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House of Representatives

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No. 19

CALL TO ORDER

At 3:00 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.

PRAYER

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Please stand for a minute of silent prayer and meditation.

Everybody rose for the silent prayer.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Please remain standing for the singing of the 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 that we 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.

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

The Secretary General will please read the Reference of Business.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

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

BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 4697, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL NUTRITION PROGRAM, TO PROMOTE PHYSICAL, MORAL, SPIRITUAL, INTELLECTUAL, AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING OF THE NATION, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Romero

TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 4698, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF A RAINWATER HARVESTING FACILITY IN ALL NEW INSTITUTIONAL, COMMERCIAL, AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN METRO MANILA”

By Representative Nieto

TO THE COMMITTEE ON METRO MANILA DEVELOPMENT

House Bill No. 4699, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN INTEGRATED SCHOOL IN CIUDAD DE STRIKE IN BARANGAY MOLINO I, CITY OF BACOR, PROVINCE OF CAVITE TO BE KNOWN AS CIUDAD DE STRIKE INTEGRATED SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREOF”

By Representative Revilla

TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 4700, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A SATELLITE OFFICE

OF THE MARITIME INDUSTRY AUTHORITY IN VIGAN CITY, ILOCOS SUR INTO AN EXTENSION OFFICE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Savellano
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 4701, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE ILOCOS SUR SPORTS TRAINING CENTER TO BE LOCATED IN VIGAN CITY AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Savellano
TO THE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

House Bill No. 4702, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE DEPARTMENT OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT (‘DTESD’), DEFINING ITS MANDATE, POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7796, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘TESDA ACT OF 1994’ AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Matugas
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 4703, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE ACQUISITION OF MATERIEL, SYSTEMS, FACILITIES, INTEGRATED MILITARY SYSTEMS AND SERVICES BY THE DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE AND ITS BUREAUS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Tupas
TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY

House Bill No. 4704, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE PRIMARY CARE FACILITY IN SAWATA, MUNICIPALITY OF SAN ISIDRO, PROVINCE OF DAVAO DEL NORTE, INTO A TEN (10)-BED CAPACITY WARD EXTENSION (INFIRMARY) OF THE DAVAO REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER, TAGUM CITY, TO BE KNOWN AS THE DAVAO REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER INFIRMARY”

By Representative Alvarez (Pantaleon)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

BY ESTABLISHING A NETWORK OF SUSTAINABLE ELEVATED WALKWAYS ALONG ALL MAJOR PUBLIC THOROUGHFARES IN HIGH DENSITY URBAN AREAS, ESTABLISHING APPROPRIATE INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Reyes
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 4706, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A SUSTAINABLE RETIREMENT AND PENSION SYSTEM BY AMENDING PERTINENT LAWS ON THE RETIREMENT BENEFITS AND PENSION OF THE UNIFORMED PERSONNEL OF THE UNIFORMED SERVICES AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Tambunting
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ENTERPRISES AND PRIVATIZATION

House Bill No. 4707, entitled:

“AN ACT ORDAINING THE MODERNIZATION OF THE BUREAU OF FIRE PROTECTION (BFP)”

By Representative Tambunting
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ORDER AND SAFETY

House Bill No. 4708, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Tambunting
TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY

House Bill No. 4709, entitled:

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

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

RESOLUTIONS

House Bill No. 4705, entitled:

“AN ACT TO ENSURE EASIER COMMUTING

House Resolution No. 354, entitled:

“RESOLUSYONG NANANAWAGAN PARA SA

AGARANG PAG-IMBISTIGASAPAGPATAY
KAY LEONIDES BACONG, LOKAL NA
LIDER NG KILUSANG MAGBUBUKID NG
PILIPINAS SA BUKIDNON”

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

House Resolution No. 355, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES, THROUGH THE
COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS, TO
CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID
OF LEGISLATION, ON THE KILLING OF
FARMER ANGELITO MARIVAO IN SITIO
LAGDIK, BRGY. MABUHAY, BUKIDNON”

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

House Resolution No. 356, entitled:

“RESOLUTION HONORING OUR FILIPINO
TEACHERS ON THE OCCASION OF THE
2019 NATIONAL TEACHERS’ MONTH”

By Representative Go (Mark)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION
AND CULTURE

House Resolution No. 357, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION HONORING FILIPINO
TEACHERS ON THE OCCASION OF THE
2019 NATIONAL TEACHERS’ MONTH
(NTM)”

By Representative Siao
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION
AND CULTURE

House Resolution No. 358, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION HONORING FILIPINO
TEACHERS ON THE OCCASION OF THE
2019 NATIONAL TEACHERS’ MONTH
(NTM)”

By Representative Romulo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION
AND CULTURE

House Resolution No. 359, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE
ON GAMES AND AMUSEMENT TO
ENSURE THAT THE BIDDING FOR
THE PHILIPPINE LOTTERY SYSTEM
(PLS) OF THE PHILIPPINE CHARITY
SWEEPSTAKES OFFICE (PCSO) SHALL BE
IN ACCORDANCE WITH LAWS AND BEST
PRACTICES IN ORDER TO PROMOTE THE
PRUDENT USE OF PUBLIC FUNDS AND

THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE FILIPINO
POOR”

By Representative Ong (Ronnie)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GAMES AND
AMUSEMENTS

House Resolution No. 360, entitled:

“A HOUSE RESOLUTION CALLING FOR AN
INVESTIGATION IN AID OF LEGISLATION
BY THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE/S
OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ON NON-PAYMENT OF REAL PROPERTY
TAX (RPT) OF POWER PLANTS UNDER
BUILD-OPERATE-TRANSFER (BOT) WITH
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIT (LGU)
OF QUEZON PROVINCE”

By Representatives Suarez (David), Villaraza-
Suarez and Suarez (Aleta)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Joint Resolution No. 18, entitled:

“A JOINT RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR A
SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET OF FIFTEEN
BILLION PESOS (P15,000,000,000) TO
BE IMMEDIATELY RELEASED TO THE
NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY (NFA) AND
DIRECTING THE LATTER TO EXCLUSIVELY
USE THE AMOUNT TO URGENTLY
PROCURE AT LEAST 750,000 METRIC TONS
OF PALAY FROM LOCAL FARMERS AT THE
FARM GATE PRICE OF TWENTY PESOS
(P20) PER KILOGRAM, AND SELL THE NFA
RICE AT TWENTY-SEVEN PESOS (P27) PER
KILOGRAM IN ORDER TO EASE THE DIRE
IMPACTS OF THE RICE LIBERALIZATION
AND TARIFFICATION LAW”

By Representatives Brosas, Zarate, Gaité, Cullamat,
Castro (France), Elago, Enverga, Ramirez-
Sato, Deloso-Montalla, Cabatbat, Singson,
Belmonte, Umali (Ma. Victoria), Paduano,
Caminero, Sagarbarria, Chatto, Ty, Sacdalan,
Amatong, Legarda, Mariano-Hernandez, Acop,
Loyola, Tambunting, Tallado, Nolasco, Suarez
(David), Dagooc, Guya, Saulog, Sangcopan,
Balindong, Matba, Ecleo, Arenas, Villanueva
(Noel), Co (Elizaldy), Cabochan, Chungalao,
Barba, Valmayor, Ferrer (Juliet), Cueva,
Abante, Bagatsing, Zubiri, De Venecia, Garin
(Janette), Nuñez-Malanyaon, Romualdo, Cua
and Dy (Faustino Michael)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

COMMUNICATIONS

Letter dated September 5, 2019 of Rey Leonardo B.
Guerrero, Commissioner, Department of Finance,

Bureau of Customs, submitting their Report on the Accomplishments and Reforms in the Bureau of Customs for the first half of 2019.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Letter dated 6 September 2019 of Sec. Adelino B. Sitoy, LLB, LLM, Presidential Adviser on Legislative Affairs and Head, PLLO, submitting their Quarterly Physical Report of Operations (BAR No. 1) as of June 30, 2019.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

CY 2018 Agency Action Plan and Status of Implementation on the Prior Years' Audit Observations and Recommendations cited in the Consolidated Annual Audit Report (CAAR) on the Office of the Ombudsman as of June 30, 2019.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

FY 2016 Financial Reports, List of articles published and posted by the Philippine News Agency from October 2018 to July 2019, Social Media Accounts and Expenses and Number of Contract of Service, Contractual and Casual Employees of Presidential Communications Operations Office.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated 12 September 2019 of Benjamin E. Diokno, Governor, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), submitting their Report on Economic and Financial Developments in the Philippines, Second Quarter 2019, pursuant to Section 21 (a) of Republic Act No. 11211.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

Letter dated 12 September 2019 of Benjamin E. Diokno, Governor, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), submitting their Report on Philippine External Debt as of 30 June 2019, which were noted by the Monetary Board on 12 September 2019.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

Letter dated 13 September 2019 of Donaldo B. Robles, Acting Deputy Director, Office of the General Counsel and Legal Services, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), furnishing the House of Representatives with duly certified and authenticated BSP issuances, to wit:

1. Circular No. 1049 dated 9 September 2019; and
2. Circular Letter No. CL-2019-065 dated 9 September 2019.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report of the Committee on Local Government (Committee Report No. 23), re H.B. No. 4750, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGAY SOUTH SIGNAL VILLAGE IN THE CITY OF TAGUIG”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 456

Sponsors: Representatives Villanueva (Noel) and Cayetano (Maria Laarni)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Local Government (Committee Report No. 24), re H.B. No. 4751, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGAY LA MEDALLA IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF PIODURAN, PROVINCE OF ALBAY”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 3145

Sponsors: Representatives Villanueva (Noel) and Cabredo

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Local Government (Committee Report No. 25), re H.B. No. 4752, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGAY CENTRAL BICUTAN IN THE CITY OF TAGUIG”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 358

Sponsors: Representatives Villanueva (Noel) and Cayetano (Maria Laarni)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Local Government (Committee Report No. 26), re H.B. No. 4753, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGAY NORTH SIGNAL VILLAGE IN THE CITY OF TAGUIG”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 355

Sponsors: Representatives Villanueva (Noel) and Cayetano (Maria Laarni)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Local Government (Committee Report No. 27), re H.B. No. 4754, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGAY TANYAG IN THE CITY OF TAGUIG”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 350

Sponsors: Representatives Villanueva (Noel) and Cayetano (Maria Laarni)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

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

PRIVILEGE HOUR

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, today being a Monday and pursuant to our rules, I move that we proceed to the Privilege Hour.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Chair declares a Privilege Hour.

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, I now move to recognize the Gentleman from the Third District of Bukidnon, the Hon. Manuel F. Zubiri, to avail of the Privilege Hour.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The Hon. Manuel F. Zubiri is recognized.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ZUBIRI

REP. ZUBIRI. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Majority Leader.

Mr. Speaker, to all our guests in the gallery, my esteemed colleagues and to all my countrymen, magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat.

Now that we have tackled the budget of our nation, and we are now in the period of institutional amendments, I beg the leadership of the House, the Senate and the Executive branches of the government to give big importance to potable water, most especially to our brothers and sisters in the far-flung areas, our urban poor and those who have never even tasted proper safe water at all. As we all know, our body is made up of 80 percent water. And without this resource, we will simply perish.

The WHO published that one-tenth or 10 million Filipinos lack safe drinking water, hence, a strong reminder to all of us in the government and the private sector to yield to this number and put more money resources and effort to water programs for this 10 million. I know that these programs exist in certain agencies like the DSWD, the DILG, et cetera. But the amount budgeted is small compared to the need.

Water filtration systems, bigger and cleaner wells, and desalination plants should be built for those in need. These would put a stop to a lot of diseases such as diarrhea, dysentery, hepatitis, and I believe even polio, et cetera. All these diseases that kill and have killed many of our children and adults have to be eliminated. Kawawa naman ang ating mga ka-barangay sa kabukiran at sa mga mahihirap na barangay sa lungsod. Tulungan po natin sila. Ang pinaka-importanteng bagay sa kanilang mga katawan ay ibigay po natin.

Sa huli, ito ang magiging pinaka-importanteng bagay o regalo na maibibigay natin sa ating kapwa Filipino. Kung tayo pong lahat dito ay nakakainom ng malinis na tubig, dapat sila rin. Ito ang karapatan ng lahat. Water is life. In the end, this will be the greatest gift we can give to our countrymen.

Marami pong salamat.

Mabuhay po kayong lahat, mga kapatid.

God bless us all!

Mahal kita Pilipinas.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. CASTELO. Mr. Speaker, may we respectfully acknowledge the presence of the guests of the distinguished Gentleman representing the OFW FAMILY Party-List, the Hon. Alberto "Bobby" D. Pacquiao, namely the barangay officials of Barangay Labangal, General Santos City: Mr. Reynaldo Clapis, Mr. Edwin Flores, Mr. James Alvero and Mr. Ricardo Belmonte. (*Applause*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Welcome to the House of Representatives.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Sr. Dep. Majority Leader, Rep. Jesus Crispin C. Remulla of the Seventh District of Cavite, who wishes to interpellate Representative Zubiri.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The Sr. Dep. Majority Leader, Crispin Remulla, is recognized.

REP. REMULLA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Gentleman from Bukidnon yield to a few questions?

REP. ZUBIRI. Yes, I will do my best to answer, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

REP. REMULLA. You spoke about the importance of water in our lives. Does it not strike you as strange that up to now, this country does not have a Department of Water Resources?

REP. ZUBIRI. Yes, Mr. Speaker. I know. I have taken note of that, Mr. Speaker. And this is why I am here right now, Mr. Speaker.

REP. REMULLA. And in your speech, you mentioned that the importance of water cannot be underestimated, and that it is so important for us to look at the fate of our countrymen who have never, ever tasted good and clean water. Is that correct?

REP. ZUBIRI. Yes. That is correct, Mr. Speaker and my distinguished colleague. That is very correct.

REP. REMULLA. Sa bansa natin ngayon sa Pilipinas, ang pinakaorganizado na tubig ng pamahalaang pantubig ay nasa Maynila na pinapatakbo ng MWSS. Ito ba ay nalalaman ninyo, G. Tagapagsalita?

REP. ZUBIRI. Yes. To my knowledge, Mr. Speaker, that is true and correct. But maybe, I do not know all the details but I will do my best to answer your questions, Mr. Speaker.

REP. REMULLA. Ngunit bukod sa MWSS at sa buong kapuluan ng Pilipinas, ang Local Water Utilities Administration lang ang gumaganap na may papel tungkol sa tubig sa buhay ng bawat tao. Tama ba ho iyon?

REP. ZUBIRI. Tama po iyan, Mr. Speaker.

REP. REMULLA. At ang Local Water Utilities Administration ay nagsisilbi lamang upang magpautang ng pera sa iba't ibang mga water districts sa iba't ibang bayan. Iyon ba ay tama ho sa inyong paningin?

REP. ZUBIRI. Sa aking paningin po ay tama. Pero lahat po ng detalye ay hindi ko po alam. Pero sa palagay ko po iyon po ang tama.

REP. REMULLA. Marahil, kung sa pagkain, ang sabi nila, ang pinakamahalagang bagay para mabuhay ang ating sambayanan—food, clothing, and shelter. Sa ngayon po, sa pagkain ay mayroon po tayong Department of Agriculture at National Food Authority at iba pang mga departamento. Tama ho, ano?

REP. ZUBIRI. Tama po yan, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues. Tama po iyan.

REP. REMULLA. Halimbawa, sabihin nating sa

clothing po, may Department of Trade and Industry tayo. Trade and Industry na tinitingnan po ang kapakanan ng mga presyo ng lahat ng mga bilingin, katulad po ng mga isinusuot natin. Tama ho iyan?

REP. ZUBIRI. Tama po iyan, Mr. Speaker.

REP. REMULLA. At kung sa mga bahay po, mayroon tayong Department of Human Settlements na bagong tatag lamang at ito po ang nag-aasikaso ng pangangailangan natin, na ating matirhan. Tama ho iyon?

REP. ZUBIRI. Tama po iyan, Mr. Speaker.

REP. REMULLA. At bukod doon, mayroon po tayong departamento para sa enerhiya, para ang ating kuryente po ay natitingnan ng maayos. Tama ho iyan?

REP. ZUBIRI. Tama po iyan, Mr. Speaker.

REP. REMULLA. Ang kuryente ay napakahalaga rin sa ating buhay. At bukod doon, mayroon ho tayong DICT na tumitingin sa data kung kinakailangan natin sa internet. Tama ho iyon?

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

REP. REMULLA. Unang tingin ninyo, ano ho ang dahilan kung bakit wala tayong Department of Water?

REP. ZUBIRI. Wala po akong masasagot diyan, Mr. Speaker. Pero alam ko po, sa lahat ng pinakaimportanteng resource po sa ating katawan, sa ating pagbubuhay dito, ay tubig po, iyan ang pinakaimportante sa lahat. Kaya po nagtataka ako, medyo malaki pa po iyong kakulangan natin—10,000,000 as per WHO—10,000,000 lives still need safe potable water, Mr. Speaker.

REP. REMULLA. Marahil, magkakasundo ho tayo sa panukala na marahil panahon na upang tingnan natin ang pagtatatag ng Department of Water sa ating bansa. Tama ho kaya iyon?

REP. ZUBIRI. Yes, tama po iyan, Mr. Speaker, my distinguished colleagues. I will support you, Deputy Majority Leader. Mr. Speaker, tungkol po diyan sa Department of Water, yes, I would totally agree, Mr. Speaker.

REP. REMULLA. Iyon lang po. Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

REP. ZUBIRI. Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker and Deputy Majority Leader. Marami pong salamat.

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, the next Member who wishes to interpellate Representative Zubiri is Rep. Jose L. Atienza Jr. of Party-List BUHAY. I move that the Gentleman be recognized.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Representative Jose L. Atienza Jr. from BUHAY Party-List is recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. Salamat po, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Majority Leader and thank you to the Gentleman Sponsor for acceding to the request of this Representation that we ask more questions to further elaborate on your issue.

REP. ZUBIRI. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I am okay. I am ready to take on some questions and I will do my best to answer them.

REP. ATIENZA. Kami po ay natutuwa, Mr. Speaker, that one Member of Congress stood up today to elaborate, magnify even the growing problem of shortage of water in the country. I believe that is your intention, Mr. Sponsor.

REP. ZUBIRI. Yes, Mr. Speaker, my esteemed colleague. Tama po iyan.

REP. ATIENZA. Na ang tubig ay madalas nagiging problema sa ating pagsasaka, sa irigasyon, pati na sa inumin ng tao. Would you consider that the price of fresh water in the country today is one of the highest also in the Asian Region?

REP. ZUBIRI. I believe so, Mr. Speaker. I think it is not cheap to purchase potable water. It is not cheap to make sure that potable water runs in your homes. Mahal po ang tubig dito sa atin, that is why I am requesting that we put a lot of importance to potable water, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Tama po kayo sapagkat ang tubig ngayon kung iko-compare natin sa presyo ng gasolina ay halos pantay, at kung minsan, mas mataas pa ang isang boteng tubig. Hindi lang dito sa atin, kung hindi sa buong mundo, nagkakahalaga ng mas mababa ang presyo ng isang bote ng gasolina. Therefore, our nation suffers from shortage of potable water when the truth and in fact, hindi po dapat ito, hindi po ba?

REP. ZUBIRI. Tama po, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Dapat po ay sobra-sobra ang

ating inuming tubig dahil sa marami tayong fresh water sources, and according to the official data of government, every year we have about 144 cubic billion meters of fresh water available for our people. Ang nagagamit po diyan ay wala pang 40 billion cubic meters out of the 144 billion cubic meters, and the rest goes to waste. Kaya sa palagay ko napapanahon na po ang panawagan ninyo na tingnan natin ang situwasyon ng tubig sa ating bansa. Marami pong mga political scientist na nagsasabing maaaring ang gulo sa mundo, sa lalong madaling panahon, ay manggagaling sa problema ng inumin sa maraming bahagi ng mundo ngayon. The price of water is almost equal to the price of gasoline and therefore, many countries will eventually lack the capacity to supply themselves with drinking water.

Ang hinihingi po ninyo ay aksyon ng gobyerno. You are aware, of course, of the continuing issues that we have been calling the attention of the government and the inability or refusal of the two water concessionaires to provide us with cleaning capacity and waste water treatment facilities. Waste water coming from our industries and our household should even be treated before they are released to the water bodies all over the country so that water will always just be recycled and recyclable, and we can source our drinking water from places like Laguna de Bay and all the other rivers of the country like the Pampanga River, Bulacan River and Pasig River. And If you talk about desalination, Manila Bay should be available for this purpose.

Are you not surprised and even disappointed that the government does not seem to be aware of this and it does not even seem concerned? Mauhaw na tayo, magbayad na tayo ng mamahaling tubig, pinababayaan tayo sa kuko ng mga dambuhalang korporasyon na pumipiga sa ating salapi, subalit hindi tayo binibigyan ng serbisyong karapat-dapat. Are you aware of the issue, Gentleman from Bukidnon?

REP. ZUBIRI. I am aware of the issue, yes, Mr. Speaker. Kaya po ngayon na budget season pa lang, baka puwede nang bigyan ng mas malaking pera para sa tubig o patubig po sa ating bansa. Dito po sa aking research, itong water filtration systems sa mga probinsya, dapat may bigger and cleaner wells at desalination plants sa coastal areas. Puwede pa. May pag-asa pa kasi nandito pa po tayo sa budget season ng gobyerno.

There is hope. There is still time and we can make sure na iyong pera po ng gobyerno ay para sa pinakaimportanteng resource sa katawan ng isang tao, which is water, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, this Representation believes that the problem does not lie on funding. We have a problem which is growing not because of funding. It is because of corruption. Clearly, it is because of corruption because without it, these two water

cessionaires should have been forced to deliver their part of the contract. Sila po ay pinapayagang maningil ng tubig. Iyong isa po ay nasa eastern side ng Metro Manila at ang isa naman ay nasa Western side. Sila po ang Manila Water and Maynilad Water. Ang may-ari po niyan ay billionaires. They got the contract from government and they did not deliver their side of the contract.

Even if we have billions and trillions of money to spend, mapupunta lang po sa corruption iyan. Hindi rin pupunta sa mga mamamayan. Ito na ang solusyon. I am sounding like a broken record but I will keep on sounding and alerting everybody. It is time to wake up. We should protect our interest on the issue of drinking water, kung hindi, darating ang panahon wala na tayong inumin, wala tayong pagkukunan sapagkat dugtong-dugtong iyan, pollution of the water bodies.

Laguna de Bay is highly polluted. Pasig River is highly polluted. All the other water bodies are getting polluted so the sources of clean potable water will diminish as we go on. You put in money, it will be lost because these two contracts are already sufficient to assure us of a continuing supply of potable water.

May nagsasabi nga po, and I can quote Sen. Manny Pacquiao. We had a good talk. Sabi niya, “Congressman, ang tubig inumin dapat libre.” So nakinig ako sa kaniya. Tama ang kaniyang reasoning. Hindi dapat bibilhin ang tubig inumin sapagkat iyan ay galing sa kalikasan. Galing sa kamay at palad ng Panginoong Diyos. Pinagkakakuwartahan? Ninenegosyo? Iniiipit pa nga samantalang tayo ay magbubuhos pa tayo ng salapi? It does not make sense.

To me, Senator Pacquiao makes sense. Drinking water should be free to every citizen. Pag-aralan ninyo iyan. I have studied the matter and I am convinced that the Senator is correct.

Rather than give it to a corporation to handle the supply of drinking water, let government do its function. Iyong tubig na galing sa ulan, galing sa ilog, galing sa sapa, i-filter ng gobyerno. Tayo na mag-provide ng waste water treatment facility, tatal ipinangungutang iyan. Do you know that they borrow money from the World Bank for that purpose? Are you aware of that?

REP. ZUBIRI. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. At this point, they already borrowed billions of US dollars. Their reasoning is that they will build the water purifying system so that their contract with the government may be fulfilled. Singil po sila nang singil sa atin at nagbabayad naman tayo. Every month we pay our water bill, and 20 percent of that, if you look at your itemized bill, 20 percent of your bill goes to purifying of water and environmental control. But do they give it? Do they build it? No. They borrow money in the name of the Filipino people, but

do they put the money borrowed in the water purifying system? No. Saan napupunta iyong inuutang na pera? Development ng kanilang negosyo, tayo nang tayo ng kanilang condominium. Palagay ko doon napupunta ang inuutang na pera na kayo, ako at ang ating mga mamamayan ang nagbabayad.

Kaya itong panawagan sana ay ituloy-tuloy ninyo. Ito ay not just for today. Let us continue the crusade until this—I am running out of adjectives to describe their greed, uncontrolled greed to milk the people dry and commit themselves to delivering a basic service that they do not deliver.

I would urge the Members of Congress, at the proper time, to cancel this contract, even if I have to seek an audience with the President. I will inform the President of this malady, malignancy affecting our people.

Iyong mga taga middle-eastern hindi na nagtatrabaho sapagkat may kinikita sila sa langis. Ang Pilipino sobra-sobra sa tubig pero nakukuba na tayo sa pagtatrabaho, ang mga magsasaka natin ay mahihirap pa rin, ang mga mangingisda ay pinakamahirap sa lahat. Bakit? Sapagkat ang kumikita lang sa ating kalikasan ay iyong mga mayayaman.

Let us study the proposal of Senator Pacquiao. You can ask him if you want. You can call him tonight and tell him, Congressman Atienza intimated to us that you have a solution to the growing problem of expensive potable water, and I agree with him. We need a President who will really fulfill the principle given us by the Creator Himself. Ang Pilipino ay mapalad mayroon tayong kalikasan. Ang Pilipino ay mapalad at sobra-sobra ang ating inuming tubig. Tayo ay naghihirap sapagkat iba ang yumayaman sa mga biyayang iyan. Panahon na upang tayong lahat ay mag-isip.

Tayo ba ay magkokongre-Kongresong ganito kung iyong mga kakayahan ay hindi natin maibibigay sa ating mga tao? There are times when I feel guilty that we are not doing our job as we are called by the exigencies of the present problems affecting our people. And I say this to the Gentleman who delivered the message today, I praise you for that. You should be written in the annals of the Congressional Record that you called on the government. Call it done on this problem. But I will repeat, the solution does not lie in more money, in the hands of the businessmen. The solution lies in the government enforcing the law. Walang mayaman sabi nga nila, at walang malakas, subalit kung ganito ng ganito tayo, anuman ang gawin ninyo, anuman ang pagsisikap natin, itong Kongresong ito walang mangyayari sapagkat patuloy ang pagpipigang ating kakayahan ng mga dambuhalang mayayaman. We should resist this. We, as elected Representatives of the people should be one in fighting this particular problem. Water is God-given, water is abundant in our nation. Why is it expensive? Pinagkakakuwartahan na ng ilan at hindi ng bayan.

Again, you continue this, Gentleman from Bukidnon, and I will be with you all the way.

REP. ZUBIRI. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. This is a cause that requires clear thinking, clean hands. Let us not be part of this corrupt system going on.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZUBIRI. Marami pong salamat, Mr. Speaker. We will work proactively with both the Executive and the private sector para mahanapan ng solusyon ang problema sa tubig, Mr. Speaker.

Marami pong salamat, distinguished colleague.

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, we still have several colleagues who wish to interpellate Representative Zubiri, but we will be suspending the Privilege Hour in a bit for us to call the roll, with the understanding that once we resume the Privilege Hour, we will have them recognized for their chance to interpellate.

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

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

ROLL CALL

REP. ROMUALDO. 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 of Members.

*The Secretary General called the roll, and the result is reflected in Journal No. 19, dated September 23, 2019.**

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. Mr. Speaker, the roll call shows that 234 Members responded to the call.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). With

234 Members responding to the call, the Chair declares the presence of a quorum.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume the interpellations and debate on the speech of Representative Zubiri; and so, I move that Rep. Manuel F. Zubiri be recognized. Further, to interpellate the Gentleman, I move that Rep. Alfredo A. Garbin Jr. of AKO BICOL Party-List be likewise recognized.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Representative Zubiri and Rep. Alfredo Garbin are recognized.

REP. GARBIN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May the Sponsor yield to some questions?

REP. ZUBIRI. Yes, Mr. Speaker, my distinguished colleague. Definitely.

REP. GARBIN. I totally agree with the Sponsor when he said that water is a basic human right.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, the human right to water and sanitation was recognized as a human right by the United Nations General Assembly in 2010. It states, "The human right to water entitles everyone to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic uses." But despite this declaration by the United Nations, Mr. Speaker, hindi ho natin naiintindihan kung bakit water as a basic human right is one of the most neglected basic services, not only that by the national government, but even local government units. Would the distinguished Sponsor agree to that statement?

REP. ZUBIRI. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARBIN. In fact, we only put a very little budget for the water system. As you can see in our approved General Appropriations Bill of 2020, kakarampot lang ho yata iyong nalagay na budget natin sa ating mga water system para sa ating mga nayon, kabarangay, mga kababayan natin na nakatira sa bundok, and even those who are settling in island barangays. Am I correct, Mr. Speaker?

REP. ZUBIRI. Tama po iyan, Mr. Speaker.

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

REP. GARBIN. So, eto na lamang po iyong kalunus-lunos na situwasyon ng ating mga kababayan. In 2000, this year, before election, we commissioned Pulse Asia and SWS in Bicol Region to identify the basic issue that Bicolanos are facing and surprisingly, hindi presyo ng bigas, hindi trabaho, hindi presyo ng kopra, kung hindi ang number one issue na gustong ma-address ng mga Bicolano ay kakulangan sa access ng malinis na tubig. Pero, Mr. Speaker, naka-confine lang iyong ating atensyon sa mga consumers ng Maynilad at Manila Water, neglecting the concern of those people in the countryside who do not have any access to clean and potable water.

Iyon ho iyong tinitingnan ho natin ngayon. In fact, when we proposed our local infrastructure program or projects, kami ho sa Kapulungan ng AKO BICOL Party-List, inilagay ho naming lahat iyon sa Water System Level II, addressing at least the concerns of 60 barangays in the entire Bicol Region. Pero, kulang-kulang pa ho, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, dahil iyong Bicol Region is composed of 3,400.

Now, eto lang ho iyong ating concern dito because we tend to focus on other issues, such as war on drugs, but you know, development is a battle of many fronts, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor. There is also a war on water dito sa Metro Manila, sa kanayunan, in fact, we have to address this problem. How bad is the problem? You know poverty is difficult to escape from without access to basic amenities such as water.

As of 2016, I do not know kung correct pa ho itong aming statistics, 14.5 percent of all households that account for 16.5 million Filipinos have no access to safe water supplies and instead rely on unprotected sources like wells, springs, rivers, ponds, lakes and rainwater. And yet, we consider water as our basic line of defense when it comes to laban natin sa anuman na sakit. Pero, sa tingin ninyo ho distinguished Sponsor, ito ba ay nabibigyan ng pansin sa panahon ngayon?

REP. ZUBIRI. Mr. Speaker, sa palagay ko po nabibigyan po ng pansin pero siguro medyo kulang pa po iyong focus ng pribadong sektor at saka ng gobyerno dito po sa tubig.

I think, what we need to do is, in all honesty, work proactively and put a bigger amount of budget dito po sa potable water system, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARBIN. I totally agree, Mr. Speaker, with the distinguished Sponsor. The national government and the local governments can allocate greater budgets for service expansion of water distribution and sanitation. Samahan na natin iyon ng electrification. But where investments and tax revenues are inadequate, these efforts can be supplemented by funds coming from

development-aid agencies and the private sector through Public-Private Partnership.

Too few of such partnerships exist today and driving away iyong ating resources or pouring it in other concerns that are not urgent or immediate.

So, I totally support your cause, the cause of our distinguished Sponsor, and I ask this august Body, which has just approved the General Appropriations Bill for 2020, not to stop here, but instead ask for more budget for water sanitation, water distribution, lalong-lalo na ho sa mga kanayunan, sa mga kababayan natin na nakatira sa bundok and those who are living in the island provinces.

Salamat ho, Mr. Speaker. Salamat, distinguished Sponsor.

REP. ZUBIRI. Marami pong salamat, Mr. Speaker, my distinguished colleague from Bicol. Thank you very much.

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

REP. BAUTISTA. Mr. Speaker, I move to recognize the next interpellator, Hon. Ferdinand R. Gaite of BAYAN MUNA Party-List.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Hon. Ferdinand Gaite is recognized.

REP. GAITE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

May ilang katanungan lang po ako hinggil sa privilege speech ng ating kagalang-galang na Congressman na patungkol sa problema ng napakahalagang, sabi nga ika nga ay “karapatan,” ang usapin sa tubig.

Tama po ba, sumasang-ayon ho ba ang ating kagalang-galang na Congressman na ang tubig, sabi nga, ay isang human right, at dahil ang isang prinsipyo sa usapin ng tubig, dahil sabi nga nila, “Water is life”? Tama po ba, Mr. Congressman, Mr. Speaker?

REP. ZUBIRI. Tama po iyan, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Kung kaya’t kahit sa buong daigdig tinitingnan ng sinasabi nga ngayon na ang tubig daw ay may value. Tama po, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. ZUBIRI. Tama po iyan, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Ang isang napapansin ng Kinatawag ito ay pinagpapalit iyong konsepto ng “halaga” at iyong “pagpapahalaga”. Iyong “value” at iyong “price” o iyong “cost”. Kasi nga po ngayon, bunga nga ng sinasabing itong tubig ay isang napakahalagang karapatang pantao, pero hindi daw ito nama-manage nang maayos kung kaya’t ang direksyon mula doon sa

sinasabing pagpapadaloy, pag-iimbak, pagma-manage ng resource, ang direksyon ay tingnan ito kung paano mama-manage ang resource. Pero iyong sinasabing pagpapahalaga ay ini-equate doon sa cost for managing the resource, Congressman, sa nagpapanukala hinggil sa usapin ng tubig ngayon.

REP. ZUBIRI. Tama po iyan, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Ito po iyong isang nagiging suliranin, lalo na sa serbisyo o karapatang pantao tulad ng nabanggit. Sabi nga, water is life, pero ngayon, apparently, only those who can afford water will be given life. Parang ganoon iyong logic, iyong pagkaintindi ko. Eh, hindi ho yata ganoon. Sabi nga, basic right po, ano.

Kaya po sabi nga natin, itong resource na ito, itong karapatang ito is too important to be left in the control of the private sector. Kasi nga po ngayon, tulad ng critic ng maraming developmental concepts sa usapin ng patubig, ngayon ang direksyon, kahit sa buong daigdig, iyong sa ilalim noong itinutulak ng IMF-World Bank, doon sa austerity measures at iyong paano popondohan ang pagseserbisyo sa tubig. Ang direksyon po ngayon ay patungong privatization, public-private partnership, at iba pa.

Nakakapangamba tulad noong ating karanasan dito sa Metro Manila kung maaalala natin, may kahalintulad rin na krisis na naganap noong 1996 na kung saan lumabas iyong Water Crisis Act, na ginamit na tungtungan para sa eventual privatization ng MWSS o Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System. Kung maaalala po natin, iyong privatization ng MWSS noong 1997, ito iyong ipinagyabang na pinakamalaking privatization. Accordingly, during that time, pinaka-successful po na privatization.

Narinig po ba ng ating kagalang-galang na Kongressman itong mga ...

REP. ZUBIRI. Hindi po ako familiar diyan, Mr. Speaker. My apologies po, my distinguished colleague. Pasensiya na po.

REP. GAITE. Para lang sa karagdagang kaalaman ng lahat, ganoon nga po na pinagyabang na iyong privatization ng MWSS, a premier water service serving Metro Manila, was one of the most successful privatizations of a water service. I forgot the full amount. Last year, to refresh our memory, hindi ba ito na iyong mga pangakong gaganda ang serbisyo, magiging dalisay ang tubig, and as a matter of fact, there was a time they even promised that their service will be cheaper. And yet, nakita na natin iyong kabaligtaran, iyong mga pangako na gaganda raw ang serbisyong tubig, patubig, iyong serbisyong pag-e-ensure ng supply ay 24/7, iyong total connections, 100 percent ang mayroon nang tubo at mayroon nang gripo. May tubo, may gripo pero

walang tubig. Iyon ho ba iyong nabalitaan rin nating information iyong nangyari noong nakaraang taon, Mr. Congressman, Mr. Speaker?

REP. ZUBIRI. I think iyong problema po medyo dumadami po iyong mga may kailangan ng tubig, iyong serbisyo po hindi po naa-upgrade iyong mga ekwipo, bumababa po iyong serbisyo. Ngayon, sa aking opinyon, Mr. Speaker, okay naman po kung may partnership iyong gobyerno, iyong pribadong sector, basta maayos lang iyong sistema at saka iyong presyo hindi naman sagabal o hindi naman masakit sa ating mga kapatid na Pilipino.

Ang problema medyo pati nga sa mga pribadong sektor at medyo sa malalaking villages ganoon din, same problem. At least tayo may tubig pa rin kahit papaano, maski na may problema. Iyong mga kapatid po natin na mga maliliit na hindi naman kayang magbayad at saka hindi naman puwede, wala namang pera para sa malalaking facilities na puwede silang mag-tap, kawawa naman po sila.

That is why I am calling on our national government kasi mayroon naman tayo sa DILG, mayroon naman tayong patubig program, puwede nating lagyan ng pondo para matulungan po iyong mga sektor or ating mga kapatid na hindi naman kaya magbayad ng malaking halaga po, my distinguished colleague, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Maraming salamat po. Mr. Congressman, alam ninyo po ba kung ano ang kailangan na tubig ng bawat ordinaryong mamamayang Pilipino? Aware po ba kayo—mayroon ho bang ideal na volume ng tubig panggamit pang-inom, panglaba, para sa hygiene at iba pa para masabing iyong karapatan niya sa tubig ay kaniyang maaangkin. May idea po ba kayo, Mr. Speaker?

REP. ZUBIRI. Hindi po. Iyong aking mga researcher po ay nagre-research pa ng mga detalye. Ito lang nakita ko lang po ito kaya ito ho iyong aking topic ngayon kasi nakita ko sa WHO na milyon-milyon pa po ang mga kapatid natin na wala pang potable clean water. Kaya po na-take up ko po ito dito sa plenaryo, iyong topic regarding potable water access for all Filipinos, Mr. Speaker. Pero the details are yet to come. So, baka puwede po ibigay ko sa inyo kung ano iyong na-research namin para at least magkakaintindihan po tayo sa mga detalye, Mr. Speaker, my distinguished colleague.

REP. GAITE. Maraming salamat po.

Ang Kinatawang ito ay na-involve na rin sa campaign para magkaroon ng dalisay, available, 24/7 na tubig para sa mga mamamayan dahil po nasangkot na rin po kami sa mga programa ng mga water district na mayroon pong mga unions na ganoon din ang

kalagayan, Mr. Speaker. And also, alam natin lalo na ang ating Gentleman from Bukidnon ay iyon din naman ang layunin lalo na sa ating mga kababayan na walang available na potable water para sa kanilang pangangailangan for hygiene, drinking and other purposes. Kaya po iyong mga unions na nasa mga water district ay interested talaga sa issue na ito dahil nga doon sa problema ng privatization.

As it is, ayon sa PAWD, Philippine Association of Water Districts, may higit-kumulang 500 water districts po and well, the MWSS, was one of the biggest before, pero iyong sa iba't ibang lugar, siyudad, munisipyo at probinsiya, mayroon pong nakatayo na water districts, pero hindi rin necessarily lahat ay may kapasidad o may kakayanan para palaguin, palakihin, palakasin, kung kaya ang nagiging direksiyon po ngayon, para sa kaalaman ng ating kasamahan from Bukidnon, marami po ngayon ang naisasapribado.

Batay sa data ng National Economic Development Authority, at least 41 of the 500 water districts have been converted to joint venture agreements, public-private partnerships, at nagkaroon na rin ng mga iba't ibang proseso ng unbundling ng services from water source development, water distribution, water filtration, et cetera. Pero ang nangyari po ngayon, instead na serbisyo siya sa mamamayan, nagiging monopolyo na po ng iilang mga pribadong kumpanya.

Aware po ba ang ating kasamahan from Bukidnon dito sa isyu ng privatization ng mga water district?

REP. ZUBIRI. Yes, aware po ako diyan, pero as to the extent, as to the details, hindi po lahat ang nalalaman ko po na ...

REP. GAITE. Maraming salamat po. Tulad po noong nangyari noon sa privatization ng MWSS, iyong mga pangakong binabanggit, bababa ang halaga ng tubig, mas magiging available 24/7, lahat po ay mabibigyan ng mga connection. May isa hong measure ng inefficiency silang tinatawag, iyong NRW, non-revenue water. Ito po iyong tubig na hindi nasingilan. Bakit po? Tumatagas, evaporation, systems loss, pati iyong pilferage, iyong ilegal na mga koneksiyon. Kaya dati rati, iyong isang objective rin o performance target ng mga naturang water district ay pababain iyong NRW para po mas maging kapaki-pakinabang hindi lamang doon sa water district kundi sa mga consumer at subscriber ng iba't ibang water districts.

Pero ngayon po, tulad ng naganap, iyong consumers ng MWSS under Maynilad and Manila Water have experienced drastic increases in the prices of water services. Kaya sa halip na iyong pangakong ibababa ang presyo, hindi po, almost 1,000 percent na po ang itinaas ng presyo ng tubig since 1997 when water services were privatized. Ang masakit pa niyan, ang dami, tinitingnan ko iyong listahan ng charges,

may basic charge, mayroong foreign currency differential adjustment, may environmental charge, may sewer charge, may maintenance and services charge, at ito iyong masakit, may value-added tax charge na ang kumokolekta ay gobyerno. Mayroon ring other charges na depende doon sa katangian ng services. Liban po diyan, nagkaroon rin ng mga ilang pagkakataon at tulad rin ng nangyari, iyong mga service interruption, tapos sinabi na sa pangakong magkakaroon ng mas availability ng water, hindi rin niya nababa. Iyong non-revenue water, dapat ibabaw nila to a certain percentage na acceptable under the performance target measures pero hindi rin niya na-achieve. Kaya po ang isang mas pinakamalubha diyan, from public monopoly, ngayon nagiging private monopoly. Kaya po wala hong option iyong mga mamamayan na pumili ng kanilang water provider unless, of course, mas expensive iyong magpapa-deliver ka ng tubig at alam natin iyong cost niyan ay di hamak na mas mataas. Kaya po maganda na tinalakay ito lalo na in the light that we are now discussing the creation of the Department of Water.

Now, the question is will it address the problem, our need for water for the public, for our people? Will it be able to address the issue on the availability nitong dalisay na tubig para sa ating mamamayan at gayundin iyong tinatawag nating affordability? Posibleng inaaral in other countries, I think it is in South Africa, iyong binanggit ko kaninang halaga ng tubig na minimum. So, kunyari may isa akong nabasa, dapat daw at least 20 liters ng tubig, at least iyon sa initial, iyon iyong libreng bahagi ng tubig pero anything over and above, iyon iyong mayroong dagdag na cost lalo na iyong ginagamit na tubig for commercial purposes. Kaya nga nakakagulat po, sa ating bansa ngayon, napansin ninyo ba na mas mahal itong tubig na 500 ml mas mahal po ito kaysa sa soft drink? Mas mahal po ito kaysa sa soft drink. Kataka-taka because soft drinks are practically made of water and yet nakakagulat bakit mas mahal ito. Nabanggit na nga po ng ating kagalang-galang na Kinatawan mula sa Bukidnon, niri-raise ang concern ng usapin sa tubig na bilang isang karapatang pantao, ito ay karapat-dapat na available sa lahat ng mamamayan.

Maraming salamat po at iyon lang po, ating Gentleman from Bukidnon, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZUBIRI. Maraming salamat po, distinguished colleague. Marami pong salamat, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. BAUTISTA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize our next interpellator, Hon. Jericho Jonas B. Nograles of PBA Party-List.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Hon. Jericho Jonas Nograles is recognized.

REP. NOGRALES (J.J.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, will the Gentleman yield to a few questions?

REP. ZUBIRI. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I will do my best to answer the distinguished colleague's questions.

REP. NOGRALES (J.J.). Mr. Speaker, my first question is very simple. Does the distinguished Gentleman from Bukidnon believe that the Philippines now has a water crisis?

REP. ZUBIRI. Mr. Speaker, I know that we have problems. I do not know if it is a crisis or if we are in a crisis level, but I know we have problems with water, Mr. Speaker.

REP. NOGRALES (J.J.). Mr. Speaker, this Representation believes that we are in a water crisis. In fact, a lot of facts have been hidden from the distinguished Members of Congress and I think it should be considered when the appropriate committee shall tackle your privilege speech, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. We should bear in mind that we are in a water crisis, especially with the fact that 40 percent of water districts are not operational.

Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, are you aware that we have 872 formed water districts, however, only 528 water districts are, actually, operational, Mr. Speaker?

REP. ZUBIRI. Mr. Speaker, more or less, I have the figures but the exact figure, that I do not have.

REP. NOGRALES (J.J.). Well, Mr. Speaker, I have a simple question because this privilege speech shall be investigated in due time by the appropriate committee. Is the distinguished Gentleman in favor of looking into this very problem and basically investigating, in aid of legislation, the water districts and their performance?

REP. ZUBIRI. Mr. Speaker, if it will help the nation, we need to be proactively working with both government and private sectors. We need to trigger our oversight function, and we shall investigate if needed, Mr. Speaker.

REP. NOGRALES (J.J.). Mr. Speaker, I would like to support the idea of investigating and asking for the performance record of all water districts considering the fact that majority of operational water districts—of the 528 operational water districts—serve less than 50 percent of the areas that they cover, Mr. Speaker. Will the distinguished Gentleman be open to doing that?

REP. ZUBIRI. Again, Mr. Speaker, if it is for the nation, then so be it. That is why we are here, Mr. Speaker.

REP. NOGRALES (J.J.). Mr. Speaker, as to my last question, it is very fast. You mentioned earlier that you would like to push for budgetary support for the water problem or in my words the water crisis. Is that correct, Mr. Speaker?

REP. ZUBIRI. Yes, Mr. Speaker, especially down to the LGU level.

REP. NOGRALES (J.J.). Mr. Speaker, I am not so sure if you are aware, but the LWUA budget has been severely depleted in the past three years. Are you aware of that, Mr. Speaker?

REP. ZUBIRI. I know that it has dropped but I do not know that it has severely dropped, Mr. Speaker.

REP. NOGRALES (J.J.). It has severely dropped, Mr. Speaker. In fact, if I may be allowed to give you a few data. In 2017, the requirement to meet our water needs by the LWUA was P2.3 billion, and we have given them a budget allocation of P2.1 billion. That is more or less sufficient and within the target. However, in 2018, Mr. Speaker, the LWUA needed P2.5 billion but we were only able to give them P220 million. That is almost just 10 percent of what is necessary in 2018.

In 2019, they required P2.8 billion, yet we only gave them less than 15 percent, at P328 million. And now, as you mentioned, Mr. Speaker, we are still within the budget season, perhaps, we will go into a bicameral conference committee. Perhaps, we can also augment what was approved last Friday because the billions of pesos needed for year 2020 by the LWUA amount to P3.9 billion, yet what has been approved was only P325 million, Mr. Speaker.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I am satisfied with the answers of the honorable Gentleman from Bukidnon and I thank him. I look forward to the appropriate committee's investigation of this matter.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZUBIRI. Marami pong salamat to my distinguished colleague. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. BAUTISTA. Mr. Speaker, before we proceed to the next interpellator, we would like to acknowledge the presence of the guests of Hon. Ma. Lourdes Acosta-

Alba from Bukidnon. They are the guests of the Liga ng mga Barangay in the Municipality of Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon, namely: Hon. Nelson Binayao, Hon. Eduardo Corbit, Hon. Amoy Ramirez, Hon. Venchito Lugmay, Hon. Floramae Penaso, Hon. Allan Torres Jr., Hon. Marilou Jumawan, Hon. Hernando Daluan, Hon. Leonardo Anlagan, Hon. Erbern Onahon, Hon. Melba Batoon, Hon. Ramir M. Lonohon, Hon. Angelie S. Roa, Hon. Eleazar Orina, Hon. Benjamin Magtajas, Hon. Mary Jane Guilayan, Hon. Benjamin S. Miñoza, Hon. Dennis Salvo, Hon. Jerville Senagonia, Hon. Yolanda Valdehueza, Hon. Romeo Dagunlay, Hon. Virgie Payanan and Hon. Janice G. Jacutin. They are the guests of Hon. Ma. Lourdes Acosta-Alba from Bukidnon. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Guests of Congresswoman Acosta-Alba, welcome to the House of Representatives.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. BAUTISTA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we extend the Privilege Hour for another hour.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. BAUTISTA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the next interpellator, Hon. Lorenz R. Defensor of the Third District of Iloilo.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Hon. Lorenz Defensor is recognized.

REP. ZUBIRI. Mr. Speaker, before that, I am honored that my dear friends from Bukidnon are here. I did not know that. Maayong hapon kaninyo tanan, mga igso-on ko. *(Applause)*

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

Will the good Gentleman yield to some questions, Mr. Speaker?

REP. ZUBIRI. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. DEFENSOR (L.). May I know from the good Gentleman if he knows how many government agencies are there right now that are involved in the production and distribution of water?

REP. ZUBIRI. Mr. Speaker, I do not have the exact number but I am very familiar because I have worked with the DILG. The DSWD, iyong Kalahi-CIDSS program nila po, they have been digging wells for our

barangays for quite some time. I know that the LGUs, in their own capacity, build wells for the barangays, Mr. Speaker.

REP. DEFENSOR (L.). That is correct, Mr. Speaker. Currently, we have more than 30 government agencies involved in water. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources is also involved. The NIA is also involved, as well as the MWSS, and many others, including the local government units. If we were to increase the budget and add for water, potable water, which government agency would be the priority of the good Gentleman, insofar as the additional budget is concerned?

At this juncture, Deputy Speaker Savellano relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Henry S. Oaminal.

REP. ZUBIRI. Mr. Speaker, to be honest, I would give it to the DILG down to the LGU, so the implementation will be quick and fast. At the same time, the local government units will make sure that it is working well and it will be a system that is not a ghost system, but a system that will definitely be workable for the LGU and all the barangays, Mr. Speaker.

REP. DEFENSOR (L.). I agree, Mr. Speaker, but insofar as the local governments are concerned, I respectfully suggest that we divide the local governments insofar as budgets are concerned. There are local government units in Metro Manila and there are rural local government units. There are 12 million Filipinos currently living in Metro Manila. Not all of them have access to potable ground water and we are dependent on the MWSS and its concessionaires for potable water. Insofar as local government units in the provinces and municipalities are concerned, especially, the barangays, may I just want to tell the good Gentleman that while the efforts of our local government units are laudable insofar as water, especially, drinking water, is concerned. Do you agree with me, Mr. Speaker, that there should be a careful and detailed mapping of all water sources, insofar as the barangay, the municipal and provincial levels are concerned? It is our experience that the local government unit gives funding to the barangay captain, to the mayor and governor, and yet, every summer, these water systems run out of water source. Most likely, sira ang mga water system na pinopondohan natin taon-taon. Would you agree?

REP. ZUBIRI. Tama po iyan, Mr. Speaker. Definitely, I totally agree with my colleague. I am talking about funding both local government units in the rural areas and definitely, also in the urban areas, Mr. Speaker. I agree with my dear colleague that for all

these fundings, dapat po may follow through. Dapat po iyong sistema is a hundred percent complete before its turnover to the barangays. There should be checks and balances whether it is the COA or whatever other agency, they should look into it to make sure especially so with the water systems kasi hindi po nakikita iyan. We drill wells all the way down so, we do not know exactly how deep they go. If it is 200 and they go 150, how sure are we that they will go all the way to 200 feet?

So, these are the things that we need to work on, and work on the details, but I am speaking in general. This is the problem we have nationwide and we have to address it now. If we do not address it now, and we do have the resources for it, we will be in trouble in the next few years. Maybe not in the next few years, but five, ten years, as the population grows, how are we going to give them potable water access, Mr. Speaker?

REP. DEFENSOR (L.). Mr. Speaker, will the Gentleman also agree with me, that insofar as Metro Manila is concerned, water infrastructure should be declared as projects of national interest? Since the 1960s and 70s, there have been water infrastructure projects in the pipeline of the MWSS that have yet to be implemented. Would you agree with me that NEDA should declare these projects or infrastructure projects as projects of national significance?

REP. ZUBIRI. Definitely, Mr. Speaker. They are of national significance, Mr. Speaker.

REP. DEFENSOR (L.). We should also distinguish between water infrastructure and water-related laws. We have the Water Code of 1976, PD 10026, Water Crisis Act of 1995 and Clean Water Act of 2004, all of which center, not only on water conservation but on implementing practices which protect our water resources.

Will the good Gentleman agree with me that this administration should push for the implementation of these laws so that we can provide potable water to our people and protect our watersheds and water resources?

REP. ZUBIRI. Yes, I totally agree with my distinguished colleague, Mr. Speaker. I am one with him, and I am sure, with everyone here, that it is of national importance that we focus on this very resource, Mr. Speaker.

REP. DEFENSOR (L.). Mr. Speaker, during the Seventeenth Congress, there were at least four bills filed creating the Department of Water Resources and such other versions of said bill. Will the good Gentleman agree that the creation of the Department of Water Resources can be one of the solutions insofar as our water crisis is concerned?

REP. ZUBIRI. Yes, Mr. Speaker. That will be one of the most, if not the most important, department in the next couple of years or five years, Mr. Speaker.

REP. DEFENSOR (L.). I have no further questions, Mr. Speaker. Thank you so much, distinguished Gentleman from Bukidnon.

REP. ZUBIRI. Marami pong salamat, Mr. Speaker, my distinguished colleague. Marami pong salamat.

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

REP. BAUTISTA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of Honorable Zubiri and the interpellations to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. TADURAN. Mr. Speaker, before we recognize the next interpellator, may we acknowledge the presence of the guests of the Makabayan Bloc headed by Hon. France L. Castro of the ACT TEACHERS Party-List. We would like to acknowledge the presence of the Philippine Federation of the Deaf and other deaf communities nationwide. Bigyan po natin sila ng pagpapahalaga at pagkilala dahil ngayon po, ipinagdiriwang natin ang International Day of Sign Languages. Mabuhay po kayo.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Oaminal). The presence of the guests of Hon. France Castro who are here at the plenary are acknowledged. Welcome to the House of Representatives.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. TADURAN. Mr. Speaker, at this point we would like to recognize Hon. France L. Castro of ACT TEACHERS Party-List for her privilege speech.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Oaminal). Hon. France L. Castro, Party-List ACT TEACHERS is recognized.

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

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Magandang hapon po sa ating lahat at magandang hapon po doon sa ating mga bisita from the Philippine Federation of the Deaf and other deaf communities nationwide. Of course, also worldwide dahil ngayon po, Mr. Speaker, ipinagdiriwang po natin iyong

International Day of Sign Languages.

Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker and colleagues. Today is the International day of Sign Languages or IDSL, which was first celebrated last year upon the Resolution of the United Nations on its 72nd General Assembly. The Resolution sets aside this day, also the day for the establishment of the World Federation of the Deaf, in order to raise awareness on the importance of sign language as an inseparable aspect of the full realization of the human rights of the deaf people.

This year, the IDSL is celebrated with the theme “Sign Language Rights for All.” Today also signals the start of this year’s International Week of the Deaf, with each day having a sub-theme. Tomorrow, Tuesday, September 24, we will be celebrating the Sign Language Rights for all Children. From Wednesday, September 25, until Sunday, September 29, it will be Sign Language Rights for Deaf Senior Citizens, for deaf-blind people and deaf people with disabilities, for deaf women, for deaf LGBTIQA and for the deaf refugees.

Since this year’s IDSL calls for the inclusion of the deaf, it is incumbent upon us to heed this call genuinely and urgently. Our country has made a significant step for the inclusion of the Filipino deaf with the recent passage of Republic Act No. 11106 or The Filipino Sign Language Act, a law that was six years in the making. If we count the struggle of the Filipino deaf for recognition of their rights to education, health and basic social services, pushing for the FSL Act went on for even longer than six years. The Filipino Sign Language Act echoes the United Nations’ Resolution declaring IDSL in at least four ways:

1. The law declares the Filipino Sign Language as the national sign language of the Filipino deaf. The Philippines is now among around 40 countries worldwide that recognize a national sign language, with only a few in Asia;

2. It acknowledges that early access to sign language and services in sign language, including quality education available in sign language, is vital to the growth and development of the deaf individual and critical to the achievement of the international standards and agreements;

3. It mandates the government to exhaust all means possible to afford the deaf access to basic social services and social participation by ensuring the rightful status of the Filipino Sign Language in public schools, public hospitals and health institutions, public and private workplaces, the media, and others; and

4. It recognizes the importance of preserving sign language as part of linguistic and cultural diversity.

Lastly, it also mandates the government to consult and heed the Filipino deaf community in all matters regarding them, embodying the principle of “nothing about us without us.”

However, Mr. Speaker, it appears that the deaf rights and the FSL Act will be facing yet another hurdle in the law’s first full year of implementation.

Unfortunately, the General Appropriations Bill was approved by this House despite budget cuts in agencies and programs vital to the genuine and urgent realization of the aims of the FSL Act. A total of at least P2.5 billion has been cut from two agencies which are supposed to spearhead the implementation of the FSL Act, the DepEd and the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino. These cuts include: P1.398 billion for learning tools and equipment under the DepEd; P881.242 million for textbooks and other instructional materials; P69.712 million for various training programs of DepEd teaching and non-teaching personnel; P5.093 million for the management and administration of learnings resources; P3.486 million for early language literacy and numeracy; P2.013 million for national literacy policies and programs; and finally, cuts in the MOOE and Capital Outlay of KWF of P69.33 million.

The Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino has also proposed P2 million for the initial preparation for the implementation of the Filipino Sign Language Act, but the DBM did not include it in the proposed budget it submitted to Congress.

The cuts I have just mentioned do not include the cuts in the budgets of public hospitals, training programs under TESDA, labor law compliance of Department of Labor and Employment and other agencies relevant to the implementation of the FSL Act.

As a point of information, I and the rest of the Makabayan bloc voted “No” on the GAB because of the budget cuts in vital social services, including the above budget cuts. I also have filed today my formal proposed amendments to this budget bill, including the restoration of the above cuts and request for the Komisyon sa Wikang Pilipino.

Sponsors of the budget have raised the lack of implementing rules and regulations for RA 11106 for the exclusion of funds for the implementation of the FSL Act in the 2020 budget, but we ask this: How can a tiny agency such as the KWF be realistically enabled to issue the necessary IRR with its already small budget slashed by half? The KWF is perhaps the only agency to suffer such a severe budget cut next year, despite a new law giving it new mandates. Furthermore, why slash funds for education, for instance, when the needs and the shortages are already dire, and the people who rely on them are many?

Mr. Speaker, this Representation believes that these cuts will translate to worse shortages in critical inputs and facilities, especially in education. They will lead to worse hardship of deaf learners and their non-hearing and hearing teachers. I am constrained to say this truth: The budget bill that this House just approved will cause

the further marginalization of the Filipino deaf—a direction contrary to the aims of the FSL Act and the spirit of the International Day of Sign Languages.

Here is a concrete picture of this marginalization caused by the long-running failure to sufficiently fund agencies such as the DepEd and the KWF: Due to the lack of SPED Centers and trained personnel and facilities, deaf children, most of whom come from poor families, often have to transfer from one school to another, or do not go to school at all. They have difficulty in understanding the lessons which result in lower grades. Teachers, especially deaf or non-hearing teachers, those who are fluent in FSL and the interpreters are very rare in public schools, so the deaf learners absent themselves from, or worse, drop out of school because they do not understand what the teacher is saying and writing. The next challenge for deaf learners is tertiary education, which is offered mostly by private colleges and universities. For those who can afford to go to college or university, many are forced to hire private interpreters so that they can understand their lessons.

After tertiary education, the deaf still have to hurdle various other challenges towards employment. For those who dream of becoming teachers, many fail in the licensure exam. Deaf applicants are not provided with interpreters during review and in actual exam, some never go to a formal review school. The exam itself, they complain, is not accessible to them because it uses vocabulary not usually understood by the deaf. And for one, it is a written exam standard for all applicants, majority of whom are not with hearing disability. Only less than 10 percent of DOLE-registered PWDs are wage-employed because their educational attainment does not qualify them for employment.

Many of the Filipino deaf, especially those who come from poor families, are turned away from hospitals, the first barrier being the lack of interpreters for the deaf. Often, the deaf have to bring and pay for their own interpreters on top of the doctor's fee. Also, rare are interpreters in the courts or on the news, making it difficult for the deaf to know what is going on around them.

As we can see, the Filipino deaf are mostly excluded from education, which leads to them being excluded from employment, from the enjoyment of such very basic rights such as the right to health and society after school.

Mr. Speaker, how can we create a more inclusive space for our deaf brothers and sisters? How can we empower them so they can avail of their rights to fully participate in our society? The first step, I believe, is for this Congress to listen to the demands of the Filipino deaf. They are by no means silent, and their demands are resounding. It is only us who turn a deaf ear to them. When they demand that

their needs for education, health and other basic rights be fully funded, this Congress should listen to them. After all, it is their taxes and it should redound to their benefit.

I, therefore, appeal to this Congress to admit into the final version of the General Appropriations Bill of 2020 my proposed amendments for the restoration of budget cuts in the DepEd and KWF, and the P2 million request of the KWF for the initial preparation for the implementation of the Sign Language Act. We appeal, especially to House Speaker Alan Peter “Compañero” S. Cayetano and the Members of the House contingent in the Bicameral Conference Committee, as well as to our fellow legislators in the other chamber, the Senate.

I also appeal for the immediate deliberation on and passage of the bills on the accessibility rights of the Filipino deaf.

If Congress today commits to heed these calls, then today will be remembered as a truly happy and meaningful International Day of Sign Languages.

That is all, Mr. Speaker, and thank you.
(*Applause*)

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

REP. TADURAN. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of Hon. France L. Castro to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The privilege speech of Hon. France L. Castro is referred to the Committee on Rules.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. TADURAN. Mr. Speaker, at this juncture, may we acknowledge the presence of the guests of Hon. Divina Grace C. Yu of the First District of Zamboanga del Sur. They are the principals and teachers from the First and Second Legislative Districts in the Province of Zamboanga del Sur.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Oaminal). The guests of the Honorable Divina Yu, please rise. (*Applause*) Welcome to the House of Representatives—the principal and teachers from the First and Second District of Zamboanga del Sur. (*Applause*)

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. TADURAN. Mr. Speaker, may we recognize Hon. Eufemia “Ka Femia” C. Cullamat of BAYAN MUNA Party-List for her privilege speech.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Oaminal). Hon. Eufemia “Ka Femia” C. Cullamat of BAYAN MUNA Party-List is recognized for her privilege speech.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. CULLAMAT

REP. CULLAMAT. Maraming salamat, G. Ispiker.

G. Ispiker, mga kapwa kong Mambabatas, magandang hapon sa ating lahat. Noong Sabado, ika-21 ng Setyembre, ang ika-47 na taon ng anibersaryo ng deklarasyon ng martial law. Sa napakadilim na yugto ng ating kasaysayan sa ilalim ng diktaduryang Marcos, naranasan ng mga Pilipino ang paglabag sa mga karapatang pantao, panunupil sa mga kalayaang sibil at pambubusal sa kalayaang magpahayag.

Mahigit apat na dekada ang nakalipas, nararanasan ngayon ang panibagong martial law sa Mindanao at *de facto* martial law naman sa iba pang panig ng bansa.

Pareho-pareho ang naranasan noon sa mga nagaganap ngayon. Ipinagbabawal ang anumang oposisyon at kritisismo. Ginigipit ang mga progresibong organisasyon at pinaslang o kaya ay ikinulong ang mga aktibista na kumikilos para sa mga reporma at pagbabago.

G. Ispiker, gusto kong bigyan ng partikular na diin ang nararanasan ngayon ng ating mga kababayan sa rehiyon ng Hilagang Mindanao. Nakakaalarma ang sunud-sunod na pamamaslang sa mga magsasaka at Lumad. Ngayong taon, umabot na ng 16 ang pinaslang na mga magsasaka sa Hilagang Mindanao, karamihan ay mga kasapi ng KASAMA-Bukidnon, organisasyon ng mga magsasaka at Kaogalingong Sistema Igpapasindog Tu Lumadnong Ogpaan o KASILO na isang organisasyon ng mga Lumad.

Hindi ordinaryo ang pagpatay na ginagawa sa ating mga magsasaka at Lumad doon. Pinatay sila sa pinakabrutal na paraan, binaril sa ulo, binaril nang malapitan, binaril ng maraming beses at sinisiguradong hindi na mabubuhay.

Ganito ang nangyari sa panahon ng Martial Law sa Mindanao na ilang beses nang na-extend ng Kongresong ito. G. Ispiker, bukod sa pamamaslang sa mga magsasaka at Lumad, napakarami na rin ang iligal na inaresto at ikinulong partikular sa mga probinsya ng Misamis Oriental at Bukidnon. Nasa 40 ang mga sinampahan ng gawa-gawang kaso at nakakulong hanggang ngayon.

G. Ispiker, pinakamasaklap ang sinapit ni Lorena Micabalo ng Bukidnon. Si Lorena ay 27 taong gulang, lider ng kababaihan at organisador ng mga magsasaka. Noong Pebrero ngayong taon, bagong panganak si Lorena. Siya ay hinuli ng 1st Special Forces na nakabase sa Mandaya Detachment, Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon. Kasama niya noon ang tatlong buwan niyang anak na si Zhia Del Rosario.

Dahil palaging nagkakasakit sa loob ng kulungan, hiniwalay si Zhia sa kanyang ina. Hindi napasuso at hindi naalagaan ni Lorena ang kanyang anak dahil siya ay iligal na ikinulong dahil sa mga gawa-gawang kaso.

G. Ispiker, kamakailan lang ay nabalitaan namin na namatay ang sanggol na si Zhia. Nakakalungkot at nakakagalit ang nangyayaring ito. Sumisigaw ng katarungan ang ating mga kababayan sa Hilagang Mindanao.

G. Ispiker, umaabot na sa 16 ang magsasaka at Lumad na pinaslang sa Bukidnon ngayong 2019. Ilan sa kanila ang mga sumusunod:

Si Datu Kaylo Bontolan, napaslang noong ika-7 ng Abril sa Kitaotao, Bukidnon;

Si Gina Mamentong-Cabusas, pinaslang noong ika-14 ng Mayo sa Valencia, Bukidnon;

Leovigildo “Nonoy” Palma, lider ng KASAMA-Bukidnon at Save Pantaron Range Movement, pinaslang noong ika-16 ng Hunyo;

Si Iquin Jake Tilucan, tinadtad ng bala at ginilitan ng leeg noong ika-25 ng Hunyo. Natagpuan ang kanyang bangkay sa isang tulay sa Cabanglasan;

Si Joel Anino, pinaslang noong ika-6 ng Hulyo sa San Fernando, Bukidnon;

Si Datu Mario Agsab, pinaslang noong ika-8 ng Hulyo sa Cabanglasan, Bukidnon;

Si Guillermo Casas, pinaslang noong ika-2 ng Agosto sa San Fernando. Nakaligtas sa pamamari ang kanyang asawa na si Jocelyn;

Si Jeffrey Bayot, pinaslang noong ika-11 ng Agosto sa Valencia City;

Si Alex Lacay, pinaslang noong ika-9 sa Quezon, Bukidnon;

Si Bai Leah Tumbalang, binaril sa noo, walang awang pinaslang noong ika-25 ng Agosto sa San Fernando, Bukidnon;

Si Leonides Bacong, pinaslang sa San Fernando noong ika-11 ng Setyembre; at

Si Angelito Marivao, binaril sa ulo noong ika-16 ng Setyembre.

G. Ispiker, naniniwala ang Kinatawang ito na may malaking impluwensiya sa mga pagpaslang na ito sa mga magsasaka at Lumad ang mga Unit ng AFP, 8th Infantry Battalion, 88th Infantry Battalion, 89th Infantry Battalion, mga grupong paramilitar na Alamara at mga tinaguriang death squad, mga armadong nakasakay sa motorsiklo, nakamaskara o naka-bonnet at gumagala sa probinsya ng Bukidnon.

G. Ispiker, kagaya ng nangyari sa Negros na mistula nang killing field dahil sa Memorandum Order No. 32, lubhang nakakabahala ang mga pamamaslang sa Bukidnon. Nananawagan sa katarungan ang mga survivor at pamilya ng mga napaslang. Kailangang may managot sa mga karumal-dumal na krimen na ginagawa sa ating mga magsasaka sa Bukidnon.

G. Ispiker, sa pagtatanong ko sa mga taga-Bukidnon, ayaw na nila ng martial law dahil sa grabeng militarisasyon sa mga komunidad ang nagdudulot ng labis na takot sa mga magsasaka. Hindi sila makapagsaka nang matiwasay. Kapag sila ay nasalubong ng mga sundalo ng Philippine Army sa bundok, pinagbibintangan silang miyembro ng mga NPA. Hindi normal ang ganitong kalagayan na umiiral ang lagim at dilim sa ating bayan, lalo na sa Mindanao.

G. Ispiker, marami ang nagtatanong, anong mayroon sa Bukidnon? Bakit pinaslang ang mga magsasaka at Lumad doon?"

G. Ispiker, mga kapwa ko Mambabatas, binuo ang Convergence Area for Peace and Development na tugon sa Executive Order No. 70 o whole-of-nation approach. Bubuksan at ide-develop ang cluster areas ng malalawak na mga mountain range sa Misamis at Bukidnon. Ang Mt. Balatucan Range, Mt. Mangabon Odiongan Complex, Saldab at Kalabugao Plains, Pantaron at Umayam Complex, Salug Valley, Gamot-Dumasilag Complex, Mt. Kitanglad Range, Mt. Kalatungan Range, West Bukidnon Plateau, Iligan-CDO Tributaries, Mt. Malindang, Mt. Ampiro, Gadungan Mountain Range, Mt. Peurai Complex, Maigo-Tangcal-Magsaysay Tributaries at Salvador-Nunungan Tributaries.

Naririto sa mga kabundukang ito ang malalawak na lupaing ninuno, nasa puso nito ang Pantaron Range o tinaguriang Central Cordillera of Mindanao na sumasaklaw sa mahigit na 33,000 ektarya at nasa tri-boundary ng Davao, Agusan del Norte at Bukidnon.

Para sa mga Lumad sa nabanggit na mga probinsya, ang Pantaron Range ang pinagkukunan nila ng pagkain, tubig at ikabubuhay. Kapag nabuksan ang Pantaron Range sa mga lokal at dayuhang negosyo, milyon-milyong katutubong Manobo, Higaonon, Talaandig at Agusanon ang maaapektuhan.

Ang mga magsasaka at Lumad sa Bukidnon at Misamis ang pinakaaktibo sa pagtatanggol ng Pantaron Range at pagdepensa sa mga kalupaan, likas na yaman at lupang ninuno. Kasama nila ang mga magsasaka at Lumad ng rehiyon ng Caraga, Timog Mindanao at iba pang bahagi ng Hilagang Mindanao. Noong 2012 pa nagkainteres ang mga negosyante na buksan ang Pantaron Range subalit napigil ng halos isang dekadang paglaban at pagdepensa ng mga magsasaka at Lumad.

G. Ispiker, ang militarisasyon at Martial Law sa Mindanao na direkta hindi lamang sa karapatan ng mamamayan kundi pati na ang kabuhayan ng mga Mindanaon, lalo na ng mga magsasaka at Lumad.

G. Ispiker, nananawagan ako ng katarungan para sa mga magsasaka at Lumad na pinaslang sa Mindanao, gayundin nananawagan ako sa Kapulungan na ito na huwag nang palawigin pa ang martial law sa Mindanao.

Ito lamang po G. Ispiker. Maraming salamat.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Oaminal). What is the pleasure of the Majority Leader?

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of Hon. Eufemia "Ka Femia" C. Cullamat to the Committee on Rules.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

REP. CASTELO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Hon. Ferdinand R. Gaité of BAYAN MUNA Party-List for his privilege speech.

I so, move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Oaminal). Hon. Ferdinand R. Gaité of BAYAN MUNA Party-List is recognized.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. GAITE

REP. GAITE. Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker. Itigil ang atake sa karapatan sa pag-uunyon. Labanan ang atake sa mga kawani ng pamahalaan at mamamayan.

G. Ispiker, nitong Sabado, September 21 ay komemorasyon ng deklarasyon ng Batas Militar ng dating Pangulong Ferdinand E. Marcos. Apatnapu't-pitong taon na ang nakalipas at wari'y nauulit ang nakakapangilabot sa panahong iyon sa lansakan ng maramihang pamamaslang, iligal na pag-aaresto, torture, harassment sa lahat ng kritiko at kalaban diumano ng administrasyon.

Nitong September 17, Mr. Speaker, apat na araw bago ang September 21, dinakip ng mga pulis at militar si Antonietta Setias Dizon, dating Deputy Secretary General at kabilang sa Council of Advisers ng Confederation for Unity, Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees o COURAGE na dating organisasyon na akin ring kinapapalooban.

Si Antonietta na mas kilala ng mga kawani ng pamahalaan sa kaniyang palayaw na Tonet ay inaresto sa kanyang tahanan sa San Pedro, Laguna batay na naman muli sa mga gawa-gawang kasong murder na isinampa sa Agusan del Sur, siya ay tinamnan ng baril, bala at pampasabog at inugnay sa Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army.

Noong 2015 rin, si Tonet ay naging biktima ng matinding intimidasyon ng militar at sa takot na dakpin o kaya'y patayin ay dumulog siya sa Integrated Bar of the Philippines dito sa Mandaluyong. Si Tonet, kasama ang inyong lingkod na noon ay Pangulo ng COURAGE at kasama pa ang ibang opisyal ng COURAGE, kami

ay nag-file ng *Writ of Amparo* at *Writ of Habeas Data* sa Supreme Court upang matiyak ang aming kaligtasan at seguridad.

Si Tonet ay pang-apat na mula sa COURAGE na dinakip ng mga pulis at militar sa ilalim ng administrasyong Duterte. Si Juan Alexander “Bob” Reyes na inaresto noong Hunyo 2018, at sina Rowena “Weng” Rosales at Oliver “Ver” Rosales na mag-asawa ay inaresto naman noong nakaraang taon din noong Agosto at lahat ay pawang nakapiit at nagdurusa dahil sa mga gawa-gawang kasong isinampa laban sa kanila.

Si Bob at si Weng ay humarap sa gawa-gawang kaso ng arson sa Agusan del Sur na hindi pa nila napupuntahan sa tanang buhay nila. Si Weng, Oliver at Bob ay kasama ni Tonet na nagsampa noon ng *Writ of Amparo* sa Korte Suprema at nabigyan ng Temporary Protection Order ngunit binawi ito ng Korte dahil hindi matukoy ang pangalan at unit ng militar na nanggigipit sa kanila.

Mr. Speaker, hindi lamang inaaresto ang mga COURAGE staff at organizers. Ayon sa tala ng Karapatan Human Rights Organization, may 16 na kawani ng pamahalaan ang biktima ng extrajudicial killings, kabilang sa daan-daang kaso ng pagpatay na naitala mula Hulyo 2016 hanggang Hunyo 2019. Kasama dito si Randy Vegas, dating organizer ng COURAGE, na pinatay ng mga diumano’y operatiba ng AFP nito lamang Enero ng 2019 habang siya ay nakikipagkonsultasyon sa mga magsasaka sa Camarines Sur.

Lahat ng mga ito ay dagdag sa napakarami nang ulat ng panggigipit ng mga kapulisan at militar sa mga lider at kasaping unyon ng COURAGE. Nariyan ang harassment sa presidente ng unyon sa Davao City Water District, harassment at surveillance laban sa mga lider-union ng Social Welfare Employees Association of the Philippines-Region VIII, pamimilit ng AFP na magpa-enlist at mag-affiliate ang mga empleyado ng NFA sa military at ang pagsasampa ng kaso laban sa 36 na lider-union at miyembro ng Consolidated Union of Employees-National Housing Authority na noon ay lumalaban sa malawakang tanggalan sa pagbubuo ng bagong Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development.

Mismo ang Kinatawag ito ay nakaranas rin ng panggigipit noon, noong ako ay pambansang pangulo ng COURAGE. Isang nagpakilalang miyembro daw ng DND ang nagtungo mismo sa aking bahay at in-interrogate ang aking pamilya at kapitbahay. Nitong nakaraang buwan lamang ay naiulat na ang aking larawan ay nakalagay sa mga presentasyon na may pamagat na “Enemy Within” na ginagamit diumano ng mga ahente ng National Security Council at National Intelligence Coordinating Agency o NICA, sa mga forum at briefing ng mga ahensya ng gobyerno.

Ito ba ang ipinagmamalaking “war against drugs, criminality and corruption” ng administrasyong Duterte na nagreresulta sa ilan libong pagpatay, Mr. Speaker? Ito ba ang gawain ng National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict—paratangan, gipitin, takutin, labagin ang karapatan, arestuhin, at paslangin ang mga taong nagsisilbi at tumitindig para sa karapatan at kagalingan ng mga mamamayan?

Hindi ito makatarungan. Hindi rin dapat ito payagan.

G. Ispiker, ginagarantiya ng 1987 Constitution ng ating bansa ang karapatan sa pag-uunyon ng mga manggagawa at kawani. Sa ilalim ng Executive Order No. 180, idiniin ang karapatan sa pag-uunyon ng mga kawani ng pamahalaan at pinagbabawalan ang sinumang government authority na makialam sa pag-uunyon.

Sa loob ng 33 taong pag-iral ng COURAGE mula noong ito ay maitatag noong 1986 bilang pinakamalaking organisasyon ng mga kawani sa pamahalaan, daan-daang unyon na ang naitayo, mas marami pang collective negotiations agreement ang napirmahan, at hindi mabilang na mga benepisyo, dagdag sweldo, at kagalingang pangkawani ang ating napagtagumpayan. Pinakikinabangan hanggang sa ngayon ng mga kawani, maging ang mga kawani sa loob ng Senado at Kongreso, ang lahat ng tagumpay sa laban ng mga kawani sa ilalim ng COURAGE.

Tuloy-tuloy ang pagkilos ng mga kawani, kasama ang mamamayan, para sa sapat at makataong sweldo, benepisyo, seguridad sa trabaho at paglaban sa kontraktwalisasyon, tanggalan, korapsyon at pribatisasyon ng serbisyong panlipunan. Kaisa ang mga kawani sa pagtutulak ng sapat na budget para sa mas mabuting serbisyo para sa ating mga mamamayan.

G. Ispiker, kapwa Mambabatas, sabihin ninyo, ang pag-uunyon at pagtindig ba para sa karapatan at kagalingan ng mga kawani at mamamayan ay krimen na dapat parusahan? Anong klaseng gobyerno ang manggigipit, mang-aaresto at papatay sa mismong mga kawani nito, bilang mga frontliners sa pagbibigay ng serbisyo sa ating mga mamamayan?

Kamakailan lamang po, noong 2017, mismo ang Pilipinas ay pumirma bilang isa sa mga signatories ng United Nations ILO Convention No. 151 na pagkilala sa karapatan ng mga kawani sa pampublikong sektor na magtayo ng mga unyon, asosasyon para sa kanilang kapakinabangan.

G. Ispiker, anong powers lampas sa Konstitusyon mayroon ang mga kapulisan, militar at mga ahente ng gobyerno para atakihin ang karapatan sa pag-uunyon, gipitin, arestuhin at paslangin ang mga kawani at organisador ng COURAGE, at iba pang mamamayang tumitindig at lumalaban para sa karapatan at kagalingan? Ganito bang track record ng armadong kapulisan at militar ang bibiyayaan ng mas malaki pang budget ngayong 2020?

Kung tunay na makatarungan ang lipunan, ang mga gawang ito ng State forces na hayagan at lantarang nilalabag ang karapatan ng mga mamamayan ang dapat na kinakasuhan at pinaparusan.

G. Ispiker, kapwa Mambabatas, 47 taon ang nakalipas pero tila nauulit ang lagim at bangungot ng martial law. Sa halos araw-araw ay may bagong ulat ng masaker, panggigipit, pang-aaresto, pagpapaslang sa mga magsasaka, manggagawa, pati na rin ang mga abogado, guro, doktor, mga kawani ng pamahalaan, media at mga kritiko ng pamahalaan mula sa Mindanao, Negros, Samar-Leyte, Kabikulan, at hanggang sa karatig na probinsya ng Kamaynilaan. Mayroon bang nahuli o naparusan sa mga masaker na ito? Mayroon pa bang pagkakaiba ang lipunan ngayon sa ilalim ng kasalukuyang administrasyon at lipunan noong panahon ng martial law?

Ang tanong, saan tayo titindig, sa hanay ba ng mamamayan na dapat nating pinaglilingkuran, o sa hanay ng nang-aapi, nandarahas at nagsasamantala?

May hangganan ang paghahasik ng lagim, may hangganan ang pang-aabusong kapangyarihan, at may hangganan ang tiraniya at diktadurya.

Ika nga, kapag puno na ang salop, dapat na itong kalusin.

Kagaya ng panahon ng martial law at sa pagwawakas nito, ang mamamayang inaapi, pinagsasamantalahan at dinarahas ay patuloy na nagpapalakas at kumikilos para sa kanilang karapatan, sa katarungan at kagalingan.

G. Ispiker, sa malao't madali, ang mamamayang Pilipino pa rin ang magpapasya. Sa kanilang organisadong lakas, tuloy-tuloy na kikilos ang mamamayan para labanan ang lahat ng atake, tungo sa tunay na makatarungan, demokratiko at mapayapang lipunan.

Maraming salamang po, Mr. Speaker, iyon lang po ang aking pahayag.

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

REP. TADURAN. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of Hon. Ferdinand R. Gaito to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Oaminal). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) There being none; the motion is approved.

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

Majority Leader, before we proceed, may we acknowledge the presence of the guests of Hon. Diego "Nonoy" C. Ty of the First District of Misamis Occidental...

REP. ZUBIRI. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Oaminal). ... Representative Canama and yours truly, who are DepEd officials in the province of Misamis Occidental.

REP. ZUBIRI. Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the presence of our guests in the plenary today: Mr. Jean Veloso, SDS of Tangub City Division; Mr. Edilberto Oplenaria, SDS of Ozamiz City Division; Mr. Edwin Maribojoc, SDS of Oroquieta City Division; and Mr. Agustines Cepe, SDS of Misamis Occidental Division.

Mr. Speaker, they are the guests of Deputy Speaker Henry S. Oaminal of the Second District of Misamis Occidental; Rep. Diego C. Ty of the First District of Misamis Occidental; and Rep. Sabiniano S. Canama of COOP-NATCCO Party-List.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Oaminal). The guests of Hon. Sabiniano Canama, Hon. Diego Ty and yours truly, the DepEd officials of the First and Second District of Misamis Occidental, please rise. (*Applause*) They are all headed by the SDS and ASDS, principals and teachers of the Department of Education. Welcome to the House of Representatives. We hope that your short stay here will be enjoyable and meaningful. Tonight, your three Congressmen will host a dinner for all of you. (*Applause*)

The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Oaminal). The Privilege Hour is suspended.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 4611 ON THIRD READING

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 4611 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on September 17, 2019, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 4611, entitled: AN ACT DESIGNATING THE THIRD SUNDAY OF NOVEMBER EVERY YEAR

AS THE NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE FOR ROAD CRASH VICTIMS, SURVIVORS, AND THEIR FAMILIES, ENSURING ITS MEANINGFUL OBSERVANCE.

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 19, dated September 23, 2019.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 4611
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Oaminal). With 234 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 4611 is approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 4466
ON THIRD READING

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 4466 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on September 19, 2019, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 4466, entitled: AN ACT INTEGRATING LABOR EDUCATION INTO THE SOCIAL SCIENCE SUBJECTS IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM.

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 19, dated September 23, 2019.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 4466
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Oaminal). With 234 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 4466 is approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 4599
ON THIRD READING

REP. ZUBIRI. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 4599 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on September 17, 2019, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL, House Bill No. 4599, entitled: AN ACT SEPARATING SITIO PANACAN-2 FROM BARANGAY PANACAN IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF NARRA, PROVINCE OF PALAWAN AND CONSTITUTING IT INTO A SEPARATE AND INDEPENDENT BARANGAY TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGAY PANACAN-2.

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 19, dated September 23, 2019.*

APPROVAL OF H. B. NO. 4599
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Oaminal). With 235 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 4599, entitled: AN ACT SEPARATING SITIO PANACAN-2 FROM BARANGAY PANACAN IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF NARRA, PROVINCE OF PALAWAN AND CONSTITUTING IT INTO A SEPARATE AND INDEPENDENT BARANGAY TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGAY PANACAN-2, is approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 4600
ON THIRD READING

REP. ZUBIRI. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 4600 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on September 17, 2019, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 4600, entitled: AN ACT SEPARATING THE SITIOS OF ILEB, NEW COLAYO VILLAGE, KINAMA AND NAMBARAN DAYA FROM BARANGAY NAMBARAN, CITY OF TABUK, PROVINCE OF KALINGA AND CONSTITUTING THEM INTO A SEPARATE AND INDEPENDENT BARANGAY TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGAY NAMBARAN EAST.

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 19, dated September 23, 2019.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 4600
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Oaminal). With 235 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 4600, entitled: AN ACT SEPARATING THE SITIOS OF ILEB, NEW COLAYO VILLAGE, KINAMA AND NAMBARAN DAYA FROM BARANGAY NAMBARAN, CITY OF TABUK, PROVINCE OF KALINGA AND CONSTITUTING THEM INTO A SEPARATE AND INDEPENDENT BARANGAY TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGAY NAMBARAN EAST, is hereby approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 4601
ON THIRD READING

REP. ZUBIRI. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 4601 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on September 17, 2019, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 4601, entitled: AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGAY NEW LOWER BICUTAN IN THE CITY OF TAGUIG, METROPOLITAN MANILA.

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 19, dated September 23, 2019.*

At this juncture, Deputy Speaker Oaminal relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Pablo John F. Garcia.

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 4601
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). With 235 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 4601 is approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 4602
ON THIRD READING

REP. ZUBIRI. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 4602 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on September 17, 2019, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 4602, entitled: AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGAY SAN MIGUEL IN THE CITY OF TAGUIG, METROPOLITAN MANILA.

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 19, dated September 23, 2019.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 4602
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). With 237 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 4602 is approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 4603
ON THIRD READING

REP. ZUBIRI. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 4603 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on September 17, 2019, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 4603, entitled: AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGAY NORTH DAANG HARI IN THE CITY OF TAGUIG, METROPOLITAN MANILA.

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 19, dated September 23, 2019.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 4603
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia P.). With 237 affirmative votes, zero negative vote, zero abstention, House Bill No. 4603 is approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that the seven measures that we approved on Third Reading be immediately transmitted to the Senate.

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we proceed to the Additional Reference of Business

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

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

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

The Secretary General read the following Committee Reports and the Deputy Speaker made the corresponding references:

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report of the Committee on Local Government (Committee Report No. 28), re H.B. No. 4774, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGAY KATUPARAN IN THE CITY OF TAGUIG”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 457

Sponsors: Representatives Villanueva (Noel) and Cayetano (Maria Laarni)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Local Government (Committee Report No. 29), re H.B. No. 4775, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGAY CENTRAL SIGNAL VILLAGE IN THE CITY OF TAGUIG”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 357

Sponsors: Representatives Villanueva (Noel) and Cayetano (Maria Laarni)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

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

PRIVILEGE HOUR
Continuation

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia P.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the Privilege Hour is resumed.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, the next Member to avail of the Privilege Hour is Rep. Sarah Jane I. Elago of Party-List KABATAAN. I move that the Lady be recognized.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia P.). Hon. Sarah Jane Elago is recognized.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ELAGO

REP. ELAGO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Just a few days since KABATAAN Party-List filed a resolution expressing our profound condolences in the commitment to exact justice and accountability for the passing of hazing victim 20-year old PMA Fourth Class Cadet Darwin Dormitorio, this youth Representation has received the gravely alarming report of maltreatment of two more cadets who are now recovering in the hospital. We strongly condemn hazing and other forms of abuse and maltreatment, especially in the country's top military academy. Hazing is not a common practice. It is a crime. This totally unacceptable act must stop now. We reiterate the call for a congressional probe on this matter—dapat na po itong maimbestigahan, dapat na itong matigil. Hazing in the PMA is another reason why mandatory ROTC in schools must be opposed. Schools must be safe spaces for education, learning and training and the PMA is no exception.

On another matter, Mr. Speaker, KABATAAN Party-List wishes to send our solidarity to all the children and youth who led the climate strike worldwide, collectively calling that there is no Planet B. Youth and environmental groups in the country joined this worldwide action dubbed as the "Global Climate Strike" from September 20 to September 27, as we sound the alarm on the worsening climate crisis all over the planet.

The first day of the global mobilization took place three days before the United Nations Climate Change Summit in New York City. The Global Climate Strike started with the powerful protest of 16-year old Swedish student, Greta Thunberg, in front of the Swedish Parliament to call for urgent global action as climate crisis looms. She believes that the youth around the globe must join to fight our common enemy, the few

elites plundering our natural resources for profit. Hence, the movement began with hundreds of thousands of school students skipping classes and 105 countries also participating.

Here in the Philippines, Mr. Speaker, just a few kilometers from Batasan, thousands of students gathered at the College of Science of U.P. Diliman led by different organizations such as the Youth Advocates for Climate Action in the Philippines or YACAP, Agham Youth, Saribuhay, and Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment. The protesters highlighted the vulnerability of Filipino communities to climate change worsened by mega-dam projects and destructive mining which affect the indigenous peoples' ancestral lands. In a statement, Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment called on President Duterte to issue a climate emergency declaration to address the country's need for climate resilience and mitigation.

The poor communities face the worst impacts of environmental destruction and climate change. Destruction of local ecosystems means loss of their livelihood, displacement from their homes and ancestral lands, and loss of their chance of a better future. Worst, when communities take a stand and defend their rights over their natural resources, they are attacked, vilified or killed.

The Philippines is now named as the deadliest country in the world for environmental and land defenders according to the most recent global report of the human rights watchdog, Global Witness. Destruction of the environment and the climate crisis are realities that impact our chance for a better and just future. It is high time that we Filipinos take a stand and collectively demand our government to take concrete actions. Our house is on fire and our resistance is our only survival.

Ito rin po iyong nasa isip ng mga kabataan na lumahok sa parehong araw, Biyernes, ika-20 ng Setyembre, sa isang pagkilos na "Laban Kabataan, Laban Bayan." Sila po ay nanindigan, nagsalita at nagpakita na sila ay hindi nakakalimot sa kasaysayan upang ang mga mali at mga abuso noon ay hindi na mangyaring muli lalong-lalo na po iyong mga lider sa kanilang mga eskwelahan at mga komunidad na mga susunod na rin na mga lider ng ating bansa at ng mamamayang Pilipino. Na sila ay palaging mapapaalalahanan na ang mga abuso, hindi lang hindi mauulit kundi ating aalalahanin at gugunitain at sama-samang mananawagan ng "Never forget, never again."

Mr. Speaker, ang KABATAAN Party-List na Representasyon ng kabataan ay naninindigan na dapat na tayong umaksyon para sa climate justice. Kailangan nang tumigil ang mga atake sa ating planeta at dapat laging mauuna ang kapakanan ng bayan at ng ating bansang Pilipinas.

We must also defend land and environmental defenders. We must defend human rights defenders.

Laban kabataan! Laban bayan!

Maraming salamat at mabuhay po kayong lahat.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that the speech of Representative Elago be referred to the Committee on Rules.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The speech of Honorable Elago is referred to the Committee on Rules.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, we still have two more Members who wish to avail of the Privilege Hour, and so I move that we extend for another 30 minutes.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the Privilege Hour is hereby extended.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that Rep. Arlene D. Brosas of Party-List GABRIELA be recognized to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). Honorable Brosas is recognized for her privilege speech.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. BROSAS

REP. BROSAS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of this august Chamber the plight of Filipino children.

Children in crisis! This was the overall assessment of the Salinlahi Alliance for Children's Concerns about the situation of Filipino children which was presented in its first national conference held a month before the downfall of the Marcos dictatorship in February 1986.

The Conference concluded that the crisis situation of the Filipino children during that time was not so much the result of parental neglect and inattention, but more of the State's inability to solve socioeconomic problems and its neglect in protecting and promoting the rights and welfare of Filipino children.

G. Ispiker, sa ating paggunita ng ika-47th Anibersaryo ng pagdedeklara ng Batas Militar nitong nakaraang araw, ika-21 ng Setyembre, we would like to underscore that women and children also shouldered the heaviest brunt of the State-sponsored atrocities under martial rule. Nais ipaalala ng Representasyong ito ang mga malulungkot at mapapait na karanasan ng daan-libong mga batang Pilipino sa ilalim ng diktadurya ng dating Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos. Kalderong walang laman, sikmurang kumakalam. Iyan ang nagpapasinungaling sa sinasabi ng iilan na ang Marcos era ay itinuturing na Philippines' golden age.

Sinasalamin ng buto't balat na katawan ni Joel Abong, pitong taong gulang mula sa Negros, ang naganap na kagutuman o famine sa isla noong 1985. Si Joel ay kabilang sa 70 percent ng mga batang Pilipino na nakaranas at ginupo ng kawalan ng masustansyang pagkain sa hapag kainan.

Walang kaparis din ang bilang ng mga batang nagbanat ng buto sa murang edad pa lamang para lamang makatawid sa pang-araw-araw. Daan-daang bilang din ng mga bata ang nasa mga kalsada, namamalimos at nabiktima ng mga sindikato at tiwaling elemento ng kapulisan. Worse, while Filipino children were dragged into a deeper socioeconomic crisis, they were also not spared from the intensified militarization and the attacks of the Marcos regime against dissent. Children were summarily executed, young girls were raped, while hundreds of babies were forced to stay with their arrested parents inside detention centers because no one can take care of them.

May malalim na sugat sa pagkabata ang iniwan ng Batas Militar. Marami sa mga batang ito, kung hindi man lahat, ay patuloy na binabagabag ng kanilang madidilim na karanasan.

G. Ispiker, habang ipinagmamalaki nating nanumbalik na ang demokrasya, tila nagpapatuloy pa rin ang Batas Militar.

Noong nakaraang Biyernes, lumahok ang Representasyong ito sa isinagawang kilos protesta ng libo-libong mamamayan, kabilang na ang mga kababaihan, kabataan at estudyante. Sa programa, napag-alaman ko ang dumaraming bilang ng kaso ng pang-aabuso sa ilalim ng mga polisiya ng administrasyon katulad ng martial law sa Mindanao, Memorandum No. 32 sa mga Isla ng Negros, Samar at Bicol at ng kontra-insurhensyang program na Oplan Kapanatagan. At kagaya ng sa batas militar ni Marcos, children are not spared from being victimized.

Last April 17, 2019, according to Children's Rehabilitation Center, a 10-year-old boy Armando J. Raymunde was murdered after a grenade was thrown by the elements of the 20th IBPA, Infantry Battalion, Philippine Army. Armando was simply buying in a store across a residence where elements of that 20th IBPA have been illegally camping. Residents and local witnesses said that a drunk soldier released the grenade which blasted and caused the instant death of Armando.

Nakilala ko rin si Sky, 16 taong gulang na babae mula sa Guihulngan, Negros Oriental. Maluha-luhang isinalaysay ni Sky kung paano pinaslang ng kapulisan ang kanyang nakatatandang kapatid na si Jesus Isugan noong December 27, 2018. Matapos ang insidente, sinampahan pa ng gawa-gawang kaso ang mga magulang ni Sky. Nito lamang July 2019, sinunog ng mga nagpakilalang mga operatiba ng militar ang

kanilang tahanan sa Guihulngan. Sapilitan silang lumikas, naghiwa-hiwalay silang magkakapamilya at tumigil sa pag-aaral ang magkakapatid dahil sa serye ng mga atakeng ito.

G. Ispiker, wala ring salita ang makapagsasalarawan sa epekto ng dumaraming bilang ng mga paaralang Lumad na inaatake at napapasara sa pangunguna ng mga military, kasabwat ang iba pang ahensiya ng pamahalaan.

Naniniwala ang Representasyon na ito na ang mga bata ang pag-asa ng ating bayan. Ngunit anong kinabukasan ang naghihintay sa mga batang ito kung sa maagang yugto pa lamang ng kanilang pagkabata ay dumadanas na sila ng kagimbal-gimbal na mga karanasan?

Ayon sa Children's Rehabilitation Center, kung ang bata ay lumaki ng may pagmamahal at may pantay na oportunidad, malaki ang potensyal na maging produktibong bahagi siya ng lipunan. Ngunit kung ito'y lumaki sa marahas na sitwasyon, nawalay sa mga magulang, palipat-lipat ng tirahan, walang kasiguruhan sa pagkain, napagkakaitan ng mga serbisyong panlipunan at nilalabag ang kanyang karapatan, may negatibong epekto ito sa kanyang pagkatao. Higit lalo, kung walang magbibigay ng anumang interbensyon para iproseso ang kanyang mga karanasan.

Mr. Speaker, our country as a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, its government should be the primary duty-bearer in and upholding and promoting the rights and welfare of Filipino children. One child's death is too many. Nawa'y maging batayan natin ang mga kuwento ni Armando, Kian Delos Santos, Jhun Mark Acto, Obello Bay-ao at ng iba pang mga bata na biktima ng extrajudicial killings para itigil ang giyerang inilulunsad ng pamahalaan laban sa mahihirap nating mamamayan. Public funds should not be wasted on policies that create conditions detrimental to the well-being and future of our children.

G. Ispiker, I call on my fellow Members of this august Chamber to support the investigation of cases of grave child rights violations. Magtulungan tayo para panagutin ang mga may sala sa paglabag sa karapatan ng mga bata. Suportahan natin ang panawagan para ihinto ang implementasyon ng Memorandum Order No. 32 sa Negros, Eastern Visayas at Bicol, gayundin ang Oplan Kapanatagan na nagbubunsod ng matinding militarisasyon sa mga komunidad. Once again, we call for the resumption of peace negotiations between the National Democratic Front of the Philippines and the Government of the Philippines and address the root causes of armed conflict.

Nananawagan muli ang Representasyon na ito na buksan natin ang ating mga mata at tainga sa mga kuwento ng mga bata na kasalukuyang dumaranas ng karahasan at kawalang-hustisya. Maraming salamat, magandang gabi, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that the speech of Representative Brosas be referred to the Committee on Rules.

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

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that Rep. Robert Ace S. Barbers of the Second District of Surigao del Norte be recognized to deliver his privilege speech.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). Hon. Robert Ace Barbers is hereby recognized.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. BARBERS

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

Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, I speak before this august Body to express deep fear of and apprehension over the serious effects of the POGO and casino operations on our government's war against illegal drugs.

No doubt, our government is motivated by good intention to generate revenues for the country to finance its many infrastructure and socio-civic development projects. This intention is a declared "policy of the State" when the country's gambling regulator, PAGCOR, was created. Indeed, PAGCOR has fulfilled its mandate.

Recently, PAGCOR flaunts its performance with a record-breaking surge of revenue. But the remarkable revenues should not be viewed and accepted on the basis of financial gain. Like casinos and other forms of gambling, this Internet-based POGO operation should be regulated with utmost circumspection, if not stopped or discontinued.

The reason is too obvious to discern, Mr. Speaker. It creates social and national security problems. One of our top security officials raised the security concerns on the influx of these Chinese nationals in the country. Labor and immigration issues have also been raised on the continuous influx of large number of Chinese tourists-turned POGO workers in our country.

Some reports also reveal alarming occurrence of gambling-related incidents. These incidents include the rise of kidnap-for-ransom crimes along with murder, torture, extortion, usurious loan sharks, suicide, and worse, illegal drug trafficking.

Data from the Philippine National Police Anti-Kidnapping Group show a total of 31 kidnap-for-ransom cases involving Chinese nationals from 2017 to 2019, and almost all of these cases happened in the vicinity of the Entertainment City where casinos and online gambling or gaming are located. But there could be more, Mr. Speaker, according to an anti-crime group, the Movement for the Restoration of Peace and Order (MRPO), which believes that more casino or gambling-related incidents were not reported to the authorities.

What irked me most, Mr. Speaker, is that the Chinese nationals engaged in gambling-related crimes have gone too far in disturbing our country. They are into illegal drugs and dirty drug money laundering. These are indications that drug syndicates are utilizing online gambling facilities to carry out their illegal activities. In one incident, Chinese drug syndicates used as front for their illegal trade an establishment used for online gambling. I am referring to the raid in December to January 2017 that resulted in the confiscation of two kilos of shabu and the arrest of 25 Chinese nationals in a condominium unit in Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City. Based on the report, the Chinese nationals were involved in online gambling and illegal drugs. Another incident happened in October 2016 in a Multinational Corporation Center in Makati where 40 Chinese nationals were arrested in a drug bust by PNP operatives. In the course of conducting this operation, the raiding team discovered that the suspects were conducting illegal gambling activities as well. These reported incidents may only be the tip of the iceberg, Mr. Speaker, so I look forward to our law enforcement units to do their job.

More alarming, Mr. Speaker, is the widely known reality that casinos and online gambling platforms are convenient channels for laundering dirty drug money. This syndicated illegal activity should be viewed in the light of the 2019 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime report that Southeast Asia is now the world's epicenter of synthetic drug or shabu trade and the volume of dirty money it circulates in the region. The UNODC estimates that the shabu market in Southeast Asia and some neighboring countries is estimated to be worth US\$30 to US\$60 billion annually. In the Philippines, the value of illegal drugs trafficked in totals to \$6.4 to \$8.4 billion annually, or 20 times more than our country's 2018 GDP of US\$330.846 million. And, this annual worth of US\$30 to US\$60 billion shabu trade in Asia-Pacific is undoubtedly laundered through various channels including online gambling and casinos in our country.

I do not wish to belabor the extent of the drug trade, but I would like to underscore the deleterious effects of laundering drug money in our society, Mr.

Speaker. If not prevented, the successful laundering of US\$30 to US\$60 billion annual drug money means more drugs, more crime, and more violence because they will be used by criminal syndicates to finance their operations, expand their illegal trade and undertake new illicit ventures. This leads us to speculate that if money laundering, especially in the area of casino and online gaming, is not abated, the government's war against illegal drugs is doomed to fail. I do not want this to happen, Mr. Speaker, so I firmly believe that we are all bound to do our share in fighting the illegal drug menace. To do this, we need to understand the dynamics of dirty drug money laundering through gambling in casinos and online gaming.

There are two common types of conducting money laundering through gambling: one is the casino or actual "brick & mortar" gambling and; two, the online or the Internet gambling. In casino gambling, laundering drug money could be effected either by the player on the one hand or by the casino operator or owner, including the junket and VIP operators, on the other hand. In either case, the success of the money laundering scheme is founded by strict adherence to the code of silence as to the gambler's identity and fund source, and this is prevalent in high roller gambling inside VIP rooms where junket or VIP operators play an important role in money laundering. Experience from Macau gambling casinos has enlightened us that junket and/or VIP operators do not just provide concierge services and VIP treatment; they have other important roles. For example, they provide or lend money to their players.

When China began its crackdown on corruption in 2014, the movement of money to Macau was restricted. The high rollers and junket or VIP operators were also drawn away by the persistent implementation of anti-money laundering regulations in the recent past. This led to the flourishing of gambling casinos in Southeast Asia, particularly in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and the Philippines. As of January 2019, there were 230 licensed casinos in Southeast Asia, including 150 casinos in Cambodia, 67 in the Philippines, and five in Lao PDR and Myanmar. Recent reports from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime disclosed that the casino operations in these countries have proven links or alleged links to organized crime and money laundering. With the advent of Internet technology, online gambling application has flourished and expanded in Macau. However, it was stunted by the incessant crackdown against illegal gambling and corruption by Chinese authorities. As a consequence, neighboring countries like Cambodia and the Philippines took advantage to attract casino operators and high rollers to play with government imprimatur.

The danger of online gambling is founded on its potential capacity to revolutionize the money laundering process which undoubtedly promotes illegal drug trade and other organized crime activities. This is because the nature of the Internet allows transactions to occur almost instantaneously and with anonymity, thereby allowing the criminal launderer to avoid detection. Thus, the online gambling operated by the POGOs may even be worse than the traditional casino gambling operations.

A report has disclosed that the notorious Italian Mafia syndicates, with the use of legitimate online gambling platforms they themselves registered in Malta, were able to make shops across Italy as virtual ATMs. It is not far-fetched that the mafia scheme or its variations are also practiced by criminal syndicates in other parts of the world including Southeast Asia. As a matter of fact, there are indications that the Asian crime syndicates are engaging in these activities as shown by the astronomical surge of online gaming platforms operating in Cambodia and in the Philippines.

Mr. Speaker, as legislators and Representatives of our people, we owe every Filipino citizen to enlighten the nation that POGOs and casinos are undermining our war on illegal drugs. I say this, Mr. Speaker, because some of our gambling policies and regulations are vulnerable to criminal syndicates' money-laundering schemes. Alam naman po nating lahat na ang mga big-time local and international drug syndicates ay matatalino at advanced masyado mag-isip, kung papaano nila malalabada o malalabhan ang kanilang dirty money nang hindi naaamoy ng ating mga otoridad.

Take a look at the realities of the gaming enterprise in our country:

1. We have junket/VIP operators who are not covered by Anti-Money Laundering Law. They are not expressly mentioned, defined and covered by RA 9160, "An Act Defining the Crime of Anti-Money Laundering," as amended by RA 10927. While the law includes casinos as persons and entities covered under the law, it mentions nothing about junket operators, junket promoters, VIP promoters, VIP operators or similar persons involved in junket and/or VIP gambling operations. This will create a legal loophole that will surely be taken advantaged of by the criminal syndicates.

2. Ineffective PAGCOR regulations on junket operators. Junket operators are not effectively regulated to the extent that they are not directly bound to comply with PAGCOR's registration and reporting requirements. They are not also subject to any sanction because only the casino operator or licensee is subject to disciplinary action. Incidentally, the imposable sanction for violation of PAGCOR's casino regulation on chip washing and junket operations simply carries the penalty of censure, which means that the casino licensee, not junket or VIP operators, shall be given a mere letter of censure in order

to rectify its violation within a specified time. What is more agonizing is that this casino regulation would be rendered inutile if the junket players are allowed to play pending compliance with the registration and reporting requirements. Worse, if these requirements are totally disregarded by them. This is not impossible to happen inside VIP rooms where secrecy is the code of conduct in this secluded environment.

3. Unqualified and Questionable POGOs. PAGCOR appears to be remiss in conducting due diligence before issuing licenses to POGOs. Under existing POGO Regulatory Manual, an applicant could be a Philippine-based or foreign-based operator who must be a registered local or foreign corporation and must not be associated with any person who is not of good reputation, character, honesty and integrity. Initially, we have information that only 13 out of the 58 POGOs licensed by PAGCOR are registered firms. Only 11 of them are registered with the SEC; one is registered both with the SEC and Hong Kong, and one is registered only in Hong Kong. Apparently, 46 of the 58 POGOs are not registered with the SEC or even abroad, including 3 POGOs whose companies in Hong Kong are already dissolved.

Close scrutiny of these POGOs could possibly result in links to illegal drugs and organized crimes, Mr. Speaker. However, this requires a deep, profound and perhaps long and tedious investigation. I, therefore, urge our financial intelligence and law enforcement units of the PDEA, the NBI and the PNP to dig deeper into the personalities behind the gambling enterprise of both the POGOs and the casinos all over the country.

4. Red Flag the POGO Hub Complex. The same question arises in connection with the construction of POGO hub complex reportedly in Cavite and Clark in Pampanga. This multibillion-peso development project is supposed to be undertaken by a reputable company under PAGCOR's regulation. Under PAGCOR's regulation, a POGO hub developer shall not be allowed to undertake the project unless it is accredited by PAGCOR and its qualification includes among others that it shall not be associated with any person who is not of good reputation, character, honesty and integrity. More importantly, PAGCOR is bound to ensure that a POGO hub shall not be used or utilized for money laundering activities. It is PAGCOR's duty to conduct due diligence and raise a red flag against a firm that would undertake the POGO Hub Project. I, therefore, urge PAGCOR to review and publicly disclose the identity of the beneficial owners of firms that would establish a POGO hub complex in our country.

5. The Rise of Gambling-Related Crimes. There is a direct relationship between the influx of Chinese tourists and the surge of gambling-related crimes.

Some reports also revealed the alarming rise in kidnap-for-ransom cases along with murder, torture, extortion, usurious loan sharks, suicide and illegal drug trafficking. These incidents manifest a similar occurrence in Macau where crime syndicates like the Chinese Triad operate extensively. Without timely and intensive crackdown by our authorities, the Philippines would level Macau's soaring statistics of 5,000 gambling-related crimes. Worse, we would be opening a floodgate of opportunity for transnational crime syndicates like the Chinese Triads to intensify their illegal drug trade in our country.

Under these clearly anomalous circumstances, Mr. Speaker, we must all ensure that PAGCOR officials involved in the licensing or accreditation of the POGOs and/or POGO hubs would not be remiss in the performance of their duty and would not fall and be trapped in the evil designs of drug syndicates by wittingly or unwittingly aiding and abetting the money laundering activities of these crime syndicates.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, may I ask that this speech be referred to the Committee on Dangerous Drugs as there could be a strong possibility that the unlicensed POGO operators in the country are probably being used by illegal drug syndicates and the Chinese Triads in their operations in the country.

Maraming salamat at magandang gabi po, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that the speech of Hon. Ace Barbers be referred to the Committee on Rules for appropriate action.

I so move.

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

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

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

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

The Privilege Hour is terminated.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, allow us to greet some guests in the gallery. They are guests of Hon. Rufus B. Rodriguez of the Second District of Cagayan de Oro City and Hon. Rolando "Klaxex" A. Uy of the First District of Cagayan de Oro City.

These are Alicia Anghay, Ph.D., Assistant Schools Division Superintendent; Lorebina Carrasco, OIC Chief, CID; Clyde Talampas, Tagpangi Elementary School Principal; Manuel Lincaro Jr. of Bayabas National High School; Paul Badon of Baikington Elementary School; Romualdo Bahala of Kamakawan Elementary School; Wilfredo Coming of Agusan National High School; Leonora Alinsub, Balulang Elementary School; Rosanna Ubalde, Puerto National High School; Marcelo Mabaros, Mambuaya Elementary School; Judson Pastrano, Tumpagon National High School; Marisa Cayetuna of Pagatpat National High School; Merlyn Bahian of Bonbon Elementary School; Maribeth Auman of Macabalan National High School; Rommelyn Gonzales of Bayanga Elementary School; Norma Ucab, Upper Carmen Elementary School; Clementina Laredo, Baluarte Elementary School; Adelina Encabo of Macabalan Elementary School; Karen Verdad, Macasandig Elementary School; Celso Pagulon, West City Central School; Noe Macabodbod, Palalan Elementary School; and Gleurio Galolo, G.L. Reyes Ana-Og, Sylvio Carciller, Carmen National High School, officials from Cagayan de Oro City DepEd family.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). The presence of the guests of Hon. Rufus Rodriguez and Klaxex Uy are acknowledged. Thank you for your visit and welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the session.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). The session is suspended.

It was 6:22 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 6:24 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). The session is resumed.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the honorable Deputy Minority Leader Janette L. Garin.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). The Deputy Minority Leader, Hon. Janette Garin, is hereby recognized.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO VARIOUS
COMMITTEES

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

The Deputy Minority Leader, Rep. Janette L. Garin, read the names of the House Members elected to the various Committees, per Journal No. 19, dated September 23, 2019.

COMMITTEE ON DANGEROUS DRUGS

As senior member:
Rep. Arnolfo “Arnie” A. Teves Jr.

As members:
Rep. Sergio C. Dagooc
Rep. Alfredo A. Garbin Jr.

COMMITTEE ON GOOD GOVERNMENT
AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY

As senior member:
Rep. Gabriel H. Bordado Jr.

As member:
Rep. Ferdinand R. Gaité

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

As senior member:
Rep. Lawrence “Law” H. Fortun

As members:
Rep. Argel Joseph T. Cabatbat
Rep. Ma. Victoria V. Umali
Rep. Sarah Jane I. Elago

COMMITTEE ON MICRO, SMALL AND
MEDIUM ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

As senior member:
Rep. Arnolfo “Arnie” A. Teves Jr.

As member:
Rep. Godofredo N. Guya

COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE
AND SECURITY

As senior member:
Rep. Alex “AA” L. Advincula

As members:
Rep. Janette L. Garin
Rep. Irene Gay F. Saulog
Rep. Isagani S. Amatong
Rep. Jose Stephen “Caraps” S. Paduano
Rep. Angelica Natasha Co

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON NORTH LUZON
GROWTH QUADRANGLE

As senior member:
Rep. Jose Christopher Y. Belmonte

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON REFORESTATION

As senior member:
Rep. Alex “AA” L. Advincula

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT GOALS

As senior member:
Rep. Sarah Jane I. Elago

As member:
Rep. Stella Luz A. Quimbo

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

CONSIDERATION OF H. B. NO. 78
Continuation

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 78, as contained in Committee Report No. 5, and that the Secretary General be directed to read the title of the measure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the Secretary General will read the title of the measure.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No.78, entitled: AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE DEFINITION OF PUBLIC UTILITY, FURTHER AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE COMMONWEALTH ACT NO. 146, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE “PUBLIC SERVICE ACT”, AS AMENDED.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). Majority Leader.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary status is that we are in the period of sponsorship and debate.

I move that we recognize the Gentleman from the Second District of Albay, Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda, to deliver his sponsorship speech.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). Honorable Salceda is recognized for his sponsorship speech.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF REP. SALCEDA

REP. SALCEDA. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The key messages in the sponsorship are: one, that the Philippines has been rated the world's most restrictive country in foreign direct investments by the 2018 OECD-FDI Restrictiveness Index; and number two, foreign investment reacts favorably to liberalizing FDI restrictions. Kahit gaano kaganda ang sala, kung sarado ang pinto, wala pong papasok.

FDIs positively affect the human development index of a country through: one, access to education; two, internet and access to telecommunications; and number three, well-developed financial markets. There is before us, three of them: the Foreign Investment Act amendments; the Amendments to the Public Services which we are now tackling; and the Retail Trade Liberalization Act, which was approved in the Seventeenth Congress.

Again, the Philippines is among the world's most restrictive economies when it comes to foreign direct investments according to the OECD-FDI Restrictiveness Index of the World Economic Forum. You can see here, virtually in all aspects of our industries, that the Philippines actually has one of the most stringent allowable foreign equity ownerships in East Asia and the Pacific.

So, what does the OECD-FDI Regulatory Restrictiveness Index measure? It measures all discriminatory measures affecting foreign investors, including market access and departures from national treatment. Here is actually the chart showing that the Philippines is first, followed only by Indonesia, among many countries that were rated by the OECD. In Asia, the Philippines definitely ranked as the most restrictive to foreign direct investments in 2018. Witness Japan, it is already well-developed but it is actually the most open to foreign investments. There are two new kids in town, Kampuchea and Vietnam, and even Myanmar—they follow Japan in terms of openness to foreign direct investment.

What does this mean? The Philippines has locked itself out of significant foreign investments and, therefore, opportunities for job creation. We have spent hundreds of billions of pesos in foregone revenues for tax incentives. We have not tried a simpler, cheaper solution: opening industries in need of capital to

foreign investment through legislative action. In simple language, instead of sending our labor force abroad, let us attract foreign investment and create more jobs here in the Philippines.

Foreign investment reacts favorably to liberalizing FDI restrictions. Let me show you a few case studies.

The net FDI inflows in Vietnam, as you can see from the chart, show the yellow line which actually measures their restrictiveness, after the *Doi Moi* reforms. Actually, you can see that the foreign direct investments actually rose rapidly. In contrast, in the Philippines, there has been a slower move towards less restrictions, although we can see that the Philippines is now performing very well.

This is actually a historical 50-year chart. Under Marcos, the peak was one percent of the GDP. Under the Cory boom, it was 2.4 percent of GDP. Under the structural reforms of Ramos, we peaked at 3.1 percent. There is, however, before us, a very good opportunity, which is what is right now the Duterte FDI boom, because we have posted the highest FDI-to-GDP ratio in the entire history of the Philippines, even when our doors are closed. And therefore, if you look at the next chart, this is how the Philippines compares: Singapore, in terms of percent of GDP, Singapore is number one; Kampuchea, number two; number three is Vietnam; and the Philippines is number four. We are right there in the middle of this comparison. For many strategists, being in the middle is actually one of the most difficult parts of making the appropriate strategy.

Now, when you look at the second chart, comparing just the four countries, Singapore and Kampuchea, the least restrictive countries when it comes to FDI in the ASEAN, continue to experience an upward trend in FDI growth. The Philippines has consistently performed worse than Vietnam since 1990 or post the 1987 Constitution.

Next, so what will we do? The PSA amendments, which were approved in the Seventeenth Congress, will essentially open previously restricted sectors to foreign investments by redefining a very old law which was the basis for interpreting our constitutional provision on utilities by limiting, after this reform, the following subject to the constitutional restrictions: electric power distribution, electric power transmission, water pipeline distribution, and sewerage pipeline system.

Next, FDIs actually positively affect or there is a direct correlation between FDIs and the Human Capital Index, provided a country has education, telecommunications services and a well-developed financial market. To convert FDIs to better HDI, these are the three requirements.

Next, liberalizing FDI restriction in public services is actually a virtuous cycle. A cross-country study (Impact of FDI Inflows on Poverty Alleviation) found that increased FDIs positively impact the quality of life in ASEAN countries.

Liberalizing restrictions in public services—FDIs will be in the right place to improve the country's ability to maximize FDIs in general.

In summary, we need to attract more FDIs even when we are in the middle of the so-called Duterte FDI boom, the highest FDI-to-GDP ratio in the past 50 years, and maximize the impact of FDIs on human development with the correct mix of structural reform.

We must pursue fiscally sustainable reforms that improve the country's ability to invest in education, infrastructure and health because these are the only ways to make foreign investment maximize their potential.

So, with this, Mr. Speaker, I beseech this august Chamber to expeditiously act on one of the most important structural reforms that this administration can engage in, can undertake in order to see higher FDIs.

Based on our analysis, based on many factors, this bill, effectively, will allow additional \$19 billion in new investments in 2021; \$22 billion in 2023; \$27 billion in 2020; 2021, \$17 billion; in 2022, \$22 billion; and in 2023, \$27 billion.

So, with this, Your Honors, Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for allowing this Representation to sponsor this most important structural reform in our country.

Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 78

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 78 as contained in Committee Report No. 5.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the consideration of the said measure is suspended.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize, once again, the honorable Senior Deputy Minority Leader Janette Garin.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). The Honorable Janette Garin is recognized.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO VARIOUS COMMITTEES

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

The Deputy Minority Leader, Rep. Janette L. Garin, read the names of the House Members elected to the various Committees, per Journal No. 19, dated September 23, 2019.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

As member:

Rep. Arlene D. Brosas

COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE AND FISHERIES RESOURCES

As members:

Rep. Ferdinand R. Gaité

Rep. Gabriel H. Bordado Jr.

COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

As member:

Rep. Ferdinand R. Gaité, in lieu of Rep. Alfredo A. Garbin Jr. who has transferred to the Majority

COMMITTEE ON DANGEROUS DRUGS

As member:

Rep. France L. Castro

REP. GARIN (J.). Mr. Speaker, allow me to amend my motion.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). Please proceed.

COMMITTEE ON DANGEROUS DRUGS

As member:

Rep. France L. Castro, in lieu of Rep. Alfredo A. Garbin Jr.

COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

As senior member:

Hon. Argel Joseph T. Cabatbat, in lieu of Rep. Alfredo A. Garbin Jr.

As member:

Rep. Arlene D. Brosas, in lieu of Rep. Alex "AA" L. Advincula

COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF LAWS

As senior member:

Rep. Gabriel H. Bordado Jr., in lieu of Rep. Alfredo A. Garbin Jr.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON LAND USE

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

As member:
Rep. Sergio C. Dagooc

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

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, with no other business in the Plenary today, I move that we adjourn the session until three o'clock in the afternoon of Tuesday, September 24, 2019.

I so move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the session is adjourned until Tuesday, September 24, 2019, at three o'clock in the afternoon.

It was 6:42 p.m.