



# Congressional Record

PLENARY PROCEEDINGS OF THE 18<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST REGULAR SESSION  
*House of Representatives*

Vol. 3

Monday, November 18, 2019

No. 27

## CALL TO ORDER

*At 3:00 p.m., Deputy Speaker Aurelio “Dong” D. Gonzales Jr. called the session to order.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.).  
The session is called to order.

## DOXOLOGY

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.).  
Please rise for the doxology of the pupils of the HRep.  
Early Childhood Care and Development Center.

*Everybody rose for the Doxology. (Silence)*

## NATIONAL ANTHEM

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.).  
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. Gonzales, A.).  
Palakpakan po natin ang ating mga ECCDC ng HRep.  
*(Applause)*

The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

## APPROVAL OF THE JOURNALS

REP. ANDAYA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we  
approve Journal No. 24, dated November 11, 2019;  
Journal No. 25, dated November 12, 2019; and Journal  
No. 26, 2019, dated November 13, 2019.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

## REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

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

## BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 5433, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE DEPARTMENT  
OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND  
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT, DEFINING  
ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS,  
REPEALING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7796,  
OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE TESDA  
ACT OF 1994 AND APPROPRIATING  
FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Nieto

TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
REORGANIZATION AND THE COMMITTEE  
ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL  
EDUCATION

House Bill No. 5434, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL

SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS HIGH SCHOOL IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF IGUIG, PROVINCE OF CAGAYAN TO BE KNOWN AS THE CAGAYAN NATIONAL SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Lara  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5435, entitled:

“AN ACT PROMOTING AND RECOGNIZING BICYCLES AS AN ALTERNATIVE MODE OF TRANSPORTATION, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Olivarez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 5436, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Olivarez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION AND THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5438, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING BENEFITS AND INCENTIVES TO ACCREDITED BARANGAY TANODS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Delos Santos  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 5439, entitled:

“AN ACT RENEWING FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO BROADBAND EVERYWHERE CORP. (FORMERLY ‘TEXTRON CORP.’) UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8510, ENTITLED ‘AN ACT GRANTING THE TEXTRON CORPORATION, A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, ESTABLISH, INSTALL, MAINTAIN AND OPERATE WIRED AND/OR WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS IN THE PHILIPPINES’ ”

By Representative Garbin  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE FRANCHISES

House Bill No. 5440, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND MECHANISMS FOR THE CREATION, OPERATION, ADMINISTRATION, AND COORDINATION OF SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES IN THE CITY OF BACOLOD, PROVINCE OF NEGROS OCCIDENTAL CREATING FOR THIS PURPOSE, THE BACOLOD ECONOMIC ZONE AUTHORITY (BEZA), AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Gasataya  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND INDUSTRY

House Bill No. 5441, entitled:

“AN ACT RENAMING MANDAUE CAUSEWAY IN THE CITY OF MANDAUE, CEBU TO OUANO AVENUE”

By Representative Garcia (Pablo John)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 5442, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE PRESERVATION OF MANGROVE FORESTS”

By Representative Nieto  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

House Bill No. 5443, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT 7432, AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9994, 9257 AND 10645 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ‘AN ACT TO MAXIMIZE THE CONTRIBUTION OF SENIOR CITIZENS TO NATION BUILDING, GRANT BENEFITS AND PRIVILEGES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES’ ”

By Representative Nieto  
TO THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON SENIOR CITIZENS

House Bill No. 5444, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING BENEFITS AND PRIVILEGES TO FORMER PRESIDENTS, VICEPRESIDENTS OF THE PHILIPPINES OR THEIR SURVIVING SPOUSES, AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 5059, REPEALING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 2087, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Nieto  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF LAWS

House Bill No. 5445, entitled:

“AN ACT TO PROVIDE YOUTH SUICIDE INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION”

By Representative Nieto  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

FERTILIZERS AND PESTICIDES USED IN RICE PRODUCTION”

By Representative Roman  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

House Bill No. 5446, entitled:

“AN ACT INCORPORATING THE VALUE OF RESPONSIBLE, FAIR USAGE AND ENJOYMENT OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN CAMPUSES NATIONWIDE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Nieto  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE AND THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 5451, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE THE PROVISIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8749, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘PHILIPPINE CLEAN AIR ACT OF 2009’ ”

By Representative Roman  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY

House Bill No. 5447, entitled:

“AN ACT ORDAINING THE STANDARDIZATION OF STEEL REINFORCING BAR QUALITY IN HIGH RISE INFRASTRUCTURES IN THE PHILIPPINES TO RESIST AGAINST WIND AND EARTHQUAKE AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Velasco  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND INDUSTRY AND THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 5452, entitled:

“AN ACT AUTHORIZING PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS (PPP) APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Roman  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 5453, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A DISTRICT BRANCH OF THE LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE (LTO) IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF CATAINGAN IN THE 3<sup>RD</sup> DISTRICT OF MASBATE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representatives Kho (Wilton) and Kho (Elisa)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 5448, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A SENIOR RESIDENCE AND GERIATRIC CARE SERVICES NURSING HOME IN EVERY PROVINCE AND CITIES IN THE PHILIPPINES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Espino  
TO THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON SENIOR CITIZENS

House Bill No. 5454, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE VILLA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN BARANGAY VILLA, MUNICIPALITY OF ESPERANZA INTO AN INTEGRATED SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS VILLA INTEGRATED SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Kho (Wilton)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5449, entitled:

“AN ACT REINSTATING THE MANDATORY RESERVE OFFICERS’ TRAINING CORPS (ROTC) FOR STUDENTS IN ALL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES, COLLEGES AND SIMILAR LEARNING INSTITUTIONS”

By Representative Abaya  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE AND THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 5455, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE MASBATE SPORTS ACADEMY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF CATAINGAN, PROVINCE OF MASBATE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Kho (Wilton)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE AND THE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

House Bill No. 5450, entitled:

“AN ACT EXEMPTING FROM TAXES

House Bill No. 5456, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE, SPECIAL POWERS IN ADOPTING A NATIONAL POLICY IN SPEEDING UP THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 'BUILD, BUILD, BUILD' PROGRAM ON OR BEFORE 2022 OR WITHIN A PERIOD OF TWO AND HALF YEARS, AND SUBJECT TO RESTRICTIONS, TO IMPLEMENT RULES AND REGULATIONS NECESSARY AND PROPER TO CARRY OUT SUCH POWERS”

By Representative Salceda  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

NO. 9645, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘COMMEMORATION OF THE FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY OF IGLESIA NI CRISTO’ ”

By Representative Savellano  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF LAWS

House Bill No. 5461, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING A RAINWATER HARVESTING SYSTEM FOR THE WHOLE PHILIPPINES”

By Representative Savellano  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 5457, entitled:

“AN ACT REGULATING HARBOR PILOTAGE SERVICES AND THE CONDUCT OF HARBOR PILOTS IN ALL PORTS IN THE PHILIPPINES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Gonzalez (Sandro), Cayetano (Alan Peter), Cayetano (Maria Laarni), Duterte and Yap (Eric)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 5462, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SPORTS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE CITY OF BAYBAY, LEYTE, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

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

House Bill No. 5458, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A GOVERNMENT CENTER FOR SATELLITE OFFICES OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SAN ILDEFONSO, PROVINCE OF ILOCOS SUR AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

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

House Bill No. 5463, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING INCENTIVES AND REWARDS TO PRIVATE ENTITIES AND INDIVIDUALS WHO USE WATER RECYCLING AND REUSE DEVICES AND TECHNOLOGIES OR DEVELOP OR UNDERTAKE EFFECTIVE WATER RECYCLING AND REUSE PROCESSES OR ACTIVITIES AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Reyes  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

House Bill No. 5459, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER TO BE LOCATED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SAN ILDEFONSO, ILOCOS SUR AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Savellano  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 5464, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE BED CAPACITY OF THE UNAYAN MUNICIPAL HOSPITAL IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BINIDAYAN, SECOND DISTRICT OF LANA DEL SUR, FROM A TEN (10) BED CAPACITY INTO A FIFTY (50) BED CAPACITY, UPGRADING ITS PROFESSIONAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES AND FACILITIES, AUTHORIZING THE INCREASE OF ITS MEDICAL PERSONNEL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Balindong  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 5460, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING JULY 27 OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL NATIONAL NONWORKING HOLIDAY, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT

House Bill No. 5465, entitled:

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

By Representative Abu  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 5466, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING MUDCRAB SEED BANKS, NURSERIES, HATCHERIES, AND GROW-OUT PRODUCTION FARMS IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF ALLEN, BIRI, BOBON, CAPUL, CATARMAN, GAMAY, LAOANG, LAS NAVAS, LAVEZARES, MAPANAS, MONDRAGON, PALAPAG, PAMBUJAN, ROSARIO, SAN ANTONIO, SAN ISIDRO, SAN JOSE, SAN ROQUE, SAN VICENTE AND VICTORIA, PROVINCE OF NORTHERN SAMAR AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Ong (Jose)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

House Bill No. 5467, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE PAGKAIN PARA SA LAHAT PROGRAM, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Villanueva (Eduardo) and Rivera  
TO THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FOOD SECURITY

House Bill No. 5468, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR ADDITIONAL BENEFITS FOR ALL TEACHING AND NON-TEACHING PERSONNEL IN PUBLIC BASIC EDUCATION SCHOOLS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Villanueva (Eduardo) and Rivera  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5469, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR MANDATORY FREE HEALTH MAINTENANCE ORGANIZATION (HMO) PLAN COVERAGE TO FACULTY AND NON-TEACHING PERSONNEL IN STATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Villanueva (Eduardo) and Rivera  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 5470, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND ESTABLISHING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION HUBS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS DIVISIONS, PROVIDING FOR STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representatives Villanueva (Eduardo) and Rivera  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5471, entitled:

“AN ACT ALLOWING THE ADOPTION OF ALTERNATIVE WORK ARRANGEMENTS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 442, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LABOR CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES, AS AMENDED”

By Representatives Villanueva (Eduardo) and Rivera  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

House Bill No. 5472, entitled:

“AN ACT ENHANCING THE REGULATION ON EMPLOYMENT OF FOREIGN NATIONALS AND TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE ARTICLES 40, 41, AND 42 OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 442, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LABOR CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Villanueva (Eduardo) and Rivera  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

House Bill No. 5473, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING THE DISPLAY OF

CALORIE AND OTHER NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION IN MENUS OF FOOD SERVICE ESTABLISHMENTS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Villanueva (Eduardo) and Rivera  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 5474, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING SPORTS VARSITY TEAMS IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Villanueva (Eduardo) and Rivera  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5475, entitled:

“AN ACT PROMOTING LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPOWERMENT IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 284 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7160, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991”

By Representatives Villanueva (Eduardo) and Rivera  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 5476, entitled:

“AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE WITNESS PROTECTION, SECURITY AND BENEFIT PROGRAM, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6981, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘WITNESS PROTECTION, SECURITY AND BENEFIT ACT,’ APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Villanueva (Eduardo) and Rivera  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 5478, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE BED CAPACITY OF THE BALINDONG DISTRICT HOSPITAL IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF WATOBALINDONG, SECOND DISTRICT OF LANAODELSUR, FROM TEN (10) TO FIFTY (50) BED CAPACITY, UPGRADING ITS PROFESSIONAL HEALTHCARE SERVICES AND FACILITIES, AUTHORIZING THE INCREASE OF ITS MEDICAL PERSONNEL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Balindong  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 5479, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9484, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ‘AN ACT TO REGULATE THE PRACTICE OF DENTISTRY, DENTAL HYGIENE AND DENTAL TECHNOLOGY IN THE PHILIPPINES’ ”

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

House Bill No. 5481, entitled:

“AN ACT TRANSFERRING TO THE BUREAU OF JAIL MANAGEMENT AND PENOLOGY THE AUTHORITY TO EXERCISE SUPERVISION AND CONTROL OVER PROVINCIAL JAILS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representatives Fariñas (Ria) and Fariñas (Rudys Caesar)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 5482, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A DRUG REHABILITATION CENTER IN EVERY REGION AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representatives Fariñas (Ria) and Fariñas (Rudys Caesar)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON DANGEROUS DRUGS

House Bill No. 5483, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING TRAVEL TAX EXEMPTION TO DEPENDENTS OF MARRIED OR SOLO PARENT OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTIONS 3 AND 35 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8042, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘MIGRANT WORKERS AND OVERSEAS FILIPINOS ACT OF 1995’, AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10022”

By Representatives Fariñas (Ria) and Fariñas (Rudys Caesar)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

House Bill No. 5484, entitled:

“AN ACT PROMOTING AND SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHARCOAL INDUSTRY AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Lacson-Noel  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND  
INDUSTRY

House Bill No. 5485, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING INCOME TAX  
EXEMPTION TO COMPENSATION OF  
TEACHERS SERVING AS MEMBERS OF  
THE ELECTORAL BOARD FOR NATIONAL  
OR LOCAL ELECTIONS”

By Representative Cuaresma  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND  
MEANS

House Bill No. 5486, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR ADDITIONAL  
COMPENSATION TO PUBLIC SCHOOL  
EDUCATORS AND NON-TEACHING  
PERSONNEL IN BASIC EDUCATION”

By Representative Cuaresma  
T O T H E C O M M I T T E E O N  
APPROPRIATIONS

House Bill No. 5487, entitled:

“AN ACT ALLOWING THE FOREIGN DECREE  
OF DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE TO BE  
REGISTERED WITH THE PHILIPPINE  
CIVIL REGISTRY EVEN IN THE ABSENCE  
OF A JUDICIAL RECOGNITION TO THAT  
EFFECT, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE  
EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 209, OTHERWISE  
KNOWN AS THE FAMILY CODE OF THE  
PHILIPPINES”

By Representative Cuaresma  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF  
LAWS

House Bill No. 5488, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A REGULAR  
DISTRICT OFFICE OF THE LAND  
TRANSPORTATION FRANCHISING AND  
REGULATORY BOARD (LTFRB) IN THE  
CITY OF DASMARIÑAS, PROVINCE OF  
CAVITE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS  
THEREFOR”

By Representative Barzaga  
T O T H E C O M M I T T E E O N  
TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 5489, entitled:

“AN ACT PROHIBITING THE PRODUCTION,  
IMPORTATION, SALE, PROVISION, AND  
USE OF SINGLE-USE PLASTICS AND FOR  
OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Abellanos  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY

House Bill No. 5492, entitled:

“AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE RECEIPT  
OF ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION  
IN THE FORM OF SPECIAL  
ALLOWANCES BY MEMBERS OF THE  
CONSTITUTIONAL COMMISSIONS  
AND THE OMBUDSMAN, AND FOR  
OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Abueg-Zaldivar  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 5493, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING THE MUNICIPALITY  
OF BALABAC, PROVINCE OF PALAWAN,  
AS AN ECO-TOURISM ZONE, PROVIDING  
FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT AND  
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Abueg-Zaldivar  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

House Bill No. 5494, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING THE COOPERATIVE  
CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES TO BE KNOWN  
AS THE ‘PHILIPPINE COOPERATIVE  
CODE OF 2008’ ”

By Representatives Savellano, Paduano and  
Nieto  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON COOPERATIVES  
DEVELOPMENT

House Bill No. 5495, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR ALTERNATE  
ROADS FOR TRICYCLES, MOTORCYCLES  
AND BICYCLES AS PRIORITY PROGRAM  
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC  
WORKS AND HIGHWAYS (DPWH) AND  
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Ty  
T O T H E C O M M I T T E E O N  
TRANSPORTATION

RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 522, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE  
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND  
FOOD TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY  
IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE  
COMPLAINTS OF FARMERS AGAINST  
THE STEEP PRICES OF FERTILIZERS  
AND PESTICIDES”

By Representative Roman  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 523, entitled:

“RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE DCCCO

MULTIPURPOSE COOPERATIVE, BAGONG BARRIO MULTIPURPOSE COOPERATIVE, KOOPERATIBA NATON MULTIPURPOSE COOPERATIVE, SAN JOSE SICO LANDFILL MULTIPURPOSE COOPERATIVE AND LITOLET CONSUMER COOPERATIVE AS THE WINNERS OF THE 2019 NINTH GAWAD PARANGAL OF THE COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY”

By Representative Canama  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON COOPERATIVES DEVELOPMENT

House Resolution No. 524, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON COOPERATIVES DEVELOPMENT TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, TO CLARIFY THE PROVISIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE JOINT ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 1-2019 AND ITS IMPLICATION TO THE ISSUED BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE MEMORANDUM CIRCULARS AND THE MEMORANDA ISSUED BY THE COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY TO COOPERATIVES FOR ITS COMPLIANCE WITH REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9520, THE COOPERATIVE CODE OF 2008”

By Representatives Lacson, De Jesus and Ty  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 526, entitled:

“RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO UPHOLD ACADEMIC REFORM”

By Representatives Elago, Castro (France), Zarate and Brosas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Resolution No. 527, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO INVESTIGATE, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, THE DEATH OF SEVERAL YOUTH IN A MILITARY OPERATION IN BRGY. TUMBRAS, MIDSAYAP, NORTH COTABATO”

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

House Resolution No. 528, entitled:

“RESOLUTION PROBING AND REVOKING, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, CHED-

CORDILLERA ADMINISTRATIVE REGION MEMORANDUM ORDER NO. 79 AND OTHER RELATED AND/OR SIMILAR MEMORANDUM ALLOWING MILITARY AND POLICE PRESENCE INSIDE SCHOOL CAMPUSES TO CONDUCT FOR A FULL OF MISINFORMATION AND RED-TAGGING”

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

House Resolution No. 529, entitled:

“RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE URGENT PROBE OF THE PHILIPPINE MILITARY ACADEMY ON THE ALARMING CONSECUTIVE DEATHS OF CADETS AND SEVERAL INCIDENTS OF HAZING INSIDE THE ACADEMY”

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

House Resolution No. 530, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE COMPASSION AND EMPATHY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE VICTIMS OF THE OCTOBER 2019 EARTHQUAKES IN REGIONS X, XI, XII, XIII, AND THE BARMM AND URGING THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT TO IMMEDIATELY EXTEND ALL FORMS OF AID TO ALL THE VICTIMS OF THE EARTHQUAKES”

By Representative Rodriguez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 531, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE STATUS OF THE DIFFERENT BAGONG LIPUNAN SITES AND SERVICES (BLISS) PROGRAM”

By Representative Revilla  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 532, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ADVANCE USE OF THE BUREAU OF CUSTOMS’ 2019 EXCESS TARIFF REVENUES FROM RICE IMPORTATION, AND OTHER POSSIBLE SOURCES, AS A SPECIAL EMERGENCY FUND SETTING-UP THE RICE FARMER FINANCIAL



ASSISTANCE AS DIRECT CASH  
TRANSFERS TO RICE FARMERS”

By Representative Villafuerte  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE  
AND FOOD

House Joint Resolution No. 24, entitled:

“JOINT RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING  
FUNDS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION  
OF SALARY GRADE 15 FOR NURSES  
IN THE GOVERNMENT PURSUANT  
TO REPUBLIC ACT NO 9173 OR THE  
PHILIPPINE NURSING ACT OF 2002”

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

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

Message dated November 12, 2019, informing the House  
of Representatives that on November 11, 2019 the  
Senate approved the Conference Committee Report  
of the Bicameral Conference Committee on the  
disagreeing provisions of Senate Bill No. 1043 and  
House Bill No. 4933, entitled:

“AN ACT POSTPONING THE MAY 2020  
BARANGAY AND SANGGUNIANG  
KABATAAN ELECTIONS, AMENDING  
FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO.  
9164, AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT  
NO. 9340, REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10632,  
REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10656, REPUBLIC  
ACT NO. 10923 AND REPUBLIC ACT NO.  
10952, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON SUFFRAGE AND  
ELECTORAL REFORMS

COMMUNICATION

Letter dated November 12, 2019 of Salvador C.  
Medialdea, Executive Secretary, Office of the  
President, Malacañang, transmitting the letter of  
President Rodrigo Roa Duterte to Senate President  
Vicente C. Sotto III, certifying to the necessity of the  
immediate enactment of Senate Bill No. 1074, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE EXCISE TAX  
ON ALCOHOL PRODUCTS, HEATED  
TOBACCO PRODUCTS AND VAPOR  
PRODUCTS, AMENDING FOR THIS  
PURPOSE SECTIONS 141, 142, 143, 144,  
147, 150 AND 288 OF REPUBLIC ACT  
NO. 8424, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE  
KNOWN AS THE NATIONAL INTERNAL  
REVENUE CODE OF 1997, AS AMENDED,  
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report of the Committee on Agriculture and Food  
(Committee Report No. 79), re H.R. No. 197,  
entitled:

“A RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING THE MONTH  
OF SEPTEMBER AS PHILIPPINE BAMBOO  
MONTH”

recommending its adoption without amendments  
Sponsors: Representatives Enverga and Savellano  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Natural Resources  
(Committee Report No. 80), re H.B. No. 5506,  
entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING PARCELS OF LAND  
OF THE PUBLIC DOMAIN LOCATED  
IN THE CITY OF NAGA, PROVINCE OF  
CEBU AS AGRICULTURAL LAND OPEN  
TO DISPOSITION FOR AGRICULTURAL,  
RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL,  
INDUSTRIAL, OR OTHER PRODUCTIVE  
PURPOSES”

recommending its approval in substitution of House  
Bill No. 1798

Sponsors: Representatives Barzaga and Gullas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Natural Resources  
(Committee Report No. 81), re H.B. No. 1158, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING THE THIRD DISTRICT  
OF PALAWAN A MINING-FREE ZONE AND  
PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREFOR”

recommending its approval without amendment

Sponsors: Representatives Barzaga and Acosta  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Government Enterprises  
and Privatization (Committee Report No. 82), re  
H.B. No. 5509, entitled:

“AN ACT LOWERING THE OPTIONAL  
RETIREMENT AGE OF GOVERNMENT  
WORKERS FROM SIXTY (60) YEARS  
TO FIFTY-SIX (56) YEARS, AMENDING  
FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 13-A OF  
REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8291, OTHERWISE  
KNOWN AS ‘THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE  
INSURANCE SYSTEM ACT OF 1997’ ”

recommending its approval in substitution of House  
Bills Numbered 86, 221, 380, 529, 1501, 2681,  
3026, 3921 and 3997

Sponsors: Representatives Olivarez, Garbin, Castro  
(France), Zarate, Gaité, Cullamat, Brosas,  
Elago, Zamora (Way Kurat), Paduano, Chatto,  
Silverio, Palma, Cagas and Agabas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### PRIVILEGE HOUR

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

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

The Chair declares a Privilege Hour.

REP. AGLIPAY. Mr. Speaker, I now move that the Lady from the Party-List TINGOG SINIRANGAN, Hon. Yedda Marie K. Romualdez, be recognized to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.). Rep. Yedda Marie K. Romualdez of Party-List TINGOG SINIRANGAN is recognized.

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ROMUALDEZ (Y.)

REP. ROMUALDEZ (Y.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, honorable Members of this august Body, ladies and gentlemen in the gallery, to the children present here today and to all the children all over the country.

It has been 30 long years since the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was signed in New York. On November 20, 1989, this manifesto was forged to attain the child's best interest in survival, development, protection and participation. It is interesting to note that more than a quarter of those who are now Members of this House were among the very first to enjoy the protection of this global charter on children's rights. In a nutshell, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child envisions that every single child everywhere in the world will enjoy his inherent right to have a happy and fulfilling life and enhance his chances at the better future. It has inspired nations and communities, including the Philippines, to embrace the moral obligation to ensure the welfare and well-being of children, especially the neglected and the disadvantaged.

In 1992, Republic Act No. 7610 was passed to provide a stronger deterrent and special protection against child abuse, exploitation and discrimination. In 2003, Republic Act No. 9231 was passed to eliminate the worst form of child labor and institute stronger protection for working children. In 2006, Congress passed the landmark legislation, Republic Act No. 9344, later amended by Republic Act No. 10630, the

Juvenile Justice Act; and in 2009, Republic Act No. 9775, the Anti-Child Pornography Law. In recent years, three more child welfare laws were passed: Republic Act No. 10821 or the Children's Emergency Relief and Protection Act, Republic Act No. 10165 or the Foster Care Act, and recently in the 17th Congress, Republic Act No. 11188 which assures the special protection of children in situations of armed conflict.

To many of us who have been elected to this House and those of you in the gallery who are mothers, fathers, relatives, guardians and even friends, it is embedded in our DNA to instinctively protect and care for our children. Thus, all of us, especially legislators, must carry out the moral imperative to ensure that today's children achieve their full potential and develop into productive adults. Children's welfare needs to be more than just a moral imperative but ensuring the welfare of children is also an economic necessity.

Our country's collective long-term vision, Ambisyon Natin 2040, aspires for a strongly rooted, comfortable and secured life. *Matatag, maginhawa at panatag na buhay* for all Filipinos in the next 20 years—this picture of the future of our country envisions a Philippines that has a strong middle class society where no one is poor. In realizing this way forward for our nation, the important role that today's children would play as tomorrow's stakeholders do not often receive the full attention that it requires, but what better path to guarantee a strong and secure future for our country than to prepare our children more intently for the role they are set to play as citizens, to prevent risks and threats to their positive growth, to promote their welfare and well-being, to encourage their full participation and to institute stronger social protection programs that will benefit them and their families. However, unlike other sectors of society, children are inherently vulnerable. They cannot, on their own, participate in nation-building. They need their families, the government and the wider community to provide the requisite care, guidance, health and education services especially in their early formative years.

This is why, as Chairperson of the House Committee on the Welfare of Children, I have taken as our utmost priority the crafting and passage of the Magna Carta of Children. Guided by the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, we in the Committee are set to review and revisit all legislations involving children and draft a more comprehensive legislative measure that will not only encourage the protection of children from threats and harm but more importantly, ensure positive support for the development of the child's personality, talents, mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential.

Investing in our children is one of the highest returns of investment our country can make for our shared future. Children's welfare and community

development must always go hand in hand as children can only thrive in a thriving community and a community prospers only where and when children prosper. This requires us to ensure that children live in a nurturing environment and grow into adulthood within a safe and supportive society. This demands that we give paramount importance to the quality of education and healthcare services. This means that we empower children to freely express themselves and to listen to them as we craft decisions that affect them. Together, let us raise strong children instead of mending broken adults. Our present demographics accentuate the fact that the Philippines is a nation of young people. More than a third of our population are below 15 years of age and their future depends on how we chart our priorities today. By ensuring that every Filipino child gets a fair chance at life, they become more capable of contributing their skills but when we fail to promote the welfare of children, we ruin not only the lives of these children but our own future as well.

Therefore, this duty to care for our children is not to be taken lightly. Our children need the best possible support and perhaps, the most fundamental of all, they need to know that they are cared for and loved. In the same manner we must make sure that the children themselves have a say in the decisions that involve them. In fact, in our Committee, our internal rules have recognized the importance of children having a voice and a role in the decisions which concern them now and throughout their lives.

I want to speak to the children present here today. Sa mga kabataan sa bulwagang ito, hangarin po namin na kayo ay lumaki na may sapat na pagmamahal at pagkalinga, na kayo ay maging malusog at makapag-aral, at may kakayahang mapaunlad hindi lang ang inyong mga sarili kundi pati rin ang ating bansa. Nais namin ang isang matatag, maginhawa at panatag na buhay para sa inyo at sa mga pamilyang nag-aaruga sa inyo. Kayo ang natatanging pag-asa ng ating bayan kaya hinihiling ko sa inyo na huwag ninyong sayangin ang mga pagkakataong mapabuti ang inyong mga sarili. Mag-aral kayong mabuti, maging magiliw sa inyong kapwa at magalang sa inyong mga magulang. Higit sa lahat ay huwag kayong mag-alinlangang mangarap at lubos kayong magsumikap para maisakatuparan ito.

Mr. Speaker, honorable colleagues, this November we celebrate National Children's Month to remind us all that nothing is as important as our children's welfare. We owe it to every Filipino child to give them the best means which we can provide for them to have a better life. The reality is that the future of the world is in the hands of our children but we must also never forget an even more important fact, the future of our children is in our hands. There is no greater responsibility that we carry as parents and as legislators, there is no more

important task than to guarantee that today's children live out their greatest value. It is our collective hope that this momentous milestone of celebrating the 30th anniversary of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child will rekindle in us the burning desire to be unrelenting and passionate champions for children, especially for every Filipino child in need.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, at mabuhay po ang batang Pilipino. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.).  
The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Rep. Manuel Jose "Mannix" M. Dalipe from the Second District of Zamboanga City for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.).  
The Gentleman is recognized.

REP. DALIPE. Mr. Speaker, may I make a manifestation?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.).  
Please proceed.

REP. DALIPE. May I be allowed, as the former Chairperson, to express my support to the speech of the present Chairperson of the Committee on the Welfare of Children, TINGOG SINIRANGAN Party-List Representative, Hon. Yedda Marie K. Romualdez. I congratulate her and the members of her Committee in this year's celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Please be assured that this Representation, the former Chairman of the Committee, will support all child-friendly measures of the Committee on the Welfare of Children and of this Congress.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.).  
The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Rep. Paz C. Radaza from the Lone District of Lapu-Lapu City for her manifestation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.). The Honorable Radaza of Lapu-Lapu City is recognized.

REP. RADAZA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a manifestation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.).  
Please proceed.

REP. RADAZA. May I commend the Chairperson of the Committee on the Welfare of Children for her privilege speech and for the wonderful child advocacy booths at the South Wing Lobby. Congratulations, Mme. Chairperson!

Indeed, it is an honor for me to be a Vice Chairperson of this Committee which takes care of the needs and welfare of children. May I express my support for the bills seeking for a better life of the Filipino child.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Rep. Ma. Lourdes T. Arroyo of the Fifth District of Negros Occidental for her manifestation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.). Hon. Ma. Lourdes T. Arroyo is recognized.

REP. ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, good afternoon, may I please make a manifestation? I would like to make a manifestation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.). Please proceed.

REP. ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, may I manifest my full support to the bills seeking to improve the welfare of the Filipino children and may I also congratulate TINGOG SINIRANGAN Party-List Representative, Hon. Yedda Marie K. Romualdez, for her very informative and passionate speech on the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Rep. Arlene D. Brosas from GABRIELA Party-List for a brief manifestation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.). Rep. Arlene D. Brosas is recognized.

REP. BROSAS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to congratulate Congresswoman Yedda Romualdez on her speech in support of the Filipino children. GABRIELA Women's Party is one with you in ensuring the welfare and promoting and protecting the rights of Filipino children. This year marks the 30th year of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and I

hope this Eighteenth Congress will pass more laws for the benefit of children, especially those coming from the marginalized sectors.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer to the Committee on Rules the privilege speech as well as the manifestations.

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

The privilege speech and the manifestations are hereby referred to the Committee on Rules for appropriate action.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the Privilege Hour.

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

#### ROLL CALL

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, I move that we call the roll of Members.

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

The Secretary General will please call the roll of Members.

*The Secretary General called the roll, and the result is reflected in Journal No. 27, dated November 18, 2019.\**

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. Mr. Speaker, the roll call shows that 217 Members responded to the call.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.). With 217 Members responding to the call, the Chair declares the presence of a quorum.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 5437 ON THIRD READING

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, I move that

\* See ANNEX (printed separately)

we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 5437 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. Gonzales, A.). 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 13, 2019, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.*

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 NO. 11260, THE GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT OF FISCAL YEAR 2019.

*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. 27, dated November 18, 2019.*

#### APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 5437 ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.). With 192 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 5437 is approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 5477 ON THIRD READING

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 5477 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. Gonzales, A.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

*Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on November 14, 2019, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.*

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 5477, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING MALASAKIT CENTERS IN ALL DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (DOH) HOSPITALS IN THE COUNTRY AND IN THE PHILIPPINE GENERAL HOSPITAL (PGH), PROVIDING 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. 27, dated November 18, 2019.*

REP. LAGMAN. Mr. Speaker, I vote “No” and I will explain my vote at the proper time.

#### RESULT OF THE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.). With 185 affirmative votes, 1 negative vote and 7 abstentions, House Bill No. 5477 is approved on Third Reading.

Congratulations. (*Silence*)

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker.

#### EXPLANATION OF VOTE

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.). The Gentleman from Albay is recognized for his explanation of vote. You have three minutes.

#### REP. LAGMAN EXPLAINS HIS VOTE

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I vote “No” on House Bill No. 5477 as amended by substitution for the following reasons:

1. No amount of legislation institutionalizing the Malasakit Centers will cleanse them of their partisan origin which helped propel the senatorial candidacy of the Malasakit poster boy.

2. The Malasakit Centers indubitably duplicate what is presently being performed by the PhilHealth and the Department of Health like the following:

a. The PhilHealth has its own liaison office in DOH hospitals nationwide which takes care of the grant

\* See ANNEX (printed separately)

of medical and financial assistance to covered patients under the PhilHealth;

b. The DOH has its existing Public Assistance Unit (PAU) which is being augmented, reclassified and strengthened to accommodate the Malasakit Centers. Moreover, DOH hospitals have their own individual finance officer who coordinates with agencies like the DWSD, Pagcor, PCSO and the Office of the President, with respect to these agencies' grant of medical and financial assistance to indigent and financially strapped patients;

c. There is no need for Malasakit personnel to explain as to how to secure membership and benefits from the National Health Insurance Program because this is already being done by PhilHealth concerned personnel;

d. There is also no need for Malasakit personnel to assist in the extension of DSWD medical and financial assistance like medicine, transportation and burial benefits because these benefits are presently managed by the DSWD regional and provincial offices as well as DSWD social workers who are assigned to DOH hospitals. Moreover, the DSWD has its existing Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) providing guidelines on financial assistance; and

e. The Malasakit Centers need not provide an express lane to PWDs because this is already mandated by existing laws.

3. The substitute Malasakit Bill is not ripe for Third and final Reading on the following grounds:

a. The substitute bill is a carbon copy of the Senate-approved bill and was crafted and introduced in plenary without the privity and approval of the sponsoring Health Committee consequent to the importuning of the Senate bill's principal author for the House of Representatives to approve a version completely identical to his bill in the Senate in order to foreclose a bicameral conference committee. This admitted pressure from a Senator bastardized the committee system and the import of plenary deliberations of our co-equal Chamber as it conscripted unanimity despite the pendency of 18 separate bills filed by individual Representatives which have differing provisions from the Go Bill;

b. Copies of this copycat substitute bill were distributed to a handful of Members in the plenary without giving them ample opportunity to peruse the substitute bill even as the Plenary deliberations were based on the consolidated version approved by the Committee on Health, not on the substitute bill;

c. Even the Chair of the Committee on Health was not given an advance copy of the substitute bill; and

d. Not one of the remaining Members on the floor

was recognized to introduce individual amendments or to question the absence of a quorum as the approval on Second Reading of the substitute bill was railroaded with only a few Representatives present in Plenary.

It is bad enough when a bill is approved by a tyranny of numbers over the ascendancy of reason, but it is worse when a bill is deemed approved by a paucity of Members, paucity of numbers in derogation of parliamentary rules.

I vote "No," Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 5306  
ON THIRD READING

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 5306 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. Gonzales, A.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

*Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on November 14, 2019, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.*

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 5306, entitled: AN ACT SEPARATING THE SITIO OF LADOL FROM BARANGAY POBLACION IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ALABEL, PROVINCE OF SARANGANI AND CONSTITUTING IT INTO A DISTINCT AND INDEPENDENT BARANGAY TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGAY LADOL.

*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. 27, dated November 18, 2019.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 5306  
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.). With 195 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 5306 is approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

\* See ANNEX (printed separately)



ADOPTION OF SENATE BILL NO. 1122 AS  
AN AMENDMENT TO HOUSE BILL NO. 4611

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, the House and the Senate have approved on Third Reading House Bill No. 4611 and Senate Bill No. 1122, respectively, designating the third Sunday of November of every year as the national day of remembrance for road crash victims, survivors and their families. We have been informed by the Committee on Transportation, sponsor of House Bill No. 4611, as well as the authors thereof, that it is in concurrence with the provisions of Senate Bill No. 1122.

In accordance with our rules, I move that we adopt Senate Bill No. 1122 as an amendment to House Bill No. 4611.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House bills we passed on Third Reading today be immediately transmitted to the Senate.

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

The House bills we approved on Third Reading today are ordered to be transmitted as soon as possible to the Senate.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, may we move to acknowledge the presence of the guests of Hon. Precious Hipolito Castelo from the School of the Holy Spirit, Quezon City.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.). The guests of Cong. Precious Hipolito Castelo, the teachers and students from School of the Holy Spirit, Quezon City, tumayo po tayo for your presence to be acknowledged. Welcome po kayo dito sa House of the People. Palakpakan po natin sila. (*Applause*)

The Majority Leader is recognized.

PRIVILEGE HOUR

*Continuation*

REP. AGLIPAY. Mr. Speaker, I move that we continue the Privilege Hour.

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

REP. AGLIPAY. Mr. Speaker, I now move that we recognize the Lady from the Party-List BH, Hon. Bernadette “BH” Herrera-Dy, to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.). The Lady, Congresswoman Bernadette Herrera-Dy from the Party-List Bagong Henerasyon, is recognized.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. HERRERA-DY

REP. HERRERA-DY. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Good afternoon, my esteemed colleagues and dear guests.

It is an honor for me to stand before all of you to deliver a privilege speech in line with the celebration of the National Children’s Month. This is momentous as we also celebrate the 30th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child or UNCRC, the most ratified multilateral agreement promoting, protecting and fulfilling the rights of every child. Three decades later, we assess how we value children by looking into recommendations and reforms we have yet to make such as the UN Committee on the CRC’s recommendation to “abolish traditional practices that have negative and harmful impacts on children.” Today in the Philippines, one such practice still exists and this is, you may have difficulty in believing, that children 17 years old and below are being married off right here in our own country. While the Family Code of the Philippines sets 18 as the legal age of marriage, there are communities practicing child marriage as part of tradition and as mandated by their own culture and personal laws.

The UNICEF, in their 2017 State of the World’s Children Report, noted that the Philippines ranked 12th in terms of absolute numbers in child marriage. According to the National Demographic and Health Survey of 2013, 15 percent of women aged 20 to 24 years old were first married or in union before the age of 18. That is approximately 700,000 or so of our Filipino women. The 2013 survey conducted by the PSA or Philippine Statistics Authority showed that 12.2 percent of all registered marriages in the country involved teenage brides 15 to 19 years old. That means that in one year alone, 53,997 marriages had teenage brides. It was also highlighted that girls are disproportionately affected by the practice of child marriage. For marriages involving parties under the age of 18, the Philippines had 4 girls married for every one boy married. This means that around three out of four girls married before 18 years old are married off to adult men.

As attested by the UNCRC and various other international human rights conventions, child marriage is a fundamental human rights violation which has

negative impacts on health and development of children. It denies them of their childhood, disrupts their education and limits their opportunities. Married girls or child brides have increased the risk of violence and abuse as well as life-threatening consequences on health. One such consequence is pregnancy-related complications which are found to be the leading cause of death among adolescent girls aged 10 to 19 years old. Child marriage also denies both girls and boys the right to choose and whom to marry, a decision that should be made freely.

We are working closely with stakeholders and civil partners to ensure that key-affected population are consulted and their views on the issue of how child marriage can be addressed are solicited. Efforts are underway to reach out to all concerned who practice this. I am committed, and we owe this to our children, we owe our children an environment that is free from all forms of violence.

Child marriage can be prevented. The WHO has recommendations to help address child marriage. These include: 1. A call for policymakers to put in place and enforce laws that prohibit marriage before the age of 18; 2. A need to increase education opportunities, especially for girls, as these have positive effects on their health and also decreases the chances of getting married; and 3. A need to work with stakeholders—cultural and traditional leaders, communities and parents—to increase their awareness on the negative impacts of child marriage and change norms around it.

In order to secure a positive future for our children, a future that is free from all forms of violence, we must ensure that our policies are working to protect and fulfill their rights. Alongside the aimed enactment of policies that prohibit and criminalize the facilitation and solemnization of child marriage, we must also ensure the full implementation of national laws that protect women and girls from child marriage such as the Family Code of the Philippines, the Magna Carta for Women, and the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination. These laws must explicitly prohibit child marriage in all settings. We should also harmonize all legal systems—civil, criminal, family and customary—to ensure child marriage is prohibited.

We often hear that the children are our future. If we truly believe that this is so, we will do all possible measures, especially at the policy level, to create an environment that is respectful of their rights and that empowers them to dream and be given platforms to make these dreams come true. Let us work together and create spaces to take action on violence against children.

Thank you very much and happy Children's Month!

Maraming salamat po.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.).  
The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. AGLIPAY. Mr. Speaker, may we refer the privilege speech of Hon. Bernadette “BH” Herrera-Dy to the Committee on Rules.

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

The privilege speech of Congresswoman Herrera-Dy is referred to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. AGLIPAY. Mr. Speaker, may we recognize Hon. Lawrence “Law” H. Fortun of the First District of Agusan del Norte to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.).  
Congressman Lawrence “Law” H. Fortun from the First District of Agusan del Norte is recognized.

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. FORTUN

REP. FORTUN. Maraming salamat po, kagalang-galang na Ispiker at aking mga kagalang-galang na mga kasamahan sa Kapulungang ito.

Bago pa man lumabas ang isang bagong sasakyan, mayroon na itong nakaukit na chassis number na walang katulad sa buong mundo. Habang pino-proseso naman ang pagpapa-rehistro nito sa Land Transportation Office dito sa ating bansa, binibigyan ito ng conduction sticker na siyang nagiging pansamantalang pagkakakilanlan ng sasakyan hanggang sa mabigyan ito ng kaukulang plate number na magsisilbing permanente o panghabang buhay na nitong pagkakakilanlan. Ito naman po ay nararapat lang ngunit sadyang nakalulungkot na habang ang mga sasakyan ay rehistrado sa LTO at may plaka at kumpletong dokumento tulad ng OR at CR, milyong-milyon po ng ating mga kababayan, at ilan sa kanila ay mga inosenteng kabataan, ang hindi rehistrado sa Civil Registrar's Office. Wala silang dokumento sa Philippine Statistics Authority kaya walang kaukulang pagkakakilanlan.

This is one depressing irony and gross injustice that has been prevailing in the country for decades, the adverse impact of which on the millions affected is humiliating, agonizing and even dehumanizing. Wika nga ng isang kaibigan ko, mabuti pa iyong aso ay may papeles at rehistrado sa PCCI. Our government has taken great strides in putting in place policies that ensure that the brand-new vehicle, before it goes out on the road, is duly registered and complete with the necessary documents. How appallingly absurd that while every car is registered and afforded the service



and protection the State provides for registered vehicles, the birth and existence of millions of Filipino human beings are unregistered and thus, unknown to the government. Walang birth certificates, hindi rehistrado sa Civil Registrar, walang record sa PSA. The number should alarm us because not only are they great, but they seem to be not decreasing. Child rights advocates have identified that 7.5 million Filipinos do not have birth certificates that supposedly are fundamental and indispensable documents that establish our identity, our nationality and citizenship.

The last number I knew when I filed my bill on comprehensive civil registration for the first time in the Sixteenth Congress was only five million. Of the 7.5 million Filipinos unregistered, about half of them are children. Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, this month of November is known as the National Children's Month. This year we commemorate the 30th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to which the Philippines is a state party.

In line with this, I rise to speak about this problem that this Chamber needs to address with urgency to protect the welfare of millions of less-privileged Filipino children, the status of our civil registration and vital statistics system. Civil registration has been defined as the continuous, permanent and compulsory recording of vital events occurring in the life of an individual in appropriate registers. These vital events include birth, death, marriage, court documents and other legally sanctioned documents that affect a person's civil status. These information form part of the identity of a person and are essential to a person's exercise and assertion of civil and political rights. The Sustainable Development Goals 16.9 aims to provide all people with legal identity, including free birth registrations. Nakasaad sa UNCRC na karapatan ng isang bata na mai-rehistro pagkapanganak niya at karapatan niya mula sa pagkapanganak na magkaroon ng pangalan at nasyonalidad.

Noong ako po ay nag-aabogado pa, naging bahagi ng adbokasiya namin, ng iilan kong mga kasamahan sa propesyon, ang tumulong sa mga magulang sa malalayong komunidad upang makakamit ng birth certificates ang kanilang mga anak. Nagbibigay kami ng mga pagtuturo hinggil sa kanilang karapatang magkaroon ng pagkakakilanlan at nasyonalidad, at ang kahalagahan ng birth certificate upang maigiit ang mga karapatang ito. Baon ang aming mga selyong pang-notaryo at typewriters, doon na rin namin ginagawa ang mga affidavits para sa kanilang late registration at doon na rin naming nino-notaryo ang mga dokumentong ito. Kami po ay nagulat at nalungkot na marami sa kanila, hindi lang mga bata, ang hindi nakarehistro. Marami sa kanila ay buong pamilya mula sa lolo, lola, nanay at mga anak ang walang birth certificates—deprived of their fundamental right to identity and nationality.

What are the reasons these people have not been able to register their births? Poverty, distance and illiteracy. You can actually lump distance and illiteracy to poverty. What does our law say? A birth should be registered within 30 days from the date it took place and beyond that is late registration and an application for late registration is quite expensive. Kailangan mo pong kumuha ng Certificate of No Birth Record sa PSA sa halagang P180. Kailangan mong magbayad ng application fee for late registration sa halagang P300. Kailangan mong magpa-notaryo ng dalawang affidavits, Affidavit of Non-Registration at Joint Affidavit of Two Disinterested Persons, sa halagang P200 bawat isa, at iba pang mga requirements; pamasaha mo papunta sa Civil Registry Office mula sa malayong baryo, pagkain mo.

Mga kasamahan, marami sa ating mga kababayan ay hindi na po nagpaparehistro. Without a doubt, this policy is anti-poor. We penalize the poor for being poor. The government, in its inability to perform its mandate, has put the blame on the victims of its failures. Pinagbabayad natin sila sa ating kapalakan. Marahil ang karamihan sa atin ay alam ito. Bilang mga Kinatawan ng mga distrito at mga sektor, alam nating lahat na marami ang hanggang sa ngayon ay hindi pa rehistrado, kabilang na ang ilang milyong inosenteng kabataan at sila ay lalo nang napag-iiwanan sa ating lipunan.

Children have many layers of vulnerabilities and thus, they must be prioritized in terms of access to basic social services such as health and education. They also have the right to be protected from all forms of abuses and exploitation. They have the right to participate in the affairs of the community. We must all realize that birth registration is a gateway to claiming all other rights but without birth certificates, our children will be deprived of or significantly denied access to these rights. Government policies on basic services such as health and education are dependent on data. However, an unregistered child is not counted, thus, has no face in the public programs of the government. In health, a birth registration system that is linked with medical records is an imperative so that the government will be properly informed about children needing vaccination and other health services.

A birth certificate is also a requirement for enrollment in the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, the key poverty alleviation program of the government aimed at reducing child mortality and malnutrition, among others, and without which, the child will be deprived of that periodic grant under the program, currently at P750 a month, that may be used to provide for his or her health and nutrition needs. Under the DepEd's enrollment policy, a birth certificate is among the minimum documentary requirements for enrollment in each grade level in basic education. While

a child may still be admitted pending submission of the document, he or she will eventually need a birth certificate for enrollment in higher levels such as high school or college.

This problem is more acute for stateless children such as those of Filipino refugees and migrants in Sabah, Malaysia. In 2013, there was an estimated 30,000 children of undocumented Filipinos who were denied access to education due to lack of proper identification that public schools in Malaysia require. Without a birth certificate, the child is vulnerable to all forms of abuses and maltreatment.

For a child in conflict with the law or CICL, a birth certificate is used to determine his or her age and the corresponding processes to manage the case of the child based on provisions of the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act. Children who have no birth certificates are also at risk of becoming victims of abuse, exploitation and trafficking because of the lack of said legal document to prove their identity and age. This was a concern in the aftermath of typhoon Yolanda in 2013, as civil registration documents, including birth certificates of approximately 1.5 million Filipinos, were destroyed. This exposed children and adolescents in the affected areas to human trafficking and other abuses.

A child without birth records who is already deprived of his or her basic rights to identity and nationality faces the further threat of being deprived of his or her right to be heard in the country's democratic processes. His or her right to suffrage is compromised if he or she remains unregistered upon reaching the age of majority. In the Philippines, the birth certificate is a documentary requirement in order to register as a bonafide voter or to run for public office.

The fundamental right to travel is curtailed when a person has no birth certificate. Philippine passports are, of course, issued only to Filipino nationals. One cannot establish his or her nationality without a birth certificate. A child listed as a PhilHealth beneficiary of his or her father or mother cannot avail of the benefits under the program unless a birth certificate is presented to prove paternity or maternity.

Our current laws and practice are also wanting in clear policies and mechanisms on the status of foundlings and children needing special protection as they often are not issued birth certificates. While a foundling receives a Certificate of Foundling, that document is not accorded the same import and recognition as that of a birth certificate. For most of them, they struggle to obtain needed documents such as passports and even government benefits are deprived to them because indeed a Certificate of Foundling is not a birth certificate which most government institutions require.

Mr. Speaker, I can go on with a thousand reasons civil registration is a matter of national concern

to us. The alarming number of unregistered births simply cannot, and ought not, escape our attention. Furthermore, existing laws and policies on civil registration have failed miserably to address the causes and reasons millions of Filipino children until now are unregistered. The time is now and we cannot delay any longer the passage of a new National Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Law that should put an end to this seemingly endless cycle of unregistered births, one that shall ensure that the following components are in place:

1. Culturally-sensitive CRVS system. We must take into account the cultural practices and identification systems of indigenous peoples and Muslim communities;
2. Free delayed registration and certificate of birth;
3. Digitization of civil registry files;
4. Conduct of mobile registration. We must give all local Civil Registrar Offices the mandate to adopt mobile birth registration to ensure accessibility of services and the establishment of the Barangay Civil Registration System; and finally,
5. Information dissemination on the importance of CRVS.

At present, there are bills introduced and pending in the House for a National Civil Registration and Vital Statistics System containing the aforesaid provisions, including House Bill No. 104 that this humble Representation filed. We most earnestly appeal for the support of our distinguished colleagues.

In our commemoration of the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, may we renew our solemn commitment to protect our children and ensure that from the time of their birth, they are given what are rightfully theirs, among the most fundamental of which are the right to identity and the right to a nationality. These are basic human rights, the deprivation of which, to reiterate, is humiliating, agonizing and dehumanizing. As the late Ka Pepe Diokno said, "Human rights are what make man human. Deny them and you deny man's humanity."

Bigyan natin ang lahat ng bata ng pagkakakilanlan.  
Bigyan natin ng dangal ang bawat batang Pilipino.

Salamat kadiyaw kaniyo nga tanan. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.).  
The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. AGLIPAY. Mr. Speaker, may we refer the privilege speech of Rep. Lawrence Fortun to the Committee on Rules for appropriate action.

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

The privilege speech of Congressman Fortun is hereby referred to the Committee on Rules.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. AGLIPAY. Mr. Speaker, may we move to acknowledge the guests of Hon. Lianda B. Bolilia of the Fourth District of Batangas. They are members of the Sangguniang Barangay Council of Salao, Rosario, Batangas headed by Barangay Captain Luz Austria and Mr. Joel Alvarez, the son of Mayor Manny Alvarez of Rosario, Batangas.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.). The guests of Congresswoman Bolilia of Batangas, welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)  
The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from the Lone District of Muntinlupa, Hon. Rozzano Rufino B. Biazon, to avail of the Privilege Hour.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.). The Congressman from the Lone District of Muntinlupa, Rep. Rozzano Rufino B. Biazon, is recognized.

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. BIAZON

REP. BIAZON. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, by virtue of Republic Act No. 10661, the month of November was declared as the National Children's Month to be commemorated every year in connection with the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by the United Nations General Assembly on the 20th of November 1989. As envisioned by the collective wisdom of the Members of the Philippine Congress, the passage of the law sought to instill in the consciousness of Filipinos the value of protecting and upholding the rights of children not only in consonance with the UN Convention but as a duty to the country's offspring.

*At this juncture, Deputy Speaker Gonzales (A.) relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Johnny Ty Pimentel.*

As we commemorate the 30th anniversary of the historic adoption of the Convention in a couple of days, I request the indulgence of this House for me to express some thoughts on how we, as an institution representing the people, can uphold the rights of children. Before I proceed, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the presence of member-organizations of the Child Rights Network (CRN), the largest alliance of organizations and agencies pushing for children's rights

legislation in the Philippines. CRN, in partnership with the House of Representatives Committee on the Welfare of Children is currently hosting a week-long celebration here at the House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker, ladies and gentlemen, 30 years ago, various countries including the Philippines recognized that certain civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights are inherent and inalienable in every child regardless of their ethnicity, gender, religion, skin color and language. This resulted in the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

As a five-term member of the Philippine Legislators Committee on Population and Development or PLCPD, I, together with my fellow legislators, am committed to ensure that people are able to enjoy the benefits of their right to an improved quality of life. This applies particularly to children who, because of their status in life, are most in need of the State's care and protection. As legislators, we are duty-bound to protect these children and their future as well as to ensure that they are living in an environment conducive to their growth and development. This is why I stand here today to speak about a very alarming issue that confronts our nation's children today, the relentless spread of tobacco use in the country. This perennial issue continues to pose a serious threat against the rights of every Filipino child, particularly their right to survival and development.

Under the CRC, the survival rights of children focus on their rights to life, health and their basic needs. The Philippines is committed to ensure that every child realizes his or her right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health. Hence, it is the obligation of the State to prioritize the health of Filipino children and protect them from the predatory moves of businesses that seek profit at the expense of people's health, regardless of whether children are first or second-hand consumers of their products.

On the other hand, the developmental rights of children pertain to their right to reach their fullest potential aided by favorable policies, a conducive environment and the removal of barriers that prevent them from reaching their full potential. They include insulating children from factors that compromise their health and well-being by making those factors inaccessible as well as informing and educating people about the ill effects to children's development. These key principles are, in fact, recognized by other treaties and conventions to which the Philippines is a signatory. The World Health Organization Framework on Tobacco Control, for example, reiterates the commitment of State parties to the CRC in recognizing the right of the child to the enjoyment of highest attainable standards of health. No less than our Constitution also reminds us of our duty and obligation to protect and promote the health of our countrymen. It is our role as legislators to

safeguard our nation's children from all harm that would impede their opportunities for full development.

One of the things that threaten these rights is tobacco. The children are susceptible to noncommunicable diseases brought about by tobacco use and even worse, death. The World Health Organization reported that 700 million—almost half of the world's children—breathe air corrupted by tobacco smoke. It should be stressed that non-smokers breathing in second-hand smoke actually capture the same nicotine and other chemicals gasped by smokers. This, without any doubt, violates children's rights to a healthy and clean environment.

Mr. Speaker, it is in this context that this Representation would like to present information and studies on the burden of tobacco in the Philippines especially among the youth.

According to the 2015 Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS), 16 percent of the youth aged 13-15 in the Philippines are currently using tobacco products. This means that as early as 10 years old, the lives of the future of this country are already in grave danger. This is a little higher compared to the 2011 data where only 13.7 percent account for young tobacco users. The same survey shows that more than half or 57.9 percent of the youth are exposed to second-hand smoke in public places, while 38.3 percent of them are exposed to it at home. These are the children whose rights we vowed to protect 30 years ago in the ratification of the CRC. These are the young people whom our very Constitution recognizes as having an indispensable role in nation-building.

Mr. Speaker, let me turn everyone's attention to a very novel issue affecting the youth of today—the use of electronic nicotine delivery systems or e-cigarettes as we commonly know it. This product was introduced by the tobacco industry as a cessation device and supposedly as a less harmful alternative to the conventional cigarette. However, it is becoming apparent that these devices are not means to escape the ill effects of cigarette smoking but rather an alternative method of delivery with nicotine infused into the liquid component known as juice of the devices or even tobacco leaves themselves in certain variants. Certainly, the habit or addiction of taking a puff and inhaling substances into the lungs are not eliminated. More and more studies have also shown that this product is actually a gateway to smoking addiction.

In addition to this, there is an increasing recognition among health experts and policy-makers worldwide that these products have adverse effects on their users and non-users alike and this can be seen from the ban or regulation of the use, sale and distribution of e-cigarettes in more than 40 countries around the world including Brazil, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, Malaysia, Mexico, Indonesia and Argentina, among others. In this regard, there is a compelling logic for the Philippines to regulate

the same, especially if we think that what is at stake here are the lives of children who are exposed to this apparent health hazard. Studies have also shown that nicotine detrimentally affects the brain development of children as well as young adults and impairs their cognition.

In the United States, the Center for Disease Control describes the situation as, and I quote, “An outbreak of lung injury associated with the use of e-cigarette or vaping products” due to the high number of deaths and illnesses across different states related to the use of the devices. A term has even been coined to refer to the negative effect, EVALI or e-cigarette or vape associated lung injury. According to the CDC, as of November 13, 2019, 2,172 cases of EVALI have been reported to the CDC from 49 states in the US, including the District of Columbia and the two US territories, Puerto Rico and US Virgin Islands. Alaska is the only exception. Forty-two deaths associated with EVALI have been reconfirmed by the CDC as well, with more deaths under investigation.

Mr. Speaker, right here at home, just two days ago, the first case of EVALI has been recorded by the Department of Health. A 16-year-old girl, who just started vaping March of this year, fell ill with symptoms associated with EVALI. The girl who is already a cigarette smoker before she used the vapes, is non-asthmatic with no report of drug abuse. Let me also remind everyone the case of a 17-year-old Filipino who suffered severe burns on his face when the battery of his e-cigarette exploded. Unfortunately, this is not the only time that this has happened. Another 17-year-old boy in the United States had a similar experience that resulted to a complete shattering of his jaws. Are we to wait for another similar incident for us to take positive actions to regulate this product?

Finally, it is clear that the marketing strategy in promoting e-cigarettes and vapes does not spare the youth. The promotion that centers around vapes being “harmless,” coupled with flavors such as candy and popular drinks, make it attractive to children. With social media as a platform for the promotion and trade of these products, children are vulnerable to the enticement of e-cigarettes and vape use. Media has been the biggest platform of the tobacco industry by spending \$9.4 billion per annum to market their products.

In the Philippines, a high-burden tobacco country and the second largest tobacco consumer in Southeast Asia, the country needs a comprehensive policy framework to protect the health and rights of the child against the harmful effects of tobacco. It is crucial and imperative for us legislators to address this danger.

Mr. Speaker, I firmly believe that there are effective ways to control and deter tobacco use in the country without affecting the industry that relies on it.

First, limit the advertisement, marketing and sale

of tobacco and e-cigarettes. The concerned government agencies should strictly implement Republic Act No. 9211, of which this Representation was one of the authors, also known as the Tobacco Regulation Act of 2003; and Republic Act No. 10643 or the Graphic Health Warnings Law. Republic Act No. 9211 states that the government should regulate the advertisement of tobacco to protect people from the hazardous effects of tobacco and promote a healthful environment, while Republic Act No. 10643 calls for the government to oversee the packaging and labeling of tobacco products.

Second, amend Republic Act No. 9211. It is high time that we raise the current minimum age for buying and using cigarettes from 18 to at least 21 years old and to expand the scope of the designated smoking areas towards 100 percent smoke-free public places.

Third, raise the tobacco tax. In this regard, I must applaud the efforts of our colleagues here at the House of Representatives for urgently passing a bill to raise excise tax on alcohol and e-cigarettes and earmarking the revenue to fund the Universal Health Care Program. This clearly demonstrates our commitment to prioritize the health and well-being of Filipinos.

Fourth, strictly regulate the use of e-cigarettes. Being an unregulated product, e-cigarettes can be easily accessed and bought by everyone, including minors. This is a matter of great concern since, as mentioned earlier, flavors that are attractive to children are being used to market these products. That is why it is important that we impose a ban on all flavors or at the minimum, on flavors that are attractive to children.

Finally, heed the people's call for stronger policies. Based on a Pulse Asia Survey in January 2019, an overwhelming number of Filipinos, smokers and non-smokers alike, agree that smoking in public places should be prohibited and that the minimum age for buying and using cigarettes should be raised.

To end, we, together with our allies, must strive to protect the health and environment of every child. The theme for this year's National Children's Month is "Children at the Heart of the Law: Pressing on after 30 years." It has been 30 years since the CRC was adopted and yet, there is so much more to do to ensure that Filipino children are able to fully and meaningfully exercise their rights. As a policymaker, I believe that it is our primordial duty to ensure that children's rights and their well-being are at the heart of the law and in every policy that we make.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. LACSON-NOEL. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Michael T. Defensor of ANAKALUSUGAN Party-List for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pimentel). Hon. Mike Defensor is recognized.

REP DEFENSOR (M.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will Honorable Biazon yield to some questions?

REP. BIAZON. Gladly, to my distinguished colleague.

REP DEFENSOR (M.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first, let me at the outset congratulate Honorable Biazon for that speech he gave. It is really very timely that we come up with a policy with regard to e-cigarettes and heat, not burn, technology, as this is growing fast around the world. Mr. Speaker, I understand that in many countries, there are already regulations in place, in particular, in the United States and the United Kingdom.

My first question, Mr. Speaker, with regard to this concern, is if there is a comprehensive data in the Philippines regarding smoking in relation to e-cigarettes?

REP. BIAZON. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Health is beginning to gather information with regard to the details on the incidence of the use of vapes, this being a relatively new technology and product that has been introduced into the Philippine market. As I pointed out earlier, the first case of an illness that is possibly related to vape has just been recently reported. If we base our information on the experience of other countries, in particular, the United States, there is as much as 42 deaths identified as being related to the use of these devices, Mr. Speaker.

REP DEFENSOR (M.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I asked this question because I myself was a smoker of regular cigarettes and has recently transitioned to e-cigarettes. Now, I understand that the case of the United States, Mr. Speaker, only in the United States, in fact, Mr. Speaker, do they have cases of deaths related to lung diseases. One out of five high school students that were recorded to have been positively identified as using e-cigarettes were, in fact, infected or were afflicted with lung diseases not because of e-cigarettes per se, but because of the use of THC. Mr. Speaker, THC being a byproduct of cannabis, an unregulated product in the United States, is illegal, to be blunt about it.

Mr. Speaker, the data coming from the US is not exactly representative of what is happening to many regular smokers who are now e-smokers. Meaning, the cause of the burn and the tar, which have been established as the ones causing the lung diseases, are not present in any other country but only in the United States, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BIAZON. Mr. Speaker, the fact is that vaping devices in the Philippines are not regulated and so, we have no knowledge of the contents of the juice that are being sold in the market. That is the very reason there is that urgent need for regulation because by the very nature of vapes wherein a person ingests a foreign substance, there is already a possibility, in a layman's view, that it could be not just a direct cause of illness but it could be a carrier of whatever cause that could lead to illness.

The FDA itself is of the view, as stated in many hearings here in the House, that this is a matter of concern and that is why there is this move to have, at least, the FDA to regulate this so that we will know the exact content of the juice that is being sold in the market. Based on the information coming from those in the industry itself, they are in fact calling for a regulation, Mr. Speaker.

REP. DEFENSOR (M.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I agree with the statement of Honorable Biazon as regards regulating the product. I understand, Mr. Speaker, as of this morning, that the Department of Health is calling for a total ban of e-cigarettes and tobacco in general. To be fair, first, Mr. Speaker, I do not take that position because what will happen is just like the scenario in the United States where alcohol was banned but we see a lot of unregulated alcohol going around the market and in fact, being sold and bought by the public without government regulation. That is number one. Number two, by doing so, we do away with the revenues that we have been getting from the sin taxes imposed on cigarettes and other cigarette products.

I agree, Mr. Speaker, with the statement of Honorable Biazon that it should be regulated and I think, Mr. Speaker, that the UK scenario would be a good model because in the United Kingdom, they address the issue as a harm reduction issue instead of an e-cigarette or an e-vaping stand-alone issue. Which means, Mr. Speaker, that they would like their regular smokers of cigarettes, instead of continuing them continuing to smoke regular cigarettes, to transition to regulated, reputable and acceptable e-cigarettes in the market.

REP. BIAZON. Yes, Mr. Speaker, this Representation is in agreement that regulation is the way to go, although we do recognize the Department of Health's position because after all, they are the guardians of health of the Filipinos and they would like to see an environment where we are totally free from any possible causes of illness.

So, regulation is the way to go as of this moment, Mr. Speaker, and that is what we are calling for to ensure that these products pass through sufficient scrutiny so as to ensure the health of the Filipino people, Mr. Speaker.

REP. DEFENSOR (M.). Mr. Speaker, again, I join Honorable Biazon in his advocacy to have this regulated. I would like to know more, to get data not only from the health perspective or from the smoking industry perspective, but basically, Mr. Speaker, on the experiences of other countries as regards e-cigarettes and e-vaping. I would like to be a part of this investigation. Of course, the regulatory body, Mr. Speaker, in the US is the Bureau of Tobacco Control, different from what we have in the Philippines where we have the FDA. Since that is what we only have now, we have to act as fast as we can.

Mr. Speaker, inasmuch that I would like to ask some more questions from Honorable Biazon, I am already satisfied with his responses and quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, I am distracted by the beauty of Hon. Lucy Torres who is in front of me while I am interpellating our distinguished colleague.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Honorable Biazon.

REP. BIAZON. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. LACSON-NOEL. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of Honorable Biazon to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

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

The privilege speech of Hon. Ruffy Biazon is hereby referred to the Committee on Rules.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. LACSON-NOEL. Mr. Speaker, I move that we extend the Privilege Hour.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. LACSON-NOEL. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Hon. Irene Gay F. Saulog of Party-List KALINGA for her privilege speech.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pimentel). Hon. Irene Saulog is recognized.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. SAULOG

REP. SAULOG. A blessed and delightful afternoon, Mr. Speaker, House leaders, and the Chairperson of the

Committee on the Welfare of Children, Rep. Yedda Marie K. Romualdez.

Today is an opportune time to discuss issues relating to children's rights as we are celebrating the National Children's Month. This year, we are also commemorating the 30th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Paragraphs 1 and 2, Article III of PD 603, otherwise known as the Child and Youth Welfare Code, states in part, and I quote:

1. Every child is endowed with the dignity and worth of a human being from the moment of his conception, and has the right to be born well.

2. Every child has the right to a wholesome family life that will provide him with love, care and understanding, guidance and counseling, and moral and material security.

The dependent or abandoned child shall be provided with the nearest substitute for a home.

Ngayong National Children's Month, nararapat lamang na bigyang pansin natin ang pangunahing karapatan ng mga bata na maipanganak nang mabuti at magkaroon ng pamilya na mangangalaga at magmamahal sa kanila. Dapat gawin natin ang lahat ng ating makakaya upang ang bawat bata ay magkaroon ng pamilya. Batid natin na hindi lahat ay mapalad na makapiling ang kanilang biological family. Sa ganitong kalagayan, mayroong mga alternatibo gaya ng adoption o pag-aampon upang magkaroon sila ng permanenteng pamilya.

Ang isang batang lumaki sa isang mapagmahal na pamilya ay magkakaroon ng malaking pagkakataon na maging masaya at matagumpay sa buhay. Makakabuti sa isang bata na maagang maalagaan at lumaki sa piling ng isang pamilya. Para sa mga batang may mga magulang na boluntaryo o inboluntaryong iniwan ang kanilang parental right o karapatan maging magulang, alam natin ang pinakamabuting alternatibong kalagayan ay ang adoption o pag-aampon. Nakakalungkot, Mr. Speaker, na ang adoption sa Pilipinas ay isang napakahaba, nakakapagod at magastos na proseso. Bakit mahaba at mabagal? Mayroon itong administrative process o pagsalang sa ahensiya gaya ng Department of Social Welfare and Development. Pagkatapos nito ay dadaan pa ito sa hukuman o judicial process at kadalasan ay lagpas sa tatlong taon bago ito matapos. Nakakapagod dahil nagkakaroon ng pag-uulit ng pagkalap ng impormasyon at pagkakadoble ng requirements sa DSWD at sa korte. Magastos dahil ang pagkuha ng abogado ay kadalasang nagkakahalaga mula sa P150,000 hanggang lagpas sa P250,000. This lengthy, tedious and expensive adoption procedure only discourages a lot of kind-hearted

married couples and single individuals to consider adopting a child. Kailangan ang patuloy na reporma upang mahikayat at matulungan ang mga nagnanais na mag-ampon at magbigay ng mapagkalingang pamilya sa ating mga batang nangangailangan.

Sa pagpasa ng RA 9523 noong 2009, naamyendahan ang RA 8552 o ang Domestic Adoption Law of 1998. Kinakailangan sa adoption ang sertipikasyon mula sa DSWD para ideklara na ang isang bata ay legally available for adoption. Child Rights Network, the largest alliance of organizations and agencies pushing for children's rights legislations in the Philippines, fully supports the bill that will provide for administrative adoption under the jurisdiction of the Department of Social Welfare and Development. This will provide for a streamlined process of adoption and will eliminate the judicial process which is costly and time-consuming. Ang panukalang ito ay magre-resulta sa mas mabilis at epektibong proseso. Hindi mako-compromise ang pangangalaga sa pinakamahusay na interes ng mga bata, sa dahilang ang DSWD ay mayroong technical expertise at competence sa adoption alinsunod sa doktrina ng primary jurisdiction. Mawawala na ang proseso sa korte na matagal at magastos at magbubunga ito ng pagbuo ng maraming pamilya na kukopkop at mag-aaruga sa mga bata.

Ako po, at marahil halos lahat ng mga kasama ko sa Kamara, ay mapalad na lumaki sa isang pamilya na nagbibigay ng pagmamahal at pagkalinga na walang kondisyon. Hindi po natin maitatangi na ang pamilyang ito ay may malaking bahagi sa ating mga tagumpay at pag-asenso sa buhay, kaya umaapela po ako sa aking mga kapwa Mambabatas na huwag nating ipagkait sa mga bata na nangangailangan ng isang pamilya na mapabilang sa isang permanenteng pamilya. Sa pamamagitan ng panukala na magkaroon ng administrative adoption, mapapalitan natin ang napakahaba, nakakapagod at magastos na proseso. Ating isulong ang mithiin na ang bawat Pilipino ay magkaroon ng mapagkalingang pamilya na nagbibigay sa kanila ng mabuting kinabukasan.

Sa hapon pong ito, kasama natin ang ilan sa mga batang unang-unang makikinabang sa panukalang batas na ito gaya nina Antonette at Nathaniel. Sila po ay ilan lamang sa libo-libong mga batang naulila at uhaw sa pagmamahal ng kanilang pamilya. Sa bawat araw na pinapatagal natin ang proseso ng adoption sa Pilipinas, ipinagkakait natin sa kanila na magkaroon ng magulang na mag-aalaga sa kanila, magtuturo ng mabuting asal at tutulungan silang maabot ang mga pangarap sa buhay, at kung magkamali man ay maitutuwid sa tamang landas.

Ngayong darating na kapaskuhan, maraming mga mabubuting puso ang nag-i-sponsor sa Christmas parties sa mga orphanages at sa sandaling panahon ay napapasaya ang mga bata. May mga regalo, palaro at

masasarap na pagkain para sa kanila. Nakasalalay sa ating mga Mambabatas na mabigyan ang mga batang nangangailangan ng pagkalinga, ng regalo na hihigit sa laruan at damit at ito po ay ang pamilyang magmamahal at mag-aalaga sa kanila.

Before I end my speech, Mr. Speaker, I would like to greet all the children and advocates of children's rights a Happy Children's Month. Mabuhay po ang bawat batang Pilipino at maraming salamat po. *(Applause)*

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

REP. LACSON-NOEL. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of Honorable Saulog to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

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

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. LACSON-NOEL. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Hon. Sergio C. Dagooc of Party-List APEC for his manifestation.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pimentel). Honorable Dagooc is hereby recognized.

REP. DAGOOC. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Representation, together with my colleagues in the power sector, the RECOBODA, PHILRECA and AKO PADAYON PILIPINO, would like to manifest his strong support for the welfare of our children, Filipino children in particular, that we will do our best to provide electricity to all the far-flung areas so that every Filipino child will enjoy the convenience of electricity especially at night when they are doing their homework for their educational advancement.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. LACSON-NOEL. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Hon. Carlos Isagani T. Zarate of Party-List BAYAN MUNA for his privilege speech.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ZARATE

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, my fellow legislators, this Representation from BAYAN MUNA Party-list unites in the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and gives high recognition to its continued commitment to recognize the civil, political, social and economic, and cultural rights of every child all over the world. It is a reminder that children's rights are also human rights and as such, we as legislators are duty-bound to uphold and protect them.

The situation of the Filipino children reflects the situation of their parents and communities. Children are not spared from the harsh realities that majority of the Filipino people face today. They are also placed at the forefront of the different wars waged by the present administration against its people—the war on drugs, the war against insurgency, and the war on terror in Mindanao as evinced through the present state of martial law in Mindanao, the declaration of Memorandum Order No. 32 in the Regions of Bicol, Samar and Eastern Visayas, and the issuance of Executive Order No. 70 which affects also the lives of our innocent children.

In more than three years since the so-called campaign on drugs was declared on June 30 of 2016, there is already an estimated 22,983 people that had been killed in the combined numbers of legitimate police operations as well as extrajudicial killings and 58 of this number are all minors. This is an estimate from Human Rights Watch world report. Other sources cite more victims.

“May exam pa po ako bukas”—those were the last words of 17-year-old Kian Delos Santos as he pleaded to the police officers who dragged and shot him dead last August 16, 2017. Police initially claimed that Kian fought back, “nanlaban,” the oft-repeated justification for the death of drug suspects who were killed for allegedly resisting arrest. Kian's case was not an isolated incident, Mr. Speaker. There are more innocent children like him who have been affected by this anti-illegal drugs campaign. Children are getting killed as actual targets of police operations, not only as collateral damage. Collateral damage, as if children's lives can be replaced like objects destroyed. “Shit happens,” in fact, declared by now Senator Bato De La Rosa who was the architect of this tokhang campaign while he was still the Chief of the PNP. “Shit happens,” he said on the killing of three-year old Myka Ulpina, a proof of how impunity destroys even innocent children's lives.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, there are thousands of children orphaned, abandoned and neglected because their parents are either killed during anti-drug police operations or are currently incarcerated for drug-related



charges, according to child rights groups. Suffering from the loss of a parent or a loved one who would likely be breadwinners of the family may not be the only tragic event that befalls on these children, especially those who have witnessed these killings. The tremendous trauma that these children experienced could consequently lead to further violence and abuse like living in the streets and fending for oneself, being arrested by the police, tortured, detained and eventually pressed with drug and other related charges. Hence, Mr. Speaker, an appropriate response such as concrete government programs and mechanisms to immediately respond to their psycho-social needs should be made.

Healing from this trauma primarily involves giving justice to their families. Law enforcers should prioritize the investigation on the killings, under the war on drugs, of children and make the perpetrators accountable to the law. This Chamber should also legislate laws that mandate government institutions like the Department of Social Welfare and Development to institute services that will provide an immediate response to the trauma and address the psycho-social needs of children left behind and orphaned, children who have witnessed killings and children who have further experienced layers of human rights violations resulting from the war on drugs and other war policy of the present administration. Sustainable intervention and rehabilitation programs and services should be made easily available and accessible to these children. Moreover, Mr. Speaker, we should support resolutions that would call for an end to this campaign on drugs, to this war on drugs, to prevent more children from being subjected to this grave violation of their rights.

Mr. Speaker, as signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child or UNCRC, our country or the government should be the primary duty bearer in upholding and promoting the rights and welfare of the Filipino children. A child's death is already unbearable, and considering them as collateral damage is just too much. May the stories of Kian Delos Santos, Hideyoshi Kawata, Althea Barbon, Joshua Cumilang, Sean Christian Martinez, Danica May Garcia, Myka Ulpina and of all the children victimized, killed and orphaned whether by legitimate police operations or by extrajudicial killings, serve to wake us up and call for a stop on this warfare launched against our people. Public funds should not be wasted on policies that create conditions detrimental to the well-being and future of our children and instead, these should be used in promoting their lives and protecting them from any and all appalling circumstances that might cause them their future.

Mr. Speaker, my fellow legislators, I call on this Chamber to support the investigation of cases of grave violations of children's rights for it is our duty to promote, ensure and uphold the rights of the country's future. The Filipino children, they are our future, so let

us all stand for truth and justice, and hold whoever is accountable. I reiterate the call for support to resolutions pending in this Chamber that would call an end not only to the war on drugs, but also to this warfare that continuously subject our children to rights violations.

Again, this Representation calls on all of us to open our eyes and ears to the stories of the Filipino children who are suffering violence and injustice because to celebrate the foundation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is also to uphold the rights of every Filipino children. Let our children live and enjoy their rights. Let us be true to our constitutional mandate to protect all families. Let us not allow "shit" to happen again. Let the other Kians and Mykas enjoy their childhood.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that the privilege speech of Hon. Carlos Isagani T. Zarate be referred to the Committee on Rules.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move to acknowledge the presence of the guests of Hon. Arlene D. Brosas of Party-List GABRIELA. They are Catarina Estavillo, Bantay Bigas spokesperson; Zenaida Soriano from AMIHAN; former Congressman Fernando Hicap of PAMALAKAYA; Beverly Mango of the Philippine Network of Food Security Programs; former DAR Secretary Rafael Mariano of Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas; former Congressman Ariel Casilao of ANAKPAWIS Party-List; Joseph Canlas and Ignacio Ortiz of Alyansa ng Magbubukid sa Gitnang Luzon, Nueva Ecija; Allison Zoe Caballero of the National Network of Agrarian Reform Advocates Youth; Baby Senobio of Magsasaka mula sa Eastern Visayas, Stand with Samar-Leyte Network; Marx Torda of the National Food Authority Employees Association; Nenita Gonzaga, representative of women workers; Pastor Irma Balaba of Church IFI; Sister Rebecca Paceter of the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines; Jel Malazarte, student, TUP; John Michael Malazarte, volunteer of Bantay Bigas Network; Eddie Bilones, UNLI Rice Coalition, Magsasaka mula sa Laguna; Ma. Jenerlita Morilla of Bantay Bigas Media Liasion; Gert Libang of GABRIELA National Alliance; and Estrellita Bagasbas of Kadamay.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pimentel). May we request the guests of Rep. Arlene D. Brosas to please stand. (*Applause*)

REP. BROSAS. Mr. Speaker, the guests are in the Speaker's Office because their letter was supposed to be read kanina and we were supposed to give the list of signatures to the Speaker, but there was an event there and so, they are still there right now, so they can listen to it.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pimentel). Noted.

REP. BROSAS. Habang nandoon po sila.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pimentel). Noted.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Hon. Arlene D. Brosas of GABRIELA Party-List to avail of the Privilege Hour.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pimentel). Hon. Arlene Brosas is recognized.

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. BROSAS

REP. BROSAS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, fellow Members of the House of Representatives and guests, good afternoon.

Tag-lamig na naman sa Pilipinas dahil sa nalalapit na pasko subalit parang tag-ulan pa rin dahil sa humahabol na pagbaha sa ating bayan, ang pagbaha ng imported na bigas. Bilang Kinatawan ng natatanging party-list ng kababaihan sa Kongreso, nais kong bigyang-diin ngayong hapon ang lalong tumitinding krisis sa agrikultura dahil sa Rice Liberalization Law, na sanhi ng kasalukuyang pagdurusa di lamang ng mga magsasaka kundi maging ng mga consumer at maliliit na negosyante. Sa kasalukuyang estado ng rice importation industry ng ating bansa, tinatayang aakyat sa tatlong milyong tonelada ang rice imports ng Pilipinas bago magtapos ang taon, at ito ang pinakamataas sa buong mundo, ayon sa report ng United States Department of Agriculture Foreign Agricultural Services. Natalo pa natin ang Tsina bilang biggest importer ng bigas na may tinatayang 2.5 million metric tons na rice imports ngayong taon.

Hindi dapat natin ipagbunyi na ang Pilipinas, na isang agricultural country, ay umaasa na lamang sa bigas na galing pa sa ibang bansa. Hindi lang tayo naging world's biggest rice importer, naging world's biggest loser din tayo sa usapin ng food security at self-

sufficiency. Mr. Speaker, itong liberalisasyon ng bigas ay hindi lamang nakakabahala pero ito ay nakakagalit. Sa Rice Liberalization Law, tuluyang naging import-dependent ang ating bansa, nawalan ng kabuhayan ang sarili nating mga magsasaka at naging mga pulubi ang mga Pilipino na nanlilimos ng imported na bigas. Ayon sa isang report, inanunsiyo raw ni Presidente Duterte ang pagsususpende ng rice importation ngunit agad din itong pinabulaanan ng Malacanang.

Mr. Speaker, sa kabila ng krisis sa agrikultura at kaliwa't kanang kilos-protesta ng libo-libong magsasaka sa buong Pilipinas laban sa anti-magsasakang polisiya na ito, tila naninindigan pa rin ang gobyerno na ang paglalagay ng taripa sa bigas ang magpapaunlad ng industriya ng agrikultura. Ang ating magsasaka ay hindi magpapatinag at patuloy na mananawagan para sa tuluyang pagbabasura ng Republic Act No. 11203 o ng Rice Tariffication and Liberalization Law. Sa katunayan, nakakalap na ng 50,000 pirma ang signature campaign na inilunsad ng Bantay Bigas para sa pagbabasura ng Rice Liberalization Law at patuloy pa itong dumadami. Ang kampanyang ito ay sinuportahan din ng ilang Mambabatas dito mismo sa Kongreso.

Mr. Speaker, kanina lamang ay umakyat ang mga kinatawan ng iba't ibang mga farmers associations, mga magsasaka at iba pang mga advocates ng pagpapaunlad sa bigas at sa industriya ng bigas, kasama ang iba pang mga kinatawan mula sa Isabela, Cagayan, Nueva Vizcaya at iba pa, kasama po ang buong Makabayan bloc, at ipinasa sa atin dito sa House of Representatives sa pamamagitan ni Speaker Alan Peter "Compañero" S. Cayetano, sa kanya po ipinaabot ang mga pirma ng 50,000 at ito naman po ay malugod na tinanggap ng House of Representatives.

Ngayon, Mr. Speaker, ang GABRIELA Women's Party, kasama ang malawak na hanay ng masa, ay patuloy na mananawagan at makikibaka para sa kasiguruhan sa pagkain, karapatan sa lupa ng mga magsasaka at tunay na repormang agraryo.

Magandang hapon po at maraming salamat.

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

REP. AGLIPAY. Mr. Speaker, may we refer the speech of Hon. Arlene D. Brosas to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

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

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. AGLIPAY. Mr. Speaker, may we recognize

Hon. France L. Castro of the Party-List ACT-TEACHERS to avail of the Privilege Hour.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pimentel). Hon. France L. Castro is recognized.

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

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker. Magandang hapon sa ating lahat.

Dalawang bahagi po, Mr. Speaker, ang talumpati kong ito ngayon pero magka-ugnay na paksa ukol sa aktwal na ginagawa at karapat-dapat na gawin ng kapulisan at ng militar.

Una, inuudyok ko na agarang tutukan ng Kongresong ito ang klima ng impunity na nagsasapanganib sa mga guro at kawani sa mga eskuwelahan, pati na rin ang mga estudyante. Pitong guro na po ang pinaslang ngayong taon, Mr. Speaker. Sa paraan ng pagpatay, makikitang malakas ang loob ng mga salarin, hindi nangangambang may madamay silang bata o ibang tao na labas sa target nila o walang takot na mananagot sila sa batas. Gaya ng mga pumaslang kina Ruby Marcha Domalanta, nakasuot ng helmet at ginawa ang krimen sa mataong lugar; o ang walang awang bumaril kay Narcisa Gumibao sa harap ng kanyang estudyante sa loob mismo ng kanyang classroom; o ang pumatay sa magkapatid na principal at DepEd division official na sila Arthur at Ardale Bayawa sa loob ng kanilang bahay habang sila ay natutulog; o si Michael Vincent Olorvida na binaril sa harap ng kanyang asawa at dalawang batang mga anak; o sina Donn Carlos Bagadiong at Mel Rose Baloloy na bukod sa pinatay ay kapwa pinagnakawan din sa mga karumaldumal na paraan.

Pagkabulok, pagkasira o pagkawalang-silbi ba ng law enforcement institutions gaya ng kapulisan kaya lumalala at lumalawak ang climate of impunity sa ating bansa? Sa ilalim ng administrasyon, nauna na ang tokhang raids, ang killings at vigilante murders na sumingil na sa libong mga buhay ng ating mga inosenteng kababayan at kabataan. Inosente dahil sila ay ipinapalagay na inosente ng batas hangga't hindi napapatunayan na responsable sa isang krimen, at inosente dahil bata, tambay, tinaguriang “caught in the crossfire”.

Hanggang ngayon, ang mahahalagang tanong pa rin na hindi nasasagot ng pamahalaan sa mga biktima at sa sambayanang pinapaniwala sa motto na “To serve and protect”—nasaan ang batas at higit sa lahat, nasaan ang kapulisan dapat nagpapatupad ng batas na ito?

I want this Congress, particularly the Committees on Public Safety and Security, Basic Education and Human Rights, to immediately act and look into the reasons on how to prevent these violent incidents from ever happening again, from claiming the lives

and endangering the safety of our teachers, education personnel and students. We in Congress should be instrumental in making sure that the police authorities are truly spending their budgets and the people’s taxes by fulfilling their mandates—targeting crime and criminals, not suppressing dissent and civil and political liberties, and targeting innocent individuals and organizations. The PNP should be launching legitimate operations such as patrols to deter murders, robberies, not raids-cum-planting operations such as those that happened in Negros and Manila in two weeks, or raising terror to *de facto* martial law with the military in Bicol, Samar and Negros.

Mr. Speaker, tumatayo rin po ako ngayon upang irehistro ang mariing pagkondena sa tangkang extrajudicial killings ng mag-asawang guro na sila Ma’am Zhaydee at Sir Ramil Cabañelez ng Valencia City, Bukidnon noong nakaraang buwan. Binaril ng malapitan si Ma’am Zhaydee ng anim na beses pero nauna rito ang pagbaril kay Sir Ramil na siyang hinahanap na kriminal dahil ayon sa salarin, siya raw ay may kontak sa bukid o koneksiyon sa NPA. Tila walang takot na ginawa ang krimen na ito sa harap ng maliliit na mga batang Grades 1 and 2 na mga estudyante nila, ngunit sa totoo lang, mga duwag sila, kinubli ang mga mukha ng mga bonete, biniktima ang mga simple at walang kalaban-labang guro at bata, at tumalilis matapos gawin ang kanilang krimen sa paraang dagang iniilawan.

Nais ko ring irehistro ang kabuuang iskema na nagdulot sa mga tangkang pagpaslang, pananakot at iba pang mga atake at paglabag sa karapatan ng mga guro kagaya nila Ma’am Zhaydee at Sir Ramil, sampu ng iba pang mga miyembro ng marhinalisado at aping sektor. Ito ay ang red-tagging o vilification o ang malisyosong pagle-level sa mga indibidwal o organisasyon bilang diumano ay rebelde at kumakalaban sa gobyerno, “pula” at “komunista,” “kaaway ng Estado” at samakatuwid ay “object of attack” ng militar at pulis sa ilalim ng programang kontra-insurhensiya.

Umiinog ang red-tagging sa kasinungalingan. Nagdudulot ang red-tagging ng ligalig, takot at nagpapadana ng dugo sa rabid o ulol na kilos ng mga sinungaling. Kasinungalingan na pagrerebelde o “going against the government” ang paggigiit ng karapatan, ang pagkritiko sa mga katiwalian at kontra-mamayang polisiya na mga nasa kapangyarihan at sa pagiging vocal, pagra-rally at progresibong pag-o-organisa. Kasinungalingan na dahil sa militanteng oryentasyon ng mga indibidwal at organisasyon ay legal fronts, supporters at recruiters daw ng CPP-NPA. Lahat ng ito, Mr. Speaker, ay mga akusasyong matagal nang ibinabato sa mga aktibista at progresibo pero hanggang ngayon ay hindi naman ito napapatunayan, at samantalang hindi ito pinatutunayan, paparami ng paparami ang biktima ng red-tagging.

My colleagues, lies and fabrication have become the norm in this administration. I, and the rest of the Makabayan bloc, have stood here countless times to assert that reality. We have called out the official news agencies of the government which now act as purveyors of fake news. This Congress has swallowed thrice the false story of the existence of rebellion in Mindanao, including the lie that I myself have gone to Talaingod to recruit Lumad children for rebellion instead of extending to them humanitarian aid and rescue due to threats and harassment from the paramilitary groups under the AFP.

Up to now, the silence is deafening with regard to the human rights violations spawned by red-tagging liars, atrocities against our people that take all shapes and sizes, from the illegal profiling committed against our teachers, professors and educator-unionists to the extrajudicial killings throughout our country, especially in Mindanao, Negros Island, Bicol and Leyte where declared and *de facto* martial law is in place.

Mga kapwa Mambabatas, hindi simpleng paninirang-puri ang red-tagging o ang kasinungalingang konektado sa NPA o organisasyon. Red-tagging deprives the right and claim lives of even the innocent children and sectors who are already victimized such as the indigenous peoples. We should not require any more proof beyond that but we could look at the frustrated EJK against teachers Zhaydee and Ramil to see the human rights cost of reg-tagging and the lies that enable it. After the shooting, lies were placed by the AFP and the PNP to surround the victims and the frustrated EJK case against them. National Security Adviser and National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict head Hermogenes Esperon himself came out as author of such lies.

Una, Mr. Speaker, ang sinabi niya sa isang press conference habang ang solidarity visit namin ay binabarahan ang mga armadong pulis. Pagkatapos ng incident, nagpunta ang pulis at na-evacuate nila ang lahat. Puro kasinungalingan ito, ayon sa mga nakausap ng aming grupo, kabilang na ang Commission on Human Rights at ang Alliance of Concerned Teachers, na mga miyembro ng komunidad sa malalapit na barangay ng Sitio Dalit at Barangay Lumbayao. Sila mismo ang nagdala kay Ma'am Zhaydee, na may anim na tama ng baril, papuntang ospital, sa pababa ng bundok, sa pagtawid ng ilog at biyahe mula Lumbayao. Ang komunidad ang rumesponde sa pinangyarihan at mga barangay kagawad ang sumubok na habulin ang mga salarin. Ang totoo, walang nagpuntang PNP sa Sitio Dalit upang paimbestigahan ito hanggang ilang araw matapos ang pamamaril dahil hanggang Barangay Lumbayao lang sila.

Ikalawa, ayon rin kay Esperon, ang tatay ni teacher Zhaydee ay dating NPA na taga-kolekta doon sa barangay, nag-surrender o pinipilit na bumalik iyong

tatay. Ang katotohanan, Mr. Speaker, the NTF has claimed this a day after the shooting, even prior to any investigation. The truth is, there is no investigation at all, so paano sila nagkaroon ng ganitong kongklusyon? Ang totoo, ganito ang palaging linya sa Sagay massacre, Lake Sebu Lumad massacre at iba pang karahasan na malinaw na ito ay akda ng militar at pulis pero agaran nitong ituturo ang NPA bilang may gawa. What is more, teacher Zhaydee's father has come out in a radio interview insisting that he is an organizer of farmers in Bukidnon, a brave and nationalist endeavor in the place where 16 had already been victimized by extrajudicial killings.

The truth is, Mr. Speaker, the victims of these atrocities were all red-tagged organizations and individuals connected to them. Ang totoo, ganito ang ginawa nila noong 2009 nang dinukot, na-torture at walang awa na pinatay si Rebelyn Pitao, isang Grade 2 teacher at anak ni Leoncio Pitao o Ka Parago ng NPA, bagaman inamin ng NPA, ng intelligence officers na restricted to barracks in the 10th IB, Camp Panacan ang dalawa na tinutukoy na nasa likod ng karumal-dumal na krimen na ito. Nagsinungaling din ang AFP noon at sinasabing dulot ito ng infighting sa NPA. Ang puno't dulo nito, walang pagkakaiba sa mga mata ng security and defense policy ng pamahalaan ang mga sibilyan at walang koneksiyon sa armadong digmaan sa isang banda, at ang mga combatant o NPA sa kabilang banda. Ginagawang target ang mga sibilyan at pagkatapos ay ipinantatabing ang kasinungalingang NPA ang may gawa at hindi State-sponsored ang pagpatay, tangka sa buhay at iba pang paglabag sa karapatan.

Sa akalang mahuhugasan niya ang kamay ng AFP, PNP at NTF sa anumang koneksiyon sa tangkang EJK kay Cabañelez, inulit muli ni Secretary Esperon ang kasinungalingang ang Alliance of Concerned Teachers daw ay CPP front, where Jose Ma. Sison claimed daw on video that human rights monitor Karapatan and the umbrella progressive organizations of Bayan, ACT, LFS, are other fronts of the CPP. Ano bang video ito? A spliced and erroneously interpreted one. Anyone who would care to verify from official records would find that the truth is the exact opposite—the distinction between the legal and democratic organizations and the communists in an armed struggle. This distinction is precisely what the AFP, the PNP and the defense and security establishments of the government should be implementing.

Mr. Speaker, ako raw ay nang-harass ng mga pulis at nag-exceed ng authority sa ospital kung nasaan si teachers Zhaydee at Ramil dahil nagpupumilit daw ako na pumasok sa kuwarto ng mga biktima. Ang katotohanan, mga elemento ng PNP ang heavily armed na mga lalaki, unipormado at di-unipormado, at sila ang nang-harass, hindi lang sa aming grupo kundi pati sa mag-asawa mismo na may pahintulot sa amin na

bumisita. Ang mga pulis ang nag-exceed ng authority at kung sa totoo lang, wala silang awtoridad doon, wala sila dapat sa ospital dahil sila ay armado at labag ito sa batas ng Pilipinas at international law. Naggiit ang Kinatawagang ito na mabisita sila dahil karapatan ng mga biktima na ma-access nila ang kanilang awtoridad, kabilang na ang Commission on Human Rights, at mga kasama nila sa unyon at organisasyon. Ako ay Representante nila dito sa Kongreso at obligasyon ko na masiguro ang kanilang kalagayan.

Ang pinakamabigat, ang mga elemento ng PNP at AFP ang patuloy na nangha-harass sa kanila at sinumang bumisita sa kanila na kaanak at kasama sa komunidad, ay nagdadala ng media na nag-i-interview na walang pahintulot nila at nagpa-publish ng kung ano-anong mga kasinungalingan ukol sa kaso nila. Kaya sa isang aglahi o napaka-ironic na ako pa ang pinaratangang sinungaling ng National Security Adviser na ito. Sinungaling daw si France Castro, sabi niya pero napatunayan na sa kasaysayan at ng kasalukuyang madilim na human rights situation ng bansa kung sino ang sinungaling at sino ang lumalaban para sa karapatan.

What is undeniable is that red-tagging is a wholesale attack, more than libel, more than slander that intends to damage the reputation of a single or few individuals. Red-tagging or vilification is the offense against a class of people usually on the political beliefs by which they are perceived or supposed to be “enemies of the State.” I have said this before and I will say it again, red-tagging is an *en masse* death threat against farmers, teachers, Lumad children, communities and others. It is a vicious tool of defense and security mechanisms of the State, as already noted by the UN Special Rapporteurs Phillip Alston and Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, and a recognized *modus operandi* in international human rights law and international humanitarian law, one that leads to extrajudicial killings, illegal arrests and detention, and other rights atrocities.

In short, you attack me along with your goons, mounting your lies and so-called whole-of-the-nation approach but in truth, you attack my constituents, the entire marginalized sector of public and private school teachers. You spread lies of “red links” against the Alliance of Concerned Teachers but in truth, you target any other educator—whether ACT member or not—who teaches critical thinking and national ideas to his or her students, who fights for humane salaries, benefits and working conditions in the arms of the Constitution that allows them their freedom of speech and the right to organization, to name a few.

Any blood spilled in the name of this so-called whole-of-the-nation approach to armed conflict is in your hands, Secretary Esperon, and any other implementor of this fascist-militarist policies of this present administration. You talk of the so-called “legal

fronts” and “enemies of the State” but you do not talk about the truth behind all of these. Who is in fact exhibiting a front before the public but Esperon who parades himself as a public servant, but is just a front of a rabid militarist? None other than Esperon and his ilk. What is in fact a front for peace but instead works for the overturning of civilian supremacy by the military and the subjugation of the people’s rights through fascist means? None other than the NTF and its purported whole-of-the-nation approach.

My colleagues, if we truly wish not to let another teacher be a victim of another assassination attempt, if we truly wish to prevent more children see their respective teachers gunned down in front of them, it is high time that we genuinely discuss the truths and condemn the lies. I demand justice for teachers Zhaydee and Ramil Cabañez. I demand justice for the thousands of victims of human rights violations during this administration. Let us hear and adopt my House resolution and other proposed probes that I and the other Representatives of the Makabayan Bloc filed on human rights violations.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon.

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

REP. LACSON-NOEL. Mr. Speaker, I move to refer the speech of Hon. France Castro to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

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

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. LACSON-NOEL. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Hon. Sarah Jane I. Elago of the Party-List KABATAAN for her privilege speech.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pimentel). Hon. Sarah Elago is recognized.

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ELAGO

REP. ELAGO. Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker.

“Huwag tayong pumayag”—iyan ang pakiusap sa atin ng isang former child in conflict with the law na si Arman Granado ng Legazpi City, Albay patungkol sa mga mungkahi na ibaba ang edad ng kriminal na pananagutan. Nakulong si Arman noong siya ay 10 taong gulang pa lamang at hindi pa naipatutupad ang Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act. Sa murang edad, naranasan ni Arman ang mahirapan at magipit dahil

sa kagutuman. Napilitan siyang magnakaw ng isang cellphone upang makakain ang kanyang pamilya.

Naging mainit na usapin sa nakalipas na Kongreso ang minimum age of criminal responsibility o MACR. Kahit na hindi pa muling nabubuhay ang usaping ito sa loob ng Kongreso, hanggang ngayon ay nandiyan at naninindigan ang mga daan-daang organisasyon, ahensiya at mga alyansa katulad ng Child Rights Network at Educo Philippines na nagbabantay at mariing tinututulan ang pagpapababa sa MACR. Bagkus, ang mga grupong ito ay sumusuporta sa implementasyon at pagpapatibay ng kasalukuyang batas.

Ngayong hapon, G. Ispiker, kasama natin sila dito sa Batasang Pambansa sa pagdiriwang ng International Day of the Child o ng Children's Month. Ngayong linggo, ipinagdiriwang rin natin ang ika-30 anibersaryo ng United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child o UNCRC. Halos tatlong dekada na mula noong na-endorso ng ika-walong Kongreso ng Pilipinas ang UNCRC. Nangako tayo sa lahat ng mga bata na re-respetuhin at po-protektahan natin ang kanilang mga karapatan. Tayo ay tiningala ng mundo nang maipasa natin ang Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act, noong 2006, na nagbigay ng hiwalay na sistema ng hustisya para sa mga bata at naitakda ang 15 taong gulang bilang edad ng kriminal na pananagutan. Napatunayan ng Pilipinas na tama ang naging desisyon na ito sapagkat lumabas na ang General Comment No. 24 ng Committee on the Rights of the Child na nagsasabi na kapag mataas na ang MACR ng isang bansa, gaya ng 15 o 16 years old, huwag na ito ibaba pa.

Mga kasama, pumirma tayo sa UNCRC at kailangan nating pakinggan ang kanilang mga rekomendasyon.

Simple lang ang mensahe natin sa hapon ito: na lahat ng nagtatrabaho para sa kapakanan ng mga bata—social workers, community development workers, house parents ng mga Bahay Pag-asa, mga doctors at psychologists—lahat sila ay tutol sa panukalang ibaba ang MACR sa Pilipinas. Alam natin na sa murang edad, ang mga bata ay nahuhulma pa ang mga ugali at kaisipan at dahil dito, nagagamit sila ng mga sindikato, napagsasamantalahan o naaabuso ng kanilang kapwa. Sabi ng mga psychologists, “Oo, maaaring may discernment ang isang teenager o alam na niya ang tama sa mali ngunit hindi nila ganap na alam ang consequences ng kanilang mga ginagawa. Patuloy ang brain development ng bata hanggang siya ay umabot ng 25 years old.”

Kaya natin ipinasa ang Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act ay dahil sa pamamagitan nito, nabibigyan natin ang mga kagaya ni Arman ng suporta para makapagbagong-buhay. Hindi lamang sinusupportahan ng batas na ito ang mga children in conflict with the law, kundi pati na ang kanilang mga nabiktima. Sa framework ng restorative justice na puso ng batas na ito, may kontrata ang isang bata sa kanyang nabiktima na kailangan niyang sundin.

Kasama rito ang rehabilitation, pagsasaayos ng sariling buhay sa pamamagitan ng pag-aaral at pagbabayad sa biktima. Kahit na below 15 years old ay puwedeng pumasok at magbagong-buhay sa Bahay Pag-asa kapag siya ay nakagawa ng matindi o paulit-ulit na pagkakasala.

Mabuti na lang at si Arman ay sinuportahan ng mga programa ng DSWD, mga programang ipinagtibay pa ng Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act. Ayon sa kanya, dahil sa mga programa ay nakabalik siya sa tamang landas. Dumaan si Arman sa cultural, psychosocial at spiritual programs ng DSWD. Kalaunan, siya ay kumuha ng skills enhancement program sa TESDA. Sa Bahay Pag-asa sa probinsya ng Sorsogon, nagkaroon ng kaayusan at gabay ang pang-araw-araw na buhay ni Arman. Ngayon, siya ay may sarili nang pamilya at nagtatrabaho nang marangal sa Legazpi City.

Madalas ginagawang dahilan ang krimen at droga sa pagpapababa ng MACR ngunit ayon sa datos mismo ng Philippine National Police, noong 2018, 2.3 percent lamang ng kabuuang krimen sa bansa kung saan nasasangkot ang children in conflict with the law—2.3 percent. Ang pagturing na kriminal sa mga batang ito ay hindi solusyon para mapababa ang crime rate sa Pilipinas.

Mr. Speaker, why do we not go after the 98 percent and all those who use children in criminal activities? Why do we target children and seek to punish them instead of the adults using them?

Hindi rin solusyon ang pagpapababa ng edad para mapigilan ang mga sindikato sa paggamit ng mga bata. Bagkus, sasabihin lang nila na gagamit sila ng mas bata pa sa minimum age. Hindi rin handa ang Pilipinas na ibaba ang MACR at umako ng mas maraming bata sa sistema. Ayon mismo sa monitoring ng JJWC, 55 lamang na Bahay Pag-asa ang naipatayo sa 114 na dapat maipatayong Bahay Pag-asa sa buong Pilipinas at sa 55 na ito, G. Ispiker, walo lamang ang nagkaroon ng accreditation ng DSWD. Ibig sabihin, walo lang ang nakapasa sa pamantayan para masabing conducive ang isang Bahay Pag-asa para sa rehabilitasyon ng isang bata.

Ayon rin sa datos ng Commission on Human Rights, 409 bata ang natagpuan nila mula sa mga taong 2013 hanggang 2018 sa loob ng mga selda para sa matatanda. Isa po iyang malaking paglabag sa Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act ngunit ito ay nangyayari dahil wala tayong sapat na mga pasilidad at hindi alam ng ating duty bearers kung ano ang dapat gawin para masuportahan ang children in conflict with the law. Mga kasama, mga kapwa Mambabatas, hindi totoong hindi makukulong ang mga bata kapag ibinaba na natin ang MACR dahil sila ay nakukulong sa ngayon pa lang.

Saan kukuha ng serbisyo at gabay ang mga kabataang pinaka-nangangailangan nito? Hindi natin

dapat iasa ang mga bata sa isang sistemang hindi pa sila handang tanggapin. Ang hiling at pakiusap ng iba't ibang sektor na nangangalaga at nagtatanggol sa mga karapatan ng mga bata ay ito: ipatupad natin ng maayos ang Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act at pagtibayin ito nang hindi natin ibinababa ang MACR. Nakita natin ang kagandahang dulot nito sa mga kuwento ng kabataang kagaya ni Arman. Sila ay biktima lamang ng kalagayan na kanilang nakalakhan. Huwag po natin silang biguin at patuloy na bansagang kriminal dahil sila ay kayang magbagong-buhay sa ilalim ng Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act.

Ang mga bata ang isa sa mga pinakabulnerableng miyembro ng ating komunidad. Kung nasasangkot man sila sa krimen, that should be our fault, not theirs. We all want to protect our children. Let us focus on the one that we know works and that is the implementation and strengthening of the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act. Kasabay nito, G. Ispiker, ang kabuuang pagpapalakas ng pag-iral ng batas at ng sistema ng hustisya sa ating mahal na bayan ng Pilipinas. Iyan din po ang isa sa mga naging panawagan ng kakatapos lamang na youth camp sa Araw ng mga Estudyante na naipagdiwang sa buong bansa. Ang pangangalaga, ang pagtatanggol ng mga karapatan ng kapakanan hindi lang ng mga bata, kundi ng lahat ng mamamayang Pilipino—ang mga karapatan na ito ay napakahalagang sangkap upang ang tungkulin natin bilang mamamayang Pilipino ay atin pong magampanan.

Maraming salamat po, G. Ispiker. Mabuhay ang Child Rights Network at lahat ng nagtatanggol ng karapatan at kapakanan ng mga bata. (*Applause*)

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

REP. LACSON-NOEL. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of Honorable Elago to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The speech of Hon. Sarah Jane I. Elago is referred to the Committee on Rules.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. LACSON-NOEL. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Hon. Eufemia “Ka Femia” C. Cullamat of Party-List BAYAN MUNA for her privilege speech.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pimentel). Honorable Cullamat is hereby recognized.

## PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. CULLAMAT

REP. CULLAMAT. Maraming salamat, G. Ispiker.

G. Ispiker, mga kapwa ko Mambabatas, noong nakaraang Biyernes, November 15, ang ika-15 taon ng Hacienda Luisita Massacre. Inaalala natin ang pitong martir sa malagim na massacre na naganap noong November 16, 2004 sa Hacienda Luisita sa Tarlac, ang simbolo ng kawalan ng lupa at hustisya para sa mga magsasaka at panunupil sa mga manggagawang nagwewelga. Inaalala natin sina Juancho Sanchez, Jessie Valdez, Adriano Caballero Jr., Jaime Fastidio, Jesus Laza, Jhaivie Basilio at Jhune David na nabuwal sa harap ng Central Azucarera de Tarlac matapos na walang habas na pinagbabaril ng mga pulis at militar ang mga nagwewelgang manggagawa ng Central Azucarera de Tarlac, mga magsasaka ng Hacienda Luisita at kanilang mga tagasuporta. G. Ispiker, humihiling ng makatarungang sahod, benepisyo at pagkilala sa karapatan ang mga manggagawa at manggagawang-bukid ng Hacienda Luisita subalit pinaslang sila ng pamilyang Cojuangco-Aquino at kasabwat ang noon ay administrasyon ni Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, dating Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas at ang mga PNP at AFP. Mula noon hanggang ngayon, walang katarungan, walang kapayapaan sa Hacienda Luisita at sa buong bayan.

G. Ispiker, maliban sa mga magsasakang ito, may mga taga-suporta din ang sunod-sunod na pinaslang—ang Obispo Maximo ng Iglesia Filipina Independiente na si Bishop Alberto Ramento, Tarlac City Councilor Abel Ladera, lider-magsasaka ng Tarlac na si Marcelino Beltran, Mapalacsiao Barangay Captain Ric Ramos, BAYAN MUNA Leader Flor Collantes at IFI priest, Fr. William Tadena. G. Ispiker, wala pa ring napapanagot sa mga krimen na nangyari sa Luisita. Sa katunayan, ang isa sa may responsibilidad sa Hacienda Luisita masaker, si General Noel Clement, ang siya na ngayong Punong Hepe ng Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Mula noong 2004, napakarami pang masaker ng mga magsasaka ang naganap na wala pa ring katarungan. Nakapagtala ang Tanggol Magsasaka ng 14 na masaker mula 2016 sa ilalim ng kasalukuyang administrasyon. Nariyan ang nangyari sa Sagay, Guihulngan, Canlaon, Manjuyod at Sta. Catalina sa Negros at marami pang iba. Umaabot na rin sa 239 magsasaka ang pinaslang. Kabilaan din dito ang marahas na pagbuwag sa mga welga ng mga manggagawang nakikipaglaban para sa sahod, trabaho at karapatan. Ligalig ang mamamayan at buong bansa dahil sa umiiral na *de facto* martial law sa bisa ng Executive Order No. 70 at Memorandum Order No. 32 sa Samar, Bicol at Negros at nagpapatuloy na martial law sa buong Mindanao.

G. Ispiker, ang isyu ng human rights ay isang palagi tinik sa gilid ni Pangulong Duterte. Palagi naming ididiin at iikot ang tinik na iyan para makamtan

ang hustisya. Anuman ang gawin ng administrasyon para pagtakpan ang kalagayan ng karapatang pantao sa bansa, batid ng publiko na ilang libo na ang napapaslang dahil sa pekeng anti-drug war. Ang mga politically motivated na extrajudicial killings ay nangyayari halos araw-araw at ang mas masahol pa, napakailap ng hustisya para sa mga biktima na nakaligtas sa Hacienda Luisita massacre 15 taon na matapos dumanak ng dugo sa lupain ng mga oligarko sa Hacienda Luisita sa Tarlac.

G. Ispiker, ginugunita ng mga magsasaka at manggagawa ang ika-15 taon ng Hacienda Luisita massacre nang may marubdob na hangaring mapanagot ang mga maysala sa pagdanak ng dugo sa Hacienda Luisita. Labinlimang taon matapos ang massacre, bigo ang land reform sa Hacienda Luisita at nanatiling buo ang malalaking pribadong hacienda. Ang mga lupaing ipinamahagi ay napunta din lamang sa mga korporasyon at kanilang mga dummy. Ibinenta ito ng mga farmer-beneficiaries dahil walang kalakip na financial at iba pang porma ng suportang kailangan ang naging pamamahagi ng lupa sa ilalim ng umiiral noon sa CARP Law. Sa kasalukuyan, G. Ispiker, halos anim na libong ektarya pa rin ang nananatiling hindi naipamahagi at nasa kontrol ng mga panginoong may lupang pamilyang Cojuangco-Aquino at ngayon, ang pamilyang Lorenzo ng Mindanao

Ang kasalukuyang Department of Agrarian Reform ay may pananagutan din sa patuloy na inhustisya sa Hacienda Luisita. Ang lider-magsasaka at dating Kalihim ng Agrarian Reform na si Rafael “Ka Paeng” Mariano ay sinubukang i-deliver ang hustisya sa mga magsasaka ng Luisita sa pamamagitan ng tunay na pamamahagi ng lupa sa mga magsasaka ngunit ang pagsusumikap na ito ay mabilis na pinapahinto ng mga panginoong may lupa at mga oligarko.

G. Ispiker, ayaw na nating may maganap pang masaker sa mga magsasaka dahil dinilig na ng dugo ang lupa na binubungkal at ipinaglalaman nila. Bigyan natin ng katarungan at hustisya ang mga magsasaka at manggagawa.

Maraming salamat, G. Ispiker.

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

REP. LACSON-NOEL. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of Honorable Cullamat to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. LACSON-NOEL. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Hon. Sarah Jane I. Elago of Pary-List KABATAAN for her manifestation.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pimentel). Honorable Elago is recognized.

REP. ELAGO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity. I rose here to manifest our support to our Representation from BAYAN MUNA. Doon po sa kakatapos lamang na National Student’s Day Youth Camp, isa po iyong issue ng mga magsasaka na pinag-usapan ng mga estudyante, noong kanilang mga adviser, mga student councils at campus publications kung paano pa mas malalaman iyong mga issue ng mga magsasaka. Kasama rin po sila doon sa mga nagbuo noong Rice Industry Development Act na siya pong nakapanukala na at naisumite na dito sa Kapulungan na ito. Ngayong hapon din po, kasama po natin ang mga student leaders mula po sa Northern Luzon—sa ilan sa mga lalawigan sa Northern Luzon—pati ang galing sa Cagayan Valley, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya at mayroon pa pong mga nanggaling sa senior high school from USL and Tuguegarao City Science High School upang maipabatid po sa atin ang kagustuhan ng mga bata at kabataan na mapag-aralan po itong mga issue, maipaliwanag ito sa kanilang mga kapwa estudyante at makita po kung paano ang kanilang kasalukuyang mga talino at mga pinag-aaralan, ang kanilang mga research projects, ang kanila pong mga programa sa eskuwelahan ay responsive naman po doon sa mga panukala ng Kongresong ito at iyong mga panukala din na tinatawagan ng mamamayang Pilipino na maipasa, na dinggin natin at mapag-usapan dito sa halls ng Batasang Pambansa.

Nais ko po silang batiin, ayan, nandito po sila sa likod. Maraming salamat, G. Ispiker. (*Applause*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pimentel). Your manifestation is noted. May we request the students to please stand. Welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. LACSON-NOEL. Mr. Speaker, I move that we terminate the Privilege Hour.

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

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. LACSON-NOEL. Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn the session until tomorrow, November 19,



2019—Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session for a few minutes.

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

*It was 6:19 p.m.*

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 6:22 p.m., the session was resumed.*

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

REP. LACSON-NOEL. Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn the session until tomorrow, November 19, 2019, at 3:00 p.m.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pimentel). The session is adjourned until tomorrow, November 19, 2019, at three o'clock in the afternoon.

*It was 6:22 p.m.*