



Congressional Record

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House of Representatives

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No. 25

CALL TO ORDER

At 3:00 p.m., Deputy Speaker Johnny Ty Pimentel called the session to order.

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

PRAYER

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pimentel). Please rise and remain standing for a silent prayer.

Everybody rose for the silent prayer.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

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

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

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

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pimentel). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the roll call is hereby deferred.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we now proceed to the Reference of Business.

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

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

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

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

BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 5307, entitled:

“AN ACT REGULATING THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA, PROVIDING PROTECTION FOR CHILDREN, MINORS AND CONSUMERS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Fernandez

TO THE COMMITTEE ON WELFARE OF CHILDREN

House Bill No. 5308, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT 8047, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE BOOK PUBLISHING INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT ACT, ENSURING THE FACTUAL ACCURACY AND VERACITY OF TEXTBOOKS PUBLISHED AND USED FROM KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 12 IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Tutor

TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5309, entitled:

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

By Representative Lara

TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5310, entitled:

“AN ACT REGULATING THE MANUFACTURE, USE, SALE, PACKAGING, DISTRIBUTION AND ADVERTISEMENT OF VAPOR PRODUCTS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Barbers
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND INDUSTRY

House Bill No. 5311, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A LUNG CENTER OF THE PHILIPPINES IN BOHOL FOR THE VISAYAS AND IN DAVAO FOR MINDANAO, AMENDING SECTIONS 1 AND 4 OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 1823, ENTITLED: AN ACT CREATING THE LUNG CENTER OF THE PHILIPPINES, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Aumentado
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 5312, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A SOLID WASTE REDEMPTION AND RECOVERY SYSTEM AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Siao
TO THE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY

House Bill No. 5313, entitled:

“AN ACT RECOGNIZING AND PROMOTING THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE FILIPINO ETHNOLINGUISTIC GROUPS THROUGH THE ADOPTION OF ETHNOLINGUISTIC COMMUNITY FLAGS AND USE OF LOCAL LANGUAGES IN STREET SIGNAGES AND OTHER INFORMATIONAL SIGNAGES IN PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES”

By Representative Siao
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5314, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN EXTENSION OFFICE OF THE LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE (LTO) IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF CALAMBA, PROVINCE OF MISAMIS OCCIDENTAL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREOF”

By Representative Ty
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 5315, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING A SPECIAL LICENSE FOR PUBLIC UTILITY DRIVERS”

By Representative Umali (Ma. Victoria)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 5316, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING LIFETIME VALIDITY OF PHILIPPINE PASSPORTS TO SENIOR CITIZENS, FURTHER AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 10 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8239, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘PHILIPPINE PASSPORT ACT OF 1996,’ AS AMENDED”

By Representative Eriguel
TO THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

House Bill No. 5317, entitled:

“AN ACT PROMOTING OPEN INTERNET ACCESS, STRENGTHENING THE NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION, AND EXPANDING THE RIGHTS OF END-USERS, AMENDING FOR THESE PURPOSES REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7925”

By Representative Romualdo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

House Bill No. 5318, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR MANDATORY APPOINTMENT OF TOURISM OFFICERS IN PROVINCES, CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES WHERE TOURISM IS A SIGNIFICANT INDUSTRY, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7160, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991, AS AMENDED”

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

House Bill No. 5319, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING RESTAURANTS AND OTHER SIMILAR FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS TO DISCLOSE AND DISPLAY NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION OF FOOD AND BEVERAGES ON THEIR MENUS AND MENU BOARDS”

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

House Bill No. 5320, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SPORTS FOR HIGH

SCHOOL STUDENTS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Chipeco
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE AND THE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

House Bill No. 5321, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTING THE COMPREHENSIVE POLICY FOR THE NURSING PROFESSION IN THE PHILIPPINES AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9173 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ‘THE PHILIPPINE NURSING ACT OF 2002’ ”

By Representative Tan (Alyssa)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL REGULATION

House Bill No. 5322, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE CONVERSION OF DINAPIGUE, ISABELA ROAD GOING TO DILASAG, AURORA INTO A NATIONAL ROAD AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Tan (Alyssa)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 5323, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING ADEQUATE FACILITIES FOR THE SAFETY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF ANCILLARY MEDICAL STAFF, INCREASING THEIR SALARY, AND PROVIDING FOR THEIR BENEFITS”

By Representative Tan (Alyssa)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 5324, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL IN BARANGAY DATU DANWATA, MUNICIPALITY OF MALITA, PROVINCE OF DAVAO OCCIDENTAL TO BE KNOWN AS GASPAR DANWATA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Bautista-Bandigan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5325, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE KIDAMAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN BARANGAY KALBAY, MUNICIPALITY OF JOSE ABAD SANTOS, PROVINCE OF DAVAO

OCCIDENTAL INTO AN INTEGRATED SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS KIDAMAN INTEGRATED SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Bautista-Bandigan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5326, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE JOSE ABAD SANTOS NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – TABAYON EXTENSION IN BARANGAY TABAYON, MUNICIPALITY OF JOSE ABAD SANTOS, PROVINCE OF DAVAO OCCIDENTAL FROM THE JOSE ABAD SANTOS NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS TABAYON NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Bautista-Bandigan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5327, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE DATU DANWATA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – TFS OF BALIS EXTENSION IN BARANGAY DATU DANWATA, MUNICIPALITY OF MALITA, PROVINCE OF DAVAO OCCIDENTAL INTO AN INDEPENDENT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS BALIS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Bautista-Bandigan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5328, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL IN BARANGAY TALOGOY, MUNICIPALITY OF MALITA, PROVINCE OF DAVAO OCCIDENTAL TO BE KNOWN AS TAMAING TRIBAL NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Bautista-Bandigan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5329, entitled:

“AN ACT ALLOWING TRICYCLES TO TRAVEL BEYOND THE REGULAR ROUTE OF SERVICE AS EMBODIED IN THEIR FRANCHISE IN EMERGENCY CASES

AS DETERMINED BY CONCERNED GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY AND PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR ANY VIOLATION THEREOF”

By Representative Panotes
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 5330, entitled:

“AN ACT PROTECTING THE INTEGRITY AND INDEPENDENCE OF THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS (COMELEC) BY REMOVING FROM THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIT THE BURDEN OF PROVIDING AN OFFICE SPACE FOR THE OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL ELECTION SUPERVISOR AND HIS STAFF AND THE ELECTION REGISTRAR AND HIS STAFF, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 55 OF BATAS PAMBANSA BILANG 881, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE OMNIBUS ELECTION CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES”

By Representative Panotes
TO THE COMMITTEE ON SUFFRAGE AND ELECTORAL REFORMS

House Bill No. 5331, entitled:

“AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE LOCAL SANGGUNIANs OF MUNICIPALITIES AND CITIES, EXCEPT IN METROPOLITAN MANILA, TO DESIGNATE TRICYCLE LANES IN PUBLIC ROADS OR HIGHWAYS WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE TERRITORIAL JURISDICTION AND PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR ANY VIOLATION THEREOF”

By Representative Panotes
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 5332, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DepEd) TO INTEGRATE GARDENING IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM IN BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS”

By Representative Panotes
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5333, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING OVERSEAS WORKERS WELFARE ADMINISTRATION (OWWA) CENTER IN EVERY PROVINCE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Panotes
TO THE COMMITTEE ON OVERSEAS WORKERS AFFAIRS

House Bill No. 5334, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A PROPORTIONATE SCHOOL ADMISSION AND ACCEPTANCE SHARE IN THE PHILIPPINE MILITARY ACADEMY AND THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE ACADEMY FOR MEMBERS OF THE INDIGENOUS CULTURAL COMMUNITIES/INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, AND FOR SUCH OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Tolentino
TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY AND THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ORDER AND SAFETY

House Bill No. 5335, entitled:

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

By Representative Yap (Eric)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION AND THE COMMITTEE ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT

House Bill No. 5336, entitled:

“AN ACT RECOGNIZING THE PARTICIPATORY GUARANTEE SYSTEM (PGS) AS A FORM FOR CERTIFICATION FOR LABELLING ORGANIC PRODUCTS AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT 10068, ALSO KNOWN AS THE ORGANIC AGRICULTURE ACT OF 2010, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Cullamat, Zarate and Gaité
TO THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

House Bill No. 5337, entitled:

“AN ACT PROHIBITING THE USE OF PRODUCTS CONTAINING GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS (GMO) ON FOOD AND AGRICULTURE IN THE COUNTRY, PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION THEREOF, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

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

House Bill No. 5338, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING INDUSTRIES ENGAGED

IN THE EXPLOITATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES TO GIVE PREFERENTIAL EMPLOYMENT TO LOCAL RESIDENTS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE THE LABOR CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES”

By Representative Tolentino
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

House Bill No. 5339, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING SEPTEMBER 7 OF EVERY YEAR AS A SPECIAL WORKING HOLIDAY IN MARAGONDON, CAVITE TO COMMEMORATE THE BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF REVOLUTIONARY WAR HERO EMILIANO RIEGO DE DIOS AND TO BE KNOWN AS EMILIANO RIEGO DE DIOS DAY”

By Representative Tolentino
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 5340, entitled:

“AN ACT REPEALING THE MINIMUM HEIGHT REQUIREMENT FOR APPLICANTS TO THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE (PNP), THE BUREAU OF FIRE PROTECTION (BFP), AND THE BUREAU OF JAIL MANAGEMENT AND PENOLOGY (BJMP)”

By Representative Nieto
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ORDER AND SAFETY

House Bill No. 5341, entitled:

“AN ACT PROMOTING OPEN ACCESS IN DATA TRANSMISSION, PROVIDING ADDITIONAL POWERS TO THE NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION”

By Representative Pimentel
TO THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

House Bill No. 5342, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A MAGNA CARTA FOR BARANGAY HEALTH WORKERS”

By Representative Pimentel
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 5343, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MEDICAL SCHOLARSHIP AND RETURN SERVICE PROGRAM FOR DESERVING STUDENTS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Lara
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 5344, entitled:

“AN ACT DEVELOPING THE CACAO INDUSTRY IN CAGAYAN VALLEY REGION, CREATING FOR THE PURPOSE THE CACAO SUBSIDY FUND AND THE CACAO RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Lara
TO THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

House Bill No. 5345, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR TAX RELIEF DURING TIMES OF CALAMITY AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Lara
TO THE COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SERVICES

House Bill No. 5346, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A MAGNA CARTA FOR BARANGAYS”

By Representative Lara
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 5347, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NUMBERED 7309, ENTITLED ‘AN ACT CREATING A BOARD OF CLAIMS UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF UNJUST IMPRISONMENT OR DETENTION AND VICTIMS OF VIOLENT CRIMES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES’ ”

By Representative Suntay
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 5348, entitled:

“AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNMENT CORPORATE COUNSEL BY RATIONALIZING AND FURTHER PROFESSIONALIZING ITS ORGANIZATION, UPGRADING POSITIONS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Gonzaga
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 5349, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING SICK LEAVE BENEFITS OF THIRTY DAYS WITH PAY PER YEAR TO ALL PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS”

By Representatives Castro (France), Zarate, Gaité,
Cullamat, Brosas and Elago
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION
AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5350, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING THE REGISTRATION
OF ALL USERS PRE-PAID SUBSCRIBER
IDENTITY MODULE (SIM) CARDS”

By Representative Sy-Alvarado
TO THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION AND
COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

House Bill No. 5351, entitled:

“AN ACT FURTHER AMENDING ARTICLES
29, 97, 98 AND 99 OF ACT NO. 3815, AS
AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE
REVISED PENAL CODE”

By Representative Chipeco
TO THE COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF
LAWS

House Bill No. 5352, entitled:

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

By Representative Castelo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 5353, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE NATIONAL
INTEGRATED COASTAL ECOSYSTEM
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (NICEDA)
FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
INTEGRATED COASTAL MANAGEMENT
PROGRAMS IN THE COUNTRY AND
PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Castelo
TO THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON CLIMATE
CHANGE

House Bill No. 5354, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING ALL PRIVATE AND
PUBLIC OFFICES AND ESTABLISHMENTS
TO PROVIDE FREE PARKING SPACES FOR
BICYCLES AND PROVIDING PENALTIES
FOR VIOLATION THEREOF”

By Representative Castelo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND
INDUSTRY

House Bill No. 5355, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING ALL PRIVATE AND

PUBLIC OFFICES TO ALLOT AT LEAST
THIRTY (30) MINUTES FREE PARKING
FOR COURIERS, MESSENGERS, LIASON
OFFICERS AND MOTORCYCLE ‘RIDERS’
WHO DELIVER GOODS EITHER AS PART
OF THEIR EMPLOYMENT DUTIES OR IN
THE CONDUCT OF THEIR BUSINESSES
AND PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR
VIOLATION THEREOF”

By Representative Castelo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND
INDUSTRY

House Bill No. 5356, entitled:

“AN ACT PROHIBITING DISCRIMINATION
ON THE BASIS OF AGE, RACIAL OR
ETHNIC ORIGIN, RELIGIOUS BELIEF OR
ACTIVITY, POLITICAL INCLINATION
OR CONVICTION, SOCIAL CLASS,
SEX, GENDER, SEXUAL ORIENTATION,
GENDER IDENTITY AND EXPRESSIONS,
MARITAL OR RELATIONSHIP STATUS,
DISABILITY, HIV STATUS, HEALTH
STATUS OR MEDICAL HISTORY,
LANGUAGE, PHYSICAL FEATURES,
AND OTHER STATUS, AND PROVIDING
PENALTIES THEREFOR”

By Representative Castelo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

House Bill No. 5357, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE BENGUET
NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – ALNO ANNEX
IN BARANGAY ALNO, MUNICIPALITY OF
LA TRINIDAD, PROVINCE OF BENGUET
INTO A NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE
KNOWN AS THE ALNO NATIONAL HIGH
SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR”

By Representative Fongwan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION
AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5358, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE BAKUN
NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – SINACBAT
ANNEX IN BARANGAY SINACBAT,
MUNICIPALITY OF BAKUN, PROVINCE
OF BENGUET INTO A SEPARATE
NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN
AS THE SINACBAT NATIONAL HIGH
SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR”

By Representative Fongwan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION
AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5359, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE AMPUSONGAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – KAYAPA ANNEX IN BARANGAY KAYAPA, MUNICIPALITY OF BAKUN, PROVINCE OF BENGUET INTO A NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, SEPARATING IT FROM ITS MOTHER SCHOOL, THE AMPUSONGAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, TO BE KNOWN AS THE KAYAPA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Fongwan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION
AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5360, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE BENGUET NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – BINENG ANNEX IN BARANGAY BINENG, MUNICIPALITY OF LA TRINIDAD, PROVINCE OF BENGUET INTO A NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS THE BINENG NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Fongwan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION
AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5361, entitled:

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

By Representative Benitez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE
FRANCHISES

House Bill No. 5362, entitled:

“AN ACT PROMOTING THE EMPLOYMENT OF SENIOR CITIZENS IN GOVERNMENT OFFICES AND PRIVATE ENTITIES NATIONWIDE, FURTHER AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 5 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7432, AS AMENDED”

By Representative Ong (Ronnie)
TO THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON SENIOR
CITIZENS

House Bill No. 5363, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE LAWA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – NUEVA VILLA

EXTENSION IN BARANGAY LAWA, MUNICIPALITY OF DON MARCELINO, PROVINCE OF DAVAO OCCIDENTAL FROM LAWA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS CORONA A. CABANILLA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Bautista-Bandigan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION
AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5364, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE DON MARCELINO NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – DALUPAN EXTENSION IN BARANGAY DALUPAN, MUNICIPALITY OF DON MARCELINO, PROVINCE OF DAVAO OCCIDENTAL FROM DON MARCELINO NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERT IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS ERNESTO BALINDAN SUMBO NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Bautista-Bandigan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION
AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5365, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE MARIANO PERALTA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – SANGAY EXTENSION IN BARANGAY SANGAY, MUNICIPALITY OF MALITA, PROVINCE OF DAVAO OCCIDENTAL FROM THE MARIANO PERALTA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS ERNESTO LOPEZ NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Bautista-Bandigan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION
AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5366, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL IN BARANGAY LACARON, MUNICIPALITY OF MALITA, PROVINCE OF DAVAO OCCIDENTAL TO BE KNOWN AS LACARON NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Bautista-Bandigan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION
AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5367, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE BASIAWAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – MALAGSOM EXTENSION IN BARANGAY BUHANGIN, MUNICIPALITY OF MALITA, PROVINCE OF DAVAO OCCIDENTAL FROM THE BASIAWAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS BUHANGIN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Bautista-Bandigan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

FUNCTIONS AND DUTIES, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Lara
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ENTERPRISES AND PRIVATIZATION

House Bill No. 5368, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL IN BARANGAY BOLILA, MUNICIPALITY OF MALITA, PROVINCE OF DAVAO OCCIDENTAL TO BE KNOWN AS BOLILA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Bautista-Bandigan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5373, entitled:

“AN ACT MAKING THE BARANGAY SECRETARY AND THE BARANGAY TREASURER REGULAR PLANTILLA POSITIONS AND ENTITLING THEM TO SECURITY OF TENURE AND OTHER BENEFITS”

By Representative Abueg-Zaldivar
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 507, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING MARGIELYN DIDAL FOR WINNING PLACING FIRST IN TWO EVENTS DURING THE 2019 EXPOSURE ALL WOMEN SKATEBOARDING CHAMPIONSHIPS IN HUNTINGTON BEACH, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, USA”

By Representative Tolentino
TO THE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

House Bill No. 5369, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A TOURISM DEVELOPMENT FUND, ABOLISHING THE TRAVEL TAX ESTABLISHED UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 1478, AS AMENDED, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Aragonas
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

House Resolution No. 508, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION URGING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE SATURATION DRIVES CONDUCTED BY THE MANILA POLICE DISTRICT AT THE BASECO COMPOUND IN TONDO, MANILA AND RECOMMEND MEASURES TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF URBAN POOR RESIDENTS AGAINST UNREASONABLE SEARCHES AND SEIZURES”

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

House Bill No. 5370, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING PARAGRAPH 3 PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 37 CREATING THE NAYONG PILIPINO”

By Representative Aragonas
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

House Bill No. 5371, entitled:

“AN ACT TO ESTABLISH AN ELDERLY CARE AND NURSING COMPLEX IN THE PROVINCE OF CAGAYAN”

By Representative Lara
TO THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON SENIOR CITIZENS

House Resolution No. 509, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE KILLING OF 23-YEAR-OLD KIM LESTER RAMOS IN MARIKINA CITY BY A POLICE OFFICER

House Bill No. 5372, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE CAGAYAN RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, PRESCRIBING ITS POWERS,

ON OCTOBER 5, 2019, AND RECOMMEND MEASURES TO PUT AN END TO DRUG-RELATED EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS”

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

House Resolution No. 510, entitled:

“RESOLUTION COMMENDING STA. CRUZ SAVINGS AND DEVELOPMENT COOPERATIVE FOR ITS REMARKABLE CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH IN THE COUNTRYSIDE”

By Representative Canama
TO THE COMMITTEE ON COOPERATIVES DEVELOPMENT

House Resolution No. 511, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, THROUGH THE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS, TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE KILLING OF FARMER NATHANIEL DODO TAGAYLO IN VALENCIA, BUKIDNON”

By Representatives Cullamat, Zarate, Gaité and Brosas
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 512, entitled:

“RESOLUTION TO A DRUG-FREE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND STRONGLY URGING ITS MEMBERS TO VOLUNTARILY SUBMIT TO A RANDOM DRUG TEST AND SHOW ITS COMMITMENT TO THE WAR ON ILLEGAL DRUGS AND TO FULFILL ITS CONSTITUTIONAL MANDATE THAT PUBLIC OFFICE IS A PUBLIC TRUST”

By Representative Barzaga
TO THE COMMITTEE ON DANGEROUS DRUGS

House Resolution No. 513, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING PROFOUND SYMPATHY AND DEEP CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE BEREAVED FAMILY OF THE LATE AQUILINO ‘NENE’ PIMENTEL JR.”

By Representative Delos Santos
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 514, entitled:

“RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING THE PHILIPPINE

NATIONAL PARA BOWLING TEAM FOR WINNING 8 MEDALS IN THE SECOND LEG OF THE WORLD PARA BOWLING CHAMPIONSHIP 2019”

By Representative Delos Santos
TO THE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

House Resolution No. 515, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING NESTHY ALCAYDE PETECIO AND CARLOS EDRIEL YULO FOR THEIR SIGNIFICANT FEATS IN INTERNATIONAL SPORTS”

By Representative Delos Santos
TO THE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

House Resolution No. 516, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES (DENR), DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS (DPWH) AND LOCAL WATER UTILITIES ADMINISTRATION (LWUA) TO IMMEDIATELY CONDUCT TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION ON THE WATER SITUATION OF THE POBLACION BARANGAYS OF BAMBANG, AND NEARBY MUNICIPALITIES, PROVINCE OF NUEVA VIZCAYA”

By Representative Cuaresma
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 517, entitled:

“RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FAMILY OF JOHN L. GOKONGWEI, JR., FILIPINO VISIONARY AND PILLAR OF THE PHILIPPINE ECONOMY”

By Representative Mariño
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 518, entitled:

“RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FAMILY OF MR. LUCIO ‘BONG’ TAN, JR.”

By Representative Mariño
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 519, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO CONDUCT AN

INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE DEPLORABLE SPATE OF KILLINGS OF JUDGES, AND TO RECOMMEND APPROPRIATE MEASURES, PREVENTIVE OR OTHERWISE, TO PROTECT THEM FROM THREATS TO THEIR LIVES WHILE IN THE PURSUANCE OF THEIR DUTIES, INCLUDING THE CREATION OF JUDICIAL MARSHALLS”

By Representative Veloso
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

COMMUNICATIONS

Letter dated October 14, 2019 of Minerva I. Morales, Ed. D, SUC President III, Catanduanes State University, submitting their Budget Accountability Report (BAR-1) as of September 30, 2019 generated from the DBM-Unified Reporting System.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated 16 October 2019 of Silvestre H. Bello III, Secretary, Department of Labor and Employment, submitting the Department’s Report to Congress on the Semi-Annual Report of the Philippine Overseas Labor Offices (January to June 2019).

TO THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

Letter dated 21 October 2019 of Victor J. Yu, Provincial Governor, Province of Zamboanga Del Sur, submitting the Report on Fund Utilization and Status of Program/Project Implementation for the Quarter Ended July to September 2019 (Third Quarter) on the Local Government Support Fund to Local Government Unit, to wit:

1. Social Services Program;
2. Conditional Matching Grant Program;
3. Bottom-Up Budgeting (BUB) Projects; and
4. Kalsada Projects.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated 21 October 2019 of Emmanuel G. Herbosa, President and Chief Executive Officer, Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP), notifying the House of Representatives that the following required Quarterly Budget and Financial Accountability Reports (BFARs) for the quarters ended December 31, 2018, March 31, 2019, June 30, 2019 and September 30, 2019 have been posted in the DBP Website under the Transparency and Disclosures:

1. FAR No. 1 – Statement of Appropriations, Allotments, Obligations and Disbursements and Balances; and
2. FAR No. 1-A – Summary of Appropriations,

Allotments Obligations, Disbursements and Balances by Object Expenditures.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated October 22, 2019 of Maria Gleda E. Lim, State Auditor V, Supervising Auditor, Audit Groups CGS I and II-Water Districts and Other CGS Stand Alone Agencies, Regional Office No. VI, Commission on Audit, furnishing the House of Representatives the Annual Audit Reports on the following Water Districts:

1. Ajuy Water District, Ajuy, Iloilo (CY 2018);
2. Concepcion Water District, Concepcion, Iloilo (CY 2018); and
3. Cuartero Water District, Cuartero, Capiz (CY 2015-2018).

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated October 23, 2019 of Jaime H. Morente, Commissioner, Bureau of Immigration, Department of Justice, submitting their Collection Report of the Express Lane Fee for the 3rd Quarter of CY 2019.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

Email dated October 23, 2019 of Joseph Viola, submitting to the House of Representatives the Report on Fund Utilization and Status of Program/Project Implementation for the Quarter Ended September 30, 2019, Province of Batanes, on the Local Government Support Fund, attested by Marilou H. Cayco, Provincial Governor.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated 24 October 2019 of Cecilia C. Borromeo, President and CEO, Land Bank of the Philippines, submitting their Report on the Utilization of Funds for the Unconditional Cash Transfer Program (3rd qtr-CY 2019).

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated 28 October 2019 of Benjamin E. Diokno, Governor, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, submitting to the House of Representatives the Report on the Philippine Financial System covering the first semester of 2019.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report of the Committee on Natural Resources (Committee Report No. 74), re H.B. No. 5421, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING CERTAIN PARCELS OF LAND OF THE PUBLIC DOMAIN,

LOCATED IN BARANGAYS BUNOG, IRAAN, PUNTA BAJA, CAMPONG ULAY AND RANSANG OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF JOSE P. RIZAL, PROVINCE OF PALAWAN, AS AGRICULTURAL LAND OPEN TO DISPOSITION FOR AGRICULTURAL, COMMERCIAL, RESIDENTIAL, INDUSTRIAL, AND OTHER PRODUCTIVE PURPOSES”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 675

Sponsors: Representatives Barzaga and Abueg-Zaldivar

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Rules (Committee Report No. 75), re H.B. No. 5437, 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”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bills Numbered 5400 and 5424

Sponsors: Representatives Romualdez (Ferdinand), Ungab, Legarda and Villafuerte

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

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

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

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 5437 ON SECOND READING

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 5437, contained in Committee Report No. 75, as reported by the Committee on Rules.

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

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 5437, 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.

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

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of sponsorship and debate and recognize the Chairperson of the Committee on Appropriations, Hon. Isidro T. Ungab, to begin the sponsorship of the measure.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

Honorable Ungab is hereby recognized.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF REP. UNGAB

REP. UNGAB. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, House Bill No. 5437 is a substitute bill to House Bills No. 5400 and 5424, extending the availability of the 2019 Appropriations for MOOE and Capital Outlays to December 31, 2020, amending for the purpose Section 65 of the General Provisions of RA 11260 or the 2019 General Appropriations Act.

May I request that the Explanatory Note of House Bill No. 5400 be inserted into the records as my sponsorship speech.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, there being no interpellators from the Majority or the Minority, and no Member registered to speak against

* See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)

the measure, I move that we terminate the period of sponsorship and debate.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of amendments. There being no Committee or individual amendment, I move that we close the same.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve House Bill No. 5437 on Second Reading.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). There is a motion for the approval of House Bill No. 5437 on Second Reading.

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

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

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

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 5437 ON SECOND READING

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

House Bill No. 5437 is hereby approved on Second Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the session.

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

It was 3:27 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:28 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, we move to acknowledge the presence of guests who are in the gallery. We have the guests of Rep. Carlos Isagani T. Zarate and the Makabayan bloc from the Stand with Samar-Leyte Network: Frenchie Mae Cumpio, Precila Lebico, Adriano Obiado, Roberto Pajares and Bienvenida Cabe.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). May the guests of Honorable Zarate please stand. Welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, Representative Zarate wishes to rise on a matter of personal and collective privilege. I move that he be recognized.

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

Honorable Zarate is hereby recognized.

QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE OF REP. ZARATE

REP. ZARATE. Maraming salamat, G. Ispiker.

G. Ispiker at mga kasamahan ko sa Kongreso, ang Kinatawang ito ay tumitindig para sa isang personal at kolektibong pribilehiyo upang ipabatid at ipaalala sa Kapulungang ito at sa ating mga kapwa Mambabatas ang tila walang katapusang pasakit at pagdurusa at bangungot ng ating mga kapatid sa Silangang Kabisayaan. Noong nakaraang Nobyembre 8, G. Ispiker, anim na taon na ang nakalipas pagkatapos ng malagim na trahedyang dulot ng super bagyong Yolanda sa Eastern Visayas. Anim na taon na ang nagdaan, kumusta na kaya ang ating mga kababayan sa Silangang Kabisayaan?

Nakakalungkot na anim na taon na ang nagdaan pero marami pa rin ang nananatiling naghihirap sa ating mga kababayan at hindi pa rin nakukumpleto hanggang sa ngayon ang mga naantalang proyekto para sa libo-libong biktima ng super bagyong Yolanda. Matapos ang bagyong ito, may 205,128 housing units ang nakaplanong itayo sa mga 14 probinsiya o mga 116 bayan at kaakibat nito ay ang inilaang budget na P75 billion. G. Ispiker, anim na taon na ang nakalipas pero nananatiling nakatiwangwang ang mga pabahay, lumitaw ang mga isyu ng korapsyon at walang malinaw na umuusad na imbestigasyon hinggil dito. Samantala, habang hindi pa tapos ang pagpapatayo ng iilang mga pabahay, pinabibilisan rin sa siyudad ng Tacloban ang implementasyon ng “no dwelling zone.” Simula’t

sapul, hindi na pabor ang marami sa mga biktima ng bagyong Yolanda sa pagtatalaga ng “no dwelling zone” at dahil dito, nasa mga 12 barangay ang humaharap sa posibleng demolisyon na hindi dumaan sa tamang konsultasyon mula sa mga maaapektuhang pamilya at indibidwal. Batay na rin sa ulat na dumating sa opisina ng Kinatawang ito, ang mga demolisyong ito ay para magbigay daan sa implementasyon daw ng ecotourism projects sa ilalim ng city business district.

Bakit nga ba tutol ang mismong mga apektado na lumipat sa mga Yolanda resettlement sites gayong mapapalayo sana sila sa danger zone, G. Ispiker? Ang dahilan dito ay mas malapit naman sa “death zone” ang kanilang sitwasyon sa mga Yolanda housing units na malayo sa ipinangakong ligtas na pabahay at hindi maaasahan ang mga pabahay sa panahon ng lindol at malakas na ulan. Tulad na lamang noong nangyari sa Ridgeview Park kung saan nagkaroon ng mga bitak ang mga kabahayan matapos ang lindol noong nakaraang Abril, at tumutulo ang mga bubong at binabaha ang mga bahay sa panahon ng malakas na pag-ulan. Bukod dito, mas napalayo ang kanilang mga kabahayan sa kanilang hanapbuhay. Ayon sa ulat, bumaba sa 76 porsiyento mula sa 95 porsiyento ang mga may hanapbuhay matapos silang mailipat sa Yolanda housing sites. Mula 20 percent na bilang ng mga magsasaka, bumaba na lamang ito sa bilang na 5 percent. Hanggang ngayon, hinahanap nila ang ipinapangako ng ating pamahalaan na livelihood programs.

Sa kabilang banda, G. Ispiker, mas nalugmok sa kahirapan ang ating mga kababayan lalo’t wala pang kuryente at tubig ang mga housing units na ibinigay sa kanila. Ayon mismo sa mga biktima, gagastos rin sila ng mahigit-kumulang P3,000 para lamang magkaroon ng kuryente, at araw-araw silang nag-iigib ng tubig mula sa halagang P4 hanggang P30 para sa inuming tubig. Mas tumaas din ang kanilang ginagastos sa transportasyon na ngayon ay nasa P50 mula sa dating P16 lamang kada araw. Higit na mataas ang gastusing ito kaysa noong nakaraan at mas napalayo pa sa kanila ang access sa batayang pangangailangang serbisyo. May P7.1 billion budget para sa tide embankment pero walang budget para sa tubig at kuryente ng ating mga kaawa-awang mga kababayan.

Anim na taon matapos ang Yolanda, malaking halaga ang ginagamit sa rehabilitasyon ngunit hindi ito umaabot sa dapat sana ay mga benepisyaryo nating mga kababayan. Higit sa lahat, nananatiling walang pinanghahawakan na titulo sa lupa ang mga maninirahan sa Yolanda resettlement sites. Nariyan ang kanilang pangamba na sa anumang oras, kahit nasa resettlement site na sila ay maaari silang paalisin mula sa kanilang tinitirahan ngayon. Noong 2016, matapos bisitahin ni Pangulong Duterte ang isang housing project sa Tacloban, sinabi niyang libre na ang paninirahan sa mga pabahay ng National Housing Authority. Kakaiba

ang pangakong ito sa usufruct agreement na sinusunod ng nakaraang administrasyon ng dating Pangulong Aquino. Matapos ang pagbisitang ito ni Pangulong Duterte ay inilabas ng NHA ang Memorandum Circular No. 2018-004 at Memorandum Circular No. 2018-005 na para sana sa distribusyon ng titulo ng pabahay. G. Ispiker, halos dalawang taon na ang nagdaan matapos ang naging deklarasyon ni Pangulong Duterte pero wala ni isang titulo ng lupa ang naibigay sa kahit isang benepisyaryo ng Yolanda housing projects at lumalabas na hindi pa ito nasisisimulang asikasuhin o naipasa ng NHA sa mga local government units. Ang anim na taon na dapat sana ay naigugol na sa rehabilitasyon ng mga apektado ng super bagyong Yolanda ay naigugol para sa hinihinalang korapsyon at katiwalian na nagpapahirap pang lalo sa ating mga kababayan.

G. Ispiker, mahalagang maimbestigahan at maisiwalat ang mga sinasabing mga katiwalian ng ito, makita ng buong bayan ang naging proseso ng implementasyon ng lahat ng Yolanda housing projects at bilisan ang distribusyon ng mga titulo sa lupa na dapat sana ay naibigay na sa mga biktima ng bagyong Yolanda. Dapat na tugunan ang problema sa access ng mga batayang pangangailangan. Alalahanin po natin, G. Ispiker, doble-doble na ang pasakit ng mga survivors ng super bagyong Yolanda dahil biktima na sila ng bagyo noon pero biktima naman sila ngayon ng kabagalan, kapabayaan at katiwalian sa pamahalaan.

Mga kapwa ko Mambabatas, G. Ispiker, dinggin natin at harapin ang kalagayan ng ating mga kababayang sinalanta ng super bagyong Yolanda. Napakatagal na ng anim na taong pagdurusa sa kawalan at napakabagal na serbisyo. Dapat kalingain ang mamamayang kabilang dito at lalo na ang sinalanta ng kalamidad at super bagyong Yolanda. Ito ang kanilang panawagan at ito ang hamon sa ating mga Mambabatas na nangakong maglilingkod sa bayan.

Maraming salamat, G. Ispiker.

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

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the Honorable Zarate to the Committee on Rules.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

ROLL CALL

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we call the roll.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Secretary General is directed to call the roll.

*The Secretary General called the roll, and the result is reflected in Journal No. 25, dated November 12, 2019.**

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. Mr. Speaker, the roll call shows that 236 Members responded to the call.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). With 236 Members present, the Chair declares the presence of a quorum.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

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

It was 3:48 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:58 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H. JT. RES. NO. 22 ON THIRD READING

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Joint Resolution No. 22, and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on November 6, 2019, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Joint Resolution No. 22, entitled: JOINT RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE USE OF THE RICE SUBSIDY AS PROVIDED IN THE GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT (GAA) FOR THE PURCHASE OF PALAY FROM LOCAL FARMERS, MANDATING FOR THE PURPOSE THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT (DSWD), DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT (DILG), DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE (DND), DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (DOTr), AND THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES (DENR), IN COORDINATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (DA) AND THE NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY (NFA), TO DIRECTLY PURCHASE PALAY FROM LOCAL FARMERS AND DISTRIBUTE RICE SUBSIDY ALLOWANCE IN THE FORM OF ACTUAL RICE, INSTEAD OF CASH.

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 25, dated November 12, 2019.*

APPROVAL OF H. JT. RES. NO. 22 ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). With 206 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Joint Resolution No. 22 is hereby approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. CASTELO. Mr. Speaker, we move to acknowledge the presence of the guests of Cong. Claudine Diana D. Bautista from the Party-List DUMPER PTDA, namely: the First Lady of Davao de Oro, Ms. Sholai S. Lim; Ms. Myrna Calolo; Mayor Lema Bolo; Marlybeth Colina; Ms. Terry Tagalog; Jan Marie S. Balbin; Jermyla Tizon; Ellen May Cunanan Famoso; Chrish May Calamba; Betty Caballero; Elsa Cantrall; Lunita Jayectin; Hon. Eufemia Jayectin; Juvy Javitalla; Charisa Fulguerinas; Ruchille Kristie Gonzaga; Junamel Nuñez; Virgencita Elmido; Marilyn Libuangan; Delia Lagumbay; Martiniana Osorio; Herminia Pusta; Mary Grace Oani; Hon. Vevencia Cecuya; Rita Lopez; SPO4 Rizalie Matunhay; Eldiecris Calzadora; TSG Jean Ganotice; Ma. Aida Fernandez; Ana Rose Lomigo; Zenith Maceda; Jana May Masaling; Agnes Tadle; Hernan Cortez; Kiven Arth Jubahib; Hon.

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

Marie Jude Fuentes Lopez; Hon. Nena Atamosa; and Hon. Kristine Mae Caballero-Rañon, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). May the guests of Cong. Claudine Diana Bautista please rise for their presence to be acknowledged. Welcome to the House of Representatives (*Applause*)

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ZUBIRI. Mr. Speaker, may we also move to acknowledge the presence of the guests of Rep. Rufus B. Rodriguez from the Second District of Cagayan de Oro City. Please welcome Barangay Kagawad Joshua Frias, former Barangay Chairman of Barangay 23, Cagayan de Oro City.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). May the guest of Cong. Rufus Rodriguez please rise for his presence to be acknowledged. Welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ZUBIRI. Mr. Speaker, may we also move to acknowledge and welcome the presence of the guests of Hon. John Reynald M. Tiangco. They are the students from Kapitbahayan Elementary School and Dagat-Dagatan Elementary School.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). May the guests of Hon. John Reynald Tiangco please rise for their presence to be acknowledged. Welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

The Majority Leader is recognized.

PRIVILEGE HOUR

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

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, the first Member who wishes to avail of the Privilege Hour is Rep. Mark O. Go from the Lone District of Baguio City. I move that the Gentleman be recognized.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). Representative Mark Go is hereby recognized.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. GO (M.)

REP. GO (M.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand to bring forward the state of higher education in the country.

To my esteemed colleagues in the House of Representatives and to our guests present here today, I wish you all a good and productive afternoon. Today, I stand before you in this hallowed hall as the Chair of the Committee on Higher and Technical Education. It is my belief that education is the greatest equalizer that affords our citizens the leverage to escape the throes of poverty, and achieve success and accomplishments in their lifetime regardless of their economic circumstance. I have always been an advocate of quality education that is accessible to all. A degree in one's hands does not only equate to introducing new members in the recruitment pool or as mere human capital. A strong learning foundation that prizes ingenuity and critical thinking is crucial to stronger nation-building, as it is from our youths' ranks that this nation's future leaders, innovators and change makers will rise. Thus, it is of great significance that the Higher and Technical Education Committee is able to perform its role in strengthening the core and system of higher learning in the country as we rally ourselves with the nation's stakeholders.

Having said that, in the months since I and the Members of the Committee had adopted and fulfilled our role, our eyes had been opened to the nuances and complexities of the dire state of higher education in the Philippines, even as we submit ourselves to the day-to-day affairs of creating and forwarding solutions to this systemic inadequacies of our educational system in the country.

Since I was elected Committee Chair in August of this year, alongside the usual grind of reading and deliberating on bills and legislative documents, I, together with the Committee members, have had the opportunity to engage in constant dialogues and conversations with the Commission on Higher Education and other stakeholders in order to create a true and accurate picture of the current state of education in the Philippines. It cannot be left unsaid that the active and consistent participation of the CHED, headed by Chairman Prospero de Vera, has been invaluable in providing the Committee the much-needed context to reach the concerns of our stakeholders and the SUCs across the nation on the grassroots level. As Chairman, I believe it is my responsibility to share with you these findings on the pertinent subject matter of education, which we would contend as an opportunity that must be afforded by all regardless of background or circumstance.

In order to gather a clear and accurate picture of the current condition of higher learning in the country, it is also logical that we begin with its roots and history. Prior to the creation of the Commission on Higher Education in 1994, our basic education system and higher education system were all overseen and supervised by a single agency. In 1982, former Pres. Ferdinand Marcos signed Batas Pambansa Blg. 232,

also known as the Education Act of 1982. The law governed both formal and non-formal education systems in public and private schools in all levels of instruction throughout the country. Batas Pambansa Blg. 232 led to the creation of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports as the singular agency that supervised all educational levels, from primary to tertiary. This would later become the Department of Education, Culture and Sports by virtue of Executive Order No. 117 as signed by former Pres. Corazon C. Aquino. The Department single-handedly administered the affairs on basic and tertiary education, as well as non-formal learning, sports and cultural undertakings.

The tri-focalization of the education system led to the reorganization of the DECS, as the Department was renamed the Department of Education. This resulted in the creation of the TESDA which was tasked to oversee the country's vocational and technical education programs, and of the Commission on Higher Education under the passage and implementation of Republic Act No. 7722 or the Higher Education Act of 1994 under then Pres. Fidel V. Ramos. The Commission was created as a breakaway agency from the DECS and authorized, as a single body, to manage and govern the country's higher education system in the public and private higher education institutions, as well as degree-granting programs in all public and private post-secondary educational institutions.

This is the system that the country follows to this day. It has been 25 years since our education system underwent a massive organizational overhaul and it has practically remained unchanged since. Yet, therein lies the rub. In over two decades since the creation of the Commission on Higher Education, the current framework, powers and functions have remained stagnant in spite of the ever-changing social and economic conditions in the country. According to figures presented to the Committee by the Commission on Higher Education, 88 percent of higher education institutions belong to the private sector, while public state universities and colleges, and LUCs or local universities and colleges were at a measly 6 percent, respectively.

The Commission on Higher Education also recorded 1,963 public and private higher educational institutions catering to 108 million Filipinos. This translates to about one institution serving 55,000 Filipinos. Among the 1,963 campuses, 111 are SUCs, while local universities and colleges are at 118. As the figures demonstrate, the number of higher education institutions serving our youth is not the issue. Despite several colleges and universities populating our regions and provinces, the fact of the matter is that the quality of instruction and learning that is being taught is uneven across the board. Only three universities from the Philippines made it annually in higher education

rankings around the world, with the University of the Philippines as the best-performing institution in the country ranking 72nd in the QS Asia Ranking. To this day, many still prefer to enroll in the National Capital Region and in other major urban centers in the hope of achieving a better quality education, thus, resulting to an uneven distribution of resources in other regions in the country. This keeps education concentrated and insulated within Metro Manila and other metropolitan areas.

Aside from the issue of oversaturation, this also poses problems for other degree offerings that are left or disregarded as students are likely to join or stay within industries that are available near their university of choice rather than be encouraged to pursue degrees in the different parts of the country that offer programs more attuned to the community's needs. Moreover, these higher educational institutions employ a total of 136,186 faculty members to handle the institutions' basic functions which include teaching and research and community extension services but according to CHED policy, these institutions may only employ faculty members who possess a master's degree as a minimum qualification.

With that in mind, it is alarming to discover that only 37.59 percent of those employed had obtained a master's degree and that most of the employed faculty members are in fact bachelor's degree holders which make 45.83 percent. The figure is even more dismal for doctorate degree holders who only constitute 16.58 percent of the population. It is clear as day that the number of qualified faculty members employed in our higher learning institutions across the nation is insufficient in order to provide a standard level of quality of instruction that is crucial in molding the minds of our youths. Also worth noting is that 55.87 percent of the first-time licensure examination takers pass the exams, while only 37.87 percent of graduates across all disciplines pass the licensure examinations. That means that more than half of our graduates are unable to practice their professions—that is wasted potential and human capital and thus, needs to be addressed.

In 2017, we have had 479,000 college graduates who, despite finishing a degree, were unemployed. College unemployment alone was 7.1 percent higher than the national unemployment rate. Those statistics are truly worrying. We have long taught our youth, as what our elders had taught us, that education is the ticket to a better life, thus, a degree is necessary in achieving success and stability. With a statistics this staggering, this essential life lesson amounts to nothing but empty words. Against constantly inflating tuition fees in private higher institutions, I think it is unacceptable that there is a mismatch between jobs and the degree programs in these institutions, with positions that are vacant yet hard to find. Despite the strides achieved

by other universities in the Times Higher Education Ranking, the country exhibits a lackluster performance when it comes to the field of STEM, that is science, technology, engineering and math and research, with the research environment being left much to be desired. Across six major countries in ASEAN, the Philippines has the lowest proportion of its researchers coming from the higher education sector at 36.41 percent in contrast with Malaysia at 81.56 percent, Indonesia at 54.47 percent, Vietnam at 49.18 percent and Thailand at 53 percent. Malaysia, in 2017, published 29,606 indexed publications compared to just 2,891 from the Philippines.

These are but the multitude of issues surrounding our higher education system, and we have only begun to scratch the surface. These concerns signal that it is high time we revisit the current framework and policies that are accorded to the governing body of higher learning in the country to one that is suited to our current economic needs and conditions. First, it is crucial to revamp the top-heavy structure that pervades the Commission. To this day, only the Secretary and Undersecretary sit as board chairmen while one Asec is in charge of regional operations and central office concerns of the entire higher education system in the country. We have over 2,000 higher education systems nationwide, with over 40,000 programs overseen by only 1,000 employees. This limited reach and thinly spread manpower calls for a significant reorganization in the Commission's structure and it is crucial that the CHED is able to add more permanent positions and satellite offices to be able to oversee and deliver the demands of new programs and advocacies.

It is also essential that CHED is enabled to enforce stricter compliance among our universities and colleges to compel their faculty members to pursue and finish their graduate degrees while performing their main functions as teachers in the academe. To do so, the CHED must be granted the power and the wealth of resources in order to provide faculty members across the country the necessary assistance to complete their master's degree alongside performing their duties in their respective institutions. With more professors and faculty members distributed among various schools in the country who possess the necessary qualifications, only then can we expect the quality of instruction to rise.

The addition of proficient and qualified educators in our institutions will certainly lead to the advancement of education resulting in skilled and critically thinking graduates as well as an increase in the competence and readiness of board examination takers. Moreover, it is recommended that the CHED undertake a rigorous review of their program offerings in consultation with the Department of Labor and Employment as well as private firms. Industries change and rapidly evolve

with the times, especially in the phase of globalization and technological advancement in the so-called Fourth Industrial Revolution, and this revisit of curricula will surely ascertain that our educational system remains globally competitive.

Our scant output in indexed publications and journals do not mean our researchers are incompetent. That is, in fact, far from the truth. With the cost it entails to pursue research, unless it is being funded by private institutions, our faculty members have to compete with limited grants in order to pursue research. Another incentive for faculty to do research is to include faculty members from our SUCs in the scientific career system to enable those who are engaged in research to be given rewards commensurate to their outputs. Moreover, it is long overdue that we prioritize research and strengthen its integration with the CHED's current framework as it is research that results in innovation. It is crucial that the CHED is empowered to enable a number of innovation hubs as well as motivate collaborations between industries and the academe or collaborations in order to increase number of patents for invention and utility models. With STEM so ingrained in our higher education system, can we begin to anticipate progress and development by way of research-oriented solutions? We also recommend that the Commission must be granted the necessary resources to increase the number of scholarships for STEM fields in order to produce more topnotch scientists and researchers.

The ones that I had mentioned are composed of an overwhelming list of statistics that not only point to the myriad issues and concerns that surround the state of higher education in the country from job mismatch and unemployment to the uneven and inadequate performance of our institutions, beginning with the number of licensure examination passers and the sore lack of qualified faculty members who hold graduate degrees. While there are various solutions and recommendations to each individual problem as elaborated, a major root behind this systemic failure is the gross lack of budget being allocated to the nation's education.

The number of enrollees in 2018 dropped to 3.2 million compared to 4.1 million students enrolled in 2015. Students were faced with the difficult choice to drop out of or refuse from pursuing a degree altogether simply because they could no longer afford it. Even as they opt for public universities or colleges, the continuously dwindling national budget forces them to compete for even more limited resources that only become scarcer by the minute. The problem is already pervasive in Metro Manila and in the urban cities, how much more in the far-flung pockets of the country where there are further barriers to education?

That is not to say that we have not achieved small victories in the Seventeenth Congress. We have passed

Republic Act No. 10931, also known as the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act, of which I am also a proponent and one of the principal authors. This law was hailed as a landmark act for providing free tuition in all state universities and colleges in the country as well as technical-vocational institutions. No youth, who is poor, will ever have the reason to skip school again. The enactment of a law is one concern, another is its implementation. As an ally of our governing body on higher and technical education and its stakeholders, it is crucial that we focus on the implementing rules and regulations of the law in order to ensure that the law is working for its constituents as intended. In another move that seeks to harden the blow, the CHED is set to suffer from a massive P11-billion budget cut from what was earlier provided in the 2019 General Appropriations Act. The enormous slash in the 2020 budget comes in spite of the monumental overhaul that is needed to introduce reforms in the current system: from increasing scholarships and grants to deserving students to additional funding in the SUCs in order to train more faculty to eventually reach 100-percent qualification.

A study by the CHED also showed that the Philippines invested 3.4 percent of its Gross Domestic Product in education. Although it is a welcome step towards progress compared to the country's statistically dismal 2.5 percent in 2007, we are still lagging behind in general. In comparison to our ASEAN neighbors, Vietnam spent 5.7 percent of its GDP in education; Malaysia at 4.8 percent; Brunei at 4.4 percent; Thailand at 4.1 percent; and Indonesia at 3.6 percent. When it comes to total government expenditure, the Philippines ranked number nine out of 10 countries in the ASEAN with 13.21 percent, only above Brunei whose education budget comprised 9.99 percent of their expenditure. From this minuscule amount, majority of the Philippine expenditure on education is always allotted to basic education and unfortunately, it does not take another statistical figure to imagine what is left of that education budget that will be distributed to the several hundreds of SUCs and LUCs across the country.

Given these significant findings as presented by the CHED, as Chairman of the Committee on Higher and Technical Education, I speak on behalf of the Committee to reiterate our commitment as allies in providing quality higher education to our constituents. It is essential that we fulfill our role in Congress in order to empower the CHED and equip them with the necessary resources so that they may carry out the necessary advancements to further this cause. As Chairman, I also urge our honorable colleagues here to restore the original budget as proposed in the 2019 General Appropriations Act.

It is also our oversight function to oversee and ensure the effective implementation of Republic Act No. 10931

or the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education. Despite the web of setbacks and problems that currently surrounds the system, my belief in action as the best tool for success has never wavered. I believe that with the right reforms and changes to the current system, we can truly begin to see positive and lasting impact.

Thus, I have taken on the endeavor to author a bill that seeks to amend the provisions of Republic Act No. 8292 or the Higher Education Modernization Act of 1997, including the addition of powers to the Commission on Higher Education to strengthen its research and innovation arm and augment the institution's structure, personnel complement and corresponding budget to enforce the necessary implementation of its programs and functions and ensure a truly modern and relevant education that is acceptable, accessible and afforded by all. Education is truly man's greatest investment and it is up to us to uphold and safeguard the interest of our Filipino youth for greater nation-building and for the opportunity to elevate one's circumstances in life.

Again, thank you very much at magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat. (*Applause*)

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

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). Hon. Lito Atienza is hereby recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. With the kind indulgence of the Gentleman whom I both admire and respect for his genuine concern for a better bill for the Filipinos now that he is talking about education, I would like to pose some questions and pick his mind on some basic issues.

REP. GO (M.). Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, the Gentleman mentioned the time when the CHED, and the Department of Education itself, was concerned with the development not only of educational prowess and knowledge, but of sports and culture orientation to start exercising our qualities as a strong nation, a strong people and champions in the different fields of sports. We dominated the sports field of Asia at one time and the rest of the world. In cultural orientation, we can be proud of our culture because as Filipinos, *alam natin na mayaman ang ating bansa sa kultura*. The Gentleman mentioned that at one time, we had the Department of Education, Culture and Sports.

REP. GO (M.). Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Ano po ba ang nangyari doon at tila nawala iyong Culture and Sports at naging Department of Education na lang? Kung pag-uusapan natin ang deterioration—and I agree with you 100 percent—the quality of higher education in the nation has changed drastically from the past to the present for the worse. Ano po ba ang inyong posisyon doon sa nangyaring nawala ang kultura at paligsahan sa palakasan sa ating mga paaralan?

REP. GO (M.). Well, totoo po iyong binanggit po ninyo that at that time, the change to Department of Education, Culture and Sports was made and then after that, it was again changed to the current set-up, the focus of the department was divided into two—but if I may state my position, I would agree or I would say that we should not have removed the culture and sports particularly in the basic education.

REP. ATIENZA. Salamat po sa inyong tugon. Ididiin lang po natin ng kaunti na ang pag-aaral ay hindi po kumpleto kung wala iyong pagsasanay ng katawan—*mens sana in corpore sano*, a strong mind and a strong body. Kapag ang mga mag-aaral natin ay walang pagsasanay sa kanilang kalusugan at kalakasan ay kulang po iyong edukasyon nila at ito ay nagbubunga ng mga pagkatalo natin sa lahat ng paligsahan.

Noong unang panahon, ang Pilipino po ay itinatanghal na kampeon sa lahat ng uri ng palaro. We were competing in the world basketball competitions. We were champions in tennis, in bowling, in track and field, in swimming—name it and the Filipinos were champions. Up to this time, we can say that we are still champions in the person of Manny Pacquiao, the only boxer in the whole world, in the history of boxing, who has garnered eight division championships—walo, from 115 to 147 pounds. Wala pong nakakagawang ganyang tao sa balat ng lupa. Pilipino lang po ang may hawak niyan, si Manny Pacquiao.

Nasabi ko na na at one point in time, we were applauded by the whole world for our sports prowess. Ngayon, nagsasanay na tayong dumapa at manglelat at dumarating na po iyong SEA Games. At one time, champion tayo nang champion diyan pero sa palagay ko, mahirap nang gawin natin iyan ngayon sapagkat wala po tayong materyal na dini-develop sa ating mga paaralan. Do you agree that the removal of cultural and sports activities in school, especially in higher education institutions, are affecting our development?

REP. GO (M.). Hindi po ako pumapayag na ganoon, at kung puwede nating i-revisit iyan ay isama natin ang kultura at ang sports po uli dito sa departamento, either sa basic education or both basic and higher education.

REP. ATIENZA. So, we are soliciting the support of the Gentleman. Together, let us champion the restoration of culture and sports as one way of upgrading the quality of higher education in the country.

REP. GO (M.). Kung kayo po ay magpa-file ng bill bukas, sisiguraduhin ko po sa inyo na tatalakayin natin kaagad sa Komite natin at gagawin po natin ang ating makakaya para maisabatas po ito ulit.

REP. ATIENZA. For the information of the Gentleman, Mr. Speaker, the bill has been filed. Therefore, it is a matter of the Chairman of the Committee taking a look at it and scheduling it for discussion in the Committee and then submitting it to the Body. The sooner we do this, the better for our youth.

We thank you for your understanding and genuine concern for the welfare of the developing huge sector of our country, ang kabataan. Maraming, maraming salamat. (*Applause*)

Congratulations for your call to improve the conditions of our higher education today. Congratulations. I am with you 100 percent.

REP. GO (M.). Salamat po. Thank you po.

REP. ATIENZA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Majority Leader and colleagues who are still actively participating tonight.

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, the next Member who wishes to interpellate Rep. Mark Go is Rep. Sarah Jane I. Elago of the KABATAAN Party-List. I move that she be recognized.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). Rep. Sarah Elago is hereby recognized.

REP. ELAGO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Magandang hapon po sa ating pinuno ng Committee on Higher and Technical Education. Ang Representanteng ito ng KABATAAN ay nagbibigay ng aming pakikiisa sa ating Committee Chairperson sa ating panawagan na restorasyon na kinakailangang pondo ng Kagawaran ng Mataas na Edukasyon upang kanilang magampanan ng buong-buo ang kanilang mandato para sa pagbibigay ng kalidad, abot-kaya at accessible na edukasyon para sa ating mga kabataan at Iskolar ng Bayan.

Nais ko lang din po na maibahagi sa ating Committee Chairperson na during po sa budget deliberations natin dito sa loob ng Kongreso, isa rin

kami sa mga nanindigan na dapat ding maibalik iyong mga naging kaltas-pondo sa state universities and colleges natin. Sa ngayon po, sa ating 112 SUCs, may siyam diyan na zero ang pondo para sa kanilang Capital Outlays at nasa 40-plus po ang may kaltas-pondo sa kabuuang budget para sa kanilang Capital Outlays. Mayroon naman na 90 na may kaltas-pondo para sa kanilang Personnel Services. Gayundin po sa kanilang Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses. Sa tingin po ng Representante na ito ng mga kabataan, malaki po ang epekto ng mga budget cuts na ito doon sa pagpapatupad ng libreng pampublikong edukasyon sa ating state universities and colleges. Bakit? Ang kasalukuyan pong proseso ngayon ng pagpapatupad ng RA 10931, iyong dating kinokolekta po mula sa mga estudyante na tuition and other school fees, sa ngayon po, tayo na ang nagbibigay ng pondo. Kung mayroon namang mga kaltas-pondo sa mga SUCs natin, marami po sa mga administration ng mga SUCs, naghahanap na sila ngayon ng mga pamamaraan kung paano ba mapupunan iyong mga kakulangan na kinakaharap nila ngayon sa kanilang mga pondo.

Ngayon, Mr. Speaker, nais ko pong marinig ang pananaw o mga plano ng ating Committee Chairperson, ng ating kagalang-galang na Kinatawan mula sa Baguio City, hinggil sa pagre-review ng kasalukuyang implementing rules and regulations ng RA 10931. Sa ngayon po, hindi pa po iyan dumadaan sa masusing pag-aaral natin at marami po dito ang siya ring nagpasa ng landmark law na Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GO (M.). Ang una pong ginawa natin diyan ay, noon pong nagkaroon tayo ng budget deliberation dito, kung inyo pong maalaala, the following day we were asked to submit our amendments to the 2020 budget. Tayo po ay nag-submit ng amendment para isama iyong dalawang importanteng programa ng ating bansa: iyong pong Free Tertiary Education at saka iyong Student Financial Program. These two programs require a P11-billion budget and this budget was actually included in the submitted budget of the CHED to the DBM. When the so-called NEP was submitted to Congress ay hindi po naipasama ito. Noong deliberation natin sa Komite, ipinahayag na po natin na kailangan ibalik ito but unfortunately, it was not included as an amendment to the 2020 budget that we forwarded to the Senate.

So, tayo po ay naghahabol ngayon sa Senado para maisama po ito at para masigurado natin na hindi lamang iyong paggawa ng batas ang dapat nating gawin dito kung hindi iyong implementation at iyong implementation nito ay hindi mangyayari kung walang budget. Ang binanggit po dito kaya medyo mababa ang budget ng CHED ay dahil iyon pong schedule natin. Ang fiscal year ng bansa natin is January to December

pero iyong mga state universities and colleges, kagaya rin ng mga pribadong unibersidad, ang kanilang first semester ay August hanggang December at iyong second semester nila ay nagsisimula ng January. So, nagkakaroon ng problema sa schedule. So, ito siguro, kailangang maisama natin sa probisyon ng ating budget para hindi tayo magkakaroon ng problema na mababa iyong absorptive capacity ng CHED at ng mga state universities and colleges. So, ito iyong pinakaimportanteng dapat nating gawin para masiguro natin na mapondohan ito on a regular basis. Hindi puwedeng binigay natin noong 2018-2019, pagkatapos, nitong 2019-2020 ay hindi natin maibigay. Ito po ay napakaimportante at gusto pa rin namin tutukan dito, hindi lamang bigyan ng ganitong budget, kasama pati na iyong ating mga faculty.

Pinakita ko nga dito, ilang porsiyento lang ang may master's degree. Kapag ikaw ay nagtuturo sa higher education institution, ito ay requirement. Kailangan kasi ito dahil tayo rin ay naniniwala na the higher your educational attainment is, then you can really contribute more. Hindi naman 100 percent iyan but in general, with high educational attainment, you can contribute. Ito ay requirement and that is one of the major items that we would like to work on in this Committee; and, of course, iyong isa rin dito ay iyong mga pondo. Nabanggit mo nga na iyong ating mga state universities and colleges ay halos zero iyong kanilang capital outlays budget maliban lang sa mga iilan. Tayo rin ay nagsumite ng ganitong additional amendment pero hindi tayo—kaya ang gagawin natin ngayon, babalikan natin iyong mga state universities and colleges at tingnan natin talaga kung ano ba iyong prayoridad nila para mabigyan ng atensiyon at iyon ang tatrabahuin natin.

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, nagalak po akong maibalita sa ating CHTE Chair na kasalukuyan pong may lobbying efforts pa rin ang mga kabataan, mga student councils, kasama po ang kanilang mga faculty unions at university officials, para nga tugunan itong mga gaps pa sa funding na kinakailangan nila para mapatupad at nasa ayos ang ating batas, at ganoon din ay hindi lang po natin papalawakin ang access kung hindi papataasin din iyong kalidad ng education offerings sa ating mga SUCs. Hindi pa po huli ang lahat dahil tayo din ay haharap pa, uupo pa ang ating mga kasamahan sa bicam, at dapat gawin nating prayoridad ang ating higher education.

Bukod po doon sa panawagan na tutulan iyong budget cuts, ma-review iyong IRR ng RA 10931, kinakailangan din po, Mr. Speaker, na bigyan ng pansin ng CHTE, bilang nakaupo rin sa Board of Regents ng ating mga SUCs, ang patuloy po na pangongolekta ng iba't ibang mga bayarin. Sa kabila po na ang nakalagay na probisyon sa ating batas—sa ilalim ng Free Public Higher Education provision, may exemption ang mga

qualified students mula sa pagbayad ng tuition at other school fees—mayroon pa rin po silang mga binabayaran kaya po maraming nagtatanong, “Hindi ba ito ay hindi po tunay na libre kung mayroon pa rin po tayong mga binabayaran?” Kung ano-ano lang po ang mga fees na ito at kailangan po nating mapag-aralan kung para saan pa ang kinokolekta sa mga universities. Halimbawa, mayroon po tayong SUC na nakitang nangongolekta ng garbage disposal fee na P100 per semester. So, kailangan din po nating mapag-aralan kung para saan ba iyan kinokolekta at matanong din natin kung hindi ba kasama na iyan doon sa supposedly Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses ng ating mga SUCs. Sa katunayan po, expressly na ipinagbabawal na po ang koleksiyon ng tuition and other school fees doon sa mga qualified na mga Filipino students sa ating mga SUCs.

Higit po diyan, tayo rin po ay nais magpahayag ng ating buong-buong suporta sa ating Chairperson ng Committee on Higher and Technical Education na maging kasangga po ng Komite, pagdating sa loob ng mga SUCs natin, sa pagpapatupad ng quality education at gayundin, Mr. Speaker, sa pag-offer ng accessible university services. Kasama po diyan ang health care, food service at housing para sa lahat po ng stakeholders sa mga SUCs, hindi lang mga estudyante, kung hindi pati faculty at mga non-teaching personnel at kasama na rin po ang mga university officials, dahil iyan po ay kanila nang pangalawang tahanan at kinakailangan na ang pagtingin po natin ay hindi lang iyong improvement sa loob ng classroom, kung hindi po pati sa buong campus ng ating state universities and colleges.

Bilang panghuli, nais ko rin pong maipahayag sa ating CHTE Chairperson, kami rin po ay nananawagan sana ng isang joint hearing kasama ang ating Committee on Labor and Employment dahil po may mga SUC students tayo, maski mga faculty po, na nagtatanong kung ano po ang pakinabang noong pagkakaroon ng isang SUC? Napakarami nating mga graduates pero marami po sa ating mga graduates ay hirap na hirap po na makahanap ng trabaho doon mismo sa kanilang mga probinsiya. So, isa po itong malaking hamon hindi lang sa komite, kung hindi pati sa buong Kapulungan na ito.

Maraming salamat po sa ating Committee Chairperson. Maraming salamat, G. Ispiker.

REP. GO (M.). Maraming salamat. I think tama iyong binanggit ni Congresswoman Elago, particularly iyong problema nga natin sa job mismatch. Marami tayong graduates, halos kalahati, ay hindi nakakahanap ng trabaho samantalang napakadaming trabaho. The main reason for this is there is a mismatch between the skills acquired at iyong requirements of the industries. So, ito ay dapat nating bigyan ng pansin at gumawa tayo ng paraan para ma-address natin ito in partnership with

other stakeholders. So, again, maraming salamat sa suporta, and I think we will have no other way except to move forward in this particular effort natin.

Thank you.

REP. ELAGO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps, the Committee can commission a study on this on job mismatch and also work with DOLE with regard to ensuring that our SUCs, our state universities and colleges, are responsive not only to the demands of the labor market, and our higher education is not developed only for mere employability but also for fulfilling and supporting the young people to really fulfill their role in nation-building.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Gentleman from the Second District of Cebu City, Rep. Rodrigo A. Abellanosa, be recognized for his chance to interpellate the Gentleman from Baguio City.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Gentleman from the Second District of Cebu, Hon. Rodrigo Abellanosa, is hereby recognized.

REP. ABELLANOSA. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Honorable Chair of the Committee on Higher Education, our distinguished Representative from Baguio City, if I may be allowed to ask just a couple of questions?

REP. GO (M.). It is an honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ABELLANOSA. Thank you very much. Before doing so, Mr. Speaker, I would like to laud our colleague for raising the issue of higher education of our country, especially with respect to the slashing of their budget. What I would like to allude to in your privilege speech is what you highlighted, the drop in enrollment from 2015 to 2018 in higher education in our country. I consider it as a very pronounced decrease in enrollment and that should cause some worry for our Commission on Higher Education, much more on the fact that in the past few years, we had adopted additional two years of senior high school. Could this be one, if not the main reason for this drop in enrollment? Could it be that the parents who have in the past, before the advent of senior high school, been laboring to send their children to college and universities to sustain the four or five years of their higher education, but with the senior high school, with the additional two years? Could this be the reason many of these parents are no longer sending their

children, or some of these parents are no longer sending their children, beyond senior high school or after senior high school to pursue higher education?

You also highlighted the fact that it is very important for our country to continue our efforts along research. I agree, honorable Member, colleague. I agree to that because there was a time, we remember in the past when research on basic sciences was beyond our reach because of the facilities and equipment needed. Nowadays, these are already within the reach of our higher education students, post-graduate students, but we now are in eminent danger of losing our bright students because they are no longer sent to our higher education institutions.

My question, and I wish that the Committee will address this to the CHED to study the impact or effect of senior high school on the enrollment in higher education, and what interventions we should do. Before we no longer have bright students in our universities and colleges, before we no longer have the human resource to pursue research and innovation in our universities, we should act now. I agree with you that our government should support and sustain these efforts for higher education in our country, especially in research and innovation.

REP. GO (M.). Yes, I agree with you. There are multiple reasons why we have a drop in enrollment in the college level from 2015 to 2018, and one of them is the implementation of the K to 12 Program, and the second one is related to economics. Because of income—this is one of the findings that we have—why people did not pursue college education, or there is a drop in the enrollment from 2015 to 2018. And the effort that we did here in Congress of passing the law giving free tertiary education is an effort to address this actually. Plus, of course, as you mentioned in your second question or second point, research is really very important. It is a necessary thing that we should really have in our higher educational institutions. This is one way of improving teaching in the classroom and, at the same time, this is an approach that we can probably take in helping the economy by developing innovations and improvements in the way we run the different organizations and businesses in the country. Many countries became successful because of research and innovations that they have in their respective countries.

As I have mentioned earlier, the researches—the Philippines has not even conducted how many percent, even 20 percent, you know, compared to the other countries. So, truly, I think this is one of the items that this Committee will focus on this Eighteenth Congress.

REP. ABELLANOSA. Mr. Speaker, honorable Chair of the Committee on Higher Education, would

you also agree that CHED right now is really not that empowered vis-à-vis its responsibility towards what you have enunciated in your privilege speech?

REP. GO (M.). Yes, I agree.

REP. ABELLANOSA. Because, for example, honorable Member, our friend from Baguio City—in Region VII where my representation in Cebu City is, the Commission on Higher Education has only a regional office. Good it is located in the city of Cebu, but there is no provincial office of the CHED in any of these, except for its location in the regional office.

At this juncture, Deputy Speaker Hernandez relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Evelina G. Escudero.

REP. GO (M.). Yes.

REP. ABELLANOSA. I think this situation has been replicated all over the country. So, I believe that there is indeed a need to empower the Commission, if only we would like to give flesh to what we believe that higher education should be the source of innovations and our tool to produce the brains for research in various technologies and applications of sciences.

REP. GO (M.). Yes. This is not only true in Cebu. It is actually true in almost all regions in the country, and I support, just like what I stated, Mme. Speaker, in my privilege speech, we need to provide them the necessary budget, manpower and infrastructure so that they can better perform their function.

You can just imagine they got only how many, more than 1,000 people and catering to how many thousands or millions of students, as well as both state universities and colleges, and private—I mean, universities and colleges in the whole country. That should be—it is really unfair to let them perform a lot of functions and responsibilities, and yet, we do not support them in terms of resources and budget, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ABELLANOSA. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. Thank you, Your Honor.

This Representation will be with you in our endeavor to support the empowerment of the higher education in our country.

Thank you.

REP. GO (M.). Thank you. Thank you, Congressman Abellanos. Thank you.

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker, the last Member who wishes to interpellate the Gentleman from Baguio City is our distinguished Minority Leader, the Gentleman from the Sixth District of Manila. I move that we recognize Rep. Bienvenido M. Abante Jr.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). The Minority Leader, Rep. Bienvenido M. Abante Jr., is now recognized.

REP. ABANTE. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

Would the Gentleman from Baguio yield to some clarificatory questions, Mme. Speaker?

REP. GO (M.). Yes, Minority Leader. It would be an honor to answer your questions. Thank you.

REP. ABANTE. Your privilege speech is so interesting, Mme. Speaker, and I just cannot help but to stand up and try to ask some questions that would, I believe, be crucial to the future of college education.

You made mention in your speech that it is quite crucial to revamp the top-heavy structure. May I ask, Mme. Speaker, when you referred to “top-heavy structure,” what do you mean by that?

REP. GO (M.). We have Commissioners running the CHED and these Commissioners are responsible for all the 111 state universities and colleges, and they got one undersecretary in charge of the different regional offices, as well as the different private universities in the whole country. So, we have a situation where they are all there on top and they do not have people in the different regions. So, what we would like to do is strengthen the regional offices and give them more power, as well as resources, not only on the higher level, but also on the lower level.

REP. ABANTE. Mme. Speaker, many of these Commissioners are political appointees as we know. Do you believe that these Commissioners have expertise as far as the work of the universities and colleges is concerned?

REP. GO (M.). Well, almost all officials of government are political appointees. However, you know, we assumed that all those appointed are qualified people to run their respective organizations. The same is true with the case of the Commission on Higher Education. While the Commissioners may be appointed by the President, they have a fixed term and they perform a function that is defined by law, and therefore, in that sense, while they may be political appointees, they are

people who, I believe, have the capabilities to run the Commission. What is needed would be the support in terms of budget and other resources for them to carry their functions. Just like here in Congress, we give them a lot of responsibilities. If we pass a bill, we always call them and, at the end of the day, we ask them to take responsibility, but there was no additional budget. We gave them the implementation of the free tertiary education, but there was no corresponding increase in budget, and they are dealing with the additional responsibility of implementing the provisions of the free tertiary education in the country.

REP. ABANTE. Do the Commissioners, Mme. Speaker, from the Chairman to the Commissioners, do they have a fixed term?

REP. GO (M.). Yes, they have a fixed term.

REP. ABANTE. So, the fixed term would be around, what? Six years, right?

REP. GO (M.). Six years, yes, Your Honor.

REP. ABANTE. But, you know, they can be replaced any time? No?

REP. GO (M.). No. I assume if they have a fixed term, they cannot be removed.

REP. ABANTE. Alright. Now, there are times in which a political appointee, for example, they do not even study the credentials of the people appointed to the office. Do you believe that in an agency like this, where education is so important, that all of the top officials, even if they are political appointees and they have fixed terms, that we should look at their credentials if they are really able to do and perform the tasks given to them?

REP. GO (M.). Yes, they should be evaluated even before the appointing authority decides who is going to be member or members of the Commission. Just like the President of any, you know, I mean of the different government organizations that we have in the country, I presume that the appointing authority reviews all their credentials and the best is chosen from among those nominated.

REP. ABANTE. Alright. Mme. Speaker. For sure, I know that the Chairman of the CHED, usually, would have been a former president of a university or a former president of a college. So, I might assume that each and every top official of CHED should also have worked intensively on the education aspect of the agency.

REP. GO (M.). Well, the current Chairman of the Commission was a former Vice President of the University of the Philippines. He was also a professor and if you will look at his qualifications, I think, I have no doubt that he is qualified to become the Chair of the Commission on Higher Education.

REP. ABANTE. Yes, thank you, Mme. Speaker, for the information. I do not even know who the Chairman is and his credentials. Now, I am very interested in the word “revamp.” So, when you say revamp, you are not referring to the top officials but you are referring particularly to the regional offices and others.

REP. GO (M.). We will also do a review of the top of the organization because what happens here is that all the Commissioners are given I think about 10 SUCs that they chair. So, this is one item that we have to look at also whether it is an appropriate or probably an effective way of ensuring the delivery of service in different state universities and colleges.

REP. ABANTE. How many regional offices does the CHED have, presently, right now?

REP. GO (M.). I do not have the exact number, Mme. Speaker, but we can get the—but almost, I think, all of the regions are...

REP. ABANTE. Okay.

REP. GO (M.). ...occupied by, I mean, ...

REP. ABANTE. You.

REP. GO (M.). ...are occupied by CHED.

REP. ABANTE. Usually, Mme. Speaker, when we speak of an agency, that is actually a commission composed of commissioners. They are more of a policy-making body than an implementing agency, Mme. Speaker. So, what I am referring here is that the Commission on Higher Education is not only a policy-making body but is mandated to implement, to monitor, to supervise, perhaps, in a way, to control the supervision of all state universities and colleges, Mme. Speaker.

REP. GO (M.). Yes. As a matter of fact, the CHED is not only monitoring—does not only have the monitoring responsibility; it is a regulatory body also. So it performs this function to ensure that the quality of education provided by these different state universities and colleges, as well as private universities, are carried out in these different universities.

REP. ABANTE. Would you, therefore, agree, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, to a suggestion perhaps that the Commission on Higher Education should now become a regular department in the government to oversee, not just a policy-making body or a regulatory body, but a regular department to oversee and perhaps, in a way, to take control of all colleges and universities, whether public or private, so that, as you have said, we would like to see a revamp, we would like to see an effective structure in which we can have a better education here? So, perhaps, there ought to be some drastic and meaningful changes as far as the agency is concerned, Mme. Speaker.

REP. GO (M.). Well, that is one of the items that we are considering, Mr. Interpellator, our Minority Leader. That is one item that we are considering, as far as the Commission on Higher Education is concerned, so that they will be more focused on their work and, at the same time, the appropriate divisions or even institutions within will be organized to address this primary objective of improving the quality of education in the country.

REP. ABANTE. Yes, Mme. Speaker, as you have shown in your speech, as you have shown the statistics of other nations, Mme. Speaker, the Philippines is actually in the lowest rank and, therefore, in the ASEAN region.

REP. GO (M.). Nine out of ten.

REP. ABANTE. We belong to the lower rank as far as the educational structure is concerned, Mme. Speaker.

REP. GO (M.). Yes.

REP. ABANTE. And it is sad to realize that, even dismal to even think about it, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

Now, what I am saying is, have we ever studied the agency in those countries, like Malaysia and Vietnam, governing all of their universities and colleges?

REP. GO (M.). I have not made any study on those countries, of the different governing boards of the different countries' educational system, but I think it is a good strategy to understand the different countries' governing boards of their different state universities...

REP. ABANTE. Yes.

REP. GO (M.). ... so that we can learn from them and see what we can apply in our country.

REP. ABANTE. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, right now, in Asia, Singapore is number one.

REP. GO (M.). Yes.

REP. ABANTE. Perhaps, we could learn from the Singaporean model. Of course, Singapore is a very small country compared to us, and Singapore is only compared to Manila, that even Metro Manila is more populated than Singapore itself. But, nevertheless, if you are going to study the educational structure of Singapore, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, being number one today, as one of the best nations, as far as education is concerned, perhaps, we could learn from the Singaporean model, as far as the structure of the higher education is concerned. Would you think so, Mme. Speaker?

REP. GO (M.). Yes, I think, it is a good move if we can, you know, work with, probably, the department or the Ministry of Education of Singapore so that we can understand their overall situation and how they, of course, as you said, it is a small country but they are topping in the whole of the ASEAN region. So, I think it is really good, you know, to understand and find out what they have there. If needed, probably, we can adopt some of their practices in Singapore.

REP. ABANTE. I would therefore suggest, Mme. Speaker, that in one of your extensive Committee hearings, that perhaps, your Committee could be able to communicate with Singaporean Embassy and the Malaysian Embassy and invite resource speakers to speak on their educational structure and educational model, Mme. Speaker.

REP. GO (M.). We will take note of the suggestion, and I think we will be pleased, you know, to invite them to come over and talk about what they have as far as the educational system, and as well as the structure of their higher educational institution in Singapore is concerned.

REP. ABANTE. Mayroon pang isang issue, Mme. Speaker, tungkol sa K to 12 na ngayon ay pag-uusapan dito sa House. Do you believe that the senior high school is a big help because they are saying that senior high school was implemented in our country because of two things: number one, that we could be equal with the rest of the world; number two, that it would be easier for students who are graduates of the senior high school, Grades 11 and 12, to find better jobs. The reason why we will be talking about this is because it is not actually true that senior high school students would be able to find jobs after graduating from senior high school.

REP. GO (M.). Well, Mr. Speaker, Mme. Speaker, as you know, there are two tracks or several tracks. We have the university track for those who will pursue college education and those who will take the so called...

REP. ABANTE. Yes.

REP. GO (M.). ... "Tech-Voc" track. The assumption under this K to 12 Program is after you finish the Tech-Voc track, you can go and work already. That is the assumption. But during the Seventeenth Congress, I delivered also a privilege speech evaluating the two-year performance of the K to 12 Program and it showed there that most companies where these students who applied in the Tech-Voc program and had graduated were not accepted by many companies in the Philippines because the Tech-Voc training that they had during the last so many years did not prepare them to assume work in the different industries in the country. They still preferred college graduates. Probably, number one, because we still have a high supply of college graduates, plus the fact that those who graduated under the Tech-Voc program do not have the qualifications considering the fact that the so-called Tech-Voc track provided only 90 hours of OJT work in the various companies in the country, kulang. That is one of the problems that we need to address in the Tech-Voc track and the overall K to 12 Program of the government.

REP. ABANTE. I think, Mme. Speaker, we are trying to follow the American model but in reality, most Americans do not even go to college anymore. Why? Because, whenever they graduate from high school taking the K to 12 curriculum, they are able to find jobs, but not in the Philippines, not in the Philippines. Therefore, would you think that on that aspect the K to 12 in preparing our high school students to college, is that effective? Would K to 12 be effective as far as going through college, and graduating and everything? Is it more effective or should we go back to the usual six-four in our lower education bracket?

REP. GO (M.). Well, I think one of the advantages, if you may, is that you delay these people to be part of the labor force because you have extended, you know, the time these students are in school, but we have to see results first.

As I have stated earlier, Mme. Speaker, based on the report that we studied, there are problems that we had encountered during the last two years of the implementation of the K to 12. The end result that we want is that those who have completed the Tech-Voc track should immediately or should be accepted by the different industries in the country, but this is not the case.

I think now those who will graduate under this K to 12 Program and who will finish their college education, how many years do we still have? It would be one or two years more, before we can see whether they have better opportunities to work after completing the K to 12 Program under the university track.

REP. ABANTE. Perhaps, Mme. Speaker, the K to 12 Program should directly pursue higher education and let the Tech-Voc or vocational aspect of the K to 12 Program be reverted to the TESDA, do you know why? Because the batting average of TESDA as far as TESDA graduates getting a job is concerned is better, in reality, and TESDA is only giving a crash course for about what, three months? Matagal na iyong three months. Matagal na iyong six months, pero nakakakuha ka ng trabaho, iyong TESDA graduate, samantalang itong K to 12 ay dalawang taon pa iyong dapat nilang matapos, hindi nakakakuha ng trabaho, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. GO (M.). Yes, as I have said, the training under the Tech-Voc track is only for 90 hours, and the people in the different public schools, probably, are not prepared to do the actual training of these people. If they, let us say, decide to take an auto mechanic in the senior high, they do not have those programs in the different public high schools in the whole country, but if they go to a TESDA institution, they can specifically choose. In this particular case, what they do under the Tech-Voc track and the other tracks, they go and assign them only in different companies for an equivalent of 90 hours for the whole year. So, what can you learn out of that?

REP. ABANTE. Yes, Mme. Speaker, I would like to commend the Chairman of the Committee on Higher Education for raising this issue on a privilege speech, and I believe that this should be pursued, Mme. Speaker. I believe that our Chairman should pursue this in such a way that there will be meaningful changes as far as giving better education for our college students is concerned.

I really appreciate the privilege speech, Mme. Speaker, of the Chairman of the Committee on Higher Education. And, may I say this, si Congressman Go po ay kamag-anak ko po ito, Representative Go, Abante, magpinsan po tayó.

Maraming, maraming salamat po. Thank you very much.

REP. GO (M.). Marami pong salamat, Mme. Speaker, and Minority Leader Abante.

Thank you.

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

REP. TADURAN. Mme. Speaker, I move that the speech of the Hon. Mark Go of Lone District of Baguio City be referred to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, I also move that we refer the interpellations of the speech of the Hon. Mark Go to the Committee on Rules for appropriate action.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. TADURAN. Mme. Speaker, I move that we acknowledge the presence of the guests of the Hon. Angelica Natasha Co of the BHW Party-List and Deputy Speaker Deogracias Victor “DV” B. Savellano of the First District of Ilocos Sur. The Barangay Health Workers and the Regional Presidents, headed by Zeny Pulido, Myrna Gaité, Divina Pakoy, Lilia Augis, Elena Hilario, Thelma Alano, Elizabeth Abarquez, Leah Doblón, Melita Guinez, Cresencia Abucay, Julia de Veyra, Joel Pasion, Helen Tesoro, Ranie Caballero, Merly Nebres, Tony Radjili, Aida Navales, Nora Llaneta, Nimfa Tianes, Myrna Rayala, Juliet De Jesus, Maria Kagahastian, Eva Hilario, Jamil Mora and Mark Cabalhin. (*Applause*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). The guests of Hon. Angelica Natasha Co and Deputy Speaker Savellano please stand up. Welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. CRISOLOGO. Mme. Speaker, I now move that we recognize the Lady from BHW Party-List, Rep. Angelica Natasha Co, for her privilege speech.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Rep. Angelica Natasha Co is now recognized.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. CO (A.)

REP. CO (A.). Thank you, Mme. Chair.

Mme. Speaker, I rise on the plight of our barangay health workers in the context of promoting primary health care as an essential component of Universal Health Care.

Mme. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, we have all been witnesses, very recently, to the alarming upsurge of emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases which have reached epidemic stage such as dengue, tuberculosis, measles, HIV, cholera, typhoid and leptospirosis. On top of these, the Philippines is also embattled with widespread diseases such as heart, kidney, lung or respiratory diseases, cancer and diabetes, among others, which, according to the Department of Health are the leading causes of morbidity in the Philippines.

These diseases are among the most dangerous killers known to man that are not visible to the mortal eyes. They were known to man centuries ago, yet, these continue to lurk in our midst, especially in a Third World country like the Philippines where a great number of its people live in abject poverty and filthy environment—under the bridges, in esteros and slums, as well as high health-risk occupations such as prostitution and street peddling where mostly women and children suffer.

On the one hand, Mme. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, the good news is that we have now a Universal Health Care Act which was passed by Congress and signed by President Rodrigo Duterte on February 20, 2019, with the end in view that all Filipinos are guaranteed equitable access to quality and affordable health care goods and services, and protected against financial risk. Without any doubt, I believe we have a good law which the Department of Health is very eager to implement.

On the other hand, Mme. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, in as much as government would like to fully implement the Universal Health Care Act, it would take time to fully realize its noble purpose as we are confronted with funding and capability issues. In fact for 2020, the DOH said that only 28 provinces and 5 cities, a total of 33 areas were chosen for the roll-out of the Universal Health Care Law.

In the meantime, in the process of progressively realizing our people's right to health, the cost of health care and wellness is taking a heavy toll on the life of every Filipino. Sans the number of deaths attributed to infectious diseases and major causes of morbidity that is prevalent throughout the Philippine archipelago; a great majority of our people are trapped in the vicious cycle of poverty. Access to health services and medicines is hardly within the reach of our fellowmen.

The Philippine Statistics Authority or PSA reported that 53.9 percent of the Filipino households spent the highest health expenditure or out-of-pocket payments in 2018. Of these, 50.1 percent went to pharmacies.

Sa halip na ibili ng pagkain, ang kita po ng karamihan ng ating mga kababayan ay napupunta sa gamot at pagpapaospital. Ang karamihan naman ay hindi na lamang nagpapagamot o bumibili ng tamang gamot. Kaya nga ang wika ng ating mga kababayan, “bawal ang magkasakit”.

Ito po ay hindi haka-haka. The Philippine Wellness Index, a study initiated by Philicare which was released in June 2019 and publicized in major newspapers, found out that 40 percent of the respondents from various parts of the country expressed uncertainty on their capability of paying medical bills; 30 percent were not sure if they can afford the cost of regular medical checkups, 37 percent had to use their savings while 25 percent sought the help of their relatives to pay their medical bills.

The same study shows that only 63.35 percent of Filipinos who have sick family members within the household have ever used the Philippine Health Insurance. This was despite the PhilHealth's claim that 97 million Filipinos or 9 percent of the entire population are already covered by PhilHealth in 2017.

As one respected newspaper puts it, Mme. Speaker, the study had just confirmed what we already know is true. Many Filipinos cannot afford to pay their hospital bills.

Another study by a foreign consultancy, the Mercer Marsh Benefits 2019 Medical Trends Around the World, reported that the Philippines is the second most expensive country in terms of medical expenses in Southeast Asia. Medical inflation in the Philippines is expected to increase to 13.7 percent in 2019 from 13 percent in 2018. And medical costs, the reports stated, are bound to continue increasing and will even outpace inflation by close to three times this year and even higher in 2020.

Mme. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, it is a fact that prevailing health care and services in the Philippines are lamentable. Even in the absence of statistics, we hear and see this sad reality every day. We do not even have to go out of the Batasan Complex. Here in the House of Representatives, we see people who patiently line up, and knock door to door in every Congressman's room, pleading, if not begging, for health assistance. Most of the cases, I believe, are kidney diseases which are so expensive that even employees with good pay cannot afford.

As I have mentioned earlier, we are hopeful that the Universal Health Care Law would pave the way to health and social justice. But to realize this noble objective, there is one requisite that has to be fulfilled, and that is, primary health care.

As the World Health Organization representative in the Philippines puts it, we know that primary health care is the fairest and most affordable path to universal health coverage. Primary health care means multiple sectors working together to bring care closer to home, with the involvement of the community. The UHC Act is just the beginning of our journey to health for all Filipinos.

Mme. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, the Philippines indeed has somehow come a long way in primary health care in keeping with the World Health

Organization's Declaration of Alma-Ata of 1978. But, much remains to be done.

In principle, primary health care is the foundation of every health care system, which is the first contact and ongoing link between people and their health providers. Primary health care delivers a broad spectrum of preventive, promotive, curative and palliative care across the life course. It is how our people at the barangay level connect with the health care system throughout their lives, for practically everything, from health education and information campaigns to the treatment of illness and the management of chronic conditions. When primary health care works, people are able to get the care they need to stay healthy. The vast majority of a community's health needs at the barangay level can be met by a well-functioning primary care system.

It is lamentable, however, that the development resources tend to be concentrated on specific diseases and issues. While this approach can generate significant progress on health care and services, it leaves the underlying health systems starving for support. The result is a primary care system that is dangerously fragile and fragmented.

The importance of primary health care is indisputable, and I would not want to belabor this point further. The reason why I am mentioning primary health care is to emphasize a very urgent concern, one that we always cross upon with, yet taken for granted by many for several decades now. I am referring to our barangay health workers or BHWs.

Our BHWs need no introduction. We know them well, by name, by face and the general nature of their work. Many speeches have been delivered in their name. Nevertheless, I stand before you now in this august Chamber, to add my voice in their struggle to be recognized, not to beg or beseech your support for their personal gain or benefit, or to seek praise for their heroic deeds, but to convey to this august Body, the urgency of promoting primary health care from the perspective of barangay health workers, if we are to achieve the noble purpose of the Universal Health Care Law that is before us now.

I would just like to stress, Mme. Speaker, that providing benefits, incentives and security to our barangay health workers should be premised and anchored on strengthening primary health care as an essential and integral component of universal health care.

I am stressing this point, as in the past there was always the tendency to shy away from the cost of upgrading the benefits and incentives of our BHWs. Unless we recognize this, we cannot expect our BHWs, who languish in poverty and poor health, to take the lead in building a healthy and progressive nation.

Alam po ninyo, sa aking pag-iikot sa iba't ibang lungsod, bayan at probinsya, nasaksihan ko kung gaano kadalisa ang puso at damdamin ng ating mga BHW. Sa aking pag-iikot, itinatanong ko lagi kung ano ang mga kailangan nila at madalas na sagot ng karamihan sa akin ay stethoscope o pang-BP, pangkuha ng blood pressure, thermometer at first aid kit. Ito ang mabilis nilang tugon lagi sa aking simpleng tanong. Nakakaantig ng damdamin sapagkat mas una pa nilang naiisip ang makapaglingkod sa kanilang mga kababayan o mga kabarangay kaysa sarili nilang pangangailangan. Kung papipiliin mo sila kung payong, make-up kit o stethoscope at pang-BP, ang pipiliin nila ay ang huli.

For what price? What personal benefit do they derive from it? Nothing really because they even spend the honoraria they receive for their hapless fellowmen. Believe it or not, there are some BHWs who receive as low as P150 as honoraria. Saan po aabot ang P150, o sabihin pa nating isa at dalawang libo sa iilang lugar?

Our BHWs practically do everything that is necessary for the benefit of the barangay folks. Umulan, bumagyo o sa katirikan ng init ng araw, walang piling oras, araw o gabi. Sa kasuluk-sulukan man ng barangay, hindi nila alintana ang panganib at pagod. Marami sa mga BHW mula pa noong 1980s. Mula sa pagkadalaga o pagkabinata hanggang sa magkaasawa na at pamilya o hanggang pagtanda, niyakap na nila ang buhay BHW hanggang sa libing.

Minsan, itinatanong ko po ang isang beteranang BHW: "Nay, sapat ba ang inyong honoraria?" Ang sagot po niya sa akin: "Hay salamat naman po kung may dagdag pa sana." So bakit po sila nagsasakripisyo? Malasakit! Malasakit sa kapwa at sa bayan. Ito ang nag-udyok sa kanila maging isang BHW, at ito rin ang kanilang pinanghahawakan sa patuloy nilang paglilingkod.

Mme. Speaker, marapat lamang na tapatan natin, ng Kapulungang ito, partikular ang malasakit na ipinamamalas ng ating mga BHW. Ganunpaman, may biyaya man o wala, nakasisiguro ako na ang ating mga BHW ay patuloy na maninilbihan ng buong malasakit sa abot ng kanilang makakaya.

Gusto ko pong bigyang diin sa pagkakataong ito, na bagama't ang tawag natin sa kanila ay volunteers, hindi tama na abusuhin natin ang katagang ito, na sukdulang humahantong pa sa pagsasamantala, kung hindi man pambubusabos.

Marami po sa ating BHW ang nagiging accredited lamang pagkalipas ng at least tatlong taon. Paglipas ng ilang taon kung sila ay accredited na, saka pa lamang bibigyan ng karampatang honoraria. Dapat lamang na baguhin na natin ang kalakarang ito. Ito ay hindi patas at hindi makatao, bagay na nakakubli sa ngalan ng bolunterismo.

I believe it is high time that we take a closer look on the essence of the volunteer status of our BHWs. It

is high time that we treat our BHWs with utmost respect in real terms, sans political rhetoric, by providing them with concrete support and ammunition in battling perennial health woes that continue to besiege, and has relegated our people into economic and social quagmire. That our BHWs serve as volunteers is not a license to neglect, discriminate and even abuse. For several decades now, our BHWs have relentlessly struggled and served our people unselfishly. Our BHWs are heroes and honor we must give to them no less.

Mme. Speaker, Pres. Rodrigo Duterte in his first SONA in the Eighteenth Congress, called for the passage of a Magna Carta for the Barangay. In response to his call, I submit that the welfare of our BHWs, as well as other barangay volunteers and officials, should be a major component or provision; otherwise, without which, the law would just be another rhetoric.

I respectfully entreat your support, Mme. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, to prioritize and fast track vital pieces of legislation. I am hopeful and I trust that this would merit our collective attention and concrete support for our BHWs. We cannot dichotomize primary health care from universal health care, in which the welfare of our BHWs is essential, as well. We cannot expect our BHWs to be effective in their duties while they languish in poverty and poor health.

We ought to give our BHWs the dignity that they deserve. What we must provide them is not act of charity or mercy on our part. Congress is duty bound to fulfill its obligation to ensure health for all and social justice.

Thank you, Mme. Speaker, distinguished colleagues.

May I also request for the viewing of a brief video featuring the lives of our BHWs, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CRISOLOGO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we extend the Privilege Hour for another 30 minutes.

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

Can we have the video now?
(*Audio visual presentation*)

REP. CO (A.). Thank you, Mme. Speaker. (*Applause*)

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

REP. CRISOLOGO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from the Second District of Cagayan de Oro City, the Hon. Rufus Rodriguez, for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Representative Rufus Rodriguez is now recognized.

REP. RODRIGUEZ. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

This is not an interpellation because I have full support for our colleague. May I first congratulate the Hon. Angelica Natasha Co of the BHW Party-List. (*Applause*) We have here with us the leadership of the BHW all over the country--its president and the regional directors of the BHW organization.

This is to manifest my strong support to our barangay health workers all over the country. This afternoon, with the Chairman of the Committee on Local Government, 29 bills in support of the barangay health workers have been filed and are now consolidated to be able to come out with the new Magna Carta for barangay health workers with the following:

1. That they will have security of tenure. That they cannot be replaced by incoming new barangay captains, and be able therefore to serve more because they have really been trained by the Department of Health;

2. That they should be given higher salaries, not anymore honoraria, because they are in the forefront of giving services (*Applause*) to our people in the barangays and sitios;

3. That they should be given retirement benefits and be members of the GSIS so that they will have their own medical assistance aside from other benefits from the Government Service Insurance System.

This Representation filed two bills for health workers. First, House Bill No. 3801, entitled: An Act Mandating the Department of Health to Provide At Least One Health Worker in Every Barangay, Increasing Their Salaries and Benefits.

These nationally hired barangay health workers will be in complement with those appointed by local governments which are the cities, municipalities and the barangays. In the study made by the Department of Health, they are saying that there should be one barangay health worker for every 1 percent of the population of the barangay. Therefore, Mme. Speaker, at this point, we have only 208,000 barangay health workers. Under the formula of the Department of Health, with that 1 percent, we should have 1,080,000 health workers considering our population of 108 million. Therefore, we have to get that desired number of health workers. We should make sure that we are able to recruit and train them, and give them all the benefits of a regular employee of our government, both in the national and local levels.

My second Bill, Mme. Speaker, is House Bill No. 4575, entitled: An Act Providing Security of Tenure for Barangay Health Workers Amending for the Purpose...

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker.

REP. RODRIGUEZ. ... Section 6 (d) of ...

REP. DE VENENCIA. Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Yes, the Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. With due respect to the Honorable Rodriguez, just a short point of order. Rule XVI, Section 122, of the House Rules on the Privilege Hour, states:

Members shall not avail of the Privilege Hour to speak on concerns that are principally and directly related to the subject matter of measures already pending in any committee or in plenary session.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). The point of order of the Majority Leader is well taken.

REP. RODRIGUEZ. Mme. Speaker, precisely, I am not discussing the merits of the bill. This is in manifestation. Yes, I know that rule very well. They are pending, but we are just giving a manifestation in support of the barangay health workers. That is why we only mentioned the titles of the bills.

Let me just finish, Mme. Speaker, by stating that my House Bill in support of the barangay health workers is to provide security of tenure for barangay health workers, amending for the purpose Republic Act No. 7883, we therefore end by stating that we urge all our colleagues, who know how our barangay health workers work, to be able to support this consolidated bill that will come out from the 29 bills that we have.

Thank you very much, Mme. Speaker. *(Applause)*

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

REP. CRISOLOGO. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from the Sixth District of Manila, our distinguished Minority Leader, the Hon. Bienvenido Abante Jr., for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Representative Benny Abante, our distinguished Minority Leader, is now recognized.

REP. ABANTE. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

Unang-una po, I am very proud to congratulate a member of the Minority bloc, Mme. Speaker, for her real concern for the barangay health workers. I would like to assure her that this Representation, with the full support of the Minority bloc, will be tackling this

problem in Congress, as Cong. Rufus Rodriguez already made mention of some bills.

Mme. Speaker, palagay ko po talagang dapat na pag-ukulan ng pansin ang ating barangay health workers. Ako ay nagpapasalamat na mayroon po tayo ritong Kongresista na siyang nagre-represent sa ating barangay health workers, na ni-raise niya ang napakalaking problemang ito. Kaya't maraming, maraming salamat. Kami ay in full support sa iyo, Mme. Speaker. *(Applause)*

Unang-una, Mme. Speaker, ito po bang ating Representante ng BHW would be willing to answer some clarificatory questions?

REP. CO (A.). Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ABANTE. Okay. Thank you. Binanggit po niya rito iyong primary health care na ang sabi niya "an essential component of the Universal Health Care." Salamat po at ito ay nabanggit. Binanggit din po niya rito iyong infectious diseases which has reached epidemic stage, such as dengue, tuberculosis, measles, at idagdag na rin natin ang polio sapagkat pinag-uusapan na ito ngayon. Nagpapasalamat din po tayo na naging batas na ang Universal Health Care Act o Republic Act No. 11223.

Ang kalungkutan ko lamang po ay ito, sapagkat tayo rin ay nag-file ng resolution to investigate PhilHealth dahil sa alleged massive corruption, kapag malaki po ang korapsyon sa isang ahensya ng gobyerno, ang nasasaktan dito ay ang mga mahihirap. Nais po natin ang Universal Health Care talaga ay maging mahalagang component upang bigyan ng solusyon ang health care programs ng gobyerno, lalo pa kung ito ay makakatulong po sa ating mga mahihirap na mga kababayan na nangangailangan ng access to health services and medicines.

Sa Maynila po ay marami ring mga barangay health workers, at ang alam ko bilang volunteers, nakakatanggap po sila ng honoraria na around P600 a month. Iyan po ay sa Maynila. Ako ay nagpapasalamat sa aming mayor, Mayor Isko Moreno, na tinaasan na ang honorarium ng mga health workers sa Maynila. Sa sinabi po ng ating kagalang-galang na Representante ng BHW na ang mga health workers po ay nagtatrabaho kahit na kaunti lang ang ibinibigay sa kanila. Bakit po? Sapagkat mayroon silang malasakit at mayroon po silang pag-ibig sa ating mga kababayan. Kaya't ang tanong ko po dito ay unang-una, kapag pinag-uusapan po ang primary health care, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, ano po ba talaga ang dapat na gamutin sa primary health care?

REP. CO (A.). Thank you very much for the question, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

Ang primary health care po na binabanggit dito,

iyang po ang talagang trabaho ng isang BHW. Sila ang nagmo-monitor. Sabi nga nila, from womb to tomb. So, ibig sabihin po niyan, mula kapanganakan ng isang tao hanggang ito ay mamatay, ang talagang nagmo-monitor po nito ay ang barangay health worker.

Ang primary health care po, papasok dito dahil magkakaroon sila ng way para effectively nila na maibigay ang kanilang mga serbisyo kung magkakaroon sila ng mga BP apparatus, magkakaroon sila ng kanilang enough ammunition to do their battle right and then they can win the fight through the primary health care po.

So, sinasabi po dito sa aking speech na kailangan na at napapanahon na po na bigyan sila ng karampatang ammunition para sa primary health care because primary health care cannot be effective without giving them ammunition.

REP. ABANTE. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

One of the most important projects I have in my district is medical mission, ano po. Iniimbitahan po namin ang mga barangay health workers para sila po ay mag-volunteer din naman sa medical mission na ito na nabanggit po ng ating kagalang-galang na Representante ng BHW na totoo po iyon madalas na nais nila at kailangan po nila na kanilang hinihiling ay stethoscope, pangkuha ng blood pressure, thermometer, pati po iyong nebulizer.

REP. CO (A.). Yes.

REP. ABANTE. Napakarami ng mga nebulizers na aking naibigay po sa ating mga kababayan, Mme. Speaker. Ngayon ko lang po nalaman na mayroon palang BHW na nakatanggap as low as P150 bilang honoraria. Eh, palagay ko po talagang napakalaki nang insulto ito sa mga nagbo-volunteer po na BHW.

So, ang tanong ko po dito ay kung, halimbawa, magkakaroon po tayo ng batas, katulad po ng sinabi na tungkol po sa mga BHW na kinakailangan po magkaroon ng security of tenure, magkaroon ng mga benepisyo, magkaroon po ng GSIS, eh, mayroon po ba kayong iniisip na dapat na isuweldo sa kanila o doon po sa batas na maaaring magawa natin? For example, kung mayroon tayong mga batas ay magsisimula tayo na sila ay isama na sa ating tinatawag na plantilla position ng ating pamahalaan, hindi lang po volunteer kundi sila ay regular na empleyado na.

REP. CO (A.). Bagamat po hindi nila hinihiling na maging regular na empleyado, okay lang po sa kanila na volunteer status, pero po kung dadagdagan ang honoraria, mas maganda po. So, para sa ano po, Committee on Local Government, pinag-uusapan na po—pag-uusapan po kung ilan ang sapat na honorarium para sa mga barangay health workers. Of course, we

have to invite po our departments so that we can have a proper amount to be given to the BHWs, so that we can set a proper amount for them.

REP. ABANTE. So, Mme. Speaker, would you rather say that instead of them be put into a regular employment in the government, they can remain as volunteer workers and they will just receive honoraria? Is that what you are saying?

REP. CO (A.). Yes, po, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ABANTE. Okay. So, palagay po ninyo, how much po ba ang magandang allowance para sa isang BHW na kung saan siya ay mabubuhay ng disente at magagawa po niya na mas maganda pa ang paggawa bilang pagiging volunteer na barangay health worker?

REP. CO (A.). Para po sa inyong Representative, at least, P3,000 per month, pero may karampatang benefits and incentives po na maibibigay para sa kanila upang hindi na nila kailangan problemahin pa ang kanilang mga health benefits, ang kanilang hazard allowance, or even their transportation allowance.

Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ABANTE. Alam ninyo po, Mme. Speaker, of course, sinasabi po ng DOH na 97 percent na ang miyembro ng PhilHealth. Ano po? Dapat po ba sa inyong palagay repasuhin pa rin ng Kongreso ang PhilHealth Program? Dapat itaas ang benepisyo na ibinibigay ng PhilHealth sa ating mamamayan, particularly, sa ating mahihirap na kababayan.

REP. CO (A.). Para po sa inyong Representante, dapat po talaga pagtuunan ng pansin ang pagbibigay pa ng mas maraming benefits para sa mga walang benefit katulad po ng mga barangay health workers na nagpo-provide ng health care service, ngunit sila po mismo ang walang health benefits.

REP. ABANTE. Therefore, Mme. Speaker, would you support the suggestion that we ought to review the PhilHealth Program, and a very important move is that we ought to increase the benefits of the members of the PhilHealth Program?

REP. CO (A.). I am in support po.

REP. ABANTE. Okay, palagay ko po ay kung pinag-uusapan po iyong honoraria ng ating mga BHW, that would be in a case-to-case basis. It will depend on the place where they are in, sa probinsiya o Metro Manila o sa ibang termino. Well, gusto ko po lamang sabihin that I fully support your thrust. I fully support your advocacy, Mme. Speaker, and rest assured that

your Minority Leader will be behind every step of the way para po masiguro natin that the barangay health workers will have the benefits and the perks afforded to them bilang mga modern heroes ng ating lipunan na naglilingkod po sa mga may sakit.

Salamat po. Maraming salamat po. Thank you.

REP. CO (A.). Thank you very much, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

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

REP. CRISOLOGO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize our Senior Deputy Minority Leader, Hon. Janette L. Garin, from the First District of Iloilo for her interpellation. I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Senior Minority Leader, Rep. Janette Garin, is now recognized.

REP. GARIN (J.). Thank you. Maraming salamat po, Mme. Speaker. First and foremost, allow me to congratulate our colleague in the Minority for a well-delivered speech, not only speaking in behalf of the group, which she represents, but moreover, speaking on behalf of the Filipino people.

Sa atin pong kagalang-galang na Representante Nikka Co, ang dami pong naibanggit tungkol sa universal health care. Would you agree with me in saying that the barangay health workers are very important tools when we talk about the accomplishment of the goals of universal health care?

REP. CO (A.). Very much agree, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. GARIN (J.). Nasabi po ng ating kagalang-galang na Minority Leader kanina po lamang na tila hindi niya masiguro kung malamang aktibo ba, o in effect ba, o nahihirapan iyong ating barangay health workers sa pag-avail ng kanilang PhilHealth benefits? Can you enlighten us? Sila po ba ay may libreng membership at iyong libreng membership ba, does it translate to utilization kasi baka naman miyembro sa papel eh pero pinapahirapan sila sa tuwing sila o ang kanilang miyembro ng pamilya ay nagkakasakit?

REP. CO (A.). Actually, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker, ang atin pong mga barangay health workers, hindi lahat sa kanila ang mayroong membership sa PhilHealth. Ang iba po sa kanila nabibigyan through their local government units; ang iba sa kanila through provincial government, pero madalas po marami sa kanila actually ang hindi nakakatanggap ng membership sa PhilHealth.

Iyong iba po sa kanila kasi sinasabi na member sila ng PhilHealth ngunit hindi rin po nayu-utilize ang membership sa PhilHealth.

REP. GARIN (J.). Mayroon po ba kayo, kagalang-galang na kasamahan, Mme. Speaker, naririnig or n-encounter na mga reklamo na sa panahon na ang isang BHW member or kanilang kapamilya ay nagkasakit, pagdating sa hospital ay pinapahirapan pa sa pag-avail ng PhilHealth? (*Response from the gallery*)

REP. CO (A.). Iyan po, narinig ninyo na rin po siguro ang sagot ng ating mga barangay health workers. Mayroon pong problema talaga sa PhilHealth at sa pagkuha nila ng medical assistance sa kanilang mga kani-kaniyang mga hospitals.

REP. GARIN (J.). Mme. Speaker, ang rason po ng katanungan na ito ay naitanong ko dahil napansin ko po karamihan sa kanila, simply because they are busy at minsan ay nagmamadali na umuwi dahil maraming aasikasuhin sa mga barangay at kailangan nilang ilabas sa ospital ang kanilang kapamilya ay tila, siyempre, kapag pinapahirapan ka, the usual recourse, magbabayad na lang sila. Kaya kung mamarapatin po ng ating kagalang-galang na Representante ng BHW Party-List, isama na po natin doon sa pagtingin at sa hearing kung mayroon po bang mga sitwasyon na ang kanilang availment ng PhilHealth, setting aside pa iyong dapat na mandatory membership sa PhilHealth, iyong kanilang availment ay napapahirapan because universal health care provision does not only mean universal health care coverage or membership ng PhilHealth. Ang mas pinakaimportante po dito ay miyembro ka na nga at ginagamit at napapagamit sa iyo iyong membership.

Will the honorable distinguished colleague be amenable na maisama ito doon sa panukalang batas na kaniyang isinasaad?

REP. CO (A.). Ang Representante pong ito ay tinatanggap ang suhestyon at ipapasok po ito siguro sa hearing sa committee.

REP. GARIN (J.). Mme. Speaker, nakarinig din po ako na isa po sa populasyon na nakakagat ng aso o pusa o minsan naman hindi naman nakakagat pero hinahabol ng aso iyong ating mga BHW workers. Narinig ninyo po rin ba ang mga kuwentong ito?

REP. CO (A.). Madalas po iyang naririnig sa mga kuwento ng mga BHW.

REP. GARIN (J.). Ito po ba, Mme. Speaker, ay kuwentong kutsero or kuwentong katotohanan iyong totoong nangyayari sa buhay ng ating barangay health workers?

REP. CO (A.). Ito po ay may katotohanan at hindi lang po, even our residents po iyong iba sa kanila talagang nakakagat na ng aso pero pagdating po sa kanilang mga barangay clinics, sa pagdating po sa kanilang hospitals kung kailan kinakailangan na nila ng medical attention sila po ay napapabayaan na.

REP. GARIN (J.). Kapag po sila ay nakakagat ng aso or kung pusa pinagbabayad po ba sila sa kanilang anti-rabies?

REP. CO (A.). Yes.

REP. GARIN (J.). Nakakalungkot po kasi, Mme. Speaker, distinguished colleague. Sa kaalaman po ng lahat, the rabies vaccination program, when I joined the Department, ang libre po doon ay dalawang dose at pinapabayaran na sa pasyente iyong subsequent doses.

When I left in 2016, ang alam ko po at sigurado po ako doon, libre po ang six to eight doses of rabies vaccine at ito po ay bayad ng Department of Health, supposedly.

Kaya kung mamarapatin po ay maganda pong buksan at unkgatin ito saan po ba napupunta ang bakuna, saan po ba napupunta ang pera, at bakit po ipinapabayad pa iyong ating mga barangay health workers ng rabies vaccine tuwing sila ay nakakagat ng aso o ng pusa?

Mme. Speaker, matanong ko lang po sa ating kagalang-galang na kasamahan, iyong mga ibang doktor po kasi, may clinic hours eh, kapagka sarado na ay wala na po iyong doktor. Ang mga barangay health workers po natin ay may clinic hours po ba sila o sila po ay 24/7?

REP. CO (A.). Ang trabaho po ng isang barangay health worker ay walang pinipiling oras; therefore, 24/7 po. Minsan nga po may kumakatok sa kanilang pintuan, hatinggabi, minsan alas-dos, alas-tres ng umaga, magpapatulong, magpapadala pa sa hospital, at sila pa po ang magbabayad ng transportation para dalhin ang mga pasyente sa hospital.

REP. GARIN (J.). Mayroon po ba silang tinatawag na “holiday” or wala?

REP. CO (A.). Wala po. Wala pong holiday ang pagiging isang BHW. Again, dahil 24/7 ang kanilang trabaho, minsan po naka-duty pa, gaya ng isang doktor, more than 24 hours na trabaho sa isang araw pero hindi po sila nagrereklamo kahit na ganyan po ang kanilang plight sa buhay.

REP. GARIN (J.). Nakasalungat ko rin po iyong isang memo or administrative order ng Department of the Interior and Local Government. Nakasaad po rito

na wala pong barangay health workers ang basta-basta na lang puwedeng tanggalin ng isang local government chief executive or ng barangay kapitan. Sa pagkakaalam po ng ating Kagalang-galang na kasamahan, is this being implemented or ito ba ay naging hanggang sa papel na lang po?

REP. CO (A.). Nakakalungkot man pong isipin, pero mayroon pong mangilan-ngilang lugar sa ating bansa na hindi nagiging tama ang pagtanggap sa kanila, so napupulitika po ang ating mga barangay health workers.

Minsan po nasasali sila sa—kapag oras na ng eleksyon o botohan sa Pilipinas, minsan sila ay nagagamit ng kanilang mga barangay captains at sila po ay napupulitika kaya hindi naiiwasan na pagka natalo ang kanilang sinusuportahan, sila po ay tinatanggal nang walang dahilan. Kahit po sila ay trained for three years or even more because they have been in service for more than 30, 40 years, tinatanggal pa rin po sila nang walang dahilan.

REP. GARIN (J.). Mme. Speaker, ang ibig ninyo po bang sabihin eh marami po tayong barangay health workers na nagiging collateral damage sa political war?

REP. CO (A.). Tama po iyan, Mme. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (J.). Lastly, Mme. Speaker, mayroon po tayong, kung sa TESDA ang dami pong tine-train—high school graduates, tine-train sila na maging driver or mag-handle ng spa or maging hilot, later on bookkeeping, baking, mechanic, electrician—napansin ko lang po, tila wala pong training na may direktiba. In other words, kumbaga, kung sa doktor, may continuous medical education, among the barangay health workers, it will actually be continuous public health education among barangay health providers. Puwede po ba nating isama ito, Mme. Speaker, sa iyong panukalang batas, that among the courses being provided by TESDA, this should also be included?

REP. CO (A.). Salamat po sa inyong suhestiyon. I am amenable and agreeable to that suggestion, Mme. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (J.). Pangalawa po, ang pagkakaintindi ko po, napakalaki ng advocacy fund ng mga training, ng mga seminar, at ng mga meeting na ginagawa ng Department of Health. Sa pananaw ninyo po ba, a portion of these is being spent to train barangay health workers? Is it enough or iyon po ba eh minsan nagagamit lang iyong ating mga barangay health workers para i-justify ng iilang opisina sa gobyerno iyong gastusin nila sa mga napakaraming seminar at training?

REP. CO (A.). May nakarating po sa aking kuwento kamakailan lamang na ang kanilang budget last year for their trainings is P1 million for one region, ngunit po ngayon, ang sinasabi po nila, even the P500,000, hindi rin po nila nararamdaman. Naibaba po ang budget ng kanilang trainings, from P1 million to P500,000 nguni't kulang pa rin po ito.

REP. GARIN (J.). Nagkaroon din po ng mga issue, Mme. Speaker, distinguished colleague, na nakitaan at ako po ay kaakibat doon, na sabi ko, bakit ba noong nakitaan ko na mayroong parang P1 bilyon na pondo para sa mga barangay health workers or community health workers sa DOH ay naubos po ito nang hindi man lang ramdam ng taumbayan.

Iyan po ang naging rason kung saan ipinaglaban natin na hindi lamang po training, na hindi naman ganoon ka thorough at kalalim, kundi dapat po ay binibigyan ng mga BP apparatus, thermometer, nebulizers, iyong mga pangkuha ng sugar ng pasyente. Ibig pong sabihin, kapag isinabak natin sa giyera iyong ating mga barangay health workers, sana man lang doon sa mga gamit ay mayroon sila. Kailan po ang pinakahuli na nakatanggap sila, at kung ito po ba ay pinagpapatuloy or naging seasonal po ba?

REP. CO (A.). Sa, base po sa mga kwento ng ating mga BHWs, hindi po madalas ang pagbibigay ng BP apparatus. Ang nalalaman po natin, ang latest na pagbigay ng BP apparatus for just one municipality was two, three years ago already. So, ngayon po, iyan po ang madalas hinihingi sa atin, kaya balak ko rin pong kausapin ang departamento upang mabigyan natin ng sapat na ammunition, katulad ng mga stethoscope, pang-BP at kung ano-ano pa, para mayroon silang madadala o mayroon silang gamit para sa kanilang pagbibigay serbisyo.

REP. GARIN (J.). Kasi po, Mme. Speaker, distinguished colleague, ang napansin ko po noon nga ako ay nasa kalakaran ng kalusugan, ang kalimitan po na sinasabi ng ating policy determinators, iyan po ay obligasyon ng local government units. However, Mme. Speaker, distinguished colleague, naiintindihan ko po na sa dami ng gastusin ng ating mga pamahalaang lokal, even the allowances of our barangay health workers na pilit nating inaangat, siyempre hindi na nila magastusan iyong mga equipment na ito.

Will the honorable Representative from the BHW Party-List be one with us in including, incorporating doon po sa panukalang batas that the Department of Health, or any national government agency for that matter, will be the mandated organization to provide for the equipment, not only the BP apparatus, but even the basic thermometers, the basic nebulizers, iyon pong basic na kagamitan na kailangan ng mga barangay health workers even on a per barangay basis?

REP. CO (A.). This Representation agrees to the suggestion and I am one with you in pushing for the department to give the necessary medical supplies.

REP. GARIN (J.). Let me move forward to the last proposal, Mme. Speaker, distinguished colleague. Ang pagkakaalam ko po ay nagkaroon ng mga girian, agawan doon sa hazard pay. Napakarami po ng nag-take advantage sa hazard pay. I am not sure, pero narinig ko po na iyong Population Commission, which is an agency under the National Economic and Development Authority—ibig pong sabihin, wala naman silang direct patient care dahil ang kalimitan ng kanilang trabaho ay nandodoon sa opisina—nare-releasan ng hazard pay na milyon-milyon.

Sa pananaw ninyo po ba, sa dami ng mga hazard pay na nadi-disallow ng Commission on Audit, hindi po ba ang pinakakailangan na bigyan ng hazard pay ay iyong frontliners ng health care, and these are the barangay health workers? *(Applause)*

REP. CO (A.). Yes po, tama po iyan.

REP. GARIN (J.). So, lastly, Madam Chair, let me put forward, if you will be amenable, the inclusion in your proposed measure, iyong unang-una nga po, mandatory PhilHealth membership, including, of course, the dependents; the provision of a regular training program, possibly a ladderized training program so that investments made on our BHW can actually be implemented further; and, of course, the hazard pay.

Lastly, ang dami po nating batas na ginawa—we have the Sin Taxes, we have the Magna Carta of Public Health Workers, we have the amendments of the PhilHealth Law—at ang dami pa ngayon, mayroon pang pino-propose na another tax on sugar drinks. Siguro naman po, it is time for us to rethink this and we will be very supportive, on the part of the Minority, susupportahan ito. It is now time to earmark a specific portion of all health taxes, a taxation for health, for the barangay health workers because that will once and for all solve the problem na iyong palagi pong rason na walang pera ay mawala na at iyon namang mga LGUs na nahihirapan ay matulungan.

In other words, for the sin taxes, kaysa naman napupunta sa mga training na paulit-ulit, kaysa naman napupunta sa mga research na hindi ibinibigay sa sambayanang Pilipino, why not set aside, maybe, 5 or 10 percent of these taxes for the utilization of the empowerment, continuous training, hazard pay and benefits of our barangay health workers because they are not political tools, they are healthcare frontliners? *(Applause)*

Maraming salamat po, Mme. Speaker, and congratulations again to our distinguished colleague

dahil kung wala po siya, iyong malaking boses ng ating mga barangay health workers ay tila babalik lang sa isang whisper.

Salamat po.

REP. CO (A.). Thank you very much, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. CRISOLOGO. Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. CRISOLOGO. I move that we extend the Privilege Hour for another 30 minutes.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. CRISOLOGO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from the Fourth District of Quezon City, Hon. Jesus "Bong" C. Suntay, for his manifestation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Representative Suntay is now recognized.

REP. SUNTAY. Thank you very much, Mme. Speaker.

I would just like to congratulate the Speaker, ...

REP. CO (A.). Thank you very much, Your Honor.

REP. SUNTAY. ... and manifest my support for the House bill that she filed together with 28 other Members of Congress.

Coming from the local government unit, saksi ho ako sa paghihirap at mga trabaho na ibinibigay, sa serbisyo na ibinibigay ng ating BHWs. Ako ay natutuwa that there are numerous bills which have been filed to institutionalize and to incentivize iyong ating mga barangay health workers.

So, nais ko hong malaman ng ating speaker that ang suporta ng Representasyon na ito ay ibinibigay sa mga House bills ukol dito.

Maraming, maraming salamat po.

REP. CO (A.). Thank you very much, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CRISOLOGO. Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. CRISOLOGO. I move that we recognize the Gentleman from the Third District of Bukidnon, Hon. Manuel F. Zubiri, also for his short manifestation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Representative Zubiri is now recognized.

REP. ZUBIRI. Marami pong salamat, Mme. Speaker.

When I heard it was you, Ma'am, Representative Co of BHW, I just wanted to manifest that sa amin po doon sa Mindanao, iyong aming BHW, 24/7, always on the go. Kung fiesta, kung araw, nagvo-volunteer; kung hindi related sa health, nagvo-volunteer; livelihood programs, nagvo-volunteer. Tapos on their day-to-day jobs, nandiyan sila parati, they are exposed to the elements. During disasters, they volunteer. Then, doon sa ating, for example, constituents with diseases, sila po iyong frontline.

Mahal na mahal po namin iyong aming mga BHW, that is why we are here. Kami po sa Mindanao, nagbibigay po kami ng suporta sa iyo, your party-list, your advocacy, especially, for the BHWs. I think, you know, they are overworked and I cannot even say they are "underpaid" because they are not getting paid; they are only getting very small allowances, if ever. These are all volunteer work.

Definitely, it is about time na we support them. Even with so much input that they have been giving—sorry, with so much output and with not enough input, but grabe po iyong kanilang trabaho.

Ma'am, we are here to support you, especially, we from Mindanao because we know, grabe po iyong talagang pagtrabaho po at saka pagbigay po ng serbisyo ng aming mga BHW doon po sa Mindanao.

Please be rest assured, if you need people to support you, definitely, you can count on us.

Marami pong salamat, Ma'am. Thank you very much.

REP. CO (A.). Thank you very much, Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. CRISOLOGO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Lady from Taguig, Hon. Lani Cayetano, for her manifestation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Rep. Lani Cayetano is now recognized.

REP. CAYETANO (M.). Thank you very much, Mme. Speaker.

Una ho sa lahat, gusto ko lang na i-congratulate ang ating napakabata pero napakahusay na Representante ng BHW Party-List para sa isang napakahalagang speech sa araw na ito, at gusto kong ipahayag ang aking pagsuporta. I am very proud dahil hindi lang siya bata, hindi lang siya babae, hindi lang siya baguhan kung hindi isa pang Bikolana. So, congratulations to you!

Sa eksperyensiya ko bilang three-term mayor ng Lungsod ng Taguig, ang siyam na taon ko ay ginugol sa malalim na pakikipagtrabaho sa ating mga BHWs at kitang-kita natin iyong kanilang sakripisyo. Mayroong ratio dapat, hindi ba, ang populasyon sa ating BHWs pero napakalayo pa natin dito. If I am not mistaken, 1:20 dapat iyan, oo, pero sa populasyon, halimbawa ng Taguig, 947, almost a million na ang mga residente sa Lungsod ng Taguig. Sinisikap naming magkaroon ng sapat na bilang pero sa kasalukuyan, mayroong kaming 959, so ang ratio ngayon, is 1:197, 1:959, hindi ba? So, gusto ko lang na i-assure ang butihing Kinatawan ng BHW Party-List na makakaasa siya ng suporta para maisulong ang mga insentibo na puwede pa nating maibigay sa kanila.

Maraming-maraming salamat sa iyo. Thank you very much, Mme. Speaker.

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

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

REP. CRISOLOGO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the honorable Rep. Angelica Co to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action, and the subsequent manifestations and interpellations.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we designate the following Members to the Conference Committee on the disagreeing provisions of House Joint Resolution No. 22 and Senate Joint Resolution No. 8, authorizing the use of the rice subsidy as provided in the General Appropriations Act for the purchase

of palay from local farmers: Rep. Wilfrido Mark M. Enverga, Rep. Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez, Rep. Luis Raymund "LRay" F. Villafuerte Jr., Rep. Florencio G. Noel, Rep. Kristine Singson-Meehan and Rep. Argel Joseph T. Cabatbat.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the following are now designated to be members of the Conference Committee: Rep. Wilfrido Mark M. Enverga, Rep. Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez, Rep. Luis Raymund "LRay" F. Villafuerte Jr., Rep. Florencio G. Noel, Rep. Kristine Singson-Meehan and Rep. Argel Joseph T. Cabatbat.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CHANGE OF REFERRAL OF CERTAIN MEASURES

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, I move for the change of referral of the following measures:

1. House Bill No. 144, from the Committee on Natural Resources to the Committee on Ecology;
2. House Bill No. 794, from the Committee on Agriculture and Food to the Committee on Banks and Financial Intermediaries;
3. House Bill No. 1424, from the Committee on Agriculture and Food to the Committees on Government Reorganization, and Agriculture and Food; and finally
4. House Bill No. 3448, from the Committee on Agriculture and Food to the Committee on Aquaculture and Fisheries Resources.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; all those measures are now remanded to the different committees.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we include additional coauthors to House Bills No. 59, 5070, 5306 and 5437, and House Resolution No. 306, as contained in the list to be submitted by the Committee on Rules.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 4463 ON THIRD READING

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 4463 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on September 25, 2019, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL, House Bill No. 4463, entitled: AN ACT EXTENDING FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO FIRST UNITED BROADCASTING CORPORATION, PRESENTLY KNOWN AS GLOBAL SATELLITE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES INC., AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8079, AS AMENDED, ENTITLED "AN ACT GRANTING THE FIRST UNITED BROADCASTING CORPORATION (FUBC) A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, OPERATE, AND MAINTAIN FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCASTING STATIONS ANYWHERE IN THE PHILIPPINES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES."

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 25, dated November 12, 2019.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 4463
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). With 222 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 4463 is now approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 861
ON THIRD READING

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 861 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to

the Members on November 7, 2019, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL, House Bill No. 861, entitled: AN ACT CREATING A REGULAR LTO DISTRICT OFFICE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF POLOMOLOK, SOUTH COTABATO TO BE KNOWN AS THE LTO LICENSING CENTER OF POLOMOLOK, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 25, dated November 12, 2019.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 861
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). With 222 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 861 is approved on Third Reading. The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 5028
ON THIRD READING

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 5028 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on November 7, 2019, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL, House Bill No. 5028, entitled: AN ACT DECLARING FEBRUARY 24 OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL NONWORKING PUBLIC HOLIDAY IN THE PROVINCE OF ZAMBOANGA SIBUGAY IN COMMEMORATION OF ITS FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY TO BE KNOWN AS "ARAW NG SIBUGAY."

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 25, dated November 12, 2019.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 5028
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). With 222 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 5028 is approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, there being no other business to transact on the floor this afternoon, I move that we adjourn the session until three o'clock in the afternoon of Wednesday, November 13, 2019.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the session is adjourned until Wednesday, November 13, 2019, at three o'clock in the afternoon.

It was 6:46 p.m.