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No. 35

CALL TO ORDER

At 3:00 p.m., Deputy Speaker Pablo John F. Garcia called the session to order.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). The session is called to order.

PRAYER

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). Please rise for a minute of silent prayer.

Everybody rose for the silent prayer.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

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

REP. FARIÑAS, RIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we defer the calling of the roll and the approval of the Journal of the previous session.

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

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

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

The Secretary General will please read the Reference of Business.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

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

BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 5978, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING THE TEACHING OF DISASTER AWARENESS AND DISASTER MITIGATION AS PART OF THE CURRICULUM OF ALL PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Silverio

TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5979, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING AND ACCREDITATION CENTERS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF HAGONOI IN THE FIRST LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OF BULACAN”

By Representative Sy-Alvarado

TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 5980, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING AND ACCREDITATION CENTERS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF PULILAN IN THE FIRST LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OF BULACAN”

By Representative Sy-Alvarado

TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 5981, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING AND ACCREDITATION CENTERS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BULAKAN IN THE FIRST LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OF BULACAN”

By Representative Sy-Alvarado
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 5982, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE HIGH SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS SYSTEM”

By Representative Romulo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5983, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A SCIENCE HIGH SCHOOL IN THE CITY OF ISABELA, PROVINCE OF BASILAN, TO BE KNOWN AS THE BASILAN SCIENCE HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representatives Hataman and Sangcopan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5984, entitled:

“AN ACT PROMOTING THE PHILIPPINE INDIGENOUS / TRADITIONAL WRITING SYSTEMS, THE USE OF BAYBAYIN AS A TOOL FOR CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE PHILIPPINES, PROVIDING FOR ITS PROTECTION, PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Nieto
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 5985, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING PAG-ASA ISLAND AND ITS ADJOINING ISLANDS OF PAROLA, KOTA AND PANATA IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF KALAYAAN, PROVINCE OF PALAWAN AS ECOTOURISM DESTINATIONS AND PROTECTED AREAS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Cabochan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

House Bill No. 5986, entitled:

“AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE RIGHT OF GOVERNMENT TO EXPROPRIATE LANDS FOR SOCIALIZED HOUSING AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTIONS 9, 10 AND 11 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7279, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING ACT OF 1992’ ”

By Representative Cabochan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

House Bill No. 5987, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE BENHAM RISE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (BRDC), DEFINING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Cabochan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION AND THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

House Bill No. 5988, entitled:

“AN ACT TO PROTECT AND PROMOTE THE RIGHTS OF PUBLIC UTILITY DRIVERS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Bautista
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 5990, entitled:

“AN ACT UPGRADING THE MINIMUM SALARIES OF PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS TO SALARY GRADE 15, TEACHING PERSONNEL IN HIGHER EDUCATION TO SALARY GRADE 16, AND OF NON-TEACHING PERSONNEL TO P16,000”

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

House Bill No. 5991, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE PERSONNEL ECONOMIC RELIEF ALLOWANCE GRANTED TO GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES TO FIVE THOUSAND PESOS (P5,000) AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

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

House Bill No. 5992, entitled:

“AN ACT DEFINING AND PROTECTING THE

RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF COMMUTERS
USING PUBLIC UTILITY VEHICLES”

By Representative Bautista
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 5993, entitled:
“VACCINATE ALL CHILDREN ACT OF 2020”
By Representative Cari
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 5994, entitled:
“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TECHNICAL
EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING
AND ASSESSMENT CENTER IN THE
MUNICIPALITY OF LILOY IN THE
PROVINCE OF ZAMBOANGA DEL
NORTE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR”
By Representative Amatong
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND
TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 5995, entitled:
“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MANDATORY
EVACUATION CENTER IN ALL CITIES,
PROVINCES AND MUNICIPALITIES,
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”
By Representative Abu
TO THE COMMITTEE ON DISASTER
MANAGEMENT

House Bill No. 5996, entitled:
“AN ACT FURTHER AMENDING
SECTIONS 101 (A) (1) AND SECTION
169 OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO.
612, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ‘THE
INSURANCE CODE’, AS AMENDED BY
REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10607”
By Representative Sy-Alvarado
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND
FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

House Bill No. 5997, entitled:
“AN ACT NAMING THE FIRST CEBU-
MACTAN BRIDGE TO SERGING OSMEÑA
BRIDGE”
By Representative Del Mar
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS
AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 5998, entitled:
“AN ACT APPROPRIATING THE SUM OF
THIRTY BILLION PESOS (P30,000,000,000)
AS SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS
FOR FY 2020, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Santos-Recto, Ermita-Buhain,
Abu, Collantes, Bolilia and Mariño
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

House Bill No. 5999, entitled:
“AN ACT GRANTING HAZARD PAY TO ALL
COURT SHERIFFS OF THE SUPREME
COURT OF THE PHILIPPINES AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”
By Representatives Baronda and Romualdez
(Ferdinand)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 656, entitled:
“RESOLUTION CALLING FOR AN
IMMEDIATE INVESTIGATION, IN AID
OF LEGISLATION, ON THE ALLEGED
ANOMALOUS AND ILLEGAL DELAY
OR LACK OF DISBURSEMENT OF THE
SOCIAL PENSION FUND TO SENIOR
CITIZENS”
By Representative Dato
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 657, entitled:
“RESOLUTION URGING THE DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION, COMMISSION ON
HIGHER EDUCATION, AND TECHNICAL
EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY TO IMPOSE MORATORIUM
ON TUITION AND OTHER FEE INCREASES
(TOFI) ON ALL EDUCATIONAL
INSTITUTIONS AMID CALAMITIES”
By Representative Elago
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION
AND CULTURE AND THE COMMITTEE ON
HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Resolution No. 658, entitled:
“A RESOLUTION COMMENDING KIM
‘GABBI’ VILLAFUERTE FOR WINNING
THE MOST VALUABLE PLAYER AWARD
AT THE MDL CHENGDU MAJOR FOR HIS
ROLE IN TAKING TNC PREDATOR FIRST
PLACE”
By Representative Sy-Alvarado
TO THE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH AND
SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

House Resolution No. 659, entitled:
“RESOLUTION URGING THE PHILIPPINE
PORTS AUTHORITY (PPA) TO
IMMEDIATELY DISCONTINUE THE
IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT

OF ITS ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 05-2019”

By Representative Geron
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Resolution No. 660, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION EXTENDING CONGRATULATIONS TO BOXER, JOHNRIEL ‘QUADRO ALAS’ CASIMERO FOR WINNING THE WBO BANTAMWEIGHT WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP ON DECEMBER 1, 2019”

By Representative Nieto
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GAMES AND AMUSEMENTS

House Resolution No. 661, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING DEEPEST CONDOLENCES FOR THE PASSING OF INTERNET PIONEER, ENGINEER BENJAMIN TAN, ON DECEMBER 26, 2019”

By Representative Nieto
TO THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

House Concurrent Resolution No. 6, entitled:

“CONCURRENT RESOLUTION URGING THE BANGSAMORO TRANSITION AUTHORITY TO DESIGNATE ITS REPRESENTATIVES TO THE PHILIPPINE CONGRESS-BANGSAMORO PARLIAMENT FORUM TO BE CREATED PURSUANT TO ARTICLE VI, SECTION 3 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11054, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘ORGANIC LAW FOR THE BANGSAMORO AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO’ AND TO MEET WITH THE DELEGATES DESIGNATED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE PURPOSE”

By Representative Romualdez (Ferdinand)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

Message dated January 21, 2020, informing the House of Representatives that on even date the Senate adopted Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 5, entitled:

“CONCURRENT RESOLUTION URGING THE BANGSAMORO TRANSITION AUTHORITY TO DESIGNATE ITS REPRESENTATIVES TO THE PHILIPPINE CONGRESS-BANGSAMORO PARLIAMENT FORUM TO BE CREATED

PURSUANT TO ARTICLE VI, SECTION 3 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11054, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘ORGANIC LAW FOR THE BANGSAMORO AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO’ AND TO MEET WITH THE DELEGATES DESIGNATED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE PURPOSE”

in which it requests the concurrence of the House of Representatives.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

COMMUNICATIONS

Letter dated 11 December 2019 of Aurora C. Ignacio, President and Chief Executive Officer, Social Security System, providing the House of Representatives a copy of the 2018 Report of Operation of the Social Security System (SSS).

TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ENTERPRISES AND PRIVATIZATION

Letter dated December 12, 2019 of Caesar R. Dulay, Commissioner, Bureau of Internal Revenue, submitting to the House of Representatives the Bureau’s Consolidated Monthly Report of Disbursements (FAR 4) for the month of November 2019.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Letter dated December 18, 2019 of Delfin N. Lorenzana, Secretary, Department of National Defense, submitting the Department’s report on the implementation of Martial Law in Mindanao covering the month of October 2019.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY

Letter dated 19 December 2019 of Catalino S. Cuy, Chairman, Dangerous Drugs Board, submitting to the House of Representatives the 2019 Implementation Report of the Philippine Anti-Illegal Drugs Strategy.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON DANGEROUS DRUGS

Letter dated December 19, 2019 of Michael G. Aguinaldo, Chairperson, Commission on Audit, providing the House of Representatives a copy of the Performance Audit Report (PAO-2019-01) entitled “Reforestation Remains an Urgent Concern but Fast-Tracking its Process Without Adequate Preparation and Support by and Among Stakeholders Led to Waste of Resources”.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated December 27, 2019 of Maria Gleda E. Lim, State Auditor V, Supervising Auditor, Audit Groups CGS I and II-Water Districts and Other CGS Stand Alone Agencies, Regional Office No. VI, Commission on Audit, furnishing the House of Representatives the Annual Audit Reports on the following Water Districts:

1. Anilao Water District, Anilao, Iloilo (CY 2018); and
2. Dumarao Water District, Dumarao, Capiz (CY 2008-2018).

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report of the Committee on Revision of Laws (Committee Report No. 199), re H.B. No. 5975, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING THE FOURTH THURSDAY OF NOVEMBER OF EVERY YEAR AS NATIONAL THANKSGIVING DAY”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 2512

Sponsors: Representatives Deloso-Montalla and Almario

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Higher and Technical Education and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 201), re H.B. No. 6030, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER IN THE LAGUNA LAKE DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (LLDA), MUNICIPALITY OF CALAUAN, PROVINCE OF LAGUNA, TO BE KNOWN AS THE TESDA-LLDA TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 4254

Sponsors: Representatives Mark (Go), Ungab and Aragoes

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Health and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 202), re H.B. No. 6035, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE BED CAPACITY OF THE WESTERN VISAYAS MEDICAL CENTER IN MANDURRIAO, ILOILO CITY FROM FOUR HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIVE (425) BEDS TO SEVEN

HUNDRED (700) BEDS, UPGRADING ITS PROFESSIONAL HEALTHCARE SERVICES AND FACILITIES, AUTHORIZING THE INCREASE OF ITS MEDICAL PERSONNEL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 909

Sponsors: Representatives Tan (Angelina), Baronda and Ungab

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Health and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 203), re H.B. No. 6036, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE BED CAPACITY OF THE LAS PIÑAS GENERAL HOSPITAL AND SATELLITE TRAUMA CENTER IN LAS PIÑAS CITY, METRO MANILA FROM TWO HUNDRED (200) BEDS TO FIVE HUNDRED (500) BEDS, UPGRADING ITS PROFESSIONAL HEALTHCARE SERVICES AND FACILITIES, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 3314

Sponsors: Representatives Tan (Angelina), Villar and Ungab

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

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

REP. FARIÑAS, RIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we acknowledge the presence of the guests of the honorable Minority Leader Bienvenido M. Abante Jr. We have with us the leaders of the BIBLEMODE, the Independent Baptist Missionaries Association, the Alliance of Baptist Councils, and the Bible Missionaries of the USA. We have with us Dr. Reuben Abante, Dr. Abraham Vallega, Dr. Pio Tica, Dr. Emmanuel Quizon, Dr. Mark Smith, Dr. Boanerge Andaya, Bishop Cesar Hernandez, Pastor Ed Pao, Pastor Ariel Abadiano, Pastor Arnold Arellano, Pastor Emerson Cruz, and Pastor Bert Chan. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). The guests of the honorable Minority Leader are recognized. Welcome to the House of Representatives.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

PRIVILEGE HOUR

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

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, the first to avail of the Privilege Hour is no less than the Minority Leader, Hon. Bienvenido M. Abante Jr. May we recognize the honorable Minority Leader, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). The Minority Leader, Hon. Bienvenido M. Abante Jr., is hereby recognized. (*Applause*)

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ABANTE

REP. ABANTE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to acknowledge the presence of all of the Baptist pastors and Baptist members we have. Will you please stand up? All of you, please, please stand up. (*Applause*) Thank you. Thank you very much.

In the Bible, the Aegis of our Nation and People, the prophet Isaiah declared: "The word of our God shall stand forever," and Jesus Christ himself said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" in the book of Matthew 24:35.

Former Presidents Ferdinand Marcos, Corazon Aquino and Fidel Ramos issued Proclamation Nos. 1023, 44, and 1067, respectively, declaring the last week of January as the National Bible Week. These presidential proclamations underscore the importance and relevance of the Bible in the life of our nation and of our people. In fact, in the Preamble of our Constitution, we declared: "We, as a sovereign Filipino people, imploring the aid of Almighty God, in order to build a just and humane society and establish a Government that shall embody our ideals and aspirations, promote the common good, x x x". It is only through the Bible, Mr. Speaker, that one could know who the Almighty God really is, especially His love, mercy, grace, righteousness and justice.

It is for this reason that I rise before you today in this august Chamber to speak about the Bible, prayerfully hoping that in so doing, we, especially in the government service, would find time to read, meditate upon, and put it into effect in our lives, that we could be instruments in giving true meaning to the constitutional declaration that "Public office is a public trust." And so, while every Filipino, Mr. Speaker, is guaranteed his freedom of religion and the free exercise of his religious beliefs and practices, we are one in recognizing God as the supreme authority who directs and governs the destiny of men and nations.

May I be allowed, Mr. Speaker, Your Honors, to speak on the infallibility of the Bible. The Bible declares: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of

God" in 2 Timothy 3:16. The Bible attests to its divine authorship through the following factors:

1. Its inexhaustibleness and freshness. The Bible is like a spring of water that never runs dry.

2. The unmistakable honesty of the writers. The Bible is unique in its treatment of history and biographies of men.

3. The character of its teaching. The Bible speaks only of God and gives glory to God alone.

4. The fulfilled prophecies declared in the Book of Isaiah on to the Book of Malachi; and

5. The typical significance of the Scriptures speaks of the Person and the work of Jesus Christ.

The Bible, Mr. Speaker, consists of 66 Books written by 40 different authors, covering a period of 1,500 years. These men lived in different generations, different locations and different backgrounds. Yet, no single book or part thereof contradicts one another. Therefore, the Bible in its entirety is an infallible book. Though written thousands of years ago, it is still as true today as it was when it was written, and it will still be true in the times to come. Time, environment, climate, practices, principles and standards, fashion, and everything under the sun change, but the Word of God does not because it is infallible.

The Bible covers all subjects of human endeavor. It teaches creation, science, astronomy, history and medicine, and the Bible is the true and final authority of any subject.

The Bible, Mr. Speaker, I believe, is the all-important book, from where, Jesus gave the instruction: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me," in John 5:39.

Great men, albeit imperfect and sinners, yet, had these to say about the Bible: The sixth President of the United States of America, John Quincy Adams said, and I quote, "It is an invaluable and inexhaustible mine of knowledge and virtue."

The 34th U.S. President, Dwight D. Eisenhower said, and I quote, "In the highest sense, the Bible is to us the unique repository of eternal spiritual truths."

H.G. Wells said, and I quote, "The Bible has been the book that held together the fabric of western civilization. The civilization we possess could not have come into existence and could not have been sustained without the Bible."

William Harrison said, and I quote, "The Bible is the Word of God, given by His inspiration for our use and benefit."

Daniel Webster said, and I quote, "I believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the will and the Word of God."

Mr. Speaker, the Bible is the most excellent, pure and perfect source of principles and standards of discipline and the development of moral, personal and

national relationship. The Bible molds the spiritual, moral, and social fiber of the nation and the citizenry. It is only through the Bible that there can be genuine individual and national transformation. And only through the Bible can we expect God to work among us, to renew us, and to make us what we ought to be. Therefore, we must endeavor to study and learn what the Bible says when it says, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”

The Bible, Mr. Speaker, is a complete book. The Bible is God’s love letter to man, Mr. Speaker, Your Honors.

The Bible declares in John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

It is through the pages of the Bible that one can learn who God really is, and about his love and about his mercy.

In the Book of John 15:13, it says, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

Mr. Speaker, Your Honors, for the light of everyone, the Bible assures godly success and prosperity.

In the Book of Joshua 1:8, the Bible teaches character and discipline like godliness, obedience, humility, integrity, honesty, industry. The Bible cautions us about the love of money, for the love of money is the root of all evil, according to the Apostle Paul, 1 Timothy 6:10.

The Bible warns us against lust. The Bible states rules, principles, and standards of human conduct and relationship. The Bible gives the right foundation and proper direction. The Bible is just as relevant and accurate today as it was when it was written. No intellectual advancement can ever supersede the accuracy of the Bible.

The Israelites, when they left Egypt, wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, and it is the Word of God that directed them to the Promised Land and sustained them throughout their journey.

The Bible can, as it should, also lead us in our journey as a nation and as a people. The Bible gives the right foundation and the proper direction. It changes our thinking and transforms our attitudes. Our priorities change and our focus turns heavenly, and not earthy.

The 25th US President William McKinley said, and I quote: “The more profoundly we study this wonderful book, x x x the better citizens we will become.”

Abraham Lincoln, the 16th and perhaps the greatest US President that ever lived said, and I quote: “But for this book, we could not know right from wrong. I believe that the Bible is the best gift that God has ever given to man.”

As human as he is, man is susceptible to evil without the right foundation. It is God, through his Holy Word, the Bible, who is the right foundation.

Let us realize, Mr. Speaker, Your Honors, face and address now the sad reality that the foundation of our morality and moral values continue to be shaken hard by worldly pleasure, greed and lust for wealth, power, position, influence and the flesh. How can there be good governance when graft and corruption continue to abound in almost all sectors and levels of our society?

CNN Philippines on January 23, 2020 reported, and I quote: “Corruption worsened in the Philippine government in 2019 as it ranked 113th of 180 countries studied on their perceived political integrity.”

Transparency International, a non-profit watchdog monitoring the status of global corruption in the public sector, has issued the Corruption Perception Index for 2019, showing that the Philippines dropped 14 notches from 99th in year 2018 to 113th today.

The Bible warns, “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” There is no other stronger and surer foundation than the Almighty God, and we can fully know Him through the Bible.

Leo Tolstoy, a Russian writer even said, and I quote: “Without the Bible, the education of a child in the present state of society is impossible.” In the Bible, we can learn proper obedience to the law, honor to leaders and respect to authority. 1 Peter 2:13 says, “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme,” and in 1 Peter 2:14, even governors. Titus 3:1 states: “Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey the magistrates, to be ready to every good work.”

In Romans 13:1, it is stated: “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.”

“Curse not the king,” Ecclesiastes 10:20.

In Acts 23:5, “Thou shall not speak evil of the ruler of thy people”

The Bible, Mr. Speaker, is indispensable in good governance. Despite the constitutional declarations on the promotion and protection of the “moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being” of our youth, and the mandate that all educational institutions shall strengthen ethical and spiritual values and develop moral character and personal discipline, and that religion may be “allowed to be taught x x x in public elementary and high schools,” morality, moral values, principles, and standards continue to deteriorate. Corruption, drugs, and criminality, to name a few, continue to proliferate in all segments of society and in all levels of government.

George Washington said, and I quote: “It is impossible to rightly govern the world without the Bible.”

Mr. Speaker, Your Honors, may I declare that the Bible is the best authority in politics and effective

governance. The principles and standards of a blessed nation and good leadership are laid down in its pages wherein it is declared in the Book of Proverbs, “Righteousness exalts a nation,” and “When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: But when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.”

If only the Bible is read, proclaimed, obeyed and practiced, our beloved country would be in a much better place to live in, and our government would truly be a government of honesty, righteousness and order.

Thomas Jefferson said, and I quote, “If only biblical discipline, principles and standards are taught and inculcated in the minds of our children, there would be no much problem on leadership, governance and peace and order.”

Mr. Speaker, true, in the Preamble of our Constitution we declare that we are imploring the aid of Almighty God, but I believe that such a mere declaration will lead our nation and our people to nowhere.

We have sufficient laws on graft and corruption, on plunder, on malversation of public funds. Yet, we are living witnesses to the reality in our country that corruption seems to have become ingrained in the blood, as no less than our President has echoed. Why? Perhaps because many do not know or understand, or may have never heard, what the Bible says in the following verses in Romans 13: 3: “Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil.”

In Numbers 32:23, a warning to all corrupt officials, it says, “... be sure your sin will find you out.”

I would like to quote to you, Mr. Speaker, Your Honors, what Psalms 19:7-11 says:

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold.

Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

I remember the words of the 18th US President Ulysses Grant when he said, and I quote, “The Bible is the anchor of our liberties.”

In closing, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of this august Chamber, may I encourage each one to turn to the pages of the Bible. The real hope of our nation and our people depend on it. I would like, again, to quote a

verse in the Bible that has been quoted so many times, 2 Chronicles 7:14:

If my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from Heaven, and will forgive their sins and will heal their land.

My sincere thanks to all who patiently listened, and may our nation become what God had said in Psalm 33: 12, “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.”

Maraming, maraming salamat po sa lahat. *(Applause)*

God bless the Philippines, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I also would like to tell our Congressmen that a Pastor in America, Pastor Mark Smith, has prepared to give each and every Congressman a leather-bound, with gold edges, King James Bible, like what I am holding today, to everyone. *(Applause)*

I would like to call the Majority Leader, as I would like to ceremonially give him a copy of the Bible.

Is the Majority Leader around here?

Before the rest would be given their own Bible, I would like Pastor Mark Smith to please stand up.

Give a hand to Pastor Mark Smith who painstakingly prepared and spent for this Bible. Mga Congressman, ito pong Bible na ito ay around P7,000 ang halaga, and this will be given free to all of you. *(Applause)* Kaya, ceremonially, Majority Leader, may I present this Bible to the Majority Leader, my partner in Congress. *(Applause)*

Later on, we will give Speaker Alan Peter Cayetano his copy.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). Thank you to the honorable Minority Leader.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. VILLAR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the honorable Representative Abante to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate actions.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). Is there any objection? The Chair hears none; the speech of Honorable Abante is referred to the Committee on Rules.

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

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

ROLL CALL

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

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

The Secretary General will please call the roll.

*The Secretary General called the roll, and the result is reflected in Journal No. 35, dated January 27, 2020.**

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. Mr. Speaker, the roll call shows that 221 Members responded to the call.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.) With 221 Members responding to the call, the Chair declares the presence of a quorum.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

APPROVAL OF THE JOURNALS

REP. ALONTE. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve Journal No. 33, dated January 20 and 21, and Journal No. 34, dated January 22, 2020.

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

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 5673
ON THIRD READING

REP. ALONTE. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 5673 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 5673, entitled: AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (DOH) TO SET AND APPROVE THE BED CAPACITY AND SERVICE CAPABILITY OF ALL DOH-RETAINED HOSPITALS.

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. 35, dated January 27, 2020.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 5673
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.) With 213 affirmative votes, no negative vote, and no abstention, House Bill No. 5673 is approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON HOUSE BILLS
ON THIRD READING

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I now move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill Nos. 5811, 5853 and 5854. All of these bills are for the creation of engineering offices, and I move that the Secretary General read the titles of the measures, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the titles of the measures, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on January 15, 2020, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 5811, entitled: AN ACT TRANSFERRING THE LOCATION OF THE SORSOGON SECOND DISTRICT ENGINEERING OFFICE FROM BULAN, SORSOGON TO GUBAT, SORSOGON, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9689, ENTITLED "AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE SORSOGON SECOND DISTRICT ENGINEERING OFFICE IN THE PROVINCE OF SORSOGON AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR";

House Bill No. 5853, entitled: AN ACT CREATING A DISTRICT ENGINEERING OFFICE IN THE SEVENTH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OF THE

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

PROVINCE OF CEBU, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR; and

House Bill No. 5854, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE FIRST DISTRICT ENGINEERING OFFICE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF LABO, PROVINCE OF CAMARINES NORTE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

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 measures is reflected in Journal No. 35, dated January 27, 2020.*

APPROVAL OF HOUSE BILLS ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). With 222 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill Nos. 5811, 5853 and 5854 are approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON HOUSE BILLS ON THIRD READING

REP. ALONTE. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill Nos. 5740, 5741, 5742, 5743, 5744 and 5872, direct the Secretary General to read the titles of the measures, and call the roll for nominal voting.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the titles of the measures, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on January 15, 2020, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 5740, entitled: AN ACT SEPARATING THE TABUK CITY NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – BANTAY EXTENSION IN BARANGAY BANTAY, TABUK CITY, PROVINCE OF KALINGA FROM THE TABUK CITY NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS BANTAY NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

House Bill No. 5741, entitled: AN ACT SEPARATING THE GUINZADAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – MAYAG EXTENSION IN BARANGAY MAYAG, MUNICIPALITY OF BAUKO, MOUNTAIN PROVINCE FROM THE GUINZADAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS MAYAG NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

House Bill No. 5742, entitled: AN ACT SEPARATING THE LUBON NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – MABALITE EXTENSION IN BARANGAY MABALITE, MUNICIPALITY OF TADIAN, MOUNTAIN PROVINCE FROM THE LUBON NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS MABALITE NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

House Bill No. 5743, entitled, AN ACT SEPARATING THE DALANAO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – DABBURAB - DALANAO EXTENSION IN BARANGAY BACARRI, MUNICIPALITY OF PARACELIS, MOUNTAIN PROVINCE FROM THE DALANAO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS WELLIE MACLINIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

House Bill No. 5744, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A SEPARATE SCHOOLS DIVISION OFFICE IN THE CITY OF CANLAON, PROVINCE OF NEGROS ORIENTAL, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 86 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 3445, ENTITLED “AN ACT CREATING THE CITY OF CANLAON”; and

House Bill No. 5872, entitled: AN ACT SEPARATING THE GUINA-ANG NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – MAINIT EXTENSION IN BARANGAY MAINIT, MUNICIPALITY OF BONTOC, MOUNTAIN PROVINCE FROM THE GUINA-ANG NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS MAINIT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

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 measures is reflected in Journal No. 35, dated January 27, 2020.*

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

APPROVAL OF HOUSE BILLS
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). With 227 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill Nos. 5740, 5741, 5742, 5743, 5744 and 5872 are approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON HOUSE BILLS
ON THIRD READING

REP. AGABAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill Nos. 5870 and 5871, direct the Secretary General to read the titles of the measures, and call the roll for nominal voting.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the titles of the measures, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on January 15, 2020, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 5870, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A THREE HUNDRED (300)-BED CAPACITY TERTIARY TRAINING AND GENERAL HOSPITAL IN BARANGAY MAUWAY, CITY OF MANDALUYONG TO BE KNOWN AS THE SENATE PRESIDENT NEPTALI A. GONZALES GENERAL HOSPITAL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR; and

House Bill No. 5871, entitled: AN ACT UPGRADING THE MARIA L. ELEAZAR DISTRICT HOSPITAL IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF TAGKAWAYAN, PROVINCE OF QUEZON INTO A LEVEL III GENERAL HOSPITAL TO BE KNOWN AS THE MARIAL. ELEAZAR GENERAL HOSPITAL, UNDER THE DIRECT SUPERVISION AND CONTROL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

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 measures is reflected in Journal No. 35, dated January 27, 2020.*

APPROVAL OF HOUSE BILLS
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). With 231 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill Nos. 5870 and 5871 are approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON HOUSE BILLS
ON THIRD READING

REP. AGABAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill Nos. 4773, 5017, 5153, 5277, 5420, 5519, 5881 and 5882, direct the Secretary General to read the titles of the measures, and call the roll for nominal voting.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the titles of the measures, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on January 15, 2020, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 4773, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A DISTRICT OFFICE OF THE LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BALINGASAG, MISAMIS ORIENTAL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

House Bill No. 5017, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A SATELLITE OFFICE OF THE LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE (LTO) IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ALIAGA, PROVINCE OF NUEVA ECIJA, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

House Bill No. 5153, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A REGULAR DISTRICT OFFICE OF THE LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE (LTO) IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF JAVIER, PROVINCE OF LEYTE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

House Bill No. 5277, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE (LTO) DISTRICT OFFICE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF LAOANG, PROVINCE OF NORTHERN SAMAR, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

House Bill No. 5420, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE (LTO) DISTRICT OFFICE IN

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

THE MUNICIPALITY OF SAN JOSE, IN THE LONE DISTRICT OF DINAGAT ISLANDS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

House Bill No. 5519, entitled: AN ACT CONVERTING THE MABALACAT CITY EXTENSION OFFICE OF THE LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE (LTO) LOCATED IN MABALACAT CITY, PAMPANGA INTO A REGULAR LTO DISTRICT OFFICE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

House Bill No. 5881, entitled: AN ACT CONVERTING THE SATELLITE OFFICE OF THE LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE (LTO) LOCATED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF INITAO, PROVINCE OF MISAMIS ORIENTAL INTO A REGULAR LTO DISTRICT OFFICE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR; and

House Bill No. 5882, entitled: AN ACT CONVERTING THE SATELLITE OFFICE OF THE LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE (LTO) LOCATED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF TANAY, PROVINCE OF RIZAL INTO A REGULAR LTO DISTRICT OFFICE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

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 measures is reflected in Journal No. 35, dated January 27, 2020.*

APPROVAL OF HOUSE BILLS ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). With 231 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill Nos. 4773, 5017, 5153, 5277, 5420, 5519, 5881 and 5882 are approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON HOUSE BILLS ON THIRD READING

REP. AGABAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on various bills and with that, I move that we vote on House Bill Nos. 624, 1061, 1778, 5831, 5849, 5850, 5851 and 5852, direct the Secretary General to read the titles of the said measures and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the titles of the measures, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on January 15, 2020, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 624, entitled: AN ACT RENAMING THE KALIBO-BANGA-BALETE-BATAN-ALTAVAS NATIONAL ROAD WHICH IS PART OF THE KALIBO HIGHWAY, STRETCHING FROM THE NUMANCIA-KALIBO BOUNDARY AT BARANGAY LAGUINBANUA IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF NUMANCIA, TRAVERSING BARANGAYS POBLACION, ANDAGAO, ESTANCIA, TIGAYON, AND LINABUAN NORTE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF KALIBO; BARANGAYS LINABUAN SUR, JUMARAP, MAMBOG, POBLACION, TABAYON, LIBAS, AND VENTURANZA IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BANGA; BARANGAYS FULGENCIO, FELICIANO, CALIZO, MORALES, POBLACION, CORTES, AND ARANAS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BALETE; BARANGAYS LALAB AND CABUGAO IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BATAN; BARANGAYS CABUGAO, LINAYASAN, ODIONG, POBLACION, MAN-UP, CABANGILA, UP TO THE CAPIZ-AKLAN BOUNDARY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ALTAVAS, ALL IN THE PROVINCE OF AKLAN, AS CONGRESSMAN ALLEN SALAS QUIMPO NATIONAL HIGHWAY;

House Bill No. 1061, entitled: AN ACT CONVERTING THE STA. IGNACIA-GUIMBA PROVINCIAL ROAD IN THE PROVINCES OF TARLAC AND NUEVA ECIJA VIA GERONAPURA ROAD STRETCHING FROM BARANGAY NAMBALAN, MUNICIPALITY OF STA. IGNACIA TO BARANGAY BUENAVISTA, MUNICIPALITY OF PURA, ALL IN THE PROVINCE OF TARLAC INTO A NATIONAL ROAD AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

House Bill No. 1778, entitled: AN ACT CONVERTING THE ROAD STRETCHING FROM BARANGAY ANDUYAN, MUNICIPALITY OF TUBAO, PROVINCE OF LA UNION TO BARANGAY SAN PASCUAL, MUNICIPALITY OF TUBA, PROVINCE OF BENGUET INTO A NATIONAL ROAD AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

House Bill No. 5831, entitled: AN ACT CONVERTING THE GUIMBA-PURA PROVINCIAL ROAD STRETCHING FROM BARANGAY SAN

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

RAFAEL TO BARANGAY SAN MIGUEL, BOTH IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF GUIMBA, PROVINCE OF NUEVA ECIJA, AND TO BARANGAY BUENAVISTA IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF PURA, PROVINCE OF TARLAC INTO A NATIONAL ROAD AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

House Bill No. 5849, entitled: AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NATIONAL ROAD FROM THE JUNCTION OF LANA DEL NORTE INTERIOR CIRCUMFERENTIAL ROAD AT BARANGAY POBLACION, THROUGH BARANGAY LEMONCRET, MUNICIPALITY OF MAGSAYSAY, TO BARANGAY SAN MANUEL, MUNICIPALITY OF LALA, TO BARANGAYS PANSILAN AND KATIPUNAN, MUNICIPALITY OF SAPAD, TO BARANGAYS MAHAYAHAY, BEL-IS, MALINAS, SITTIO DAO, BUTADON, BANSARVIL, AND TIPOLO, MUNICIPALITY OF KAPATAGAN, TO BARANGAY CALUBE, MUNICIPALITY OF SULTAN NAGA DIMAPORO, TO BARANGAY LANTUNGAN, MUNICIPALITY OF AURORA, ALL LOCATED IN THE PROVINCE OF LANA DEL NORTE INTO A NATIONAL ROAD TO BE KNOWN AS ILIGAN – AURORA NATIONAL HIGHWAY BYPASS ROAD AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

House Bill No. 5850, entitled: AN ACT CONVERTING THE GUIMBA-TALUGTUG-UMINGAN PROVINCIAL ROAD IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF GUIMBA AND TALUGTUG, ALL IN THE PROVINCE OF NUEVA ECIJA AND THE MUNICIPALITY OF UMINGAN, PROVINCE OF PANGASINAN INTO A NATIONAL ROAD AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

House Bill No. 5851, entitled: AN ACT CONVERTING THE ROAD NETWORK CONNECTING BARANGAY GRIJALVO IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SAN FERNANDO AND THE MUNICIPALITY OF BULA, PROVINCE OF CAMARINES SUR INTO A NATIONAL ROAD; and

House Bill No. 5852, entitled: AN ACT CONVERTING THE ALBAY DIVERSION ROAD IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF MINALABAC, BULA, AND NABUA, ALL IN THE PROVINCE OF CAMARINES SUR, INTO A NATIONAL ROAD AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

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 measures is reflected in Journal No. 35, dated January 27, 2020.*

APPROVAL OF HOUSE BILLS ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). With 231 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill Nos. 624, 1061, 1778, 5831, 5849, 5850, 5851, and 5852 are now approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON HOUSE BILLS ON THIRD READING

REP. AGABAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill Nos. 5738 and 5739. These local bills pertain to the establishment of state colleges and universities, and for this purpose, may I request that the Secretary General be directed to read the titles of the bills and thereafter call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the titles of the measures, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on January 15, 2020, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 5738, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A CAMPUS OF THE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES (PUP) IN THE CITY OF SANTA ROSA, PROVINCE OF LAGUNA, TO BE KNOWN AS THE PUP-SANTA ROSA CAMPUS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR; and

House Bill No. 5739, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A CAMPUS OF THE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES (PUP) IN CALOOCAN CITY-NORTH, TO BE KNOWN AS THE PUP-CALOOCAN CITY-NORTH CAMPUS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

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 measures is reflected in Journal No. 35, dated January 27, 2020.*

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

APPROVAL OF HOUSE BILLS
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). With 234 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill Nos. 5738 and 5739 are now approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON HOUSE BILLS
ON THIRD READING

REP. AGABAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill Nos. 5840, 5874, 5875, 5876, 5877, 5878 and 5879. All of these local bills pertain to the establishment of TESDA Centers, and for this purpose, may I request that the Secretary General be directed to read the titles of the bills and thereafter call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measures, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on January 15, 2020, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 5840, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTERS IN SAN JOSE CITY, SCIENCE CITY OF MUÑOZ AND IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF RIZAL, PROVINCE OF NUEVA ECIJA, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

House Bill No. 5874, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BAYOMBONG, PROVINCE OF NUEVA VIZCAYA, TO BE KNOWN AS THE NUEVA VIZCAYA TESDA TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

House Bill No. 5875, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF MINALABAC, PROVINCE OF CAMARINES SUR, TO BE KNOWN

AS THE MINALABAC TESDA TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

House Bill No. 5876, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SAN ANTONIO, PROVINCE OF QUEZON, TO BE KNOWN AS THE SAN ANTONIO, QUEZON TESDA TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

House Bill No. 5877, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTERS IN THE CITY OF PUERTO PRINCESA AND IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF CORON, CUYO, ROXAS, SAN VICENTE, SOFRONIO ESPAÑOLA, AND QUEZON, PROVINCE OF PALAWAN, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

House Bill No. 5878, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING CENTER FOR PIÑA HANDLOOM WEAVING IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF KALIBO, PROVINCE OF AKLAN, TO BE KNOWN AS THE KALIBO, AKLAN TESDA PIÑA HANDLOOM WEAVING TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR; and

House Bill No. 5879, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER IN SAN JOSE DEL MONTE CITY, PROVINCE OF BULACAN, TO BE KNOWN AS THE SAN JOSE DEL MONTE CITY TESDA TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

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 measures is reflected in Journal No. 35, dated January 27, 2020.*

APPROVAL OF HOUSE BILLS
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). With 234 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill Nos. 5840, 5874, 5875, 5876, 5877, 5878, and 5879 are approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we acknowledge the presence of the guests of honorable Deputy Speaker Luis Raymund “Lray” F. Villafuerte Jr. who are in the plenary. They are the Vice Governor and the Provincial Board Members of Camarines Sur, headed by Vice Governor Imelda Papin; and Board Members Angel Naval, Romulo Hernandez, James Jaucian, Nelson Julia, Manny Noble, Wilfredo Julio Oliva, Nellie Largo, Russel Pala and Jorge Bengua.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). The presence of the guests of the honorable Deputy Speaker Villafuerte is acknowledged. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

REP. PALMA. Next, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. PALMA. Likewise, Mr. Speaker, I move that we also acknowledge the presence of the guests of the honorable Minority Leader Bienvenido Abante. They are the Chairmen of the Barangays of the Sixth District, headed by Chairman Jimmy Anselmo, Chairman Evelyn Mallari, Chairman Grace Parel and Chairman Emmy Fabros.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). The presence of the guests of Honorable Abante, our Minority Leader, is acknowledged. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we immediately transmit to the Senate the bills that we have recently approved on Third Reading.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the Secretary General will transmit to the Senate the bills just approved.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, before we continue, may we move that we recognize Hon. Rogelio “Ruel” D. Pacquiao for a short manifestation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). Honorable Pacquiao is recognized for his manifestation.

MANIFESTATION OF REP. PACQUIAO (R.)

REP. PACQUIAO (R.). Mr. Speaker, my dear colleagues, sa atin pong lahat, magandang hapon po.

Today, the last Monday of January, and in accordance with Republic Act No. 11163 which was approved on December 20, 2018, we observe National Bible Day as a special working holiday throughout the Philippines. I therefore join the honorable Representative from Manila, our Minority Leader, Cong. Benny Abante, in reminding us of this solemn occasion.

Our country is the largest Christian nation in the Asia-Pacific and the fifth largest in the world. The core of Christian belief is the Bible, its Holy Book. This law recognizes its significance in the spiritual and moral values of many Filipinos and its contribution in the development of a socially responsible citizenry. This is why last Seventeenth Congress, this Representation, as principal author of the Bill in the House of Representatives, steadfastly championed the passage of this law, in conjunction with the efforts of my brother, Sen. Manny Pacquiao, in the Senate.

I thank all legislators who threw their overwhelming support back then in making this worthwhile proposal a reality. Now, I implore everyone to give meaning to this law by appreciating the Scripture and recognizing its indispensable role in the character development and morality of Filipinos. For indeed, as Psalm 33:12 tells us: “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people He chose for His inheritance.”

Again, Mr. Speaker, maraming salamat sa ating lahat.

Magandang hapon po. *(Applause)*

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move to resume the Privilege Hour.

PRIVILEGE HOUR

Continuation

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

REP. AGGABAS. Mr. Speaker, I move to recognize the Gentleman from the Third District of Bukidnon, the honorable Rep. Manuel F. Zubiri.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move to withdraw the motion to recognize Honorable Zubiri. Instead, I move to recognize Hon. Rico B. Geron of the Party-List AGAP for his privilege speech.

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

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. GERON

REP. GERON. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, my dear colleagues, magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat.

Batid ko na lahat tayo sa kasalukuyan ay kumakaharap sa napakaraming mga suliranin at dagok sa buhay, direkta man tayong naapektuhan o hindi. Mula sa banta ng Coronavirus, isang epidemyang nanganganib na kumalat sa ating lipunan sa ngayon, hanggang sa nakalulungkot na biglaang paglisan ng isang global icon na si Kobe Bryant, isang inspirasyon sa maraming mga kabataan sa buong mundo.

At siyempre, kamakailan nga ay abala tayong lahat sa trahedyang naganap sa lalawigan ng Batangas dahil sa pagsabog ng Bulkang Taal, kung saan ang Kinatawang ito ay nagmula at maituturing na isang taal na Batangueño. Atin po ngayong nasasaksihan at namamalas ang tunay na kahulugan at diwa ng pagbabayanihan kung saan kaisa ang lahat sa pagbibigay tulong, sa pakikiramay, at sa pagtukoy ng mga pamamaraan kung paano pagagaanin ang sitwasyon at kahit papaano ay maibsan ang paghihirap para sa mga biktimang Batangueño at mga taga-kalapit lalawigan na naapektuhan.

Nakatutuwang makita at nakagagaan sa aming mga dalahin sa puso at damdamin na marami at nag-uumpaw ang gustong tumulong at makibahagi sa mabigat na pasaning ito ng ating mga kababayan. Dahil dito, sa ating mahal na Pangulo President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, sa ating iginagalang na Speaker Alan Peter Cayetano, sa mga minamahal kong kapwa Mambabatas sa Mababang Kapulungang ito, sa ating mga Senador at mga opisyal ng pamahalaan, private sector, mga simbahan, NGOs, at mga cooperatives, mga volunteers, at sa lahat ng mga tumutulong, sa ngalan ng lahat ng mga Batangueño, ang aming taus-pusong pasasalamat sa inyong ipinakikitang pakikiisa at suporta. Nawa ay huwag kayong magsasawa sa pagtulong sapagkat mahaba pa ang lakbayin ng kalbaryong ito. Bagama't ibinaba na ang estado ng bulkan mula sa Alert Level 4 to Alert Level 3 na nagpapahiwatig ng unti-unting pagbalik ng ilang mga inilikas na residente sa kani-kanilang mga tahanan, hindi naman ito nangangahulugan ng tuluyang pagbalik sa normal ng buhay ng mga kababayan nating naapektuhan. Sila ay patuloy pa ring mangangailangan ng tuloy-tuloy na suporta at ayuda upang makaraos sa pang-araw-araw na buhay pagkatapos ng trahedyang

Sa aming mga Batangueño ay may nakatutuwang kasabihan, “Maubos na ang yaman, huwag laang ang yabang.” Biro man ito subalit ito ay may kalakip na katotohanan. Tunay mang naging simbolo ng

katatakutan sa kasalukuyan ang Bulkang Taal na aming itinuring na yaman ng kalikasan ng lalawigan, hindi ito naging hadlang upang maipakita ang pagkamalikhain at pagkamaparaan ng mga Batangueño sa gitna ng kawalan at paghihikahos para magpatuloy ang buhay.

Totoo na naroon pa rin ang yabang at tindig sa tigas ng isang Batangueño na hindi kababanaagan ng bigat ng pagdurusa. Kami man ay bumabagsak, ngunit hindi kailanman ay gagapang sapagkat kami ay babangon at titindig muli. Kami man ay lumuluha, pero hindi umiiyak sapagkat buong tapang naming haharapin kung anuman ang kapalaran.

Mr. Speaker, dear colleagues, patuloy po ang buhay para sa lahat. At kasabay ng pagputok ng Bulkang Taal, hindi natin namamalayan ang pagsulpot ng mga bagong isyung lubhang makakaapekto sa lahat, lalo at higit sa buhay ng ating mga kababayan sa mga isla bunsod ng Philippine Ports Authority, Administrative Order No. 5, 2019, signed by PPA General Manager Jay Daniel Santiago.

Sa ilalim ng administrative order na ito, ang lahat ng mga truck ay hindi na papayagang maisakay sa mga roll-on roll-off vehicle kung ang karga nila ay hindi babawasan mula sa dating kakayanan. Halimbawa, ang isang forward truck na dating kumakarga ng 300 bags at 50 kilos ay hindi na maaaring magkarga ng 300, bagkus ito ay papayagan na lamang sa humigit-kumulang na 70 bags at 50 kilos, at ang mga 10-wheeler trucks naman na kumakarga ng humigit-kumulang sa 550 bags at 50 kilos ay puwede na lang sa humigit-kumulang na 200 bags at 50 kilos na walang anumang kabawasan sa bayad sa pamasaha o freight. Samakatuwid, tataas ng humigit-kumulang sa 400 percent ang magiging upa sa pagtatawid ng anumang produkto sa karagatan.

Nangangahulugan ito na kung sa datihan, ang mga taga-Mindoro ay nagbabayad sa trucking ng P50 kada sako ng bigas upang ito ay itawid sa Batangas at ipagbili, ngayon ito ay aabot na sa humigit-kumulang P200 kada sako. Ganoon din ang mangyayari sa lahat ng produkto na dadalhin sa mga isla na isasakay sa mga Ro-Ro. Magmamahal din ang presyo ng mga inputs ng ating mga magsasaka sapagka't walang ibang gagawin ang mga suppliers kung hindi ang ipatong sa presyo ng produkto ang kung anumang gastos na kaniyang gugugulin sa pagde-deliver ng mga ito.

Mr. Speaker, dear colleagues, ang sitwasyong ito ang tunay na magpapalubha sa lugmok na sitwasyong ng ating mga magsasaka. Hindi pa man nakakabawi ang ating mga magsasaka sa mga isla sa suliraning dulot ng rice tariffication, sa African swine fever sa mga alagang baboy, sa pinsalang dulot ng bagyo at pagputok ng bulkan, isa na namang suliranin ito na kanilang papasanin, hindi lamang sa pagdadagdag sa gastusin, ganoon din sa pagdadagdag sa mga bilang ng mga sasakyang kakailanganin sapagkat kung binabawasan ang kapasidad ng humigit-kumulang sa 75 percent,

mangangahulugan ito ng 400 percent na karagdagang sasakyan.

Ang shipping cost natin sa Pilipinas ay isa sa pinakamataas sa rehiyon. Batay sa ating sariling karanasan, mas mura pa ang shipping cost ng mag-angkat mula sa ASEAN countries kumpara sa magdala ng produkto mula sa Mindanao papunta sa Batangas. Nasubukan nating mag-angkat mula sa bansang Thailand at ang shipping cost ay P1.00 to P1.30 per kilogram. Samantala, ang shipping cost from Mindanao to Batangas ay umaabot ng P1.50 to P1.80 per kilogram. Ang pangyayaring ito ang lalong maglalagay sa ating agrikultura at sa mga magsasaka upang lalong hindi maging competitive kahit sa lokal na pamilihan.

Kaya ang aming panawagan ay ibasura ng Philippine Ports Authority ang Administrative Order No. 05-2019, sapagkat hindi ito makatutulong sa ating ekonomiya at hanapbuhay ng mga magsasaka, lalo na sa mga isla.

Sa ating kapwa Mambabatas, lalo na iyong mga mula sa mga island provinces, pagtulung-tulongan natin itong bantayan at pagtagumpayan sapagkat ito ay tunay na makasasama sa ating mga kababayan at sa inyong mga kalalawigan at nasasakupan.

Marami pong salamat at magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat. (*Applause*)

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

REP. AGABAS. Mr. Speaker, may we refer the speech of Hon. Rico B. Geron to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. AGABAS. The next to avail of the Privilege Hour is the honorable Rep. Manuel F. Zubiri from the Third District of Bukidnon. I now move for the recognition of the Hon. Manuel Zubiri to avail of the Privilege Hour, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). The Hon. Manuel F. Zubiri is recognized for his privilege speech.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ZUBIRI

REP. ZUBIRI. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, my esteemed colleagues and our special guests in the plenary today. Magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat.

I am here today to urge our agencies and the executive departments to create a very important unit

for all our barangays nationwide. This would be for the creation of the Barangay Quick Response Units or BQRUs. Ito po ang magiging first responders natin kapag nagkaroon ng mga kalamidad sa hinaharap. Iyong ating mga BQRUs ay bibigyan ng sapat na suporta sa kanilang training at bibigyan din ng mga nararapat na kagamitan para sa mga kalamidad na nararanasan natin taon-taon. The training and equipment will be specific to the needs of the barangay or the area which they reside in.

To cite examples, my dear Speaker, iyon pong sa Taal Volcano, nahihirapan. Maski na mask, nahihirapan po tayo para magbigay sa ating mga kabarangay. Ito pong mga BQRUs ay mayroon na po sila. Kung magki-create tayo ng BQRUs o Barangay Quick Response Units, they will have the needed equipment and the needed tools to be able to help our people.

In the case, for example, of typhoon or storm surge areas like Leyte, Tacloban, etcetera, the BQRUs will be there to help and they will have the proper training and the proper equipment to help our people.

Dito po sa Davao area, Davao del Sur, sa Bukidnon po, sa mga earthquake areas natin, they will have the proper equipment and the know-how to be the first responders in helping our people.

Mr. Speaker, most of all, the BQRUs or the Barangay Quick Response Units should be ready for any eventuality or disasters. First aid training and quick physical trauma response is a must for all volunteers. Dapat sapat ang kanilang training para sa lahat ng kailangan ng mga kabarangay natin. Sila ang mag-augment sa mga LGU response teams na hindi agad-agad mapuntahan ang mga area dahil sa layo o hirap ng dinaraan, Mr. Speaker.

Para po hindi masyadong magastos sa gobyerno, ang mga BQRUs ay puwedeng ilagay sa isang kwarto o sa isang area sa loob ng barangay building. Kung may budget po iyong barangay o iyong munisipyo ay puwedeng magtayo po ng sariling maliit na building o opisina.

Mr. Speaker, in the end o sa huli po, kung laging handa ay hindi po tayo kawawa.

In the end, it is our choice, to be ready or not! Which would you rather be? In the thick of things, it is better to be equipped and trained than to be ill-equipped and untrained. From a quote, "There is no harm in hoping for the best as long as you are prepared for the worst!"

Hindi na po ako magtatagal, mga kapatid. Ang payo ko lang po sa ating mahal na bayan, dapat po tayong maging parang Boy Scouts. Laging handa at laging handang tumulong!

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mabuhay po tayong lahat!

Mahal kita, Pilipinas!

Salamat. (*Applause*)

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

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

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the speech of the Honorable Zubiri is referred to the Committee on Rules.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ALONTE. Mr. Speaker, next to avail of the Privilege Hour, may I move that we recognize Rep. Presley C. De Jesus of Party-List PHILRECA for his privilege speech, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). Honorable De Jesus is hereby recognized for his privilege speech.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. DE JESUS

REP. DE JESUS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My esteemed colleagues, beloved guests, a pleasant afternoon to all of you.

Mr. Speaker, I stand before you in this august Chamber to raise an issue affecting the disposition of services or lack thereof, of an agency very crucial to the economic development of our country. Allow me please to explain the experiences of our member-electric cooperatives in requesting for an approval of simple terms of reference for the conduct of Competitive Selection Process or CSP for Power Supply Procurement.

As early as August of this year, Palawan Electric Cooperative Inc., also known as PALECO, and Isabela I Electric Cooperative Inc., also known as ISELCO I, submitted their terms of reference for approval of the National Electrification Administration or NEA and the Department of Energy or DOE. These terms of reference are for the procurement of a 20 MW (Megawatt) Mainland Palawan Power Supply and 5 megawatt renewable energy supply for PALECO and ISELCO I, respectively.

Two to three weeks later, a joint NEA-DOE review of these terms of reference was completed, and as a result of the discussions, the revised TOR were submitted to NEA. Per records from the Regulatory Affairs Office of NEA, the revised TOR were endorsed to the Department of Energy last October 14 and 15 for ISELCO I and PALECO, respectively.

Dito po, Mr. Speaker at iginagalang na mga kapwa ko Mambabatas nangagaling ang problema na gusto kong idulog at ipakita sa bulwagang ito.

The DOE has guidelines on how to proceed with the CSP or Competitive Selection Process. The current procedure is as follows:

1. The electric cooperative submits the proposed TOR to NEA for evaluation;
2. NEA endorses the same to the DOE for review;
3. The conduct of the joint NEA and DOE meeting is scheduled to discuss the terms of reference;
4. The electric cooperatives finalize the TOR based on joint review results;
5. The electric cooperatives resubmit the same to NEA for review;
6. The NEA submits the TOR to the Department of Energy for approval;
7. After approval of the DOE, the TOR is endorsed back to the NEA;
8. The NEA issues a notice to proceed publication of competitive selection process.

Both electric cooperatives have submitted their terms of reference or TOR as early as August 2019, but up to now, five months after their initial submission, five months, Mr. Speaker, the National Electrification Administration cannot issue a notice to proceed because their endorsement has not been acted upon by the Department of Energy. In vernacular, nakatengga po ang CSP nila o ang TOR.

Sa aking pagkakaalam, Mr. Speaker, nagawana ng National Electrification Administration ang ganang kailangan niyang gawin as far as the process of approving the terms of reference is concerned.

This Representation has been informed that the electric cooperatives have made follow-ups already. The most recent one is through the electric cooperative's umbrella organization, PHILRECA or the Philippine Rural Electric Cooperative Association, two months ago. But as of now, we found out that there was still no movement or development on the approval of these requests.

After making some calls and due diligence, this Representation found out that the documents are currently with the Office of the Secretary of Energy for review. Such deviation was what had been causing the delay of this CSP. The guidelines above were supposed to facilitate the conduct of the competitive selection process, but what is happening is contrary to the ideal procedure, as well as to the law. Mr. Speaker, we did not even receive any reply on the follow-up letter we made two months ago.

Mr. Speaker, this may sound like a simple parochial concern. But just to clarify, this is about the agency's failure to render its service according to its mandate, as well as according to the requirement of the law. For all we know, this might be a systemic problem with the agency or hopefully, just an isolated case.

Republic Act No. 11032 or the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery

Act of 2018 was signed into law last May 2018, and was made effective in June of last year. The creation of this law is expected to reduce the number of complaints on delayed government transactions by cutting down on bureaucratic red tape and eliminating corrupt practices, thereby reducing processing time of any requested transactions.

Mr. Speaker, in Section 9 (b) of the aforementioned Republic Act, it states:

All applications or requests submitted shall be acted upon by the assigned officer or employee within the prescribed processing time stated in the Citizen's Charter which shall not be longer than three (3) working days in the case of simple transactions and seven (7) working days in the case of complex transactions from the date the request and/or complete application or request was received.

For applications or requests involving activities which pose danger to public health, public safety, public morals, public policy and highly technical application, the prescribed processing time shall in no case be longer than twenty (20) working days or as determined by the government agency or instrumentality concerned, whichever is shorter.

So, whether the delay in the case of PALECO and ISELCO I is an isolated or systemic case, R.A. No. 11032 is very clear in the prescribed time of any agency to process its request.

Mr. Speaker, granting that the TOR application is not just a "simple" or "complex" transaction, still, the prescribed time of less than 20 days has not been met by the agency. In fact, it has been almost five months, Mr. Speaker, since the original submission of the electric cooperatives, and yet, the transaction is not yet fully completed.

We are inviting investors and entrepreneurs to invest in the Philippines, Mr. Speaker, but if this is the kind of service that we are going to offer them, it will not only hinder our effort to get more investments, but also compromise the efficiency of operations of basic utilities in the country. In the end, it would be the end users who will suffer the most.

If this is an indication of how the Office of the Secretary of the Department of Energy acts on concerns and applications being submitted to it, then the effect, at the bare minimum, is for some electric cooperatives to have power outages due to lack of power supply and noncompliance to the required renewable portfolio standards. Well, it will keep on the 2020 of this year.

Mr. Speaker, RA 11032 has created the Ease of Doing Business/Anti-Red Tape Advisory Council composed of the DTI Secretary as Chair and the Anti-Red Tape Authority or ARTA Director-General as

Vice-Chair, with the Secretaries of the DOF, DICT, and DILG plus two representatives from the private sector as members. By means of this privilege speech, Mr. Speaker, this Representation would like to request this Advisory Council to look into similar cases and make their recommendations because I assure you, the two cases I have mentioned are not the only ones that are being processed with such delays. And for that matter, Mr. Speaker, it may not just be the Department of Energy who is noncompliant to the provisions of the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018.

I fervently hope that the concerned government agencies will upgrade and enhance their services as required by law. And if they cannot, then, the concerned authority should investigate and conduct due diligence.

Mr. Speaker, my esteemed colleagues, if the case of the two electric cooperatives in this privilege speech will be resolved after this, it does not take away the fact that there was noncompliance in the provisions of the law, and that, I hope, Mr. Speaker, is sufficient for the appropriate agencies to make an appropriate action so that such delays will not happen again.

Let me reiterate: This is not about the two electric cooperatives cited by this Representation. This is about agencies adhering to the requirements of the law, specifically, Republic Act No. 11032 or Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018. This is one of the landmark legislations of the Duterte administration, as part of his 10-Point Socioeconomic Agenda. Let us not put this legislation to waste.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and my esteemed colleagues, for the opportunity to be heard on this issue.

Magandang hapon po sa ating lahat. (*Applause*)

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

REP. VILLAR. Mr. Speaker, I move that the speech of the honorable Rep. Presley C. De Jesus of the Party-List PHILRECA be referred to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the speech is referred to the Committee on Rules.

REP. VILLAR. Mr. Speaker, I now move that the Lady from the BAYAN MUNA Party-List, Rep. Eufemia "Ka Femia" C. Cullamat, be recognized to avail of the Privilege Hour.

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

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. CULLAMAT

REP. CULLAMAT. Maraming salamat po, G. Ispiker.

G. Ispiker at sa mga kapwa kong Mambabatas, magandang hapon po sa ating lahat.

G. Ispiker, bilang isang Manobong Kinatawan ng BAYAN MUNA, mahigpit kong kinokondena ang naganap noong Sabado, Enero 25, 2020, na pag-atake ng mga paramilitar na mga Alamara na sapilitang pumasok at nagbanta sa buhay at seguridad ng mahigit 500 Lumad na nagbakwit at nakatira ngayon sa United Church of Christ in the Philippines o UCCP, Haran Compound sa Davao City.

G. Ispiker, sampung araw mula noong naglabas ng resolusyon ang Region XI Regional Peace and Order Council ng order upang ipasara ang UCCP Haran kung saan nakasantuwaryo ang mga kapatid nating Lumad na mahigit limang taon nang dito naninirahan nang ginawa ang pag-atakeng ito. G. Ispiker, ang UCCP Haran ay isang pribadong pagmamay-ari ng simbahang United Church of Christ in the Philippines. Ang pag-atake ay isang resulta ng mga panunulsol at red-tagging ng National Task Force–End Local Communist Armed Conflict o NTF–ELCAC na matagal nang nanawagan ng pagpasara ng Haran sanctuary. Ito ay hindi makatarungan, ilegal at sulsol na nagresulta sa bastos na pagwawalang-bahala ng mga paramilitar na Alamara sa mga ligal na proseso.

G. Ispiker, ang pag-atake ng mga Alamara sa UCCP Haran ay sa pamamagitan ng sapilitang pagpasok. Nakarating sa inyong lingkod na ni-ransack at sinira ng mga Alamara ang library, clinic at ang secretariat office. Sinunog din nila ang mga damit at ninakaw ang mga pagkain ng mga bakwit sa kanilang mga kubo. Ito ay isang kasuklam-suklam na pag-atake ng mga Alamara sa mga Lumad sa UCCP Haran.

G. Ispiker, dagdag pa rito, mayroong presensya ng mga pulis sa labas ng UCCP Haran, pero wala silang ginawa kung hindi tumayo at harangan ang harap at labas ng compound. Hindi rin nila agad pinapasok ang Bishop ng UCCP Haran at mga miyembro ng media.

G. Ispiker, mula noong 1990s, ang UCCP Haran ay kilala na naging sangktuwaryo ng mga Lumad sa Davao dahil sa illegal logging at militarisasyon sa aming mga komunidad. Noong 2014, daan-daang mga Lumad ang bumalik sa UCCP Haran at naging sangktuwaryo nila ulit ito, habang ang mga militar at mga tauhan nilang paramilitary ay walang humpay na minimilitarisa ang aming mga komunidad, pinapatay ang aming hanay at sinusunog ang aming mga bahay at sinira ang aming mga pang-kabuhayan.

Simula noon, ang UCCP Haran ay nagsilbing sangktuwaryo ng mga Lumad at pansamantalang naging tirahan ito ng mga Talaingod Manobo na nangangarap ng isang kapayapaan, hindi giyera o militarisasyon ang hangad.

G. Ispiker, ang pagsira ng mga paramilitary sa Haran ay nagpapakita na ang lokal na pamahalaan ng Region XI ay walang kakayahang tumindig sa sarili upang protektahan ang kagalingan ng mamamayan, ng simbahan at lalo pa, ng mga katutubo. Wala na nga silang naitutulong, ito pa ang ginagawa nila. Dinadahas na ang mga katutubo sa kanilang mga komunidad, hanggang sa sangktuwaryo ng Haran, ito pa rin ang ginagawa. Saan ngayon pupunta ang 500 na nasa naturang sangktuwaryo?

G. Ispiker, ang pag-atakeng ito sa Haran ay patunay na kahit lifted na ang martial law sa Mindanao, nagpapatuloy pa rin ang pandarahas sa mga katutubo sa pangunguna ng Regional National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict. Uulitin ko, ang mga sibilyang tulad naming mga Lumad at ang mga magsasaka ang inyong pinapaslang, dinadahas, sinasampahan ng gawa-gawang kaso, at tinataniman ng kung anu-anong mga ebidensiya. Wala kaming armas. Tanging pagtatanggol namin sa lupang ninuno at ang aming karapatan sa sariling pagpapasya ang aming dinepensahan at ipinaglalaman.

Mga kapwa ko Mambabatas, mariin kong kinokondena ang walang puso at hindi makataong hakbanging ito laban sa amin na mga katutubong Pilipino. Hinihikayat ko kayong maging kaisa ng mga Lumad at gawin ang kaparehong kondemnasyon sa paglabag sa aming karapatang pantao.

G. Ispiker, ang aming panawagan sa aming karapatan sa sariling pagpapasya ay karapatan din sa sariling pagpapasya ng buong mamamayang Pilipino, na kailangan nating ipagtanggol ang ating pambansang sobereniya.

Salamat po, G. Ispiker. Muli, magandang hapon sa ating lahat.

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

REP. VILLAR. Mr. Speaker, I move that the speech of the honorable Rep. Ka Femia Cullamat be referred to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the speech of the Honorable Cullamat is referred to the Committee on Rules.

REP. VILLAR. Mr. Speaker, I now move that the Lady from KABATAAN Party-List, Rep. Sarah Jane I. Elago, be recognized to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). Hon. Sarah Jane Elago is recognized for her privilege speech.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ELAGO

REP. ELAGO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Following the call of this Youth Representative to stop all tuition and other school fee increases in educational institutions amid calamities, I now rise on a matter concerning the present state of academic freedom and institutional autonomy worldwide.

First, Mr. Speaker, let me start by sharing the context in which the first-ever declaration on academic freedom and autonomy of institutions of higher education—the Lima Declaration—was formulated and approved in the World University Service Assembly in 1988.

This landmark document, Mr. Speaker, was borne out of the rise in the alarming tendency to undermine, restrict or suppress academic freedom and autonomy of institutions of higher education. The most alarming effect of this has been the increasing violation of human rights of teachers, students, researchers and educational writers irrespective of socio-political systems throughout the world.

The idea of this declaration sprung out of the realization that although there were extensive international instruments and guidance in the field of human rights in general, namely: we have the UDHR, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, but there was a lack of it in the field of higher education which covered academic freedom and autonomy.

This is a cause of concern for this Youth Representation because, essentially, academic freedom is a human right that is of special importance to the higher education sector. It is not the privilege of a small elite. It is derived from the right to education and relates to the right to freedom of thought and freedom of opinion and expression.

Then, how is academic freedom related to autonomy of education and learning institutions? “Autonomy,” as defined in the Lima Declaration, is the institutional form of academic freedom. It is a necessary precondition for higher education institutions to fulfill their proper functions. They must be protected from undue pressures from the State and from business interests. Hence, this declaration became the starting point for more understanding, more discussion and more action towards defending academic freedom and autonomy of institutions of higher education.

In fact, this has paved the way to the formulation and adoption of various international instruments such as:

- The 1997 UNESCO Recommendation Promoting Academic Freedom, which formed the basis of the definition of academic freedom we use today by Member States, which is:

the right, without constriction by prescribed doctrine, to freedom of teaching and discussion, freedom in carrying out research and disseminating and publishing the results thereof, freedom to express freely their opinion about the institution or system in which they work, freedom from institutional censorship and freedom to participate in professional or representative academic bodies.

- Then came the 1999 General Comment No. 13 of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
- Followed by the institution of the 2014 Principles of State Responsibility to Protect Higher Education from Attack.

We have also the 2015 Resolution 29-7 on the Right to Education, adopted by the UN Human Rights Council at its 42nd meeting, which has put in place a regulatory framework guided by international human rights obligations for education providers that establish minimum norms and standards for the creation and operation of educational institutions.

Just recently, Mr. Speaker, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the recommendation of defense of academic freedom in the EU’s external action. It is now 2020 and 32 years since the Lima Declaration, what is the current state of the academic freedom in institutional autonomy?

The Scholars-At-Risk or SAR, an international network of institutions and individuals whose mission is to protect scholars and promote academic freedom, provides us an overview of the matter. The SAR has an annual publication titled, “Free to Think,” which documents the alarming rate of attacks on the higher education sector and serves as a call to action. It draws on data from the SAR’s Academic Freedom Monitoring Project to identify trends related to violent attacks on higher education communities, including a series of deadly bombings targeting scholars and students in Afghanistan; wrongful imprisonments and prosecutions of scholars, particularly in Turkey and Sudan; pressures on student expression involving more than 100 documented incidents around the world; and restrictions on academic travel, deployed most prominently by authorities in the US, Israel and China.

In India, authorities detained hundreds of scholars during a protest against allegedly insufficient and irregularly disbursed research stipends.

In Turkey, two academics calling for peace were detained.

In Brazil, students are protesting against budget cuts and calling for increase in funding for higher education also suffered from campus raids and threats to the autonomy of their democratically elected and governed student institutions.

From September 2018 up to August 2019, 97 killings, violence and disappearances were reported, 87 imprisonment, 70 prosecution, 22 loss of positions, 11 travel restrictions and 37 other reported attacks on higher education which include lethal dispersal of protests, among others.

We must note, however, that these figures reflect only a small sample of attacks on higher education that occurred over the past year. Nevertheless, it suggests a distressing, global phenomenon of attacks requiring a robust, global response from all who value academic freedom and quality higher education.

In the Philippines, although empowered students and schools are recognized as vehicles of positive development in their communities, they are also being singled out because of their ability to ferret out the truth, analyze various societal issues, and criticize certain policies of the present regime; their dissent is criminalized. Teachers are being profiled by the police as they are accused of indoctrination and brainwashing students. Student unions, councils, publication and organizations are likewise profiled, vilified in social media and then falsely accused of fabricated charges of child abuse, kidnapping, trafficking, and recruitment into armed rebel groups. There is also a systematic effort to institutionalize student and faculty profiling, and to legitimize increased police and military presence in schools, even though this is already banned in various national and international legislation, through Committee Report No. 10 which is based on totally sensationalized lies. The said report also recommends a deradicalization program of students, and a security intervention into academic curricula which are clearly violation of academic freedom.

This contrived context of fear and disinformation is being used and now exploited to criminalize dissent, and suppress critical voices through proposed legislation that would further legalize measures that threaten the very essence of academic freedom and institutional autonomy.

We must heed the calls to investigate and stop these attempts to trample fundamental freedoms in campuses, and defend academic freedom and uphold the autonomy of our institutions of learning.

What else can we do to defend academic freedom? Recognizing our obligations and the widespread attacks on domestic and cross-border higher education, we urge our fellow Members of Congress to join the Global Coalition to Protect Education in calling States to:

First and foremost, to demonstrate public support for these principles and for higher education that is safe and free from intimidation, including communicating support to their higher education sector, including institutions, staff and students; and to encourage other States to support the principles domestically and in appropriate inter-State relations.

Second, to review national policies and laws, in close cooperation with their higher education institutions and staff, and with due respect for the values essential to quality higher education, including and most especially, institutional autonomy, academic freedom and social responsibility, to ensure that higher education communities are physically secure, and free from intimidation and improper external influence.

Third, to take all reasonable measures to assist victims and deter future attacks by conducting prompt, thorough and transparent investigations and holding perpetrators accountable in proceedings consistent with internationally recognized standards.

This Youth Representation, likewise, strongly urges our fellow public servants, youth, students and teacher-formators to organize public seminars and campaigns promoting and defending academic freedom and autonomy of institutions of higher education. Violations of human rights in institutions of learning must also be reported, and legislative measures defending the principles of academic freedom as a civil liberty, and combining autonomy with social accountability, such as bills on strengthening media and information literacy must also be supported.

I end this speech, Mr. Speaker, with a quote to reiterate the value of education and academic freedom from Supreme Court Associate Justice Marvic Leonen:

Institutions of learning perform a basic function in nurturing and sharpening the people's understanding and intellect. They ensure an educated and thriving citizenry on whom a nation's civilization and life depend. Education leads to an economically productive populace through learned skills. More importantly, it leads the people to think more prudently and critically.

G. Ispiker, nais din po nating maiparating ang ating pakikiisa sa Representante ng BAYAN MUNA, si Kinatawan Femia Cullamat, na nananawagan ng imbestigasyon sa nangyaring panghihimasok sa UCCP Haran, kung saan halos 200 din po ang mga bata at kabataan ang nagpapatuloy ng kanilang pag-aaral diyan. Hinding-hindi ko po makakalimutan ang kanilang ibinahagi sa akin noong minsan ako ay makabisita sa kanila at makita mismo kung paano nila ipinapagpatuloy ang kanilang pag-aaral sa loob ng grounds ng UCCP Haran. Ang sinabi diyan ng mga estudyante, ang edukasyon para sa kanila ay hindi lamang tungkol sa pag-alam ng pagbasa o ng pagsusulat, kundi ang edukasyon ay ang kanilang sandata upang hindi sila maloko at upang kanilang maipagtanggol at patuloy na madepensahan ang kanilang mga lupang ninuno.

Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker. Maraming salamat po at mabuhay ang lahat ng kabataan na patuloy na nagtatanggol sa kalayaang pang-akademiko.

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

REP. VILLAR. Mr. Speaker, I move that the speech of the distinguished Representative from KABATAAN Party-List, Hon. Sarah Jane Elago, be referred to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the speech of the Honorable Elago is referred to the Committee on Rules.

REP. VILLAR. Mr. Speaker, I now move that the Gentleman from the Third District of Pampanga, the honorable Deputy Speaker Aurelio “Dong” D. Gonzales Jr., be recognized to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). Deputy Speaker Aurelio “Dong” D. Gonzales Jr. is recognized for his privilege speech.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. GONZALES (A.)

REP. GONZALES (A.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Mr. Speaker, I stand here in front of you because of my experience with the Mt. Pinatubo eruption, and today, with the Taal Volcano eruption.

Mr. Speaker, fellow Members of this honorable Chamber, officers of this House, members of the Secretariat, legislative staff, guests, ladies and gentlemen, and everyone. Today, I stand before this honorable Chamber to express an urgent legislative concern affecting not only a particular local government unit but also the nation as a whole.

Noon pong nakaraang January 12, 2020, nasaksihan po ng buong sambayanang Pilipino, partikular po sa katimugang bahagi ng Luzon, ang pagputok at pag-alburoto ng Bulkang Taal na kung saan, nabalot po ng abo ang mga probinsiya ng Batangas, Cavite, Laguna at ang mga karatig bayan o probinsiya. Pati na po ang Metro Manila ay hindi nakaiwas sa peligrong hatid ng pagputok ng Taal Volcano.

The eruption prompted the displacement of at least 500,000 people within the surrounding area of Taal, forcing them to stay at evacuation sites. Authorities

imposed total lockdown or prohibited zones on municipalities within the 14-kilometer radius of the Taal Volcano. It impeded business activities and transactions in nearby cities and municipalities including Tagaytay, which is one of the most visited tourist destination. Pati po Metro Manila, nagkaroon po tayo ng metro-wide suspension of classes, work in government offices at pati po ang private entities, nag-suspend din po ng pasok due to volcanic upsurge.

Even NAIA and Clark International Airport were forced to abort or cancel flight operations because of the upsurge of Taal Volcano.

At the time it erupted, Taal Volcano was immediately placed by Phivolcs on Alert Level 3 and then Alert Level 4, prompting imminent and hazardous eruption that could happen anytime.

Isa po ang Taal Volcano sa mga aktibong bulkan sa ating bansa. Bagama’t bago po ang pagsabog nito, kamakailan lang po ay naitala po ang huling pagputok ng Bulkang Taal noong 1977. Itinuturing pa rin po na isa sa mga “World’s Deadliest Volcano” ang Bulkang Taal sa kasaysayan ng Pilipinas.

We are all witnesses of how resilient Batangueños are in times of catastrophic events. From bayanihan efforts to promote the welfare of each and every Batangueño, to selfless endeavor by every Filipino to provide donations that will alleviate and lessen the impact of the unfortunate event, these truly reflect our societal values. Also, earnest efforts and immediate response coming from Filipinos in different parts of the Philippines, even overseas, are expeditious, making an overflow of relief goods, clothing and basic necessities for evacuees coming from different local government units, private sector, and foreign humanitarian aids.

Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2020, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte urged us to ensure funds for the Supplemental Budget to provide for the much-needed aid for those affected by the Taal Volcano eruption. This was befittingly seconded and endorsed by House Majority Leader Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez, our Majority Leader, and put emphasis to give the highest priority for the approval of the Supplemental Budget to augment the government Calamity Fund and the agencies’ Quick Response Funds in helping our kababayans to get back on their feet and regain their normal lives.

Salamat po, Mr. Speaker Alan Peter “Compañero” S. Cayetano for this augmentation for our kababayans.

Mr. Speaker, even though there is an overflowing of ayuda to our kababayans, and the timely release of Calamity Funds from the government, we still need a more efficient and coordinated quick-response body to manage disaster-related operations up to the rehabilitation of devastated areas as the above-mentioned responses are only quick fixes and momentarily solutions.

Mr. Speaker, my dear colleagues, we need a common vision, a collective vision and workable plan for our disaster management goal. We need to provide responsive, distinct, coordinated and clear rehabilitation plan from risk-assessment down to reintegration assistance and actual rehabilitation.

Gusto ko lang pong ibahagi dito ang isa sa mga batas na aking naiakda dulot ng aking karanasan at kagustuhan po na manumbalik ang sigla at progreso ng isang bayan, sa lalawigan ng Pampanga na isa sa mga lubhang nasalanta at napinsala sa pagputok ng Bulkang Pinatubo noong taong 1991.

With this, your Honor, during my stint as neophyte lawmaker in 2007, I authored House Bill No. 1624, otherwise known as the Bacolor Special Rehabilitation Fund Bill, which subsequently became Republic Act No. 9506, entitled: AN ACT CREATING THE BACOLOR REHABILITATION COUNCIL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR. Masuwerte po tayo ngayon sa pagputok ng Taal dahil mayroon kaagad na P30 bilyon na inilaan ng ating Pangulo para sa pagrehabilitasyon at quick-fix solution sa lalawigan ng Batangas. This was signed into law by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo on September 28, 2008, which specifically mandated the establishment of Bacolor Rehabilitation Council, requiring a comprehensive rehabilitation and a master plan for the municipality of Bacolor, province of Pampanga during that time. Through the participation of the U.P. Planning and Development Research Foundation Inc., we were able to craft and develop the Bacolor Comprehensive Rehabilitation Master Plan which is the backbone of the now progressive and accelerating municipality of Bacolor.

During that time, my dear colleagues, Mr. Speaker, I gave P500,000 to the U.P. PLANADES to study and conceptualize the master plan of the whole town and the whole province.

Ito po ang layunin ng aking panukalang rehabilitasyong plano. Una, kung halimbawa, magkakaroon tayo ng isang batas sa Taal, ito po ang aking suggestion lang sa mga aking kapwa-Kongresista sa Batangas, anim po iyan, headed by Deputy Speaker Vilma Santos-Recto at ang ating mga ibang kasama pa:

1. The Physical and Socio-Economic Rehabilitation;
2. The Rational Growth through attraction of investors; and
3. The Economic Interventions through government efforts.

Mr. Speaker, gusto ko pong maging isang modelo o benchmark itong rehabilitasyon na ito na naisakatuparan ng lalawigan ng Pampanga para sa mga bayan na lubhang nasalanta ng pagputok ng Bulkang Taal sa katimugang bahagi ng ating bansa. Ang layunin ko po

at ang layunin ng rehabilitasyong ito ay isang plano para gabayan at maibigay ang mabisang alituntunin sa pagbangon ng bayang ito, so that funds allocated for their rehabilitation will not be put into wastage and dissipation.

With the useful and relevant technical know-how and knowledge I gained from the passing of Republic Act No. 9506, I plan to assist in crafting bills that will strengthen the disaster management system and eventually provide a comprehensive and detailed rehabilitation framework for heavily damaged communities in an orderly, methodical, programmed and inter-agency manner.

I am confident that through our shared efforts, communal vision and proactive attitude, we will be able to develop a consensus towards relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction of devastated communities.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I enjoin my fellow Congressmen to be proactive in strengthening of our disaster management plan which is a central component of our future development policy.

Mr. Speaker, alam ninyo po, noong pumutok iyong Pinatubo, ang tinamaan po niyan ay ang Region III—Zambales, Bataan, Pampanga, parts of Nueva Ecija, Tarlac and Bulacan. Saan po nagpunta iyong mga tao? Kung alam ninyo iyong Jose Abad Santos Avenue, naputol po iyong bridge doon during that time.

On June 15, 1991, pumutok iyong Pinatubo, puro po ashfall po iyan. Madilim ang rehiyon at ang Metro Manila nasama rin sa dilim because of ashfall. Pangalawa, on October 1, 1991, dumagundong po, dumating po iyong pinakamalaking lahar na tinabunan ang bayan ng Bacolor at part of San Fernando, parts of Magalang, Tarlac, Floridablanca and Porac. So, kumbaga po, lahat po ay tinamaan, pero ang pinakasentro ng tinamaan po dito ay ang Bacolor. That is why, I filed a bill para humanap ng pondo kasi kung local government lang po ang aasahan natin dito, they only have 20 percent as development funds at naisip ko pong mag-file ng isang batas para magkaroon ng isang pondo para lamang dito sa pagbalangkas at sa pagbalik ng aming mahal na bayan ng Bacolor na tinamaan ng Mount Pinatubo.

Ngayon po, during that time, nag-form po kami ng Mt. Pinatubo Commission. Ngayon po siguro, sa Taal, they can also form a Taal Volcano Commission. Iyon po ang magli-lead, magtatayo tayo ng isang parang Mt. Pinatubo Emergency Project Management Office, o MPE-PMO ang tawag namin noon, sila sa Region IV-A and Region IV-B, kung ano ang puwede nilang itawag, headed ng isang Undersecretary ng Department of Public Works and Highways, which will compose infrastructures.

Number two, sa Regional Council, ang Chairman po rian ay ang NEDA. Ang NEDA kasi, iyan ang tatawag sa mga agency gaya ng Department of Public Works and

Highways, Department of Agriculture, Department of Education, Department of Health, lahat po iyan. Lahat ng mga ahensiya, i-involve po natin iyan para matahak natin kung papaano natin gagamitin iyong P30 billion quick fix. If I may say quick fix, ano ang problema ngayon? Hindi pa po natin puwedeng gawin iyong mga apektado ng eruption ng Taal. Hindi pa po natin alam kung safe na ba iyan. Ang unang tanong diyan, dapat tanungin natin si Usec Solidum: “Hanggang kailan puputok iyan?”

Kasi po ang Mount Pinatubo, pumutok noong June 15, 1991, hindi po tumigil iyan. Kapag umuulan, may magfo-flow na lava at lahar, at iyon hindi po safe iyon. Kaya kung gagawin na natin iyan, hindi pa po kayo safe niyan. So, number one, tanungin natin ang Phivolcs kung safe na bang gawin iyan.

Ang unang-unang gagawin ngayon sa quick fix na sinasabi ko is to look for a resettlement area para iyong mga affected families, huwag nating dalhin sa mga eskuwelahan, huwag nating dalhin sa mga bahay ng iba. We will look for a property na tatawagin nating resettlement areas for the affected families of the Taal Volcano residents. Iyon po, ang bubuo ay si Governor Mandanas po siguro, ang ating mahal na Gobernador, masipag na gobernador, na kasama ko noong Wednesday, na siguro may pera naman po iyong gobyerno, titingin po tayo ng resettlement area. Iyong resettlement area is composed of number one, housing projects; number two, school buildings; number three, public market; number four, land development of the resettlement area; and number five, kailangan po mayroon tayong livelihood project sa mga nasalanta ng Taal Volcano.

Kung tatanungin ninyo po ako ngayon, palagay ko ang puwede kong isagot, “Puwede na bang gawin iyong tinamaan ng Taal?” Palagay ko po, hindi pa natin puwedeng gawin ngayon iyan kasi masyado pang bago, ilang linggo pa lang ang nakakalipas, hindi pa natin puwedeng gawin iyan in terms of infrastructure, in terms of agriculture, hindi pa po tayo puwedeng bumalik.

Ang tanong, iyong mga pamilya, gusto nila. Kahit tinatamaan sila ng lahar, hindi sila aalis sa bahay nila kasi mahal nila iyong bahay nila. Hindi po puwede iyon. Kailangang i-force po nating umalis doon, kasi masuwerte po ang bayan, ang probinsiya ng Batangas at nearby provinces, wala pong nasawi, walang namatay. Noong kami po, hindi mo po mabilang iyong mga buhay na nawala, pamilya na nawala, sa aming experience, kaya nagpapasalamat po ako sa Diyos, tayo pong lahat magpasalamat na, at least, masuwerte pa rin tayo, na walang namatay na kababayan noong pagputok ng Bulkang Taal.

So, iyon po ang puwede kong i-share, Mr. Speaker.

Puwede po akong sumali. I cannot be the principal author pero kailangan po, siguro po, iyong anim na mga Kongresista na mga taga-Batangas, puwede po silang mag-file ng isang House bill na kung saan i-involve natin dito iyong inter-agency body headed by NEDA. Ang gawin nating chairman ang local government, iyon po ang gobernador ng lalawigan, at nandito po ako, puwede po akong mag-coauthor at tumulong.

Ngayon po, ibinabalita ko po sa inyo, iyong aking batas, kasalukuyang ginagawa, nagkataon lang po siguro this budget hindi nabigyan, siguro medyo rush na rin, pero kakausapin ko rin si Speaker. Sinabi ko na rin sa kaniya na sana maituloy iyong pagbalik ng Bacolor Rehabilitation Fund sa aming probinsiya.

So, sa inyo pong lahat, sana po nakabigay ako ng bahagi ng karanasan ko sa pagputok ng Mt. Pinatubo. At ngayong pumutok iyong Bulkang Taal, sana po nakapag-share ako nang maayos at kung ano pa po iyong puwedeng itulong ko, sa aking experience, and definitely, Batangas will bounce back—Laguna, Cavite, at iyong distrito ni Congresswoman Collantes. Wala pong puwedeng magtulung-tulong dito kung hindi tayong mga Pilipino.

Maraming salamat at magandang gabi po sa inyong lahat.

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

REP. FARIÑAS, RIA. Mr. Speaker, I move to refer the speech of the honorable Deputy Speaker Aurelio “Dong” D. Gonzales Jr. to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

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

The speech of Deputy Speaker Gonzales is referred to the Committee on Rules.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. FARIÑAS, RIA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the session for a few minutes.

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

It was 5:59 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 6:00 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

REP. FARIÑAS, RIA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the Privilege Hour.

adjourn the session until tomorrow, January 28, 2020, at three o'clock in the afternoon.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the session is adjourned until tomorrow, January 28, 2020, at three o'clock in the afternoon.

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

REP. FARIÑAS, RIA. Mr. Speaker, I move to

It was 6:00 p.m.