



# Congressional Record

PLENARY PROCEEDINGS OF THE 18<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST REGULAR SESSION

## House of Representatives

Vol. 1

Tuesday, August 27, 2019

No. 12

### CALL TO ORDER

At 5:00 p.m., Deputy Speaker Deogracias Victor “DV” B. Savellano called the session to order.

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

Please rise for the Invocation to be delivered by the Hon. Maria Laarni Cayetano of the Second District of Taguig City-Pateros.

*Everybody rose for the Invocation.*

### INVOCATION

REP. CAYETANO (M.). 1 Corinthians 15:58 says and I quote:

*Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.*

Let us pray:

*Father God, as we gather here today, we praise and thank You for giving us in the House of Representatives another day to serve our citizens and legislate measures for the common good. We are grateful for every one’s presence as we prepare ourselves to fulfill our responsibilities to the nation.*

*May You grant each and everyone a calm heart and a clear mind in order for us to craft laws that will serve the best interests of our constituents. Through Your guidance, we will work with unity and openness that transcend the boundaries of political affiliations and religious beliefs.*

*We implore You to give our House Speaker the fortitude to steer us towards the realization of our goals.*

*May You also shine Your grace upon the head of our nation, Pres. Rodrigo Roa Duterte, and bestow upon him the gift of wisdom in leading our beloved country to greater heights.*

*Finally, may You inspire all of us to do our best for Your greater glory.*

*Amen.*

### NATIONAL ANTHEM

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Please remain standing for the singing of the Philippine National Anthem.

*Everybody remained standing for the singing of the Philippine National Anthem.*

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

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, I move to defer the calling of the roll.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

### APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Before that, Mr. Speaker, I also move that we approve the Journal of the previous session—Journal No. 11 for August 14 and 20, 2019.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Is

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

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

#### REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

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

#### BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 3899, entitled:

“AN ACT PROTECTING CHILDREN BY PROHIBITING AND DECLARING CHILD MARRIAGE AS ILLEGAL, AND IMPOSING PENALTY THEREOF”

By Representative Vargas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON WELFARE OF CHILDREN

House Bill No. 3900, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON DISABILITY AFFAIRS, DEFINING ITS POWERS, FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Vargas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SERVICES

House Bill No. 3902, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT 8972 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE SOLO PARENTS WELFARE ACT OF 2000, PROVIDING ADDITIONAL BENEFITS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Fernandez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF LAWS

House Bill No. 3903, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE TAGPANGI NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – TUBURAN ANNEX IN BARANGAY TUBURAN, CITY OF CAGAYAN DE ORO, FROM THE TAGPANGI NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS TUBURAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Uy (Rolando)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 3904, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE TALIMAO NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – BESIGAN ANNEX IN BARANGAY BESIGAN, CITY OF CAGAYAN DE ORO, FROM THE TAGLIMAO NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS BESIGAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Uy (Rolando)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 3905, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE MAMBUAYA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – DANSOLIHON ANNEX IN BARANGAY DANSOLIHON, CITY OF CAGAYAN DE ORO, FROM THE MAMBUAYA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS DANSOLIHON NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Uy (Rolando)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 3906, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE TAGLIMAO NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – TUMPAGON ANNEX IN BARANGAY TUMPAGON, CITY OF CAGAYAN DE ORO, FROM THE TAGLIMAO NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS TUMPAGON NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Uy (Rolando)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 3907, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE MAMBUAYA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – BAYANGA ANNEX IN BARANGAY BAYANGA, CITY OF CAGAYAN DE ORO, FROM THE MAMBUAYA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

TO BE KNOWN AS BAYANGA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Uy (Rolando)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 3908, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE CANITOAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – PAGATPAT ANNEX IN BARANGAY PAGATPAT, CITY OF CAGAYAN DE ORO, FROM THE CANITOAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS PAGATPAT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Uy (Rolando)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 3909, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7104, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ‘KOMISYON SA WIKANG FILIPINO (COMMISSION ON THE FILIPINO LANGUAGE) ACT’ AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Legarda  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 3910, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING THE WALING-WALING ORCHIDS AS SECOND NATIONAL FLOWER OF THE PHILIPPINES IN ADDITION TO SAMPAGUITA”

By Representative Legarda  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 3911, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8972, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE SOLO PARENTS’ WELFARE ACT OF 2010, PROVIDING FOR ADDITIONAL BENEFITS ON BASIC COMMODITIES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Legarda  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF LAWS

House Bill No. 3912, entitled:

“AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE BARANGAY UNIT THROUGH SUPPORT FOR

BARANGAY OFFICIALS AND BARANGAY VOLUNTEER WORKERS, AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7160 PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Legarda  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 3913, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE PHILIPPINE DISASTER AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY, DEFINING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Legarda  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION AND THE COMMITTEE ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT

House Bill No. 3914, entitled:

“AN ACT FACILITATING AND REGULATING INTERNATIONAL DISASTER RELIEF AND INITIAL RECOVERY ASSISTANCE AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Legarda  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT

House Bill No. 3915, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING LARGE ENTERPRISES AND MAJOR BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS TO HAVE AT LEAST ONE PERSONNEL CERTIFIED IN CARDIOPULMONARY RESUSCITATION AND FIRST AID AND QUALIFIED TO HANDLE A DEFIBRILLATOR”

By Representatives Suansing (Estrellita) and Suansing (Horacio)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 3916, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE COMPENSATION FOR PERSONS WRONGFULLY CONVICTED OF A CRIME, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT 7309, ENTITLED, ‘AN ACT CREATING A BOARD OF CLAIMS UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF UNJUST IMPRISONMENT OR DETENTION AND VICTIMS OF VIOLENT CRIMES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES’ ”

By Representative Cagas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF LAWS

House Bill No. 3917, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING PASSIG ISLET OF BARANGAY BATO IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF STA. CRUZ, PROVINCE OF DAVAO DEL SUR AS AN AQUA-ECOTOURISM SITE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Cagas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

House Bill No. 3918, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING KAPATAGAN INDIGOS, DAVAO DEL SUR AS AN ECOTOURISM SITE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Cagas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

House Bill No. 3919, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INDIGENOUS PEOPLES TRAINING AND LEARNING CENTER IN THE PROVINCE OF DAVAO DEL SUR AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Cagas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON INDIGENOUS CULTURAL COMMUNITIES AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

House Bill No. 3920, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO INCLUDE IN THE CURRICULA OF ELEMENTARY AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL A SUBJECT ON ROAD SAFETY AND TRAFFIC EDUCATION”

By Representative Cagas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 3921, entitled:

“AN ACT LOWERING THE COMPULSORY RETIREMENT AGE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE SYSTEM (GSIS) FROM SIXTY-FIVE TO FIFTY-FIVE YEARS OLD, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 1146, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE SYSTEM ACT OF 1997’ ”

By Representative Cagas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ENTERPRISES AND PRIVATIZATION

House Bill No. 3922, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR MONETARY REPARATION FOR THE LOSS OR DESTRUCTION OF RESIDENTIAL HOUSES, COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS AND OTHER PROPERTIES IN MARAWI AND AFFECTED AREAS IN LANAO DEL SUR DURING THE 2017 SIEGE OF MARAWI, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Balindong  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT

House Bill No. 3923, entitled:

“AN ACT SETTING THE MINIMUM MONTHLY PAY OF GOVERNMENT PHYSICIANS, PROVIDING THEM BENEFITS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Crisologo  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

House Bill No. 3924, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE NATIONAL TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT AND MANAGEMENT CENTER, DEFINING ITS POWERS, FUNCTIONS AND DUTIES AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Vargas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 3925, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR REORGANIZATION AND REFORM OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE UNIFORMED MEMBERS OF THE BUREAU OF FIRE AND PROTECTION, AMENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6975 AND REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9263 AND OTHER PURPOSE”

By Representative Vargas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ORDER AND SAFETY

House Bill No. 3926, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTING A PROGRAM FOR THE MANDATORY CONTINUING EDUCATION OF TEACHERS IN THE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY LEVELS IN BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Vargas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 3927, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING JANUARY 9 OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL NONWORKING HOLIDAY IN THE ENTIRE COUNTRY TO COMMEMORATE THE FEAST OF THE BLACK NAZARENE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Vargas

TO THE COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF LAWS

House Bill No. 3928, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING BEREAVEMENT LEAVE OF FIVE (5) WORKING DAYS WITH FULL PAY TO EMPLOYEES IN THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS IN THE EVENT OF DEATH OF AN IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBER”

By Representative Vargas

TO THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT AND THE COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL REGULATION

House Bill No. 3929, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE TO ANY OFFICERS OR ENLISTED PERSONNEL OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES AND THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE ON ANY CHARGE BEFORE THE PROSECUTOR’S OFFICE, COURT OR ANY COMPETENT BODY ARISING FROM AN INCIDENT OR INCIDENTS RELATED TO THE PERFORMANCE OF OFFICIAL DUTY”

By Representative Vargas

TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY AND THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ORDER AND SAFETY

House Bill No. 3930, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING JANUARY 6 OF EVERY YEAR AS A SPECIAL NONWORKING HOLIDAY IN QUEZON CITY TO COMMEMORATE THE BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF MELCHORA AQUINO TO BE KNOWN AS ‘TANDANG SORA DAY’”

By Representative Vargas

TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 3931, entitled:

“AN ACT EXEMPTING PETROLEUM PRODUCTS FROM VALUE-ADDED TAX

(VAT), AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 109 OF THE NATIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1997, AS AMENDED”

By Representative Vargas

TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

House Bill No. 3932, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING AN EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES SYSTEM, CREATING FOR THE PURPOSE THE NATIONAL EMSS COUNCIL, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Vargas

TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 3933, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING TRAFFIC SIGNAL POLES TO BE EQUIPPED WITH ACCESSIBLE PEDESTRIAN SIGNALS”

By Representative Vargas

TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 3934, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE TECHNICAL EDUCATIONAL AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) MANPOWER TRAINING AND YOUTH CENTER IN BARANGAY GULOD, QUEZON CITY AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Vargas

TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 3935, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A RURAL EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREOF”

By Representative Vargas

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

House Bill No. 3936, entitled:

“AN ACT MODERNIZING PUBLIC HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE, PROVIDING FUNDS FROM THE PHILIPPINES AMUSEMENT AND GAMING CORPORATION (PAGCOR) INCOME, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 1869, AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9487”

By Representative Vargas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 3937, entitled:

“AN ACT POSTPONING THE MAY 2020 BARANGAY AND SANGGUNIANG KABATAAN ELECTIONS, FURTHER AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9164, AS AMENDED”

By Representatives Garcia (Vincent), Ungab, Duterte, Cagas, Almario, Nuñez-Malanyaon, Bautista-Bandigan, Dujali, Gonzaga, Zamora (Way Kurat), Gonzalez and Bautista  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON SUFFRAGE AND ELECTORAL REFORMS

House Bill No. 3938, entitled:

“AN ACT TO MANDATE THE TEACHING OF LEGAL RIGHTS, OBLIGATIONS AND OTHER RELATED TOPICS IN BASIC AND HIGHER EDUCATION, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Dy (Faustino Michael)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE AND THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 3939, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING AMBASSADORS AND HEADS OF MISSION BEING REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE TO ASSUME THEIR *PARENS PATRIAE* DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN PROVIDING PROTECTION TO OUR OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS (OFWs) AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Pacquiao (Alberto)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON OVERSEAS WORKERS AFFAIRS

House Bill No. 3940, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE DEPARTMENT OF OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT, DEFINING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Pacquiao (Alberto)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION AND THE COMMITTEE ON OVERSEAS WORKERS AFFAIRS

House Bill No. 3941, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL IN BARANGAY PULANG BATO, MUNICIPALITY OF BAYOG, PROVINCE OF

ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR TO BE KNOWN AS PULANG BATO NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Babasa  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 3942, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL IN BARANGAY LIBA, MUNICIPALITY OF BAYOG, PROVINCE OF ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR TO BE KNOWN AS LIBA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Babasa  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 3943, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL IN BARANGAY SUPON, MUNICIPALITY OF BAYOG, PROVINCE OF ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR TO BE KNOWN AS SUPON NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Babasa  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 3944, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING GOVERNMENT OFFICES AND/OR ESTABLISHMENTS TO ALLOT AT LEAST THIRTY PERCENT (30%) OF THEIR ENERGY REQUIREMENTS TO SOLAR ENERGY, AND COROLLARILY, MANDATING THE SAME TO INSTALL SOLAR PANELS UNTO THEIR BUILDINGS”

By Representative Olivarez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY

House Bill No. 3945, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING THE PHILIPPINE POSTAL CORPORATION TO PRINT POSTAGE STAMPS DEPICTING PHILIPPINE TOURIST ATTRACTIONS AND DESTINATIONS AND TO AFFIX THESE STAMPS ON OUTGOING MAIL MATTERS TO ATTRACT FOREIGN TOURISTS”

By Representative Olivarez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

House Bill No. 3946, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING MALASAKIT

CENTERS IN ALL PUBLIC HOSPITALS IN THE PHILIPPINES”

By Representative Olivarez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 3947, entitled:

“AN ACT RENEWING THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO ABS-CBN CORPORATION (FORMERLY ABS-CBN BROADCASTING CORPORATION) UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7966 OR ‘AN ACT GRANTING ABS-CBN BROADCASTING CORPORATION A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, ESTABLISH, OPERATE, AND MAINTAIN BROADCASTING STATIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES’ FOR TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS FROM THE EFFECTIVITY OF THIS ACT”

By Representative Aragonés  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE FRANCHISES

House Bill No. 3948, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING MALASAKIT CENTERS TO COMPLEMENT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11223 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE ACT’ BY REQUIRING PHILHEALTH TO ESTABLISH, OPERATE, AND MAINTAIN MALASAKIT CENTERS IN ALL DOH, LGUs, SUCs, AND DND HOSPITALS IN THE COUNTRY, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Aragonés  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 3949, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR GERIATRIC HEALTH INTO A CORPORATE BODY TO BE KNOWN AS THE ‘NATIONAL CENTER FOR GERIATRIC HEALTH AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE’, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Abante  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION AND THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 3950, entitled:

“AN ACT DELIMITING THE EXTENT OF ALIENABLE AND DISPOSABLE LANDS VIS-A-VIS FOREST LANDS AND NATIONAL PARKS IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF

ARACELI, DUMARAN, TAYTAY, EL NIDO AND CORON IN THE PROVINCE OF PALAWAN BY CLASSIFYING PARCELS OF PUBLIC FORESTS AS AGRICULTURAL LANDS UNDER THE 1987 CONSTITUTION”

By Representative Alvarez (Franz)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

House Bill No. 3951, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING PROTECTION AND INCENTIVES FOR FREELANCERS”

By Representative De Venecia  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

House Bill No. 3952, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6971, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘PRODUCTIVITY INCENTIVES ACT OF 1990’ ”

By Representative Macapagal Arroyo  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

House Bill No. 3953, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF COOPERATIVES FOR FRY GATHERERS, SMALL SCALE FISHERMEN AND FISH FARMERS”

By Representative Vargas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE AND FISHERIES RESOURCES

House Bill No. 3954, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL TASK FORCE FOR THE PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE OF TOURISTS”

By Representative Vargas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

House Bill No. 3955, entitled:

“AN ACT UPGRADING THE MINIMUM SALARY OF GOVERNMENT NURSES FROM SALARY GRADE 11 TO SALARY GRADE 15 AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Aumentado  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

House Bill No. 3956, entitled:

“AN ACT UPGRADING THE BASIC SALARY

OF PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS SALARY  
GRADE 11 TO SALARY GRADE 15”

By Representative Aumentado  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

House Bill No. 3957, entitled:

“ANTI-STEALTHING LAW OF 2019”  
By Representatives Garbin and Co (Elizaldy)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 3958, entitled:

“AN ACT RENAMING DEL MONTE AVENUE  
TO FERNANDO POE, JR. AVENUE”  
By Representative Castelo  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS  
AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 3959, entitled:

“AN ACT POSTPONING THE MAY 2020  
BARANGAY AND SANGGUNIANG  
KABATAAN ELECTIONS, AMENDING  
FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO.  
10952, AND OTHER PURPOSES”  
By Representative Ferrer (Juliet)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON SUFFRAGE AND  
ELECTORAL REFORMS

House Bill No. 3960, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING ALL FRANCHISE  
GRANTEES USING WIRES AND  
CABLES IN THE OPERATION OF THEIR  
BUSINESSES TO RELOCATE ALL WIRES  
AND CABLES UNDERGROUND OR  
USE COLORED WIRES AND CABLES  
TO IDENTIFY THEIR CORPORATION,  
PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREOF,  
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”  
By Representative Almario  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND THE  
COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION AND  
COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

House Bill No. 3961, entitled:

“AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE PHILIPPINE  
CANNABIS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
(PhilCADA), DEFINING ITS POWERS AND  
FUNCTIONS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS  
THEREFOR AND OTHER PURPOSES”  
By Representative Villafuerte  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 3962, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING GAMBOA HERMANOS  
FARMWORKERS MULTIPURPOSE  
COOPERATIVE A FRANCHISE TO  
CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, ESTABLISH,

OPERATE, OWN, MANAGE AND  
MAINTAIN DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS  
FOR THE CONVEYANCE OF ELECTRIC  
POWER TO THE END-USERS IN THE  
ISLAND OF NEGROS, AND FOR OTHER  
PURPOSES”

By Representatives Alvarez (Genaro), Sagarbarria  
and Valmayor  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE  
FRANCHISES

House Bill No. 3963, entitled:

“AN ACT RENAMING DEL MONTE AVENUE  
TO FERNANDO POE, JR. AVENUE”  
By Representatives Herrera-Dy, Crisologo, Castelo,  
Reyes, Belmonte and Teves (Jose)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS  
AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 3964, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY IN  
ACMAC, ILIGAN CITY TO BE KNOWN AS  
BARANGAY ACMAC”  
By Representative Siao  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 3965, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY IN  
DITUCALAN, ILIGAN CITY TO BE KNOWN  
AS BARANGAY DITUCALAN”  
By Representative Siao  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 3966, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY IN SAN  
ROQUE, ILIGAN CITY TO BE KNOWN AS  
BARANGAY SAN ROQUE”  
By Representative Siao  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 3967, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY IN  
LUIBAB, ILIGAN CITY TO BE KNOWN AS  
BARANGAY LUIBAB”  
By Representative Siao  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 3968, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY IN  
UPPER HINAPLANON, ILIGAN CITY  
TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGAY UPPER  
HINAPLANON”



By Representative Siao  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 3969, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY IN  
UBALDO LAYA, ILIGAN CITY TO BE  
KNOWN AS BARANGAY UBALDO LAYA”

By Representative Siao  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 3970, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING A NATIONAL  
VALUES, ETIQUETTE, AND MORAL  
UPRIGHTNESS PROGRAM”

By Representative Sy-Alvarado  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION  
AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 3971, entitled:

“AN ACT PENALIZING THE DISSEMINATION  
OF FALSE INFORMATION AS TO THE  
PRESENCE OF BOMBS, EXPLOSIVES AND  
OTHER INCENDIARY DEVICES IN HIGH  
DENSITY OR SENSITIVE PLACES AND  
PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREFOR”

By Representative Villafuerte  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ORDER  
AND SAFETY

House Bill No. 3972, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING THE ESTABLISHMENT  
OF DIALYSIS CLINICS IN ALL NATIONAL,  
REGIONAL AND PROVINCIAL  
HOSPITALS AND PROVIDING FOR  
FREE DIALYSIS TREATMENTS  
TO INDIGENT PATIENTS AND  
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Villafuerte  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 3973, entitled:

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

By Representative Villafuerte  
TO THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FOOD  
SECURITY

House Bill No. 3974, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING THE PROVINCE  
OF CAMARINES SUR AS THE  
WAKEBOARDING CAPITAL OF THE  
PHILIPPINES”

By Representative Villafuerte  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

House Bill No. 3975, entitled:

“AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE  
EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS OF MEMBERS  
OF THE CITIZEN ARMED FORCES OR  
THE RESERVE FORCE OF THE ARMED  
FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES AND FOR  
OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Villafuerte  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE  
AND SECURITY

House Bill No. 3976, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING INCENTIVES TO  
FILIPINO FILMMAKERS WHO ARE GIVEN  
HONORS IN NOTABLE INTERNATIONAL  
FILM FESTIVALS AND APPROPRIATING  
FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Villafuerte  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC  
INFORMATION

House Bill No. 3977, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN ARBORETUM  
IN THE PREMISES OF THE  
COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT AND  
NATURAL RESOURCES OFFICE IN THE  
MUNICIPALITY OF KOLAMBUGAN,  
LANAO DEL NORTE TO BE KNOWN AS  
THE KOLAMBUGAN ARBORETUM AND  
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representatives Dimaporo (Khalid) and  
Dimaporo (Abdullah)  
TO THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON  
REFORESTATION

House Bill No. 3978, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE MINDANAO  
STATE UNIVERSITY-LANAO DEL  
NORTE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE  
ARBORETUM IN BARANGAY RAMAIN,  
MUNICIPALITY OF SULTAN NAGA  
DIMAPORO AND APPROPRIATING  
FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representatives Dimaporo (Abdullah) and  
Dimaporo (Khalid)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND  
TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 3979, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN ARBORETUM  
IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF TAGOLOAN,  
LANAO DEL NORTE WITH THE MIGHTY  
CAVE PARK IN IT, TO BE KNOWN AS THE

MIGHTY CAVE PARK ARBORETUM AND  
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representatives Dimaporo (Khalid) and  
Dimaporo (Abdullah)  
TO THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON  
REFORESTATION

House Bill No. 3980, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE SAN ISIDRO –  
NATO ROAD IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF  
SAGÑAY, PROVINCE OF CAMARINES  
SUR TO A NATIONAL SECONDARY  
ROAD AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS  
THEREFOR”

By Representative Fuentesbella  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS  
AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 3981, entitled:

“AN ACT EMPOWERING THE LOCAL  
SCHOOL BOARD TO CHOOSE FROM  
AMONG THE LIST OF FIVE NOMINEES  
SUBMITTED BY THE DEPARTMENT  
OF EDUCATION FOR PROMOTION OR  
APPOINTMENT TO THE POSITION OF  
DIVISION SUPERINTENDENTS, DISTRICT  
SUPERVISORS, SCHOOL PRINCIPALS,  
AND OTHER SCHOOL OFFICIALS,  
AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION  
99 (d) OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7160  
OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991”

By Representative Fuentesbella  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 3982, entitled:

“AN ACT EXPANDING THE DEFINITION  
OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT,  
STRENGTHENING THE MECHANISMS  
TO MENTOR COMPLIANCE WITH  
POLICIES AGAINST SEXUAL  
HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE  
AND IN EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING  
INSTITUTIONS, AND PRESCRIBING  
PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS  
THEREOF, REPEALING FOR THE  
PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7877,  
ALSO REFERRED TO AS THE ‘ANTI-  
SEXUAL HARASSMENT ACT OF 1995’”

By Representatives Yap (Eric), Tulfo and Taturan  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND  
GENDER EQUALITY

House Bill No. 3983, entitled:

“AN ACT SYNCHRONIZING THE ACADEMIC

CALENDAR IN ALL LEVELS OF PUBLIC  
AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS NATIONWIDE”

By Representative Ong (Ronnie)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION  
AND CULTURE AND THE COMMITTEE  
ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL  
EDUCATION

House Bill No. 3984, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE HIBAO-AN  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN HIBAO-AN  
SUR, MANDURRIA, ILOILO CITY  
INTO AN INTEGRATED SCHOOL TO BE  
KNOWN AS THE HIBAO-AN INTEGRATED  
SCHOOL”

By Representative Baronda  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION  
AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 3985, entitled:

“AN ACT STRENGTHENING AND  
INSTITUTIONALIZING THE BARANGAY  
PRIMARY HEALTH CARE PROGRAM,  
PROVIDING SECURITY OF TENURE,  
BENEFITS AND INCENTIVES TO  
BARANGAY HEALTH WORKERS, AND  
PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Co (Angelica)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 3986, entitled:

“AN ACT TO INCLUDE IN THE CURRICULA  
OF ALL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE HIGH  
SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES A COURSE ON  
NECESSARY LIFE SKILLS”

By Representative Dy (Faustino Inno)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION  
AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 3987, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE DEPARTMENT  
OF WATER, IRRIGATION, SEWAGE AND  
SANITATION RESOURCE MANAGEMENT,  
DEFINING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS,  
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR,  
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Tupas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
REORGANIZATION AND THE COMMITTEE  
ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 3988, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE  
CONSTRUCTION OF A NATIONAL  
HIGHWAY FROM THE LANA DEL

NORTE INTERIOR CIRCUMFERENTIAL ROAD IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF TAGOLOAN, LANA DEL NORTE TO THE MUNICIPALITY OF TALAKAG, PROVINCE OF BUKIDNON, WITH A CROSSROAD AT BARANGAY MALIMBATO, MUNICIPALITY OF TAGOLOAN, LANA DEL NORTE AND CONNECTING ROADS TO THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY IN ILIGAN CITY THROUGH BARANGAY PUGAAN, ILIGAN CITY AND TO THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY IN MARAWI CITY THROUGH THE MUNICIPALITY OF KAPAI, LANA DEL SUR, TO BE KNOWN AS THE MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN UNITY CROSSROAD AND HIGHWAYS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representatives Dimaporo (Abdullah), Dimaporo (Khalid), Acosta-Alba, Siao and Adiong  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 3989, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 3815, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE REVISED PENAL CODE, REDEFINING THE CRIME OF ADULTERY AND CONCUBINAGE AND PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREOF”

By Representative Suarez (Aleta)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF LAWS

House Bill No. 3990, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTING THE MAGNA CARTA OF FILIPINO SEAFARERS”

By Representative Agabas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON OVERSEAS WORKERS AFFAIRS

House Bill No. 3991, entitled:

“AN ACT FURTHER PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP BY STRENGTHENING, EMPOWERING, AND ENHANCING THE FINANCING PROGRAMS FOR MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSES REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6977, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘MAGNA CARTA FOR MICRO, SMALL, MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (MSMEs)’ ”

By Representative Agabas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

House Bill No. 3992, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE ALTERNATIVE LEARNING SYSTEM IN THE BASIC EDUCATION FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN, YOUTH AND ADULTS, PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, AND OTHER MARGINALIZED SECTORS OF SOCIETY, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Agabas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 3993, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE MAGNA CARTA OF THE OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH”

By Representative Agabas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

House Bill No. 3994, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS HOSPITAL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Agabas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 3995, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR THE SURVIVING SPOUSE AND CHILDREN OF SLAIN JUSTICES AND JUDGES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 910, AS AMENDED, ENTITLED ‘AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR THE RETIREMENT OF JUSTICES OF THE SUPREME COURT AND OF THE COURT OF APPEALS, FOR THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE PROVISIONS HEREOF BY THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE SYSTEM, AND TO REPEAL COMMONWEALTH ACT NUMBERED FIVE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SIX’, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Agabas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 3996, entitled:

“AN ACT ALLOWING AND REGULATING THE USE OF MOTORCYCLES AS PUBLIC UTILITY VEHICLES, AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 4136 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LAND TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC CODE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Agabas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON  
TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 3997, entitled:

“AN ACT LOWERING THE OPTIONAL RETIREMENT AGE OF GOVERNMENT WORKERS FROM SIXTY (60) YEARS TO FIFTY-FIVE (55) YEARS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 13-A OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8291, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ‘THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE SYSTEM ACT OF 1997’ ”

By Representative Agabas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ENTERPRISES AND PRIVATIZATION

House Bill No. 3998, entitled:

“AN ACT LOWERING THE OPTIONAL RETIREMENT AGE OF PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS FROM SIXTY (60) YEARS OLD TO FIFTY-FIVE (55) YEARS OLD AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 13-A OF REPUBLIC ACT 8291, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE SYSTEM ACT OF 1997”

By Representative Agabas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 3999, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE DEPARTMENT OF DISASTER RESILIENCE, DEFINING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Agabas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION AND THE COMMITTEE ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT

House Bill No. 4000, entitled:

“THE CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET AND IMPOUNDMENT CONTROL ACT”

By Representatives Gaité, Zarate, Cullamat, Brosas and Castro (France)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

House Bill No. 4001, entitled:

“AN ACT TO CHANGE THE DEFINITION OF ‘YEARS,’ AMENDING SECTION 13 OF THE CIVIL CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES AND SECTION 31 OF THE REVISED ADMINISTRATIVE CODE OF 1987”

By Representative Dy (Faustino Michael)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF LAWS

House Bill No. 4002, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE BED CAPACITY OF QUIRINO MEMORIAL MEDICAL CENTER FROM FIVE HUNDRED (500) BEDS TO ONE THOUSAND (1000) BEDS, UPGRADING ITS PROFESSIONAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES AND FACILITIES, AUTHORIZING THE INCREASE OF ITS MEDICAL PERSONNEL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Reyes  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 4003, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION PROGRAM FOR THE BANGSAMORO, CREATING FOR THE PURPOSE THE NATIONAL TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR THE BANGSAMORO, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representatives Belmonte and Sangcopan  
TO THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON PEACE, RECONCILIATION AND UNITY

House Bill No. 4004, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING FEBRUARY 24 OF EVERY YEAR AS A SPECIAL NON-WORKING HOLIDAY IN THE PROVINCE OF ZAMBOANGA SIBUGAY, IN COMMEMORATION OF ITS FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY, TO BE KNOWN AS ‘ARAW NG SIBUGAY’ ”

By Representative Hofer  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 4005, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR REGULATION OF TRICYCLES, INSTITUTIONALIZING MECHANISMS FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION”

By Representative Agabas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 4006, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTING THE MAGNA CARTA OF DAY CARE WORKERS AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Agabas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON WELFARE OF CHILDREN

House Bill No. 4007, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING ADDITIONAL

PRIVILEGES TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7277, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE MAGNACARTA FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Agabas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SERVICES

House Bill No. 4008, entitled:

“AN ACT REGULATING THE PLANNING, DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION, OCCUPANCY, AND MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE BUILDINGS, ENACTING A NEW BUILDING ACT, THEREBY REPEALING PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 1096, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Romero and Pineda  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 4009, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR AN INTEGRATED NATIONAL BAMBOO AND RATTAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE BAMBOO AND RATTAN CENTERS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Villarica  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

House Bill No. 4010, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTING THE MAGNA CARTA OF DAY CARE WORKERS AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Villarica  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON WELFARE OF CHILDREN

House Bill No. 4011, entitled:

“AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE REGULATION OF HEALTH FACILITIES AND SERVICES REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 4226, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘HOSPITAL LICENSURE ACT’ AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Villarica  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 4012, entitled:

“AN ACT PROHIBITING THE DUMPING OF SEWAGE SLUDGE AND INDUSTRIAL

WASTE INTO THE SEAWATERS AND PROVIDING FOR PENALTIES IN VIOLATION THEREOF”

By Representative Villarica  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY

House Bill No. 4013, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A PHILIPPINE HIGH SCHOOL FOR SPORTS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Villarica  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

House Bill No. 4014, entitled:

“AN ACT TO PROVIDE FREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE TO ALL INDIGENT FILIPINOS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE CHAPTER 5, TITLE III, BOOK IV OF EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 292, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘ADMINISTRATIVE CODE OF 1987’ AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Villarica  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION

House Bill No. 4015, entitled:

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

By Representative Villarica  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY

House Bill No. 4016, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A DATABASE OF PRODUCTS CONTAINING PROBABLE CARCINOGENS”

By Representative Villarica  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 4017, entitled:

“AN ACT PROHIBITING THE IMPOSITION OF INTEREST AND/OR PENALTY CHARGES ON UNPAID HOSPITAL BILLS AND MEDICAL EXPENSES OF PATIENTS WHO EARN MINIMUM WAGE OR LESS”

By Representative Villarica  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 4018, entitled:

“AN ACT INTEGRATING HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE INTO THE PHILIPPINE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Villarica  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 4019, entitled:

“AN ACT REGULATING THE RATE OF FEES AND CHARGES THAT BANKS IMPOSED FOR AUTOMATED TELLER MACHINE (ATM) TRANSACTIONS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Zarate and Cullamat  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

House Bill No. 4020, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE SCOPE AND PROCEDURE FOR PHILIPPINE SHIP REGISTRY, RECOGNITION AND ENFORCEMENT OF MARITIME CLAIMS, AND LIMITATION OF LIABILITY, AS WELL AS PROVIDING ESSENTIAL INCENTIVES COLLECTIVELY RESULTING IN A COMPREHENSIVE AND ORDERLY PHILIPPINE SHIP REGISTRY SYSTEM AND REGULATION OF VESSELS CARRYING THE FLAG STATE”

By Representative Sarmiento  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 4021, entitled:

“AN ACT TO PROVIDE PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES WITH ONLINE VOLUNTEERISM OPPORTUNITIES”

By Representative Vargas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SERVICES

House Bill No. 4022, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A COMPREHENSIVE AND RESPONSIVE CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS SYSTEM, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Biazon  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON POPULATION AND FAMILY RELATIONS

House Bill No. 4023, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE POSITION OF PRESIDENTIAL PHYSICIAN, DEFINING ITS FUNCTIONS, ALLOCATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Biazon  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

House Bill No. 4024, entitled:

“AN ACT REGULATING TRANSPORTATION NETWORK SERVICES, IMPOSING AND AUTHORIZING FEES, PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Biazon  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 4025, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A MAGNA CARTA OF COMMUTERS”

By Representative Biazon  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 4026, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Biazon  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION AND THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

#### RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 226, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON AGRARIAN REFORM TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, IN THE PROLIFERATION OF IRRIGATED AND IRRIGABLE LAND CONVERTED INTO NONAGRICULTURAL PURPOSE IN VIOLATION OF SECTION 65 OF RA 6657 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE COMPREHENSIVE AGRARIAN REFORM LAW OF 1988, AS AMENDED BY RA 9700”

By Representative Geron  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 227, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SECTION 150-B OF THE NATIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1997, AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10963, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘TAX REFORM FOR ACCELERATION AND INCLUSION (TRAIN)’”

By Representatives Suansing (Estrellita) and Suansing (Horacio)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 228, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION URGING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE BASIS OF MERALCO IN INCORPORATING IN THE CONSUMERS' MONTHLY ELECTRIC BILLS, ADDITIONAL CHARGES FOR RENEWAL ENERGY, SYSTEM LOSS AND OTHER CHARGES, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF PROVIDING THE PUBLIC A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHARGES AND TO PROVIDE CONGRESS AN INSIGHT TO GUIDE IT IN CRAFTING RESPONSIVE LEGISLATION TO ADDRESS THE PERENNIAL PROBLEM OF HIGH ENERGY COST”

By Representative Barbers  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 229, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE REPORTED PROLIFERATION OF ‘FALSIFIED’ MEDICINES IN THE COUNTRY BASED ON THE 2019 REPORT BY THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME (UNODC) ENTITLED ‘TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME IN SOUTHEAST ASIA: EVOLUTION, GROWTH AND IMPACT’, WHICH IDENTIFIED THE PHILIPPINES AS HAVING THE HIGHEST INCIDENCE OF FALSIFIED MEDICINES AMONG SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES WITH THE END IN VIEW OF PROTECTING AND PROMOTING THE RIGHT TO HEALTH OF THE FILIPINO PEOPLE”

By Representative Tan (Angelina)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 230, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION URGING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO REVIEW THE RESOLUTION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS VICTIMS CLAIMS BOARD DENYING THE CLAIM OF DIORICA FRANCISCO LUMBAD AND OTHER WORKERS OF LA TONDEÑA DISTILLERS, INC. FOR ABUSES COMMITTED DURING MARTIAL LAW”

By Representative Lopez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 231, entitled:

“RESOLUTION CALLING AND URGING THE

PRESIDENT TO AWARD THE MEDAL OF VALOR TO FIRST LIEUTENANT RONILO M. VENDER FOR VALIANTLY LEADING THE COMBAT TEAM THAT NEUTRALIZED THE MAUTE TERRORISTS, ISNILON HAPILON AND OMAR MAUTE”

By Representative Suarez (Aleta)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY

House Resolution No. 232, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT AGAINST TRANSGENDER WOMAN GRETCHEN CUSTODIO DIEZ”

By Representatives Brosas, Roman, Elago, Castro (France), Zarate, Gaité and Cullamat  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 233, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE POSSIBLE DISCRIMINATORY INCIDENT, THAT HAPPENED INSIDE A MALL, ON THE BASIS OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION OR GENDER IDENTITY INVOLVING THE DENIAL OF ACCESS TO A LADIES' RESTROOM TO TRANSGENDER WOMAN GRETCHEN CUSTODIO DIEZ WITH THE ACCOMPANYING INSTRUCTION TO HER USE THE RESTROOM OF MALES INSTEAD”

By Representative Roman  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 234, entitled:

“RESOLUTION OF THE MINORITY FOR THE APPROPRIATE HOUSE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION ON THE COMMISSION ON AUDIT (COA) 2018 AUDIT FINDINGS ON THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DEPED) RELATIVE TO VARIOUS ERRORS ON LEARNING MATERIALS INTENDED FOR GRADE 3 PUPILS VALUED AT OVER P254.3M, INCLUDING AN ALARMING NUMBER OF UNDISTRIBUTED INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS VALUED AT OVER P113M, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, FOR PURPOSES OF INSTITUTING REFORMS, REVIEW OF POLICIES AND ASSESSMENT OF DEPED”

By Representative Abante  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE  
UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE LAW  
(REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11223)”

By Representative Abante  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 235, entitled:

“RESOLUTION CALLING FOR AN  
INVESTIGATION IN AID OF LEGISLATION  
BY THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE OF  
THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON  
THE TWO HUNDRED NINETY-NINE (299)  
IRRIGATION PROJECTS FLAGGED BY  
COMMISSION ON AUDIT”

By Representative Cabatbat  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 239, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE HOUSE  
OF REPRESENTATIVES, THROUGH  
THE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY, TO  
INVESTIGATE, IN AID OF LEGISLATION,  
THE BULK WATER SUPPLY PROJECT IN  
MORONG, BATAAN, AND ITS IMPACT TO  
THE PEOPLE AND ENVIRONMENT”

By Representatives Gaité, Zarate, Cullamat, Castro  
(France) and Brosas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 236, entitled:

“RESOLUTION CALLING FOR AN INQUIRY  
IN AID OF LEGISLATION BY THE  
APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE OF THE  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FOR  
THE INCREASE OF THE COCO METHYL  
ESTER (CME) BLEND OF BIODIESEL  
FROM 2 PERCENT TO 8 PERCENT”

By Representatives Suarez (David) and Villaraza-  
Suarez

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 240, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE  
ON AGRICULTURE OF THE HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES TO CONDUCT AN  
INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO  
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF REPUBLIC  
ACT NO. 11203, 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,’  
TO ASCERTAIN THAT GOVERNMENT  
AGENCIES AND INSTRUMENTALITIES  
CONCERNED ARE PERFORMING  
THEIR RESPECTIVE DUTIES AND  
RESPONSIBILITIES, SPECIALLY INTO  
THE UTILIZATION OF THE RICE  
COMPETITIVENESS ENHANCEMENT  
FUND”

By Representative Suansing (Estrellita)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 237, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE  
ON GOOD GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC  
ACCOUNTABILITY TO CONDUCT AN  
INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION,  
INTO THE ALLEGED UNAUTHORIZED  
PURCHASE BY THE CIVIL AVIATION  
AUTHORITY OF THE PHILIPPINES (CAAP)  
OF LIFE INSURANCE PLANS WORTH A  
TOTAL OF PHP 500 MILLION FOR TEN  
(10) OF ITS OFFICIALS DESPITE LACK  
OF BOARD APPROVAL AND PROPER  
SELECTION CRITERIA”

By Representative Castelo  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 241, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE  
ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE  
TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF  
LEGISLATION, ON THE P254 MILLION  
WORTH OF ERROR-RIDDEN TEXTBOOKS  
AND/OR LEARNING MATERIALS AND THE  
P113 MILLION WORTH OF UNUTILIZED  
INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AS  
REPORTED BY THE COMMISSION ON  
AUDIT IN ITS 2018 CONSOLIDATED  
ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT”

By Representative Fortun  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 238, entitled:

“RESOLUTION OF THE MINORITY  
CALLING ON THE APPROPRIATE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN  
INVESTIGATION ON THE ALLEGATIONS  
OF FRAUDULENT MEDICAL CLAIMS,  
MISMANAGEMENT & NEGLIGENCE,  
GRAFT & CORRUPTION AGAINST  
PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE  
CORPORATION (PHILHEALTH), IN  
AID OF LEGISLATION, FOR PURPOSES  
OF INSTITUTING REAL REFORMS,  
REVIEW OF PHILHEALTH POLICIES AND  
ASSESSMENT OF ITS EFFECTIVENESS



House Resolution No. 242, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION URGING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE PROTOCOLS OF MARINA AND PCG IN DETERMINING THE SEAWORTHINESS OF VESSELS AND RESPONDING TO MARITIME ACCIDENTS DUE TO THE REPEATED OCCURRENCE OF MARITIME MISHAPS IN THE COUNTRY”

By Representative Sarmiento  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 243, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION URGING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY AND INVESTIGATE, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, THE ALARMING NUMBER OF KILLINGS IN CALBAYOG CITY AND TO ENSURE THE PRESENCE AND ASSIGNMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS IN THE AREA”

By Representative Sarmiento  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Concurrent Resolution No. 4, entitled:

“CONCURRENT RESOLUTION GIVING CONSENT TO HIS EXCELLENCY RAUL S. HERNANDEZ, FORMER AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES TO THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA FROM 28 MAY 2014 TO 30 APRIL 2019 TO RECEIVE THE AWARD OF THE ‘ORDER OF DIPLOMATIC SERVICE MERIT, FIRST CLASS’ FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA”

By Representative Hofer  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

House Joint Resolution No. 10, entitled:

“JOINT RESOLUTION EXTENDING THE AVAILABILITY OF THE 2019 APPROPRIATIONS FOR MAINTENANCE AND OTHER OPERATING EXPENSES AND CAPITAL OUTLAYS TO DECEMBER 31, 2020, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 65 OF THE GENERAL PROVISIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11260, THE GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT OF FISCAL YEAR 2019”

By Representatives Zamora (Ronaldo) and Almario  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

#### COMMITTEE REPORT

Report of the Committee on Ways and Means and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 2), re H.B. No. 4157, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING SECTIONS 4, 5, 20, 22, 27, 28, 34, 40, 50, 73, 112, 117, 204, 222, 237, 237-A, 255, 256, 257, 258, 261, 263, 264, 266, 275, 290, 291, 292 AND ADDING NEW SECTIONS 6-A, 282-A, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315 AND 316 ALL UNDER THE NATIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1997, AS AMENDED, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bills Numbered 176, 313, 1042, 1909, 2084, 2554, 2704, 2956, 3356, and 3846

Sponsors: Representatives Salceda, Ungab, Suansing (Estrellita) and Garin (Sharon)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

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

#### ROLL CALL

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

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

The Secretary General is directed to call the roll.

*The Secretary General called the roll, and the result is reflected in Journal No. 12, dated August 27, 2019.\**

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. Mr. Speaker, the roll call shows that 259 Members responded to the call.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). With 259 Members responding to the call, the Chair declares the presence of a quorum.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. CRISOLOGO. Mr. Speaker, we would like to acknowledge the presence of the guests of the following Congressmen: first, the guests of the Congresswoman from the Lone District of San Jose del Monte, Bulacan, the Hon. Florida “Rida” P. Robes. They are the San Jose del Monte City local government unit department heads and employees. From the Office of City Mayor Arturo Robes, we have City Administrator Dennis Booth, PhD; OIC of the City Social Welfare and Development Office Marlyn A. Cumba; Margarita Bernales; Rowena Gugulan; Marjorie Oliveros-Fortuno; Genevieve Oliveros; Betzaida Banaag; Wilma Abella; Mercy Salas; Ronald D. Soriano; Luis R. Gutierrez; Violeta Cadiz; Annie Marie Rolle; Felix Cadiz; Atty. Elmer A. Galicia; Atty. Rizaldy L. Mendoza; Ana D. Sugang; Liza S. Avancena; Regina S. Delos Reyes; Marina D. Serrano; and Leonila C. Daza.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The guests of the Honorable Robes are welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

REP. CRISOLOGO. Also, Mr. Speaker, the guests of the First District Representative from the Province of Cagayan, Cong. Ramon C. Nolasco Jr., we have with us today former Cong. Ramon C. Nolasco and Mayor Florante “Anteng” C. Pascual, Mayor of the Municipality of Lal-lo, Cagayan.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The guests of the Hon. Ramon Nolasco are welcome to the House of Representatives.

REP. CRISOLOGO. Lastly, Mr. Speaker, may we acknowledge the presence of the guests of our Party-List Representative from the ACT TEACHERS, the Hon. France L. Castro: Carolyn B. Dagani, George Lintag, Henry Bibo Perey, John Paul Trinidad, Yvette Apurado-Bernardo, Yobbo Garcia, Jay Maisel Lardizabal, Ember Parpa, Kristina Miranda, Jennifer Balan, Dennis Balan, Maria Rowena Rivera, Marjorie Bulahan, Bernadette Infanta, Melissa Rubi N. Rabang, Manuel V. Adonis, Dr. Liza Martinez, Sir Richard Jay Sunico, Abigail Cathlyn Ablaza, Raymond Manding, Judith Luis and Gemaima Abayan.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The guests of the Hon. France Castro are all welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

REP. CASTELO. Mr. Speaker.

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

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 4157  
ON SECOND READING

REP. CASTELO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 4157, contained in Committee Report No. 2, as reported out by the Committees on Ways and Means, and Appropriations.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). 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. 4157, entitled: AN ACT AMENDING SECTIONS 4, 5, 20, 22, 27, 28, 34, 40, 50, 73, 112, 117, 204, 222, 237, 237-A, 255, 256, 257, 258, 261, 263, 264, 266, 275, 290, 291, 292 AND ADDING NEW SECTIONS 6-A, 282-A, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315 AND 316 ALL UNDER THE NATIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1997, AS AMENDED, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.\*

*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 DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The Majority Leader is recognized.

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

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

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

REP. CASTELO. Mr. Speaker, may I move that we recognize the Chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, the Hon. Joey Sarte Salceda, for his sponsorship speech.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The Honorable Salceda is recognized.

\* See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)

## SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF REP. SALCEDA

REP. SALCEDA. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Honorable Speaker, my colleagues, ladies and gentlemen.

The Committee on Ways and Means has the privilege of sponsoring the Corporate Income Tax and Incentives Rationalization Act, which we call "CITIRA." Based on its name, essentially, what it will do is, number one, reduce corporate income tax (CIT) by one percent per year for 10 years, from 30 percent, which is among the highest in the region—in fact, it is the highest in the region—to 20 percent, which will only be slightly higher than that of Singapore at 17 percent. This, Your Honor, will do three things: first, we expect that domestic companies that can produce here would rather produce here rather than abroad because sometimes or many times, because of the profit motive, they would rather, for example, produce C2 in Vietnam rather than here in the Philippines because the corporate income tax in Vietnam is 20 percent; but if they produce it in the Philippines, the corporate income tax is 30 percent. Number two, it will provide additional revenues for our responsible corporate partners every year and if they, as we assume, reinvest 50 percent of the tax savings arising from the CITIRA, then this will produce 1.4 million jobs between 2020 and 2029. Number three, Mr. Speaker, with the CITIRA, based on certain econometric models, we expect that this entire Bill could add 3.9 percent to the GDP growth rate per year, while inflation will be tamed to only 0.9 percent and therefore, Your Honor, this is the single biggest argument for this. In fact, this is the biggest of all the packages that will essentially expand the capacity of the economy because the State accounts for only 21 percent of the GDP, while the private sector actually accounts for 79 percent. Therefore, we are transferring the dynamism of growth.

While the government has committed to provide public goods which is essentially infrastructure, now it is time, Your Honor, to incentivize and provide our domestic private sector the means in order to respond to the programs of the national government. On the other hand, Your Honor, we also have to pass the Incentive Rationalization Act because it is a national imperative. This is to ensure that for every peso the government will grant, the economy and our people will receive more. In 2017, we granted P441-billion worth of incentives based on the TIMTA, which is a product of this Congress, to more than 3,000 enterprises and we lost P63 billion because of the possible abuse in transfer pricing, and reduced our tax revenues by P504 billion, or 2.2 percent of our GDP, which is virtually our current deficit. Yes, it did not result in a surplus for the economy. A cost-benefit analysis study showed that firms with incentives, compared with firms without incentives, actually, hardly had any significant difference. The only difference was that they pay their

workers more, and they pay their workers more because they have incentives. In fact, the incentives, as a percentage of their total dividends, amounted to 132 percent. We have to mark this number. The dividends of RBEs are actually simply financed by our incentives. Incentives accounted for, compared with dividends, the 132 percent.

Second, it is time to simplify our incentives system. Our incentives system has 133 investment and 209 non-investment laws creating 549 ecozones and 13 investment promotion agencies and in fact, this created, Your Honor, a possible loophole for unnecessary incentives. Your Honor, ang ginawa po ng Committee on Ways and Means, amin pong inaprubahan iyong inaprubahan noong nakaraang Kongreso, noong Seventeenth Congress, using House Rule X, Section 48. However, we continuously met—the Committee, especially the leadership—and just this afternoon, we met with the Speaker, the Majority Leader and all the party leaders of Congress to discuss what will be in front of you which is, essentially, a substitute bill. Ano po ang ginawa namin? Number one, we improved the offer of Congress to investors. The Department of Finance initially and actually offered the formula called "3-2-2"—three years for income tax holiday, two years of reduced corporate income tax at 18 percent, three percent of which will go to LGUs, and this will continue to fall every year until it reaches 13 percent; and additional two years if the enterprise is located outside Metro Manila and its adjacent areas. Of the additional two years, one year could be ITH or one year could be reduced corporate income tax.

What is in front of you now under the substitute bill? We retained the one for Metro Manila—three years of ITH and two years of reduced CIT. However, in order not to disadvantage adjacent areas like Bulacan, Cavite, Rizal—especially Rizal which actually does not host any major ecozones—we created a new one essentially providing four years of income tax holiday, better than those for Metro Manila, and three years of reduced corporate income tax, better than those for Metro Manila. Beyond Metro Manila and its adjacent areas, we are now offering six years of income tax holiday, not three, and four years of reduced corporate income tax, not two. Therefore, Your Honor, I believe these incentives will be responsive to our needs. In fact, Your Honor, the current situation wherein this Bill was approved by the President in a Cabinet meeting in January 2018, has been a source of uncertainty to many investors, thus, affecting our FTI. So, the best strategy really is to pass this Bill quickly so that, at least, we can do away with the incentives. We have done, the Congress has done its part by offering what we can call "proportionally and more attractive incentives" than in Vietnam and many other countries.

Ano po iyong mga tinanggal namin? Number one, sa ngayon po kasi, kapag ikaw po ay nagpalista bilang registered business enterprise, bibigyan ka ng four

years of ITH. Pagkatapos, ang babayaran mo lang, five percent tax on the gross income earned forever. Iyong “forever” po, walang ganyan sa buong mundo kaya ito po ang pinakamalaking reporma—mawawala ang “forever.” Pangalawa, ngayon po, mayroon tayong dalawang sistema: ang corporate income tax kung saan lahat po ng puwedeng i-deduct, inaalalis at saka lang bubuwisan. Sa ngayon po, mayroon din tayong gross income earned. Ang nangyayari po, ito ay nagbubunga ng tinatawag nating pag-abuso na umaabot po ng P64 billion dahil iyong hindi mo ma-deduct doon o sa loob under GIE, nilalabas mo po doon sa mga kumpanya mo na puwede pong gamitin bilang isang tax deduction. Ang pangatlo po na ginawa namin—ang dami ko na palang sinabi—ay pinalakas po namin ang atin pong Fiscal Incentives Review Board. Sa ngayon po, lahat ng mga ITH, kasama na po ang BOI, sila po ang magbibigay ng incentive.

Ngayon po, para sa transparency, accountability and consistency, kung sino po ang kailangang maghabol ay kailangan po ay mayroon pong silang “say.” Sa halos lahat po ng ITH ay iisang boses lang ang andoon at kung minsan ay wala pa—ang Department of Finance, pero sila naman po itong nahihirapan. Kaya po inisip ko, at napag-isipan at napagkasunduan ng komite na bigyan ng poder ang FIRB. Samakatuwid, kung ang BOI, based po dito sa incentives system na atin pong itatalaga, sila po ang magpo-propose para sa isang kumpanyang lumapit sa kanila, subalit kailangan po itong matingnan agad-agad ng isang body na chaired po ng ating Secretary of Department of Finance para po masiguro na mapupunta sa tama at hindi po masasayang ang incentives.

Pang-apat, kung dati po namimigay tayo ng incentives, parang nagtatapon tayo ng dice—na sana may manalo, na sana may bagong trabaho, na sana may gross value-added, na sana po may wealth creation. Exposed analysis study po ang tawag diyan. Subalit dito po sa ginawa ng Kongreso *ex-ante*, lahat ng incentives na ipamimigay natin ay nakabase sa isang performance. Ano po iyon? Kung ikaw ay nag-training ng mga empleyado, kung gumastos ka ng one million, two million iyan ang deductible sa taxes mo. Kung ikaw po ay gumawa ng R & D kung saan ang ating mga produkto ay mas nagiging competitive at lumalakas ang ating share sa world market kaya nagkakaroon ng trabaho, double deduction din. Kung ikaw ay nagpagawa ng kalsada papunta po sa iyong factory sa Sta. Rosa, double deduction din. Kung ikaw po ay nag-hire ng domestic workers, iyan po ay bibigyan ng 50 percent deduction for hiring domestic workers. Kung ikaw ay gumamit o bumili ng mga produkto galing sa Albay, bibigyan ka ng additional 50 percent for that domestic input utilization.

Napakaganda po. Isa sa pinakamagandang offer na nandiyan sa buong pandaigdigang kalakalan at pandaigdigang pamumuhunan itong ating gagawin

subalit walang forever, subalit wala na pong transfer pricing. Kaya sa ating lahat, oras na para ang Pilipinas should claim its rightful place among the most prosperous of all nations and the way to do that is to do these three things: first, the government is doing infrastructure which means lower power usage and faster internet; second, we must ease the cost of doing business. We have the EODB, the 3720, the 45 Rule; and third, we must do a tax reform, one that will be efficient, effective and performance-based.

Mr. Speaker, as an economic analyst, I have studied this Bill quite closely since it was introduced in the past Congress. In my best analysis, Mr. Speaker, one, it is the best offer now there is in the market; and two, it is good for our country and the right thing to do.

Maraming salamat po.

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

#### SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H. B. NO. 4157

REP. TADURAN. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 4157.

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

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. TADURAN. Mr. Speaker, may I request for a suspension of the session.

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

*It was 6:03 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 6:03 p.m., the session was resumed.*

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we withdraw the previous motion and instead recognize the Hon. Estrellita B. Suansing, Vice Chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, for her sponsorship speech.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The Hon. Estrellita Suansing is recognized.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF REP. SUANSING (E.)

REP. SUANSING (E.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, I rise today to sponsor House Bill No. 4157 which, when passed into law, shall be known as the Corporate Income Tax and Incentives Rationalization Act or CITIRA. This Bill is envisioned to make the country's economy more resilient, vibrant and cohesive by promoting competitiveness through the imposition of meaningful and timely reforms in our outdated tax system. The principal objective of this proposal measure is to make the corporate tax system simpler, fairer and more transparent. It seeks to gradually lower the corporate income tax rate from 30 percent to 20 percent for businesses in the Philippines. Currently, the country's corporate income tax system is characterized by a high tax rate, at 30 percent for taxable income and a narrow base, primarily due to the existence of generous fiscal incentives available to other corporate taxpayers. It is noteworthy to state that while we have one of the highest corporate income tax rates in the ASEAN, we are lagging behind our neighbors in terms of tax collection.

On the other hand, let me underscore the fact that the fiscal incentives, which are given in perpetuity and in lieu of other taxes, seriously erode the country's tax base. As such, the other equally important objective of this proposed measure is to reorient fiscal incentives towards the strategic growth industries of tomorrow, and make incentives available to investors who make net positive contributions to our society. By lowering the rate of corporate income tax in the Philippines, all businesses, especially small and medium enterprises, will improve and this will ultimately encourage robust business activity, more investments and most importantly, tax compliance.

Mr. Speaker, for the past 50 years, the country has been overly generous in giving special treatment to some investors who have actually enjoyed this special status for decades. In 2017 alone, out of the P441 billion in fiscal incentives given to around 3,000 enterprises, P63 billion was lost vis-à-vis the so-called "transfer pricing scheme." This resulted in non-collection of taxes amounting to P504 billion which comprised 3.2 percent of our GDP. It is only in the Philippines where this special treatment is granted for eternity regardless of the lackluster return in economic and social benefits such as the creation of jobs or the expansion of investments to the less-developed areas of the country. While some incentives may be needed to attract investments that support our growth objectives, may I emphasize that they must be performance-based, targeted, time-bound and transparent.

May I reiterate that, currently, the Philippines is unable to effectively translate its tax incentives scheme into actual investments. Under this proposed measure, fiscal incentives will be rationalized, taking into account important factors such as the investors' performance, the period covered by incentives, the specific industries targeted for export as well as for the development of domestic markets, and transparency. In due course, we will arrive at a fairer and more accountable tax incentives regime because every peso granted as tax incentive must equate to a peso that could be spent for infrastructure development, health care, quality education and adequate social protection. The passage of this measure will allow the national government to better ascertain whether incentives granted would result in the generation of jobs necessary to employ thousands of our youth who graduate every year, accelerate the economy in the countryside, and eventually redound to the benefit of our people with the objective of collecting the correct amount of taxes and redistributing wealth and more importantly, putting food on every table.

Mr. Speaker, in the recent State of the Nation Address of Pres. Rodrigo Roa Duterte, he urged Congress to immediately pass this proposed measure which is envisioned to reform the tax system by removing redundant and costly tax incentives to generate more tax revenues. It is time to correct the inequitable and inefficient system which benefits few industries in the economy, while negatively impacting the micro, small and medium-sized enterprises which notably, are made to pay the same regular corporate income tax of 30 percent. By and large, the critical factors that we will impose to determine the grant of incentives will show the seriousness of our will, our concern for our economy and our countrymen. This will surely result in attracting more investments and this is the impetus we need to jump-start the engines of economic growth and national development.

Mr. Speaker, with this short note, allow me this opportunity to call on the distinguished Members of this august Body to support the immediate approval of this bill.

Maraming salamat po.

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

REP. TADURAN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that we recognize the Hon. Sharon S. Garin, Vice Chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, for her sponsorship speech.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The Hon. Sharon S. Garin is recognized.

## SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF REP. GARIN (S.)

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

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Let me remind you that in this Chamber, for more than two years, we approved and passed the first of the four packages of the Comprehensive Tax Reform Program of the current administration, the TRAIN Law under Republic Act No. 10963. I am standing, again, before you my dear colleagues for the second part of the packages, the Corporate Income Tax and Incentive Rationalization Act or CITIRA Bill. While the TRAIN Law lowered the income tax for individuals, the CITIRA Bill mandates the tax authorities to lower the income tax of corporations. Admittedly, we have a very complicated Tax Code, rendering unfairness to those with little knowledge about it and vulnerability to manipulations within and outside the taxation system. It is then to no surprise that the Philippines has the highest corporate income tax rate among the ASEAN countries. Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam manage to give 20 percent corporate income tax while Singapore dares to give only 17 percent. Other neighboring countries, Malaysia and Laos have 24 percent while giant countries like China and Indonesia have 25 percent, both still lower than the current 30 percent corporate income tax in our country. This means that we have been lagging far behind our neighboring countries with respect to local and foreign investments.

Package 2 of the Comprehensive Tax Reform Program seeks to reduce the 30 percent corporate income tax to 20 percent by gradually lowering the same to two percent every two years. In lowering the CIT, the question will follow, where to get or how to get the foregone revenues? The foregone revenues will, in the long run, be offset through the rationalized and simplified tax incentives to be given to the deserving investors. While it is true that we have the highest rate of CIT in Asia, our tax collection is not really overwhelmingly high because of tax leakages by some using the most creative way of availing tax incentives through the 300-plus investment-related laws. Depending on the creativity, resourcefulness and political affiliation of those availing of the fiscal incentives, tax breaks were subject to abuse by big and top corporations in different sectors. Worst, these incentives have become perpetual or infinite. From income tax, customs duties, value-added tax and sometimes local taxes, the top corporations from different sectors are entitled to these tax breaks unconditionally.

To make our tax system simpler, more fair and efficient, the CITIRA will make our fiscal incentives transparent and time-bound, and will be based on performance and target. This Representation has high hopes that the CITIRA will make the Philippines more competitive not only among the ASEAN countries,

but also globally. I also foresee stronger domestic investments from small and medium enterprises, as well as foreign direct investments by leveling the playing field with rationalized fiscal incentives to the old and new players from all sectors. Thus, there will be more jobs, high income for every Juan Dela Cruz, reduced poverty among rural and urban areas and finally, a stronger economy for the Republic of the Philippines.

In this regard, I urge for the immediate passage and approval of this Bill.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maraming salamat po.

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

REP. ZUBIRI. Mr. Speaker.

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

## SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

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

*It was 6:16 p.m.*

## RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 6:16 p.m., the session was resumed.*

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION  
OF H.B. NO. 4157

REP. ZUBIRI. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 4157.

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

## PRIVILEGE HOUR

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

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

REP. ZUBIRI. Mr. Speaker, I now move that we recognize the Lady from the Lone District of San Jose del Monte City, Rep. Florida “Rida” P. Robes, for her privilege speech.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The Hon. Florida “Rida” Robes is recognized.

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ROBES

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

Mr. Speaker, my esteemed colleagues in this august Chamber, friends, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. Today, I rise to talk on a topic that is close to my heart but is rarely discussed in public. This affects the young and old alike, but my concern is mostly the youth. I am a mother and therefore, I care about how I can contribute to making this country a better place for my children to grow up in. We must understand the duality of man—his mortality as represented by his body, and his immortality as evidenced by his spirit. As such, the body without a spirit is a corpse while the spirit without the body is a ghost.

Our educational system would show that it is mostly geared towards developing a man’s body and intellect by capacitating the man with knowledge and technical competence. However, it has failed miserably to prepare man for the requirements of his spirituality and immortality. All too often, man has increasingly become a stranger to himself, more so in the complex world where he lives in, and especially so with the advent of technology. There is less and less time to indulge in introspection. Thus, we have graduates with big minds but Liliputian hearts. Education is not programmed to develop the will and emotions, but is heavily tilted towards the development of the mind.

According to Aristotle, knowing one’s self is the beginning of wisdom. Psychologist Jennifer Campbell, in a paper published in 1990, introduced the idea of self-concept clarity. According to her, having a clear sense of one’s self correlates well with high self-esteem. When one knows his worth, he will stand firm on his beliefs, aspirations and goals. He is able to see clearly his own virtues and strengths, and he also understand his fears, doubts, vulnerabilities and insecurities and recognize them as being normal. Not everyone, though, has the maturity to accept and recognize this.

The prevalence of mental health problems like hopelessness, depression, suicide, loss of moral values and discipline, lack of empathy, extreme nonconformism, loss of respect for authority and institutions, is just a manifestation of man’s alienation and emptiness.

My fear is awakened as I see this phenomenon dawning upon Filipinos, especially the young ones. As

our young Filipinos change faces, I get mixed feelings or ambivalence, for that matter, on the promise of their future. I am not a pessimist but with their faces changed, I see that an increasing number of them would either die young or slide down to social deviancy and mental illness unless something is done to temper the solution. Statistics show that there is an alarming number of young Filipinos who have taken their own lives because of feelings of hopelessness and meaningless existence. “Mental illness and suicide cases rising among youth,” says the *Rappler* banner on its September 11, 2018 story, as it speaks to psychiatrists, psychologists and life coaches, which confirmed a drastic rise in the cases of suicide referrals in the last two years. The same *Rappler* report confirmed that on a daily basis, at least one young person would come into the emergency room of the Philippine General Hospital, or the PGH, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine, for a suicide attempt.

Similarly situated, a number of child psychiatrists in the country shared anecdotes from their practice, indicating an increase in young patients who have suicidal thoughts or have attempted suicide. Some psychiatric clinics would have a high of five children-patients who are suicidal in one day, and their practice in the past two years have been the busiest in more than 20 years. In some school referrals of students who admitted dealing with mental health issues, the schools also admitted that these have become common in the recent years, and at the base of many of these clinical cases of suicide and mental illness is the ugly face of depression.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, dear colleagues, I am alarmed as I opt to speak about the changed face of our young Filipinos: depressive and suicidal. First, I am alarmed about these turnouts in the number of cases of depression-related suicides in the country. Depression used to affect, at the most, those who are 25 years old or older but now, the majority comes from ages 13 to 25 years old. Kamakailan lamang, ako po ay dumalaw sa mga patay sa isang barangay po namin sa Lungsod ng San Jose del Monte, sa Barangay Citrus. Tatlong patay na nagpakamatay dahil po sa mga problema—19 years old, 18 years old at isang 21 years old.

This is such depressing news—where the Philippines has the highest number of depressed people in Southeast Asia, and a high number of these cases are observed among our young people, including career-bound young professionals. Hindi po pinag-uusapan dito ang kategoriya ng buhay dahil mahirap man o mayaman, ito ay nangyayari po sa kanila. In the year 2017, a World Health Organization report said that suicide rates in the Philippines are about six for males and two for females per 100,000, as it recorded over 2,000 cases of suicide from 2000 to 2012. The majority of individuals dying by suicide are at the young age

of 15 to 25 years old. Second, I am alarmed at the propensity of the young Filipinos to take their own, dear lives. Third, I am alarmed that depression gets to become like a common cold, pangkaraniwan na lang sa ating bayan, in this country, and is affecting some 3,300,000 Filipinos. It is recognized by our own Department of Health as a “serious health condition” and the weight of “haplessness,” “hopelessness” and “helplessness”—the three dreaded “H” as symptoms of depression—gravitates toward what is now the new high-risk group, the young population of today.

Looking at the global picture, the World Health Organization reported an average of 3,000 people who commit suicide everyday. There is one case of suicide in every 40 seconds. In global ranking, suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15 to 29 year olds. The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention or the AFSP reported that adolescents are at risk as well, as suicide is reported to be the third leading cause of death in teens in the United States. And what is the level of risk? Well, not every depressed person attempts or commits suicide. However, most people who kill themselves are dealing with depression. The AFSP concedes a strong correlation between the two as in 60 percent of the people who have had a major depression, it led to their deaths. In our country, the rise in the number of suicide cases and youth with mental issues may be attributed to a convergence of “risk factors” like social disconnection and the weakening of the “helpful factors” such as genuine relationship and healthy lifestyles. Many of them lack a sense of purpose in life and experience disconnectedness and deteriorating relationships brought about by social media and technology. Young people today tend to be even more disconnected in spite of the Internet. Social media burdens them with too many things to do and prove, leaving them very pressured and stressed out and living complicated lives.

In a recent 2017 study published in the *Association for Psychological Science*, adolescents who spend more time online such as social media, are more likely to report mental health issues. At home, relationships or guidance may not be better either, when parents lack quality time for their children due to their busy schedules or when one or both of them work abroad.

Social life has become a source of high levels of stress as well. Our senior high school students speak of difficulty in coping with increased pressure and stress brought about by the lumping of too many subjects, having too many academic requirements, the lack of guidance and counseling, by heightened competition and an increasing level of expectations from teachers and parents. Our students are lacking formal values education or “pagpapahalaga”, as a stand-alone subject because this had been removed from the curriculum and had instead been integrated into other subject areas.

A sad scenario emerges wherein our young people are left to fend for themselves to face the present challenges of life. All these can have an impact on how they will learn to cope, as their development may not be at a stage where they would know how to deal with changes and heightened expectations. As a result, they must learn how to cope, although some would lapse into using less or not socially-desirable coping mechanisms that border on aggression such as bashing or bullying in social media and using abusive language, losing moral values and discipline, lacking empathy, being a nonconformist and losing respect for adults and authority. Halimbawa na lamang po dito ay, kapag po gustong ideklara ng ating kabataan na wala pong pasok, hindi sila papasok kahit wala pang signal number two; and alongside the increase in the vulnerability of young people to suicide and depression, I am seeing another face change in our young people as they lose sight of traditional Filipino values. Yes, Mr. Speaker, dear colleagues, I feel pain upon seeing our young people’s excesses in the exercise of their freedom of expression. They have become abusive, disrespectful, and too licentious and critical at expressing themselves. The social media has become their channel in bashing teachers, parents, adults, institutions and persons of authority. I am sad that the faces of the hope of our fatherland had been substituted by depressive suicidal tendencies and signs of social deviancy, a reality we can no longer afford to simply gloss over or be complacent with.

Through this Representation, I therefore trumpet a call to all sectors that hold a stake on young Filipinos. First, I call upon our government institutions, particularly the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the Department of Education, to lead in the formulation and implementation of an ethical orientation program anchored on the process of moral choice, with emphasis not only on the teaching of moral and philosophical values but also social and cultural values that are necessary for human survival. We must aim for that—to achieve to educate the spiritual dimension of man. Second, I enjoin civic-minded individuals—today, I am with the Soroptimists, the DMIS and all the Rotarians—religious constitutions, civil society organizations and private corporations to contribute their share in addressing these emergent problems through counseling and stress debriefing, and the establishment of a helpline for young people who cry for help. Third, I rally the Department of Health to step up the implementation of Republic Act No. 11036 or the Philippine Mental Health Act, particularly the launch of strong and widely-promoted anti-suicide helplines. The Department must also be prompted to implement community-based mental health programs with the same vigor and determination it showed in championing anti-AIDS, anti-dengue and anti-Japanese encephalitis campaigns.



May I also challenge the Department of Information and Communications Technology to exercise administrative actions on abusive posts on social media.

Finally, I move for the interest of the House of Representatives on the issue of helping young Filipinos confront better the threat of depression, suicide and various forms of maladjustment. I particularly move that we restore, through legislation, values education as a stand-alone subject in basic and higher education and curricula; conduct a congressional inquiry on the construction and loading of senior high school curriculum and probe on the age-appropriateness of difficult subject offerings like calculus, statistics and research; exercise our oversight powers on the implementation of Republic Act No. 11036 or the Philippine Mental Health Law; and craft legislation that mandates responsible social media usage.

On a related note, I propose that we address the difficulty in hiring licensed guidance counselors, as Republic Act No. 9258 or the Guidance and Counseling Act of 2004 prescribes steep licensing requirements. They are the professionals who help students understand and deal with social, behavioral and personal problems. Today, I am with our counselors from the city of San Jose del Monte. To be eligible for the PRC licensure examination, this law requires that an applicant must be a holder of Bachelor's Degree in Guidance and Counseling or in other allied disciplines, and a Master's Degree in Guidance and Counseling. This steep licensing requirement, coupled with a low entry salary of P21,000 per month, are considered deterrents to those who wish to pursue a career in guidance and counseling, hence, the scarcity of these professionals. The Department of Education currently has 2,200 unfilled vacancies for licensed guidance counselors.

Mr. Speaker, my esteemed colleagues, there are far-reaching consequences if we fail to contain these problems confronting our young people. Alam ko po na ang mga narito ngayon ay puro mga magulang katulad ko. Ako po ay nananawagan sa gobyerno na magkaroon tayo ngayon ng gobyernong mapagmahal at mapagmalasakit, at simulan po natin ito sa ating mga anak. May I, therefore, solicit your support in ensuring the mental health and psychological well-being of our young people.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, esteemed colleagues. Mabuhay po ang pamilyang Pilipino. *(Applause)*

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

REP. TADURAN. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from BUHAY Party-List, the Hon. Jose L. Atienza Jr. for his interpellation.

I so move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The Honorable Atienza is recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maraming salamat po, Majority Leader.

I will only interpellate, with the kind permission and understanding of the Lady whom I respect very much.

REP. ROBES. Yes.

REP. ATIENZA. Alam po ninyo, naniniwala ako kay Congresswoman Robes sa kanyang tunay na pagmamalasakit para sa ating bansa *(Applause)* at lalung-lalo na sa kanyang mga pinaglilingkuran, sa mga taga-distrrito niya sa Bulacan. She is an ideal member of Congress whom I recognize, and whose talent and gift in public service is unquestionable.

REP. ROBES. Thank you po. *(Applause)*

REP. ATIENZA. I would like to congratulate her for taking up this issue now before it is too late. Dumarami po talaga ang suicide cases sa ating bansa. Nasabi po ninyo kanina na in one out of so many days ay mayroon pong nag-suicide—mga Pilipinong nawawalan ng pag-asa. Tama po ba iyon?

REP. ROBES. Yes po.

REP. ATIENZA. Ako po ay matamang nakikinig sa inyo at nabanggit ninyo ang mga kadahilanan ng pagpapakamatay ng isang tao, at nabigay ninyo ang lahat ng mga kadahilangang dito na mahalaga sa inyong mensahe sa amin. Kapuna-puna na hindi ninyo nabanggit ito at bibigyan ko kayo ngayon ng pagkakataon at baka nakalimutan lang ninyo—hindi po ba iyong droga, lalung-lalo na ang marijuana, sa mga kabataan ay isa sa mga malaking kadahilanan kung bakit sila ay nawawala sa sarili? Mayroon po ba kayong ganoong uri ng pag-aaral tungkol sa isyung ito?

REP. ROBES. Mr. Speaker, as far as I am concerned, mayroon po talaga tayong mga problema pagdating sa mga kabataan na gumagamit po ng droga. Kasama po itong drugs—I am sorry pero kasama po ito talaga sa mga problema na hinaharap po, na risk factor po, ng ating mga kabataan ngayon.

REP. ATIENZA. Sa aming payak subalit makabuluhang pag-aaral at pagsusuri, napag-alaman namin na marami sa mga nagpapakamatay ngayon ay bunga ng kanilang pagkakalulun sa droga, lalung-lalo na sa marijuana. This is undebatable. This is unquestionable. This is a fact of life today. Marijuana is the greatest destroyer of the minds of our youth.

Your call for us to wake up is very timely, but we must include, Lady from Bulacan, Mr. Speaker, this issue of marijuana in our midst, lalung-lalo na na may naka-pending na measure dito sa ating Kamara on the legalization of the so-called medical marijuana. Maaaring ito ang maging simula ng kawalan natin o mawalan tayo ng kontrol sa pagkalat ng marijuana sa mga kabataan. Would you include this particular detrimental influence on society today in your message to the nation? We must provide our youth with more activities so that they may be pulled away from the useless and destructive habit of smoking marijuana.

REP. ROBES. Yes, Mr. Speaker. Atin pong isasama iyan sa content ng aking speech, and at the same time, kung mare-refer po ito sa isang committee, akin pong isasama ang pagtatalakay sa usaping drugs ang marijuana dahil naniniwala po ako talaga na minsan po—hindi pala minsan pero kadalasan, kapag ang isang bata ay nakakaramdam ng helplessness, hopelessness or haplessness, siguradong ang hahanapin po niya ay ang kasangga niya sa droga, of which I am also not in favor kasi hindi talaga nararapat na ang isang kabataan ay mamulat sa mga ganitong masasamang bisyo.

Kaya kanina po, when I was talking to Congressman Angara, ang sabi rin po niya ay siya rin daw ay magpa-file ng bill na palaganapin ang sports sa buong Pilipinas dahil medyo talagang naliligaw na po ng landas ang ating mga kabataan. Siguro po, it is one way of adopting also the baby boomers, the millennials, the gen x and gen z. This is actually more of—to adopt the personality of a person.

REP. ATIENZA. The Lady mentioned that the number one cause could be depression. Am I correct to assume that?

REP. ROBES. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

*At this juncture, Deputy Speaker Savellano relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Ferdinand L. Hernandez.*

REP. ATIENZA. It is a fact that marijuana may cause two effects: one is super joyfulness, tawa nang tawa pero wala namang tinatawanan. The other is severe depression. Doon po nagkakaroon ng ugnayan ang depression at marijuana, and as a result—suicide.

It is very sad, Lady from Bulacan, to see our young getting depressed when we as a people, the Filipinos, are known all over the world as being the happiest. Tayo daw ay masayahin. Tayo daw ay palaging nakangiti. Tayo daw ay palakaibigan. Tayo raw ay mapagmahal. Kaya iyong depression na inyong inilahad ay nakakabahalang tunay. Maaaring nagbabago na ang ating ugali kaya dumarami ang mga biktima ng depression. Kailangan

tingnan natin ng mas malawak ang ibinigay ninyong mensahe.

Suicide cases are increasing, tama po iyon. Depression is found to be, in many cases of suicide, as the main cause or as one of the main causes of committing suicide and therefore, we must also add to this particular message the issue of marijuana in our midst. In a short while, we will be discussing the proposed bills on the legalization of medical marijuana. Actually, iyon po ay sugarcoating, they term it as “medical marijuana” but, in reality, it is actually marijuana or opioid. Is the Lady aware that in the United States, opioid is a problem that is causing almost a national crisis in America?

REP. ROBES. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Tama po and we congratulate you for including that in your broad appreciation for the welfare of our youth today. In America, one big pharmaceutical company, Johnson & Johnson, malaki po iyon, is being considered or being sued for producing pharmaceutical products laced with opioid, meaning, containing marijuana, marijuana oil. Kaya maraming Amerikano, sa palagay ko, mas marami sa kanila ang nagsu-suicide ngayon. Marami sa kanila ang nasisiraan ng ulo, pumupunta sa eskuwela at binabaril ang kanilang mga kaklase, binabaril ang kanilang mga guro. Hindi naman nangyayari sa atin iyan, ano po? Matino pa ang mga kabataan natin compared to the young of the United States. I have not heard of any young Filipino going to a public school to shoot his teachers and classmates. Wala po. I do not see Filipinos talking to themselves inside our trains, buses and public conveyances. Sa America po, very common iyan, kung saan kinakausap nila ang sarili nila at sinasagot pa nila, dahil sila ay talagang tunay na palasak na sa kanilang pamumuhay.

So, your call is very timely, but we should put all these issues together. Suicide is now showing a danger sign in our midst. The future of our young, actually, is dependent on what we do today to address their needs. Binanggit ninyo kanina na ang mga kabataan ay madalas kulang sa ginagawa other than being on their computers, talking on their cellphones, and checking their internet. Isa po ba iyan sa pinagkakaabalahan ng mga kabataan ngayon?

REP. ROBES. Mr. Speaker, ang ating mga kabataan po ngayon ay alam naman po natin na talaga pong nakatutok sa gadgets nila. So, ang social media po ay napakalaking factor sa mga nangyayari sa kanilang mga pag-iisip, sa kanilang mga gusto at moods. Nagkakataon naman sa buhay po natin na mayroon tayo ngayon—kahit mahirap man, sa P15 po ay nakakapag-load na para po makapag-Facebook.

So, I guess, Mr. Speaker, I really wanted to move

na magkaroon po tayo ng investigation or a joint query with the DICT para po makita natin ang paghawak po mismo ng Facebook. I have also inquired about the regulation on Facebook. Ang sabi po nila ay wala daw po tayong magagawa. Paano iyon kung masisira na po ang buhay ng ating mga anak, wala pa rin ba tayong gagawin? Narito po tayo sa Mababang Kapulungan para tingnan po natin ang kaligtasan ng bawat pamilyang Pilipino.

REP. ATIENZA. Ang problema po ba ng suicide ay may pinipiling economic level sa ating lipunan?

REP. ROBES. Isa po iyon, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Ito po ba ay nangyayari sa class A, B, C, D and E? Sa very poor? Ano po ba ang inyong pag-aaral at pagsusuri?

REP. ROBES. Mr. Speaker, ayon po sa isang pag-aaral, ang mga sumusuweldo po ng P25 o P20 at pababa po, dito po nagkakaroon ng medyo tunay na paghihikahos ang mga magulang. Kaya pagdating po sa kanilang panahon sa mga anak, imbes ho na makatugon sila sa mga pangangailangan ng mga anak nila sa pang-araw-araw, sinisikap ng mga magulang na magtrabaho nang todo-todo at hindi po nila nakikita na mayroon pong peers o mga kaibigan na hindi po nakakapagbigay ng magandang halimbawa o magandang ehemplo sa kanila. Ang kahirapan po ay isa po roon sa factors na iyon. Kung pang ilan numero? I guess it is number one po.

REP. ATIENZA. As I join you in this particular cause and crusade, we request you to join us in preventing the spread of marijuana use through the subterfuge of the so-called “medical marijuana.” Would you consider that, Lady from Bulacan?

REP. ROBES. Yes, Mr. Speaker. Do I have to go back also to check if I signed that? If I did, I am going to retract it. That is my answer.

REP. ATIENZA. Thank you. We really have to work together to make sure that our children are saved from this very destructive element that is now clearly in our midst. Families are affected by children who lost their minds. Families are destroyed and separated in their ideologies and thinking because of the problem of drugs. Ang droga tulad ng shabu at marijuana ay pare-parehong mga substance that destroy the minds of people. Therefore, we, Members of Congress, should really work hard to keep our people safe and not expose them to the danger of shabu, cocaine, marijuana and other substances which destroy the minds of people.

I appreciate the message of our respected Member

of Congress, the Lady, Congresswoman Robes, sapagkat napapanahon na tayo ay gumising sa katotohanan. Kung nagpapakamatay ang isang tao, bata, matanda—may problema. Walang nagpapakamatay na tao na maligaya at masaya sa kanyang buhay. We must worry about this increasing number of people who commit suicide, and I have seen many friends suffer because of this. My own family had gone through the crisis of knowing somebody getting depressed. I am sure your families, dear colleagues, are not exempted from this social problem that is affecting all of us.

Again, my appreciation for the message of Congresswoman Robes whom I admire very much for her dedication, diligence, intelligence and total research on the subject, and I join her call for us to act together.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

REP. ROBES. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for a very good interpellation. Mabuhay po ang pamilyang Pilipinong muli.

REP. ATIENZA. Salamat po.

REP. ROBES. God bless the Philippines. *(Applause)*

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

REP. TADURAN. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the Hon. Rida Robes and the interpellation of the Hon. Lito Atienza to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, next to avail of the Privilege Hour is the Hon. Lorenz R. Defensor from the Third District of Iloilo. I move that he be recognized.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Hon. Lorenz Defensor is hereby recognized.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. DEFENSOR (L.)

REP. DEFENSOR (L.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Members of the House of Representatives, yesterday, we commemorated the 88th National Heroes Day. Last August 21, we also marked a turning point for our democracy with the 36th death anniversary of Ninoy Aquino but instead of remembering, more so to

celebrate our heroes and their heroism, most of us let the days pass without a thought on their sacrifices for freedom and democracy. Sadly, we, Filipinos, have allowed time and progress to slowly erode our memory. Comfort and indifference have made us forget the sacrifices of those whose lives and blood were spilled so that we can all be free. This country, Mr. Speaker, needs new heroes to inspire its people. We have our indefatigable teachers, the honest civil servants, the hardworking nurses, our farmers, the laborers and, of course, our OFWs and many more—they all help build our nation and now more than ever, we have a chance to make real heroes of those who are ready to lay their lives on the line, our soldiers in the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Not too long ago, our fighters and soldiers were our heroes. They fought bravely alongside Bonifacio and the Katipunan, and they valiantly stood and died beside Del Pilar in Tirad Pass and helped regain our independence fighting side by side with our allies in 1945. Who can forget the image of two nuns in EDSA in 1986? On that fateful day, courage had a new meaning for the soldier to stand down for your countrymen, for peace, for democracy. But like all stories, there are dark and sad chapters in the history of the Filipino soldiers. The black and white images of Ninoy's body sprawled on the tarmac are among the most painful. Those chapters, however dark they may be, must never be forgotten. The past should serve as a reminder for us all to be vigilant in choosing our leaders who will lead our soldiers.

Today, our nation is confronted by an ominous predicament that calls for our support of our armed forces. China is right at our doorstep and we cannot passively allow the threat of losing our national territory to go on. While we have expressly renounced war in the Constitution, our armed forces must be organized, equipped and prepared. It is noteworthy that the Philippines is not even among the top countries in Southeast Asia in terms of military strength. Meanwhile, our neighbors, China, India, South Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Indonesia and Thailand, rank among the top 30 countries with most powerful armies worldwide.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we are in the best position to support our soldiers, their institutions as well as their families. While we are grateful to the President and the previous Congress for the increase in the salary of soldiers, this Congress must continue legislating to improve the condition and standard of living of their families. If teachers or soldiers alike are to be considered modern-day heroes who deserve more from the government, then the state should reconsider the fiscal burdens imposed upon them. Taxes may be the lifeblood of the nation, but the nation will cease to exist without the lives sacrificed and blood shed by those who had to leave their families behind so that we can sleep

soundly at night. A career in the armed forces should, once more, be looked upon with pride and honor—the uniformed personnel, an officer and a gentleman. The well-deserved increase in benefits is a welcome development to encourage Filipinos to find their calling in the army, the navy or the air force. If we can lower corporate income taxes and rationalize fiscal incentives, maybe someday soon, the Congress, too, may consider lowering their taxes and further increasing the benefits for families of soldiers. Amidst growing external threats, the time has come to recognize the paramount importance of our armed forces. We must act now. Lest we are left to ask ourselves in regret, where have all the soldiers gone? Let us support and fast-track the modernization of our armed forces. With government's help, they will confidently secure our sovereign territory and preserve our freedom and democracy.

I, too, fervently hope that time will come when that silent, unspoken respect seen in EDSA 33 years ago will burn once more in the hearts of soldiers and civilians alike; a time where our men in uniform can stand loyal and ready to defend the country but stand down with honor and dignity for their countrymen; a time when, like our heroes from the past, all Filipinos can say with pride, "this country is worth dying for."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that the speech of Rep. Lorenz Defensor be referred to the Committee on Rules.

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the Privilege Hour.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO VARIOUS COMMITTEES

REP. REMULLA. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Majority, I move for the election of the following Members to various Committees:

*The Sr. Dep. Majority Leader, Rep. Remulla, read the names of the House Members elected to the various Committees, per Journal No. 12, dated August 27, 2019.*

## COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

As Vice Chairpersons:

Rep. Gerardo “Gerryboy” J. Espina Jr.  
Rep. Ruth Mariano-Hernandez  
Rep. Jose Enrique “Joet” S. Garcia III

As members:

Rep. Ramon C. Nolasco Jr.  
Rep. Jose “Bong” J. Teves Jr.  
Rep. Alan I B. Ecleo  
Rep. Emmarie “Lolypop” Ouano-Dizon  
Rep. Aleta C. Suarez  
Rep. Ma. Angelica M. Amante-Matba

COMMITTEE ON INDIGENOUS  
CULTURAL COMMUNITIES AND  
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

As Vice Chairperson:

Rep. Nestor B. Fongwan

As members:

Rep. Joseph Sto. Niño B. Bernos  
Rep. Maximo Y. Dalog Jr.  
Rep. Mark O. Go  
Rep. Luisa Lloren Cuaresma  
Rep. Raul “Boboy” C. Tupas  
Rep. Noel L. Villanueva  
~~Rep. Luisa Lloren Cuaresma~~

Strike off the last name, Mr. Speaker, Rep. Luisa Lloren Cuaresma. It was already read earlier.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. REMULLA. To continue, Mr. Speaker.

## COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

As Vice Chairperson:

Rep. Francis Gerald Aguinaldo Abaya

## COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SERVICES

As member:

Rep. Ma. Angelica M. Amante-Matba

COMMITTEE ON SUFFRAGE AND  
ELECTORAL REFORMS

As Senior Vice Chairperson:

Rep. Virgilio S. Lacson

As members:

Rep. Luisa Lloren Cuaresma  
Rep. Rufus B. Rodriguez

## COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

As members:

Rep. Adriano A. Ebcas  
Rep. Jocelyn F. Fortuno  
Rep. Mercedes “Didi” C. Cagas  
Rep. Jose “Bong” J. Teves Jr.  
Rep. Gerardo “Gerryboy” J. Espina Jr.  
Rep. Ma. Angelica M. Amante-Matba

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Rep. Ruth Mariano-Hernandez  
Rep. Horacio P. Suansing Jr.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

PRIVILEGE HOUR  
*Continuation*

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume the Privilege Hour.

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, the next of our colleagues to avail of the Privilege Hour is the Gentleman from the Fourth District of Cavite. I move that Rep. Elpidio F. Barzaga Jr. be recognized.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Hon. Elpidio F. Barzaga Jr. is hereby recognized.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. BARZAGA

REP. BARZAGA. Maraming-maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker. Malugod na pagbati sa mga kapwa ko Mambabatas, mga panauhin at mga kababayan.

Bawat taon marami tayong pagdiriwang na ginaganap sa ating bansa. Kahapon lamang, ika-26 ng Agosto 2019, ipinagdiwang natin ang Araw ng mga Bayani. Noong nakaraang linggo, ika-21 ng Agosto, ginunita natin ang Araw ng Kamatayan ng dating Senador Ninoy Aquino. Kapag dumarating ang ika-12 ng Hunyo, ipinagdiriwang natin ang Araw ng Kalayaan. Tuwing ika-30 ng Disyembre, inaalaala natin ang kamatayan ng ating pambansang bayani na si Dr. Jose Rizal. Ngunit sa dami ng mga pagdiriwang na ating ginagawa, ako ay nagtataka kung bakit sa selebrasyon ng ating wika ay isang buwan ang ating inilalaan, at ako ay nagtatanong sa aking sarili, “Ano ba ang kahalagahan ng isang wika at kinakailangan nating ipagdiwang ito ng isang buwan?”

Ayon sa ating pambansang bayani na si Dr. Jose Rizal, sa katauhan ni Simon sa ikapitong kabanata ng nobelang *El Filibusterismo*, kanyang sinabi na bawat bayan ay may sariling wika, kagaya ng pagkakaroon niya ng sariling pag-iisip. Habang pinangangalagaan ng isang bayan ang kanyang wika, pinangangalagaan niya ang marka ng kanyang kalayaan, kagaya ng pangangalaga ng tao sa kanyang kalayaan habang pinanghahawakan niya ang sariling paraan ng pag-iisip.

Ayon sa Malolos Constitution, sa Titulo XIV: Constitutional Observance, Oath, and Language, Artikulo 93, nakasaad:

The use of languages spoken in the Philippines shall be optional. Their use cannot be regulated except by virtue of law, and solely for acts of public authority and in the courts. For these acts, the Spanish language may be used in the meantime.

Ayon naman sa Saligang Batas ng 1935, Artikulo XIV, Section 3:

The Congress shall take steps toward the development and adoption of a common national language based on one of the existing native languages. Until otherwise provided by law, English and Spanish shall continue as official languages.

Sa Saligang Batas ng 1973 naman, nakasaad sa Artikulo XV, Section 3, bilang 2 at 3:

2. The National Assembly shall take steps towards the development and formal adoption of a common national language to be known as Filipino.

3. Until otherwise provided by law, English and Filipino shall be the official languages.

Sa probisyon ng Saligang Batas ng 1987 na kasalukuyang umiiral, nakasaad sa Artikulo XIV, Sections 6 at 7:

Section 6. The national language of the Philippines is Filipino. As it evolves, it shall be further developed and enriched on the basis of existing Philippine and other languages.

Subject to provisions of law and as the Congress may deem appropriate, the Government shall take steps to initiate and sustain the use of Filipino as a medium of official communication and as language of instruction in the educational system.

Section 7. For purposes of communication and instruction, the official languages of the Philippines are Filipino and, until otherwise provided by law, English.

Noong ika-26 ng Marso 1954, sapagkat wala pang ginagawang batas ang ating Kongreso kung ano ang ating wikang pambansa, nilagdaan ng Pangulong Ramon Magsaysay ang Proklamasyon Blg. 12 na nagtatakda sa pagdiriwang ng Linggo ng Wikang Pambansa tuwing ika-29 ng buwan ng Marso hanggang ika-4 ng Abril sa bawat taon. Ngunit ninais ni Pangulong Magsaysay na isama sa iba't ibang gawaing pang-wika ang mga mag-aaral kaya binago niya ang una niyang proklamasyon at inilipat niya ang selebrasyon ng Linggo ng Wika tuwing ika-13 hanggang ika-19 ng Agosto. Ito ay sa bisa ng Proklamasyon Blg. 186 na nilagdaan noong ika-23 ng Setyembre 1955. Sa proklamasyon, ang pagtatapos ng selebrasyon ng Linggo ng Wika ay sa ika-19 ng Agosto bilang paggunita sa araw ng kapanganakan ni dating Pangulong Manuel L. Quezon na kinikilala bilang Ama ng Wikang Pambansa. Sa ngayon, ipinagdiriwang natin sa buong buwan ng Agosto ang araw ng ating wika. Ito ay

sa bisa ng Proklamasyon Blg. 1041 ni dating Pang. Fidel V. Ramos na kanyang nilagdaan noong Hulyo 1997 na naglalayong paigtingin ang selebrasyon ng wika upang magbunsod sa atin ng mas malalim na pagkaunawa sa kahalagahan ng pagkakaroon ng wikang pambansa.

Sa iba't ibang pananaliksik, nakita na ang lengguwahe sa buong daigdig ay nagsisimula nang maglaho sa isang nakakabahalang bilis. Sa katunayan, tinatayang sa taong 2100, kalahati sa higit 7,000 wika sa buong mundo ang tuluyang maglalaho. Ang ating bansa, bagamat maliit kumpara sa ibang mga bansa sa Timog-Silangang Asya, ay tahanan ng 183 wika. Ang malaking bilang ay patunay sa kayamanan ng ating lahi. Sa katunayan, mayroon tayong 13 diyalekto na may higit tig-iisang milyong mamamayan ang gumagamit, kabilang dito ang Cebuano, Ilocano, Hiligaynon, Waray-Waray, Kapampangan, Bicolano, Pangasinense, Maranaoan, Tausug, Maguindanaoan, Chavacano, Kinaray-a at Surigaonon. Gayunpaman, tinatayang 28 wikang katutubo ang nanganganib mawala at 11 ang nasa proseso ng pagkawala. Kung gayon, tayo ay nahaharap sa malaking hamon ng pagsasalba sa mga wikang nabanggit sapagkat ang paglilintang sa pambansang wika ay kakabit ng pag-iingat at pagpapanatili ng mga katutubong wika. Hamon rin maituturing ang pagtatatag sa wikang Filipino bilang wikang tagapagbigkis ng lahat ng Pilipino.

Ang wikang Filipino ay may dalawahang kalikasan: una, ang pagiging wikang pambansa; at pangalawa, ang malalim na kaugatan sa isang katutubong wika, ang wikang Tagalog. Noong ika-13 ng Disyembre 1937, inilabas ni Pang. Manuel Quezon ang Kautusang Tagapagpaganap Blg. 134 na nagtatalaga sa Tagalog bilang batayang wika ng wikang pambansa. Kaugnay nito, tinatadhana ng Saligang Batas ng 1987 ang paggamit sa mga katutubong wika bilang pangunahing pantulong sa pagpapayaman ng wikang Filipino. Sa Artikulo XIV, Seksyon 6, isinasaad na ang wikang pambansa ng Pilipinas ay Filipino. Samantalang nililintang, ito ay dapat payabungin at pagyamanin pa salig sa iba pang mga umiiral na wika sa Pilipinas.

Bilang mga Mambabatas, itinatadhana ng ating Saligang Batas na pagyamanin ang umiiral na wika para sa ikauunlad ng wikang pambansa at higit sa lahat, para tayo ay magkaroon ng pagkakakilanlan at magkaroon din ng mayamang balon ng kultura at kasaysayan. Malaking hamon sa bawat isa sa atin na pagsikapang maging tulay ang wikang Filipino at maging wikang panlahat sa buong kapuluan na may daan-daang diyalekto. Ito ay maisasakatuparan lamang kung mayroon tayong pagpupunyagi. Kailangang gumawa tayo ng mga hakbang upang ang wikang Filipino ay tunay na maging ina sa ating mga wikang katutubo at ganoon din, upang bigyang pugay at paggalang ang bawat wikang bernakular at panatilihing buhay ang mga ito.

Nakakatuwang isipin na atin na itong nasimulan.



Humakbang na tayo tungo sa layuning ito. Sentral sa K to 12 Program ang pagtatatag ng Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE). Sa ilalim nito, ginagamit ang wikang kinagisnan ng mag-aaral o ang tubong salita na kinalakihan sa pagtuturo mula kindergarten hanggang sa unang tatlong taon sa elementarya. Ang pagsasalin ng mga materyal na pangturo sa diyalekto ng mag-aaral ay nagbibigay daan upang palawigin ang bokabularyo ng mga wikang katutubo at mas mapagtibay ang koneksiyon ng mga ito sa wikang Filipino. Ang pagsasalin ay isang makapangyarihang paraan upang pagyamanin ang wika. Nararapat lamang na pag-ibayuhin natin ang pagsasalin, lalo na ng mga natatanging akdang pampanitikan na nasa wikang katutubo. Dapat rin na hikayatin natin ang paglalathala ng mga ito sa edisyong bilingguwal, sa wikang orihinal at sa Filipino. Hindi lamang wika ang yayabong kung hindi pati na ang ating panitikan.

Bukod sa pagsasalin, dapat ring magpanukala tayo ng mga batas para sa ikauunlad ng pananaliksik pangwika. Ang de-kalidad na mga pananaliksik ay maaaring bumalangkas para sa atin ng isang sistematiko at komprehensibong pagbuo at pagtitipon ng kayamanan at karanasang naukit sa bawat katutubong wika. Ganunpaman, ang ganitong gawain ay nangangailangan ng suporta ng ating pamahalaan sapagkat masalimuot at magastos na proseso ang pananaliksik. Bilang mga Kinatawan, magpanukala tayo ng mga batas na maglalagay ng pondo sa akademiya para sa mga gawaing pananaliksik.

Higit sa lahat, sikapin nating lumikha ng mas maraming programang pang-edukasyon na gaganyak sa ating mga mag-aaral na makilahok sa pagpapaunlad ng wika, lalo na sa kasalukuyan kung saan kinatigan ng Korte Suprema ang Memorandum Order No. 20 ng Commission on Higher Education na inilabas noong 2013 na bumabalangkas sa bagong General Education Curriculum kung saan inalis ang Filipino at Panitikan bilang core subjects sa kolehiyo. Higit na kinakailangan na paigtingin ang mga programang pangwika. Maglunsad tayo ng mga pambansang patimpalak sa bawat sulok ng Pilipinas. Buhayin nating muli ang balagtasang, dagliang talumpati at ang pagsulat ng iba't ibang akdang pampanitikan sa katutubong wika. Makakabuti rin na gawing mas bukas ang mga regular na pagsasanay o kumperensiya sa ating mga kabataan.

Sa panahon ngayon ng globalisasyon, kailangan ng isang mas dinamikong wika na intelihenteng magpapahiwatig lalo na sa mga kaalamang kanluranin na higit na umiiral lalo na sa pandaigdigang larangan ng ekonomiya. Hindi maitatangi, ang wikang Filipino at ang mga katutubong wika natin ay humaharap sa maraming hamon kaya naman hinihimok ang lahat na gawing mas kongkreto ang pagdiriwang ng wika sa buwan ng Agosto. Tulad ng mga inilalahad ng inyong lingkod, marami tayong magagawa upang maging

tagapagtaguyod ng ating wika na siyang sagisag ng ating karangalang panlahi. Tayo na at ipakita natin sa gawa ang pagsaludo at pagdakilang nararapat sa ating wika. Sa huli, tunay na kailangan ang mas pinayamang mga katutubong wika at isang wikang pambansa na kakalinga sa ating mga katutubong wika. Patuloy nating itaas sa pedestal ang wika nating magiting.

Hayaan ninyo akong magtapos sa pagsambit ng ilang bahagi ng tulang “Ang Wika Ko” na ginawa ng Pambansang Alagad ng Sining na si Virgilio Almario:

Ang wika ko’y wika nating malikhain,  
May hiwaga ng gunitang ‘pag hinukay,  
lumalalim;

Langhapin mo ang linamnam, umaalab  
kung haplusin,

Kabaak mo, buong-buo, iyong-iyong ‘pag  
inangkin.

Marami pong salamat sa inyong lahat. (*Applause*)

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, before we proceed to recognize our colleague who will interpellate, I move that we extend the Privilege Hour for another 30 minutes.

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Sr. Dep. Majority Leader, Rep. Jesus Crispin C. Remulla, who wishes to interpellate the Gentleman from Cavite.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Hon. Crispin Remulla is hereby recognized.

REP. REMULLA. Unang-una, nais ko pong ilahad ang aking paghanga sa mga salitang binitawan ng aking kababayan na si Elpidio Barzaga sa araw na ito sapagkat napakahalaga nga ang usaping wika sa panahon na ito na halos nalilimutan na ng mga kabataan ang gumamit ng salitang katutubo. Nais ko lang magtanong ng ilang mga bagay-bagay hinggil sa mga binitawan na salita ng ating kagalang-galang na Mambabatas mula sa

Dasmariñas, Cavite. Ano po ang mga paraan na nakikita ninyo upang palawigin at palakihin ang paggamit ng wika natin sa ating mga paaralan at sa buhay ng ating mga kabataan?

REP. BARZAGA. Unang-una, katulad ng aking mga nabanggit, kinakailangang ipagpatuloy natin at pagyamanin ang wikang katutubo. Kung maaari, doon sa wikang katutubo natin ay magsaliksik tayo kung ano ang ating maitutumbas sa wikang Filipino at nang sa ganoon, sa iba't ibang rehiyon ay mabubuhay at yayabong ang mga wikang katutubo. Aking ding binanggit, ating muling ibalik ang mga patimpalak kung saan ginagamit natin ang wikang pambansa at ang wikang katutubo katulad ng balagtasang, extemporaneous debate in Filipino, kasama na rin ang pagkakaroon ng pag-aakda ng mga panitikan sa katutubong wika at sa wikang Filipino.

REP. REMULLA. Kung gayon, ang sinasabi po natin dito ay hindi lang Pilipinong Tagalog ang ating pinag-uusapan kundi ang iba't ibang mga wika na ginagamit, ang mga katutubong wika sa ating bansa katulad ng Visaya o Ilonggo, o kaya Ilokano at mga iba-ibang salita na ginagamit ng ating mga kababayan. Iyon po ang inyong tinutukoy?

REP. BARZAGA. Iyon po ang aking tinutukoy. Kaya po kanina nabanggit ko na ang ating wikang pambansa ay Filipino, iyon ang unang katangian ng Filipino bilang wikang pambansa, at higit sa lahat, sa wikang Filipino ay kasama rin ang Tagalog na kung saan doon maraming mga salita ang pinagbatayan ng ating mga katutubong wika.

REP. REMULLA. Nabanggit po ninyo ang patimpalak na maaaring ganapin sa ating bansa, sa iba't ibang rehiyon. Ito bang tinutukoy po ninyo rito, bukod sa balagtasang, ay marahil ang paggawa ng mga awit ng mga Filipino sa iba't ibang wikang katutubo?

REP. BARZAGA. Ang balagtasang, ayon sa aking pagkakaalam, ay katulad ng isang debate na parang tula na mayroong subject o mayroong pinagtatalunan.

REP. REMULLA. Opo, ang balagtasang, ngunit iyong mga patimpalak naman sa paglikha ng mga awit na gawa ng ating mga musikero, ito ba ay kasama rin sa inyong iminumungkahi na pairalin natin?

REP. BARZAGA. Kasama rin iyan, ginoong kababayan mula sa lalawigan ng Cavite, sapagkat nalilimutan na ng ating mga kabataan kung ano ang kundiman at kung ano ang mga harana na nasa wikang Filipino at doon din sa mga wikang katutubo sa iba-ibang rehiyon ng bansang Pilipinas.

REP. REMULLA. Kasama po ninyo ako sa pagmumungkahi na ating paigtingin po ang paggamit ng ating wikang katutubo, at ako po ay nakikiisa sa inyo sa inyong hangarin na mapalaganap muli ang ating paggamit ng ating sariling wika.

Maraming salamat po.

REP. BARZAGA. Maraming salamat din sa aing kapwa Kinatawan na nanggaling sa aming lalawigan ng Cavite.

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, our Minority Leader, Rep. Bienvenido M. Abante Jr., also wishes to interpellate the Gentleman. I move for his recognition.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The honorable Minority Leader Bienvenido Abante is hereby recognized.

REP. ABANTE. G. Tagapagsalita, maaari po ba akong makapagtanong sa napakagaling na Mambabatas po natin dito mula sa Cavite, ang ating Representanteng Barzaga.

REP. BARZAGA. Isang malaking karangalan na aking sagutin at linawin ang mga katanungan ng ating kaibigan na nanggaling sa lungsod ng Maynila.

REP. ABANTE. Ipagpaumanhin po ninyo kung ang Tagalog ko po ay hindi po tulad ng Tagalog Cavite o Tagalog Bulacan sapagkat ang Tagalog Maynila po ay Tagalog na iba sa katagalugan. Ito ho ang una kong tanong—nabanggit ninyo ang wikang Pilipino, ano po ba talaga ang wikang Filipino?

REP. BARZAGA. Katulad ng aking isinambit kanina, ang wikang Filipino ay may dalawang katangian: una, ang pagiging wikang pambansa na itinatadhana ng ating Saligang Batas. Ang pangalawang katangian ng wikang Filipino ay ang malalim na kaugatan ng isang katutubong wika at ang binabanggit na malalim ang kaugatan sa isang katutubong wika, ito ay ang wikang Tagalog.

REP. ABANTE. Okay, Ang wikang Filipino, mahal na Kongresista, ay sinisimulan po ng letrang “F,” na hindi po ito letrang Tagalog. Hindi po ba?

REP. BARZAGA. Unang-una, ang nakatadhana sa mga naunang Saligang Batas, ang wikang pambansa ay Pilipino with a letter “P,” ngunit binago ito at ginawang Filipino with a letter “F” upang magkaroon ng distinction ang ating pambansang wika sa wikang Pilipino o sa wikang Tagalog.

REP. ABANTE. Kayo po ba ay kakatig sa akin kung sasabihin ko po sa inyo na ang salitang Filipino ay salitang banyaga at hindi po salitang katutubo?

REP. BARZAGA. Siguro, hindi ako makakakatig diyan sapagkat inilagay sa ating Saligang Batas that the national language is Filipino with the letter “F.” Siguro naman ay tatanggapin ng aking kaibigan na nanggaling sa kamaynilaan na iyong gumawa ng ating Saligang Batas ay makabayan. They have patriotism; they are nationalistic and therefore, they would not put in the Constitution, which is the highest law of the land, ang paglalagay ng isang salitang banyaga. Kasi kung sasabihin natin ang Pilipino ay banyaga with a letter “F,” saan nagsimula ang salitang Filipino with a letter “F”? Sinimulan ba ito ng mga Amerikano? Sinimulan ba ito ng mga Kastila? Sinimulan ba ito ng sumakop sa bansang Pilipinas, o tayo mismong mga Pilipino ang nagsimula ng salitang Filipino with a letter “F”?

REP. ABANTE. Ang ibig ninyo bang sabihin, mahal na kongresista, sapagkat ito po ay nilagay sa isang batas, ang salitang Filipino na may letter “F” ay hindi na po isang banyagang salita...

REP. BARZAGA. Hindi na para sa akin.

REP. ABANTE. ...kahit na ang letter “F” ay wala po sa katitikan ng Tagalog?

REP. BARZAGA. Kung wala man sa alpabetong Tagalog, nagpapakilala lamang ito na, katulad ng aking sinabi kanina, kulang na kulang ang ating wikang katutubo. Maraming bagay na walang katumbas sa wikang katutubo bagamat ginagamit ito ng ating mga kababayan. Kaya ang sabi ko nga kanina, kinakailangang tayo ay magsaliksik sa mga wikang katutubo natin at nang sa ganoon ay malaman natin ang kanilang katumbas sa wikang Pilipino.

REP. ABANTE. Kayo na rin po ang nagsabi kanina sa inyong talumpati ng pinagkaiba ng katutubong wika sa wikang pambansa na Tagalog. Hindi po ba?

REP. BARZAGA. Okay. Ang aking sinasabi, ang Filipino with a letter “F” ay ang wikang pambansa ngunit iyong Filipino, hindi natin dapat ilagay sa ating isipan na iyong Tagalog lamang ang ibig sabihin ng Filipino. Kaya nga aking binanggit, ang wikang Filipino with a letter “F” ay may dalawang katangian: una, ay ang pagiging wikang pambansa; at ang pangalawang katangian ng wikang Filipino with a letter “F” ay ang malalim na kaugatan sa isang katutubong wika at ang katutubong wika ang wikang Tagalog. Sa madaling sabi, ang wikang Tagalog ay hindi wikang Pilipino with a letter “F” ngunit ang Filipino ay maraming kaugatan sa ibang katutubong wika, kaya

kung minsan nagkakamali tayo at sinasabi natin na ang wikang Filipino with a letter “F” ay ang wikang Tagalog. That is a misconception. Kaya nga ini-emphasize natin na dalawa ang katangian ng wikang Filipino with a letter “F”: number one, bilang wikang pambansa as provided under the Constitution; at pangalawa, kasama na rin dito ang Tagalog but Tagalog is not our national language.

REP. ABANTE. Nabanggit po ninyo sa inyong talumpati ang pinagkaiba ng lengguwahe at ang diyalekto—dialects and languages. Sa akin pong pagkakaalam, ang languages po sa Pilipinas ay 13.

REP. BARZAGA. Ano po?

REP. ABANTE. May 13 lengguwahe at ang dialects po ay 108. Iyon po ang aking pagkakaalam. Ang ibig sabihin, itong mga dialect na ito ay iyong mga katutubong wika at ito ay hindi wika po ng karamihan ng mga Pilipino. Subalit ang 13 lengguwahe, ito po ang lengguwahe ng karamihan ng mga Pilipino katulad ng mga Ilokano, Cebuano, Tagalog at Bikolano.

REP. BARZAGA. Siguro ay dapat din nating isipin ang pagkakaiba ng wikang pambansa as compared to the official language. Iyong official language, base sa mga binanggit kong Saligang Batas, minsan ginagamit natin as official language ang Español. Sa kasalukuyang Saligang Batas, nakalagay rin that the use of Filipino—“the official languages of the Philippines are Filipino and until otherwise provided by law, English.” Sa madaling sabi, kinikilala ng ating Saligang Batas na ang español, ang Ingles ay ginagamit din na official language sa bansang Pilipinas kaya magkaiba talaga ang language at local dialects.

REP. ABANTE. Salamat po sa inyong nasabi. Nabanggit din po ninyo sa inyong talumpati na naniniwala kayo na dapat natin ipagsalin-salin ang mga katutubong wika. Ano po ang ibig ninyong sabihin sa “ipagsalin-salin natin ang mga katutubong wika”? Ibig po bang sabihin nito ay dapat tingnan natin ang lahat ng ating mga wika, pati wikang Ingles ay i-integrate para magkaroon tayo ng isang wikang pambansa? Iyon po ba ang ibig ninyong sabihin?

REP. BARZAGA. Ultimately, iyan talaga ang ating nais, ang magkaroon ng isang wikang pambansa. Ngunit magkakaroon lang tayo kung iyong local dialects ay ating isasalin sa wikang Filipino, this we have to do. Dito mismo sa Kongreso, kung ang magsasalita ay nanggaling sa Mindanao at gagamitin niya ang local dialect, hindi tayo magkakaintindihan, ngunit kung dumating ang pagkakataon na iyong nga pangkaraniwang ginagamit sa Mindanao na mga salita sa kanilang local dialects ay maisasalin natin sa wikang

Filipino, madali tayong magkakaintindihan dito sa Kongreso ng Republika ng Pilipinas.

Anyway, nakasaad din sa Saligang Batas that Filipino, and unless otherwise provided by law, the official languages in the Philippines shall be Filipino and English, and not the local dialects. Kaya ginawa natin iyan sapagkat hindi pa tayo nakahanda na gawin na rin nating official language ang mga local dialects unless na naisalin na natin iyan sa wikang Filipino para lahat tayo ay magkakaintindihan bagamat sa iba't ibang rehiyon tayo ng Pilipinas nanggaling.

REP. ABANTE. Mukhang mahirap po yata ang inyong panukala na ating ipagsalin-salin ang iba't ibang lengguwahe sa iisa...

REP. BARZAGA. Kung ang gagawin nating mga panukala...

REP. ABANTE. ... tulad po—hindi pa po ako tapos...

REP. BARZAGA. Okay po.

REP. ABANTE. ... tulad po, halimbawa sa Cebu, ang “lingkod” ay “maupo,” sa Tagalog ang “lingkod” ay “to serve.” Sa Bicol naman, ang “daga” ay “lupa,” sa Tagalog ang “daga” ay “daga.”

REP. BARZAGA. Unang-una...

REP. ABANTE. Mayroon pong tulay sa Bulacan na umaabot hanggang Pampanga. Pagpanhik mo ng tulay sa Bulacan, ang tawag ay “itlog,” pero paglampas mo ng tulay, nagiging “ebun” na iyon. Paano po magkakaroon ng iisang wika na inyong pinapangarap?

REP. BARZAGA. Unang-una, kung madali ang panukala, sa tingin ko, hindi na natin dapat gawin ang panukala because, after all, it is very easy. Talagang ang mga panukalang gagawin natin ay mahirap at siguro ay nalalaman ng bawat isa sa atin ang kahalagahan ng wika. Talagang mahirap dahil marami tayong pagbabago na dapat gawin. Maaaring hindi natin matapos sa loob ng buhay natin sa mundong ibabaw at hindi rin matapos sa buhay ng ating mga anak at mga apo. Ang mahalaga, kinakailangang magsimula na tayo ngayon. Siguro, wala namang tututol na mahalaga talaga sa isang bansa ang magkaroon ng isang wikang pambansa na nalalaman ng lahat ng mga mamamayan sa kapuluan ng Pilipinas. Wala namang madaling gawin sa mundong ibabaw, lahat ay mahirap, pero kung mahirap man, kinakailangang simulan na natin ngayon at nang sa ganoon, pagkalipas ng maraming taon, ang ating pangarap na magkaroon ng isang wikang pambansa ay magkaroon ng katuparan.

REP. ABANTE. G. Tagapagsalita, nais ko po sanang sang-ayunan ang aking kaibigan subalit naniniwala ako na hindi lang iisa ang wikang pambansa. Naniniwala po ako na ang Tagalog ay wikang pambansa. Naniniwala po ako na ang Kapampangan ay wikang pambansa. Naniniwala po ako na ang Cebuano, ang Bicolano, ay parehong wikang pambansa. Sa palagay ko po, ganoon na lamang po ang nais nating paniwalaan sapagkat kahit na marami tayong katutubong wika na gagawin nating wikang pambansa, tayo pa rin ay puwedeng magkaisa sapagkat pare-pareho ang dugong nananalaytay sa ating mga ugat.

Maraming salamat po, G. Tagapagsalita.

REP. BARZAGA. Maraming salamat din po.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that the speech of Representative Barzaga, as well as the interpellations thereon, be referred to the Committee on Rules.

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the Privilege Hour.

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that our Sr. Dep. Minority Leader, the Hon. Janette L. Garin, be recognized.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Hon. Janette Garin is hereby recognized.

#### ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO VARIOUS COMMITTEES

REP. GARIN (J.). Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minority, may I move for the election of the following Members to various Committees:

*The Sr. Dep. Minority Leader, Rep. Janette L. Garin, read the names of the House Members elected to the various Committees, per Journal No. 12, dated August 27, 2019.*

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND  
TECHNICAL EDUCATION

As additional member:  
Rep. Stella Luz A. Quimbo

## COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

As senior member:  
Rep. Lawrence "Law" H. Fortun

As additional members:  
Rep. Argel Joseph T. Cabatbat  
Rep. Ma. Victoria V. Umali  
Rep. Stella Luz A. Quimbo

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS  
AFFAIRS AND WELFARE

As senior member:  
Rep. Isagani S. Amatong

## COMMITTEE ON VISAYAS DEVELOPMENT

As senior member:  
Rep. Sharee Ann Tee Tan

As additional member:  
Rep. Arnolfo "Arnie" A. Teves Jr.

## COMMITTEE ON WELFARE OF CHILDREN

As senior member:  
Rep. Irene Gay F. Saulog

As additional member:  
Rep. Arlene D. Brosas

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND  
GENDER EQUALITY

As senior member:  
Rep. Arlene D. Brosas

As additional members:  
Rep. Irene Gay F. Saulog  
Rep. Angelica Natasha Co  
Rep. Stella Luz A. Quimbo

## COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

As senior member:  
Rep. Elizaldy S. Co

As additional members:  
Rep. Sarah Jane I. Elago

Rep. Lawrence "Law" H. Fortun  
Rep. Alex "AA" L. Advincula

## COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE FRANCHISES

As additional members:  
Rep. Sergio C. Dagooc  
Rep. Godofredo N. Guya

## COMMITTEE ON OVERSEAS WORKERS AFFAIRS

As senior member:  
Rep. Ferdinand R. Gaité

COMMITTEE ON POPULATION  
AND FAMILY RELATIONS

As senior member:  
Rep. Arlene D. Brosas

As additional member:  
Rep. Ma. Victoria V. Umali

## COMMITTEE ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION

As senior member:  
Rep. Irene Gay F. Saulog

As additional member:  
Rep. Ma. Victoria V. Umali

## COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ORDER AND SAFETY

As senior member:  
Rep. Arnolfo "Arnie" A. Teves Jr.

As additional members:  
Rep. Lawrence "Law" H. Fortun  
Rep. Gabriel H. Bordado Jr.

## COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF LAWS

As senior member:  
Rep. Lawrence "Law" H. Fortun

As additional member:  
Rep. Argel Joseph T. Cabatbat

## COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

As senior member:  
Rep. Sergio C. Dagooc

As additional members:  
Rep. Eufemia "Ka Femia" C. Cullamat  
Rep. Godofredo N. Guya

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE  
AND TECHNOLOGY

As senior member:  
Rep. Sarah Jane I. Elago

As additional member:  
Rep. Argel Joseph T. Cabatbat

COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SERVICES

As senior member:  
Rep. Alex "AA" L. Advincula

As additional members:  
Rep. Ma. Victoria V. Umali  
Rep. Irene Gay F. Saulog  
Rep. France L. Castro

COMMITTEE ON SUFFRAGE AND  
ELECTORAL REFORMS

As senior member:  
Rep. Lawrence "Law" H. Fortun

As additional member:  
Rep. Ferdinand R. Gaité

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON  
BASES CONVERSION

As senior member:  
Rep. Ferdinand R. Gaité

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON BICOL RECOVERY  
AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

As senior member:  
Rep. Gabriel H. Bordado Jr.  
As additional member:  
Rep. Elizaldy S. Co

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON  
CLIMATE CHANGE

As senior member:  
Rep. Irene Gay F. Saulog

As additional member:  
Rep. Eufemia "Ka Femia" C. Cullamat

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON  
EAST ASEAN GROWTH AREA

As additional member:  
Rep. Angelica Natasha Co

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FOOD SECURITY

As senior member:  
Rep. France L. Castro

As additional member:  
Rep. Argel Joseph T. Cabatbat

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON  
GLOBALIZATION AND WTO

As senior member:  
Rep. France L. Castro

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON LAND USE

As senior member:  
Rep. Arlene D. Brosas

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON SOUTHERN  
TAGALOG DEVELOPMENT

As senior member:  
Rep. Alex "AA" L. Advincula

As member:  
Rep. Irene Gay F. Saulog

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

PRIVILEGE HOUR  
*Continuation*

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume the Privilege Hour.

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, considering that we already consumed 20 minutes of our first extension and we still have two more Members who wish to deliver their speeches, I move that we extend the Privilege Hour for another 30 minutes.

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

REP. BAUTISTA. Mr. Speaker, I now move that

the Lady from ACT Teachers Party-List, the Hon. France L. Castro, be recognized to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Hon. France Castro is hereby recognized.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. CASTRO (F.L.)

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker. Isang manifestation lang po doon sa privilege speech ni Representante Barzaga. Buong-buong puso ko pong sinusupportahan ang privilege speech niya sa pagtataguyod ng ating wika.

Ang aking speech ay ukol din po sa wikang Pilipino at mga wikang Pilipino sa aspeto ng polisiya at budget. Mayroon po ako, Mr. Speaker, na natutunang tula noong ako ay nasa unang taon ng kolehiyo. Ito po ay hindi ko nalilimutan, itong tula mula po kay Ka Amado V. Hernandez. Ganito po ang tula:

Lumuha ka, aking Bayan, buong lungkot mong iluha

Ang kawawang kapalaran ng lupain mong kawawa,

Ang bandilang sagisag mo'y lukob ng dayong bandila,

Pati wikang minana mo'y busabos ng ibang wika,

Ganito ring araw nang agawan ka ng laya,

Labintatlo ng Agosto nang saklutin ang Maynila,

Lumuha ka, habang sila ay palalong nagdiriwang,

Sa libingan ng maliliit, ang malalaki'y may libingan;

Katulad mo ay si Huli, naaliping bayad-utang,

Katulad mo ay si Sisa, binaliw ng kahirapan; Walang lakas na magtanggol, walang tapang na lumaban,

Tumataghoy, kung paslangin; tumatangis, kung nakawan!

Iluha mo ang sambuntong kasawiang nagtalakop,

Na sa iyo'y pampahirap, sa banyaga'y pampalusog;

Ang lahat mong kayamana'y kamal-kamal na naubos,

Ang lahat mong kalayaa'y sabay-sabay na natapos;

Masdan mo ang iyong lupa, dayong hukbo'y nakatanod,

Masdan mo ang iyong dagat, dayong bapor nasa laot!

Lumuha ka kung sa puso mo ay nagmaliw na ang layon,

Kung ang araw sa langit mo ay lagi nang dapit-hapon,

Kung ang alon sa dagat mo ay ayaw nang magdaluyong,

Kung ang bulkan sa dibdib mo ay hindi man umuungol,

Kung wala nang maglalamay sa gabi ng pagbabangon,

Lumuha ka nang lumuha't ang laya mo'y nakaburol.

May araw ding ang luha mo'y masasaid, matutuyo,

May araw ding di na luha sa mata mong namumugto,

Ang dadaloy, kundi apoy, at apoy na kulay dugo,

Samantalang ang dugo mo ay aserong kumukulo;

Sisigaw ka ng buong giting sa liyab ng libong sulo,

At ang lumang tanikala'y lalagutin mo ng punglo!

Magandang hapon, G. Ispiker, mga kapwa Mambabatas, at sa lahat ng mga nakikinig. Binuksan ko po, Mr. Speaker, ang pribilehiyong talumpati ngayong Martes gamit ang "Kung Tuyo na ang Luha Mo Aking Bayan" ni Ka Amado Hernandez, ang tinatanghal bilang manunulat ng manggagawa, dahil napapanahon ang mga bersong ito hanggang sa kasalukuyan, halos siyam na dekada na matapos itong iakda.

G. Ispiker at mga kapwa Mambabatas, ngayong Buwan ng Wika, hayaan ninyo akong ilahad ang kawawang kalagayan ng ating mga katutubong wika. Dalawang mayor na aspeto ng marhinalisasyon ito na nais kong tugunan ng Kongreso sa aspetong polisiya at aspeto ng budget. Gaya ng tinula ni Ka Amado, hindi atin ang interes na winawagayway sa sarili nating sistema ng edukasyon. Halimbawa, gamit ang simpleng memorandum order ng CHED, sinuway ang takda ng Konstitusyon at mga batas at ginawang optional lamang ang wikang Filipino bilang asignatura, wika ng pagtuturo at medium ng opisyal na komunikasyon. Ipinagpapatuloy lamang nito sa antas tersiyaryo ang nasimulan na sa elementarya at high school. Habang tumataas ang baytang o grado ng mga estudyante, paliit ng paliit ang lugar ng Filipino bilang isang subject at wikang gamit sa pagtuturo. Matapos ang maliit na panahong nilaan hanggang Grade 3 para sa pag-aaral ng mga pagtuturo sa wikang kinagisnan o iyong "unang wika" o iyong mga Filipino anumang "ikalawang wika," Ingles na ang dominante sa matataas na baytang sa elementarya at lalo na sa high school. Walang sapat na panahon

sa mas malalim na pag-aaral ng Filipino at iba pang wika ng bansa.

Ayon nga sa mga eksperto sa Filipino at mga wika ng Pilipinas, napakababa ng mga tina-target na competencias ng curriculum hanggang sa senior high school. Wala ring sapat na puwang para sa malalim na kasanayan at praktikal na paggamit ng Filipino at mga katutubong wika, halimbawa, sa malikhaing pagsulat, pananaliksik at panitikan. Malayung-malayo ito sa matagal nang pinanukala na sana ay mga unang hakbang upang magtagumpay ang wikang Filipino bilang wikang pambansa, una, ang teksto ng alinmang kasulatan ng pamahalaan na dapat maging batayan, lalo na ang bagong Saligang Batas ay kailangang nasa Filipino. Kailangang Filipino ang gawing tanging wikang opisyal ng Pilipinas at pangunahing wikang panturo sa anumang kurso o asignatura sa lahat ng mga paaralan sa Pilipinas, pati na sa mga kolehiyo at unibersidad. Ang pangunahing layunin ng pangkalahatang edukasyon o iyong general education ay ang pagbubuo, paglilinang at pagpaunlad sa mga mag-aaral ng kakayahan sa pagsulat, pagsasalita at pag-iisip sa Filipino at sa sariling wikang kinagisnan, at ito ang isang sistematikong atake sa mga wika ng bansa.

Taun-taon, inuuhaw sa pondo ang mga ahensiya at programa para sa paggamit, paglinang at pagpapalawak ng mga wika natin. Halimbawa ay ang Kagawaran ng Edukasyon at mga programa ng gobyerno para sana tuparin ang mandato ng Saligang Batas na payabungin at pagyamanin ang pagsalin sa umiiral na mga wika ng Pilipinas at iba pang mga wika. Walang malalim at sistematikong suportang badyet para sa Filipino at iba pang mga wikang Filipino gaya ng Ilocano, ang wikang kinagisnan ko, pati Bisaya, Waray, Manobo at iba pa.

Halimbawa, Mr. Speaker, ang Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino ang natatanging ahensiyang pangwika ng bansa sa pagpaunlad ng Filipino alinsunod sa diwa ng ating Konstitusyon. Sa ibinigay ng Kongreso, ng administrasyon na panukalang budget para sa susunod na taon, 48 percent o halos kalahati ang tapyas sa pondo ng kawanihan at 53 percent ang budget cut sa MOOE, samantalang halos 97 percent na budget cut sa Capital Outlay. Malalaman din natin sa mga susunod na araw kung gaano kalalim ang mga budget cuts sa DepEd, TESDA, DOH at sa iba pang mga ahensiyang may mandato ukol sa wika. Nakakalungkot po dahil ang KWF ang punong ahensiya sa pagpapatupad ng Filipino Sign Language o iyong Republic Act No. 11106, at sa 2020 ang unang buong taon sana ng implementasyon ng batas na ito.

Mga kapwa Mambabatas, Abril 2012 po ng unang isinulong ng ACT TEACHERS Party-List ang batas na ito. Tinulungan tayong isulat ito ng mga representante ng mga rehiyunal at pambansang samahan ng mga Pilipinong may kapansanan sa pandinig o iyong deaf rights advocates. Sa katunayan, Mr. Speaker, naririto

silang ngayon at sila iyong nagbibigay ng Filipino sign language doon po sa ating screen ngayon. Palakpakan naman po natin sila. (*Applause*) Nandoon po sila. G. Ispiker, anim na taong pinaghirapan ng mga kababayan nating may kapansanan sa pandinig para sa wakas ay opisyal nang ideklara ang kanilang wikang senyas o Filipino Sign Language at gawing institusyonal ang paggamit nito sa edukasyon, pati na rin sa mga ospital, korte, opisina ng pamahalaan, media at iba pa. Pero, ano po ang saysay ng pagpasa natin ng batas kung sa unang taon pa lamang ng implementasyon, ito ay hindi bibigyan ng pondo? Tila sinasayang natin ang paghihirap ng mga kababayan nating may kapansanan para isulong ang kanilang karapatan sa edukasyon, kalusugan at iba pang pangunahing serbisyo, at ang kanilang karapatan na makatangkilik sa pulitika at panlipunang diskurso, pati na rin sa paggawa ng mga polisiya.

Ayon sa ulat ng FSL Advocacy Cooperative na kasama natin ngayon dito sa plenaryo, hindi inaprubahan ng sangay ng ehekutibo ang Tier 2 proposal ng mga ahensiya na magsisiguro sana na ang mga mandato ng FSL Law ay hindi mananatili sa papel kundi maisasakatuparan. Samakatuwid, mananatiling pangarap pa rin ang mga libro, video at accessible learning materials para sa pagtuturo ng FSL at pagtuturo sa learners with hearing disabilities. Mananatiling pangarap ang pagpapatibay ng Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino at DepEd bilang mga behikulo ng pagpapayabong at pagpapalaganap ng FSL.

Hindi limitado sa FSL ang ganitong sitwasyon, Mr. Speaker. Halimbawa, ilan sa atin dito ang nakakita na ang libro o LMs sa kasaysayan ng math o science na inilimbag sa wikang Ilokano at anumang wika natin o sa wikang Filipino, na pinalalaganap at ginagamit sa ating mga pampublikong paaralan? Ilang gurong Manobo na ba ang nabigyan ng DepEd ng pagsasanay? Magkano ang ipinanukalang pondo para masimulan ang ortograpiya ng mga katutubong wika o wikang pambansa? Sa macro na pagtingin, G. Ispiker, dahil paimbabaw o panlabas lamang ang suporta sa aspetong polisiya at pinansyal sa wikang Filipino, pinapatay ang ating pagkakaisa, ang ating pagkabansa at pagka-Pilipino. Gaya ng sinabi ni Ka Amado V. Hernandez, “Ang bandilang sagisag mo’y lukob ng dayong bandila, pati wikang minana mo’y busabos ng ibang wika.” Nakapanghihinayang, Mr. Speaker, dahil sa ganitong kalagayan ay nananatili tayong estranghero sa sarili nating wikang Filipino at mga katutubong wika at nananatili tayong estranghero sa isa’t isa.

Ang wika ay pundasyon ng di-nasasalat na kulturang pamana o intangible cultural heritage, daluyan ng karunungan bayan at simbolo ng ating identity at hangarin bilang isang mamamayan. Sa pagpapakitid ng espasyo sa edukasyon para sa ating wika, sa hindi pagbibigay ng sapat na pondo at sa kawalan ng pulitikal na loob ng maka-wikang Filipino, pinahihina



ang pundasyon, binabarahan ang mga daluyan at pinapa-pokus ang mga kulay na simbolo. Sayang, mga kasamang mga Mambabatas, dahil tayong mga Pilipino lang ang may “bayanihan.” Walang dayuhan ang may gagap sa totoong “kilig,” “kulit, at “gigil” nating mga Pilipino. Dahil sa kasaysayang natatangi sa ating mga Pilipino, walang dating ang anumang banyagang salita para sa “sigwa” at “agit.” Walang alinmang makasasapat para sa “Sulong, mga kapatid!” at “Makibaka, huwag matakot!” Kung babalikan natin ang tula ni Amado V. Hernandez, mapapansin na wika, ang simbolo ng pagkamamamayan, ang tuntungan niya upang iangat ang diskurso tungo sa iisang paghihirap, iisang pakikibaka, at iisang layon ng mamamayan.

Mga kapwa Mambabatas, sa panahong batbat pa rin tayo ng mga nagpapaluha sa ating bayan, ang mga wika ng ating mga mamamayan ang dapat natin suportahan, paunlarin at ipalaganap. Ngayon ay panahon na rin ng bawat magsasaka, manggagawa, maging ang propesyunal gaya ng titser, pero tila nahuli na sa nakakaaliping bayad-utang dahil hindi kailanman sumasapat ang kita at nakabubuhay na sahod sa bawat Pilipino na kahit hindi pa pinapanganak ay libu-libo na po ang utang. Ngayon, marami sa ating mga kababayan ay binaliw ng kahirapan, nananaghoy dahil pinaslang ang mga kaanak, kaibigan, kasama sa komunidad, at kakampi sa kanilang mga laban. Sila ay tumatangis dahil ninanakawan sila ng karapatang mabuhay ng disente sa isang lipunang payapa at may hustisya. Ngayon ay panahon na rin na banyaga ang nagpapalusog sa ating rekurso at lakas-paggawa dahil dayong hukbo ang nakabase na sa ating lupa, at dayong bapor ang nasa ating mga laot.

Huwag nating isiping hiwalay ang usapin ng mababang estado ng wikang Filipino at mga wikang katutubo natin sa usapin ng oppression sa mamamayan. Sa katunayan, ang kawalan ng maka-masang sistema ng edukasyon na nakabatay sa sariling kalinangan at mga pangangailangan ay isa sa mga ginagamit upang manatili tayong mangmang, naghihirap at watak-watak. Ang hindi paggamit ng mga wika ng mga mamamayan sa mga ahensiya ng pamahalaan ang isa sa salik na naglalayo sa ating mga kababayan, lalo na ang mga marginalized na sektor gaya ng mga kababayan nating mahihirap at may kapansanan, mula sa kanilang mga karapatan tulad ng kalusugan at hustisya. Ang pagpatahimik sa mga wikang Pilipino ay kapantay ng pagtatakip ng gobyerno sa mga karaingan ng ating mga Pilipino.

Kaya, una, ay inuudyok ko tayong lahat dito sa Kongreso na tunay na tumindig para sa wikang Filipino at mga katutubong wika ng mga Pilipino. Maaari nating simulan sa 2020 budget. Huwag tayong magpatali sa kakarampot na pondo na ipinanukala sa atin, at dagdagan ang pondo para sa wikang sariling atin, partikular para sa implementasyon ng Filipino Sign Language Act, para

sa Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino at mga programa ng DepEd at iba pang mga ahensiya sa ilalim ng FSL Act. Ikalawa, pinapanukala ko na magkaroon ng aktibong partisipasyon ang Kamarang ito sa komprehensibong pagtatasa at pagrerepaso ng mga polisiyang may kaugnayan sa wika, lalo na sa edukasyon, kalusugan, hudikatura at mga batayang serbisyo. Ikatlo, inuudyok ko ang kagyat na paglalagay at pagpasa ng batas na kabilang ang aming Panukalang Batas Blg. 223 na naglalayong itakda na hindi bababa sa siyam na yunit na asignaturang Filipino at tatlong yunit ng asignaturang Panitikan sa curriculum ng kolehiyo.

Iyan lang po, G. Ispiker, mga kapwa Mambabatas. Maraming salamat.

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

REP. CASTELO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the privilege speech of the Hon. France L. Castro to the Committee on Rules.

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

REP. CASTELO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the next speaker under the Privilege Hour, the Hon. Raul V. Del Mar representing the First District of Cebu City.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Rep. Hernandez). The Hon. Raul Del Mar of the First District of Cebu City is hereby recognized.

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. DEL MAR

REP. DEL MAR. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Majority Leader.

I have been waiting so long for my turn and I know that everyone is eager to go home and so, instead of my two-hour speech, Mr. Speaker, I will just make it one.

Mr. Speaker, esteemed colleagues, I rise today on a concern about the burgeoning traffic problem in Metro Cebu which must strike a familiar chord among government leaders in several urban centers of the country, especially Metro Manila. One visible significant effort to help reduce the traffic problem in Cebu is the Cebu Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in Cebu City. Its route and alignment have reportedly been changed and we are worried because the changes will be detrimental to the city and the people of Cebu. Cebu's local newspapers recently reported that the Department of Transportation (DOTr) has changed the alignment of the Cebu BRT. The original route for the BRT starts in Barangay Bulacao in the southern part of

Cebu City, to Barangay Talamban in the northern part, passing through the city's Central Business District. The new route, the news media reported and this has been uncontradicted or uncorrected by higher officials, starts at the South Road Properties (SRP) to the IT Park, still in Cebu City. That is a reduction in the total dedicated BRT length by almost 50 percent, from 23 kilometers down to only 13 kilometers. The news media reports followed the site visit of the DOTr Secretary in Cebu last July 6.

Mr. Speaker, the announced changes have raised a number of questions that, to this day, are still unanswered:

1. What was the practical basis, the rationale, for the reported changes made by the DOTr and the NEDA?

2. Has the Investment Coordination Committee (ICC) of the NEDA Board approved the revision?

3. Did the Department of Finance (DOF) and the NEDA agree to the changes and amendments on loan agreements with the World Bank IBRD, Clean Technology Fund (CTF), and *Agence Francaise de Developpement* (AFD)? Has the loan agreement been officially amended already?

The primordial purpose of instituting a mass transport system in any city, whether in Manila, Cebu or anywhere else in the world, is to serve the needs of the people to travel, like going from home to their workplace, school or other places where they must be, and vice versa. The acute problem we have in Metro Manila, dramatized by most everyone's EDSA harrowing experiences, is characterized in the very real images of commuters waking up in the dark, wee hours of the morning if only to reach the office, school on time, or in going to places to shop, do business or socialize, and in the very real images of commuters waiting for hours along the roadside in the afternoon, struggling to get a bus or jeepney ride home, or queuing in terminals, wasting valuable time which could be spent productively at home or elsewhere. Everyday, we are bombarded with horror stories of our people suffering from inadequate mobility here in the capital and similarly in Cebu and many other urban centers, where travel becomes a daily ordeal in waiting for the next jeepney and enduring the slow flow of cars jostling for space. Traffic has afflicted, not just the passengers who must endure the ordeal of using public transport, but also the moneyed commuters. Even in their private cars, they also suffer, though less in the matter of comfort, from the clogging of traffic.

Mass transport will surely help and Cebu's first attempt in mass transport is now being threatened by changes on the plan. The ultimate goal remains the same: to provide a fast and reliable public mass transport system from the residences of the people to their places of work, study, business or leisure. It

is precisely this "people-centered" philosophy which defined the original route alignment of the Cebu BRT, Mr. Speaker. You do not know Cebu if you do not know where the people or most of the people live. Throngs of commuters lining up early morning have been a constant and common sight in Cebu for the past 20 years, along the main highway in the south starting from Bulacao to all the neighboring residential barangays. This is the same dispiriting sight in Cebu City north, my district, and along Banilad Road, with the hordes of commuters converging from Barangays Talamban and Banilad and the other surrounding barangays.

The more livable area of Cebu City is a strip between the mountains and the sea, with more people living in the north and south but who work in the Central Business District during the day. Most of the colleges and universities are also in the Central Business District, which entails the same arduous journey for students. That is why the original BRT route was drawn along these corridors. There are other areas where people live—Mabolo, Lahug, Guadalupe, and Labangon—and they will be next in line for the progression of the transport systems, but the bulk of the problem is in Bulacao and Talamban zones where the BRT is mostly needed.

It has, therefore, come as a shock to us when we learned that the route was cut and realigned instead to SRP then to the IT Park. True, these are economic powerhouses with advanced business establishments, but these are not residential areas, and nobody commutes to and from those points early in the morning when traveling is at its peak. One will not need much wisdom, only an understanding of Cebu, to see that the trip demand from one end to the other is virtually nil in the morning because nobody lives there, in both areas, and so, one is befuddled over the changes in the BRT route. Why was this new route selected in lieu of the old established route where every Cebuano knows that people line up at the roadside every morning?

In fact, the only entities that will benefit from this arrangement are corporations that do business in one or both sides of the new route. These entrepreneurs want the people of Talamban and Bulacao to continue riding jeepneys and transfer to the BRT when, in fact, the BRT was planned to provide them continuous uninterrupted service in the first place. Something is clearly out of sync here, Mr. Speaker. I am fully aware that this is an ODA, Official Development Assistance-funded project, duly approved by the NEDA ICC not only once but twice. It has three existing loan agreements: the World Bank IBRD, the Clean Technology Fund (CTF) and the *Agence Francaise de Developpement* (AFD), as well. A NEDA-approved project with loan agreements cannot be simply and unilaterally changed, Mr. Speaker, surely not without the corresponding reevaluation and approval of the ICC and NEDA.

I know this for a fact because in 2017, I was the one who attended the ICC-NEDA meeting which deliberated on its change of cost when the then Cebu City mayor was out of the country. If you may recall, Congress passed a law, RA 10752, which amended the previous Right-of-Way Acquisition Law, making it imperative that market values are offered to landowners affected by infrastructure projects. This is a great law that we crafted, my friends, but it also meant that road right-of-way acquisition becomes more expensive for the government. The project cost of Cebu BRT consequently shot up from P10 billion to P16 billion, and the guidelines and procedures of the NEDA-ICC necessitated another round of review and evaluation for any change in scope and cost of projects previously approved by them. In all humility, I managed to represent the city fairly well in that meeting and had the project approved for the second time. But I know, Mr. Speaker, that changes in scope and cost necessitate a reevaluation by the NEDA, of which we have not heard or read about, whether it was being done for the Cebu BRT Project. It was splashed all over the news media in Cebu, yet, there was no record of any ICC approval being presented or reported. Was there really an official approval in the first place?

It must be stressed, Mr. Speaker, that this Representation continues to support the Cebu BRT Project, and I pray that the government will continue and complete it as soon as possible. I also support all the other undertakings of the DOTr in Cebu and hope these will be implemented soon. Cebu needs all the infrastructure it can get. The city is growing faster and congestion comes with development and progress. What we need is inclusive mobility, one which addresses the needs of everybody but most especially the underprivileged ones—the women, the elderly, the children, the poor, those with disabilities, the ordinary workers, the saleswomen, the construction workers, the call center agents, including the manicuristas, barbers, et cetera—everybody. The Cebu BRT was designed for them, and the other projects would immensely help them, which is why it is crucial that we be apprised of the truth in whatever decision our government leaders make.

For those reasons and related concerns, Mr. Speaker, I therefore earnestly request for the approval of the following recommendations:

1. For the Committee on Transportation to call for a hearing and invite the Department of Transportation (DOTr) and the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) to shed light on the route alignment of the Cebu BRT from 23 kilometers to 13 kilometers of dedicated lanes, which could disenfranchise thousands of residents in the Bulacao and Talamban cluster of barangays from having direct access to the city center;

2. For the Committee on Transportation to inquire from the Investment Coordination Committee of NEDA whether or not the ICC has already approved the revision of the scope and cost of the Cebu BRT as announced in Cebu;

3. For the Committee on Transportation to inquire from the Department of Finance or the DOF, and the NEDA on whether or not they agree with the changes and corresponding amendments of the loan agreements with the World Bank-IBRD, the Clean Technology Fund (CTF), and the *Agence Francaise de Developpement* (AFD), and whether these loan agreements have already been amended;

4. In case the changes have not been finalized, for the Committee on Transportation to ask the DOTr to reconsider its decision and implement the Cebu BRT as originally designed and approved; and

5. On the related problem of traffic and the need for complementary measures to the Cebu BRT, for the Committee on Transportation to appeal to the DOTr to implement the bill for the construction of the LRT or MRT or monorail or such other appropriate mass transport system in Cebu City and Metro Cebu, which was filed and refiled by this Representation in the Eighteenth Congress as well as the bills for the construction of a subway under a skyway over the three most congested road sections in Cebu City North District filed this Eighteenth Congress.

Let us all help improve the lives of our people the most effective and efficient way we can.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and esteemed colleagues.

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

REP. BAGATSING. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the Hon. Raul V. Del Mar to the Committee on Rules for appropriate action.

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

REP. BAGATSING. Mr. Speaker, I move that we terminate the Privilege Hour.

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

#### CHANGE OF REFERRAL OF CERTAIN MEASURES

REP. CRISOLOGO. Mr. Speaker, I move for the change of referral of the following measures:

1. House Bills No. 2145 and 3729, from the

Committee on Poverty Alleviation, to the Committees on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development and Poverty Alleviation;

2. House Bills No. 606, 1118, 1192, 1241, 1309, 2087, 2447, 2559, 2613, 2685, 3181, 3337 and 3376, from the Committee on Basic Education and Culture, to the Committees on Basic Education and Culture and Higher and Technical Education;

3. House Bills No. 303, 545, 2545, 2867, 2875 and 3277, from the Committee on Youth and Sports Development, to the Committees on Basic Education and Culture and Youth and Sports Development;

4. House Bill No. 3522, from the Committee on Health, to the Committee on Local Government;

5. House Resolution No. 170, from the Committee on Trade and Industry, to the Committee on Rules; and

6. House Resolution No. 171, from the Committee on Health, to the Committee on Rules.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

REP. CRISOLOGO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn the session until five o'clock in the afternoon of Wednesday, August 28, 2019.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the session is adjourned until Wednesday, August 28, 2019, at five o'clock in the afternoon.

*It was 8:29 p.m.*