



Congressional Record

PLENARY PROCEEDINGS OF THE 18th CONGRESS, FIRST REGULAR SESSION

House of Representatives

Vol. 3

Monday, November 11, 2019

No. 24

CALL TO ORDER

At 3:01 p.m., Deputy Speaker Mujiv S. Hataman called the session to order.

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

PRAYER

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hataman). Please rise for a minute of silent prayer.

Everybody rose for the silent prayer.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

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

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we defer the calling of the roll.

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

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we defer the reading of the Journal.

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

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we proceed with the Reference of Business.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hataman). Is

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

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

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

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

BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 5269, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE PACIFIC PALISADES SUPERHIGHWAY CONNECTING THE PROVINCES OF BICOL, QUEZON, AURORA, QUIRINO, ISABELA, AND CAGAYAN”

By Representative Suarez (Aleta)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS
AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 5270, entitled:

“AN ACT REORGANIZING THE OFFICES OF THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS (COMELEC)”

By Representative Hernandez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON SUFFRAGE AND
ELECTORAL REFORMS

House Bill No. 5271, entitled:

“AN ACT IMPROVING CONFIRMATION OF IMPERFECT TITLES UNDER SECTION 14 OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 1529, IMPROVING THE PROCESSING OF AGRICULTURAL FREE PATENT UNDER SECTION 44 OF COMMONWEALTH ACT NO. 141, AND REMOVING THE PERIOD TO FILE APPLICATIONS THEREAT UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9176”

By Representative Defensor (Michael)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

TRANSPORTATION OFFICE
(LTO) DISTRICT OFFICE IN THE
MUNICIPALITY OF LAOANG,
PROVINCE OF NORTHERN SAMAR AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

House Bill No. 5272, entitled:

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

By Representative Ong (Jose)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION

By Representative Sy-Alvarado
TO THE COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SERVICES

House Bill No. 5278, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING THE DECLARATION
OF THE VALUE OF IMPORTED
GOODS IN SHIPPING AND AIRLINE
DOCUMENTS AND PROHIBITING
FRAUDULENT ALTERATION OF CARGO
MANIFEST, BILL OF LADING, AND
AIRWAY BILL AMENDING FOR THE
PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10863,
OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘CUSTOMS
MODERNIZATION AND TARIFF ACT’ ”

House Bill No. 5273, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING EMERGENCY
RICE RESERVES AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES”

By Representative Marcoleta
TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND
MEANS

By Representative Sy-Alvarado
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
ENTERPRISES AND PRIVATIZATION AND
THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
AND FOOD

House Bill No. 5274, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING THE CREATION OF A
SYSTEM OR APPLICATION THAT WOULD
DETERMINE POTENTIAL CREDIT LIMIT
BREACH AND GIVE THE CREDIT CARD
HOLDER REAL-TIME FINANCIAL
NOTIFICATION”

House Bill No. 5279, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING A FRAMEWORK FOR
THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD, AND
FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Olivarez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND
FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

By Representative Belmonte
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

House Bill No. 5275, entitled:

“AN ACT RENAMING THE MACTAN-CEBU
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT TO LAPU-
LAPU INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT”

House Bill No. 5280, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING YOUNG FARMERS
CHALLENGE PROGRAM, CREATING
THE YOUNG FARMERS CHALLENGE
COUNCIL, APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES”

By Representative Olivarez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION

By Representative Barba
TO THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
AND FOOD

House Bill No. 5276, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING A PORTION OF
LAND COVERED UNDER SPECIAL
PATENT NO. 51431 IN THE NAME OF
LABASON CENTRAL SCHOOL FOR
THE CONSTRUCTION OF A PHILIPPINE
NATIONAL POLICE OFFICE AND
MUNICIPAL CIRCUIT TRIAL COURT”

House Bill No. 5281, entitled:

“AN ACT REDEFINING THE CRIME OF GAME
FIXING AND PROVIDING PENALTIES
THEREFOR”

By Representative Amalong
TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL
RESOURCES

By Representative Barba
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 5277, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A LAND

House Bill No. 5282, entitled:

“AN ACT PROTECTING CARDHOLDERS
FROM LIABILITY FOR UNAUTHORIZED
TRANSACTIONS IN CASES OF LOSS,
FRAUD OR THEFT OF CREDIT OR
DEBIT CARDS, AMENDING FOR THE
PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10870”

By Representative Barba
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND
FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

House Bill No. 5283, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A
CONGRESSIONAL LIBRARY IN CITY
OF MARAWI IN THE PROVINCE OF
LANAODELSUR TO BE KNOWN AS THE
LANAO PEOPLE'S PARK AND PUBLIC
LIBRARY, AND APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Adiong
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION
AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5284, entitled:

“AN ACT EMPOWERING THE MEMBERS OF
THE SANGGUNIANG KABATAAN (SK) BY
AMENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF
REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10742, OTHERWISE
KNOWN AS THE ‘SANGGUNIANG
KABATAAN REFORM ACT OF 2015’ ”

By Representative Nograles (Juan)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL
GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 5285, entitled:

“AN ACT DEFINING THE RIGHTS OF
WOMEN DEPRIVED OF LIBERTY IN
JAILS AND CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES
AND PROVIDING FUNDS FOR THEIR
ENFORCEMENT”

By Representatives Brosas and Amatong
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND THE
COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER
EQUALITY

House Bill No. 5286, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL HIGH
SCHOOL IN BARANGAY TIGTABON
IN ZAMBOANGA CITY, TO BE KNOWN
AS TIGTABON NATIONAL HIGH
SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR”

By Representative Dalipe
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION
AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5287, entitled:

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

By Representative Dalipe
TO THE COMMITTEE ON WELFARE OF
CHILDREN

House Bill No. 5288, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL HIGH
SCHOOL IN BARANGAY QUINIPUT IN
ZAMBOANGA CITY, TO BE KNOWN AS
QUINIPUT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Dalipe
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION
AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5289, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE PHILIPPINE
SEAWEED DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
AND DEFINING ITS OBJECTIVES,
POWERS AND FUNCTIONS”

By Representative Dalipe
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
ENTERPRISES AND PRIVATIZATION AND
THE COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE
AND FISHERIES RESOURCES

House Bill No. 5290, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL HIGH
SCHOOL IN BARANGAY MAMPANG
IN ZAMBOANGA CITY, TO BE KNOWN
AS MAMPANG NATIONAL HIGH
SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR”

By Representative Dalipe
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION
AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5291, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TECHNICAL
EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING
AND ASSESSMENT CENTER IN
LABO, CAMARINES NORTE, TO BE
KNOWN AS LABO TESDA TRAINING
AND ASSESSMENT CENTER AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Tallado
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND
TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 5292, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL HIGH
SCHOOL IN BARANGAY CATIOAN IN
THE MUNICIPALITY OF CAPALONGA,
CAMARINES NORTE, TO BE KNOWN
AS CAPALONGA NATIONAL HIGH
SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR”

By Representative Tallado
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION
AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5293, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE ARAKAN–CALINAN MUNICIPAL ROAD IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ARAKAN, PROVINCE OF COTABATO INTO A NATIONAL ROAD AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Caoagdan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS
AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 5294, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE SAGUING–INDANGAN ROAD IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF MAKILALA, PROVINCE OF COTABATO, INTO A NATIONAL ROAD AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Caoagdan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS
AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 5295, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE POBLACION–MAGPET–KINARUM–KIRONGDONG MUNICIPAL ROAD IN MAGPET, COTABATO, INTO A NATIONAL ROAD AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT THEREOF”

By Representative Caoagdan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS
AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 5296, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE ROAD CONNECTING BARANGAY SARAYAN IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF PRESIDENT ROXAS, PROVINCE OF COTABATO AND THE MUNICIPALITY OF KIBAWA IN THE PROVINCE OF BUKIDNON, INTO A NATIONAL ROAD AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Caoagdan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS
AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 5297, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE DOROLUMAN–KADINGILAN MUNICIPAL ROAD CONNECTING THE MUNICIPALITY OF ARAKAN, PROVINCE OF COTABATO AND THE MUNICIPALITY OF KIBAWA, PROVINCE OF BUKIDNON, INTO A NATIONAL ROAD AND APPROPRIATING

FUNDS FOR THE MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT THEREOF”

By Representative Caoagdan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS
AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 5298, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE GINATILAN–BONGOLANON ROAD TRAVERSING THE CITY OF KIDAPAWAN AND THE MUNICIPALITY OF MAGPET, PROVINCE OF COTABATO INTO A NATIONAL ROAD AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Caoagdan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS
AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 5299, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE KIDAPAWAN–MAKILALA–MAGSAYSAY PROVINCIAL ROAD CONNECTING THE CITY OF KIDAPAWAN, PROVINCE OF COTABATO AND THE MUNICIPALITY OF MAGSAYSAY, PROVINCE OF DAVAO DEL SUR, INTO A NATIONAL ROAD AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT THEREOF”

By Representative Caoagdan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS
AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 5300, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE ARAKAN–PUNTIAN–BUKIDNON ROAD IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ARAKAN, PROVINCE OF COTABATO, INTO A NATIONAL ROAD AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Caoagdan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS
AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 5301, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE BULATUKAN–NEW ISRAEL ROAD IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF MAKILALA, PROVINCE OF COTABATO, INTO A NATIONAL ROAD AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT THEREOF”

By Representative Caoagdan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS
AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 5302, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MULTI-SPECIE

MARINE BREEDING FARM AND HATCHERY IN BAYBAY CITY, PROVINCE OF LEYTE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Cari
TO THE COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE AND FISHERIES RESOURCES

House Bill No. 5303, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR STANDARDS FOR THE PRACTICE OF REHABILITATION MEDICINE AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Robes
TO THE COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL REGULATION

House Bill No. 5304, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING TISA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL FROM DON SERGIO OSMEÑA SR. MEMORIAL NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Abellanos
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5305, entitled:

“AN ACT REORGANIZING THE COMELEC OFFICES”

By Representatives Hataman and Sangcopan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON SUFFRAGE AND ELECTORAL REFORMS

RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 495, entitled:

“RESOLUTION CONDEMNING THE THREAT, HARASSMENT, AND INTIMIDATION AGAINST OLIVER LUCENARIO, A PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHER AND PRESIDENT OF THE ALLIANCE OF CONCERNED TEACHERS REGION V UNION, AND THE UNION BUSTING AGAINST THE SAID UNION, AND URGING THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE AND THE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO CONDUCT AN IMMEDIATE INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION INTO THE SAME”

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

House Resolution No. 496, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE ALLEGED FAILURE OF THE PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION (PHILHEALTH) TO REIMBURSE ACCREDITED HOSPITALS FOR THEIR EXPENSES IN ATTENDING TO THE MEDICAL PROBLEMS OF PHILHEALTH MEMBERS”

By Representative Castelo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 497, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE PROLIFERATION OF PROSTITUTION DENS CATERING EXCLUSIVELY TO PHILIPPINE GAMING OFFSHORE OPERATORS (POGO) WORKERS, WITH THE END VIEW OF PROPOSING REMEDIAL MEASURES TO CURB THE PRESENCE OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS IN OUR COUNTRY”

By Representative Castelo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 498, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING CARLOS EDRIEL YULO FOR BAGGING THE GOLD MEDAL IN MEN'S FLOOR EXERCISE OF THE 49TH FIG ARTISTIC GYMNASTICS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS”

By Representative Castelo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

House Resolution No. 499, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION URGING THE COMMITTEE ON GOOD GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE ALLEGED SLASHED DAILY MEAL ALLOWANCE OF PRISONERS”

By Representative Castelo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 500, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE HOUSE COMMITTEE TO SOLICIT THE POSITIONS OF THE PROVINCIAL AND CITY PEACE AND

ORDER COUNCILS IN MINDANAO, TO DETERMINE WHETHER THEY ARE 'IN FAVOR' OR 'NOT IN FAVOR' OF EXTENDING MARTIAL LAW BEYOND 2019 IN THEIR RESPECTIVE PROVINCE OR CITY”

By Representative Dimaporo (Khalid)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 501, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION URGING THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, REGARDING MANILA WATER'S 780% HIKE WARNING IN THE EVENT THAT THE SUPREME COURT DOES NOT REVERSE ITS DECISION TO PENALIZE THE COMPANY FOR ITS FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE CLEAN WATER ACT”

By Representative Castelo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 502, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION EXTENDING CONGRATULATIONS TO THE HONORABLE JUSTICE DIOSDADO PERALTA AS THE NEW CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE PHILIPPINES”

By Representatives Nieto, Abante, Lopez, Reyes and Valeriano
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 503, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES EXPRESSING PROFOUND CONDOLENCES ON THE DEMISE OF CONGRESSMAN RODOLFO ALBANO JR.”

By Representatives Nieto, Abante, Lopez, Reyes and Valeriano
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 504, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, THE PHILIPPINE COCONUT AUTHORITY, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET MANAGEMENT AND OTHER AGENCIES OF THE EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT TO AUTHORIZE AND IMPLEMENT EMERGENCY MEASURES AND SAFETY NETS TO AMELIORATE THE ECONOMIC SHOCK OF FILIPINO COCONUT FARMERS IN LIGHT OF THE ENORMOUS REDUCTION OF COPRA PRICES”

By Representative Enverga
TO THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

House Resolution No. 505, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT OR THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE THE NECESSARY SUPPORT TO OUR NATIONAL ATHLETES AND A REVIEW OF THE EXISTING LAWS RELEVANT THERETO”

By Representative Barzaga
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 506, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION URGING THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE POSSIBLE IMPOSITION OF STRICTER IMPORT REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDELINES AND OTHER ENFORCEABLE MEASURES ON FRESH, FROZEN, PROCESSED PORK PRODUCTS, AND BY-PRODUCTS TO CONTAIN THE AFRICAN SWINE FEVER (ASF) VIRUS IN THE COUNTRY”

By Representative Cabatbat
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Joint Resolution No. 23, entitled:

“JOINT RESOLUTION TO ALLOT A BUDGET EQUIVALENT TO TWO PERCENT (2%) OF THE COUNTRY'S GDP TO EFFECTIVELY INCREASE THE PHILIPPINES' DEFENSE SPENDING AT PAR WITH THE ASEAN REGIONAL STANDARDS”

By Representative Cabochan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

COMMUNICATIONS

Letter dated October 7, 2019 of Albert S. Garcia, Provincial Governor, Province of Bataan, submitting to the House of Representatives a Report on Fund Utilization and Status of Program/Project Implementation for the Quarter Ended September 30, 2019 of the Local Government Support Fund – Financial Assistance to Local Government Units (LGSF-FA to LGUs).

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated October 15, 2019 of Gen. Ricardo R. Visaya (Ret), Administrator, National Irrigation Administration (NIA), submitting the Third Quarter

Report of NIA CARP-Irrigation Component for CY 2019.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
AND FOOD

Letters dated 22, 25 and 28 October 2019 of Janice G. Ayson-Zales, 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. 1054 dated 11 October 2019;
2. Circular No. 1052 (corrected copy) dated 02 October 2019;
3. Circular No. 1055 (corrected copy) dated 17 October 2019;
4. Circular No. 1056 dated 22 October 2019; and
5. Circular Letter No. CL-2019-078 dated 18 October 2019.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND
FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

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

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we acknowledge the presence of the guests of Hon. Claudine Diana D. Bautista. These are the Young Councilors of Laguna: Councilor Edizon Leonardo Ebor of Sta. Cruz, Councilor Jel Balagtas of Calamba, Councilor Rommel Ilagan of Bay, Councilor Riza Elbo of Sta. Cruz, Kagawad Salve Lopez, Kagawad Jean Napiza, Kagawad Daisy Palconan, and Kagawad Jaymee Nicole Castro.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve Journal No. 22, dated November 5, 2019.

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

PRIVILEGE HOUR

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hataman). The Privilege Hour is open.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, first to avail of the Privilege Hour is the honorable Lady from the Third District of Laguna. I move that we recognize Rep. Sol Aragonés for her privilege speech.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hataman). Rep. Sol Aragonés is hereby recognized for her privilege speech.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ARAGONÉS

REP. ARAGONÉS. Mr. Speaker, for somebody on her third term like me, the break was a great time not only for relaxation, but more importantly for reflection. Some may call it a reflection on how one can already go on a legacy mode after three terms in Congress. However, in the language I know best, mine is a reflection on how to go back to regular programming.

Mr. Speaker, my fellow Members of the House of Representatives, today, I rise not to say goodbye, but to say hello. Before that, I wish to share with you three simple things I learned during our break. I have committed to include these in my things to do for the rest of my term as a Congresswoman, especially as your Chairman of our Committee on Tourism.

First, never miss the forest for the trees. Second, do not bark up the wrong tree. Third, pick the low-hanging fruits first. Please allow me to explain each one.

Mr. Speaker, my fellow Members of the House of Representatives, I have always believed that tourism creates jobs, directly and indirectly, but I never realized it comprised an average of 10 percent of all the jobs in the whole world. This is a lot of jobs.

In addition, I recently learned that in the Philippines, the share of jobs attributed to tourism is even higher than the global average. We are at 13 percent, not just 10 percent. This figure translates to 5.4 million jobs. Again, this is a whole lot of jobs. Likewise, I thought that our economy would be gaining maybe hundreds of millions of pesos, perhaps, even billions of pesos from the tourism industry. I recently learned that according to the Philippine Statistics Authority or PSA, the Tourism Direct Gross Value Added to the Gross Domestic Product or the contribution of the tourism industry to the Philippine economy was estimated to be at 12.7 percent. This figure translates to P2.2 trillion. Now, this is a whole lot of money. Please let me emphasize some numbers for you. Thirteen percent of all jobs in our country are tourism-related. The contribution of the tourism sector in our economy is 12.7 percent or P2.2 trillion.

Mr. Speaker, fellow Members of the House of Representatives, it is best that we never miss the forest for the trees.

Kung saan-saan po tayong nakatingin para lamang

makahagilap ng hanapbuhay at kabuhayan para sa ating mga kababayan. Kung anu-ano pa po ang ating tinitingnan, baka sakaling mayroon kahit konti, kahit ito po ay nasa malayong lupain. Pero base sa mga datos na ating narinig, dito sa turismo, may trabaho na, may negosyo pa. Kung itong mga numerong ito ang pinagbabasihan, sa turismo, sigurado ang asenso.

Napakalinaw na dapat ay titigan nang mabuti itong turismo dahil dito ay may pangako, may pagkakataon at may pag-asa. Kailangang palakasin, kailangang palakihin, kailangang palawakin.

Moving on, Mr. Speaker, fellow Members of the House of Representatives, it is best that we do not bark up the wrong tree.

Kaya po ba nating habulin ang 28 percent ng “Amazing Thailand”? Kaya po ba nating habulin ang 21 percent ng “Malaysia, Truly Asia”? Kung isasama pa sa mga hahabulin, ang 14 percent ng “Passion Made Possible Singapore,” ang 11 percent ng “Wonderful Indonesia,” at ang 10 percent ng “Timeless Charm Vietnam,” ang sumangay total niyan ay 84 percent. May 16 percent na lang ang natitira na paghahati-hatian. Kaya at kakayanin po natin ito. Ang mahalaga ay may sinimulan at may ginagawa.

Baka dapat hindi tayo masyadong nakatingin sa 100 million plus na mga dayuhan na hanggang 5 percent lang naman sa kanila ang kinaya nating abutin dahil sa tindi ng kompetisyon ngayon. Baka dapat ibaling natin sa ibang dako ang ating mga tinitingnan na pagkukunan ng mga bakasyonista. Baka dapat ay tingnan natin ang 100 million plus na kapwa nating mga Pilipino at himukin silang bisitahin ang ibang bahagi ng ating sariling bansa.

Mr. Speaker, fellow Members of the House of Representatives, fortunately and very surprisingly, I recently learned that domestic tourists spend more than foreign tourists do, as in more, more, more, more, more. Not just double, not just triple, but seven times higher, seven times higher. In 2018, domestic tourism expenditure totaled P3.2 trillion, while inbound tourism expenditure amounted to only P441.4 billion. Now, this is very surprising. This is very exciting. Please let me rephrase some numbers for you. Local and international tourists spent almost P4 trillion in 2018. In the total amount spent by tourists in our country, only 12 percent comes from the foreign tourists, 88 percent comes from the domestic tourists. Domestic tourists spend seven times higher than foreign tourists.

Mr. Speaker, fellow Members of the House of Representatives, it is best that we pick the low-hanging fruits first.

Ang solusyon sa ating problema ay wala sa ibang bansa o sa dayuhang banyaga. Para magkaroon ng hanapbuhay at para lumago ang kabuhayan, kailangan

natin ang ating mga sarili. Atin ito. Tayo mismo. Nasa Pilipino ang kailangan ng Pilipinas.

Huwag tayong tumingin sa kung saan pa. Titigan lang natin ang ganda ng ating mga tanawin, ang sarap ng ating mga pagkain, ang yaman ng ating kultura, ang kulit ng ating mga kuwento, at ang init ng pagmamahal ng mga pusong Pilipino. Ayos na tayo sa kapwa natin Pilipino.

Maghanda na ang bawat isa sa atin, lalo na tayong mga Kongresista na maging tour guide sa ating mga kanya-kanyang distrito. Paano po natin gagawin ito? Sa tulong na rin po ng ideya ni Speaker Alan Peter “Compañero” S. Cayetano at mungkahi ninyo sa akin, pinagsama-sama po natin ito at nakabuo po tayo ng isang konsepto.

Nais ko pong ipaalam sa inyo na magkakaroon na po ng sariling vlog ang ating mga Kongresista, tayong mga Kongresista. Ang lakas pong maka-millennial nito. Dahil sa panahon po ngayon, ang social media ay malakas makahatak at magbigay ng impormasyon sa ating lahat, kaya naman, ang magiging vlog po nating mga Kongresista ay tatawaging “Cong-Tour” o Congressional Tour, kung saan, pupuntahan ko po kayo sa inyong mga distrito, iinterbyuhin ko po kayo gaya ng ginagawa ko ho noong araw, iinterbyuhin ko po kayo at itatanong ko sa inyo kung gaano kaganda ang inyong distrito. Ipo-promote po natin ito at pagkatapos, ilalagay natin sa *YouTube* channel natin na Cong-Tour or Congressional Tour. Ishi-share po natin ito sa social media. Hihikayatin natin ang ating mga constituent na ito ay i-share hanggang makarating ito sa buong Pilipinas hanggang kumalat sa buong mundo. At ito ang paraan natin ng pagpapakita na maganda ang turismo ng Pilipinas.

Sinimulan po namin ang aming first episode ng vlog sa Third at Fourth Districts ng Laguna, sa aking distrito at kay Cong. Benjie Agarao. Susundan po ito ng episode nina Cong. Len Alonte sa Lone District ng Biñan at Cong. Jun Chipeco sa Lone District ng Calamba. Susunod po ang Lone District ng Sta. Rosa ni Deputy Speaker Dan Fernandez at Second District ng Laguna ni Cong. Ruth Hernandez.

Isusunod na po namin ang inyong mga distrito. Hindi ko lang po maipapangako na maiikot po ang buong Pilipinas sa loob ng dalawang taong natitira, pero at least, makapagsimula ho tayo sa atin pong Cong-Tour. At para po mas makita ninyo kung ano po ang sinasabi ko, ito po ay inaprubahan at buo ang suporta ng ating Speaker at ng buong Committee ng Tourism. Ipapakita po namin sa inyo ang sample ng vlog ng Cong-Tour. Panoorin po natin ito. Let us watch this.

(Video presentation)

Salamat po sa inyong panonood. Abangan po ninyo ang pagkatok ng Cong-Tour sa inyong mga distrito para kayo ay makapanayam ko at maikuwento po ninyo sa amin ang magandang turismo at masasarap na pagkain sa

inyong mga lugar. Ifi-feature po natin iyan sa Cong-Tour, pero sabi nga po sa *It's Showtime*, dapat may sample.

Kaya, puwede ho ba nating ipakita ang ating pagsuporta sa vlog na ito? Puwede po ba nating hawakan ang ating mga cellphone? Pumunta po tayo sa *YouTube* at i-search po natin ang Cong-Tour—C-o-n-g-T-o-u-r at pagkatapos, tayo po ay mag-subscribe, mag-like at mag-share.

At this juncture, Deputy Speaker Hataman relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Deogracias Victor "DV" B. Savellano.

Sa pamamagitan po niyan ay natulungan na natin ang pag-promote ng turismo sa bawat distrito at sa bawat probinsya ng ating bansa.

Maraming salamat po. Mabuhay po ang turismo! Mabuhay ang Kongreso! Mabuhay ang Cong-Tour! Magandang-magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat. *(Applause)*

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

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the privilege speech of the Honorable Aragones to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

I so move.

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

REP. DE VENECIA. 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.

ROLL CALL

REP. DE VENECIA. 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 hereby directed to call the roll.

*The Secretary General called the roll, and the result is reflected in Journal No. 24, dated November 11, 2019.**

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

** See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. Mr. Speaker, the roll call shows that 220 Members responded to the call.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). With 220 Members responding to the call, the Chair declares the presence of a quorum.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

RATIFICATION OF CONF. COMM. RPT. ON H.B. NO. 4933 AND S.B. NO. 1043

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, we are in receipt of the Conference Committee Report reconciling the disagreeing provisions of House Bill No. 4933 and Senate Bill No. 1043.

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

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

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No.4933, entitled: AN ACT POSTPONING THE MAY 2020 BARANGAY AND SANGGUNIANG KABATAAN ELECTIONS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9164, AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9340, REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10632, REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10656, REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10923 AND REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10952, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES; AND SENATE BILL NO. 1043, ENTITLED: AN ACT POSTPONING THE MAY 2020 BARANGAY AND SANGGUNIANG KABATAAN ELECTIONS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9164, AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9340, REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10632, REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10656, REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10923, AND REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10952, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

REP. ROMUALDO. In accordance with our rules, I move that we ratify the said Conference Committee Report.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Conference Committee Report on House Bill 4933 and Senate Bill No 1043 is ratified.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, before we proceed to the Reference of Business, I move that we acknowledge the presence of some of our guests in the gallery. We have the guests of Deputy Speaker Deogracias Victor Savellano—accompanying faculty members of the University of Northern Philippines, we have Ms. Dea Tacbas, Mr. Moises Embat, Ms. Angel Unias and the politically inclined students of the University of Northern Philippines, headed by their President, Ms. Christine Savellano.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The faculty and students of the University of Northern Philippines are welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, we also have the guests of Rep. Shirlyn L. Bañas-Nogralas: Councilor Shandee Llido Pestaño and employees of the city government of General Santos.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The guests of Congresswoman Bañas-Nogralas are welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, may we also acknowledge the presence of the guests of Rep. Jose Francisco “Kiko” B. Benitez. They are Ana Lim, the Project Evaluation Officer II of the PPDO Province of Negros Occidental; Dannylyn Magallanes of the Office of the City Mayor of Bacolod; Gladys Villasis of the municipality of Hinigaran; Rhoda Vista of the Department of Education Division of Bacolod City; Remilyn Blanco of SSS Guihulngan; Mae Diamante of the National Police Commission; Gorgonio Hojilla Jr. of Phil. Post; John Delis, the Assistant Manager of NONECO; Ma. Chona Gosiaoco the DPA Council President Production Consultant of the Office of Representative Benitez; and Dr. Vermont Khan Juvahib of the Local Governance and Development—CENRO, Escalante City.

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

REP. ROMUALDO. We also have, Mr. Speaker, the guests of Rep. Sergio C. Dagooc: Councilor Jayme Nicole Castro, Councilor Salvacion Lopez, Councilor

John Aaron Dela Cruz, Councilor Rommel Ilagan, Councilor Jane Larisse Napiza, Councilor Riza Elbo, Councilor Mina Lincalio, Councilor Daisy Palconan, Councilor Edizon Eboras and Councilor Jel Balagtas.

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Finally, Mr. Speaker, we have the guests of Rep. Rudys Caesar G. Fariñas. I. They are Councilors from the province of Laguna: Councilor Edizon Leonardo Eboras, Councilor Jel Balagtas, Councilor Rommel Ilagan, Councilor Riza Elbo, Kagawad Salve Lopez, Kagawad Jean Napiza, Kagawad Daisy Palconan and Kagawad Jaymee Nicole Castro.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The guests of the Honorable Rudys Fariñas are welcome to the House of Representatives (*Applause*)
The Majority Leader is recognized.

PRIVILEGE HOUR

Continuation

REP. CASTELO. 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.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. CASTELO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we reconsider the referral of the privilege speech of the Hon. Sol Aragonas to the Committee on Rules, and I move that we recognize the honorable Deputy Speaker Raneo “Ranie” E. Abu for his manifestation.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The honorable Deputy Speaker Ranie Abu is recognized.

MANIFESTATION OF REP. ABU

REP. ABU. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is just a short manifestation with respect to the privilege speech made by the Chairperson of the Committee on Tourism.

I think, Mr. Speaker, not only thinking of it but we should—the entire membership of the House of the Eighteenth Congress should support the initiative by the honorable Representative from the Third District of Laguna, iyon pong kanyang ginawang vlog, iyon “Cong-Tour” *YouTube* channel.

Alam naman po nating lahat na bawat isa sa ating mga Kongresista ay may kanya-kanyang sariling email address or mayroong mga website. Baka pupuwede pong mapakiusapan ang mga kasamahan natin na sabihan natin ang ating mga constituent, i-market natin ito sa ating mga distrito na mag-subscribe din sila dito sa *YouTube* channel natin, sa Cong-Tour, Congressional Tour, nang makita naman nila iyong palibot ng iba't ibang lalawigan at iba't ibang distrito sa ating bansa. At the same time, nang malaman nila na ang ating mga Members ng House of Representatives ay kumikilos talaga at nakikita nila na may maipagmamalaki tayo. Alam naman po natin, mayroon tayong oversight functions sa ating mga ibinibigay na pondo sa ating pamahalaang bansa. At makikita natin doon at nang maipakita natin kung ano iyong ginagawa natin bilang mga Kongresista para dito sa ating mga distrito, sa ikagaganda, hindi lamang sa turismo, kung hindi pati sa mga imprastraktura, within our very own districts. Sana po ay makasama natin ang lahat ng ating mga kasamahan dito, na ito ho ay maipalaganap natin sa ating mga kasamahan sa iba't ibang distrito natin.

Isa pa ho, Mr. Speaker, ito pong initiative ng Committee on Tourism, under the leadership of the Chairperson, na sinusupportahan at isinusulong din ng ating Speaker Alan Peter Cayetano, siguro maganda rin iyong iba pa hong mga Komite, hindi sa pinangungunahan natin iyong ibang mga Chairpersons, na iyong ibang mga Komite natin ay magkaroon din ng ganitong klaseng vlog, na kung nasaan, iyong adbokasiya at kung ano iyong mga mandato ng mga komite na kanilang hinahawakan ay maipalaganap din sa ating bansa, through social media. Alam naman po natin kung gaano kalakas ang social media. Iyon lamang po, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much.

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

REP. CASTELO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer again the privilege speech of Hon. Sol Aragonés to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action, along with its manifestation, Mr. Speaker.

I so move.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. CASTELO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the next to deliver her privilege speech, Hon. Shirlyn L. Bañas-Nogralés of the First District of South Cotabato.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Hon. Shirlyn Bañas-Nogralés is recognized.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF
REP. BAÑAS-NOGRALES

REP. BAÑAS-NOGRALES (S.). Thank you.

To our honorable House Speaker Alan Peter Cayetano, our honored Deputy Speakers, Majority Leader Ferdinand Romualdez, Minority Leader Bienvenido Abante Jr., my colleagues, honored guests, maayong hapon sa aton nga tanan. Magandang araw po sa ating lahat.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to speak before all of you.

My honored colleagues, what I bring today is a story of our community's stirring persistence to protect and preserve the building block of modern Filipino democracy, *vox populi*, the voice of the people. It is a political travail we endured for the past 12 months to ensure that the people's sovereignty shall be heard and upheld by all Filipino people, most especially by all instrumentalities of our democratic and republican government.

Allow me to share with you the story of our people's resolve and ordeal, the very reason why I stand in this honored Hall today. Today marks my fourth session, my eighth day as a Member of the House, and of course, I would like to thank you for the warm welcome that you have given me. I now assume the post as the Representative of the First District of South Cotabato, still comprised of General Santos City, municipalities of Polomolok, Tupi and Tampakan.

The people of the First District of South Cotabato have sought to create new legislative districts for many years to address the development demands and demographics of the current times. It was a fact that 10 years prior to the new millennium, in 1990, GenSan has long obtained the 250,000 population requirement of the Constitution. It is, thus, a fact that such legislation for the creation of a lone Congressional district of GenSan was long overdue.

Finally, a proposed legislation was submitted by my predecessor on May 4, 2017 during his final term as Congressman—House Bill No. 5162, entitled, AN ACT SEPARATING THE CITY OF GENERAL SANTOS FROM THE FIRST LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OF THE PROVINCE OF SOUTH COTABATO TO CONSTITUTE THE LONE LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OF THE CITY OF GENERAL SANTOS.

A Senate version of the separation was also submitted by Sen. Manny Pacquiao—Senate Bill No. 1487—which is similarly titled. But in the final version of the law, the law became one of reapportionment, which created the Third District of General Santos City of the province of South Cotabato.

Republic Act No. 11243 was then signed by Pres. Rodrigo Roa Duterte on March 11, 2019. This law then took effect on April 4, 2019 while the 2019 election period was already ongoing.

Finally, this was what we have all been waiting for—finally, a law long desired by the people of GenSan, Polomolok, Tupi and Tampakan; finally, a law that gives us a new chance in the 2022 national and local elections to choose individuals we can trust that will best represent our ideals and aspirations in Congress; finally, a chance for the people of GenSan and for the three municipalities to choose among their populace who they wish to represent them in Congress, respectively. But then, the Commission on Elections issued Comelec Resolution No. 10524.

On April 11, 2019, the Comelec issued the IRR of the new law and suspended the elections for the First District of South Cotabato. The Comelec then called that all votes cast for all candidates of the ongoing election for the Representative of the First District shall be considered stray. The IRR became effective on April 22—22 days before the May 13, 2019 election.

This Resolution has caused massive confusion among the voting populace of the First District, most especially the four candidates for the position of District Representative, yours truly included.

A legal question remains unanswered and hovers in the minds of the electorate. Was the suspension of the election right? This magnifies the importance of a single provision of the said law, the bone of contention.

Section 1 of Republic Act No. 11243 states that:

The First Legislative District of the province of South Cotabato is hereby reapportioned in order to create a Lone Legislative District of General Santos City to commence in the next national and local elections after the effectivity of this Act.

Everyone concurs that this provision of law separates GenSan from the three other municipalities. However, where everyone seems to disagree upon is the question of “when.” When will the separation take place? When will the new Third District and the new First District legally exist? When will the election for our new Representatives be?

The Comelec explained why the election for the First Legislative District of South Cotabato must be suspended. The Comelec stated in its resolution that since the 2019 elections are already ongoing, the present configuration can no longer be revised or modified in time for the May 13, 2019 national and local elections, without jeopardizing the preparations for the election of other positions, due to operational and logistical constraints. In Section 3(b) of the Comelec Resolution, the Commission then reset the elections for the new

Representatives of the new districts “within six (6) months from May 13, 2019.”

With all honesty and legal insight, we saw that such interpretation has flaws and uncertainties which need clarity immediately. However, appealing to the Commission will likely be unreasonable with only a few weeks left before the May 13 elections. We had no option but to seek the infallible wisdom of the Supreme Court and contest the contention of the Comelec in the petition, *Bañas-Nogales et al. vs. Comelec*.

Accompanied by respected local leaders from the four localities of the First District of South Cotabato, we filed a petition for *certiorari* with the urgent prayer for the issuance of a status *quo ante* order before the Supreme Court, to proceed with the election for the Congressional seat of the First Legislative District of South Cotabato, including General Santos City, in the upcoming May 13, 2019 midterm elections. We also sought for the petition to be granted and to declare as null and void the assailed Comelec Resolution No. 10524 dated April 11, 2019.

Finally, on May 10, 2019, three days before the conduct of the election, we received a copy of the notice issued by the Supreme Court recognizing our petition for *certiorari*. The said notice stated that the Court *en banc* issued a resolution dated May 3, 2019, requiring the Comelec to comment on the petition and submit a prayer for status *quo ante* order.

This signified that resolving this issue in the shortest time possible was the intent of the Supreme Court. The high court, herewith, intended to resolve ambiguity, flaws and confusion in the shortest time possible.

Then the May 13, 2019 national and local elections came. Naturally, the inevitable happened. Despite the existing Comelec resolution suspending the election, the people of the First District of South Cotabato opted to exercise their God-given democratic right of suffrage. The sovereign will of the people was expressed in the ballot. Despite the confusion, the people opted to vote and they bestowed us with a clear mandate.

From a total voting population of 473,137 in the First District of South Cotabato, 368,448 people went out to vote. Of that latter number, 283,860 voted for the district’s House Representative. Of 283,860 votes cast for the Member of the House of Representatives, 194,929 people cast their votes to be represented in the First District, or 69 percent of the vote. It was clear. The people of the First District of South Cotabato wanted their representation in the Philippine Congress. It was the people’s overwhelming display of their sovereignty. But the Comelec maintained its position to suspend the election. It continued its plan to push on with the special election for the new districts, together with the two new districts of the province of Southern Leyte, which also had similar circumstances with our district. The Comelec scheduled both elections on October 26, 2019.

With the case still pending, we, the petitioners, continued to file supplemental pleadings in the court. Two important documents were submitted to the court: the certificates of canvass containing the results of the recent May 13, 2019 national and local elections; and, the opinion of Senator Pacquiao, one of the Sponsors of the said law.

In the letter of Senator Pacquiao, he emphasized that the intention of the law was to push for its approval before the May 2019 elections. However, the Bill was approved and signed into law within the election period. Thus, Senator Pacquiao opined, and I quote:

It is therefore my understanding that R.A. No. 11243 must take effect on the next national and local election, which is on May of 2022. x x x Prudence and justice would dictate that it must and should be applied on May of 2022. x x x

On September 17, 2019, the Supreme Court unanimously ruled, 14-0, on the validity of the May 13, 2019 midterm elections for the First Congressional District of South Cotabato, and the election results determined us as the official winner.

The Supreme Court voted unanimously to declare null and void Comelec Resolution 10524, which suspended the elections for the Member of the House of Representatives in the First District of South Cotabato. The *en banc* decision also recognized the unmistakable results of the May 13, 2019 elections for the House Representatives in the First District of South Cotabato.

The ruling of the Supreme Court highlighted the following key points:

First and foremost, the court viewed that Congress could not have intended to enforce RA 11243 during the 2019 general election as the election period had already begun when RA 11243 was enacted. The 2019 election period began in January 2019 and ended in June 2019. Republic Act No. 11243 was passed in April 2019 during the conduct of the elections. Clearly, what the framers meant for the term “next local and national elections” was not the ongoing May 2019 elections but the upcoming May 2022 elections.

Second, the Court ruled that Republic Act No. 11243 did not delegate to the Comelec the power to set a date for a special election; thus, it violated Sections 7 and 8 of Article VI of the Constitution. Nowhere was it written in Republic Act No. 11243 that the Comelec shall set a specific date for the special election of the new districts. Furthermore, Republic Act No. 11243 was intended to take effect at the most feasible and practicable time, which is in fact, the national and local elections of May 2022.

Third, and the most important, especially for all my colleagues here in this august Chamber, is that the Supreme Court ruled that a special election will result in a term less than what is provided for in Section 7, Article VI of the Constitution. The High Court in this case emphasized the importance of maintaining the term or length of office of elected officials set forth in our Constitution.

The Comelec then followed the order of the Supreme Court. On October 9, 2019, the Comelec *en banc*, in cognizance with the ruling of the Supreme Court, resolved to cancel the conduct of the October 26, 2019 special elections for the apportioned First and Third Districts of South Cotabato, and opted not to file a motion for reconsideration.

The province of Southern Leyte also has a similar case since the law splitting the province into two new legislative districts, or RA 11198 signed by the President on February 1, 2019 also took effect while the 2019 election period was ongoing. The Comelec also suspended the elections then, and scheduled a special election on October 26. However, on October 10, the Comelec opted to consider the ruling of the case. It issued Memorandum Order No. 191116 suspending the special elections in view of the recent Supreme Court decision on South Cotabato, but also noted that it will push through on November 30, in the absence of any Supreme Court resolution prior to the said date in Southern Leyte.

May I go back to our case. Prior to the lapse of the 15-day reglementary period before the finality of the judgment, a motion for intervention was filed by a candidate in a supposed special election for the new congressional seat of the First District of South Cotabato. In addition, a motion for leave to be allowed to intervene and to file and admit motion for reconsideration was filed by our three-term Congressman who was then vying for another term as Representative of the newly-created district of General Santos City. This further delayed our proclamation. But on October 15, 2019, the Supreme Court denied and ruled with finality that both motions lacked merits and essential substance for consideration. Hence, it further ruled that on the same day that the unanimous *en banc* decision on the case of *Bañas-Nogralles et al. vs. Comelec* has become final and executory.

Honorable Members of this Chamber, this is the story of the sovereign will of the people in the First District of South Cotabato. A story of the “voice of the voiceless,” to comprehend the magnanimity of the authority embedded in the democratic right to choose their leader and representation.

I am humbly bringing this story to the annals of Congress with the hope that the unprecedented perseverance of the people of the First District of Cotabato to defend, protect and uphold the sanctity of

their sovereign will shall enrich our learning, respect and responsibility towards the uncompromising value of democracy.

My esteemed colleagues, it is a first-time privilege to be given the chance to work with you. Yet, I serve only on a borrowed chance with fixed terms. The width of my authority is completely reliant on public trust. Whereas, the length of my stay in office will be decided upon on the basis of good performance. Please bear with me as I begin this new job. I still have a lot more new things to learn in regard to rules of procedures, and I still need to know more from experienced colleagues from whom I could seek good advice.

I also humbly ask my honored colleagues to review Republic Act No. 11243. Our reservations with this law focus on the treatment of General Santos City still as part of the province of South Cotabato, a consideration which somehow contravenes the city charter of General Santos City that separates our city from the province. This is why I intend to pass an amendment that will fully separate GenSan from the province of South Cotabato, pursuant to the city charter of General Santos City.

Now, I begin my work as the Representative of the people of the First District of South Cotabato. I bring with me into this great hall the hopes, ideals and aspirations of thousands of Filipinos in this part of Mindanao; kind and hard-working people who all pray for a better life for their families and for the next generation.

Honored Members of this Chamber, colleagues and friends, I thank God for this opportunity to work and learn from you for His glory and growth of our country.

Maraming salamat po at mabuhay po tayong lahat.

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

REP. CRISOLOGO. Mr. Speaker, there being no interpellations, I move that we refer the speech of the Honorable Bañas-Nogralas to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. CRISOLOGO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we now recognize the Gentleman from AKO PADAYON Party-List, Rep. Adriano A. Ebcas, for his privilege speech.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Hon. Adriano Ebcas is recognized.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. EBCAS

REP. EBCAS. Mr. Speaker, my dear colleagues here at the House of Representatives, a pleasant afternoon to you all. First, I would like to offer a minute of silence to our brothers and sisters in Mindanao, particularly in Cotabato, Davao and Kidapawan, who suffered great losses following the series of earthquakes that struck them in the past few weeks.

Representative Ebcas then offered a silent prayer.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am addressing this august Chamber on a matter of both personal and collective privilege.

My dear colleagues, my fellow Filipinos in the Visayas and Mindanao still find themselves in a situation of great uncertainty. Up to this day and age, ang aking mga kababayan in these regions still suffer shortages in power and rotational brownouts which could have been prevented if only we have learned from the past and prepared for the future.

As you may have known, Mr. Speaker, power shortages and rotational brownouts had been recurring problems that our country continues to face. Maybe it is high time that we revisit our policies because, clearly, we need to do something about this. To be more specific, I will raise to this Body some power issues which we believe can be addressed by revisiting the Philippine Grid Code.

Allow me to paint for you a picture. My first concern which has also been the concern of our people for the longest time now is that there is an ongoing electricity concern in the eastern and western parts of Visayas and some parts in Mindanao. If you will recall, a 6.6 magnitude earthquake hit Leyte in July 2017 which, aside from the destruction of homes and the loss of lives, damaged our power infrastructures in the province and left the Region with no electricity. This prompted the Federation of Rural Electric Cooperatives or FRECOR in Eastern Visayas to declare a state of emergency to allow its member-consumers in electric cooperatives to look for another option to restore the power supply in their service area. Immediately after which, the electric cooperatives sought the help of the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines or NGCP to address the problem. The NGCP, Mr. Speaker, gave their assurance, vaguely saying that they have solutions but they could not commit to a timeline.

They could not commit to a timeline, Mr. Speaker, dear guests and colleagues, and this was two years ago. Now, 2019, we have yet to see these so-called solutions that the NGCP promised our electric cooperatives. In

fact, just last Wednesday, two widespread power outages in one day were experienced by the residents of Western Visayas. The disgruntled people of Aklan, Antique, Capiz, Guimaras, Iloilo, and even the metropolitan Iloilo City were left with no electricity due to sudden power interruption brought about by a grid problem that affected the operation of the Panay Energy Development Corporation in Iloilo City.

It was a grid problem, everyone. Here we see that until now, just two weeks ago, the electric cooperatives continue to receive low voltage, fluctuating electricity and the general grid problems, as they call it, which should have already been addressed by appropriate authorities. It pains me to say that the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines' solutions that they have promised are still yet to surface.

Let me illustrate to you what would happen when the distribution utilities are met with low voltages of power. We at the AKO PADAYON PILIPINO, PHILRECA, APEC and RECOBODA Party-Lists received report from the president of the Nueva Ecija Electric Cooperative II–Area 1 and Nueva Ecija Electric Cooperative II–Area 2 that the whole Central Luzon has been receiving low voltage of electricity, which in effect halts the operation of their substation causing line congestion. We also have reports of the same scenario in certain areas in Caraga Region, Davao, and South Cotabato. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the South Cotabato 1 Electric Cooperative has been receiving extremely low voltage at times. To put it simply, this instability and fluctuation in voltage cause rotational brownouts in their coverage area, which compel them to use their own generators to appease the complaints of their member-consumer-owners. It has come to our attention, Mr. Speaker, that there is an emerging issue that this was not the scenario before, and together, we come to wonder why.

This brings me to my second concern. Let me give you further the background as to what is happening behind power fluctuations. The reports I have mentioned a while ago are the results of a persisting problem in the management of our grid. We have been receiving reports of countless instances where voltage magnitude in the grid were outside their allowable range of variations. There are reports that voltage fluctuation that cause flicker that is outside of the flicker severity limits are also rampant. All of these despite the provisions of the Philippine Grid Code, our engineers and experts in the power industry agreed to these limits for a reason, that is, to prevent damage to the facilities and ensure reliable supply of electricity to the end-users. Why is it then that the violations of the Code seem to be a norm in the industry? What can we do about this? Who do we hold accountable for these?

Mr. Speaker, colleagues, and dear guests, this Representation believes that the reason why the limits

set in the Code continue to be violated is that the Code does not have teeth. There is nothing to stop the system operator, in this case the NGCP, from not following what is in the Code because quite simply, the Code does not penalize its violators. It is safe to say that in this case, it is high time that the NGCP be held accountable for the damage and revenue losses caused by its shortcomings. But what really is the solution for us to sustain reliability and make sure that this not happen again?

We are bringing to light these issues, Mr. Speaker, because we cannot continue to be mum about the hardships that the people, the electric cooperatives, who vowed to reliably distribute electricity to the Filipino households, continue to face everyday. If you may have noticed, I have cited occurrences of this grid issue emanating from the different parts of the country—Central Luzon, Caraga, Davao, South Cotabato. This is the widespread problem. Ladies and Gentlemen, we cannot anymore overlook these problems as they do not matter. We cannot accept that there seems to be a downplay of these problems and a continuation of the delay of the delivery of basic public utility, that is, electricity. And we cannot let our fellow Filipinos sit and wait for the NGCP to offer them solutions that, quite frankly, may take too long and could arrive when it is too late.

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

Only two years had passed since the major crisis in the Visayas and it seems to me the issue was buried while its ill effects are still being experienced by our people in the region. To tell you the truth, it saddens me that the voices of our electric cooperatives may be falling into deaf ears. This is precisely the reason, Mr. Speaker, that we, the Representatives of these electric cooperatives, and the millions of the member-consumer-owners in the country, stand before you here today to make their plight known, to include them again in the bigger conversation of our government, and to gain your support.

We cannot deny that these problems persist in our provinces while we sit here in the metro, not knowing what it is like to have rotational brownouts as a norm, as a part of our daily lives. We, here, do not know what it is like to have to adjust our daily activities to work around the hours when we actually do have electricity. And we do not want—it is like being the member-consumer-owners of these power distribution utilities who, instead of spending their valuable time trying to make ends meet for their families, are in the forefront of their respective electric cooperatives, begging to fix the power situation as they have suffered enough. Mahirap po iyon, Mr. Speaker, but we know that we can do something about it as their chosen national legislators.

This is why I brought up one of the reasons, which is incidentally also the most overlooked behind the problem of rotational brownouts, if I may reiterate, the power fluctuations brought about by the uncontrolled and unmonitored flickers that go above and below the limits set by the Grid Code.

Mr. Speaker, my dear colleagues, we, the four Representatives of the 121 strong electric cooperatives of the Philippines, have 13 million member-consumer-owners, as warriors of light, alike, refuse to sit idly amidst these clear lapses in the implementation of the Grid Code. We refuse to allow the institutions to which we entrusted our successful delivery of the public good of electricity to continue unscathed in their misgivings.

We call upon the NGCP, the Transco, and the DOE, and all other concerned agencies to look within themselves and their operations and to take proper and immediate action. We are hoping that we do not need to go through a lengthy process of passing a new law or amending the Code just to fix these problems. This is us, hoping that with your cooperation, we can solve the issues at hand and make service reliable again.

We join the President and the House leadership in their quest and efforts to energize all households at the earliest possible time. This is in recognition that alongside these efforts, those already being served will not be compromised.

In closing, I humbly implore the support of my distinguished colleagues here at the House of Representatives. We, the warriors of light, seek your support to revisit this particular measure. Our existing policy is not a show of the incompetence of the past, but a show of competence and perseverance to fulfill our commitment to the Filipino people for the future.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). 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 suspend 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 suspended.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO COMMITTEES

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. May I move for the election of the following Members to various Committees:

The Majority Leader read the names of the House Members elected to the various Committees, per Journal No. 24, dated November 11, 2019.

COMMITTEES ON TRANSPORTATION, LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT, BANKS AND FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES, SOCIAL SERVICES, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, AND NATURAL RESOURCES

As member:

Rep. Macnell M. Lusotan

COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE AND FISHERIES RESOURCES

As Vice Chairperson:

Rep. Macnell M. Lusotan

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY

As Vice Chairperson:

Rep. Jose Enrique “Joet” S. Garcia III

COMMITTEE ON MINDANAO AFFAIRS

As member:

Rep. Shirlyn L. Bañas-Nogralas

COMMITTEE ON POPULATION AND FAMILY RELATIONS

As Vice Chairperson:

Rep. Shirlyn L. Bañas-Nogralas

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

As Vice Chairperson:

Rep. “Kuya” Jose Antonio R. Sy-Alvarado

COMMITTEE ON GOOD GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY

As Vice Chairperson:

Rep. Michael T. Defensor

COMMITTEE ON ACCOUNTS

As members:

Rep. Sol Aragonas

Rep. Ma. Lucille L. Nava, M.D.
Rep. John Marvin “Yul Servo” C. Nieto

COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE
AND SECURITY

As member:
Rep. Arnold “Noli” D. Celeste

COMMITTEE ON AGRARIAN REFORM

As member:
Rep. Geraldine B. Roman

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

As member:
Rep. Geraldine B. Roman

COMMITTEE ON PEOPLE’S PARTICIPATION

As Vice Chairperson:
Rep. Shirlyn L. Bañas-Nogales

As members:
Rep. Rosanna “Ria” Vergara
Rep. Sandra Y. Eriguel, M.D.
Rep. Elisa “Olga” T. Kho
Rep. Carl Nicolas C. Cari
Rep. Glona G. Labadlabad
Rep. Yasser Alonto Balindong
Rep. Solomon R. Chungalao
Rep. Precious Hipolito Castelo
Rep. Faustino “Inno” A. Dy V
Rep. “Kuya” Jose Antonio R. Sy-Alvarado
Rep. Gavini “Apol” C. Pancho
Rep. Ma. Lourdes Acosta-Alba
Rep. Macnell M. Lusotan

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

As Vice Chairperson:
Rep. Florida “Rida” P. Robes

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND
GENDER EQUALITY

As members:
Rep. Ma. Angelica M. Amante-Matba
Rep. Josefina B. Tallado
Rep. Glona G. Labadlabad
Rep. Alfred Vargas
Rep. Ma. Lourdes T. Arroyo
Rep. Paz C. Radaza
Rep. Aleta C. Suarez
Rep. Julienne “Jam” L. Baronda

Rep. Lorna C. Silverio
Rep. Cheryl P. Deloso-Montalla
Rep. Jocelyn Sy Limkaichong
Rep. Sharon S. Garin
Rep. Shernee A. Tan-Tambut

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
REORGANIZATION

As Vice Chairperson:
Rep. Lorenz R. Defensor

COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL
AMENDMENTS

As Vice Chairperson:
Rep. Lorenz R. Defensor

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

PRIVILEGE HOUR
Continuation

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

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). Honorable Atienza is recognized.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ATIENZA

REP. ATIENZA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Salamat po, Majority Leader.

At this juncture, Deputy Speaker Garcia (P.) relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Deogracias Victor “DV” B. Savellano.

My dear colleagues, I stand today, again, reminding the nation about a continuing problem and a threat to all of us Filipinos—that water could disappear from our taps, from our faucets, simply because the water concessionaires are not doing their job. They are shortchanging the nation and

the consumers who are dependent on the delivery of their commitments.

Sometime in the year 2008, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources noticed that the concessionaires had not delivered on their responsibility to build wastewater treatment facilities. And when we inspected them, true enough, wala po silang ginawa upang iyong kanilang kontrata ay mabigyan ng bisa. Samantala, kolekta po sila nang kolekta magmula noong 1997 ng tinatawag nating “sewage fee.” Iyon po ang dapat na inilalagay bilang puhunan para mabuo ang ating mga sewage lines that lead to a wastewater treatment facility.

We fined them then P100,000 per day for the non-delivery of their concession commitment. They filed a case in court, they lost. They elevated it to the Court of Appeals, they lost. They elevated it to the Supreme Court and again, the Supreme Court, about six months ago, with finality decided that the action taken by the Department of Environment was valid; there was a continuing violation of the concession agreement and a continuing violation of the Clean Water Act which was already in effect.

Mga minamahal kong mga kasamahan, itong ganitong uri ng negosyo, na ang pinipiga ay ang balsa ng taumbayan at nangangako na magbibigay sila ng ating pangangailangan sa tubig subalit ayaw gumastos, ang gusto lamang ay kumolekta ng pera sa ating mga mamamayan.

Today, we do not hear much about it anymore as we expected, the machineries of these giant corporations—giant because they are the biggest corporations in the country led by the richest Filipino businessmen in the country—their public relations machineries have already gone into action. Wala na po kayong nababalitaan. Isang araw, mawawala na lang ang tubig sa ating mga gripo at doon sasabihin na may problema tayó.

Samantala, nais kong ilahad sa inyong lahat ang patuloy na pagsisinungaling nitong Manila Water, in particular, because they came out with full-page ads, tinatawag nilang kasinungalingan ang ating sinasabi. Binabaligtad nila ang titik ng batas. Binabaligtad nila ang mga nakasulat sa kanilang kontrata upang mapawalang bisa ang desisyon ng Korte Suprema, even with a threat that we will be made to pay P780 per cubic meter of water, kung hindi babaligtarin ng Supreme Court ang kanilang desisyon na talo sila sa kanilang demanda at dapat silang singilin ng P1 bilyon bawat isa—tatlo sila, dalawang concessionaires, including MWSS—for failure to do its task.

Ang kanilang reaksyon, mga minamahal kong kababayan, ay hindi pagtupad sa utos ng Korte Suprema; ang reaksyon nila ay public relations. Tinawag nila ang inyong lingkod, nagsisinungaling

daw, gawa-gawa ko lang daw ito. Subalit itong mga peryodiko, nag-publish ng kanilang mga statements para bolahin tayong lahat. Hindi naman nila idinedeny. Ang nagsabi lang daw noong P780 increase ay ang inyong lingkod. Hindi ko po sinabi iyon. Iyon po ay sinabi nila sa mga headline stories ng ating mga pahayagan.

At noong isang araw, ang ating senior officer, one of the senior officers of this Chamber confronted the Manila Water people with this question: Why are you not complying with the Supreme Court decision? Alam ninyo ang sagot nila? “Hindi naman totoo iyon. Hindi naman kami magtaas. Ano ba kami, luku-luko?” Kung iyan ang sinabi nila, ang sabi ko roon sa ating kasama, tinatawag nila ang sarili nilang luku-luko, idadagdag ko, hindi sila luku-luko, mandarambong pa sila, in the genuine sense, because they are collecting money without delivering service.

The sewage lines of Metro Manila should have been completed in 1998, 1999, year 2000. When I noticed that they were delayed despite 11 years of collection, they said they were going to finish it in three to five years, but there was a change in administration in 2010, and again, they did not deliver their commitment.

Ngayon, ang sinasabi nila, tatapusin daw nila ang ating paglilinis ng ating katubigan sa year 2037. Hindi po ba panloloko iyan? Iyan ay tinatawag kong pandarambong sa pinakamataas na paraan sapagkat iyong ibinabayad natin sa ating tubig na wala namang bayad sa pinanggagalingan sapagkat iyan ay galing sa kalikasan, bigay sa atin ng Panginoong Diyos, bakit naman sila ang nagkakamal ng bilyun-bilyong salapi dito sa ating yaman ng ating bansa sa kalikasan?

They have declared in the Stock Exchange a net profit of P138 billion from 2009 to 2019. I got these figures from the Stock Exchange. Sapagkat sila ay public corporation, they are forced to make a report on their money-making contract with the government. Nagbigay sila ng net profit, dividend of P49 billion in the same period. Nakikita ninyo, bilyun-bilyon ang pinag-uusapan na kinikita. Nasaan ang wastewater treatment facility? Nganga ang taumbayan sapagkat walang nakaalam ng issue.

Ang inyong lingkod ay hindi nila mapaglalalangan sapagkat pinag-aaralan ko ang lahat ng kanilang ipinangako, sinisilip ko ang kanilang kinita. Hindi totoo na sila ay nalulugi. Hindi nila idineklara ang salaping inutang nila sa pangalan ng bansang Pilipinas. They keep on borrowing money from the World Bank, from the Asian Development Bank, from European financing institutions in the name of the Filipino people. They used our name; they used the guarantee of the Philippine Government. Under sovereign guarantee, they are being given very soft loans, salapi na dapat ay ibinubuhos

nila sa pagbuo ng ating wastewater treatment facility. Technically, ang tubig na dapat umaagos sa Manila Bay, sa Laguna de Bay ay kasing linis ng tubig na iniinom natin sa mineral water, subalit hindi po nangyayari iyan sapagkat hindi nila nililinis ang tubig na nanggagaling sa ating mga palikuran, sa ating mga kusina ng ating mga tahanan na dapat sinimulan nila magmula noong 1997. Therefore, to state that they will finish the contract in year 2037 is outright highway robbery, highway robbery, pagnanakaw sa bulsa ng Pilipinong pinaghahirap ng panahon.

Uulit-ulitin ko po na itong dalawang kumpaniyang ito, lalong-lalo na po iyong Manila Water, sapagkat sila ang masyadong agresibo sa pagsisinungaling. Mabuti-buti po iyong Maynilad, hindi na kumikibo, nagbibilang na lang ng salapi, pero iyong Manila Water would like us to believe that they are correct. Sobra-sobra raw ang kanilang puhunang ibinuhos sa kanilang kontratang iyan. Kung nalulugi kayo, i-give up na ninyo ang kontrata. You have the option to terminate your contract. Do us a favor. Tell the President, “We are losing so much money. We cannot continue with the monopoly that we are enjoying.” But why are you continuing? Simply because you continue to amass hundreds of billions of pesos at the expense of each and every Filipino citizen. Hindi po dapat magpatuloy ito.

We are filing a resolution and we are seeking the help of this whole Chamber. We have to act now; we have to protect the interest of our people. We cannot allow concession agreements, exclusive agreements na ang kanilang pakay lang ay magkamal ng salapi at hindi tumupad sa serbisyo publiko. Marami pa po iyan. Ang maipapangako ko sa kanila, marami pa po kaming pinag-aaralan ngayon na mga kontrata na magugulat kayo sapagkat nagkakamal sila ng hundreds of billions of pesos without any investment at all. Anong klaseng negosyo iyan? Ang tawag diyan ng mga Chinese businessmen “hao xiao.” Ang tawag sa Filipino niyan, mga tarantado kayong manlolo ko sapagkat wala kayong puhunan, wala kayong gagastusin, magkakamal kayo ng daan-daang bilyong salapi.

Gumising naman tayo sa katotohanan. Let us protect the interest of our people. Let us be true to our oath of office that we shall protect and defend the Constitution and the interest of the nation. This cannot continue. Silence means surrendering the duties and responsibilities of this Chamber. We have to counter the lies being peddled by these two giant corporations. Hindi sila lulusot sa katotohanan sapagkat wala sila talagang ginagawang wastewater treatment facilities. Para ipangako sa ating 2037 ang completion, iyan ay niloloko na lang tayong lahat niyan. Sa 2037, wala na tayong lahat dito sa balat ng lupa. Wala na rin marahil sila subalit patuloy ang koleksyon nila at ng kanilang kumpanya. Tatamasahin ng kanilang mga anak at kaliit-liitan ng sangay ng kanilang pamilya itong kontratang ito na pinipiga nila ang bawat Filipino.

We should not allow it. We should take action now and we will join you in every effort.

I know that the Supreme Court will not relent under threat of Manila Water sapagkat ang pleading nila ay malinaw. Ang sabi nila, kapag hindi ninyo binawi ang inyong desisyon, itataas namin ang presyo ng tubig by P780. Ang masasabi ko sa kanila, kapag ginawa ninyo iyan, bukod sa mananagot kayo sa Panginoong Diyos, mananagot kayo sa nagngingitngit na taumbayan.

Our people can only take so much. The Filipinos are very long in patience but when they get angry—we removed a dictator, do not ever forget that. We removed a president who was not doing his job. This is just a private corporation that is covering themselves with the protection of their public relations people. They will not be able to excuse and extricate themselves from this very, very big and grievous offense on our citizenry.

Ang tubig ay bigay ng Panginoong Diyos. Sila lamang ang binigyan ng karapatan upang sila ang mamahagi pero hindi kanila iyang tubig na iyan. Hindi nila mina-manufacture iyan. At hindi rin naman sila gumugugol upang dumagsa ang tubig sa ating kapuluan. We have an abundance of fresh water in our nation, more than what we need. We can supply fresh water to Singapore, to Hong Kong, all the rest of Asia, and make every Filipino live better in our economic condition. If the Middle Easterns can live happily with the abundance of fuel and oil in their soil, the Filipinos are fortunate, we have water in our land, flowing in our stream, still flowing in our river. We just have to do our share to make sure that those who are able to squeeze themselves into the picture—because hindi nila nakuha iyan nang ganoon lang. Iyan ay inilakad nila, siguradong ipinilit nila ang kanilang sarili sa pamamagitan ng pangako.

Basahin ninyo ang mga pahayagan. Ano ang sinasabi? “Hindi na namin magagawa iyan. Kapag hindi, lalong lalala ang trapik sa EDSA. Kapag ginawa namin iyan, hindi makakayanan ng mga sewer lines iyong volume ng mga household wastewater.” Lahat iyan ay mga kasinungalingan sapagkat hindi po dapat tayo nananakot sa tao sa pagtupad ng ating nilagdaang tungkulin. Hindi natin dapat ipagkait iyong ating pinagsisingilan na magmula pa noong 1997.

Twenty-two years have passed, Mr. Speaker. Twenty-two years of collecting have passed and nothing is done on the performance and delivery of their commitments. If we believe what they say, we might as well fold up as a Congress of the Filipino people because we will not be able to face our people when asked, “What did you do when we were milked of our hard-earned peso?” I would like to be able to answer that by saying, “We worked hard and we tried our best to collect.” The rest should be in the hands of the people. Our people would know how to react when the time comes. As I said, if we were able to remove two presidents, we will be able to remove two giant corporations because they have

no power over the will of God. The Filipinos were not made, created to suffer from lack of our natural wealth. *Sobra-sobra ang ating kalikasan, mapalad tayo, subalit itong mga may salapi na nagpapanggap na tagapagligtas ng ating kapakanan, sila ang nagpapanggap na sila ang magbibigay ng serbisyo, ang ibinibigay nila ay perwisyo. Ang mahalaga sa kanila ay salapi—money, money, and more money, but they will not be able to take this money in the afterlife. That is for sure, not even one centavo of their accumulated wealth will benefit them eventually. We are warning them as we continue to warn them. Do not overdo, do not abuse the patience of our people. You try raising the price of water and I tell you, you will reap the whirlwind of people power. Samantala, tayo sa Kongreso ay may magagawa. Gawin na natin ang ating kakayahan upang itong dalawang korporasyon na ito ay mailagay sa tama. I am naming Maynilad Water and Manila Water: one is run by one of the richest Filipinos, Ayala Corporation; the other one is led by Manny Pangilinan. So, kung kayo ay mayroong interes sa kapakanan ng tao, ito na ang pagkakataon, ipakita natin.*

Our Resolution will call for the termination of these contracts so that President Duterte should answer the need for providing water to our people on a continuous basis. Only then will they realize, mayroon pa ring natitirang mga Pilipinong gising sa gitna at kalagitnaan ng gabi. Iyan po ang mga kataga na binitawan ng ating mga bayani na ang inihihingi nila ay ang aksyon na dapat manggaling sa kanilang mga lider.

We are all leaders, none of us is a dealer. As leaders, we are required to act on this. We have to act and put a stop to this continuing swindle. It is a continuing swindle of people who have nothing in mind but to make more and more money, borrowing money from foreign banks in your name, in my name, in the name of each and every citizen. *Kapag hindi binayaran iyang mga perang iyan, ang magbabayad niyan, tayo na naman. Ilalaan na naman natin sa ating budget, pambayad ng utang nitong mga korporasyong ito. Sobra na. Tama na. Mahiya kayo sa sarili ninyo.*

Thank you.

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

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the Honorable Atienza to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

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 to extend the Privilege Hour for another hour.

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

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, I move to recognize Hon. Presley C. De Jesus of Party-List PHILRECA.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Hon. Presley C. De Jesus of PHILRECA is recognized.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. DE JESUS

REP. DE JESUS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Honorable Speaker of the House, fellow House Members and to all our guests in attendance of today's session, good afternoon.

A month ago, specifically September 30, 2019, this Representation as the Vice Chairman of the Committee on Energy, along with the other members of the Committee, probed some agencies that are part of the energy sector, specifically, the NGCP also known as the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines. The query addressed to NGCP was engrossed in the delayed initial public offering or IPO of the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines.

I speak in front of you today, not as a Representative of the Philippine Rural Electric Cooperatives Association Party-List, but of the Filipino people as a whole.

To reiterate my query last September 30, and I quote:

This Representation is very concerned on the long-overdue delay of the IPO of NGCP for it involves the national interest, and a big amount of money of P4 billion a year that rightfully belongs to the Filipino people.

First of all, please allow me to guide you, my fellow House Members, and guests, unto the depth of the roots of this issue.

Republic Act No. 9511 or the Act granting NGCP of its franchise, and mandates NGCP first, and I again quote:

to operate, manage and maintain, and in connection therewith, to engage in the business of conveying or transmitting electricity through high voltage back-bone system of interconnected transmission lines, substations and related facilities, system operations, and other activities that are necessary to support the safe and reliable operation of the transmission system.

Second,

to construct, install, finance, manage, improve, expand, operate, maintain, rehabilitate, repair and refurbish the present nationwide transmission system of the Republic of the Philippines, the Grantee shall continue to operate and maintain the subtransmission system which have not been disposed by TRANSCO.

They are also authorized—

to engage in construct, install, finance, improve, expand, rehabilitate and repair the nationwide transmission system and the grid of the Republic of the Philippines.

From here, it has been expressly concluded that the franchise of the NGCP is nationwide in scope and public in character.

Moreover, under the law, Section 8. Dispersal of Ownership of RA No. 9511, NGCP should make a public offering of the shares representing at least 20 percent of its outstanding capital stock within 10 years from the commencement of its operation, which was on January 15, 2009.

“Initial public offering,” as defined by the Corporate Finance Institute, is where a previously unlisted company sells new or existing securities and offers them to the public for the first time. Hence, under the NGCP’s franchise, from January 15, 2009, it has 10 years to comply with its statutory requirement to offer at least 20 percent of its outstanding capital stock to the public.

As early as November 13, 2018, NGCP filed a petition for extension, where it cited the following reasons in delaying its IPO, as mentioned in Manila Bulletin news report: the pending arbitration case filed by NGCP before the Singapore International Arbitration Centre or SIAC against TRANSCO and PSALM; the delay in the implementation of its regulatory reset; the period provided for compliance with Section 8 of RA No. 9511, which is merely directory; the lack of implementing rules and regulations for compliance with Section 8 of RA 9511; and the timing of the public offering, addressed to the discretion of the NGCP’s Board of Directors.

On April 3, 2019, the Senate Committee on Energy, chaired by Senator Win Gatchalian, ordered the ERC to submit a definite timetable for the resolution of the case on NGCP’s delay which will determine whether NGCP can extend its IPO. The ERC, in turn, specified that the issuance of their decision on the case should be last October 29, 2019. Alongside this case is the petition for the intervention of the National

Transmission Corporation, which the ERC has denied, despite TRANSCO’s emphasis that it has the right to do so bearing in mind that the IPO delay issue involves public interest.

From November 2018 up to now, November 2019, one year has passed, this issue is still pending, which we all know will seriously affect the interest of our constituents. The government should act on this. We, as lawmakers, should act on this because, in all ways, this will benefit the Filipino electric consumers. Definitely, this 10-year period ended on January 15, 2019, and based on NGCP’s audited financial statements, the corporation declared a total cash dividend of P169.893 billion in the past nine years.

Sa makatuwid, humigit kumulang na apat na billion kada taon in stock dividends ang nawawala sa mga Pilipino mula sa pagkakaantala na ito ng NGCP. Ang interes ng publiko, na dapat nating inaalagaan at pinapahalagahan, ang nakasalalay sa mga pagkakaantala na ito.

Mr. Speaker, and my distinguished colleagues, imagine where these billions could go if the IPO of the NGCP has not been delayed. Imagine if these billions that deprived the Filipinos for ten long years would be allotted back to our constituents. A lot more implemented projects and subsidized developments could have occurred if only the NGCP had an IPO in those years. We need to keep in mind that the NGCP operates the Philippines’ power transmission network for 25 years.

As public servants and Representatives of the people who gave this entity the franchise to exist and in return, with this condition of Initial Public Offering, we must be united in making sure that the law is faithfully executed, that their obligation has been acted accordingly, and that their mandated statutory requirement to offer at least 20 percent of its outstanding capital stock to the public was devotedly complied with.

Mr. Speaker, and fellow House Members, I thank you for the opportunity to present and profess my thoughts in advocating against this IPO delay of the NGCP.

May God continue to bless our beloved country, the Republic of the Philippines.

Maraming salamat po.

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

REP. TADURAN. Mr. Speaker, I move that the speech of Hon. Presley C. De Jesus be referred to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

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. TADURAN. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Gentleman from the Third District of Camarines Sur, Hon. Gabriel H. Bordado Jr., be recognized to avail of the Privilege Hour.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Hon. Gabriel H. Bordado Jr. is recognized.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. BORDADO

REP. BORDADO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, just before Vice President Maria Leonor “Leni” Gerona Robredo made her decision last November 5, 2019, majority of her allies were trying to convince her that the Presidential offer was a trap and meant to put her in a very humiliating position. Yet, in a move which triggered veritable shock waves in the national political arena, Vice President Robredo accepted President Rodrigo Duterte’s challenge for her to lead the so-called war on drugs.

Mr. Speaker, in the banner headline story of a major national daily, the Vice President was quoted as saying that “she intended to curb drug killings and to hold accountable not only drug smugglers, large-scale traffickers and ‘ninja cops’ who recycled illegal drugs, but also those behind rights abuse in waging the war.”

She virtually dismissed, Mr. Speaker, the warning made by her allies by stating that “I am ready to bear all of these because if I can save one innocent life, my principles and heart are telling me I should give it a try.”

Mr. Speaker, the Vice President’s new position as co-chair of the Inter-Agency Committee on Anti-Illegal Drugs does not come without challenges. The drug problem faced by the country has grown with such ferocity that eradicating it would be extremely tough even for a leader with the steeliest resolve. It is not a job where the solution comes neatly boxed and tied with a ribbon just after a couple of months. Neither is it a challenge that the President or the Vice President must face alone. It is a burden all the elected and appointed officials of the country must take on, regardless of their views and affiliations. We must learn to look at this not as opposing sides waiting for the others to fail, but as one unified government looking to overthrow the real enemy, the drug crisis that is ravaging and destroying the lives of our citizens.

Mr. Speaker, this new opportunity under the Vice President’s leadership means that we should all learn to accept that violence, murder and fear only work up to a certain extent and that they do not resolve the

deeply rooted problem of illegal drug dependence in the country. Quick fixes might provide the people with a sense of action and resolution, but, Mr. Speaker, if we are to find a sustainable solution to the drug crisis gripping the nation, then we must dig deep into the monstrous heart of the issue and start there.

In her acceptance speech, Mr. Speaker, Vice President Leni Robredo made the right first move when she asked that she and President Rodrigo Duterte should work together to solve the drug problem in the country. We, too, should put aside our hesitations and whatever reservations we might have to help in resolving the crisis.

In accepting the position offered to her, Vice President Robredo showed that she is serious about taking on the great responsibility. It is not just for show and her actions are not just for her own aggrandizement. It is a call for us to do the same. Mr. Speaker. As the Presidential spokesman declared, “Her success is our success, and her failure will be our failure. I do not think we would want that.”

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. TADURAN. Mr. Speaker, I move that the speech of Hon. Gabriel H. Bordado Jr. be referred to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

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. TADURAN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this point, I now move that the Gentleman from the Party-List BAYAN MUNA, Hon. Carlos Isagani T. Zarate, be recognized to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Hon. Carlos Isagani T. Zarate is recognized.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ZARATE.

REP. ZARATE. Maraming salamat, G. Ispiker.

G. Ispiker, noong nakaraang Miyerkules at Huwebes, ika-6 at ika-7 ng Nobyembre, kasama ang Kinatawang ito sa isinagawang National Fact-Finding and Solidarity Mission na pumunta sa Bacolod City. Ang nasabing mission ay dagliang tugon sa mga nangyaring joint police and military raids sa iba’t ibang mga opisina at residensya ng mga miyembro ng mga progresibong grupo sa mga siyudad ng Bacolod at Escalante noong ika-31 ng Oktubre na nagresulta din

sa walang basehang pagkahuli at pagkakulong ng 57 katao mula sa mga nasabing dalawang siyudad.

Napag-alaman sa aming fact-finding, G. Ispiker, na may pitong search warrants ang inimplementa ng mga pulis at militar. Apat dito ay sa siyudad ng Bacolod at tatlo naman sa Escalante, at lahat ng mga warrant na ito ay nilagdaan at inilabas ni RTC Quezon City Executive Judge Cecilyn Burgos-Villavert.

Naiulat din sa amin ang maraming paglabag sa karapatang pantao na ginawa ng mga miyembro ng raiding team sa aming mga kasamahan na hinuli sa panahon nang sila ay ni-raid, ang mga nabanggit kong opisina, at ng mga panahong sila ay hinuli na at dinala sa Negros Occidental Police Provincial Office kung saan sila ay nakaditene.

Lumabas ang ganitong halos magkaparehong eksena sa isinagawang mga pag-raid sa mga opisina nabanggit. Sa bigla at mabilisang pagdating ng mga kapulisan at militar, hinuli, dinala sa labas, o hindi kaya ay pinadapa agad ang nadatnan nilang mga tao sa lugar na kanilang ni-raid. Habang nasa labas o nakadapa ang kanilang mga hinuli ay may mga pumasok kaagad na mga nakamaskarang mga armado na kasama rin ng pulis at militar. Pagkatapos ng ilang sandali, saka pa lamang pinayagang pumasok muli o pinatayo ang mga hinuli at dinala sa loob ng mga opisina at ipinakita ang mga umano'y baril at eksplosibong kanilang nakita sa iba't ibang bahagi ng mga ni-raid na opisina at bahay.

G. Ispiker, ang mga paratang na ito sa aming mga kasamahan ay isang malaking kabalintunaan at kasinungalingan. Tahasan kong sinasabi na ang mga umano'y baril at eksplosibo o bomba na nakita sa mga opisina at bahay na ni-raid ay pawang mga itinanim at gawa-gawa lamang ang mga akusasyon na sila ay mga rebelde na nag-training daw sa mga nasabing mga lugar.

Malaking kasinungalingan dahil ang mga opisina ng ni-raid, halimbawa, ang aming regional office ng BAYAN MUNA ay isang publicly known na opisina na sa araw-araw ay bukas sa kahit sinuman, maging sa mga miyembro ng media na madalas pumupunta at nagsasagawa ng interview sa mga opisina ng iyon.

Sa katanayan, G. Ispiker, noong araw na ni-raid nila ang mga opisina ng ito, ang opisina ng BAYAN MUNA at ng Kilusang Mayo Uno, mayroong 21 mga manggagawa ng Ceres bus ang naroon dahil sa isang konsultasyon na ginawa nila sa KMU tungkol sa kanilang mga sitwasyon sa paggawa. Kasama rin sila sa mga walang batayang hinuli. Noong araw ding iyon, may mga kabataan ding miyembro ng cultural group, ang Teatro Obrero, na nasa loob din ng compound na nagsanay para sa isang pangkulturang palabas. Kasama rin sila sa mga hinuli na malisyosong tinawag na "child warriors" daw kaya sila ay hinuli.

Ipinabot din sa amin ang mga ginawang pananakot, pagbabanta at iba pang tipo ng psychological warfare or psychological torture sa mga hinuli nang sila ay dinala na sa Negros Occidental Provincial Police Office or NOPPO. May mga interogasyon na ginawa. Ang iba ay sa madaling-araw na walang kasama o assistance ng abogado ang mga hinuli na pilit na pinapaamin na sila ay mga miyembro ng rebeldeng NPA. Ngunit ang mga natuklasan at napag-alaman naming ito na mapaglabag sa karapatang pantao ay hindi pa nasasapat dahil kahit na ang pagbisita sa kanila ay ipinagkait din ng mga kapulisan na may hawak sa kanila.

Mga bandang alas dos y medya ng hapon noong Miyerkules, ilang miyembro ng fact-finding mission at mga kaanak ng mga nakakulong ay dumating sa NOPPO or Negros Occidental Provincial Police Office sa Bacolod City. Kabilang po sa mga pumunta rito, G. Ispiker, ay ang Kinatawang ito, si Rep. Arlene Brosas ng GABRIELA Women's Party, mga dating Kinatawan na sina Neri Colmenares, Teddy Casiño, Rafael Mariano at Ariel Casilao. Ang layunin sana ng aming grupo, maliban sa plano naming dalawin ang mga nakakulong naming mga kasamahan, ay magbigay sana ng courtesy call sa mga opisyal ng nasabing police command partikular kay Col. Romeo Baleros, ang Provincial Director at ang kanyang assistant na si Lt. Col. Adrian Accolado. Maliban sa courtesy call, gusto na rin sana namin nang mga oras na iyon na ipa-receive o ipatanggap na sa mga naturang opisyal ang Resolution ng Inquest Prosecutor ng Bacolod City na nag-uutos na palayain na ang 32 sa mga nakakulong dahil sa walang nakitang basehan o dahilan na sila ay ikulong at ang mga kasong isinampa sa kanila ay walang sapat na basehan. Subalit, G. Ispiker, kahit na malinaw ang aming pagpapakilala at pagpapaalam ay hindi kami pinayagan na makipagkita sa mga nasabi kong opisyal o makita man lang ang mga nakakulong na kasamahan namin. Walang masabing tiyak na dahilan kung bakit kami pinigilan sa gate ng nasabing police command na ayon sa officer-in-duty ng kampo ay kautusan ng kanilang Provincial Director na si Col. Romeo Baleros. Masaklap pa, kahit na ang mga abogado at mga kapamilya ng mga detainees ay hindi na rin pinapasok.

G. Ispiker, ito ay isang tahasang paglabag sa karapatan ng mga detainees na dalawin at kausapin ng kanilang mga pamilya at maging ng kanilang mga abogado sa loob ng oras ng dalaw. Hindi ko rin maintindihan kung bakit ayaw ng mga nasabing opisyal ng mga kapulisan, mga kapareho nating empleyado ng pamahalaan, kung bakit ayaw nilang humarap at makipagkita sa mga Kinatawang ito na nagnanais lamang na magbigay sana ng kortesiyang pagdalaw sa kanila.

Pagkaraan ng halos tatlong oras, ang aming grupo ay parang nakaditene din. Pinayagan din ang ilan sa aming pumasok, ang Kinatawang ito, si Rep. Arlene Brosas, si Atty. Neri Colmenares, at isa pang abogado

upang salubungin ang mga pinalayang 32 detainees na mga manggagawa at mga menor de edad at upang kausapin ang 11 pang hindi na pinalagay dahil sa mga gawa-gawang kaso na isinampa sa kanila, subalit, G. Ispiker, ang ginawang ito ng mga opisyal ng kapulisan ng NOPPO or Negros Occidental Provincial Police Office sa pangunguna ni Colonel Baleros ay hindi katanggap-tanggap, at atin itong mariing pinupuna at kinokondena. Nagpakita ito ng pagiging arogante ng mga nasabing opisyal ng NOPPO sa gitna ng pagkabasura ng mga kasong isinampa nila sa 32 naming mga kasamahan na kanilang ipinangalandakan pa at ipinarada sa harap ng media na mga “child warriors” daw at mga rebelde umano na nagsagawa ng training noong hinuli nila ito noong October 31. Ang ginawang ito ng mga opisyal ng Negros Occidental Provincial Police Office ay malinaw na kabahagi ng umiiral ngayon na panunupil at panggigipit sa mga miyembro ng mga oposisyon at kritiko ng kasalukuyang administrasyon partikular ang mga miyembro ng mga progresibong grupo na consistent sa pagpupuna at pagkokondena sa mga kontra mamamayan na mga programa at patakaran katulad ng mga madugong kampanya laban sa droga, corruption, rice import liberalization na pumapatay sa ating mga magsasaka, ang walang habas na pagpataw ng mga buwis, katulad ng TRAIN na nagresulta sa taas ng presyo ng mga bilihin, ang lumalalang kahirapan, ang walang pagtaas ng sahod at pension at marami pang iba.

G. Ispiker, itinuturo na sa atin ng kasaysayan na ang mga panunupil at panggigipit ay hindi ang kasagutan sa mga lehitimong hinaing, kahilingan at kahingian ng ating mga mamamayan, bagkus ang mga panunupil at panggigipit ay magiging gatong lamang sa mas matindi at lumalakas pang paglaban ng mamamayan na naghahangad ng tunay na pag-unlad at pagbabago sa ating lipunan. Kaya, ang ating panawagan, G. Ispiker, ay itigil na ang mga atake sa mga karapatan ng ating mga mamamayan. Itigil na ang atake sa mga miyembro ng oposisyon, kritiko at mga progresibong grupo. Ibasura ang gawa-gawang kaso at palayain na ang lahat ng mga biktima nito at palayain na ang lahat ng mga ditenidong pulitikal.

Maraming salamat po, G. Ispiker, at magandang hapon sa ating lahat.

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

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

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 Gentleman from the Sixth District of Manila, Minority Leader Hon. Bienvenido Abante, for his interpellation.

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

The Hon. Bienvenido Abante is recognized.

REP. ABANTE. Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, puwede po ba akong makapagtanong sa kagalang-galang na Congressman Zarate ng BAYAN MUNA ng mga ilang mga katanungan upang maging malinaw po ang mga nais nating tukuyin, Mr. Speaker?

REP. ZARATE. Isa pong karangalan G. Ispiker na ma-interpellate ng ating Minority Leader.

REP. ABANTE. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, ilan po ba talaga ang mga hinuli ng ating mga kasundaluhan? Ilan po ho ang nakakulong at ilan po ang pinakawalan?

REP. ZARATE. Noong October 31 po, G. Ispiker, doon ho sa Bacolod, at sa Escalante 75 po—75 sa Bacolod City at dalawa naman sa Escalante or a total of 77 lahat ang hinuli. Pagkatapos ho ng ginawang inquest proceedings ng City Prosecutor’s ng Bacolod City iniutos nito na palayain na ang 32, nauna na po iyong mga minors ni-release na iyong mga minors, 15, at pagkatapos po after po ng inquest proceedings naglabas nga ng resolusyon na palayain ang 32 dahil walang basehan ang isinampang kaso sa kanila iyong illegal possession of firearms at illegal possession of explosives.

Kasama po rito sa 32 na pinalaya ay ang 21 workers ng Ceres bus company na gaya ng nabanggit ko kanina ay nandoon lamang dahil nagkaroon ng consultation sa kanilang labor problem, at 11 mga cultural workers na mga kabataan na miyembro ng Teatro Obrero. Sa kasalukuyan po 11 na lamang sa Bacolod City ang nakakulong, ang pito rito ay sinampahan ng non-bailable offenses of illegal possession of explosives and multiple possession of handguns; apat naman ang sinampahan ng kasong illegal possession of firearms kaya bailable sila. Iyong dalawa hong hinuli naman na matatanda sa Escalante City ang isinampa sa kanila ay non-bailable offense of illegal possession of explosives.

Iyon po ang nangyari ho doon na, Mr. Speaker, kagalang-galang na Minority Leader sa isa, sa Bacolod at saka sa Escalante.

REP. ABANTE. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, nabanggit ninyo po kanina na tinatawag po silang mga child warriors. Bakit po? Ilan po ba ang mga menor de edad na mga hinuli, Mr. Speaker?

REP. ZARATE. Noong panahon po, G. Ispiker, na nag-conduct ng raid ang joint team ng PNP, CIDG at ng Army, noong pumunta ho sila sa opisina ng BAYAN MUNA, isa ho itong compound na nandoon ang opisina ng BAYAN MUNA, nandoon din po ang opisina ng Kilusang Mayo Uno at opisina rin ho ng isang cultural group iyong tinatawag na Teatro Obrero.

Noong panahon pong iyon, mayroon pong pagsasanay para sa isang pagtatanghal ang Teatro Obrero at kasama po rito ay ilang minors na mga 15 years old, mayroon hong 16 at mayroong 17 at iyong iba naman ay 18 and above. Ito po iyong tinawag na “child warriors” dahil mga minors kaya sila ho itong unang inutos ng piskalya na palayain, dahil mga minors nga sila at walang isinampang kaso sa kanila, subalit noong magkaroon na ng press conference ang pulis at militar, ito nga ang sinabi nila, child warriors na nag-training daw doon sa aming opisina bilang mga rebeldeng NPA.

Pinabubulaanan po natin ito, G. Ispiker, kagalang-galang na Minority Leader. Paano hong magtre-training ang mga NPA doon, na ang amin hong opisina is a publicly known office? Araw-araw, bukas ho ito kahit Linggo para ho puntahan ng ating mga constituents sa Negros, specifically sa Bacolod, at ito nga ay bukas, palaging pinupuntahan ng mga media, so iyon po ang kanilang justification, dahil mayroon daw hong mga nakuhang mga baril, na mga paltik, iyong iba mayroong granada.

Kaya po nabanggit ko kanina, tahasang sinasabi namin na ito ay mga itanim. Dahil ayon na rin po sa ginawa nating fact-finding, ang pakikipag-usap natin sa ating mga kasamahan na nandoon noong ginanap ang raid ay talaga hong parang blitzkrieg ang nangyari. Dumating iyong mga armado, pinalabas sila sa compound, pinadapa, at ina-announce na lang pagkatapos na mayroon daw silang nakuhang mga baril at mga granada, G. Ispiker, kagalang-galang na Minority Leader.

REP. ABANTE. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, iyong lugar kung saan sila hinuli ay hindi lamang isang pampublikong lugar kung hindi ang mga naroon po ay mga ligal na political organizations. Hindi po ba?

REP. ZARATE. Tama po, ang BAYAN MUNA po ay isang ligal na organisasyon. Ang KMU ay isang labor center na kilala na. Ang isa pong ni-raid din nila na opisina, ang National Federation of Sugar Workers—dekada ‘80 pa po ay kilala na ang NFSW na talagang nakikipaglaban para sa interes ng mga magtutubo, lalong-lalo na sa mga manggagawa ng tubo, na ni-raid din nila, at ang isa pa pong ni-raid ay opisina rin ng GABRIELA Women’s Party, ang organisasyon ng GABRIELA, na isa ring kilalang organisasyon. At ang pang-apat ho rin na ni-raid nila sa Bacolod

ay ang residensiya ng aming Regional Coordinator, na kilala rin sa kanilang subdivision na nakatira roon as a peaceful citizen, although, siya ay isang kilalang aktibista at hindi naman niya ito itinatago dahil hindi naman ho natin ikinakahiya, at hindi niya ikinakahiya na siya nga ay isang aktibista, pero iyon po, sinabi rin nila na ito raw ay kanlungan or underground house ng mga rebeldeng NPA, G. Ispiker, kagalang-galang na Minority Leader.

REP. ABANTE. Mr. Speaker, wala na po tayong Anti-Subversion Law. Iyon po ang gusto kong tukuying maigi, wala na po tayong Anti-Subversion Law. At gusto ko rin pong sabihin, Mr. Speaker, na kailangan po natin ng aktibong activism dito sa ating bansa, na hindi naman po bawal sa Konstitusyon na ang mga kabataan, kahit na ang mga katandaan, ay maging aktibista para po gisingin ang taumbayan sa ilang mga bagay na nangyayari, na alam natin na hindi po ayon sa batas at hindi po nararapat, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ZARATE. Tama po kayo, kagalang-galang na Minority Leader, Mr. Speaker, na-repeal na ho iyong ating Anti-Subversion Law, ang RA 1700 noong kapanahunan ng dating Pangulong Fidel V. Ramos. Very ironic, isang Heneral ng Armed Forces of the Philippines, nang maging Presidente, nakita niya na itong Anti-Subversion Law ay isang batas na sinusupil ang karapatan ng ating mga mamamayan kaya noong panahon niya ay ibinasura ito, ni-repeal ito. At kung matatandaan ninyo rin po, G. Ispiker at kagalang-galang na Minority Leader, sa kapanahunan din ni dating Pangulong Fidel V. Ramos ay naging masigla ang panunumbalik noong usapang pangkapayapaan sa gitna ng gobyerno ng Pilipinas at ng National Democratic Front of the Philippines.

In fact, ang agenda ng usapang pangkapayapaan, iyong tinatawag nilang Hague Joint Declaration ay nalagdaan noong 1992, at ang unang mayor na kasunduan na nakapaloob dito sa Hague Joint Declaration ay ang Comprehensive Agreement for the Respect of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law or CARHRIHL. Ito ay nakumpleto sa panahon din ni dating Pangulong Fidel Valdez Ramos.

Kaya nabanggit ko ito dahil tama po kayo, ang mga ganitong panggigipit sa gitna ng wala na tayong batas kontra subersyon, ang mga ganitong panggigipit ay hindi po akma o tama sa isang healthy democracy. Kailangan natin ang fiscalizer o namumuna, o kahit na iyong mga aktibista dahil napakaraming reporma at pagbabago sa lipunan dahil sa aktibismo ng mga ninuno natin maging hanggang sa ngayon, kagalang-galang na Minority Leader, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ABANTE. Mr. Speaker, Kagalang-galang na Zarate, ano po ba talaga ang dahilan kung bakit hinuli

at ikinulong ang mga taong ito at pagkatapos ang ilan ay pinakawalan din? Ano po ba talaga ang dahilan? Nais pong malaman ng taumbayan ang dahilan kung bakit ang iba ay pinakawalan at ang iba ay nakakulong pa rin hanggang ngayon.

REP. ZARATE. G. Ispiker, kagalang-galang na Minority Leader, wala po kaming ibang makitang dahilan kundi ito talaga ay panggigipit at panunupil sa karapatan ng oposisyon o mga kritiko ng pamahalaan. Ang nakita po natin, dahil sa ating mga pagpupuna sa mga kontra-mamamayan na mga patakaran, iyong ating panawagan na magkaroon, halimbawa, ng tunay na repormang agraryo, magkaroon ng pambansang industriyalisasyon, itigil na ang distraksyon ng ating environment, ang displacement ng ating mga katutubo, ang mapaminsalang mga proyekto gaya ng mga dambuhalang dam at marami pang iba ay kailangang itigil na.

Ang mga adbokasiyang ito sa ating palagay ay nasasaktan din ang ilang mga sektor ng ating lipunan, lalong-lalo na ang ating security sector. Mula noon hanggang ngayon, pinipilit na ang mga progresibo at mga ligal na organisasyon at iniuugnay sa ating mga kapatid na nag-alsa o nagbitbit ng armas dahil ito iyong nakita nilang porma ng paglaban.

Sa amin pong bahagi, kagalang-galang na Minority Leader at G. Ispiker, na-recognize natin na talagang mayroong malalim na problema sa ating lipunan, kaya mayroon tayong mga kapatid na piniling mag-aklas o magbitbit ng armas in the act of rebellion. Kaya nga po sa halos higit na 50 taon o limang dekada, mayroon na sana tayong nakitang pagkakataon na magkaroon ng isang negotiated political settlement sa pamamagitan ng usapang pangkapayapaan, na in all candidness po, masasabi ko na mahaba na ang iniusad sa ilalim ng administrasyong ito, noong pumasok ang administrasyong Duterte sa usapang pangkapayapaan, kung saan nagkaroon ng series of formal talks between August of 2016 until February of 2017.

Sa katunayan, para sa kaalaman ng ating kagalang-galang na Minority Leader at G. Ispiker, before ibinasura ang usapang pangkapayapaan, mayroon na sana, sa aking pagkakaalam, na mga draft interim agreement para sa mga substantive agenda, kagaya ng usaping tigil putukan or ceasefire, dahil alam naman po natin na isa rin iyan sa hinahangad ng ating mga kababayan. Pero iyon nga po, pagkatapos ibasura na ang usapang pangkapayapaan nang nilagdaan ni Pangulong Duterte ang Executive Order No. 70 in December 2017, at inilabas naman ang Memorandum Order No. 32 noong sumunod na mga taon, mas lalo pang umigting ang atake sa mga miyembro ng mga progresibong grupo sa iba't ibang bahagi ng bansa, at lumundo nga ito nitong October 31 kung saan nagkaroon ng maraming paghuli sa aming mga kasamahan sa Negros.

Tinanong po ninyo kanina, kagalang-galang na Minority Leader, kung ano ba ang dahilan nang sila ay hinuli? Gaya po ng nabanggit ko, ang mga ebidensya nila ay ang mga nakita raw na mga baril at mga granada or explosives, at ang lahat ng hinuli ay mga rebelde raw. Pero ito po ang aking katanungan, kung totoong sila ay mga rebelde na nag-training, bakit iniutos ng Inquest Prosecutor na i-release ang 32 at sinabing walang basehan at walang ebidensya na sila nga ay probably may kasalanan sa isinampang kaso sa kanila? Dito, makikita po natin na talagang mahina ang kasong isinampa, at dahil ito ay mga gawa-gawa lamang, kami ay nananalig na sa darating na mga araw, sa efforts na rin po ng aming mga abogado, mababasura rin ang mga trumped-up charges laban sa aming mga kasamahan, G. Ispiker, Minority Leader.

REP. ABANTE. Doon po ako nagtataka, Mr. Speaker, kung bakit ang iba ay pinakawalan at ang iba ay nakakulong pa? Ang nakapagtataka rin, Mr. Speaker, ay ito, ang sabi po ninyo kanina na iyong mga ibang humuli ay nakamaskara, naka-mask. Sa palagay po ninyo, sila ay mga pulis o sila ay mga miyembro ng Armed Forces of the Philippines?

REP. ZARATE. Dahil po, G. Ispiker, kagalang-galang na Minority Leader, it was a joint team, kaya to our understanding, magkahalo na sila. Ang nabanggit lang nila, talagang mayroong mga nakasuot ng bonnet at ang iba naman ay hindi, lalong-lalo na ang mga miyembro ng CIDG dahil sila ang mga imbestigador at magfa-file ng kaso. Pero ang mga naunang pumasok, halimbawa, talagang forcibly pinasok ang isang opisina ng mga naka-bonnet na ayon sa witnesses at sila rin ang aming pinaghinalaan na nagtanim ng sinasabing nakuha raw na baril at explosives sa naturang mga opisina, G. Ispiker, G. Minority Leader.

REP. ABANTE. Mr. Speaker, bilang isang abogado, Kagalang-galang na Zarate, iyon po ba ang dapat na maging damit ng mga nanghuhuli? Tayo ba ay may digmaan dito sapagkat nakikita ko lang iyan sa mga pelikula, na iyong mga mersenaryo ay kapag iyan ay nang-raid ng isang lugar, mga naka-bonnet. Pero ang Pilipinas po ay isang matahimik na bansa. Sa pagkakaalam ko, parang overkill po yata ang ginawa ng mga nanghuli sa mga kabataang ito.

REP. ZARATE. Tama po kayo, G. Ispiker, Mr. Minority Leader, overkill at talagang hindi po talaga kabahagi siguro iyan ng standard operating procedure nila. Pero itong nakikita naming padron sa ngayon, pattern po sa mga hinuli nila, maging sa consultants sa usapang pangkapayapaan noon at sa iba pang mga lider ng mga progresibong grupo.

Ako rin po, sa aking karanasan bilang abogado,

bago tayo pumasok dito sa Kongreso, mayroon na rin akong kasong nahawakang ganito na eventually ay atin pong naipabasura.

Nitong mga nakaraan po, marami na ring kasong naipabasura ang ating piskalya at maging ang husgado dahil nga pagdating talaga sa trial sa korte, napapatunayan na gawa-gawa lang ang mga kaso at pati na rin ang mga ebidensya. Ang pattern po na nakuha natin, kaya sa ngayon talagang hindi na lang baril ang ebidensya kundi explosives na rin or granada or kung ano pa mang explosives dahil nga po non-bailable ito. Kung hindi man explosive, kagaya po noong isang hinuli nila sa Bacolod, isang miyembro ng alternative media na young lady broadcaster, ang itinanim sa kanya ay tatlong baril. Sa kasalukuyang batas, kapag mahigit dalawa ang nakuha sa iyong baril o kung tatlo na iyan, non-bailable na rin po. Ito ngayon ang ating nakikitang padron or pattern dahil siguro gusto nilang gipitin talaga at supilin, at habang nasa loob ka ng kulungan, siguro ang iniisip nila ay magiging ineffective ka na. Iyon po ang isa nilang pagkakamali, dahil napatunayan na rin at itinuro ng kasaysayan, ang mga ganitong gawain, hindi magpapapigil ang mamamayan kung mayroon talagang kadahilanan na magsalita, magreklamo at magpuna. Kaya kahit po sa kapanahunan ng diktator na si Marcos, libu-libo ang ikinulong pero hindi rin po napigilan ang ating mamamayan na maghanap ng tunay na pagbabago. Naipakita ng ating kasaysayan na napatalsik ang isang diktator at ang mga sumunod pang mga administrasyon na mayroon ding ginawang kontra-mamamayan na mga patakaran, G. Ispiker, Mr. Minority Leader.

REP. ABANTE. Naniniwala po ba kayo, Mr. Speaker, na ang atin pong Sandatahang Lakas at mga kapulisan ay nagbabalik sa mga panahon ng rehimeng Marcos, Mr. Speaker?

REP. ZARATE. Kung atin pong pagbabasehan ang mga nangyayari sa ngayon, hindi natin maikakaila na ang dami talagang hindi magagandang nangyayari sa mga institusyong ito. Nitong mga nakaraan sa isang pagdinig sa Senado, halimbawa, sa usapin ng kampanya sa droga, libu-libo na po ang namatay sa kampanya laban sa droga. Naging madugo ang kampanya laban sa droga pero napag-alaman natin na ang mga pulis pala mismo, iyong mga tinatawag na “ninja cops” ang naging dahilan sa recycling ng drugs.

Mayroong problema ang mga institusyong ito na ang naging resulta po, nandiyan ang malawakang paglabag sa karapatan ng ating mga mamamayan, na sa halip na sila itong mayroong mandato sa ating Saligang Batas na protektahan at respetuhin ang karapatan ng ating mamamayan, sila pa itong lumalabag. Iyan po ang isa sa pinakamataas na klase ng paglabag nang karapatan na kung sino iyong dapat naatasan na magprotekta sa atin ay sila pa ang nagiging violator sa ngayon, G. Ispiker.

REP. ABANTE. Naniniwala po ba kayo, Mr. Speaker, sa ating panahon ngayon, nabubuhay na tayo sa culture of violence, Mr. Speaker?

REP. ZARATE. Ang umiiral po talaga ngayon is that there is a state of impunity na nakikita natin dahil marami sa mga naging violators ng karapatan ng ating mamamayan ay hindi napaparusahan, mula sa mga matataas na opisyal hanggang sa ordinaryong empleyado or opisyal ng ating pamahalaan, especially our security sector. Kaya kapag nagtuluy-tuloy po ang ganitong state of impunity, kakambal nito ang violence. Gusto po sana nating mahinto na ito. Itigil ang mga pagpatay, itigil ang mga pag-atake, dahil po halimbawa sa Negros, noong mga nakaraang buwan, sa panahon ng tagtuyot na kung tawagin nila ay *tiempo muerto*, literally it is a season of death. Dahil tagtuyot, walang trabaho, namamatay. Pero nitong mga nakaraang buwan po sa Negros, talagang literally, it is a season of death dahil kaliwa’t kanan, pinapatay ang mga lider magsasaka, lider manggagawa. Kahit na isang abogado, lider noong Sagay massacre, si Atty. Ben Ramos, na aking kasamahan sa isang samahan ng mga abogado, noong nakaraang taon, a year ago, he was murdered by motorcycle riding gunmen. Nitong March ng kasalukuyang taon, sa Canlaon City, for example, isang incumbent city councilor, si Councilor Jalandoni, pinasok ng madaling araw sa kanilang bahay at pinagbabaril. Gaya ng nabanggit ko, kabahagi ito ng umiiral ngayon na isang kultura o estado na walang pananagutan. Kaya dapat mahinto na po ito, G. Ispiker, kagalang-galang na Minority Leader.

REP. ABANTE. Naniniwala po ako, Mr. Speaker, na bilang isang demokratikong bansa, mayroon tayong karapatan. Anuman ang ideyolohiya ng tao, mayroon tayong karapatan na i-express ang ating opinyon, i-express ang ating paniniwala.

Naniniwala rin po ako Mr. Speaker, na hindi dapat humawak ng baril upang magkaroon ng pagbabago sa ating lipunan. Naniniwala po ako sa kapayapaan. Palagay ko ang ating Pangulo naman ay alam niya ang kasaysayan ng ating bayan. Ang ating Pangulo ay isang matalinong tao at naniniwala po ako na nakikita niya ang kalagayan.

Naniniwala po ako na kung tutupdin lamang ng ating mga awtoridad ang sinasabi ng ating Saligang Batas, magkakaroon ng magandang kalalagayan ang ating mga mamamayan, sapagkat ang ating Saligang Batas, Mr. Speaker, nais solusyunan ang kahirapan ng tao. Naniniwala rin po ako sa sinabi ng ating kagalang-galang na Representante ng BAYAN MUNA na may mga kadahilanan kung bakit nag-aaklas ang maraming kabataan. Kinakailangan po i-address ito ng ating pamahalaan within the bounds of law. Hindi po karahasan ang kasagutan, Mr. Speaker. Hindi po blitzkrieg na pag-atake; hindi po ang pagbalik natin sa

rehimen na ang pinag-uusap ang kamay na bakal. Hindi po iyon, Mr. Speaker.

Naniniwala po ako na ngayon ang pagkakataon na ipakita natin na tayo ay civilized men at may kultura ng kapayapaan, Mr. Speaker. Nalulungkot po ako sa mga pangyayaring ito sapagkat kapwa Pilipino ang mga nag-aaway, Mr. Speaker, samantalang pinababayaan po natin ang Tsina na agawin ang ating mga isla na wala tayong ginagawa masyado. Pero walang patumangga po ang nangyayaring violence sa ating kapwa mga Pilipino, Mr. Speaker.

Sana po ang privilege speech na ito, ang pinag-uusapan natin ay malaman ng ating bayan at marinig ng ating awtoridad. Malaman din ng ating Pangulo na sincerely and honestly, nais po natin ng tunay na kapayapaan sa ating bayan. Nais po natin na ang mga mahihirap ay magkaroon ng sariling lupa; ang mga mahihirap ay magkaroon po ng sariling kinikita; na ang mga mahihirap ay mahango sa kahirapan. Iyan po ang nais natin sa ating bayan.

Alam ko na si Kagalang-galang na Zarate, iyan din po ang kanyang inaasam-asam bilang isang Kongresista, na talagang lumalaban para po sa ating mga mamamayang Pilipino, hindi po ba?

REP. ZARATE. Tama po kayo at sumasang-ayon ako sa ating kagalang-galang na Minority Leader. Bilang mga Kinatawan po dito sa Kongreso, iyan ang ating mithiin na magkaroon tayo ng pangmatagalan na katahimikan, kapayapaan na nakabase sa hustisya, matugunan na ang mahigit limang dekadang tunggalian sa ating bayan at masagot na ang ugat ng tunggaliang ito. Ito ang ugat na nagmumula sa kahirapan, ng walang hustisya at iba pang mga panlipunang problema.

Kaisa po ninyo kami at salamat sa inyong pakikiisa sa amin. Tama po, kaya tayo nandito sa Kongreso, hindi lang para magpuna. Kung titingnan po ang track record ng aming partido, ng BAYAN MUNA, kami po ang fiscalizer dito sa Kongreso. Pero nagtutulak din tayo ng mga importanteng mga reporma sa ating mga batas. Napakaraming batas na rin po ang aming ipinanukala rito at pinakikinabangan na rin ng ating mga mamamayan ngayon.

So, maraming salamat po sa ating kagalang-galang na Minority Leader sa kanyang mga katanungan, sa paglilinaw ng pangyayaring ito. Sana nga po, ang aming panawagan ay matigil ang mga ganitong karahasan. Dahil ito ay hindi, gaya ng nabanggit ko kanina, hindi ito ang tugon na ating hinahanap. Ang ating tugon na hinahanap, kaya mayroon tayong mga advocacy ay upang matugunan at ma-resolve iyong tinatawag nating “root causes of the impoverishment of our people,” the root causes why until now there is an ongoing armed conflict in our country, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minority Leader.

REP. ABANTE. Tigilan na po natin, Mr. Speaker, ang karahasan. Tigilan na po natin, Mr. Speaker, ang mockery sa ating mga batas. Tigilan na po natin, Mr. Speaker, ang pang-aabuso ng ating mga law enforcers.

Mr. Speaker, malapit na po ang Kapaskuhan at ang isa pong napakagandang dahilan na pagdating ng ating Panginoon ay iyong sinabi po ng mga anghel, iyan po ay, “Peace on earth, goodwill towards men.”

Magandang hapon po, Mr. Speaker. Salamat po sa inyo.

REP. ZARATE. Maraming salamat at magandang hapon din po sa ating kagalang-galang na Minority Leader.

Maraming salamat, Ginoong Ispiker.

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, earlier, the speech of Representative Zarate was already referred to the Committee on Rules. Considering that there was an interpellation, we just move that the interpellation of the Minority Leader be also referred, together with the speech of Representative Zarate, to the Committee on Rules.

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.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

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

It was 6:02 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 6:14 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

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

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

The Secretary General read the following House Bills on First Reading, and the Deputy Speaker made the corresponding references.

BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 5400, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING SECTION 65 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11260, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT OF FISCAL YEAR 2019”

By Representatives Legarda and Ungab
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Bill No. 5424, entitled:

“AN ACT EXTENDING THE AVAILABILITY

OF THE 2019 APPROPRIATIONS FOR MAINTENANCE AND OTHER OPERATING EXPENSES AND CAPITAL OUTLAYS TO DECEMBER 31, 2020, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 65 OF THE GENERAL PROVISIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT 11260, THE GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT OF FISCAL YEAR 2019”

By Representative Villafuerte
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

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

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn the session until tomorrow, Tuesday, November 12, 2019, at three o'clock in the afternoon.

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

It was 6:15 p.m.