kami ay tama lang ho at maganda naman ho iyong lipad ng helicopter. Nagkataon lang ho na bago lumapag ay parang nahagip po kami ng malakas na hangin.

REP. TY. Sa pananaw po ninyo—at ang Representanteng ito ay nagagalak na isa kayo sa napakapalad na naligtas—sabihin natin, supposed to be na ang magiging biktima ng ating mga military equipment, at ito ang akin pong pinangangambahan, samantalang kayo ay bihirang sumakay sa mga ganitong kagamitan ng military pero ang ating mga magigiting na sundalo, halos araw-araw, iyan po ang ginagamit nila sa maraming bagay, sa kanilang mga tungkulin tulad ng pagre-rescue ng ating mga kababayan na naiipit sa kaguluhan at saka sa masamang panahon. Ang Representanteng ito ay nangangamba dahil sa palagi hong nasusuong sa peligro ang atin hong mga kasundaluhan o ang ating mga government employees na, kadalasan, ito po iyong kanilang ginagamit na mode of transport, especially when they go to far-flung areas. Ang akin lang hong katanungan sa inyo is, ano po ba sa pananaw ninyo ang kailangan na suporta na dapat ibigay sa ating mga ahensiya ng military at kapulisan para po ang mga kagamitan ay masigurado natin na ito ay nasa good working standard at ayon sa ating pangangailangan?

REP. BRAVO (A.). Sa akin nga hong pananaw, dahil nga ho nabanggit ko dito ho sa aking privilege speech na pagtuunan natin ng pansin and let us pursue the genuine modernization of the Armed Forces to include capacity building and upliftment of equipment and facilities to maximum capability, hindi ho kailangan na i-downgrade ang isang equipment dahil mahina o mababa ang paggamit ng pondo, kundi pondohan po natin ng tama para ho talagang magkaroon ng capability to the maximum capacity ang ating Armed Forces.

REP. TY. Iyan pong inyong position ay sinusuportahan ho ng Representanteng ito at, sa tingin ko naman ho, ng lahat ng ating mga kasamahan dito sa Kongreso sapagkat sa atin nagmumula ang kanilang taun-taon na pangangailangan na pondo at sabi nga natin, taun-taon, sila ay lumalapit sa atin at tayo ang siyang nag-aapruba ng pondong iyan. Ang sabi nga o may kasabihan ang ating mga kasundaluhan na mas nanaisin pa nilang sila ay masawi sa pakikipaglaban sa kanilang mga katunggali kaysa naman ho mamatay sila sa sariling kagamitan.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Tama ho.

REP. TY. Kaya, ang Representanteng ito ay sumusuporta sa adhikain at sa inyong motion to investigate ang tamang paggasta at tamang pagbili ng mga equipment ng ating mga military, at hindi lamang ho sa military pero kahit ho sa any government agencies na namimili ng kanilang mga gamit na, sabi pa nga ninyo, ang kailangan ho is that we should maximize our resources sa pamamagitan ng pagbili ng mga tamang kasangkapan at nasa kalidad na kasangkapan.

Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Maraming salamat to my distinguished colleague, Hon. Arnel U. Ty.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the Honorable Bravo (A.) to the Committee on Rules.

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

The speech of the Honorable Bravo (A.) is referred to the Committee on Rules for proper action.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we take up the Unfinished Business. Mr. Speaker, may I withdraw that motion, please.

Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session.

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

It was 4:43 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:47 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, we are still in the Privilege Hour. I move that we refer the privilege speech earlier of the Hon. Florida “Rida” P. Robes to the Committee on Rules.

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

The speech of the Honorable Robes is referred to the Committee on Rules.

REP. DEFENSOR. Before we proceed Mr. Speaker, may we acknowledge the presence of the guests of the honorable Deputy Speaker Munir M. Arbison. They are Mayor Elay Asmadon and Mayor Boyet Elaji and spouse.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). Please rise to be recognized. Welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, there being no other Members who wish to avail of the Privilege Hour, I move that we close the Privilege Hour.

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

The Privilege Hour is closed.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we immediately transmit all the Bills that we approved on Third Reading today to the Senate.

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

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

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

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 8618

Continuation

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 8618, as contained in Committee Report No. 934, and direct the Secretary General to read only the title of the measure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). 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.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 8618, entitled: AN ACT AMENDING SECTIONS 141, 142 AND 143 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8424, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE NATIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1997.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary status is that we are in the period of sponsorship and debate. I move that we recognize the distinguished Chairperson of the Committee on Ways and Means, the Hon. Estrellita B. Suansing.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). The Honorable Suansing (E.) is recognized.

REP. SUANSING (E.). Mr. Speaker, we are ready to accept questions.

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

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move for a brief suspension of the session.

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

It was 4:50 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:50 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

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

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). Is there

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

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

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve House Bill No. 8618 on Second Reading

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). There is a motion for the approval of House Bill No. 8618 on Second Reading.

As many as are in favor of House Bill No. 8618, please say *Aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). As many as against, please say *Nay*.

FEW MEMBERS. *Nay*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 8618 ON SECOND READING

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

House Bill No. 8618 is hereby approved on Second Reading.

REP. SUANSING. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we take up bills on Second Reading.

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

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 8645 ON SECOND READING

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we take up House Bill No. 8645, contained in Committee Report No. 951, 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. Arbison). 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. 8645, entitled: AN ACT AMENDING SECTIONS 22, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 34, 37, 38, 39, 42, 51, 52, 54, 56, 57, 73, 108, 121, 122, 123, 174, 176, 179, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, AND 199; AND REPEALING SECTIONS 127, 175, 177, 178, 180, 192, AND 193; ALL UNDER REPUBLIC NO. 8424, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE NATIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1997, AS AMENDED, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

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

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

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

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

REP. DEFENSOR. To sponsor the measure, Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the distinguished Chairperson of the Committee on Ways and Means, the Lady from the First District of Nueva Ecija, the Hon. Estrellita B. Suansing.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). The Honorable Suansing (E.) is recognized.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF REP. SUANSING (E.)

REP. SUANSING. A pleasant afternoon to the distinguished ladies and gentlemen of this august Body. Once again, I stand before you with high hopes for your support for this important piece of legislation that covers the fourth package of the Duterte administration's comprehensive tax reform program. It was once said

by then US President Ronald Reagan, "Government's view of the economy could be summed up in a few short phrases: If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it. And if it stops moving, subsidize it."

This Bill complements the recently-passed Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) Act or Republic Act No. 10963 by making passive income taxes and financial intermediary taxes simpler, fairer and more efficient. As it is today, the taxation of the financial sector may be described to have a complicated tax structure, susceptible to arbitrage and uneven playing field, inequitable distribution of tax burden, uncompetitive tax system, and high administrative and compliance costs not supportive of capital market development. It is said to be complicated as there are about 80 tax bases and tax rate combinations applicable to financial income, financial intermediation services, and financial transactions. The tax on income also depends on many factors and conditions which are difficult to ascertain. The factors that affect the taxation of income include the type of product, type of lending, issuer, currency, maturity, taxpayer, residency and business status, and various special laws. These result in variations in the tax base and tax rate, even among comparable financial instruments and transactions.

Under House Bill No. 8645, interests, dividends and capital gains will be levied with a unified income tax rate of 15 percent. Preneed, pension and life insurance will be levied a uniform two percent. Various nuisance documentary stamp taxes will be removed. Resultantly, passive income rates will be reduced by half. Ultimately, the poor and the middle class will enjoy a net gain. The tax on savings will go down from 20 percent to 15 percent, providing a tax saving of P50 to P113.50 for savings and investments ranging from P35,000 to P100,000. Meanwhile, the rich who invests in dividends will pay five percent more in taxes. However, the losses will only be minimal, at less than P200 per P55,000. Likewise, the variations in tax rates and unequal tax treatment of equivalent or comparable financial instruments give rise to arbitrage. The different tax treatments among the sectors—between financial institutions and non-financial institutions offering the same service and/or products, or between interests and dividends—open a window for arbitrage and leveraging. These disparities in tax treatments distort investment decisions, considering that tax impositions overshadow all other considerations. Competitive advantage arises in favor of the financial sector favored by the tax treatment. This measure seeks to simplify such complexity and provide neutrality in the tax treatments across financial institutions and financial instruments by reducing the rates of withholding taxes and removing the distinctions, special rates and unnecessary exemptions.

Moreover, the current tax system provides certain concessions or different tax treatments for certain transactions or some types of financial institutions or FIs compared to similar transactions of other FIs. For instance, there are exemptions allowed for long-term investments, bank deposits, individual trust funds and investment management accounts in favor of resident individuals. Such exemptions do not cover long-term savings offered by other FIs such as life insurance, pre-need/pension plans and investment houses, among others.

Anent the classification between different FIs, this has caused unequal treatment, considering that some are subject to gross receipts tax or GRT, while some are subject to premium tax, while still others are subject to the value-added tax or VAT. For instance, banks, quasi-banks and other FIs are subject to GRT, while life insurance companies are subject to premium tax; and lending investors, property insurers, preneed companies, health maintenance organizations or HMOs, and money remitters are subject to VAT. This is not to mention those investments in equity and some forms of long-term instruments which are subject to lower tax rates. Hence, those who have more money to place in these investments tend to pay lower taxes compared to working class individuals who are content with placing their funds in short-term investments like savings deposits but being charged with higher taxes.

This measure intends to redesign the financial sector taxation with fairer and more efficient ways. With utmost optimism, this Bill shall improve equity among investors and savers, minimize arbitrage opportunities through application of a single rate of gross receipt tax on all insurance businesses and the removal of distinctions between lending and non-lending activities and terms of maturity. Comparing our tax system on capital income with other ASEAN nations, the Philippine tax rates remain as the highest in the region. This is the very reason the Philippine capital market remains shallow and uncompetitive, and continues to lag behind its ASEAN neighbors. Admittedly, our current tax system on the financial sector imposed difficult and costly administration and compliance. For instance, firms have to pay different taxes that are derived from the same tax base. There are also some taxes on financial transactions that hinder capital market development. Initial public offering or IPO tax, for instance, is essentially a tax on capital and does not take into consideration income generation. Such an imposition serves as a deterrent to public listing. This results in the Philippine Stock Exchange or PSE waddling behind other ASEAN countries in terms of market capitalization.

Hence, this measure will promote capital market development and tax competitiveness within the context of financial globalization, increased capital mobility and financial inclusion. It removes or minimizes barriers to

capital market development, like the IPO tax which is found to be detrimental to capital market development. Further, the documentary stamp tax or DST of the financial sector has been rationalized to promote capital mobility. In order to have a competitive tax system, this Bill adopted tax rates comparable to those of neighboring ASEAN nations and their best practices. With the introduced reform, the proposed rates would be at par with the rates imposed in the ASEAN to ensure competitiveness of the domestic capital market. The approval of this Bill provides a window of opportunity to achieve the much-needed reforms in the financial sector. The taxation of the financial system should indeed be viewed as a major component of these reforms, an ingredient that could fuel and direct the movement of capital rightly to where it is most needed so that higher, sustainable and more inclusive growth can be achieved.

Financial sector taxation is indeed ripe for reform. We need to compete better in attracting capital investment which is urgently needed to finance infrastructure, create more and better jobs, and boost the inclusive and sustainable growth of the economy.

Thank you for your unwavering support for this important piece of legislation.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 8645

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 8645.

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

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. DEFENSOR. I move for the suspension of session, Mr. Speaker.

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

It was 5:05 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:12 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO THE COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT

REP. MARCOLETA. Mr. Speaker, I move for the election of the following Members to the Committee on Oversight:

As Vice-Chairmen:

- Rep. Rodante D. Marcoleta
Rep. Victoria Isabel G. Noel
Rep. Cristina "Chiqui" Roa-Puno, and
Rep. Alexandria P. Gonzales.

As Members, for the Majority:

- Rep. Michael L. Romero, PhD
Rep. Ron P. Salo
Rep. Vini Nola A. Ortega
Rep. Deogracias Victor "DV" B. Savellano
Rep. Rosanna "Ria" Vergara
Rep. Jose Enrique "Joet" S. Garcia III
Rep. Marlyn B. Alonte
Rep. Wilter "Sharky" Wee Palma II
Rep. Marlyn L. Primicias-Agabas
Rep. Lawrence H. Fortun
Rep. Bernadette "B.H." Herrera-Dy
Rep. Florida" Rida" P. Robes
Rep. Johnny Ty Pimentel
Rep. Oscar "Richard" S. Garin Jr.
Rep. Ann K. Hofer
Rep. Arthur R. Defensor Jr., and
Rep. Rogelio J. Espina, M.D.
I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. MARCOLETA. Mr. Speaker, I move to recognize the Minority Leader.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). The Minority Leader, the Hon. Danilo E. Suarez, is recognized.

REP. SUAREZ. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for the Minority, I move to elect the following as Members:

- Rep. Juliet Marie D. Ferrer
Rep. Peter John D. Calderon, and
Rep. Strike B. Revilla.
I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Minority Leader, the Honorable Suarez, please continue.

ELECTION OF REP. SALON AS DEPUTY MINORITY LEADER

REP. SUAREZ. Mr. Speaker, I move to elect the Hon. Orestes T. Salon of the AGRI Party-List as Deputy Minority Leader.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, last Thursday, the Armed Forces of the Philippines Legislative Stakeholders Engagement, the Hon. Anthony M. Bravo, PhD, the Hon. Cheryl P. Deloso-Montalla and former Secretary General Cesar Strait Pareja were not able to receive their certificates and marksmanship badges due to unforeseen events. In order to allow the representative of the AFP to present such certificates and badges to our colleagues, we move for the suspension of our session to give way to this awarding.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

It was 5:15 p.m.

At this juncture, the following certificates and badges were awarded to Representative Bravo (A.) and former Secretary General Pareja by the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

REP. DEFENSOR. In the presentation of the awards, Mr. Speaker, allow me to read the citation:

HEADQUARTERS
TRAINING AND DOCTRINE COMMAND,
PHILIPPINE ARMY
Camp O'Donnell, Capas, Tarlac

22 November 2018

GENERAL ORDERS
NUMBER 601 and 602

AWARD OF THE MARKSMANSHIP BADGE

Pursuant to paragraph G-1, Appendix G28-1, Annex, Armed Forces of the Philippines Regulations G131-054. General Headquarters, Armed Forces of the Philippines dated 26 June 2014, as revised, the Award of the Marksmanship Badge Expert is hereby awarded to Lieutenant Colonel Anthony M. Bravo, PhD.

Likewise, under the same citation just read, the award is likewise given to former Secretary General, Atty. Cesar S. Pareja, by command of Major General Devesa.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). Congratulations. (*Applause*)

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:18 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF R.B.H. NO. 15

Continuation

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of Resolution of Both Houses No. 15 as contained in Committee Report No. 923 and for this, that we please direct our Secretary General to read only the title of the measure.

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. Resolution of Both Houses No. 15, entitled: RESOLUTION OF BOTH HOUSES PROPOSING THE REVISION OF THE 1987 CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary status is that we are in the period of sponsorship and debate. I move that we recognize the Hon. Wilter “Sharky” Wee Palma II to sponsor the measure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). The Honorable Palma is recognized to sponsor the measure.

REP. PALMA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, first to interpellate today is the Lady from the Third District of Nueva Ecija. I move that we recognize the Hon. Rosanna “Ria” Vergara.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). The Honorable Vergara is recognized to interpellate.

REP. VERGARA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity to be here as we discuss the revision of the Philippine Constitution as embodied in Resolution of Both Houses No. 15. I believe it is our solemn duty under the Constitution to fully participate in these deliberations as the revision of this fundamental law of our land will affect all Filipinos. I fully support Resolution of Both Houses No. 15. The Honorable Veloso said last week, when he introduced this Resolution, that one of the intentions of Resolution of Both Houses No. 15 is to spur regional economic development in those regions in our country left behind—and he specifically mentioned Region VIII—or to decentralize “imperial Manila,” a phrase I so often heard growing up. I am hopeful that the country’s development, especially in the regions that are lagging behind, will be addressed by the change from a unitary form of government to a federal one. With this in mind, I would like to ask the honorable Sponsor about some provisions to be enlightened as to the reason they were placed or amended, and to explain why he thinks they should be removed, deleted or strengthened. Is that allowed? I ask permission, honorable Speaker, to begin.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). Please proceed.

REP. VERGARA. In Article II of the proposed Federal Constitution, the proponents added the clause “shall be governed by benevolent neutrality” to the present Article II, Section 6 which currently states, “The separation of church and State shall be inviolable.” I know that the addition constitutionalizes a standard used by the Supreme Court in the 2003 case of *Estrada vs. Escritor*. I support Congressman Tinio’s observation that the current insertion of the phrase “relations between them shall be governed by benevolent neutrality” in Article II, Section 6 should be removed and we retain the current line as is—“separation of church and State shall be inviolable.”

Since this article of the Constitution speaks of general principles, I think that we should just leave the current section in the Constitution as it is and let the task of developing constitutional tests or standards

to the Supreme Court, which has the duty to interpret our Constitution in the context of the changing circumstances and facets of our national life. I fear that constitutionalizing the standard of benevolent neutrality would unnecessarily make the Constitution inflexible even during those times that require a reexamination of our laws.

May we ask the Honorable Palma if he is amenable to this recommendation.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, since we are in the period of sponsorship and debate, our stand is, kung ano po iyong nakasulat po natin dito is iyon po ang dedependensahan namin at iyon po ang paniniwala ng Representanteng ito sapagkat ito po ay dumaan sa maraming komite at marami pong—it underwent a lot of consultation. My personal view is that I believe in the provision of benevolent neutrality. However, that being said, I would like to encourage the Honorable Vergara that in due time, she may also introduce some amendments, whether it would be to amend the provision itself or to delete the provision, at the proper time. With that, siguro dadaan naman po sa diskusyon iyan at siguro po, sa tamang panahon, ay magkakaroon po tayo ng diskusyon kung aamyendahan po ba natin ang probisyon na iyan o hindi, kung tatanggalin ba natin o hindi. So, siguro po, sa tamang panahon, pag-uusapan po natin iyan during the period of amendments. That being said, let me also stress that the provision of benevolent neutrality was actually introduced by the Constitutional Commission and was recommended by the commission that was created by the President of the Philippines, Rodrigo Roa Duterte.

REP. VERGARA. So, honorable Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, since they were the ones who inserted it, you are in no position to explain why they did that?

REP. PALMA. No, Ma'am. As of now, I cannot definitely say that I am in favor of your recommendation or not, but let me stress again that this is the recommendation of the Constitutional Commission, and my personal view is that I believe in the theory of benevolent neutrality. So, like I said, this Representation is willing to listen. In due time, when the period of amendments is already open, then we will hear your concerns and we will be happy to deliberate on that during the period of amendments.

REP. VERGARA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The next, Mr. Speaker, is that the proposed Federal Constitution also amends Article III, Section 1 of the current Constitution by adding this provision as the first line, as Congressman Tinio also mentioned, "The natural right to protect oneself shall always be respected

by the State." A reading of the line tells us that it speaks of the right to self-defense. I echo Congressman Tinio's questions last Wednesday with respect to the necessity and danger of constitutionalizing the right to self-defense. In the first place, the right to self-defense as a natural right is debatable. It transports us back to the time when society was still ruled by passions of men and not by law. But even conceding the status of that right, there is no necessity to make it a constitutional and primordial right, as Congressman Tinio said, in Article III, considering that such right is already granted under our statutes, as well as embedded in our criminal laws, and the Revised Penal Code, Article 11, protects the person who exercises self-defense from any criminal liability.

So, I guess, my question is similar: Why is that now the very first line of our Bill of Rights?

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, the first line of Section 1, the natural right to protect oneself, was inserted also as recommended by the Constitutional Commission. Like I previously mentioned, Mr. Speaker—siguro ang chronology po dito, well, hindi naman po ibig sabihin na since nauna siya, siya po ang naging pinakamataas na right of a person. So, like I said po, last week I mentioned na puwede naman po natin pagbaliktarin ang mga probisyon na ito, itong mga sentences in Section 1.

The rationale for the provision on natural right is that the right of the people to use reasonable force or defensive force for the purpose of defending one's own life should be given priority, pero hindi naman po sinasabi na siya ang pinakamataas. Ang sinasabi lang po natin ay natural right po natin ito sapagkat buhay na po natin ang pinag-uusapan. Hindi po ibig sabihin na kesyo nandito siya sa Constitution ay you already have the absolute power to defend yourself. Mayroong criteria po na sinusunod at iyon po ang nakalaan sa ating Revised Penal Code. Even in the Rules of Court, nakalaan po ang procedure na ito. Mayroon pang mga principles in criminal law wherein they stated na even if the right exercised by the person is not self-defense, if it does not fall within the criteria mentioned in the Revised Penal Code, ay mananagot po siya sa ating hukuman. Ang sinasabi lang po namin dito, Mr. Speaker, is that kailangan na po naming i-institutionalize ang natural right natin—to recognize that protection of oneself is a natural right of every person. Hindi po sinasabi ng proposed Constitution na ito po ang pinakamataas na right sa pansariling rights natin.

So, iyon lang po, Mr. Speaker. Gusto lang po naming i-institutionalize o kinikilala lang po natin ang ating sariling karapatan.

REP. VERGARA. I concur pero, siguro, nababahala lang ako dahil ito ngayon ang pinaka-unang linya sa

Bill of Rights. Kahit tayo, hindi ba, kapag tumatakbo, sa party-list palang ay nag-aagawan na kung sino ang letter “A.”

REP. PALMA. Naiintindihan ko po.

REP. VERGARA. So it seems to reinforce the idea that self-defense is the most important right and it worries me that it might weaken the rule of law. Like you mentioned, honorable author, it is already in the Revised Penal Code so nagtataka lang ako kung bakit natin na naman ipinapasok dito as it seems misplaced. I understand your explanation but maybe, I would be more comfortable if I do not see it as the first line under the Bill of Rights.

The third one, honorable speaker, is regarding the Bill of Duties. I was listening last week when the Honorable Veloso was explaining this and I think the spirit behind putting the Bill of Duties is similar to what JFK said, “Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.” However, I am just thinking, does this not sort of demand certain duties as stated here, and that if you do not perform them, then, you have no right under the Bill of Rights that is enshrined in this Constitution. Like, how do we define “participate meaningfully” under Section 4? It says, “Citizens shall participate actively in public and civic affairs, contribute to good governance.” How do we define “participate actively”? For instance, kunwari, mayroong Alay Lakad na sponsored ng gobyerno, pagkatapos, hindi ka sumama. Is it a violation of your duty to participate actively by opting not to join, let us say, these kinds of activities sponsored by the government?

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, hindi po ganyan ang konsepto ng Bill of Duties. Ipapaliwanag ko lang po na ang Bill of Duties po kasi ay idinagdag po dito sa proposed Federal Constitution kasi po ang Bill of Rights natin under the 1987 Constitution, in Article III, these are the limitations imposed by the Constitution against the State. In other words, pinipigilan lang po ng Article III ang Estado na gumawa ng karahasan against sa ating mga mamamayan, even including those who are not citizens of the Philippines but are present here in the country.

Now, ang Bill of Duties po kasi, parang ito po ang hinihingi ng gobyerno na kapalit lang po, kumbaga, rerespetuhin lang po natin na mayroon tayong mga obligasyon sa ating gobyerno. It is not necessarily naman po na ito ay, kagaya po sa inyong example, magiging violation kaagad. Magiging violation lang po iyan kung may corresponding penalty, pero sa nakikita po natin dito sa ating Article IV, wala namang corresponding penalty po ito. Ang sinasabi lang ng proposed Federal Constitution ay mayroon lang tayong corresponding duty na dapat nating ibigay din sa ating Estado.

REP. VERGARA. So, honorable author, kapag hindi po natin nagawa iyong mga nakasaad dito sa Bill of Duties, ano po ang kahihinatnan noong hindi pagsunod doon sa duty na iyon?

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, as of now, if you look at Article IV of the proposed Federal Constitution, wala pong penalty na nakalagay po. In fact, the 1987 Constitution does not provide for any penalty. There should be corresponding laws in the future, perhaps a law which mandates—perhaps, anything at all. Kunwari iyong sinabi mo regarding the Alay Lakad na malyoong multa, dito siguro ay magkakaroon tayo ng another diskusyon. But in these proposed sections of Article IV of the proposed Federal Constitution, wala pong sinasabi dito na kapag ito po ay hindi natin sinunod ay mayroon tayong kaukulan na parusa na matatanggap. Hindi po ganoon ang operation ng proposed Constitution. Ang proposed Constitution po ay nagsasabi lang na just obey the laws and pay taxes, pero wala pong sinasabi kung aling laws o taxes dito. For example, in obeying the laws, which laws would that be? Wala naman pong binabanggit dito. It presupposes that this will include all laws in the present and future, ang gagawin pang mga batas.

REP. VERGARA. I agree because some of them are redundant. Like Section I, “It shall be the duty of every citizen to be loyal to the Republic of the Philippines, honor the Philippine flag x x x”—we already have R.A. No. 8491, the Code of the National Flag.

REP. PALMA. Tama po.

REP. VERGARA. To defend the State—I mean, most of them are already embodied in Republic Acts. Ano po iyong spirit behind creating this Bill of Duties? Hindi po ito quid pro quo. Hindi po ito na, “O sige may Bill of Rights ka pero para makuha mo iyong rights na iyon, kailangan susunod ka naman sa Bill of Duties na nakasaad dito.”

REP. PALMA. Hindi naman po ganoon, Mr. Speaker. The reason behind the inclusion of the Bill of Duties is to institutionalize lang. Tama po iyong sinasabi ni Honorable Vergara na mayroon na po tayong mga batas. In fact, in the 1987 Constitution, makikita natin na iyong ibang aspeto nitong Bill of Duties ay nandoon sa 1987 Constitution. For example, be loyal to the Republic of the Philippines, talagang requirement po iyan sa ating citizens of the Philippines, and even those who are not citizens of the Philippines should obey the law. Talagang enshrined po iyan. Kaya lang, napagkasunduan po ng Constitutional Commission na i-institutionalize po natin iyong Bill of Duties, at para mailagay lang po siya at ma-institutionalize siya na hindi

na natin kailangan gumawa pa ng other laws, Republic Acts o executive orders para sundin po natin ang mga duties na ito. General ang nakalagay dito, general po ang provision. Ang sinasabi lang po, i-institutionalize natin, at kung mayroon mang batas later on na gagawin ang Kongreso ay dapat po ating sundin.

REP. VERGARA. If I may just manifest, Sir, the danger I see with constitutionalizing these duties is that the government is now given a basis to penalize the citizens in the future for their non-performance even when there is no clear and measurable standard, for instance, in determining participation in civil affairs or contribution of good governance. Our focus should be to better the lives of our countrymen and not to unduly burden them with duties that they already know are relative to their rights as citizens. That is just my concern. If it is there as it is, fine, but as we move forward, you know, we have other amendments and all of a sudden, these duties will now carry with them certain penalties that are not in Republic Acts but in our Constitution. Then, that is when they become worrisome for me.

If I may go to the next point, Mr. Speaker.

REP. PALMA. Yes, Ma'am.

REP. VERGARA. On the two-party system, I support in theory the proposal to institute a two-party system so that there are more remedies to exact accountability in the participation of politicians in our national life. This means that we can finally put a stop to, or at least address, the phenomenon of political butterflies who switch parties for convenience and without regard for issues or principles. The two-party system will allow our people to hold the party accountable during elections as they will have an option to choose one or the other party, or vote the party out when the party in power is failing in its governance and policies.

I am curious, however, as to the vision of the proponents on how the two-party system might work in our country. I am a little worried because I was asking around and they said that the two-party system will evolve, depending on which two parties in the elections proposed in 2022 will win the most seats. What happens if that party is the Communist Party? They are funded by international groups. How do we prevent that? How do we maintain democracy, which is the form of government that we have, in our desire to have a two-party system? We say that elections will determine which are the most dominant parties. Heaven forbid the next dominant party is the Communist Party. What are the safeguards here?

REP. PALMA. Thank you very much for the question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, ang two-party

system po na pino-propose po natin dito sa Federal Constitution ay ito po iyong parang katulad sa United States of America where they have the Republicans and the Democrats. Ang binoboto po ng mga Americans is not the person but rather the party because each party has its own ideology. Perhaps, mayroon silang sariling pananaw on how to improve the country. Ito po ang ninanais lang po na natin na gayahin kasi, sa ngayon po, makikita natin na, since we have a multi-party system, nagkakanya-kanya po tayo. Ang partido na ito ay iba ang pananaw, ang isang partido naman na ito ay iba rin ang pananaw. There is no continuity of the programs of the government. Kung napapansin po ninyo, pagkatapos ng isang Presidente, ang pumalit ay may ibang agenda. Pagkatapos ng Presidente na iyan, ang pumalit ay iba na naman ang agenda, but there are programs of the government and there are issues of the society that need to be addressed beyond the six-year term limit of a President.

So, ang nakikitang solusyon po dito ay gumawa ng dalawang partido. Itong isang partido, ito iyong kanyang pananaw, ito iyong ilalahad niya na mga programa. The other party will do the same; it will lay down its programs and plans for the future of this Republic. Pagkatapos po, tayong mga politicians, nasa sa atin po kung aling pananaw po that we believe in or which party we want to be recognized with. Kumbaga, ang punto lang po talaga dito is the continuity of all programs of the government, na huwag iyong pabago-bago. Pagkatapos, nagiging isang problema po natin iyong multi-party kasi dapat—ganito na lang po, sa present situation natin, may Presidente tayo pero ang mga nasa baba, ang mga nasa legislative, even in the executive branch, magkakaiba ang partido.

Since hindi namin katunggali ang Presidente, o-oppose kami diyan. So, ganoon po ang status natin ngayon. Although hindi ko naman sinasabi na absolute na—with due respect to our colleagues here who are in the opposition—hindi ko naman sinasabi na ganoon pero it happens. Now, ang nagiging problema is, sa multi-party, nagko-combine tayo ng kanya-kanyang ideas and yet, we cannot come up with a long-term plan for the government because may sarili nga tayong mga agenda at may mga sarili tayong priorities. With the two-system party, we are hoping that this will be addressed.

REP. VERGARA. So, honorable author, would you be privy to how or what the framers of this two-party system see for the Philippines—pro-China versus the pro-US? Most of the time when we campaign, we hear our leaders saying the same things—we are for the poor, we are going to uplift your lives. So, I am just asking you: In your opinion, how do you see these two parties emerging? What do you think? In the US, the

Republicans are the capitalists and the Democrats are for the working men, the labor unions. In the UK, you have the Liberals and the Conservatives. So here, on this proposed two-party system for our country, what do you think the framers had in mind? What would be the defining line to be able to distinguish one from the other, do you have any idea?

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I am not privy to how the members of the Constitutional Commission deliberated on this matter and how they came up with the idea of setting up a two-party system. I was not privy to the discussion. However, as regards your second question on how I envision a two-party system here in the Philippines, *iyon po ang kagandahan po dito, Ma'am, Your Honor, because the two-party system will eventually evolve. As of now, what we see is the present multi-party system where this party has its stand, that party has its own stand, still another party has its own stand. When we shift to a two-party system, the framers perhaps envisioned that it will mature, it will develop, siguro kasi mayroon siyang, ano, but the change in the system will not happen with a mere flick of a finger. I can say that this is my opinion, na ang paniniwala ko po ay hindi po basta-basta ang pagsabi na, after the election, na ang two-party system, iyon na iyon kaagad. Mag-e-evolve po ang ating party system, mag-e-evolve po ang dalawang partido.*

So, just like in the US, just like in the UK, *iyong Democrats and Republicans, iyong the Conservatives and the Liberals, as they go along, nag-e-evolve po sila. In fact, the programs that they have, nag-e-evolve. Siguro iyon po ang essence or perhaps, the vision of the framers in the Constitutional Commission, which was to allow the two-party system later on to evolve without any interference from the government or any person, to let time allow the flow for the party to evolve.*

REP. VERGARA. Mr. Speaker, honorable author, that is exactly what worries me when you say it will evolve. What happens if the loudest voice and the biggest one that sends the message that touches most of our poor brothers and sisters is the cry of the Communist Party of the Philippines? Are we going to allow them to be the second party? That is why I ask, who will determine what these two parties will be? Will these parties be something like, which one garners the most vote? Will there be guidelines? Because to allow it to evolve, I think that it is very dangerous.

REP. PALMA. Yes, Mr. Speaker. At the outset, let me be clear that under the proposed Federal Constitution, only registered parties are allowed to participate in the election. Parties which are *per se* illegal or not recognized by the State should not be or are not allowed to participate in the election. So, only

those registered po and—again, let me stress that this is just my opinion—on the hypothesis *na mayroon isang grupo na nagpasok dito ng isang partido at iyon po ang naging dominant, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, ito po ang essence ng demokrasya— that we allow the people to say what they want and we in the government, we as elected officials are the voices of the people. Kung sila ang mananalo diyan because iyon po ang tawag ng karamihan at iyon po ang tawag ng taumbayan ay hindi ko po masasabing wala po tayong magagawa pero iyon po talaga ang essence ng demokrasya—to listen to the people and allow them to say what they want through the election.*

REP. VERGARA. Will you assure me, Mr. Speaker, that those parties that are running on a platform contrary to what the Republic of the Philippines stands for, will not be allowed to be the dominant party in this two-party system that this Constitution proposed, or you are still of the mindset that this is a democracy and if that is what the people want, then so be it?

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, let me make it clear that, again, only registered parties can participate in the election. Illegal parties or parties that believe in illegal activities are not allowed to enter the election arena. In other words, Mr. Speaker, at the outset pa lang po, *pag-file pa lang po ng kandidatura ng mga nagnanais na gustong mahalal ay tinitingnan po iyong partido. May COMELEC po tayo at may guidelines po iyong COMELEC. If they violate the rules and regulations and the laws, then they will not be given the permission to enter as a party in the election.*

REP. VERGARA. Mr. Speaker, honorable author, you said that among the reasons the framers were proposing a two-party system were for continuity of programs and to prevent political switching, right?

REP. PALMA. Yes, Ma'am. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VERGARA. Rather than go from a multi-party to a strictly two-party system, would it not be better that we maintain the multi-party system and just amend our laws to make switching illegal?

REP. PALMA. Actually, Your Honor, the term “switching,” meaning the transfer of one elected official or one person or one candidate from one party to another, is actually allowed in the proposed Federal Constitution, only that there is provided a time period wherein a person cannot transfer from one party to the other party within a period of six months after the election. So, *iyong switching po, actually, the proposed Federal Constitution allows it. Ang sinasabi lang po kasi dito is to establish a two-party system that upholds, perhaps,*

two different ideas, two different programs, but which will give us a continuing or at least an outlook on the continuing programs of the government. For an example, myself, kung lilipat ako sa isang partido, hindi po ibig sabihin na pinagbabawalan po ako because this is my right if I want to join another party. So, ang ibig lang sabihin nito is na-institutionalize lang po natin ang dalawang partido wherein makikita natin dito ang mga programa nila at tulad nang sinabi ko kanina, pagdating sa Amerika, the American voters do not vote for the person, but they are actually voting for the principles or the programs of that party. So, basically, kaya magugulat na lang tayo na ang governor sa isang lugar, hindi siya kilala pero nanalo, ay wala naman siyang platapormang sinasabi. Ang sinasabi lang niya, "I am for the Democrats. I am in the Republican." Kasi naka-institutionalize po iyong mga programa nila. You can see it from each state, na may nakalagay, "O ito iyong programa ng Democrats, ito iyong programa ng Republicans." Ito lang po ang ninanais ng proposed Federal Constitution natin, but not to prevent any one of us from switching parties.

REP. VERGARA. Okay. Then I stand corrected because I thought the reason for the two-party system was to minimize switching from one party to another. So, in short, the two-party system is just to really create two parties with differing principles so that the voters can identify which party they will support and it will be no longer an issue of personalities but party representation.

REP. PALMA. Yes, representation, Your Honor.

REP. VERGARA. Is that right?

REP. PALMA. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. VERGARA. Still, I just want to say, again, the evolving—that really worries me and I just hope that once the proposed Constitution is approved, this will have IRR. There is none?

REP. PALMA. No.

REP. VERGARA. The Constitution does not require them. It is what it is on paper.

REP. PALMA. Yes.

REP. VERGARA. Subject to interpretation, and if there is confusion, then it goes to the Supreme Court to determine how to interpret it.

REP. PALMA. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. VERGARA. I will move on to the next issue, on the ticket vote for the President and the Vice President which is what they have in the United States where, since it has a two-party system, a vote for the President is a vote for the Vice President. Historically, here in our country, we always see, more often than not, that the President and the Vice President come from two different parties.

REP. PALMA. Yes, two different parties, that is correct.

REP. VERGARA. It is almost like our electorate is the check and balance, and they do not want to give the entire executive branch, at least the President and the Vice President, to two individuals who belong to the same party. This is based on historical data with the exception, I believe, in 2004 and that was the only time we had President-elect GMA and Vice President-elect Noli de Castro.

REP. PALMA. Yes, Noli de Castro, Your Honor.

REP. VERGARA. In all our other elections, there was always a President and Vice President coming from different parties. By putting this in our Constitution, are we not going against what our people believe in, on how they would like to vote? Are we not forcing it upon them na, "Okay, now, we have changed our Constitution, so it is take one, buy two. No more. You know, you might like that Vice President, but he is not with the President that you like." So, this is mandated. Is that not sort of forcing them into a box?

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that this is a violation of the right of the people to choose because this goes hand in hand also with the two-party system. So, ang point lang po dito is, since we have a two-party system or the vision here is to have a two-party system, thus, it is necessary, therefore, that the President and the Vice President should belong to the same party. So, a vote for one should also be a vote for the other, kasi nga po, nandoon iyong dalawang partido, ito lang ang nakikita natin.

Can you imagine a scene with a two-party system and yet, nagkaroon ng problema because the President and the Vice President do not belong to the same party? So, the whole point of having it, iyong vote for the President is also the vote for the Vice President, this hinges on the idea that we have a two-party system.

REP. VERGARA. So, if for any reason we amend this and it becomes a multi-party system with amendments, then, this vote for the President and the Vice President will also be removed. If this proposed Constitution is approved, which has a two-party system, then this follows?

REP. PALMA. Yes, that is the vision here, Your Honor.

REP. VERGARA. So, in the period of amendments, we amend it and say, “Okay, we will have a transition phase. It will only be a two-party system.” Immediately—it will take a while before we get there—then this one vote for the President and the Vice President will automatically be also deferred. Is that correct?

REP. PALMA. For clarification lang, Your Honor. Are we saying that in the event that we amend the two-party system and allow the multi-party system, kapag hindi naamyendahan ang provision na ito, it follows that if the proposed Federal Constitution is ratified by the people, then, necessarily, nandoodon pa rin po na iyong vote ng President is also the vote for the Vice President.

So, if our colleagues would like to introduce amendments, maybe, we should look into that also, kasi hindi po natin sinasabi na amending one provision necessarily amends the other. Hindi po. Kung mayroon tayong nakikitang kailangang i-amend dito sa isang probisyon at may nakarugtong o equally related ito doon sa next provision, I suggest that we look also into that provision because one amendment will not necessarily amend the other provision.

REP. VERGARA. Thank you. The last one that I would like to—I mean the second to the last—which is most troublesome for me is the requirement of a college degree to run for a national position. At first glance, this qualification seems justifiable. We look for college degree holders for the top positions in the private sector, the civil service eligibility for important government positions so, why not for the most important elective positions in the government, especially those national in scope? It is a perfectly logical premise and makes perfect sense. However, honorable author, here are the facts: In 2010, only 10 percent of Filipinos had college degrees. As of 2018, this 10 percent is now 36 percent or an increase of 3.25 percent per year, and free college education in public state universities has only been around for less than a year. Thus, requiring college degrees would disenfranchise almost 64 percent of our voters, narrow down the pool of qualified people simply because they do not have a college degree. There is also no scientific evidence that a college graduate would perform better as a leader than one who is not.

In my own personal experience as a neophyte Congressman, none of the classes I took in college was relevant to my job as a Representative. The traits that helped me serve my constituents have nothing to do with my educational attainment. Rather, perseverance, the recognition of my own strengths and weaknesses,

knowledge about the needs of my constituents, and making informed and sound choices when voting and making bills—these are the traits that I rely on most, none of which I learned in college.

On February 2018, The Harvard Business Review published an article of successful CEOs without college degrees, and they cited three attributes: The first is familiarity with the issues of the business or in our case, it should be a prospective leader’s familiarity with the needs and problems of his or her district and country. The second trait is sincerity and reliability—doing what you say and delivering results. The third is humility, recognizing what you do not know and bringing in people who are experts and working with them as a team. None of these attributes are gained by having a college degree. We can add to that list, character, integrity and sound judgment.

To require a college degree would narrow down the pool of qualified applicants and would be unjust and contradict Section 25, Article II in this proposed Constitution which says there should be equal access to serve in public office. Thus, I hope that during the period of amendments, we will consider to remove this qualification so as not to dash the hopes of our fellow Filipinos who do not have the opportunity that most of us have. Ang sabi nga ng asawa ko, “Masarap mangarap dahil ang pangarap ay libre.” Huwag sana naman nating ipagkait ang mangarap ang ating mga kababayan na hindi pinalad makapag-aral dahil sa kahirapan. Sana sila din ay maaaring mangarap na makapaglingkod bilang Representante, Senador, Bise Presidente o Presidente dahil ang hinahanap natin sa ating liderato, higit sa katalinuhan, ay ang katapatan, mapagkumbaba, mapagmahal sa bayan at kagustuhang magsilbi nang walang hinihintay na kapalit.

I know that the next section says that Congress will exempt those who have been elected prior to the approval of this Constitution.

REP. PALMA. Yes, Ma’am.

REP. VERGARA. Even that, I think, is unfair because it says that if you were elected before we apply this, then, even if you do not have a college degree, you are okay. But if you, unfortunately, lost in the previous elections and now, you won in an election but you have no college degree, then, sorry, you are not allowed to sit. So, I hope you will take this explanation and really look into why we, all of a sudden, included a college degree requirement for Congressmen, Senators, President and Vice President.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, just a quick response to the Honorable Vergara’s concerns and observations—by the way, let me stress that I fully agree with the Honorable Vergara’s statement that a college degree or

educational attainment does not make you or define you as a good leader—that is true, I agree. However, in this proposed Federal Constitution, the reason it included the requirement of a college education is that we want to, kumbaga gusto lang natin na pagandahin pa ang ating pagseserbisyo.

Baka ma-misconstrue ninyo ako pero ang sinasabi ko lang po is the quality of product or service that we give out. Kumbaga, can you imagine, pagdating sa isang aplikante na ordinaryong mamamayan, janitorial lang, that one of the requirements, dapat siya ay college level. Pero pagdating po sa ating mga—with due respect sa pinakamataas na kawani ng gobyerno—para sa Presidente natin, ang nakalagay lang na qualification ay, he must be able to read and write.

Hindi ko naman sa minamaliit iyon, ang sa akin lang po, ang gusto lang po natin ay i-angat ang ating quality of service. It may not—and I fully agree with your statement awhile ago, Mr. Speaker—define you as a good leader or not, but what is important is that you render your service. However, there are sectors in the government such as ourselves here in the Congress, parang ang academic standards po ay medyo kailangan, lalung-lalo na kasi batas ang ating mga ginagawa dito. So, in order for us to have a better grasp or a better understanding, it was agreed to put in as one of the requirements, having a college education or background.

If I remember it right, hindi lang ako sure kung tama ang memory ko, dati pa nga ay may nakalagay na “or its equivalent.” Kaya lang ang problema sa phrase na “or its equivalent,” ano naman iyong ka-equivalent nito? That is why it was removed and instead, nilagay na lang po na college education o college degree.

REP. VERGARA. Mr. Speaker, I am sorry, what was it before?

REP. PALMA. Dati, mayroon pong nakalagay na college degree or its equivalent. May nakalagay pong ganyan, but during the deliberations, a lot of questions were raised on what is considered “as its equivalent.” So, napagkasunduan na tanggalin na lang ito dahil parang mas lalong gumulo. What came out as a result of the deliberations ay ito pong college degree requirement.

REP. VERGARA. I kind of disagree with what you said that having a college degree will elevate or improve the quality of our governance. Maybe, if we will look at all those found guilty by the Sandiganbayan, how many kaya have no college degree, as I am sure all of them have college degrees. In fairness to the 64 percent of Filipinos who have yet to attain a college degree, maybe, it would be fair to put that 10 to 15 years from now, and the Free Education Act that was

just signed by the President into law last year will have been around for a longer time. We have Bill Gates, we have Steven Jobs, we have Mark Zuckerberg, they are all billionaires and they changed the way, you know, we communicate but they are college dropouts. Now, are you telling me they are not qualified to be a President just because they do not have that degree? We look to America and they have Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, Harry S. Truman—they are the pillars of American democracy. They were self-schooled, they do not have college degrees.

I just do not want people to think that we are creating a Constitution that is elitist. I mean, usually, those who can afford college are coming from the A, B and C classes. So, let it not be said that this Congress passed a Constitution that disenfranchised people from the lower classes who do not have access to education. Like I said, let us give them hope and let us not dash that hope. In 10 or 15 years, this Free College Education Act will have, more or less, increased the 36 percent to 85 percent—I think that would be acceptable.

The last, Mr. Speaker, on the composition of the Electoral Tribunal, currently, the House of Representatives Electoral Tribunal is composed of five Representatives and three Justices from the Supreme Court. The proposal amended that and now, there are two from the House of Representatives, two from the Senate, and five Justices from the Supreme Court. Is the composition of the present Electoral Tribunals not more appropriate, as such have the proper check and balance mechanisms in the so-called “decision making” of the Justices who are tempered by the competence of legislators who were the ones who ran for office and are more familiar with the realities of elections and the compliance with the requirements of the election returns and the qualifications of the Members and vice versa? May the distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, enlighten this Representation on the reason this amendment was introduced to stack the Electoral Tribunal in favor of the Supreme Court Justices than those Representatives elected by the people?

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, the whole idea of an electoral tribunal—ang electoral tribunal po ay para pong husgado. This is the sole body that will determine whether a certain candidate or elected official is indeed qualified and possesses all the qualifications and none of the disqualifications. This is judicial in nature. In the present Constitution, mayroon po tayong tinatawag na House of Representatives Electoral Tribunal and as a counterpart in the Senate, we also have a Senate Electoral Tribunal.

In the proposed Federal Constitution, however, tinanggal po natin ang HRET at SET at ginawa po nating Congressional Electoral Tribunal. If there is

a question as to the qualification of a Senator, this particular case will be brought to the Congressional Electoral Tribunal, in the same way that if there is a question on the eligibility of a Member of the House, dito rin po natin dadalhin iyan, kaya po nagkaroon ng equal number of Members from the Senate and the House of Representatives. Now, as to the question on why mas marami ang Justices or the members of the Judiciary who are involved, like I said, the function of an electoral tribunal is judicial in nature.

Ang function po ng isang Mambabatas ay enshrined sa isang legislative function. So, parang nagkaroon po tayo ng isang delineation lang para hindi po maubos ang oras ng isang Mambabatas na, instead of attending to his constituents and attending to his functions as a Member of the legislative branch of the government, ay napupunta na lang po iyong oras at panahon niya sa pag-iintindi ng isang kaso ng kanyang kasamahan sa Kongreso. Nauubos ang kanyang oras dahil lamang po sa isang disqualification case filed against a certain individual, so, nawawala po iyong function niya. Hindi naman natin tinanggal but rather, binawasan natin ang Members of the House and the Senate in the Congressional Electoral Tribunal at dinamihan natin ang Justices of the Supreme Court, the members of the Judiciary.

REP. VERGARA. Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, the spirit behind cutting back the number of Representatives is because of time. We want our Representatives engaging more in creating bills...

REP. PALMA. And in our functions, yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VERGARA. ... and that is the reason?

REP. PALMA. That is just one of the reasons, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VERGARA. Okay. Thank you very much, honorable author, Mr. Speaker. That ends my speaking here now, but I hope that my interpellation does not prevent me from rising again to make amendments.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker

REP. PALMA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. TY. Mr. Speaker.

REP. DEFENSOR. What is the pleasure of the Gentleman of the LGPMA Party-List?

REP. TY. Mr. Speaker, as we are tackling a very important legislative matter, I believe we have no quorum. I move that we adjourn.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, may I move for a suspension of the session before we proceed with the motion.

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

It was 6:09 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 6:09 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

REP. MARCOLETA. Mr. Speaker.

REP. TY. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my motion.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). The previous motion has been withdrawn.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. MARCOLETA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we proceed to the Additional Reference of Business, and may we request that the Secretary General be directed to read same.

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

The Secretary General is directed to please read the Additional Reference of Business.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report of the Committee on Justice and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 952), re H.B. No. 8646, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING NINE (9) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE TWELFTH JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED IN THE CITY OF TACURONG AND IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ISULAN, PROVINCE OF SULTAN KUDARAT, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14(M) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BILANG 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ‘THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980’, AS AMENDED”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bills Numbered 6085 and 6086
Sponsors: Representatives Leachon, Zamora (M.C.), Veloso and Mangudadatu (S.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Should we not suspend first the consideration of the previous Bill?

REP. MARCOLETA. We already did, Mr. Speaker.

Report of the Committee on Revision of Laws (Committee Report No. 953), re H.B. No. 8648, entitled:

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). Is the Gentleman satisfied with the response of the Majority Leader?

“AN ACT DECLARING JANUARY 17 OF EVERY YEAR AS JAMES LEONARD TAGLE GORDON DAY, A SPECIAL NONWORKING HOLIDAY IN THE CITY OF OLONGAPO AND IN THE SUBIC BAY FREEPORT ZONE, IN RECOGNITION OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS, CONTRIBUTIONS AND HEROISM OF JAMES LEONARD TAGLE GORDON”

REP. TY. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 7212
Sponsors: Representatives Primicias-Agabas and Hernandez (F.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

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

DESIGNATION OF MEMBERS TO THE CONF. CTTEE. ON H.B. NO. 8417 AND S.B. NO. 1439

Report of the Committee on Transportation (Committee Report No. 954), re H.B. No. 8649, entitled:

REP. MARCOLETA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we designate the following as members of the Conference Committee on the disagreeing provisions of House Bill No. 8417 and Senate Bill No. 1439, on establishing the Energy Virtual One-Stop Shop: Reps. Lord Allan Jay Q. Velasco, Carlos Roman L. Uybarreta, Rodel M. Batocabe, Jose Enrique “Joet” S. Garcia III and Orestes T. Salon.

“AN ACT RENAMING CLARK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT LOCATED IN ANGELES CITY, PROVINCE OF PAMPANGA AS DIOSDADO MACAPAGAL INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT”

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bills Numbered 2274 and 8289
Sponsors: Representatives Sarmiento (C.), Gonzales (A.D.) and Marcoleta
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

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

The Members nominated are so designated

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

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

REP. MARCOLETA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn the session until tomorrow, November 27, at three o'clock in the afternoon.

REP. MARCOLETA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we designate the following Members to the Conference Committee ...

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the session is adjourned until three o'clock tomorrow afternoon.

REP. TY. Mr. Speaker, parliamentary inquiry.

It was 6:11 p.m.