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No. 36

CALL TO ORDER

At 3:00 p.m., Deputy Speaker Michael L. Romero, PhD called the session to order.

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

PRAYER

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

Everybody rose for the silent prayer.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

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

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

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I also move that we defer the approval of the Journal.

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

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

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Romero). 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

Upon direction of the Chair, the Secretary General read the following House Bills on First Reading, Message from the President, Communications and Committee Report which were referred to the appropriate Committees hereunder indicated:

BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 6000, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING ULOT RIVER IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF PARANAS, PROVINCE OF SAMAR AN ECOTOURISM SITE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Tan (Sharee)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

House Bill No. 6001, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING LULUGAYAN FALLS ANDECOVILLAGE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF CALBIGA, PROVINCE OF SAMAR AN ECOTOURISM SITE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Tan (Sharee)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

House Bill No. 6002, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING ALL GRADUATING ELEMENTARY, HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STUDENTS TO PLANT AT LEAST TEN (10) TREE SAPLINGS EACH AS A PREREQUISITE FOR GRADUATION”

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

House Bill No. 6003, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING THE INCLUSION OF ANTI-CORRUPTION AND GOVERNANCE EDUCATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Villanueva (Eduardo) and Rivera

TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 6004, entitled:

“AN ACT STRENGTHENING ACCESS TO CREDIT OF MICRO, SMALL, AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6977, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘MAGNA CARTA FOR MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES’ AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Villanueva (Eduardo) and Rivera

TO THE COMMITTEE ON MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

House Bill No. 6005, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE CREATION OF PHILIPPINE EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVE AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Villanueva (Eduardo) and Rivera

TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

House Bill No. 6006, entitled:

“AN ACT ENHANCING THE SAFETY OF PEDESTRIANS, FURTHER AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 4136, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS LAND TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC CODE AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Villanueva (Eduardo) and Rivera

TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 6007, entitled:

“AN ACT PENALIZING THE UNJUSTIFIED INTERRUPTION OF SERVICE PROVIDED BY DISTRIBUTION UTILITIES AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND BROADCASTING ENTITIES”

By Representatives Villanueva (Eduardo) and Rivera
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND INDUSTRY

House Bill No. 6008, entitled:

“AN ACT RECOGNIZING ALTERNATIVE MODES OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, PROVIDING REGULATIONS GOVERNING THEIR OPERATIONS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Villanueva (Eduardo) and Rivera

TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 6009, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 972, AS AMENDED BY PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 1174, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘COAL MINING DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 1976’ AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Villanueva (Eduardo) and Rivera

TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

House Bill No. 6010, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIALYSIS CLINICS IN ALL NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND PROVINCIAL HOSPITALS AND PROVIDING FOR FREE DIALYSIS TREATMENTS TO INDIGENT PATIENTS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representatives Villanueva (Eduardo) and Rivera

TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 6011, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING A STANDARD OF CARE FOR THE TREATMENT OF PERSONS WITH BLEEDING DISORDERS, ESTABLISHING TREATMENT CENTERS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representatives Villanueva (Eduardo) and Rivera

TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 6012, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING PROOF OF AVAILABLE PARKING SPACE FROM MOTOR VEHICLE OWNERS IN METROPOLITAN AREAS AS A PREREQUISITE FOR THE REGISTRATION OF A MOTOR VEHICLE WITH THE LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE (LTO), AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 4136, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘LAND TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC CODE’ AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

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

House Bill No. 6013, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE CENTER FOR DIABETES AND ENDOCRINOLOGY AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

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

House Bill No. 6014, entitled:

“AN ACT RATIONALIZING GOVERNMENT INTERVENTIONS IN LABOR DISPUTES BY ADOPTING THE ESSENTIAL SERVICES CRITERIA IN THE EXERCISE OF THE ASSUMPTION OR CERTIFICATION POWER OF THE SECRETARY OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT, AND DECRIMINALIZING VIOLATIONS THEREOF, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE ARTICLES 278[263], 279[264] AND 287[272] OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE 442, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LABOR CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES, AS AMENDED AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

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

House Bill No. 6015, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING SECTION 16 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7610, AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9231, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE SPECIAL PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AGAINST CHILD ABUSE, EXPLOITATION AND DISCRIMINATION ACT”

By Representatives Villanueva (Eduardo) and Rivera
TO THE COMMITTEE ON WELFARE OF CHILDREN

House Bill No. 6016, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING CAMPUS HOUSING TO TENURED FACULTY MEMBERS IN STATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Villanueva (Eduardo) and Rivera
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 6017, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING THE PROVISION OF INFANT-FRIENDLY FACILITIES IN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND OTHER ESTABLISHMENTS”

By Representatives Villanueva (Eduardo) and Rivera
TO THE COMMITTEE ON WELFARE OF CHILDREN

House Bill No. 6018, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAM AND PROVIDING JOB OPPORTUNITIES TO INMATES IN DETENTION FACILITIES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

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

House Bill No. 6019, entitled:

“AN ACT LOWERING THE OPTIONAL RETIREMENT AGE OF PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS FROM SIXTY (60) YEARS OLD TO FIFTY-FIVE (55) YEARS OLD, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 13-A OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8291 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE SYSTEM ACT OF 1997”

By Representatives Villanueva (Eduardo) and Rivera
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ENTERPRISES AND PRIVATIZATION

House Bill No. 6020, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE MAXIMIZATION OF BENEFITS FROM FINITE MINERALS AND MINERAL PRODUCTS AND QUARRY RESOURCES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

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

House Bill No. 6021, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A PERMANENT APPOINTMENT TO ALL CASUAL AND CONTRACTUAL EMPLOYEES OF THE GOVERNMENT WHO HAVE RENDERED THE PRESCRIBED YEARS OF SERVICE AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Villanueva (Eduardo) and Rivera
TO THE COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL REGULATION

House Bill No. 6022, entitled:

“AN ACT ENSURING SAFE DRINKING WATER, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 856, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE CODE ON SANITATION OF THE PHILIPPINES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

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

House Bill No. 6023, entitled:

“AN ACT FURTHER STRENGTHENING WORKERS’ RIGHT TO SELF-ORGANIZATION, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE ARTICLES 240[234] (C), 242[235], 243[236], 244[237] AND 285[270] OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 442, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LABOR CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

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

House Bill No. 6024, entitled:

“AN ACT PROHIBITING DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF AGE, SEX, CIVIL STATUS, COLOR, ECONOMIC STATUS, ETHNICITY, MEDICAL CONDITION, PHYSICAL DISABILITY, POLITICAL OPINION OR AFFILIATION, RACE, OR RELIGIOUS BELIEF, PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

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

House Bill No. 6025, entitled:

“AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS OF MEMBERS OF THE RESERVE FORCE OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Villanueva (Eduardo) and Rivera
TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY

House Bill No. 6026, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING SECTION 55 OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 881, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE OMNIBUS ELECTION CODE, AS AMENDED, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Villanueva (Eduardo) and Rivera
TO THE COMMITTEE ON SUFFRAGE AND ELECTORAL REFORMS

House Bill No. 6027, entitled:

“AN ACT PROTECTING UNATTENDED CHILDREN IN MOTOR VEHICLES”

By Representatives Villanueva (Eduardo) and Rivera
TO THE COMMITTEE ON WELFARE OF CHILDREN

House Bill No. 6028, entitled:

“AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE BARANGAY DAY CARE SYSTEM, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6972 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE BARANGAY-LEVEL TOTAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN ACT AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Villanueva (Eduardo) and Rivera
TO THE COMMITTEE ON WELFARE OF CHILDREN

House Bill No. 6029, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING ALL FOREIGN NATIONALS WHO INTEND TO WORK IN THE PHILIPPINES TO PRESENT AN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT PRIOR TO THE ISSUANCE OF NON-IMMIGRANT VISA OR TEMPORARY ADMISSION TO THE PHILIPPINES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE COMMONWEALTH ACT NO. 613, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE PHILIPPINE IMMIGRATION ACT OF 1940”

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

House Bill No. 6031, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE INSTITUTE OF SPORTS, DEFINING ITS POWERS, FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Hernandez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH AND
SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

House Bill No. 6032, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING THE PLACEMENT OF
DEFIBRILLATORS IN PUBLIC SPACES”

By Representative Hernandez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 6033, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MANDATORY
EVACUATION CENTER IN ALL CITIES,
PROVINCES AND MUNICIPALITIES,
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Hernandez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON DISASTER
MANAGEMENT

House Bill No. 6034, entitled:

“THE REVISED CHARTER OF THE
GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE
SYSTEM”

By Representative Rodriguez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
ENTERPRISES AND PRIVATIZATION

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

MALACAÑAN PALACE
Manila

January 22, 2020

THE HONORABLE SPEAKER
and Members of the House of Representatives
House of Representatives
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

Ladies and Gentlemen:

In accordance with my firm commitment to uplift the lives of the Filipino people, I hereby sign into law Republic Act (RA) No. 11467, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING SECTIONS 109, 141, 142, 143, 144, 147, 152, 263, 263-A, 265, AND 288-A, AND ADDING A NEW SECTION 290-A TO REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8424, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AT THE NATIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1997, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.”

The passage of the bill increasing the excise taxes on alcohol, heated tobacco and vapor products, and expanding the coverage of value-added tax-exempt sales and importation of medicines, is a welcome development in the

government’s efforts to protect the public’s health from the ill effect of sin products, and in ensuring equitable access and affordable healthcare services to every Filipino through the additional revenues for the implementation of Republic Act No. 11223, otherwise known as the Universal Health Care (UHC) Act.

However, I am constrained to veto Section 5 of the measure, which amends the second paragraph of Section 152 of the National Internal Revenue Code (NIRC) as this unduly curtails the search and seizure powers of the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR). The phrase “upon order of the court” unnecessarily requires the BIR, in the exercise of its mandate to examine, search, and seize under Section 171 of the NIRC, as amended, to secure an order from the court before its officers may be allowed to enter any house, building, or place where tobacco, heated tobacco, and vapor products are produced or kept, or are believed to be produced or kept. Such restriction does not exist with respect to any other taxable article.

Under Section 27(2) of Article VI in the 1987 Constitution, the President may veto particular items in an appropriation, revenue, or tariff bill, but the veto shall not affect the item or items to which he does not object. This power covers items of appropriation, revenue, tariff, as well as inappropriate provisions in the measure. As such, I hereby register the item veto of Section 5 of the measure which was intended to further amend Section 152 of the NIRC, as it effectively curtails the power of the State to collect taxes, and renders powerless the BIR to effectively implement enforcement mechanisms against illicit tobacco products.

I commend the wisdom of Congress in acknowledging the unregulated manufacture, proliferation, distribution and use of heated tobacco products and vapor products in the country, and accordingly establishing a framework for the regulation thereof by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Given such framework, and considering that the Implementing Rules and Regulations mentioned in the bill will be limited to a revenue measure that will be issued by the Secretary of Finance upon the recommendation of the BIR, the members of Congress may be pleased to note that I am instructing the FDA to formulate the intended regulatory framework, and the relevant agencies to immediately operationalize the same upon issuance.

I am confident that the multi-tiered effect of this law as a cost-effective health measure to reduce smoking and alcohol consumption among Filipinos support the UHC Act. Coupled with its positive impact in improving domestic resource mobilization, this measure will significantly reinforce and advance this

administration’s commitment to provide a better quality of life for every Filipino.

I VETO.

Very truly yours,

(Sgd.) RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE
PRESIDENT

Copy furnished:

Sen. Vicente C. Sotto III
Senate President
The Philippine Senate
Pasay City

Sec. Adelino B. Sitoy
Head
Presidential Legislative Liaison Office
2/F New Executive Building
Malacañang, Manila

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES
COMMUNICATIONS

Letters dated 7 and 14 January 2020 of Janice G. Ayson-Zales, Deputy Director, Office of the General Counsel and Legal Services, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), furnishing the House of Representatives with duly certified and authenticated BSP issuances, to wit:

1. Circular Letter No. CL-2020-001 dated 2 January 2020; and
 2. Circular No. 1071 dated 08 January 2020
- TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

Letter dated 9 January 2020 of Maria Anthonette Velasco-Allones, CESO I, Executive Director, Career Executive Service Board (CESB), submitting their BAR No. 1 – Quarterly Physical Report of Operation as of 31 December 2019.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL REGULATION

Letter dated January 22, 2020 of Salvador C. Medialdea, Executive Secretary, Office of the President, transmitting two (2) original copies of Republic Act No. 11467 which was signed by President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, together with his line-veto message entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING SECTIONS 109, 141, 142, 143, 144, 147, 152, 263, 263-A, 265, AND 288-A, AND ADDING A NEW SECTION 290-A TO REPUBLIC ACT

NO. 8424, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE NATIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1997, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

TO THE ARCHIVES

COMMITTEE REPORT

Report of the Committee on Women and Gender Equality (Committee Report No. 204), re H.B. No. 6078, entitled:

“AN ACT ENSURING THE FUNDAMENTAL EQUALITY OF MEN AND WOMEN UNDER THE LAWS ON MARRIAGE AND FAMILY RELATIONS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE ARTICLES 14, 96, 124, 211, AND 225 OF EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 209, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘FAMILY CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES’ ”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bills Numbered 111, 866, 1142, 1148, 3396 and 4113

Sponsors: Representatives Acosta-Alba, Fortun, Aglipay, Brosas and Villarica
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

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

REP. VILLAR. Mr. Speaker, we would like to acknowledge the presence of the guests of our honorable Deputy Speaker Michael L. Romero, PhD, our presiding officer. His guests in the plenary today are Ms. Pamela Sofia Lapid, Ms. Aida Garcia, Ms. Lilibeth Romero and Ms. Viveca Lagman-Bautista.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Romero). May my guests rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives, my mother, Ms. Lilibeth Romero. *(Applause)*

Thank you.
The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. VILLAR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session for a few minutes.

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

It was 3:13 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:24 p.m., the session was resumed with Deputy Speaker Johnny Ty Pimentel presiding.

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

REP. VILLAR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Lady from the Fourth District of Quezon, Hon. Angelina “Helen” D.L. Tan, MD to be recognized on a question of privilege.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pimentel). Majority Leader and the Chairperson of the Committee on Health, what is the nature of the question of privilege?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). This is a matter regarding coronavirus.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pimentel). Please proceed.

QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE OF REP. TAN (A.D.L.)

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Good afternoon.

I rise on a matter of personal and collective privilege, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Members of this august Chamber regarding the country’s preparedness for global health emergencies, especially in light of the emergence of the deadly coronavirus that, per the latest count or report, had already killed at least 81 people in China with almost 2,800 or 2,798, to be exact, confirmed ill. Per data of the Department of Health, the global risk is so far moderate, with the Western Pacific Region placed on a high risk and, of course, China having a very high risk of coronavirus. However, latest reports revealed that the World Health Organization already admitted an error in its assessment and placed the global risk at a high instead of on a moderate level.

Nasaan po ba talaga ang Pilipinas sa gitna ng pagkalat ng sakit na ito? Sa kasalukuyan, habang mainit nating pinag-uusapan ang coronavirus, wala pang naitatala na kumpirmadong nahawaan ng sakit na ito sa ating bansa. This is something that we need to be thankful for because Thailand and USA have five confirmed cases as we speak; Australia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and South Korea have four cases; France has three; Vietnam has two; and, Canada and Nepal have one. These are confirmed cases. Sa Pilipinas po ay wala pa at bagamat mayroon pong mino-monitor na mga kaso ang Department of Health, nag-umpisa ito sa 11 at bumaba na nga sa anim, wala pa sa mga iniimbestigahan na ito ang kumpirmado na mayroong novel coronavirus (nCoV) kaya wala pong dapat ikabahala ang publiko sa kasalukuyan, ngunit hindi rin ito dahilan para hindi tayo patuloy na maghanda kung sakaling makapasok ang sakit na ito sa ating bansa.

I think the DOH or the Department of Health has

taken the necessary proactive steps to stop the entry of novel coronavirus in the country like the establishment of the nCoV Task Force. It has also taken the initiative to heighten border screening through thermal scanning and the health declaration checklist. For sick passengers, the Department of Health has utilized decision tables to evaluate these individuals as well as triaging at the arrival areas. It is also regularly releasing a daily update on its surveillance of the virus. Si Secretary Duque po ay patuloy na nakikipag-ugnayan sa kaniyang mga counterparts sa World Health Organization patungkol po sa mga mabisang paraan upang pigilan ang sakit na ito.

While the government is trying everything to spare the Filipinos from this virus, I am calling upon the public to remain calm and responsible amidst this global threat. Sa lahat po ng ating mga kababayan, huwag tayong mag-panic at magpakalat ng mga maling balita o fake news tungkol sa novel coronavirus dahil dito nanggagaling ang takot ng ating mga kababayan. Makinig lamang po tayo sa mga kinauukulan, partikular po sa Department of Health at World Health Organization dahil sila ang nakakaalam ng tamang impormasyon. Pangalawa, hindi lamang dahil may novel coronavirus ngayon pero dapat po ay lagi tayong malinis sa katawan. Maghugas lagi ng kamay at umiwas na agad sa mga taong may sintomas ng ubo at sipon. Kung may ubo man ay dapat tayong lumayo at magtakip ng bibig at ilong sa tuwing uubo o kaya ay babahing. Proper coughing etiquette must be observed at all times.

The Department of Health also advises the public to consume enough water, walong basong tubig na malinis araw-araw, at lutuing maigi ang pagkain. Kung may sintomas ng ubo at sipon ay pumunta na po agad sila sa duktur. Huwag mag-self medicate, lalo na kung may lagnat, ubo o ibang respiratory symptoms tulad ng hinihinal o nahihirapang huminga dahil iyan po ay mga posibleng sintomas ng coronavirus. As we speak, neither a vaccine was developed to fight this virus nor is a specific treatment available kaya puwede po itong makuha mula sa taong infected ng coronavirus; at dahil ito ay mula sa malaking pamilya ng viruses na nagdudulot ng respiratory illnesses tulad ng pangkaraniwang sipon at ang mas seryosong impeksiyon katulad ng MERS-CoV at SARS coronavirus, ay may posibilidad na manggaling rin ito sa hayop. In fact, ang nCoV ay nanggaling po sa hayop at puwede pong makahawa sa tao or between humans.

While no less than the WHO is saying that the coronavirus is not yet a public health emergency of international concern, there is a possibility that it may yet become one if the death toll and confirmed cases continue to rise. As of yesterday, the WHO risk assessment of China is very high; at the regional level, it is high and the global level is high also. An emergency committee that was convened in Geneva to

advise the WHO on a virus outbreak was, as a matter of fact, divided on whether to issue the recommendation to declare coronavirus as a public health emergency of international concern.

At this point, Your Honors, Mr. Speaker, it bears asking if the government is ready, the Department of Health in particular, just in case the coronavirus is declared a public health emergency of international concern. This is particularly important in light of a report at the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board or GPMB, an independent body that assesses how ready we are for the worldwide emergency, that once again, humankind is tumbling towards the 21st century equivalent of the 1980 influenza pandemic which affected one-third of the world's population and killed approximately 50 million people. In specific terms, it is essential to know the risk of local transmission of the virus. We need to know if the Department of Health is prepared and not just prepared, but fully prepared if ever cases of the novel coronavirus are reported in the country, that our protocols are in place. Do we have the guidelines or infrastructure to accommodate the patient, or do we have the wherewithal to address the eventuality?

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of the Committee on Health, there is a lot to ask and we need the specifics regarding the coronavirus, and this means that the House, in the exercise of its legislative power and oversight functions, is perforce to call the Secretary of Health to appear before this very Chamber in order to shed light on this pressing health concern. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that in so doing, we will be able to protect and promote the health of the people and instill health consciousness among them.

Mr. Speaker, it is my hope, as I am sure it is also the hope of everyone in this Chamber, that we will win as one against coronavirus. We win as one, as the official slogan for last year's SEA Games also applies to us as a nation today. Our success in stopping the novel coronavirus at the borders of our archipelago is the success of every Filipino. Magtutungan po tayong labanan ang sakit na ito.

Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker.

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

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

REP. ATIENZA. Thank you.

With the kind indulgence of the Lady Member of Congress, this Representation would like to ask some questions from her to clarify the issues she had brought forth here today in this Congress.

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Iyon po bang kabibigkas lang ninyo ay ang inyong pananaw na nakaugat sa inyong detalye na hawak tungkol dito sa nababalitang—dahil kung minsan tinatawag ito na pandemic, at iyong iba naman—nakakatakot—ay nagsasabing malapit na raw maging epidemic. Iyon po bang mga tinuran ninyo ay angkop o mayroong basehan sa katotohanan?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Thank you for the question, Mr. Speaker, yes po. Ang atin pong nabanggit katulad po noong risk assessment ay nanggaling po doon sa World Health Organization at doon po naitala iyong level like, for example po, ang level po sa China, ito ay very high. Ang regional level, itinala na po na high-risk at ang para sa global, mataas din po.

REP. ATIENZA. Kapuna-puna, Mr. Speaker, ang balita na lumalabas tungkol dito sa isyu ng sakit na ito na kumakalat sa buong mundo at umabot na rito sa atin, but it is a fact na wala pa tayong kaso rito. Mayroon ba kayong isang kaso na masasabing iyon ay galing sa coronavirus?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Tama po, Mr. Speaker, na sa pangkasalukuyan po ay wala pong naitala. As I had said earlier po in my speech, wala pa pong na-confirm mula doon sa tests ng Department of Health na nagpositibo na kaso ng coronavirus.

REP. ATIENZA. Wala pa tayong kaso rito ni isa man lang? May kasabihan, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." Kapag patuloy ang ating pag-uusap tungkol dito, patuloy ang headline stories, patuloy ang mga warning, ang paggamit ng maskara, iyong sabihing "huwag kayong gagawa nito o huwag kayong pupunta roon"—ang mga iyan po ay pananakot e, iyan ay nakakatakot. Lahat ngayon, nakikita natin, ay nakamaskara na ang mga Pilipino—malaking negosyo po iyan dahil ang mahal-mahal na ng maskara. Ngayon, may lumalabas na balita na magkakaroon ng bakuna—bakuna na naman na tiyak sasakmalin ng lahat ng tao sapagkat takot na takot na sila. E bakit tayo natatakot e ni isang kaso ay wala? Kaya ang sa akin po naman, the mere fact that you are taking the issue on the floor of Congress, I hope you have one case to point out because, otherwise, we are all participating in the hysterics of the world, especially in Asia and now locally in the country.

Ako, hindi po ako nababagabag sapagkat kailangang sigurado tayong may problema bago tayo manawagan sa lahat na gumawa nito o gumawa noon at kung hindi, ay nagbibigay tayo ng takot na wala namang dahilan. For all we know, this is one big commercial hyperbole to promote material or financial gain for some people. Until and when can medical science declare this is a problem, ang sakit na ito ay, sa palagay ko po, hindi natin dapat pansinin muna. Pabayaang natin ang Department of Health na gumawa ng aksiyon dahil sila, ang trabaho nila ay makinig, umaksiyon, humanap ng paraan kung mayroong panganib at iligtas ang tao, ang mga Pilipino. Kung hindi po sila makakakita ng anuman, ako ay nababahala na pag-uusapan pa natin sa Kongreso ito at kung hindi ay kagat na kagat tayo kung ito nga ay isang pakana. We are all swallowing everything that is being dished out when the truth and in fact—as you stand there and I stand here—if I ask you, ano ba talaga ang symptoms ng coronavirus?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Salamat po doon sa unang nasabi ninyo na pananaw po ninyo. Ang katotohanan po, iyong coronavirus ay concern nating lahat globally. Hindi po natin gusto na makapasok siya dito sa ating bansa at iyon ang measures na ginagawa, I think, ng iba't ibang ahensiya ng gobyerno para ma-prevent natin ito. Naniniwala tayo na prevention is better than cure, so, ayaw po nating hintayin na pumasok ito dahil ang coronavirus is a deadly virus, nakakamatay ito katulad sa naitala po na mga kaso doon sa China, at ganoon din, hindi natin alam kung ano ba talaga ang behavior ng virus na ito.

Up to now, ongoing po ang pag-aaral ng ating scientists, experts and researchers around the world para talagang tingnan ito. Ang mahirap po sa coronavirus, ang symptoms nito ay katulad ng symptoms ng ordinary common colds like sipon, ubo, lagnat, at iyong iba ay nahihirapang huminga o kinakapos ng paghinga. So, mahirap po, Mr. Speaker, ma-identify ito doon sa lahat ng symptoms of other viruses na identified na ng ating scientists.

REP. ATIENZA. Bilang isang Mambabatas, at kayo bilang isang doktora, hindi po ba dapat, kung wala rin po naman kayong kasiguruhan, ay mag-iingat tayo sa ating mga sinasabi, lalu't lalo na dinadala natin ang usapin ngayon sa Kongreso ng Pilipinas, dahil baka naman lahat ng may sipon, lahat ng may lagnat, lahat ng may trangkaso—iyan po ay libo-libo—sila ay mataranta. Ano ang gagawin natin? Mayroon po ba kayong maipapayo?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Okay. Mr. Speaker, that is the reason mayroon pong guidelines kung kailan dapat sasabihan na “ikaw, you are at risk.” Sa pangkasalukuyan po, ang Department of Health and ang World Health

Organization ay nagtala kung papaano—halimbawa po, ikaw ay sinisipon, inuubo, nilalagnat, mayroon tayong suspect, probable and confirmed case. Kung suspect ka, mayroon kang isa-satisfy na isa doon sa criteria—ikaw ba ay mayroong exposure or may history ng travel in China, or nagkaroon ka ba ng close contact with anyone na nanggaling po sa China? So, mayroon din pong mga basehan at iyan naman po ay naka-cascade sa ating health workers at sa mga health facilities. Iyong nga po, ang gusto nating ibigay sa ating mga kababayan ay iyong kahandaan, na alam na nila na dapat ito ay pagdudahan dahil posible na ito ay coronavirus.

REP. ATIENZA. Gaya nga po ng sinabi namin, Mr. Speaker, marahil ngayon as we speak and exchange views, there could be 10,000, a hundred thousand Filipinos with ordinary colds, with cough, mayroong sinusitis, may lagnat, e lahat sila ay matataranta pero wala naman tayong ino-offer na kasiguruhan. Ano ang diperensiya—and it is not enough to say similar—ng trangkaso at noong mayroong coronavirus?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Mr. Speaker, actually, pareho.

REP. ATIENZA. Mayroon po ba kayong alam doon?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Pareho po sila. Masasabi lang po natin na ito ay coronavirus kung mag-undergo siya po, iyong pasyente, ng specific test para masasabi na positibo siya sa coronavirus. Iba ang kaso noong sinasabi po ninyo na ang presentasyon ay trangkaso. So, kailangan po ng diagnostic or laboratory test.

REP. ATIENZA. Kung ang isang tao ay mayroong trangkaso ngayon, maaari ba ninyong masabi dito sa ating hapag, “Ito ang bantayan mo. Baka mayroon siyang coronavirus.” Hindi sapat iyong lagnat, hindi sapat iyong nananakit ang kalamnan, hindi sapat ang lahat ng sintomas ng influenza. Mayroon po ba kayong maipapayo?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). So, iyong pong symptoms natin, tama po kayo na hindi ito sapat dahil pare-pareho sila ng presentasyon. Kaya nga po sinasabi natin na iyong criteria, dapat tinitingnan. Halimbawa po ako, Mr. Speaker, I am a doctor, tatanungin ko ang pasyente, “Nilalagnat ka ba, sinisipon o inuubo ka ba”—puwede ko hong sabihin na ito ay ordinary common cold or flu na mayroon tayo sa Pilipinas kung nakita ko sa interview ko na wala naman siyang history ng travel or exposure or close contact. Right there and there, puwede kong sabihin sa kaniya, “O, that is ordinary,” pero kung sa interview ho natin, Mr. Speaker, ay mayroon tayong nakitang risk, then, that is the time na

magre-request po tayo ng specific test para masabi na coronavirus ito.

REP. ATIENZA. Ano po ang hahanapin sa test?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). It is the strain po, iyon ang kinukuha po sa test pero wala po tayo sa Pilipinas ng test na ito, Mr. Speaker, para doon sa strain po na specific sa novel coronavirus.

REP. ATIENZA. Dito po ba sa atin, sa Pilipinas, nakita na po ang strain na iyan?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Wala po.

REP. ATIENZA. Wala.

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Ang mayroon po tayo ngayon doon sa RITM ay iyong strain na kapag naranasan natin like MERS-CoV and SARS at dahil bago po itong strain, kahit po ang mga scientist from China and around the world, tinitingnan nila iyong genetic sequence. Ang maganda po, Mr. Speaker, is that, at the very early stage, the scientists from China were able to identify the genetic sequence at iyon po ang naging dahilan kung bakit naka-develop na po sila ng specific test.

REP. ATIENZA. Ang alam po namin, Mr. Speaker, ang daming may sakit ng TB na Pilipino. Ang alam po namin, Mr. Speaker, ang dami o daan-daang libong Pilipino ang namamatay taon-taon sa problemang ito. Bakit wala tayong panawagan tungkol sa TB? Bakit wala tayong action? Ang balita ko ay pupunta pa rito ang Secretary of Health para bigyan tayo ng briefing. Anong briefing? May sasabihin ba siyang kulay, anyo at epekto ng virus na ito? Wala. Ang payo ko sa kaniya, “Lumabas ka na lang. Gamutin mo ang mga mahihirap na Pilipinong may TB, na walang kalaban-laban na mga namamatay.” Iyon ay katotohanan. Itong coronavirus, hindi ko sigurado kung ito ay pananakot lamang, negosyo at pagsasamantala sa kakulangan ng kaalaman ng tao.

Before we act, I would strongly state our position that we should be very prudent and so, let us not add a little more panic when there should not be. Not a single case has been established in the Philippines, therefore, ang isigaw natin, “Wala tayong problema. Magpakaligaya at magtrabaho tayo. Kung mayroon kayong sakit, magpahinga kayo at baka iyan ay influenza, iyan ay sipon, iyan ay ubo, iyan ay lagnat, at marami pong gamot para diyan.” Huwag kayong humiga na lamang at sabihing, “Naku, mayroon akong coronavirus.” Sino nagsabi niyan? “Narinig ko ang panawagan ng isang congresswoman na tayo raw ay mag-ingat.” Ang payo ko, “Hindi po.” Hindi para mag-ingat pero ang payo ko sa Department of

Health, asikasuhin nila ang mayroong high blood, ang mayroong diabetes, ang mayroong tuberculosis sa mga mahihirap na namamatay araw-araw dahil alam naman natin kung ano talaga ang sintomas ng mga ito. Madali nilang makikita ang mga iyan kung talagang iyan ang aasikasuhin nila. Mag-assign na lang sila ng isang team, sundan iyang isyu ng coronavirus pero do not alarm the nation unnecessarily.

No one in this Chamber can really say, “I know about coronavirus. I will explain to the nation about it.” I would suggest that you go on TV and tell the people, “Ito bantayan ninyo, at kapag kayo ay tinutubuan ng kung ano diyan, baka coronavirus na iyan.” Kung sabihin ninyo, “Kayo ay may ubo, kayo ay may sipon, kayo ay may lagnat—nananakit ang inyong mga paa, hita, kamay, masakit ang ulo ninyo, baka mayroon kayong coronavirus”—ito ang sinasabi ko, ang panawagan ng inyong lingkod na hinay-hinay lang at huwag tayong mataranta dahil baka tayo ay nadadala sa dengvaxia, baka tayo ay nadadala sa tetanus toxin, baka tayo ay nadadala sa negosyo rather than serbisyo.

Anyway, I congratulate the Lady for having the guts to stand up and talk about this subject matter, although I am quite disappointed because she is not an authority right now because she does not have the real data needed to be accurate in our warning or advisory to our people.

Thank you.

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Maraming salamat po. Again, I just want to reiterate na ang intensiyon po ng question of privilege na ito is actually to allay the fears of the public and find out the readiness of the Department of Health just in case na iyong virus po ay makapasok sa ating bansa.

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

REP. BROSAS. Mr. Speaker.

REP. VILLAR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Lady from the First District of Iloilo, Rep. Janette L. Garin, for her interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pimentel). Hon. Janette Garin is recognized.

REP. GARIN (J.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, distinguished colleague. Of course, my greetings to the Chair of the Committee on Health.

Earlier, she mentioned that the World Health Organization is taking a step back on this issue. Can she please expound on this?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Mr. Speaker, from the time

po na na-inform ang World Health Organization ng government of China sa pagdami ng pneumonia cases in Wuhan, ang China ay nakipag-ugnayan sa World Health Organization actively sa experts and scientists ng WHO para alamin at matulungan ang China kung ano ba ang virus na ito na kumakalat sa probinsiya ng Wuhan; at ganoon din, ang panel of experts ay nag-convene, I think, several days ago upang pag-usapan ano ang drift nito at the regional and global levels.

REP. GARIN (J.). What did they say? Ano po ang naging step back—was it a change in decision-making? Was there a change in statement or was it a progressive statement that was actually valid?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). It is a progressive statement at katulad po ng nabanggit ko kanina sa aking talumpati, Mr. Speaker, initially ang tingin nila ay moderate lang ang risk assessment and then, noong last silang nag-convene ay naitaas na ito sa high risk.

REP. GARIN (J.). Ano po ang pananaw ninyo sa mga ganitong sitwasyon? Is this a set back on the side of the World Health Organization or is this expected in situations where there are emerging infectious diseases?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). It is expected sapagkat nakita po natin sa experience ng mga bansa sa paglabas ng iba't ibang virus katulad ng SARS and MERS-CoV na hindi natin ma-determine kung ano ba talaga iyong behavior ng virus na ito kasi ito ay nagbabago-bago. Sa pagdating ng data sa kanila, nababago-bago din ang pagtingin nila, so, ini-expect din natin na in the coming days or weeks na makukuha nila ang data, maaaring magkaroon din ng mga pagbabago ang pronouncement ng World Health Organization.

REP. GARIN (J.). Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, sasang-ayon po ba kayo sa akin if I interpret the act of the WHO this way: Noong una po itong pumutok at sinabi nga ng mga kaukulang namamahala ng kalusugan sa Tsina sa World Health Organization na marami ang nagkaka-pneumonia, it was an unusual spike, epidemiological-wise speaking, at ang WHO ay nagkaroon ng pagpupulong at ang sinabi nila doon, “We are not declaring this situation as a public health emergency of international concern.” Tama po ba?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Tama po, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (J.). Ang naging rason po dito ay una, nangyari lang po ito sa China at wala pa po ito sa ibang parte ng mundo. Tama po ba?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Tama po, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (J.). The progress is, as the days and the weeks passed by, there were already documented and confirmed cases outside China.

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Tama po, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (J.). Yes, that is why, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, I am making this categorical statement on the floor kasi minsan, baka naman mamaya sisihin ang WHO na, “Bakit sinabininyo hindi public health concern, hindi international emergency at pagkatapos ngayon, sasabihin ninyo international emergency.”

Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, I would just like to explain that the way they work in situations like this, nawawala po ang kontrol sa bawat bansa, sa bawat region, and it is elevated to the central level. Do you agree, Mr. Speaker?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Tama po, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (J.). In this case, kaya sinasabing hindi pa dahil iyong nagpopositibo ay confined pa lang doon sa isang lugar.

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Tama po, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (J.). In other words, that is the usual process and we should not be blaming the WHO just like other people who keep on saying that the World Health Organization is a bad science and the WHO has to be blamed because of the resurgence of polio.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, may I move forward in saying that earlier, I heard the term “commercial hyperbole.” Ibig pong sabihin, baka ito namang sitwasyon ay haka-haka lamang dahil mayroong mga grupong nag-i-interes para magkanegosyo dito. Do you affirm or confirm that statement or do you negate that statement, scientifically speaking?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Mr. Speaker, yes po, nabanggit ng ating previous interpellator na may ganoong fear at iyon naman ay ipinaliwanag natin. Sinagot din po naman natin na hindi natin gusto na makapasok dito iyong virus. Ang pinakaimportante ngayon ay iyong prevention kaya kahit may maliit na kaso or walang confirmed case in the Philippines, ang kahandaan ay napakahalaga pa rin.

REP. GARIN (J.). Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, I appreciate your answer, but let me politely say that it did not answer directly my question. Ang katanungan ko po—kanina may nagsabing this might be a commercial hyperbole, meaning, gawa-gawa lang po ito, kathang-isip ng tao, kuwentong kutsero dahil sa interes ng ilang negosyante. Do you affirm this hypothesis?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). No.

REP. GARIN (J.). Or do you think it does not have a place in situations when an emerging infectious disease with approximately five percent mortality is being discussed?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). I do not affirm that claim considering that there is no vaccine yet developed for that virus.

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

On one note, I would say “yes” and “no.” No, it is not a commercial hyperbole, especially if we are talking about an illness that is newly discovered from a mutated virus and definitely po, hindi po gawa-gawa ng tao ito. Pangalawa naman po, the commercial hyperbole might actually come from those sowing panic, declaring and spreading statements para marami ang bumili ng mask, lalo na po iyong ordinaryong mask that, for the further information of our distinguished colleagues, the size of the virus is much, much smaller than the pores of the ordinary mask that we have with us.

Pahiram nga po, Congressman Gaite, may baon ka pala, Sir. Buti na lang e...

What can be construed here as a commercial hyperbole is, like the dominant mask that is going around, na ang butas po dito, if I may be allowed to explain in layman’s term, ay mas malaki kaysa sa coronavirus. Ang ibig sabihin, kapag may coronavirus ang isang tao at bumahing sa harap natin, kaya niya itong pasukin. In other words, this is not actually effective and so, it can be called commercial hyperbole, but this is not the case of the scientists, the multinationals, the researchers and the governments which are willing to share their resources, their income and their money just so we can have a vaccine for this illness. The timetable given, I believe, is three months. Can our distinguished Chair of the Committee on Health affirm that?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Yes, Mr. Speaker, and this is the reason na gusto po nating tawagin din ang Secretary ng Department of Health na, although ginagawa na nila, Mr. Speaker, iyong information dissemination on general precautions or self-protection measures, para hindi naman pagsasamantalahan ng mga negosyante ang ating mga kababayan sa gitna po nitong usapin ng coronavirus. Kung mabasa po ninyo, hindi naman inilagay talaga doon, at this point sa ating bansa, na magsuot tayo ng mask kaya napakahalaga ng impormasyon na iyon. Ang pinakamahalaga rin ay sundin iyong fixed na ginagawa natin—handwashing, avoiding close contact which, I think, alam na ng marami—subalit dahil nga po hindi malinaw, Mr. Speaker, sa ating mga kababayan kung ano ba talaga

ito, kung papaano ito nakakahawa, siguro o marapat na marinig iyong kumpirmasyon na wala pang kaso sa Pilipinas pero ito ang kailangang sundin, at para sa ganoon din ay iyong commercial...

REP. GARIN (J.). Commercial hyperbole.

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). ... iyong pananamantala ng ating mga negosyante, para ito ay maiwasan.

REP. GARIN (J.). Let me just put it categorically clear, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague. Ang sinasabi ninyo po, ang mga datus na binibigay ng iba’t ibang bansa, kasama ang WHO, ay hindi po kathang-isip ng isang tao o isang kumpanya. Ito ay katotohanan na dapat harapin, tama po ba?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Yes po, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (J.). Iyong ibang nag-aabuso at nagbibigay ng panic para magbenta ng maraming mask na hindi naman epektibo kontra sa virus, this is a possible commercial hyperbole.

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (J.). Yes. Moving forward, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, nasabi ninyo po kanina na kailangan nga may mga adbokasiya dahil hindi pa maliwanag sa tao kung paano sila mahahawa nito. Sa pananaw ninyo po ba, bilang Chairman ng ating komite, mula sa mga naging report po sa inyo, paano po ba nai-spread iyong 2019-nCoV?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). As of now, ang sinabi po, ang nCoV ay naipapasa through droplet transmission kaya ang ibig sabihin po, ito iyong sa pagbahing at pag-ubo ng ating mga kababayan na infected ang puwedeng maging source noon. So, iyon po ang sa ngayon na impormasyon na naka-publish.

REP. GARIN (J.). Thank you for that, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague. Napansin ko po kasi nalilito po ang tao, lalo na po iyong mga hindi doktor. Ang pagkakaintindi po ng karamihan, if you say direct contact by respiratory droplets, kapareho lang po siya ng airborne—tama po ba ito o mali?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Actually, tama po kayo na may misconception ang mga tao na akala nila ay airborne ito. Ang pagkakaiba po nitong dalawa, sa droplet transmission po ay mas malaki iyong particulates or iyong virus na puwedeng mag-lodge po doon sa isang—like secretions or on the surfaces, at kailangan po ng close contact na at least three feet. Iyong airborne naman po, ang pagkakaiba nito ay sumasama lamang

sa hangin at kailangan po ng malapit na malapit o mas malapit na contact, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (J.). Mr. Speaker, papayagan ninyo po ba akong maka-expound kaunti diyan? Ang ibig pong sabihin, hindi totoo na pareho ang airborne sa meaning ng direct contact through respiratory droplets. Magkaiba sila, tama po ba?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Tama po.

REP. GARIN (J.). Mr. Speaker, if you will allow me, distinguished colleague, sa layman, ang novel coronavirus, hindi po siya nakakahawa dala ng hangin. It is not airborne unlike measles or tuberculosis which is a bacterial infection. Ibig sabihin, kung ikumpara mo ito sa tigdas na sa bawat environment it is times 17—times 17—dahil dala siya ng hangin. Ibig sabihin, kapag nandidito ka at mayroong virus na lumilipad, malalanghap mo, at iyan po ay ibang virus, iyan iyong bacteria na TB, iyan po iyong measles virus.

If you say direct contact through respiratory droplets, either bumahing direkta sa inyo, pumasok sa mata o bunganga ninyo, o puwedeng bumahing ka sa kamay, pagkatapos mong ilagay sa kamay, humawak ka sa door knob, umalis ka na pero dahil infected ka, ako na sumunod sa iyo at humawak sa parehong door knob, kung humawak lang ako sa door knob pero hindi ko hinawakan iyong mukha ko, iyong mata ko at iyong bunganga ko, hindi ako mahahawa, tama po ba?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Tama po, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (J.). Kung hinawakan ko iyong door knob na hinawakan ng isang pasyenteng may sakit tulad mo at hinawakan ko iyong aking bunganga, ako ay mahahawa.

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Tama po, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (J.). Bakit po ba ito nangyayari, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague? Dahil po ang virus ay hindi po tumatagal sa environment unless na papasok po sa katawan ng tao o sa katawan ng hayop. In other words, there is no room for panic, but there is room to be vigilant and to know what we should be doing.

Bumalik po tayo doon sa—you also mentioned earlier that the Department of Health is doing a good job, especially its Bureau of Quarantine, and allow me to congratulate the DOH family whom I just saw actually at the back. Thank you for coming and helping us again. You also mentioned the presence of the checklist. Ito po ba ay importante sa mga ganitong panahon. Bakit oo o bakit hindi?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). The health declaration

checklist na ngayon po, Mr. Speaker, ay ini-implement nila ay importante sapagkat kailangan natin na alamin sinu-sino doon sa mga indibidwal, partikular iyong mga pumapasok sa ating bansa, ang high risk at walang risk. So, napakahalaga po na mayroon po tayong ganitong ipinapatupad sa ngayon, na mayroon po tayong mino-monitor na isang hindi makilala na virus.

REP. GARIN (J.). Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, correct me if I am wrong, but the Department of Health actually abolished the implementation of a health declaration checklist. So, ang ibig ninyo po ba sabihin is, ibinalik na ito dahil nanawagan nga po kami last week na ibalik ito pero ang kanilang sinabi ay hindi po siya ibinalik at tinanggal po siya dahil walang gamit? Ano po ba ang totoong sitwasyon?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Mr. Speaker, according to the Department of Health representative, sa pangkasalukuyan ay ibinalik po iyong health declaration checklist subalit hindi po para sa lahat ng mga flight na pumapasok doon sa ating bansa. Ito ay ginagamit nila sa pangkasalukuyan daw doon sa mga traveler na nanggaling po sa China.

REP. GARIN (J.). Kailan pa po siya ibinalik?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). According to the Department of Health, Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago ay ibinalik daw po nila itong health declaration checklist.

REP. GARIN (J.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, distinguished colleague, for that. Nalito lang po kami because when we were being interviewed, when the Minority was being interviewed last week, nagulat din po nga kami noong ipinaalam sa amin ng ating mga kasamahang nasa media na ito ay tinanggal na pala matagal na at hindi pa naibabalik. So, when we inquired, sinabing wala na pero parang nakakalito po kung ibinalik na ito two weeks ago. Iyon ang sinabi sa amin—wala—but mabuti kung ibinalik na. That is important. My point there, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, kung ibinalik mo lang iyong health declaration checklist para sa mga nanggagaling ng China, hindi po ba ito ay isang reactive instead of a pre-emptive measure dahil hindi lang naman po sa China puwedeng manggaling ang virus na ito? Nandidiyan na siya sa Amerika, mayroon na siya sa Japan ba or Taiwan, mayroon na sa Hong Kong. Will the DOH possibly consider bringing back the health declaration checklist that we started before with MERS-CoV, Ebola and SARS?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Tama po, Mr. Speaker. Actually, kanina ay napag-usapan din po namin iyan na, I think, tama lamang na hindi siya sa isang bansa lamang ginagawa or ini-implement dahil may 11

countries na may confirmed cases ay dapat gawin na siyang parte ng screening ng mga pagpasok po ng lahat po ng travelers.

REP. GARIN (J.). Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, the reason I am personally very particular with the health declaration checklist is I have been part of the conceptualization of that move. Bakit po namin ginawa iyon? You mentioned earlier, Mme. colleague, na mayroon naman pong thermal scanner kaya maganda but in our experience, ang thermal scanner ay lagnat lang po ang tinitingnan at kung ang pasyente na dumating ay nakainom na ng gamot, hindi mo siya made-detect at iyong iba namang hindi nilalagnat pero may sipon, may ubo, nanghihina ang katawan, ay maaaring positibo po sa MERS-CoV.

In our experience before, the patients who turned out to be positive for MERS-Coronavirus, they did not have fever. What was prominent was actually body malaise kaya very particular kami doon at tinatanong namin kung mayroon silang ganitong mga sintomas—sipon, pananakit ng katawan, ubo, paghihirap sa paghinga and anything. That is checked there—you are led to a lane where a doctor will brief you, bibigyan ka po ng isang number, at araw-araw po sa number na iyon ay iti-text mo kung iyong nararamdaman ninyo ay okay pa ba o hindi na. Pagkatapos mong mag-text doon araw-araw, sasabihin mo rin iyong mga lugar na pinupuntahan mo because this is a system that was established before but should be brought back now. Hindi nga po siya dapat tinanggal kasi, tingnan ninyo noong tinanggal natin, ngayon, heto na naman tayo, nagkakandarapa tayo. Why is it important? Any patient who comes into our country na may nararamdaman or mayroong mararamdaman, we should have a phone number of the specific person in that region.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, the way it works, iba-iba ang contact persons sa bawat lugar na pinupuntahan. Kunwari ako ay pupunta ng Boracay, i-inform ko iyong quarantine officer, “Sir, Doc, I am now travelling to Boracay.” Bibigyan ka ng numero ng tao na nandodoon at bibigyan ka ng coordinator doon. Kapag pumunta ka naman ng Bohol, ililipat ka sa coordinator na taga-Bohol. Pagpunta mo ng Cebu, nandodoon ka naman sa Cebu kaya anytime na may sintomas ka, that doctor would know which hospital he or she will take you.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, bakit po ito napakaimportante? Look at what is happening now—panic texts right and left. Pinapangalanan pa iyong mga ospital, tuloy, iyong mga pasyente sa loob ng ospital, instead na nandodoon sila para gamutin sila at naka-relax, kinakabahan sila dahil marami sa mga ospital na sinabi doon are not referral hospitals because they do not have negative pressure rooms.

So, may we request, Mr. Speaker, distinguished

colleague, through your representation, that first, the Department of Health immediately put back the health declaration checklist all over the country; second, immediately call for a command conference and establish the Command Conference Office that they are very much familiar with; third, the people who have been involved there, whether they have been involved with Dengvaxia vaccination because they are the experts, loop them in because you need them most now as they know what to do and we have worked with them; fourth, update all hospital directors and regional directors so that they will make representations with the governors and mayors in each region para iyong mga mayor naman, Congressmen at mga gobernador na malaman kung nasaan iyong negative pressure room.

Next, Mr. Speaker, will our distinguished colleague support the Minority? Earlier, we had a meeting and we are actually contemplating, proposing an ordinance to make spitting in public a violation with corresponding fines on the first offense, maybe fine plus community work on the second offense, and imprisonment on the third offense.

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Thank you for the recommendation, Mr. Speaker. I just want to—of course, I am very supportive of that, but I just want to inform you that anti-spitting is part of the Comprehensive Tuberculosis Elimination Plan Act or 106—I forgot the number of Republic Act, but being the principal author

REP. GARIN (J.). There is a law now that ...

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Yes, there is a law now on anti-spitting. Now, I think, Mr. Speaker, we need to go back to the Department of Health if this is being fully implemented or cascaded that it is actually not allowed.

REP. GARIN (J.). Yes.. If the IRR, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, is in place, then let us spread that to the police force and the LGUs so that it will be implemented kasi sayang naman po ang ginawa ng Kongreso kung iyon ay nandodoon lang.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, allow me to thank our colleague who has been very much bent on pushing public health—and, of course, the DOH family, and allow me to mention a very critical person who was with the Department of Health when SARS came. I remember I was not yet with the Department as I was an aspiring doctor doing my Residency Training Program at that time noong pumutok iyong SARS. Alam ko po hanggang doon sa—there was this event kung saan para siyang Nazareno—it was a public event at marami ang tao at nandodoon iyong person of interest. Siya po iyong nanguna para ikutin lahat iyon.

When MERS-CoV struck our country and 10 nurses died in Saudi Arabia without the government knowing it and with the Saudi government trying to hide it, siya naman ang nanguna para suguin ang MERS coronavirus sa Pilipinas. When Ebola came, he was also a prominent person then because he was a specialist in the Department of Health who had made all these actions and with his moves. Unfortunately, in the last hearing we had at the Quezon City Regional Trial Court, he succumbed to a heart attack because he could not bear anymore the lambasting, iyong mga pambabastos na nakukuha niya simply because he was one of those who initiated the Dengvaxia, the dengue vaccine.

With that, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, infections will come and go, new diseases will be discovered right and left, but the memory of Asst. Secretary Lyndon Lee Suy, a specialist who made his mark in our country and abroad, will never be forgotten. If Lyndon were here today, hindi pa man nagsisimula ay na-activate na niya iyong whole system. He was very much responsible for putting up all the negative pressure rooms, the biosafety laboratory in RITM and that is Biosafety Lab 3, and all the other infrastructure preparedness and human resource training. We hope that he is happy now with God and that his legacy will be revived by the Department of Health.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we temporarily suspend the interpellation on the question of privilege to give way to the calling of the roll of the Members.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

ROLL CALL

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pimentel). 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. 36, dated January 28, 2020.**

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. Mr. Speaker, the roll call shows that 239 Members responded to the call.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pimentel). With 239 Members responding to the call, the Chair declares the presence of a quorum.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. AGABAS. Mr. Speaker, I move to acknowledge the presence of the guests of the honorable Speaker Alan Peter “Compañero” S. Cayetano. They are freshmen students of AB Political Science from the San Beda University, Manila, namely: Danalyn Gaitos, Debbie Andrade, Jennifer Juablar, Kristine Aguilar, Gyana Fei Suerte, Julienne Allyah Legutan, Ylieza Tacdoro, Ervin Benitez, Gabriela Francin Patag, Ron Ashley Trias, Glorie Verdad, Carl Martin Uy, Jaden Vincent Reyes, Nor-Allyzah Lumabao.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pimentel). To the guests of Speaker Alan Peter Cayetano, please rise. (*Applause*) Welcome to the House of Representatives.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. AGABAS. Mr. Speaker, in addition, I move to acknowledge the presence of the guests of Hon. Francisco G. Datol Jr., the San Agustin Academy Batch 1965 from Jaen, Nueva Ecija, namely: Nestor De Luna, Blanquita Trinidad, Guadalupe Varon, Rosario Palanca, Blademer Esquivel, Isaias Arrieta, Agapito Lores, and Rosalia Arrieta.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pimentel). To the guests of Rep. Francisco Datol, welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

REP. CASTELO. Mr. Speaker, before we continue, may we also move to acknowledge the presence of the guests of the distinguished Gentleman representing the TGP Party-List, Cong. Jose “Bong” J. Teves Jr.: Hon. Wencerom Lagumbay, Councilor of the Third District of Quezon City; as well as the councilor of Second District of Marikina City, Councilor Mark Del Rosario; and, the kagawad of Barangay Escopa I from the Third District of Quezon City, Kag. Dong Macabata.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pimentel). The guests of Hon. Bong Teves, please rise. (*Applause*) Welcome to the House of Representatives.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume the interpellation on the question of privilege

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

delivered by Hon. Angelina Tan. With that, I move that we recognize Hon. Arlene D. Brosas to deliver her interpellation.

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

Hon. Arlene Brosas is recognized.

REP. BROSAS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, ilan lamang pong katanungan para sa ating Sponsor. Mme. Sponsor, maaari po ba?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BROSAS. Sa gitna po ng coronavirus isyu na ito, we cannot help but ask—ilan lang pong mga precise na katanungan. Unang-una po, nais naming tanungin kung iyong Health Department natin ngayon, the DOH itself, at iyong iba pang mga ahensiya sa gobyerno ay may capability para mag-screen ng potential coronavirus carriers.

At this juncture, Deputy Speaker Pimentel relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Mujiv S. Hataman.

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Mr. Speaker, iyon po ang isa sa dahilan kung bakit po natin ginawa itong ating talumpati, upang alamin mula sa ating Secretary of Health, Secretary Duque, iyong kahandaan. Sa kasalukuyan, as I mentioned earlier, ang nagagawa lang ay tingnan through the declarations of suspected patients iyong kalagayan nila, iyong common symptoms, at iyong definitive means of diagnosis ay ipadala sa ibang bansa. Iyong definite diagnosis wala po tayo but the screening, I believe, mayroon po tayo na kapasidad as of the moment po.

REP. BROSAS. Yes. Mr. Speaker, kaya po natin tinatanong ito, iba't ibang entry points po ang mayroon tayo sa Pilipinas. Kung screening po ay wala tayo, medyo nakakabahala po iyon. Plus, kung screening pa lang iyon ng potential, paano pa po kaya iyong capability to track and effectively repel the coronavirus outbreak? Iyon po ang tinatanong natin bukod sa screening at every entry point. Alam ninyo po kasi, marami tayong paliparan kaya maraming paraan kung paano papasok iyong iba't ibang mga nasyonalidad, especially ang mga mula sa Tsina na alam natin na maluwag na maluwag na nakapasok dito sa Pilipinas. So, kung sa screening, kailangan pong magkaroon talaga ng effective information dissemination ang DOH kaugnay dito at ng iba pang ahensiya para mas maunawaan o maintindihan ng ating mga kababayan iyong kinakaharap na new strain of coronavirus.

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Mr. Speaker, sa kasalukuyan, yes po, in all means of entry ay mayroon pong nakatalaga ang Department of Health pagdating po dito. Naka-alerto rin po ang lahat ng health facilities po natin. Doon po sa concern on the other agencies, iyong ginagampanan na trabaho dapat o participation of other agencies, mayroon pong interagency high-level meeting, I think, today or early this morning at sila ay nagko-coordinate with each other on preventive measures on the coronavirus.

REP. BROSAS. Okay. Mr. Speaker, Mme. Sponsor, noong nakaraan po, kaya ko ito itinatanong, it has to do with the allocation for the Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance Program in our 2020 General Appropriations Act. Kaya ko po itinatanong, ano ang ginagamit na pondo sa kasalukuyan kung ito ay inislah ng 56 percent last time? Ngayon po ay mayroon lang tayong P115.5 million para sa pag-determine, pagkilala or iyong ina-allocate para sa epidemiology and disease surveillance. Hindi pa po tayo nag-uusap kung magkano ang gagamitin kapagka na-track at paano ang pag-repel ng coronavirus outbreak dahil kailangan po iyong paghandaan. Hindi naman po natin sinasabi na magkalat tayo ng fake news; ang sinasabi lang po natin dito, gaano kahanda ang gobyerno natin para i-tackle ito?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Mr. Speaker, ang Department of Health po ay mayroong tinatawag na Emerging and Re-emerging Infectious Disease Program budget o tinatawag nila ito na EREID, at ito po ay may pondo at sa pangkasalukuyan, iyon po ang kanilang kinukuhaan ng pondo. Sa taong 2020, this year po, mayroon silang mahigit na P35 million all in all na budget. Bukod po doon, mayroon silang available na QRF na pinagkukunan din, which is about P100 million.

REP. BROSAS. Okay. Mr. Speaker, Mme. Sponsor, gusto ko rin sabihin na actually iyong allocation kasi natin na mas malaki, lalo na dito sa Department of Health, nasa PhilHealth, hindi ba, at P71.35 billion ang budget natin na nakalagak sa Philippine Health Insurance Corporation. Samantalang mayroon tayong mga kinakaharap na ganito, nag-budget cut pa tayo sa ibang mga, sa tingin namin, ay necessary na dapat nabadyetan pa natin, plus mayroon po tayong nakalagak na P36 billion mula sa National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict o NTF-ELCAC na supposedly nakalagak din sa iba't ibang ahensiya—P36 billion po iyon na black fund. Wala tayong itemized list na kung saan gagamitin ito, kundi ang nakikita po namin ngayon ay ang pag-continue ng pagkriminalisa sa mga dissenter at pangha-harass ng mga critic mismo sa gobyerno habang humaharap tayo sa matinding issue. Kailangan nating maging precise kung saan natin nilalagay iyong budget natin.

Dito po lumalabas na iyong screening, saka iyong ano—mayroon naman tayong pinagkukunan ngayon pero iyong paghahanda pa para sa mga susunod, mayroon po ba tayong tiyak na mapagkukunan ng pondo para diyan?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Ayon po sa Department of Health, ang pinagkukunan doon sa mga susunod pa na pangangailangan concerning this nCoV ay iyong QRF nila, as mentioned earlier, iyong P100 million.

REP. BROSAS. Mr. Speaker, my distinguished colleague...

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Maidagdag ko lang po, Mr. Speaker, na maaari naman na humingi ang Department of Health ng karagdagang pondo for emergency response kung kukulangin pa ang kinakailangan na pondo.

REP. BROSAS. So, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, maraming salamat po sa pagsagot kaugnay doon. Ang inaalala po ng Kinatawan na ito ay siyempre, matiyak iyong safety noong ating mga kababayan, plus makapagbigay ng mga tamang impormasyon, ano, sa ating mga kababayan para hindi sila matakot o magkaroon ng panic—iyon nga iyong sinasabi ngayon. Samantalang iyong mga case ay ganito pa lang, maipaliwanag ito natin sana sa kanila ng mabuti at kung ngayon po, kinakailangan nga, sabi ko nga kanina, iyong information dissemination, kailangan effectively po ito ma-address ng, of course, hindi lang ng Department of Health kundi ng iba't ibang ahensiya sa ating gobyerno.

Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker, and distinguished colleague.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hataman). Thank you.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, next to interpellate the honorable Sponsor is Hon. Rozzano Rufino B. Biazon. I move that we recognize him.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hataman). Honorable Biazon is recognized for his interpellation.

REP. BIAZON. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the distinguished Lady yield to some questions?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BIAZON. Yes, Mr. Speaker, thank you to my distinguished colleague. Last January 22, this Representation sent a letter to the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines to suggest that flights—direct flights—coming from Wuhan to Manila or to the

Philippines be suspended and, of course, the reply was that they did not have that direct authority and that they had to consult with other concerned agencies, which is very understandable. That was a bit of a concern to this Representation because the 2019-nCoV issue had already been brewing since early December, and I guess that was not misplaced—that concern was not misplaced because the following day, Wuhan itself went into a shutdown and so, it did not require the government to suspend flights because on its own, Wuhan City was locked down.

Then this morning, as I was browsing through the news, I came upon this news item which said, and I quote, in CNN Philippines, “Immigration Commissioner Jaime Morente clarifies that there is no order barring Chinese nationals to enter the Philippines” but the Bureau of Immigration suspended the issuance of visa upon arrival and it is meant to “prevent the entry of the Wuhan coronavirus.” So, now, sa pagkaunawa po natin, pipigilan nila ang pagpasok ng certain nationals. This was at 10:54 a.m. At 12:39 p.m., another news item came out which said, “The Bureau of Quarantine okays arrival of China and Hong Kong cruise ships in Manila.” So, dalawang bapor po iyon ng mga turista na pinayagan naman pumasok.

The point I am driving at, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, is that there seems to be a disconnect among agencies. While we were expecting that there would be a more proactive stance with regard to the entry of nationals, especially those coming from Wuhan, I was surprised to find out that it is not even one flight but three destinations, direct flights, from Wuhan to Kalibo, Wuhan to Clark and Wuhan to Cebu, which provided for a wide open gateway. We were just fortunate enough that Wuhan, by itself, initiated the lockdown. On this disconnect between the position of the BI and the position of the Bureau of Quarantine, may I know, Mr. Speaker, my distinguished colleague, what is the measure that has been taken by the DOH which, I assume, is the lead agency in ensuring that interagency cooperation and coordination is made certain in the face of this threat of a highly-contagious epidemic?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Mr. Speaker, currently, I think the DOH is in coordination with other agencies. In fact, I was informed that the Secretary of Health was with the other Secretaries in a high-level meeting. There was a high-level meeting this morning where they discussed the travel restrictions. Iyon pong concern ninyo na katanungan, I think, ay maaaring sagutin ng ating mga namumuno ng ahensiya sa panahon na atin po silang ipapatawag.

REP. BIAZON. Noong isang araw din po, mayroon akong nabasang balita na nakipagpulong naman ang ating Secretary ng Health sa Department of Foreign

Affairs presumably to talk about Filipinos living abroad and possibly how to repatriate them. Again, surprisingly, nagkaroon lang noong meeting na iyon ilang araw pa lamang nakakaraan pero medyo matagal na nating alam na may pumuputok na paglaganap noong sakit sa ibang bansa, particularly iyong sa Wuhan. Iyong nabanggit ko nga ay January 22 iyong sulat ko, at noong January 23, sinabi ng Wuhan shutdown kami but then, nag-usap lang iyong DOH at saka DFA parang two days ago with regard to the problem of Filipinos who are there, about 50 of them. So, there is this impression that we are just reactive to this kind of a threat to public health which is spreading very fast. Bakit po kaya ganon? Iyon bang meeting na nabanggit ninyo, biglaan na rin lang ho ba iyan in reaction to a certain condition?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Mr. Speaker, hindi ko po masagot ang katanungan directly ng ating honorable colleague, but naniniwala po ako na ang high-level meeting na ginanap ngayong umaga ay pagtugon sa mga lumalabas na problema, at iyon din po ang dahilan kung kaya nga po tayo ay nagtalumpati ngayong umaga—to clarify all our questions to the executive head of different agencies.

REP. BIAZON. My distinguished colleague is a doctor by profession and I am pretty sure that she will agree that things like these are something that we can expect to happen again in the future.

In 2003, we had SARS. Later on, we had MERS-CoV and some other highly infectious diseases and now, we have 2019-nCoV. So, somewhere in the future, there will be another contagion that will come in pero bakit po parang kahit na may experience tayo dati, parang ganon nga, ay reactionary tayo ngayon? How can this be explained by the DOH?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Mr. Speaker, according to the DOH—actually, I do not know if that is the right term to use, being reactionary on the situation—they told me that the guidelines they are using right now were the experiences or the guidelines that they used during the MERS-CoV and the SARS-CoV situations. So, somehow, Mr. Speaker, iyong karanasan naman noong MERS-CoV and SARS ay nagagamit sa pangkasalukuyan pong sitwasyon.

REP. BIAZON. May nabanggit po kanina sa inyong lingkod iyong mga taga-DOH na mayroon na ho silang binuo na task force. Puwede na po bang malaman kung ano ho iyong basehan noong pagbuo ng task force na iyon?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Mr. Speaker, according to Department of Health representative, they are using a draft Department Personnel Order (DPO) for the task force creation within DOH.

REP. BIAZON. Tama po ba iyong pagkarinig ko, a “draft Department Order”?

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Mr. Speaker, I am sorry, but I think I am wrong on using the word “draft.” They said there is a Department Order, an unsigned Department Order. So, they are using the ACS—okay, there is an Administrative Order on the incident command system that they are using right now.

REP. BIAZON. Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, I do not wish to prolong the questions anymore because I know that tomorrow, there is a call for the Secretary of Health to appear before Congress and respond to questions. I am just putting these issues on record so that, perhaps, it can be taken up during that time when we ask questions to the Secretary of Health. Before I end, Mr. Speaker, let me just point out to our colleagues from the Department of Health that while we speak of an unsigned Department Order to trigger the task force creation, there is an Executive Order 168, series of 2014, which created an inter-agency task force for the management of emerging and infectious diseases in the Philippines issued by the President of the Republic. So, when I asked for the basis of the task force that was being created, there was mention of an unsigned Department Order when we could have very well cited this Executive Order.

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Mr. Speaker, I was just informed just now that it was already signed by the Secretary. It is Department Order 2020-00224.

REP. BIAZON. Well, it has been signed but again, as I will point out, there is already an existing Executive Order, and we probably do not have to have that Department Order, and in this Executive Order, there is even that mandate to create an Emerging Infectious Diseases (EID) Preparedness Manual. Now, I do not know if they already have that document. Perhaps, the good Secretary can respond tomorrow.

In closing Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, we do need to prepare for the future because it will happen again, we know that for a fact, and we just want to see the government being able to respond, if possible, right at the moment that the issue or the public health threat comes upon us. We do hope that we would be more proactive in dealing with these serious matters.

Thank you very much, my distinguished colleague, and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hataman). Thank you.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ROMUALDEZ (F.). Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the Rule XVII, Section 124 of the Rules of the House, I

move that the Department of Health Secretary Francisco T. Duque III be requested to appear before the House of Representatives during the Question Hour. With leave of the House, I further move that the said Question Hour be held tomorrow, January 29, 2020, at the Plenary Hall, for the Secretary to answer questions from the Members of the House of Representatives pertaining to the measures being undertaken by the Department of Health on the threat of the novel coronavirus in the country.

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

DOH Secretary Francisco T. Duque III is hereby requested to appear before the House of Representatives in the Question Hour to be held tomorrow, January 29, 2020, at the Plenary Hall.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ROMUALDEZ (F.). Mr. Speaker, may we remind the Members of the standards set for questions pursuant to Section 128 of the same rule.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hataman). The remarks of the Majority Leader are duly noted.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. AGABAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we include the additional coauthors of House Bill Nos. 137, 424, 425, 497, 510, 656, 1079, 1497, 3029, 3119, 5083, 5422, 5777, 5793, 5829, 5869, 5887, 5889, 5890, 5891, 5892, 5912, 5919, 5920, 5921, 5925, 5944, 5945 and 5955, and House Resolution Nos. 423, 510, 630, 631, 632, 633, and 634 as contained in the list to be submitted by the Committee on Rules.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. AGABAS. Mr. Speaker, I move to acknowledge the presence of the guests of Hon. Sabiniano S. Canama of the Coop-NATCCO Party-List, namely: Dr. Garibaldi Leonardo, Mr. Edwin Bustillos, Ms. Cielo Garrido, Mr. Wilver Sy, Mr. Bernard Yu, Ms. Sheen Dolfo, Ms. Esperanza Ocampo, Ms. Raquel Aquino, Mr. Oliver Casajeros, Ms. Imelda dela Cruz, Mr. Felimon Espares, Ms. Luz Yringco, Dr. Mylene Gocon, Mr. Chito Sandino, Ms. Zeny Enobabos, Mr. Honorato Vacal, Jr., Mr. Edgar Bayano, Engr. Romeo Manzano, Dr. Emma Nieva, Mr. Antonio Aranas, Mr. Francisco

Jose, Mr. Rolando Abadia, Pastor Marlon Magno, Mr. Rey Trinidad and Mr. Jojo Ytang.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hataman). The guests of Hon. Sabiniano S. Canama, please rise.

Welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 5422 ON SECOND READING

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 5422, contained in Committee Report No. 133, as reported out by the Committee on Cooperatives Development.

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

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 5422, entitled: AN ACT DECLARING THE MONTH OF OCTOBER OF EVERY YEAR AS THE "NATIONAL COOPERATIVE MONTH" IN THE ENTIRE COUNTRY.

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

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of sponsorship and debate. The parliamentary status of House Bill No. 5422 is that we are in the period of sponsorship and debate. To deliver the sponsorship speech, I move that we call the Chairman of the Committee on Cooperatives Development, Hon. Sabiniano S. Canama.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hataman). Hon. Sabiniano S. Canama is recognized.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF REP. CANAMA

REP. CANAMA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, my distinguished colleagues.

* Copies of the bill were distributed to the members earlier. Section 53, Rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives provides that "[a] bill or joint resolution on Second Reading shall be read in full unless copies thereof have been distributed to the Members."

This Bill seeks to declare the month of October of every year as the National Cooperative Month in the country. The primary objective of every cooperative is to help improve the quality of life of its members and the communities. Cooperatives provide assistance, trainings and services to augment the income of their members, increase their savings and widen their investments, productivity and purchasing power. Cooperatives also teach their members in propagating cooperative practices and introducing new ideas in business and management.

Cooperatives are significant contributors to the Philippine economy. In fact, they serve as instruments in promoting social justice and economic development. They contribute to economic growth through the mobilization of savings and by providing capital. They also provide access to goods and services to the less privileged members of the society.

On October 29, 2003, Pres. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo issued Proclamation No. 493, declaring the month of October 2004 and every year thereafter as Cooperative Month, to encourage the wider participation of all sectors of society in nation-building through cooperativism. Mr. Speaker, my distinguished colleagues, to give it a more permanent status, however, this Bill seeks to declare the month of October of every year as National Cooperative Month to raise the consciousness of the people on the principles and values of cooperatives and encourage them to join the cooperative movement.

In view of the foregoing, the approval of this Bill is earnestly sought.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, there being no Member who wishes to interpellate on or speak against the measure, I move that we close the period of sponsorship and debate.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of amendments.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, there being no Committee or individual amendments, I move that we close the period of amendments.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve House Bill No. 5422 on Second Reading. I so move, Mr. Speaker.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hataman). There is a motion for the approval of House Bill No. 5422 on Second Reading.

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

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

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

FEW MEMBERS. *Nay*.

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 5422 ON SECOND READING

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

House Bill No. 5422, entitled: AN ACT DECLARING THE MONTH OF OCTOBER OF EVERY YEAR AS THE “NATIONAL COOPERATIVE MONTH” IN THE ENTIRE COUNTRY, is approved on Second Reading. (*Applause*)

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 5829 ON SECOND READING

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 5829, contained in Committee Report No.140, as reported out by the Committee on Basic Education and Culture.

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

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

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

* Copies of the bill were distributed to the members earlier. Section 53, Rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives provides that “[a] bill or joint resolution on Second Reading shall be read in full unless copies thereof have been distributed to the Members.”

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 5829, entitled: AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING VALUES EDUCATION IN THE CURRICULUM BY INCORPORATING “GOOD MANNERS AND RIGHT CONDUCT” AS A SUBJECT IN KINDERGARTEN UP TO THE GRADE 3 LEVEL.

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

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of sponsorship and debate. To deliver the sponsorship speech, I move that we recognize the Chairman of the Basic Education, Hon. Roman T. Romulo of the Lone District of Pasig City.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hataman). Hon. Roman Romulo is recognized to deliver his sponsorship speech.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF REP. ROMULO

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

To the honorable Members of this Congress, may we have the honor to ask for your support for House Bill No. 5829, which is an Act to institutionalize good manners and right conduct in our basic education. Mr. Speaker, to summarize, the Bill actually wishes to instill these values from Kinder to Grade 3 by mandating the DepEd to require all our schools to teach good manners and right conduct. Currently, they have a subject called ESP but the subject itself is being taught in a theoretical manner, meaning that definitions are just taught and memorized. What we want to have or put in this Bill is that the teaching of good manners and right conduct be also actual and situational so that learners from Kinder to Grade 3 will be able to imbibe properly the lessons for the day.

Mr. Speaker, Members of this Congress, we always hear nowadays that technology is moving quite fast and we hear a lot of parents and teachers saying that most of our learners are being influenced by technology advancements, including social media. The Committee believes that the institutionalization of these values of good manners and right conduct will provide a balance, so that our learners from Kinder to Grade 3, during that prime age, will be able to realize proper conduct, patriotism and love for country.

Mr. Speaker, I endeavor and wish that the Members of this Chamber will earnestly support this Bill and that we will pass this immediately so that by the next academic calendar, we can have good manners and right conduct as a subject from Kinder to Grade 3. Mr. Speaker, may I also move, as there are a lot of authors

of various measures all dealing with good manners and right conduct and in fairness and in courtesy to all the Members who have filed the same, that the Explanatory Note of the Bill of said Member be made part of the records of this Plenary.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I join the author in his motion that the Explanatory Note of the bills of all the other authors be considered part of the sponsorship speech.

I so move.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, there being no Member who wishes to interpellate on or speak against the measure, I move that we close the period of sponsorship and debate.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of amendments.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, there being no Committee or individual amendments, I move that we close the period of amendments.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve House Bill No. 5829 on Second Reading.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hataman). There

is a motion for the approval of House Bill No. 5829 on Second Reading.

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

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

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

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 5829
ON SECOND READING

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

House Bill No. 5829 is approved on Second Reading. The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move for a few minutes suspension of the session.

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

It was 5:09 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:15 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 5869
ON SECOND READING

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 5869, contained in Committee Report No. 158, as reported out by the Committee on Women and Gender Equality.

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

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 5869, entitled: ANACT DEFINING ELECTRONIC VIOLENCE

AGAINST WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN, PROVIDING PROTECTIVE MEASURES, AND PRESCRIBING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9262, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE “ANTI-VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN ACT OF 2004.”

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

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of sponsorship and debate. To deliver the sponsorship, I move that we recognize the Chairwoman of the Women and Gender Equality Committee, Hon. Ma. Lourdes Acosta-Alba.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hataman). Honorable Acosta-Alba is recognized for her sponsorship speech.

REP. ACOSTA-ALBA. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Explanatory Note of House Bill No. 5869 be considered as the sponsorship speech on the measure.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I join the honorable author in her motion that the Explanatory Note of the measure be considered as the sponsorship speech.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, there being no Member who wishes to interpellate on or speak against the measure, I move that we close the period of sponsorship and debate.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of amendments.

* Copies of the bill were distributed to the members earlier. Section 53, Rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives provides that “[a] bill or joint resolution on Second Reading shall be read in full unless copies thereof have been distributed to the Members.”

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, there being no Committee or individual amendments, I move that we close the period of amendments.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve House Bill No. 5869 on Second Reading.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hataman). There is a motion for the approval of House Bill No. 5869 on Second Reading.

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

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 5869 ON SECOND READING

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

House Bill No. 5869 is approved on Second Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move for a few minutes suspension of the session.

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

It was 5:17 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:20 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 5832 *Continuation*

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. AGABAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume consideration of House Bill No. 5832, under Committee Report No. 142. For this purpose, may I ask that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the Bill.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 5832, entitled: AN ACT CREATING THE DEPARTMENT OF FILIPINOS OVERSEAS AND FOREIGN EMPLOYMENT, DEFINING ITS MANDATE, POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

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

REP. AGABAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from the Fifth District of Batangas, Hon. Mario Vittorio “Marvey” A. Mariño.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hataman). Representative Mariño is recognized to continue sponsorship of the measure.

REP. AGABAS. Mr. Speaker, I move to recognize Cong. Arlene D. Brosas for her interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hataman). Honorable Brosas is recognized for her interpellation.

REP. BROSAS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor, maaari po bang magtanong ng ilan lamang kaugnay sa Bill na lumilikha ng Department of Overseas Filipino Workers?

REP. MARIÑO. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BROSAS. Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor, bago natin pag-usapan ang detalye ng ipinapanukalang Department of Overseas Filipino Workers, mainam na mailatag muna natin kung ano ba sa aktuwal ang batayan ng panukalang ito at kung saan direksiyon natin gusto dalhin ang mga

kababayan natin, lalo na ang mga kababaihang Pilipino. Sa bahagi po namin sa GABRIELA Women's Party, napakahalaga na mailinaw, lalong-lalo na mahigit kalahati o 55 percent ng mahigit 10 milyong OFWs sa iba't ibang sulok ng daigdig ay mga kababaihan.

Isa po sa mga sinasabing batayan ng pagtutulak ng pag-buo ng Department of OFW ay ang Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration na pinirmahan noong July 11, 2018. Tama po ba, Mr. Speaker?

REP. MARIÑO. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BROSAS. G. Ispiker, may probisyon po sa Global Compact under Objective 2 kaugnay ng pag-minimize ng adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin. Kumbaga, tumutukoy po ito sa push factors kaugnay ng migration gaya ng kahirapan at kawalan ng trabaho sa ating bayan na dapat ay komprehensibong tugunan.

Ngayon, mistulang taliwas po sa diwa ng Objective 2 ng Global Compact ang House Bill No. 5832 na lumilikha ng Department of Overseas Filipino Workers dahil ilan sa mga layunin ng panukala, bukod sa paglikha ng bagong ahensiya ay, mula po doon sa Bill mismo, Section 5(n), line 34, kung saan ang nakalagay po doon, "provide job matching services to the public with the view of promoting global competitiveness of the Filipino." Pangalawa po, sa same Section 5(s), line 16, it states, "assist in the professionalization, training and capacity building of private recruitment agencies."

Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor, ano po ang ibig sabihin nito, bakit meron mga section kung saan sinasabi pa or being viewed in the future na dapat may matching services to the public para sa pag-promote ng global competitiveness. Tapos, mayroon pang professionalization, training at capacity building para sa mga mismong private recruitment agencies, Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor?

REP. MARIÑO. Mr. Speaker, unang-una, doon po sa mga recruitment agencies, siyempre, dapat naman po talaga mayroong proper briefing o training doon sa practices ng tamang pag-recruit dahil marami naman talagang nangyayari na mga underage o illegal recruitment ang nangyayari sa ating bansa. Hindi naman po ibig sabihin na kung kailangan natin silang i-train, ay pino-promote na natin na paalisin ang ating mga kababayan. Hindi po iyan ang hangad. Ang hangad lang po natin ay ma-recognize po natin na marami ang nagtatrabaho sa ibang bansa, at iyan naman ay karapatan nila para sila ay pumili ng kanilang opportunities, na sabi po kanina na nasa 10 million ang ating Filipino overseas workers. So, itong kini-create na departamentong ito ay tugon lamang sa mga pangangailangan ng ating mga kababayan pero hindi po natin pino-promote na sila ay paalisin. Ang ginagawa nga po natin, katulad noong "job matching," kung sino

iyong mga nasa abroad ay dapat may job matching para ang mga available na trabaho dito sa ating bansa upang sa gayon, sila ay puwede makabalik. Iyon po ang hangad ng ibang probisyon sa section na nabanggit kanina ng ating kasama, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BROSAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor. Binanggit po ninyo na hindi ito necessary at ang sabi ninyo na ito ay paglu-look forward sa pagma-migrate o pagkakaroon pa ng trabaho sa labas ng bansa. Alam po ninyo, ilan sa mga problemang hinaharap ng mga Filipino migrant workers natin ay ang private recruitment agencies mismo nila, hindi po ba? May mga example po tayo diyan ng matitinding pang-aabuso na hinaharap ng workers natin. Actually, ito po iyong kailangang tugunan na problema, doon dapat mag-respond at hindi po sa pagti-train, pagpapa-professionalize, pagbi-build ng capacity ng mismong private recruitment agencies. Parang sinabi po natin na tayo ay nag-engganyo pa lalo na magkaroon ng mga ganitong ahensiya, Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor.

REP. MARIÑO. Mr. Speaker, ang ibig sabihin po ng "to professionalize ang ating recruitment agencies" ay para nga maiwasan ang illegal recruitment, at kaya po natin pino-professionalize iyan ay marami po kasi ang mga nagba-violate sa mga batas dahil alam natin na ito ay market-driven. Malaki po ang kinikita ng mga recruitment agency sa bawat tao na mapaalis nila.

Ang sinasabi po natin ay nangyayari talaga iyong recruitment kaya po dapat natin maisaayos na tama naman ang pagre-recruit. Ibig sabihin, hindi labag sa batas. Iyon po ang ibig sabihin ng trainings na ginagawa ukol sa mga recruitment agency.

REP. BROSAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor. Magbibigay lang po ako ng isang halimbawa kung paano na ang mga private agency pa mismo ang lumalabag sa karapatan ng ating migrant workers. Ang 10 o 11 days bago mo makuha ang bangkay ng migrant worker, usually po ang sinasabi nila kapag nagkakaproblema sa ganyan, kailangan muna magpaalam doon sa recruitment agency. Iyon po ang nire-reklamo ng ating regular migrant workers at hindi po ito nare-respondahan ng mabuti ng mga ahensiya, kahit po ng DFA at ng DOLE. May mga halimbawa po na ang mga kababayan natin na 10 o 11 days bago nakaka-respond ang mga ahensiya. Hindi po ba dapat iyon ang asikasuhin? Hindi po iyong capacity building kasi parang nagbigay pa tayo ng mas lalong leeway para sa private recruitment agencies na lumawak or dumami, Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor.

REP. MARIÑO. Mr. Speaker, gaya po ng sabi ko kanina, ang training po doon sa recruitment agencies is to ensure that they are compliant with the ethical standards at saka capacity building din ito pero siyempre, iyong sinasabing issues na nagpapaalam pa bago ma-ship

ang mga labi ng mga namamatay na overseas workers, iyan po ay depende doon sa pagpo-process at batas ng host country. Lahat naman po ito—kaya nga po nagcreate tayo ng departamento para iisa na lamang iyong ahensiya ang mag-iintindi ng lahat ng issues na ito.

Sa ngayon po, siguro dahil maraming coordination with the different agencies at bureaus, dahil diyan ay nade-delay din siguro. Hindi naman po siguro kaila sa atin na ang lahat ng mga ito may coordinating with each other kapag may mga problema pero kapag na-create po ang departamento na ito, iisa lamang iyong Secretary, isa lamang ang boss nila, kaya mas lalong mabilis ang kanilang pag-aksiyon na nabanggit ng ating kasamahan regarding sa mga problema, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BROSAS. Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor, hindi ba nangangahulugan ito ng pag-iinstitusyonalisa o pagtitibay sa pag-export ng mga manggagawang Pilipino bilang opisyal na patakaran ng Estado? Paano magiging totoo iyong sinasabi na migration should never be an act or choice kung magiging instrument ang ahensiya sa pag-supply ng lakas paggawa sa ibang bansa habang hindi naman natutugunan ang kawalan ng trabaho dito mismo sa ating bayan? Sa halip po na tulungan ang private recruitment agencies sa ngalan ng professionalization at capacity building, mas mainam kung ang magiging direksiyon ay ang pagpapanagot ng mga recruiter na sangkot sa mga kaso ng trafficking, karahasan at abuso sa ating mga kababayan, lalo na sa mga kababaihan. Hindi pa po ako pumupunta sa structure, kahit sa Secretary, pero ang tinatanong ko pa lang ay iyong kaugnay sa private recruitment agencies at ang professionalization at capacity building na sinasabi natin, samantalang hindi tayo makapaganagot ng mga recruiter na sangkot sa mga kaso ng trafficking, karahasan, or marami pa rin tayong cases na hindi tayo nakakapaganagot ng mga recruiter na sangkot nga sa kaso ng trafficking, karahasan at abuso sa ating mga kababayan, lalo na sa mga kababaihan.

Perfect example po nito si Villavende kamakailan lang, isang kaso mula sa Kuwait na dinala ang bangkay dito sa Pilipinas. Ayon sa NBI ay matindi ang kinaharap niyang abuso sa bansang Kuwait, Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor.

REP. MARIÑO. Again, when we look at the policy, Mr. Speaker, ang polisiya po natin hinggil sa migration ay personal choice iyan ng ating mga kababayan at ginagawan lang po natin ng paraan na sila ay mapangalagaan sa pagki-create ng departamentong ito. Alam po natin na mayroong mga problema sa ngayon sa mga ahensiya kung papaano tutulungan gaya noong nabanggit na kaso, but that is included in the mandate of this department. Kasama po iyan sa mandato and in fact, one of the Undersecretaries, specifically the Undersecretary for Foreign Employment, is the one in charge of the regulation of the recruitment agencies

and the Department has quasi-judicial functions as well. Kaya nga po kailangan dumaan sila sa proseso para nga ho maiwasan iyong mga hindi sumusunod sa mga polisiya. Iyon po ang ibig sabihin ng nagkakaroon tayo ng polisiya regarding recruitment agencies.

REP. BROSAS. Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor, isa-cite ko ulit iyong Global Compact on Migration, na ito ay isang blueprint or neoliberal blueprint to uphold migration as a tool for development, instead of charting a path for genuine reintegration through national industrialization and addressing economic issues like contractualization, depressed wages and soaring prices of goods, and the lack of quality and affordable social services to stop the massive outward migration of Filipinos.

Ang sinasabi ko po na dapat ito ang mga inaasikaso ng ating gobyerno para masabi natin, kung talagang may free choice ang mga tao, na hindi talaga sila pupunta sa ibang bansa kasi nare-resolve natin ang issues na ito. Hindi rin tayo o ang gobyerno na mag-stick sa approach na magkaroon ng loan offers para sa OFWs at magkaroon ng State exaction fees na tumutulong daw sa ekonomiya natin pero hindi naman tayo nakakapagdevelop ng local industries at hindi napa-prioritize iyong local employment natin. Contradictory po ito sa sinasabi na we are serving the needs of our OFWs, Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor.

REP. MARIÑO. Mr. Speaker, ang departamentong ito ay mayroong programa para sa OFWs na magbabalik sa ating bansa. Hindi naman ibig sabihin sila ay pinaalis bilang policy. In fact, kasama rin po sa mandate ng departamento kung ano ang puwede nilang gawin sa kanilang pagbabalik. May mga programa sa departamentong ito sa pagbabalik ng ating mga kababayan kaya nga po ito kini-create ay para ma-streamline ang mga proseso para sila ay makabalik agad na mayroon silang trabaho.

I also mentioned earlier that the job matching capabilities ng departamento ay upang malaman din, for example, Mr. Speaker, ang kontrata ng isang manggagawa ay isang taon kaya dapat bago pa matapos ang kanilang kontrata, sila ay binibigyan na ng pagkakataon na makapili. Kagaya po ng isang programa ngayon para sa teachers na bibigyan sila ng item ng ating gobyerno pero ito ay hinahanda bago pa matapos ang kanilang mga kontrata.

Iyon po ang kagustuhan natin mangyari sa pagki-create ng departamentong ito. Again, it is not a policy. I understand that global migration is a global strategy, but it does not prevent any country from acting on the situation, in which case, ang sitwasyon po natin sa ating bansa ngayon ay napakadami ang gusto magtrabaho abroad. Hindi naman po natin sila pinadala doon at sila ay kusang nagtrabaho doon. Ang atin pong gustong mangyari ay bumalik sila with the set of skills na kanilang natutunan abroad. In fact, I am an example of

an OFW who worked in the United States for 10 years. Ako po ay nagtrabaho ng 10 taon. Ako po ay nag-aral at iyong aking nalalaman ay naitulong ko—ako po ay nakabalik dito at naitulong ko sa ating bansa ang aking nalalaman.

Iyon po ang pananaw siguro na dapat tingnan natin sa kabuuan. Maaaring nag-a-abroad po ang ating mga kasamahan, but let us look at it as if they will come back on a later date.

Wala naman pong OFW na gusto na magtrabaho habang buhay sa ibang bansa at lahat po iyan ay gustong bumalik one way or the other. In fact, iyon pong mga nag-migrate na sa ibang bansa, particularly United States and Canada, mayroon din tayong programa na sila ay binibigyan din natin ng pagkakataon na bumalik dito dahil sila po ay mayroon nang set skills at saka may resources na din po sila para sila ay magtrabaho dito. So, ang kagandahan po ng pag-create ng departamento na ito ay lahat po ay matitingnan natin iyong mga problema at lahat po ay maaaksiyunan nang mabilis, hindi po gaya ngayon.

My committee is the Government Reorganization, so, niri-reorganize lang po natin iyong bureaus at agencies so that ma-streamline and will have faster service para po sa ating mga kababayan, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BROSAS. Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor, iyong usapin po ng sinasabi na choice ng mga tao, baka po kailangan nating pag-aralan kung bakit may diaspora tayo na nagaganap ngayon at napakarami talagang Pilipino iyong nagtatrabaho sa ibang bansa. For example, kami po sa Makabayan, we think that there is a failure to address the problems of high unemployment and economic underdevelopment here in the Philippines, at iyon po ang dapat unang nire-resolve natin sa kasalukuyan.

Ngayon, sa Duterte administration po, mag-i-intensify talaga iyong systematic drive to perpetuate a labor export program kapag hindi po nare-resolve iyong mga basic issue na ito. Kaya nga sinasabi ko kanina, halimbawa, wala naman po tayong mga industriya dito, kailangang i-address iyong economic issues natin, iyong contractualization, e ano po bang trabaho mayroon dito—puro kontraktwal, tapos depressed wages o mababa ang sahod. Kahit po siya, sabihin na natin, na hindi gusto ng tao na umalis pero dahil ganito iyong conditions na mayroon tayo, parang sinabi na rin natin o tinulak natin sila sa ganoong condition—umalis ng bansa at humanap ng trabaho na may nakabubuhay na sahod at regular ang kanilang status. Kaya as a policy po sa usapin dito, ito po iyong mga basic na dapat tugunan ng Duterte administration na sa kasalukuyan ay nagpi-fail siya.

So, Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor, hindi pa po tayo nag-uusap nga ng reorganization—tama po ba iyon, reorganization, pagsasama-sama ng mga ahensiya—at

nag-uusap pa po tayo ng labor export policy na mayroon ang kasalukuyang pamahalaan at ang pag-a-address dito. Kung wala po tayong malinaw na pag-a-address dito, paulit-ulit po itong mangyayari na palagi sa bawat administration, nakita naman po natin iyon, palagi na ang mga administrasyon, pati ang mga nakaraang administrasyon din, ay nagpapadala ng maramihan na mga migrant worker sa labas ng bansa. If this administration really intends to address the roots of the forced migration and to end labor export, bakit po tayo kailangang mag-create ng isang Department of OFW, hindi ba, Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor?

REP. MARIÑO. Mr. Speaker, alam naman po natin na talagang mayroong mga bagay kaugnay ng ekonomiya natin, na walang choice ang ating mga kababayan but iyan naman po ay ginagawan natin ng paraan. Mayroon ho tayong Build, Build, Build Program at tinitingnan ko rin po iyong mga datos na, sa tingin po namin, na pag-aaralan ko lang nang mabuti, ay marami po ang bumabalik na mga overseas Filipino workers dito sa ating bansa dahil nagkakaroon po ng iba't ibang mga opportunity. Again, opportunities are based on supply and demand dahil kung mayroon po ditong mas maganda na trabaho, siyempre dito po sila pupunta. Kaya po natin kini-create ang departamento na ito ay sa ngayon po ay mayroon pong pangangailangan ang 10 milyon nating kababayan na nasa abroad.

Simultaneous po ang pag-solve natin ng problema. Hindi naman po ibig sabihin na hindi tayo dapat mag-create ng isang departamento upang tulungan iyong 10 milyon nating mga kababayan dahil hindi pa natin naaayos ang ating ekonomiya dito. Kailangan po ay simultaneous ginagawan natin ng paraan. Nagkataon po na mayroon tayong 10 milyon kababayan na nasa abroad na napakalaki ng kontribusyon sa ating ekonomiya. Dapat po ba nating hindi i-create ang departamento na ito ngayong sila ang nananawagan at nangangailangan? Ang sagot ko po doon sa tanong kung bakit iki-create ang departamento na ito ay ito po ang kahilingan ng ating mga kababayan. Iyon po ang ating pinakikinggan sa mga panahon na ito, na ito po ay kanilang kahilingan at sila po ay naghahanap ng gobyerno na poprotekta sa kanilang mga karapatan hanggang sa sila ay magbalik dito sa ating bansa kapag mayroon nang magandang opportunity.

It is also the job of this department to find them a better opportunity when the time comes. So, hindi naman po ibig sabihin na ngayon na walang opportunity ay hindi na natin dapat i-create ang departamento na ito. Mas lalo nga po nating kailangan ang departamento na ito dahil napakadami po ng mga issue na nangyayari ngayon. May legal issues, may mga panghanapbuhay na issue, trabaho issue, so, mas lalo po nating kailangan dahil ito po ang sagot doon sa mga hinaing ng ating mga kababayan para isa lang po iyong pupuntahan nila. Ang set-up po natin ngayon ay napakadaming ahensiya ang

kanilang dapat puntahan at iba-iba iyong hina-handle na mga programa, so, minsan po ay nagkakadoble-doble pa, kaya maganda po na ma-create talaga ang departamento na ito.

Again, doon sa mga issue na walang opportunity dito, maaari po pero hindi po natin sila itinataboy dahil hindi po natin sila ipinipilit na magtrabaho abroad. Again, that is their choice. Nagkataon lamang po na mayroon silang magandang oportunidad sa ngayon but again, this Bill has a sunset provision. In fact, pag-aaralan po natin after 10 years kung kinakailangan po ang departamentong ito dahil marami pong mga pangyayari sa ngayon ang puwedeng wala na pong magtrabaho abroad—for example, ngayon, pinapauwi iyong mga OFW dahil mayroong epidemic sa Wuhan, China, so, agad-agad marami ang babalik. Sino po ang maghahanda sa kanilang pagbabalik? Katulad po sa Middle East kung sakali na, huwag naman sana, magkaroon ng giyera ang Amerika at ang Middle East and again, pauwiin po natin ang napakadaming manggagawa—nasa two million. So, sino po ang mag-aasikaso doon sa repatriation noong two million overseas workers? So, sabi ko nga po, ito po iyong kailangan talaga natin. Hindi po tayo reactive at kailangan po ay proactive tayo. Kaya nga po dapat maaga pa, bago pa sila umalis ng bansang ito, ay nabibrief na sila kung ano iyong mangyayari sa kanila kapag sila ay nagtrabaho abroad.

In fact, dapat din po nilang malaman iyong mga risk na kanilang haharapin. Puwede po silang madiscourage at puwede naman po silang tumuloy, kaya nga po iyan ay choice nila. Hindi po natin sila pinipilit na magtrabaho abroad. We are not recruiting them to work abroad, but let me just say that the global trend right now is to send people abroad so that they will learn different skills. Marami po sa Amerika, even sa China, pinapadala nila ng kusa. It is their policy to send people abroad so that they will learn global practices, so that they will experience what are the global practices, at ito po ay para mayroon silang programa para bumalik. Pagbalik po noon ay dala-dala nila ang kanilang mga kaalaman, dala-dala nila ang resources, so, iyon po ang gusto nating mangyari sa pag-create ng departamentong ito, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BROSAS. Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor, actually ito po iyong sinasabi namin na hindi dapat piecemeal approach ang ginagawa sa mga issue ng mga OFW para ma-resolve ang malalaking problema ng OFWs in distress, ano po. Kasi kapag tiningnan po natin nang ganoon, parang nagmumukhang, oo nga, kailangan po natin o nagiging appealing iyong magkaroon ng Department of OFW pero ito ba talaga iyong makaka-resolve sa problema ng ating mga kababayan?

So, ito pong piecemeal approach, kaya nga kanina ay binabanggit ko po the policy na mayroon tayo at iyong

mga ire-resolve na mga issue sa ating bayan, iyon talaga iyong dapat kasabay, kapanabayan na makapagbibigay ng genuine na protection, tapos, makakapag-reintegrate sa ating mga kababayan. Kasi hindi na sila maghahanap doon sa ibang bansa e. Necessity po siya e, hindi naman siya—most of our migrant workers o iyong mga lumalabas po ng bansa sa atin ay nagtatrabaho talaga. Hindi naman talaga iyong—mayroon tayo ilan, ano, for global competitiveness, siguro ay mag-aaral, et cetera, pero most of our kababayan, nagtatrabaho talaga iyon, hindi ba? Mula sa domestic workers hanggang sa skilled workers, iyon po ang kalakhan at karamihan. Kaya po pumupunta doon kasi kailangan ng trabaho at nakabubuhay na sahod. Iyon ang reality na mayroon tayo, na sasagutin po sana kung mayroon tayong industriyalisasyon at genuine agrarian reform dito at may improved social services at nakakapag-champion tayo ng labor rights. Sa trend po na mayroon tayo ngayon, binabawal pa iyong pag-uunyon at nagkakaroon pa po ng mga policy sa government na mas lalong pinalalala o pinasisikip iyong demokrasya para mas lalong gumanda iyong kalagayan ng ating mga manggagawa, aba ay hindi?

Pag-usapan po natin iyon kapanabayan nitong Department of OFW kasi kung ganito lang din po, di hindi rin talaga mare-resolve iyong tinatawag nga nating diaspora o pag-alis ng bansa nang maramihan ng ating mga kababayan para magtrabaho. So, necessity po siya, napipilitan siya—iyon ang tawag doon. Napipilitan iyong ating mga kababayan na magtrabaho sa ibang bansa dahil ito iyong kalagayan dito, hindi po maigi para sa ating mga Pilipino. Ganoon po iyon.

So, there is something wrong with that. Kung ang gusto lang natin ay ayusin iyong ahensiya ay i-address po natin iyong mga basic issue ng ating lipunan. Kapagka ganoon po natin iyon tiningnan, mas maniniwala po tayo na talagang matutugunan ang problema nila, ang problema ng bansa. Well, kasama po iyong migration. So, hindi po siya piecemeal. Talagang kailangan pong tingnan nang buo para ma-address iyong interest and concerns of the Filipino migrant workers at ng buong mga kababayan natin.

So, Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor, gusto ko lang malaman kaugnay doon sa effects on government employees, ano, mayroon pong more than a thousand government employees expected to be affected by this large-scale reorganization. Ito po iyong pangamba ng mga tao. Many could lose their jobs dahil sa mga concerns, halimbawa, ng DOLE sa National Conciliation and Mediation Board, iyong National Labor Relations Commission, iyong government entities outside of the POEA and the OWWA that are bound to have their OFW-related functions na ma-cut. Ano po bang mangyayari sa kanila? Ilan po ba ang maaapektuhan nito? Ano po ang plano sa Department of OFW kaugnay nito?

REP. MARIÑO. Well, Mr. Speaker, unang-una, iyong kanina pong katanungan, gusto ko lang pong ipagbigay-alam sa ating kasamahan na ang 10 million Filipino overseas, mga kasamahan natin, 41 percent are OFWs, permanent migrants are 48 percent, irregular migrants are 11 percent. So, doon po sa sinasabi na contribution ng ating mga, for example, migrants, 48 percent po iyan. Napakalaki po ng kontribusyon niyan sa ating ekonomiya at kasama po dito iyong programa doon sa mga permanent migrants. In fact, hinihikayat nga po natin sila na bumalik sa ating bansa. Mayroon pong community-based communications doon sa mga migrant na gusto o puwedeng mag-invest dito sa atin. So, malaki po talaga ang sakop ng ahensiya na ito, na ang katanungan po kanina ay anong mangyayari doon sa mga ahensiya na pagsasama-samahin natin na ireorganize?

For example, the Office of the Undersecretary of the Office of Migrant Workers Affairs, also known as OMWA, will be subsumed under this department. Also, the Commission on Filipinos Overseas, the Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) under the DOLE. Also the ILAB or International Labor Affairs Bureau, the POEA, and the Social Welfare Attache Office (SWATO) under the DSWD which is now operating as the International Social Services Office. So, ito po lahat ay masa-subsume, makakasama po siya doon sa departamento. Hindi naman po nangangahulugan na mawawalan sila ng trabaho. Siyempre, depende po iyan sa mga responsibilidad nila—whether it is duplication ba iyan ng trabaho o mas marami pang opportunities ang mangyayari dahil nga na-create ang isang departamento na ito, kaya sa tingin ko ay mas maraming opportunities for them—lateral or vertical movement. Mas marami pong opportunities, not necessarily na maraming madi-displace na workers sa government.

REP. BROSAS. May study na ba kayo kung ilan ang maapektuhan na mga empleyado o government employees kaugnay dito sa reorganization na magagawa?

REP. MARIÑO. I will get the details, Mr. Speaker, but since they will be subsumed, wala naman pong maaalis doon sa mga worker ng existing na ahensiya.

REP. BROSAS. So, Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor, buong-buo na ipapasok sila doon sa ahensiya. So, tinitiyak po natin ito, dahil iyon po iyong sinasabi ninyo, tinitiyak ngayon na hindi magkakaroon ng loss of job sa mangyayaring ito, Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor.

REP. MARIÑO. That is correct, Mr. Speaker,

REP. BROSAS. On to my next question, Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor. Sinasabi rin na batayan ng

panukala ang umano ay pagkalito ng mga OFW at ng kanilang pamilya kung saan lalapit sa kalagayang kailangan nila ng tulong. Ilan na po ba ngayon ang host countries na may migranteng Pilipino, Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor?

REP. MARIÑO. Again, Mr. Speaker, ilang countries ang ...

REP. BROSAS. Host countries na may migranteng Pilipino.

REP. MARIÑO. More or less 150, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BROSAS. Lahat po ba ng mga bansang ito ay may embahada o consulate ang Pilipinas?

REP. MARIÑO. Hindi po lahat, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BROSAS. Lahat po ba ng host countries na ito ay may POLO o Philippine Overseas Labor Office, Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor?

REP. MARIÑO. Hindi po lahat, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BROSAS. Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor, ang gusto po nating puntuhin dito ay hindi puwedeng iangkas sa pagtatayo ng Department of OFW ang pagresolba sa mga fundamental na kakapusan sa pangangalaga ng gobyerno sa ating mga OFW.

Kung walang konsulado man lang o POLO sa mga lugar na may konsentrasyon ng mga OFW, bakit uunahin nating magtayo ng isang Department of OFW? Kung wala tayong pinapanghawakan na MOU sa isang bansa para matiyak na walang pang-aabuso sa ating mga manggagawa, bakit uunahin natin ang paggastos sa pagtatayo ng isa na namang bagong ahensiya?

Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor, ang masaklap dito, sa pagtatayo mismo ng Department of OFW, baka mag-anak pa ito sa mas matitinding pangangailangan dahil sa direksiyon nito na pagtibayin at gawing episyente ang pag-export ng manggagawang Pilipino sa kasulukulukan ng mundo.

REP. MARIÑO. Mr. Speaker, ang budget naman po na ilalaan dito ay kung ano iyong existing na mga budget noong agencies. Iyon po ay masa-subsume at may idadagdag po tayong five billion pesos para pantulong doon sa mga pangangailangan ng ating mga kababayan. Hindi naman po ito masasabing malaki ang budget. In fact, if you consider their contribution to the economy, iyong mga pinapadala pong remittances ng ating mga kababayan, that is \$32 billion a year, at napakalaki po na tulong sa ekonomiya na ibinibigay ng mga remittances na iyan. That is almost 10 percent of

our GDP. So, how do we justify this dahil iyong budget po na ilalaan dito ay talaga naman pong maliit pa, considering that the contribution to our revenue is that much. Bukod po doon, hindi naman po natin maki-create iyong sinasabi kanina na pagandahin ang ating ekonomiya o bigyan natin ng social services kung wala naman po tayong sources of revenue. This is one of the sources of revenue, Mr. Speaker.

Kapag tayo po ay nagde-demand ng mga serbisyo, kailangan din po nating hanapan ng sources of revenue. Sa ngayon, ito po ang isa sa pinakamalaking sources of revenue. Kung dumating ang panahon na hindi na natin kailangan ang remittances o kinikita sa mga remittances ay mas maganda po dahil nangangahulugan na maganda na po ang ekonomiya ng ating bansa, pero hindi po gaganda ang ating ekonomiya kung wala po tayong revenue na inaasahan, at kailanman ay hindi rin po gaganda ang mga social services kung wala rin po tayong mga revenue na nakukuha mula sa mga OFWs natin or even sa mga migrants natin na nagpapadala ng pera dito sa ating bansa.

Again, if I were to justify the creation of this Department, number one, it is a necessary department. Number two, pangangailangan o matagal nang hiling po ito ng ating mga kababayan, 10 milyong kababayan. Ilang Kongreso na po ang dumaan at siguro ngayon lang ito may pag-asang maipasa. Kung hindi pa po natin ipapasa ngayon, kailan pa ho natin ipapasa ang departamento, ang pag-create ng departamento na ito? Aantayin po ba natin na gumanda ang ating ekonomiya bago tayo magpasa ng isang departamento? Sa tingin ko po ay simultaneous po dapat.

Marami pong mga nabanggit na issues but that is the job of other departments. It is not necessarily the job of this Department of Overseas Filipino Workers; it is also the job of other departments to create other opportunities; and it is the job of the government. Ang sinasabi ko lang po ay mas lalo ho nating paiigtingin at pagagandahin ang kalagayan ng ating mga kababayan kung mayroong isang departamento na tumututok sa kanila. Alam natin na kung ang kailangan na programa ay iyong pag-repatriate sa ating mga kababayan, iyon po dapat ang magiging focus ng departamento na ito. It is a balancing act kapagka po na-create ang departamento na ito. Anyway, that is an implementation problem. My job is to suggest the creation. Kapag na-create po iyan, saka po natin puwedeng i-review dahil mayroon naman pong Oversight Committee na puwedeng tingnan ang relevance ng na-create na departamento na ito, whether it is relevant. It could be irrelevant five years or 10 years from now but as of right now, Mr. Speaker, ito po ang pangangailangan ng ating mga kababayan.

REP. BROSAS. Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor, naniniwala po ang Kinatawan na ito na kailangan talagang mag-hold ng mga series ng consultations with the OFWs kaugnay nitong iki-create o lilikhaing Department of Overseas Filipino Workers. Actually, hindi lamang po sa mga OFWs kung hindi sa public at mga stakeholders para naririnig talaga kung ito ba ang sagot, iyong pag-e-establish ng Department of OFWs para sa ating mga overseas Filipino workers.

Bukod po doon, nais ko lang sabihin na may mga demands ang mga overseas Filipino workers natin kaugnay ng mga kalagayan nila. Ito ay ilan lamang sa mga maaari kong ibahagi.

Unang-una, to conduct a full and independent audit of alleged abuse, misuse and corruption of OWWA Funds and to fully evaluate all of OWWA's existing programs. Sinasabi ninyo kanina, ipapasok siya ng isang buo. Baka po matugunan ng departamento iyan. Ikalawa, immediately order the release of OWWA funds to all rightful claimants dahil may mga rightful claimants po na hindi pa nakakakuha nito. Pangatlo, recall all abusive and erring officials in all Philippine posts. Ikaapat, prosecute officials involved in the "tanim bala" and balikbayan box extortion schemes. Imbestigahan po iyong smuggling syndicates na mayroon diyan. Ikalima, investigate and prosecute notorious recruitment agencies and their government coddlers including human traffickers, particularly Cristina Sergio and Julius Lacanilao, the traffickers of Mary Jane Veloso. Alam naman po natin iyong case noon at hanggang ngayon, hindi ba?

Abolish the irrelevant and money-making overseas employment certificates. Mayroon pong OEC na tinatawag na problema ng ating mga kababayan. Revoke the POEA's standard employment contract for seamen. Push for the inclusion of career international conventions and norms, obligations of states under international law to respect the rights of migrants and labors in school curricula. Ilan po iyan sa mga kahilingan ng ating mga migrante.

Ang sinasabi ko po, kung matutugunan ito lahat ng Department of OFWs, siguro po mabuti para sa ating mga migrante kung iyon ang magagawa ng isang Department of OFW pero kung hindi po, e baka dapat pag-isipan po natin ng mabuti. Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor, kung ayuda po iyong pag-uusapan natin, may probisyon po doon sa panukalang batas hinggil sa Overseas Filipino Assistance Fund na nagkakahalaga ng limang bilyon para sa repatriation, legal assistance at iba pang tulong. Fixed po ba ang halagang ito?

REP. MARIÑO. Initial fund lang po iyan. Siyempre, kung madadagdagan po iyan, that is the prerogative of Congress.

REP. BROSAS. Kaya ko po naitanong iyan, Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor, sa P5 billion annually, para sa humigit-kumulang na 10 milyon na migranteng Pilipino na sinabi ko kanina, parang lumalabas pagka tiningnan po natin, P500 lang po kada isang OFW iyan. Parang insulto naman po iyon sa mga kababayan nating pinipiga ng mga singil at fees bago pa umalis ng bansa tapos ipapako ang ayuda sa mga OFWs sa P5 bilyon. Halos katumbas lang po siya ng Confidential Fund ng Pangulo ngayong taon.

So, Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor, sa tingin ko po, itong mga binanggit ko ay worth na i-review para makita po kung ano ang makakainam para sa ating mga kababayan sa labas ng bansa. Kung matutugunan effectively at efficiently ng isang Department of Overseas Filipino Workers o DOFW, iyong mga ganoong problema, e mainam po iyon pero kung hindi, baka pag-isipan po nating mabuti, Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor.

REP. MARIÑO. Mr. Speaker, karagdagan na lang po siguro. Iyon pong mga binanggit kanina, these are implementation problems. Kapag na-create po ito ay puwede natin po sila, at least isa lang iyong Secretary, puwede nating tanungin siya doon sa mga implementation issues. Ngayon po, iyong pondo pong binanggit kanina na P5 billion, initially, mayroon pa po tayong puwedeng pagkuhanan ng karagdagang pondo. Ito po iyong sa exemption doon sa dollar remittances ng documentary stamp tax. Medyo malaki na rin po iyon na naipon sa mga nakaraang taon, kung hindi po ako nagkakamali, humigit-kumulang nasa P15 billion po ang collected doon sa mga exemption doon sa dollar remittances. Inuulit ko, ito ay one-five, P15 billion.

Tama po kayo, medyo maliit din pero considering that, even though we have 10 million overseas workers, hindi naman po lahat ng overseas workers ay nangangailangan ng tulong, iyon lang pong mga vulnerable at iyong mga nagkakaroon ng problema. In fact, iyong 49 percent po na migrants, sila po ang tumutulong at hindi po sila nangangailangan ng pondo. Kaya nga po naiipon iyong pondo sa OWWA dahil hindi naman po lahat ay nangangailangan ng tulong. Again, we are just focusing on the vulnerable sector. Hindi po natin puwedeng i-divide doon sa 10 million. Iyan po ay doon para sa mga nangangailangan at mas malaki po dapat ang makuha nilang tulong depende po sa sitwasyon. So, again, the budget will be allocated by this Congress in terms of kung ano talaga iyong kailangan ng departamento na ito.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BROSAS. Yes, panghuli na lang, Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor. Gusto ko lang balikan ulit na ang kailangan

talaga nating asikasuhin sa ating bayan, siyempre, gusto po natin ng magandang polisiya para nang sa ganoon ay matugunan ang mga basic na pangangailangan ng ating mga mamamayan at hindi nga po sila mapilitang lumabas ng bansa para magtrabaho.

Mayroon po kaming people economics, may magagawa. Maganda pong i-review ang mga panawagang ito: isang clean environment, low prices, affordable transport, jobs for all, decent wages, free education, free health care, affordable housing. Iyon po ang mga kailangan nating magawa dito sa ating bayan nang sa ganoon ay mawala na iyong labor-export policy program ng gobyernong ito, Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hataman). Maraming salamat po.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 5832

REP. AGABAS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 5832.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CHANGE OF REFERRAL OF CERTAIN MEASURES

REP. AGABAS. Mr. Speaker, I move for the change of referral of the following measures:

1. House Bill No. 3900 on creating the National Commission on Disability Affairs, from the Committees on Government Reorganization, and Social Services to the Committee on Government Reorganization and Special Committee on Persons with Disabilities;

2. House Bill No. 1291 on granting benefits and privileges to junior citizens, from the Committee on Welfare of Children to the Committee on Youth and Sports Development;

3. House Bill No. 1526 on banning minors from full-contact competitive sports, from the Committee on Welfare of Children to the Committee on Youth and Sports Development;

4. House Bill No. 4338 on establishing a national program for the Filipino gifted children, from the Committee on Youth and Sports Development to the Committee on Basic Education and Culture;

5. House Bill No. 5023 granting benefits and incentives to accredited Bantay-Dagat, from the

Committee on Aquaculture and Fisheries Resources to the Committee on Local Government;

6. House Bill Nos. 284, 2119 and 4081 on promoting integrated urban agricultural development in all metropolitan areas nationwide to address food security concerns, from the Special Committee on Food Security to the Committee on Agriculture and Food and the Special Committee on Food Security;

7. House Bill Nos. 855, 3412 and 5640 on promoting integrated urban agricultural development in all metropolitan areas nationwide to address food security concerns, from the Committee on Agriculture and Food to the Committee on Agriculture and Food and the Special Committee on Food Security;

8. House Bill Nos. 3174, 3423 and 5706 on allowing the use of waste to energy technology in electricity, fuel and heat generation, from the Committee on Energy to the Committees on Ecology and Energy; and

9. House Bill No. 3352 on requiring all graduating elementary, high school and college students to plant at least 10 tree saplings each as a prerequisite for graduation, from the Committee on Basic Education and Culture to the Special Committee on Reforestation.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO COMMITTEES

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we nominate and elect Members of the House to various committees.

Rep. Palma read the names of the House Members elected to the various Committees, per Journal No. 36, dated January 28, 2020.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON GLOBALIZATION AND WTO

As members:

Rep. Luisa Loren Cuaresma
Rep. Franz “Chicoy” E. Alvarez
Rep. Florida “Rida” P. Robes
Rep. Geraldine B. Roman
Rep. Josefina B. Tallado
Rep. Samier A. Tan
Rep. Rowena Niña O. Taduran

COMMITTEE ON SUFFRAGE AND ELECTORAL REFORMS

As member:

Rep. Francisco G. Datol Jr.

COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

As member:

Rep. Gil “Kabarangay Jr.” A. Acosta

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

As member:

Rep. Precious Hipolito Castelo

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

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

It was 6:17 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 6:18 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move to adjourn the session until three o'clock tomorrow afternoon, January 29, 2020.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hataman). The session is adjourned until three o'clock tomorrow afternoon, January 29, 2020.

It was 6:18 p.m.