



# Congressional Record

PLENARY PROCEEDINGS OF THE 18<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST REGULAR SESSION

## House of Representatives

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No. 38

### CALL TO ORDER

*At 3:00 p.m., Deputy Speaker Conrado M. Estrella III called the session to order.*

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

May I call on Rep. Cheryl P. Deloso-Montalla to deliver the Invocation for today.

The Chair would like to ask everybody to rise, and all of us, let us remember that we are in the holy presence of the Lord.

The Honorable Deloso-Montalla will lead us in prayer.

*Everybody rose for the Invocation.*

### INVOCATION

REP. DELOSO-MONTALLA. *Lord God, we gather together unified in Your name this afternoon as we seek guidance, wisdom and support to reflect on the past accomplishments of this Chamber, and look ahead to working together to promote a brighter future for our nation.*

*Lord, look upon us with Your merciful eyes and give us courage, boldness and discernment, as we engage in meaningful discussions in an effort to prepare the country for a better tomorrow.*

*Father, we are so grateful to be living in a democracy, where many play a part in making sure that the needs and desires of our nation's citizens are heard and met. Give us wisdom on how to best represent everyone. Guide our minds and hearts so that we will work for the common good. Fill us with Your grace and continue to remind us that all that we do and accomplish is for the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of You, and for the service of the Filipino.*

*Lord, these are anxious days for Your children. The risks of misunderstanding and failed messaging are great. The threat of maladies and natural calamities are upon us. Help all of us to seek Your presence in our midst during this time, so that peace, understanding and goodwill may prevail. Cover the Philippines, O Lord,*

*with Your mantle of protection as we go through this challenging chapter in the history of our nation.*

*May the comings and goings of Your people be under the seal of Your loving care, and may all our work be done for Your greater honor and glory.*

*Amen.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Amen.

### NATIONAL ANTHEM

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The Chair would like to ask everybody to 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. Estrella). The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

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

The calling of the roll of Members is hereby deferred.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

### APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve Journal No. 36, dated January 28, 2020.

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

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the Secretary General is hereby directed to read the Reference of Business.

#### REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

*Upon direction of the Chair, the Secretary General read the following House Bills and Resolutions on First Reading, Communications and Committee Reports which were referred to the appropriate Committees hereunder indicated:*

#### BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 6051, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8972, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE SOLO PARENTS’ WELFARE ACT OF 2000, PROVIDING FOR ADDITIONAL BENEFITS AND PENAL PROVISION FOR VIOLATIONS OF THE ACT”

By Representative Villafuerte  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF LAWS

House Bill No. 6052, entitled:

“AN ACT RENEWING THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO ABS-CBN CORPORATION (FORMERLY ABS-CBN BROADCASTING CORPORATION) UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7966 OR ‘AN ACT GRANTING THE ABS-CBN BROADCASTING CORPORATION A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN TELEVISION AND RADIO BROADCASTING STATIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES’ FOR TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS FROM THE EFFECTIVITY OF THIS ACT”

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

House Bill No. 6053, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING FEBRUARY 26 EVERY YEAR AS SPECIAL WORKING HOLIDAY IN CELEBRATION OF PHILIPPINES-ISRAEL FRIENDSHIP DAY”

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

House Bill No. 6054, entitled:

“AN ACT RE-NATIONALIZING THE BONDOC PENINSULA DISTRICT HOSPITAL LOCATED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF CATANAUAN, PROVINCE OF QUEZON, PLACING UNDER THE DIRECT SUPERVISION AND CONTROL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Suarez (Aleta)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 6055, entitled:

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

By Representative Suarez (Aleta)  
TO THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON SENIOR CITIZENS

House Bill No. 6056, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING BARANGAY QUICK RESPONSE UNITS IN EVERY BARANGAY THEREBY AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT 7160 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991 AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Zubiri  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 6057, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE OFFICE OF THE REGISTER OF DEEDS IN THE CITY OF PASSI, PROVINCE OF ILOILO AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Biron  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 6058, entitled:

“AN ACT RATIONALIZING THE TAXES IMPOSED ON NON-LIFE INSURANCE POLICIES, AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE SECTIONS 108, 123, 184, AND 185 OF THE NATIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1997, AS AMENDED”

By Representative Nograles (Jericho)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

House Bill No. 6059, entitled:

“AN ACT PRESCRIBING AN ACTIVE

MONITORING AND URGENT RESPONSE MECHANISM BY THE GOVERNMENT TO PREVENT THE KILLING, RAPE AND OTHER ABUSES COMMITTED AGAINST OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS AND PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREFOR”

By Representative Ong (Ronnie)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON OVERSEAS WORKERS AFFAIRS

House Bill No. 6060, entitled:

“AN ACT EXPANDING THE PANTAWID PAMILYANG PILIPINO PROGRAM”

By Representatives De Jesus, Guya, Dagooc and Ebcas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION

House Bill No. 6061, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING FOUR (4) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF REGIONAL TRIAL COURTS IN THE FOURTH JUDICIAL REGION, TWO (2) OF WHICH SHALL BE ESTABLISHED AS FAMILY COURTS, ONE (1) AS A COMMERCIAL COURT AND ONE (1) AS A CYBERCRIME COURT TO BE STATIONED AT THE 2<sup>ND</sup> LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OF CAVITE, CITY OF BACOR, IN THE PROVINCE OF CAVITE, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ‘THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980’, AS AMENDED, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Revilla  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 6062, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER IN THE CITY OF MAASIN, PROVINCE OF SOUTHERN LEYTE, TO BE KNOWN AS THE MAASIN CITY TESDA TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Mercado  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 6063, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A FISH PORT IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SAINT BERNARD, PROVINCE OF SOUTHERN LEYTE”

By Representative Mercado  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE AND FISHERIES RESOURCES

House Bill No. 6064, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A FISH PORT IN BARANGAY ICHON, MUNICIPALITY OF MACROHON, PROVINCE OF SOUTHERN LEYTE”

By Representative Mercado  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE AND FISHERIES RESOURCES

House Bill No. 6065, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING THE CONSTRUCTION OF PANAON ISLAND CIRCUMFERENTIAL ROAD IN SOUTHERN LEYTE”

By Representative Mercado  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 6066, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE SATELLITE OFFICE OF THE MARITIME INDUSTRY AUTHORITY LOCATED IN MAASIN CITY, PROVINCE OF SOUTHERN LEYTE INTO AN EXTENSION OFFICE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Mercado  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 6067, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING TWO (2) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED IN THE CITY OF MAASIN AND IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SOGOD, PROVINCE OF SOUTHERN LEYTE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14(1) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ‘THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980’, AS AMENDED”

By Representative Mercado  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 6068, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING ONE (1) ADDITIONAL BRANCH OF THE MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURT FOR THE CITY OF MAASIN, PROVINCE OF SOUTHERN LEYTE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 29 OF BATAS PAMBANSA BILANG

129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ‘THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980’, AS AMENDED”

By Representative Mercado  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 6069, entitled:

“AN ACT INTEGRATING THE SOUTHERN LEYTE PROVINCIAL HOSPITAL INTO THE EASTERN VISAYAS REGIONAL HOSPITAL”

By Representative Mercado  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 6070, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING THE PROVINCE OF SOUTHERN LEYTE A TOURISM ZONE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Mercado  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

*It was 3:10 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 3:13 p.m., the session was resumed.*

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ANDAYA. Mr. Speaker, may we move to acknowledge the presence in the gallery of the guests of Speaker Alan Peter “Compañero” S. Cayetano. They are the Baguio Correspondents and Broadcasters Club, namely: Mr. Jordan Tablac, Bombo Radyo, Baguio; Mr. Roderick Osis, SunStar Baguio; Mr. Jay Jay Landingan, Manila Bulletin; Ms. Rimaliza Opiña, Baguio Midland Courier; Mr. Dionesio Dennis, DZWT Radyo Totoo; Mr. Joseph Manzano, RPN Baguio; Mr. Redgie Cawis, Philippine Information Agency, CAR; Mr. Frank Cimatu, Rappler, Baguio Chronicles Newspaper; Mr. Mau Victa, Business Mirror; Mr. Dexter See, Manila Times, PIO, Baguio LGU; Mr. Darius Bajo, GMA News; Mr. Aldwin Quitasol, Manila Daily Tribune; Ms. Jessa Samidan, Baguio City, PIO; Mr. Migs Velarde, Sky Cable News; Mr. Cesar Reyes, People’s Journal Tonight; Ms. Liza Agoot, Philippine News Agency; Mr. Jhong Munar, Radyo Pilipinas; and Ms. Jean Nicole Cortes, SunStar Baguio.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The members of the Baguio Correspondents and Broadcasters Club, guests of the honorable Speaker Alan Peter Cayetano, are all welcome to the House of Representatives, the House of the People. Welcome, ladies and gentlemen. *(Applause)*

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ANDAYA. Mr. Speaker, we move that we also acknowledge the presence of the guests of Rep. Cheryl P. Deloso-Montalla from the Second District of Zambales. They are the Barangay Captains from the municipality of Palauig, province of Zambales, namely: Kap. Ernesto S. Dequina Jr., Barangay Bulawen; Kap. Elmer R. Asiatico, Barangay Liozon; Kap. Antonio A. Asis, Barangay Cauyan; Kap. Carlos P. Anulao, Barangay East Poblacion; Kap. Jesus B. Arigo Jr., Barangay San Juan; and Kap. Noel A. Landero, Barangay Bato. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Welcome to the House of Representatives, distinguished Barangay Captains from the municipality of Palauig, guests of Hon. Cheryl Deloso-Montalla. Welcome to the House of Representatives.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ANDAYA. Mr. Speaker, may we also move that we acknowledge the presence of the guests of Cong. Edgar R. Erice from the Second District of Caloocan City: from Barangay 181—Kap. Bernardo Quiboy, Kgd. Augustus Guan, Kgd. Baltazar Sampayan, Kgd. Jaime Delmiguez, Kgd. Jonathan Atchico, Kgd. Joselito Glee, Kgd. Lorenzo Alegre, Kgd. Reynaldo Oflash and SK Chair, Abygail Ojenar; and from Barangay 182—Kap. Rowel Brin, Kgd. Emmanuel Llorca, Kgd. Ernesto Cabotaje, Kgd. Ester Dacanay, Kgd. Ramon Lorgonio, Kgd. Romeo Abarratigue and Kgd. Rosita Milahan.

We would also want to acknowledge the presence of the Senior Citizen President, Erlinda Reguera, and the Malacañang Homeowners Association President, Mr. Edwin Feliciano.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). To the distinguished guests of the honorable Representative Erice, the barangay officials and other leaders of Caloocan City, welcome to the House of the People. Welcome to the House of Representatives.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ANDAYA. Mr. Speaker, may we also acknowledge the presence of the guests of Deputy Speaker Eduardo “Bro. Eddie” C. Villanueva. They are Dr. Michael and Dr. Adelle McKinney, President and Founders of Promise Christian University, California, USA; *(Applause)* Bishop Leo Alconga, President,

Philippines for Jesus Movement; (*Applause*) Bishop Noel Pantoja, (*Applause*) Chairman, Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches; (*Applause*) Dr. Willie and Ellen Isip; Atty. Monching and Esther Ocampo; (*Applause*) Officers and Board Members of Quezon City for Jesus Movement; and the hundreds of CIBAC leaders and coordinators from the National Capital Region, (*Applause*) Bulacan, Cavite and Laguna.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). To all of the guests of Deputy Speaker Bro. Eddie Villanueva and to all the distinguished religious leaders before us, please rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives. May God bless you all. (*Applause*)

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move for the resumption of the Reference of Business.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The Secretary General may resume.

#### REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

##### *Continuation*

*Upon direction of the Chair, the Secretary General continued reading the following House Bills and Resolutions on First Reading, Communications and Committee Reports, which were referred to the appropriate Committees hereunder indicated:*

#### BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 6071, entitled:

“AN ACT REPEALING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11198 ENTITLED, ‘AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE REAPPORTIONMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF SOUTHERN LEYTE INTO TWO (2) LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS’ ”

By Representative Mercado

TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 6072, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A DISTRICT ENGINEERING OFFICE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS (DPWH) IN THE SECOND LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN LEYTE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Mercado

TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 6073, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FOR DETERMINING STATUTORY RAPE AND OTHER ACTS OF SEXUAL ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION TO PROTECT CHILDREN AND AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 3815, AS AMENDED, ALSO KNOWN AS THE REVISED PENAL CODE, AND REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7610, ALSO KNOWN AS THE SPECIAL PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AGAINST ABUSE, EXPLOITATION AND DISCRIMINATION ACT”

By Representative Lim

TO THE COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF LAWS AND THE COMMITTEE ON WELFARE OF CHILDREN

House Bill No. 6074, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING EVACUATION CENTERS IN EVERY PROVINCE, CITY AND MUNICIPALITY AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Olivarez

TO THE COMMITTEE ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT

House Bill No. 6075, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING SOHOTON CAVES AND NATURAL BRIDGE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BASEY, PROVINCE OF SAMAR AN ECOTOURISM SITE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Tan (Sharee)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

House Bill No. 6076, entitled:

“AN ACT IMPOSING A NATIONWIDE BAN ON THE USE OF SINGLE-USE PLASTICS TO ELIMINATE PLASTIC POLLUTION IN THE PHILIPPINES”

By Representative Guico

TO THE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY

House Bill No. 6077, entitled:

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

By Representative Tupas

TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY

House Bill No. 6079, entitled:

“AN ACT DEFINING THE OBLIGATIONS AND

LIABILITIES OF OWNERS/OPERATORS/  
MANAGERS OF CAR-PARKS OF MALLS,  
OFFICE/COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS,  
OPEN PARKING SPACES, AND OTHER  
SIMILAR ESTABLISHMENTS, AND FOR  
OTHER RELATED PURPOSES”

By Representative Taduran  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND  
INDUSTRY

House Bill No. 6080, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING THE INCLUSION OF  
FINANCIAL LITERACY AS A SEPARATE  
SUBJECT IN THE CURRICULUM OF  
ELEMENTARY, SECONDARY, TERTIARY,  
AND TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL  
EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS,  
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR,  
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Garin (Janette)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION  
AND CULTURE AND THE COMMITTEE ON  
HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 6081, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE PUBLIC  
HEALTH EMERGENCY COUNCIL,  
PROVIDING ITS POWERS AND FOR  
OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Biazon  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 6082, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING THE ISLAND OF  
MINDORO A MINING-FREE ZONE AND  
PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREFOR”

By Representative Ramirez-Sato  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL  
RESOURCES

House Bill No. 6083, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING NOVEMBER 17 OF  
EVERY YEAR AS A LOCAL NON-WORKING  
HOLIDAY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF STA.  
BARBARA, PROVINCE OF ILOILO IN  
COMMEMORATION OF THE CRY OF STA.  
BARBARA”

By Representative Gorriceta  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 6084, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING JANUARY 8<sup>TH</sup> OF EVERY  
YEAR AS A LOCAL NON-WORKING  
HOLIDAY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF  
PAVIA IN COMMEMORATION OF ITS

DECLARATION AS AN INDEPENDENT  
MUNICIPALITY”

By Representative Gorriceta  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 6085, entitled:

“AN ACT BANNING THE MANUFACTURE,  
IMPORTATION, SALE, AND USE OF  
SINGLE-USE PLASTIC PRODUCTS, AND  
PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS  
THEREOF”

By Representative Sy-Alvarado  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY

House Bill No. 6086, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE  
DEFENSE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM AND  
FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Sy-Alvarado  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE  
AND SECURITY

House Bill No. 6089, entitled:

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

By Representative Bagatsing  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 6090, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING PHILIPPINE CITIZENSHIP  
TO JUVENAL SANSO”

By Representative Zamora (Ronaldo)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 6092, entitled:

“AN ACT APPROPRIATING THE AMOUNT  
OF FIFTY BILLION PESOS FOR THE  
AID, RELIEF, RESETTLEMENT,  
REHABILITATION, LIVELIHOOD,  
AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS  
AND SERVICES TO COMMUNITIES  
ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY THE TAAL  
VOLCANO ERUPTION, AND FOR OTHER  
PURPOSES”

By Representative Rodriguez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

House Bill No. 6093, entitled:

“AN ACT BANNING THE MANUFACTURE,  
IMPORTATION, SALE, DISTRIBUTION

AND USE OF REEF-TOXIC SUNSCREENS  
IN THE PHILIPPINES”

By Representative Biazon  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 6094, entitled:

“AN ACT REGULATING THE USE OF FACIAL  
RECOGNITION TECHNOLOGY AND FOR  
OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Biazon  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION AND  
COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

House Bill No. 6096, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE CENTER FOR  
DISEASE PREVENTION AND CONTROL,  
PROVIDING MECHANISMS FOR  
EPIDEMIC CONTROL, AND FOR OTHER  
PURPOSES”

By Representative Salceda  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 6097, entitled:

“AN ACT RENUMBERING THE CEBU  
FIRST, SECOND, AND FOURTH  
DISTRICT ENGINEERING OFFICES  
TO CONFORM AND CORRESPOND,  
RESPECTIVELY, WITH THE NUMBERING  
OF THE LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS IN THE  
PROVINCE OF CEBU”

By Representatives Salimbangon, Garcia (Pablo  
John), Caminero, Frasco, Ouano-Dizon,  
Radaza and Calderon  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS  
AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 6098, entitled:

“AN ACT PROHIBITING ANY FORM OF  
DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF  
ETHNICITY, RACE, RELIGION, SEX,  
GENDER, ORIENTATION, LANGUAGE,  
DISABILITY, EDUCATIONAL  
ATTAINMENT, ECONOMIC STATUS,  
HEALTH, AND OTHER STANDARDS,  
PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREFOR, AND  
FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Hernandez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

House Bill No. 6099, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING THE USE OF  
BODY WORN CAMERAS BY LAW  
ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS FOR THE  
PURPOSE OF ENSURING LEGITIMACY  
OF OPERATIONS AND INCREASING  
THE LEVEL OF ACCOUNTABILITY

OF BOTH THE POLICE AND THE  
PUBLIC”

By Representative Hernandez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ORDER  
AND SAFETY

House Bill No. 6100, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING OCTOBER 31 AS  
ANNUAL NATIONAL SAVINGS AND  
FINANCIAL LITERACY DAY”

By Representative Malapitan  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON POVERTY  
ALLEVIATION

## RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 663, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES, THROUGH THE  
COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS, TO  
STRONGLY CONDEMN AND INVESTIGATE  
THE ILLEGAL AND FORCIBLE ENTRY OF  
PARAMILITARY GROUP ALAMARA INTO  
THE LUMAD EVACUATION CENTER AND  
SANCTUARY AT THE UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST IN THE PHILIPPINES (UCCP)  
– HARAN CENTER IN DAVAO CITY”

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

House Resolution No. 664, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE HOUSE  
COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION  
AND CULTURE TO INQUIRE IN  
AID OF LEGISLATION INTO THE  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATUTORILY  
MANDATED INTEGRATION OF  
CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE PRIMARY  
AND SECONDARY EDUCATION  
CURRICULA”

By Representative Escudero  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 665, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE HOUSE  
OF REPRESENTATIVES, THROUGH  
THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC  
ORDER AND SAFETY, TO CONDUCT  
AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF  
LEGISLATION, ON ALLEGED ABUSES  
OF THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE  
DURING THE CONDUCT OF TRASLACION  
2020”

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

House Resolution No. 666, entitled:

“RESOLUTION STRONGLY URGING PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA. DUTERTE TO IMMEDIATELY RELEASE OF ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS, INCLUDING THE ELDERLY, THOSE WITH ILLNESSES, THE WOMEN, AND THOSE IMPRISONED FOR MORE THAN (10) YEARS, FOR JUST AND HUMANITARIAN REASONS, AND, THE RELEASE OF DETAINED CONSULTANTS OF THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT OF THE PHILIPPINES (NDFP) IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE JOINT AGREEMENT ON SAFETY AND IMMUNITY GUARANTEES (JASIG) SIGNED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES (GRP) AND THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT OF THE PHILIPPINES (NDFP) AS A GOODWILL MEASURE IN THE RESUMPTION OF PEACE NEGOTIATIONS”

By Representatives Zarate, Gaite, Cullamat, Castro (France), Brosas and Elago  
TO THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON PEACE, RECONCILIATION AND UNITY

House Resolution No. 667, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, THROUGH THE COMMITTEE ON GOOD GOVERNMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY, TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE ISSUE OF GRAFT AND CORRUPTION IN THE MANIPULATION OF THE PHOTO RELEASED BY THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES TO MEDIA OUTLETS AND THE ALLEGED FAKE REBEL SURRENDEREES”

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

House Resolution No. 668, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT TO IMMEDIATELY RELEASE APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR THE AID, RELIEF, REHABILITATION AND RESETTLEMENT OF FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY THE ERUPTION OF THE TAAL VOLCANO”

By Representative Geron  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

House Resolution No. 669, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION SEEKING TO IMPOSE AN IMMEDIATE TRAVEL MORATORIUM ON FLIGHTS FROM CHINA TO PANGLAO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IN PANGLAO, BOHOL DUE TO CORONAVIRUS, UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE”

By Representative Aumentado  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

#### COMMUNICATIONS

Letter dated 13 December 2019 of Benjamin E. Diokno, Governor, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), submitting to the House of Representatives the Report on Philippine External Debt as of 30 September 2019.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Letter of Alfonso G. Cusi, Secretary, Department of Energy (DOE), providing the House of Representatives with a copy of the Mindanao Energy Plan (MEP) 2018-2040 and the Energy Annual Report 2018 that were both posted at the DOE website ([www.doe.gov.ph](http://www.doe.gov.ph)).

TO THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY

Letter dated 2 January 2020 of Benjamin E. Diokno, Governor and Chairman of the Financial Stability Coordination Council (FSCC), Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), submitting to the House of Representatives a soft copy of an audio-visual presentation (AVP) entitled “Understanding Financial Stability” together with a printed copy of the Financial Stability Report (FSR) for 2018H1-2019H1.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

Letter dated 7 January 2020 of Maria Catalina E. Cabral, Ph.D., CESO I, Undersecretary for Planning and Public-Private Partnership (PPP), Office of the Secretary, Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), submitting to the House of Representatives the Project Briefers as of December 25, 2019, including the List of Priority Projects of PPP of the DPWH and Toll Regulatory Board (TRB), for implementation, ongoing, and completed by the DPWH.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

Letter dated January 8, 2020 of Niño Raymond B. Alvina, Executive Director, Bureau of Local Government Finance, submitting to the House of Representatives the Bureau’s preliminary Quarterly Statement



of Receipts and Expenditures (SREs) of Local Government Units (LGUs) covering the period Q1 to Q4 of FY 2018 and Q1 to Q3 of FY 2019.  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Email dated January 9, 2020 of Jessica G. Unson, Supervising Agriculturist, Special Projects Coordination Unit, Provincial Governor's Office, Province of Agusan del Sur, submitting the following Report of Operations for the quarter ending December 31, 2019, on the Local Government Support Fund – Conditional Matching Grant to Provinces (CMGP) for Road Repair, Rehabilitation and Improvement, attested by Santiago B. Cane, Jr., Provincial Governor:

1. Quarterly Physical Report for 2018 and 2019 Projects; and
2. Quarterly Financial Report for 2017, 2018 and 2019 Projects.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated January 13, 2020 of Maria Gleda E. Lim, State Auditor V, Supervising Auditor, Audit Groups CGS I and II-Water Districts and Other CGS Stand Alone Agencies, Regional Office No. VI, Commission on Audit, furnishing the House of Representatives the Annual Audit Reports on the following Water Districts:

1. Ibajay Water District, Poblacion, Ibajay, Aklan (CY 2016-2018); and
2. Metro Kalibo Water District, Andagao, Kalibo, Aklan (CY 2018).

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated January 14, 2020 of Victor J. Yu, Provincial Governor, Province of Zamboanga del Sur, forwarding the Report on Fund Utilization and Status of Program/Project Implementation for the Quarter Ended October to December 2019 (4th Quarter) on the Local Government Support Fund to Local Government Units, to wit:

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

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated January 16, 2020 of Orlando T. Lavista, State Auditor IV/Audit Team Leader, Team No. 1, NGS A for SUCs and Other Stand-Alone Agencies, Regional Office No. IX, Commission on Audit, furnishing the House of Representatives a copy of the Annual Audit Report on the JH Cerilles State College-System, Mati, San Miguel, Zamboanga del Sur for the year ended December 31, 2018.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated January 16, 2020 of Delfin N. Lorenzana, Secretary, Department of National Defense, submitting the Department's report on the implementation of Martial Law in Mindanao covering the month of November 2019.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY

Letter dated 17 January 2020 of Emmanuel G. Herbosa, President and Chief Executive Officer, Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP), notifying the House of Representatives that the following required Quarterly Budget and Financial Accountability Reports (BFARs) for the quarter ended December 31, 2019, have been posted in the DBP Website under the Transparency and Disclosures:

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

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated 17 January 2020 of Acmad Rizaldy P. Moti, Chief Executive Officer, Home Development Mutual Fund, submitting to the House of Representatives a copy of the Pag-IBIG Fund 2018 Annual Report.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

National Tax Research Center (NTRC) Tax Research Journal, Volume XXXI.2, March - April 2019 and Volume XXXI.3, May-June 2019.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

2018 Annual Report of the Social Security System.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ENTERPRISES AND PRIVATIZATION

Letter dated January 23, 2020 of Salvador C. Medialdea, Executive Secretary, Office of the President, Malacañang, transmitting herewith two (2) original copies of Republic Act No. 11468, which was signed by President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, entitled:

“AN ACT DESIGNATING THE THIRD SUNDAY OF NOVEMBER EVERY YEAR AS THE NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE FOR ROAD CRASH VICTIMS, SURVIVORS, AND THEIR FAMILIES”

TO THE ARCHIVES

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report of the Committee on Public Order and Safety

(Committee Report No. 209), re H.B. No. 6123, entitled:

“AN ACT DEFINING THE OFFENSES OF DISCHARGE OF FIREARMS AND INDISCRIMINATE FIRING OF FIREARMS AND PROVIDING STIFFER PENALTIES THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE ARTICLE 254 OF ACT NO. 3815, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘REVISED PENAL CODE’, AND REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10591, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ‘THE COMPREHENSIVE FIREARMS AND AMMUNITION REGULATION ACT’ ”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 607

Sponsors: Representatives Bravo and Acop  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Banks and Financial Intermediaries (Committee Report No. 210), re H.B. No. 6134, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING BANKING INSTITUTIONS TO STRENGTHEN THE FINANCING SYSTEM FOR AGRICULTURAL, FISHERIES AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 5681

Sponsors: Representatives Cua, Tiangco, Padiernos, Singson, Paduano, Lusotan, Garbin and Oaminal

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Ways and Means and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 211), re H.B. No. 6135, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE FISCAL REGIME FOR THE MINING INDUSTRY”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bills Numbered 288, 560, 1687, 2557, 4541, 4874, 5022 and 5253

Sponsors: Representatives Salceda, Ungab, Suansing (Estrellita) and Garin (Sharon)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Ways and Means and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 212), re H.B. No. 6136, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8794, ENTITLED ‘AN ACT IMPOSING A MOTOR VEHICLE USER’S CHARGE ON OWNERS OF ALL TYPES OF MOTOR VEHICLES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES,’ AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11239”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bills Numbered 1294, 3006, 3616, 4223 and 4695

Sponsors: Representatives Salceda and Ungab  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Trade and Industry (Committee Report No. 213), re H.B. No. 6137, entitled:

“AN ACT ENCOURAGING CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY, PROVIDING INCENTIVES THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bills Numbered 1198, 1225 and 3853

Sponsors: Representatives Gatchalian, Macapagal Arroyo, Pineda and Agabas

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Welfare of Children (Committee Report No. 214), re H.B. No. 6139, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING AND ENHANCING THE ROLE OF PARENT-TEACHER AND COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS IN PROMOTING THE WELFARE AND PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 603, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ‘THE CHILD AND YOUTH WELFARE CODE’ ”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 1587

Sponsors: Representatives Romualdez (Yedda) and Romualdez (Ferdinand)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Health and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 215), re H.B. No. 6144, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE BED CAPACITY OF THE CAGAYAN VALLEY MEDICAL CENTER (CVMC) IN TUGUEGARAO CITY, PROVINCE OF CAGAYAN, FROM FIVE HUNDRED (500) TO ONE THOUSAND (1,000) BEDS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 716

Sponsors: Representatives Tan (Angelina), Lara and Ungab

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

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

## ROLL CALL

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). 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. 38, dated February 3, 2020.\**

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. The roll call shows that 227 Members responded to the call.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). With 227 Members responding to the call, the Chair declares the presence of a quorum.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

## PRIVILEGE HOUR

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

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

The Chair declares a Privilege Hour.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ANDAYA. Mr. Speaker, I now move that the Gentleman from CIBAC Party-List, the honorable Deputy Speaker Eduardo “Bro. Eddie” C. Villanueva, be recognized to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The distinguished Gentleman from CIBAC Party-List, the honorable Deputy Speaker Eduardo “Bro. Eddie” C. Villanueva, is hereby recognized. (*Applause*)

## PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. VILLANUEVA (E.)

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Isang mapagpala at makasaysayang araw po sa lahat ng mga naririto sa august Body ng House of Representatives.

Para sa kaalaman po ng lahat, ang privilege speech na ito ay naka-schedule originally noong January 22, 2020, subalit dahil sa sudden eruption ng Taal Volcano, the leadership of the House of Representatives, headed by our beloved Speaker of the House, Hon. Alan Peter

“Compañero” S. Cayetano; the Majority Leader, Hon. Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez; and Minority Leader, Hon. Bienvenido M. Abante Jr. decided to transfer the said session to Batangas City Convention Center. Hence, this privilege speech was a little bit delayed for a while, but this is to emphasize the Bible Month in our country. Kaya po ang title ng aking privilege speech na ito ay the so-called “The Indispensability of the Holy Bible in State-Crafting or in Nation-Building.”

Sa simula po, plano ko sanang huwag ko nang basahin ang aking prepared privilege speech because of some sentiments on the time of some of our friends here. Balak ko po, in five minutes, I can just present to you the answers to “What is the Bible?” Why the Bible is important in crafting the nation’s future and how?

Nabalitaan ko po na marami palang mga dumating na mga multisectoral groups from different societies ng ating bansa, nasa mga bleacher, mula po sa different cities and provinces ay nandito po sa ating kalagitnaan, maging ang ilang foreign missionaries sa pangunguna ng President and the Founders of Promise Christian University, sina Dr. Mike McKinney at Dr. Adelle McKinney, (*Applause*) kasama po ang National President ng Philippines for Jesus Movement, Bishop Leo Alconga, at ganon din po, kasama ang President ng Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches, si Dr. Noel Pantoja, (*Applause*) maging ang El Shaddai leading Preacher ng USA, si Atty. Ramoncito Ocampo ay narito po at ang kaniyang maybahay. (*Applause*) Dahil po sa binisita tayo ng multisectoral groups, it could be an injustice to them if I will just abbreviate my message. So, therefore, I do hope that you can understand why I have to read this prepared privilege speech.

To my fellow atheists before, I used to be an atheist for seven years of my life, and if there are still some atheists here, I am just requesting your consideration. Let us remember the philosophy of Voltaire, an atheist in history, who said, and I quote, “I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.” So, I do hope that I can read my privilege speech with freedom and liberty.

To my distinguished colleagues in the House of Representatives, guests and visitors gathered here today, and fellow Filipinos watching this video stream, good afternoon.

I stand in front of this august Body to speak about a very important matter that I deem highly instrumental in fulfilling our solemn mandate to the Filipino people. Initially, I requested to deliver this speech on an earlier date, as I have said a while ago, but because of extremely urgent matters that we have to address in the recent session days, I chose to get the next available and suitable schedule. Conveniently, such schedule falls today, the first Monday of February, the month when Filipinos in the whole world celebrate the spirit of love,

\* See ANNEX (printed separately)

because I am here to talk about the Book of Love that was written through and by God's own love for us, the Holy Bible.

Last week, we celebrated the National Bible Day, as we ought to do every last Monday of January in deference to Republic Act No. 11163, principally authored by Senator Manny Pacquiao and Senator Joel Villanueva. Through this Act, the State recognizes its policy of aiding and encouraging the development of moral character and spiritual foundation of the Filipino people who constitute the largest Christian nation in the Asia Pacific. We saw the different ways on how Filipinos commemorated this significant event in the very halls of the House of Representatives. For instance, at the South Wing Lobby, just last week, we had an educational exhibit organized by the Philippine Bible Society and the United Bible Societies, in coordination with Christians in Congress Fellowship that ran from January 27 to January 30, 2020. Still for others, there were prayer walks, mass gatherings, symposiums, competitions and the like. However, as a loyal follower of the living God, as your Deputy Speaker for good governance and moral uprightness, per designation revealed to me by our Speaker, I feel with deep conviction that I am duty bound, both to God and to you my beloved, my dear colleagues, to make sure that this celebration will not just simply pass as that, a celebration mandated by a Republic Act. For even though the National Bible Day is but only a day in the Philippines' list of national holidays, the truth it conveys must be trumpeted in all corners of the society every single day, that the living God has revealed to the world the truths necessary to guide us as we endeavor to live our earthly existence, and these truth are contained in God's book, the Holy Bible.

I remember suddenly the word of Abraham Lincoln, considered as the greatest President of the United States of America, who said, per history, that the greatest gift of God to humanity is the Holy Bible. I remember suddenly also the words of George Washington, the first President of the United States of America, who said, and I quote him, "It is impossible to govern a nation without God, without His word and prayer." Hence, I want to share to you briefly what is this Bible that sometimes becomes controversial.

According to history, various forces since time immemorial tried to destroy the Bible, but until now, the Holy Bible remains to be the number one bestseller in all parts of the world. This is just a reminder to all of us.

Now, what is this Bible? If it is not just a book at the center of a religion that is Christianity, what really is it? To put it plain and simple, the Bible is the word of God. It testifies of itself through Saint Paul, in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, and I quote, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking,

correcting." I am repeating "correcting" because I believe the House of Representatives of the Republic of the Philippines is bound by its duty to correct whatever wrongs that are happening, if there are any, in our society—"correcting and training in righteousness"—righteousness here is mentioned. I remember in Proverbs 14:34, "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people."

Now, the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work, which is one of the ultimate aims of the Bible. In detail, it is a divine compilation of 66 different books written in three languages: Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic, written by 40 very different authors in three major continents: Asia, Africa, and Europe, in a span of over 1,600 years.

Beloved colleagues, just to remind us of this truth, 40 writers, in the span of 1,600 years, wrote the Bible as inspired and mandated by the Holy Spirit of God. And you cannot find any major real contradiction. But we can see in history, you read five biography books of one person, written by four authors, just four authors, and you can see several contradictions proving that the Bible is entirely different from an ordinary book. Yet, there could exist some—(coughing) excuse me—differences in words, like large or big or huge, but the meaning is the same. And I would like also to remind everybody that Saint Peter emphasized this truth when he said in 2 Peter 1:20-21:

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

The Bible thus is the book of books because it is the book of God as rebuilt in the Holy Bible.

Some people are saying, like me when I was still an atheist, "Well, I do not believe in the Bible. What is the convincing proof that the Bible could be the book of the living God?" If you will study carefully without biases and prejudices, there are 332 prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the birth, the life and the death of Jesus Christ, that were all accurately fulfilled in the New Testament. And some major prophecies are now being fulfilled everyday as signs of the second coming of the Lord. So, that is just a reminder to all of us because I used to use that argument when I was still an atheist during my radical days.

Now, why use the Bible? Why will we, complex human beings with wide access to all the available knowledge in the world, follow a book? Why will we let it regulate our lives or even our nation? It is because

using it means acknowledging and submitting to the authority of God in every pillar of our society, because doing so will open up our country to all the good things God has in store for those who put him above all else. As it is written in Psalm 33:12, “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.” If US dollar has “In God We Trust,” we can say to the whole world that the Philippine peso has enshrined, few years ago, in Psalm 33:12, “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.” The national anthem of Canada clearly enshrined the Word of God, so let us show to the world that the Philippines is really a God-believing nation.

Clearly, God’s blessings and guidance are what our country needs, especially today when the new year has barely started, yet, trials after trials have already hounded us. Indeed, while we are still reeling from the effects of local and international conflicts, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, calamities, disasters and the two cases of novel coronavirus in the country which were confirmed just a few days ago, if we are serious in reading the Holy Book of the Living God, we can see that all nations of the world are beset with different crises—calamities, disasters, plagues, famine—all because of the so-called curses of sins. Even Israel suffered many times from all these tragedies, curses of sickness, curses of sins, but I would like to remind everybody, my beloved colleagues, that God has provided one simple but significant solution. In 2 Chronicles, 7:14, God said:

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

Sa Tagalog po:

Kung ang bayan ng mga taong tinawag sa Aking pangalan ay magpapakumbaba, mananalangin, hahanapin ang Aking mukha at tatalikod sa kanilang mga kasalanan, ako na Diyos na may gawa ng langit at lupa’y makikinig sa inyong mga daing at pananalangin. Patatawarin ko ang inyong mga kasalanan at pagagalingin Ko ang inyong bayan.

*At this juncture, the Deputy Speaker relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Prospero A. Pichay Jr.*

Ang coronavirus po ay hindi gawang biro. Never in history na halos lahat ng Pilipino ngayon nag-aagawan sa mask—sa maskara. Kaya nga po ang supply na P200 per box ng mask, ngayon P1,500 na pero wala pang mabili. I do hope that God’s mercy will prevail eventually and stop this plagues and famine going around in our country.

At gusto ko rin pong ipaalala iyong sinabi sa Psalm 119:105 for all respected lawmakers in our country in the Lower House as well as in the Upper House. Sabi po ng Diyos sa Psalm 111:105, “The word of God is the light unto our path and lamp unto our feet.” Sinabi naman sa Psalm 119:11, “I keep your word, Lord, in my heart so that sin cannot come in.” Ito po ay paalala sa sambayanang Pilipino kung gusto nating ang ating bansa ay may bukas na langit, iwasan po natin ang S-I-N—sin. Because of sin, curses are coming, but when there is repentance and humility, and courage to submit ourselves to God’s authority and sovereignty, then the healing power of God will prevail. Ito po ang napakahalaga na nakalagay sa banal na kasulatan.

Puwede po ba, sa puntong ito, ibigay natin ang karangalan sa Diyos? Isang malakas na palakpak sa Diyos na buhay (*Applause*) just to give applause to the Lord. Applause is not only for politicians or celebrities, but also for the Almighty God. Amen.

While we do our best to curb the debilitating effects of these challenges to our people, I urge you, beloved, to put in mind that we are not alone in this fight. In dark times as this, we have God and His word to light our path. On one hand, let us utilize science, device strategies and implement ways to address the matter at hand. Yet, on the other, let us pray to God, cling to His promises, obey His word. From then until now, we must be the same people, the sovereign people of this land imploring the aid of the Almighty God as enshrined in the very preamble of our Constitution.

I suddenly remember to read, for the sake of our 110 million Filipinos right now, the Philippine Constitution. Enshrined in its Preamble, this glorious preamble, let me read it, is a reminder to the world that the Filipino people are not barbaric but actually civilized and Christians, and may I quote the Preamble of the Philippine Constitution:

We, the sovereign Filipino people, imploring the aid of Almighty God, [the author of the Bible] in order to build a just and humane society and establish a Government that shall embody our ideals and aspirations, promote the common good, conserve and develop our patrimony, and secure to ourselves and our posterity the blessings of independence and democracy under the rule of law and a regime of truth, justice, freedom, love, equality, and peace, do ordain and promulgate this Constitution.

Maliwanag pa sa sikat ng araw, ang sambayanang Pilipino, the sovereign Filipino people believe in the living God. Kaya, there is no room to oppose the beliefs of the majority of our people on God.

Nabasa ko po ang isang aklat, ang title: “Why Nations Fail.” Ang isang lesson po na nakita ko roon,

na the failure of political power in establishing the right institutions that can understand and promote in advance the greatest welfare and interest of the people could be the cause why grinding poverty, miseries, injustices, unrighteousness are prevailing, hence more than ever before, the importance of reviewing the Holy Book or the Bible.

As Deputy Speaker for good governance and moral uprightness, I have burdened myself to be blatantly exposed to the sad realities besetting our nation today. I bring these hard facts to this Body not to create controversies, but I feel it is the duty of the lawmaking Body of every nation to hear this, especially the entire Filipino community, that may hasten action in order to save our society from first degradation.

First is the increasing rate of teenage pregnancy in our country. My beloved fellow lawmakers, statistics show the unbelievable sudden increase of teenage pregnancy in our country—13 years old, 14 years old, 15 years old, young girls in our country becoming pregnant according to Commission on Population and Development or POPCOM. An average of 530 teenagers get pregnant daily. That is roughly 24 babies every hour or 200,000 babies each year.

While primarily affecting the young parents' future, this scenario is also detrimental to the economy because according to National Economic and Development Authority or NEDA, young mothers lose about P24 billion to P47 billion in earnings annually due to early pregnancy. That is why you can see the increase in rape and incest cases in our country today. Sometimes, I am tempted to ask if the MTRCB is still relevant or does the MTRCB need more teeth to implement the laws based on righteousness and morality? You and I are witnesses. Many television programs today, instead of learning great lessons in rebuilding our country, are advancing the spirit of lasciviousness and immorality.

Indeed, we all labor to address this alarming situation in all ways we can, but this would not have happened in the first place if what the Bible teaches about sexual purity is being inculcated among our youth. Call me conservative if you must, but I know what the Bible says: "It is God's will that you should be sanctified; that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable," 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4. In Hebrews 12:14, God said, "Be holy, pursue peace and be holy; for without holiness, no one can see God."

Another pressing matter we must address is this country's perennial problem of corruption. We recently received the unfortunate news that the Philippines has dropped 14 places below its 2018 Global Corruption Index. In addition to this is the estimation of Deputy Ombudsman Cyril Ramos, which surmised that the government had lost a staggering P1.4 trillion to corruption in the past two years alone.

I believe rational people should be shocked about this shocking corruption going on. I remember a scholar from Scotland who has been specializing in the economies of the Asian region, who said that he has never seen a country in this world like the Philippines that used to be number one in Asia, even richer than Japan until 1943. But 50 years after in so short a time, the Philippines has fallen down to the bottom, blacklisted as the "sick man of Asia"; the laughing stock of Asia; the most corrupt country in Asia; and exporter of slaves, because the Philippines had undergone incredible deterioration due to shocking, unabated political corruption.

I am just sharing this because I believe in my heart that there is still much hope for our country, especially if the lawmaking bodies in the country will be serious in crafting serious laws that can curb the evils of corruption.

Truthfully, until now, we see irregular government transactions and shady contracts. I would really like to have a deeper conversation regarding these purported deals, but I will have to reserve this matter for another day as our team is gathering pieces of evidence to present to this judicious body. But let me stir your memory a bit regarding a statement that became notoriously known when a dubious project between the Philippine government and China was exposed not many years ago. A former Cabinet member said and popularized this word and may I quote, "Moderate your greed," said one government official to another. I suddenly remember Colossians 3:5-6, "Greed or covetousness is idolatry, and people exercising such will surely invite the wrath of God."

This is against the law. The Holy Bible does not only say moderate your greed. It explicitly tells us in Colossian 3:5-6, "As I have told you already, my beloved, that greed or covetousness is idolatry and, therefore, abomination to the Lord." What is unfortunate is that, the wrath of God is coming not only to the responsible people, not only to the guilty people, not only to the corrupt people, but even to the innocent people who suffer because of the corrupt who seats in power. This is a confirmation of what is written in Proverbs 29:2, "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice, but when the wicked bears rule, the people mourn."

My beloved, respected fellow lawmakers, just to remind you the warning of the Lord here, in Proverbs 25:1, the Bible says from the Lord, "Remove the wicked away from the King's throne, so that the government will be based on righteousness." Why righteousness is important? God answered in Proverbs 14:34, "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach or disgrace to any people." Now, in Proverbs 29:2, let me just finish this very important scriptures or reminders of the living God. "When the righteous are in authority,

the people rejoice, but when the wicked bears rule, the people mourn.” This is in verse 2. Please do not forget verse 1. To all concerned in this nation, verse 1 of Proverbs 29 says, “When a man or a woman remains stiff-necked or stubborn after several rebukes, he or she will be destroyed suddenly without remedy.” This is just a reminder to our beloved countrymen; it is high time for us to make our lives right with God, because there is also, of course, the so-called judgment day.

We can see it in the approximately 22 million Filipinos, or 21 percent of our population who live below the poverty threshold or below P10,481 for a family of five, as reported by the Philippine Statistics Authority. What must we do for them? The Bible is very explicit, and this command must appeal to us, specifically public servants.

Proverbs 3:27-28 says, “Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due. When it is in your power to act, do not say to your neighbor, ‘Come back tomorrow and I will give it to you,’ when you already have it with you.” There is mourning too in thousands and thousands of people who were orphaned by those who died in the government’s war against drugs. It all started with the Command Memorandum Circular No. 16-2016, which laid down the guidelines of the PNP’s Anti-Illegal Drugs Campaign, a campaign plan tagged as Project Double Barrel. It had a two-pronged approach, namely: “Project Tokhang” or the lower barrel and “Project HVT,” involving massive and reinvigorated illegal drugs operations targeting illegal drugs personalities and drug syndicates. In addition to this two-way approach was the conduct of internal cleansing and education awareness and rehabilitation. The project had the following results as recently reported by the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency or PDEA.

Before I go on, I just want to remind everybody, I am bringing these issues not to create any controversy, but to remind everybody that the Bible is not irrelevant. The Bible is so relevant in the daily living of every human being, especially in the existence of every government in every nation of the world.

According to the reports of the PDEA, there were 151,601 anti-illegal drug operations conducted, 419 drug dens and 14 shabu laboratories dismantled, P40.39 billion worth of illegal drugs seized, where 220,728 persons involved in illegal drugs arrested, of which 8,185 were high-value targets and 485,295 surrenderees completed recovery programs.

These are but a few of the many outstanding figures that this project has recorded in its roster of achievements. Among these numbers, however, one figure tragically stands out. PDEA puts them at 5,552, but the international human rights organizations’ count is much higher. I am pertaining to the number of people who died during the government’s campaign against illegal drugs. Thousands of people were prematurely

snatched from their families, robbing them of their chance at a better or even just a decent life, depriving them even of a chance to repent and turn from their unlawful ways.

A few months ago, or last year, a neighbor of mine with the name Abet who just joined the motorcade campaign of former General Dela Rosa, now Senator Dela Rosa, just joined the campaign motorcade but when he came back to his house, according to a neighbor of ours, that evening, a group of people and, as reported to me, some policemen entered his house. In front of his mother, he was killed horribly.

So, I remember what God said, “Justice and righteousness are the foundations of God’s throne.” God’s throne is the seat of power. The government is an extension of God’s throne. Hence, just a reminder to all of us that there are some injustices.

Mga kapwa ko Kinatawan sa Kongreso, kailangang may gawin po tayo. Huwag nating payagang maging laganap ang patayan sa ating bayan kahit ano pa mang dahilan.

Remember President Duterte’s famous inauguration address in Malacañang on the first day that he assumed his office, and I really salute him for this. He said, and I quote, “My adherence to due process and the rule of law is uncompromising.” No less than the President of the Philippines released this national Presidential policy. Unfortunately, there were scalawags in the police system, who violated this Presidential pronouncement of our respected President. Therefore, I would say that the lawmaking body in this country must really do something rather than let this violation of the Presidential pronouncement continue.

Remember, life is valuable. The Bible teaches that we were created by God according to His image and likeness. Killing life outside the due process of law is murder. The Ten Commandments are very clear; in one of them, God said, “Do not murder.”

I remember Revelation 21:8 states that murderers, the sexually immoral, thieves and liars cannot be accepted in the Kingdom of Heaven, but they will be thrown into the lake of fire with burning sulfur.

It will be my fault and a sin of omission if, after being a Member of this august Body, I would be a coward and not remind everybody of this important Scripture of the Lord.

You may be rich, your lives may prosper here on earth, but as Jesus said, “What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and suffers the loss of his own soul to hell forever?”

The Bible reveals that a soul will remain in hell not only for 100 years, not only for 1,000 years, not only for 1 million years, billion years or trillion years but throughout eternity. That is why the price of our salvation is too high, the very life of Jesus and His blood shed on the cross of Calvary. God is so good. Whenever

a sinner like me—I believe I am one of the greatest sinners in this world, or when I was a radical activist atheist, I taught my students in college to not believe in God. Belief in God is just a product of the fertile imagination of human minds for the psychological satisfaction of the suffering humanity during the ancient time. Belief in God is man’s invention. What we need is to unite the people and advance the national democratic revolution to establish a just and humane society.

I was very sincere but sincerely wrong because there is a God and I praised God because before it was too late, I was arrested by the Lord and, therefore, it is my duty to God and to my fellow Members of this august Body to remind us of the importance of the Holy Bible, the importance of the Word of God in building a nation. That is why I decided to deliver this so-called privilege speech.

Before I go to my two more closing pages—I am just reminded of the famous statement of Edmund Burke, a great politician, statesman of his time. He said, “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.” And I discovered, this is also biblical, James 4:17 states that if you know the good things to do and you do not do them, you sin.

Ano ang dapat nating gawin sa sitwasyong tulad nito na naghahari kung minsan ang kasamaan sa ating lipunan? Proverbs 31:8-9, and I quote in Tagalog:

Ipagtanggol mo ang mga hindi makalaban,  
ipaglaban ang kanilang karapatan. Ipahayag  
mo nang malinaw ang katotohanan at ang  
katuwiran at igawad ang katarungan sa api at  
mahirap.

In English, to summarize, this means: Speak for those who cannot speak for themselves. That is why I am enjoining my beloved colleagues in this august Body, let us all be bold in exposing the truth, for Jesus Christ said, “You will know the truth and the truth shall set you free.”

Now, last but not least: how can we use the Bible to establish an ideal nation? We must begin with ourselves, the leaders of this land.

My fellow Representatives of the Filipino people, our seat is not ours. It is but an extension of God’s throne, His seat of power in our land. According to Psalm 89:14, “Righteousness and justice are the foundation of God’s throne.” Therefore, the transformation of this country begins when we ensure that righteousness and justice based on the Word of God are enforced in every corner of our beloved nation.

We have witnessed how great kings and kingdoms fell because they did not heed the teachings of God contained in the Bible. Let us not be like them. Let us use the Holy Bible as our guide in our pursuit to build our nation upon a strong moral foundation.

My dear colleagues in this august Chamber, please, by the way, accept my gift, the Bible, as a gesture of faith, and to guide us as we have been chosen to lead this nation. You may add to the King James Version Bible our esteemed Minority Leader Benny Abante gifted us last week as this new Bible is another English translation version called “The New International Version,” the simplified one.

Additionally, you can find inside some basic biblical truth teachings that may help you both in your personal lives and official duties, from Hebrews 4:12:

For the Word of God is alive and active,  
sharper than any double-edged sword. It  
penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit,  
joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and  
attitudes of the heart.

To use it, please take note of the verse written on the card that comes with your Bible, and I quote:

Keep this Book of the Law always on your  
lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you  
may be careful to do everything written in it.  
Then, you will be prosperous and successful.

Sa sambayanang Pilipino na nanonood through live streaming, ang sabi ng Joshua Chapter 8, if you want to prosper and succeed in life, meditate on God’s law or God’s Word daily so that you can observe to do all that is written therein. If you do that, anything you do you will be prosperous and you will be successful.

Before I conclude, Mr. Speaker, allow me to take this opportunity to thank this Body for passing on Second Reading a Bill filed by this Representation, the GMRC Bill or Good Manners and Right Conduct Bill, as substituted by House Bill No. 5829, or 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.

I remember, just before I close, I discovered why Japan became a great industrialized country. The first 10 years of the lives of the children, they just inject into the minds and hearts of the young students of Japan values, work ethic, and morality. They are not taught academic courses, not until they finish the foundation of moral values in their existence. And then after that, they are taught advanced technologies and academic courses. That is why after the Second World War, Japan was destroyed, but after one decade, Japan rose up and became a great industrialized country. This is just a reminder to all of us of the importance of moral uprightness. That is why I thank the Speaker of the House when he designated me, through his leadership,



as one of the so-called Deputy Speakers of the House, particularly Deputy Speaker for Good Governance and Moral Uprightness.

Now, before I close, I filed this Bill in the hope of providing the students with a holistic concept to character development and moral values formation from a tender age, which by the way is also a biblical principle, as reflected in Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in a way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

Now, before I close, I remember during President Marcos' regime, he initiated the so-called Moral Rearmament Program, headed by the late Commissioner Victor Nituda. During Ramos' time, he initiated Presidential Proclamation No. 62, otherwise known as the "Moral Recovery Program" led by Senator Shahani. Unfortunately, those noble programs failed to succeed.

I pray that the present dispensation, before the eyes of history, in our generation, such crusade for moral regeneration program be successful, ensuring the foundation of the future greatness of our country and people.

Again, thank you very much for your patience and, before the eyes of history and eternity, I believe I have done my part, whether you agree or not. I thank you for your patience.

God bless you more, and God bless the Philippines. *(Applause)*

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

REP. ANDAYA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from the SENIOR CITIZENS Party-List, Hon. Francisco G. Datol Jr., for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). Congressman Datol, you are recognized. Please proceed.

REP. DATOL. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Majority Leader, Minority Leader, my colleagues, Deputy Speaker Brother Eddie.

I am representing SENIOR CITIZENS in this august Chamber, representing 10 million senior citizens in our country. Ito po ang tanong ko: Ano po ang kahalagahan ng Bibliya sa taumbayan at sa aming mga Kongresista nitong Eighteenth Congress?

Sabay-sabay na daluyong ng mga sakuna gaya ng nakakatakot na nCoV at ang paglulupagi o pagwawala ng Bulkang Taal ang ating nararanasan. Ito po ba ay senyales ng pagtatapos na ng daigdig? Ano po ang masasabi ninyo sa bulwagang ito at sa mga nakikinig na mga senior citizens ng bansang Pilipinas na nasa predeparture area na po ng kanilang buhay?

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). Maraming salamat sa napakagandang katanungan ng isang no-nonsense Member of this august Body, the Chairman of the Senior Citizens Committee, if I am not mistaken, Cong. Jun Datol.

Ang sagot ko po ay simple lang. Number one, ano ang kahalagahan ng Bible dito po sa problema ng ating bansa na dinadalaw ng sangkatutak na calamities, disasters, plagues? Number one po, kapag binasa natin ang Deuteronomy 28:1-14, ang nakalagay doon: "Blessings for Obedience." Ang nakalagay naman ho sa verse 15 up to verse 68: "Curses for Disobedience." Kaya ho ang summary noong aking sagot ay nasa Deuteronomy 28:1, which states that if you fully obey and carefully follow the Lord's commands, God said, in the Word of God, that He will exalt you above all nations of the earth. He will command the coming of the blessings to you, not calamities, not floods, not plagues, but blessings will overtake you. You will no longer borrow and you will no longer beg, but you will lend; you will no longer be the tail, but you will be the head. Your enemy will come to you one way, but your enemy will run away from you seven ways in great trembling. *(Applause)*

I suddenly remember when our beloved President said that we cannot fight China as we might be massacred. But if we will apply the principles of God, sa Bible po, iyong mga kalaban ng mga anak ng Diyos ay nagpadala ng gabundok na bubuyog. Bubuyog ang ginamit ng Diyos para talunin ang kalaban ng mga anak ng Diyos, at minsan nagpaulan ang Diyos ng mga yelo at parang mga bato na dumurog sa mga kalaban.

Ang punto ko po, kapag tayo po ay sumunod sa Salita ng Diyos, ang langit ay bukas. Kapag ho isinarado natin ang ating isip at puso sa Salita ng Diyos, ang impiyerno po ang bukas. Kaya iyong Deuteronomy 28:15-16, makikita ninyo rito itong katakut-takot na sumpa na darating sa mga bansa na hindi sumusunod sa Aking mga utos. *(Applause)*

Naalala ko, ako ay nasa Batangas, nakita ko si Congresswoman Deputy Speaker Vilma Santos when I was in Batangas many years ago, tanghaling-tapat, pumutok ang Pinatubo, nasa gitna kami ng highway alas-dose ng tanghali, umuulan ng buhangin, umuulan ng abo, umuulan ng dust, first time in my life. Sabi ko, "Lord, ano ang ibig sabihin nito, imbes na umulan ng tubig, umuulan ng dust, umuulan ng buhangin?" Pagdating ko sa Bocaue, binuksan ko ang Bible, sabi ko, "Holy Spirit, lead me to the right answer to my question, 'What does it mean?'" Dinala ako ng Diyos sa Deuteronomy 28:24, na nagsasabi na ang isang bansa na nasa ilalim ng sumpa ay makararanas ng pag-ulan ng buhangin, ng dust, ng abo. Kaya, the Lord answered my prayer. So, I repented.

I ask God to forgive our nation. Let us go back to God.

Last but not the least, ano ang kahalagahan ng Bible sa mga taong nasa departure area, senior citizens? Ang sabi ng Diyos sa Bible, “For God so loved the world,” at sinabi rin na sa Bible, “lahat ay makasalanan,” Romans 3:23. Ang kabayaran ng kasalanan ay kamatayan, hindi lang pisikal kung hindi kamatayan sa impyerno, subali’t gayon na lamang ang pag-ibig ng Diyos sa sanlibutang makasalanan, ibinigay niya ang kaniyang bugtong na anak upang sino man ang sa kaniya ay sumampalataya ay huwag mapahamak, kung hindi magkaroon ng buhay na walang hanggan.

Listen carefully, please, this is my last answer to that important question, 1 John 5:11-12:

And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

I am sorry to remind everybody, I respect all religions, kaya lahat ng religious leaders ay kaibigan ko ho, I respect them, but no religion has power to save. If you study carefully the Bible, you will learn that ang impyerno ngayon ay puno ng mga taong galing sa lahat ng relihiyon. Religion has no power to save. Kahit sa JIL Church tayo um-attend, walang itinataas na relihiyon kung hindi si Jesus. Impyerno pa rin ang bagsak natin.

What is important to God is not religion but relation. Hindi relihiyon kundi tamang relasyon sa Diyos ang kailangan natin kung gusto nating magkaroon ng buhay na walang hanggan. (*Applause*) Nasa Banal na Kasulatan po ito, Cong. Francisco G. Datol Jr. Thank you for your important question.

REP. DATOL. Salamat po, Bro. Eddie, at ngayon, naliwanagan na natin at makakarating po iyan sa 10 milyon na aking mga miyembro sa buong Pilipinas, iyong inyong napakagandang sinabi. Iyong Bibliya na nandoon sa lamesa ko ngayon, ano po, paglibot ko sa buong Pilipinas, sa 44,042 barangays, sasabihin ko na kayo na mga senior citizen, ipinagdadasal tayo ni Bro. Eddie na humaba pa ang buhay natin. (*Applause*)

That is all, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). Thank you, Sir.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). Thank you, Congressman Datol.

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). I am open to other ...

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

REP. DELOS SANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I move to

recognize the Gentleman from the First District of Albay, honorable Cong. Edcel C. Lagman, for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). Cong. Edcel C. Lagman, you are recognized. Please proceed.

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Will the distinguished Deputy Speaker and Representative of CIBAC Party-List yield to some questions?

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). Yes, Sir.

REP. LAGMAN. Dan Buttafuoco, the President of the Historical Bible Society, underscored five major reasons we must read the Bible and why the Bible is the most important book on earth. His first reason is that the Bible has transformed the world. I am certain the distinguished Representative will agree to this statement. Kindly provide us, in a few words, the justification for this statement that the Bible has transformed the world.

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). First, Jesus said in John 6:63, “x x x The words that I speak unto you are spirit, and they are life.” Second, Jesus said in Matthew 4:4 repeated in Luke 4:4, “x x x Man shall not live by bread alone x x x.” Third, when we hear the Word of God, the Word of God is the producer of faith. In Romans 10:17, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” Why is faith important? Hebrews 11:6, “And without faith, it is impossible to please God x x x.”

Once we can show to God that we have faith, a living faith, He will be pleased. In Numbers 14:8, “If the Lord is pleased with us, He will lead us to that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us.” He will lead you to your promised land.

That is why the Word of God is indispensable. As I have been saying, the Bible is indispensable in crafting the so-called state-crafting or nation-building. That is part of my answer because of the time constraint. Thank you, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you, distinguished Representative.

The Bible is one of the most published and printed books in the history of the world. It has been published and printed in every known language including Braille, and every year since it was first written, the Bible is the world’s greatest bestseller year after year. You have mentioned that earlier in your privilege speech, Your Honor.

Worldwide organizations and associations have been formed because of this book and its message.

Many of them existing for centuries. Together, they represent multiple hundreds of millions of members. Would that be an accurate statement, distinguished Representative?

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). What was the last part, sorry, just the last part.

REP. LAGMAN. Together, they represent multiple hundreds of millions of members, the organizations on the Bible.

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). Actually, I was informed by statistics that out of seven or eight billion people on the surface of the Earth, there are around three—three billion are believers, Bible-believing Christians scattered all over the world, at least three billion according to statistics. And I believe in my heart that God is giving every human being a chance, a chance to know Him, a chance to be saved. That is why, God said, “Anyone who is serious in seeking My face, they will surely find Me.”

I have to confess to you, for seven years of my life, I was an atheist. I became the best debater in our university under Dr. Nemesio Prudente, proving that there is no God, using the teachings of Marxism, Leninism, same thoughts of Mao Tse-tung and dialectical materialism theory. I was very sincere, but sincerely wrong. But because there is God, and before it is too late, the Lord allowed me to know Him or else, I might spend my eternity in eternal fire of hell.

Thank you.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, Mr. Buttafuoco listed the number two reason, and he said, “People are willing to die for the Bible.” Can you explain or tell us the verity of this statement?

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). Absolutely, when you read the book, “Tortured for Christ,” the book of—many books po, hindi ko ho makakalimutan doon sa socialist-communist countries, many years ago, mayroong special mission, lahat ng Bible-carrying people are being killed.

Isang pastor po ay binugbog at iyong anak po ng pastor ay binugbog, “Ituro mo sa amin kung sino ang nagba-Bible study sa bansang ito.” Hindi ho siya sumunod hanggang hinuli iyong bata sa harap ng amang pastor na dumudugo na ang kaniyang nguso, ang kaniyang tainga, at sabi noong pastor, itigil ninyo na ang pagpapahirap sa aking anak. I will reveal to you the people I know engaging in Bible studies in this country. And the son said, “No, no, no, Dad, please do not be a traitor to God. Please, I prefer to die without being a traitor to our God. Please, do not be a traitor to our God.” And many, according to that “Tortured

for Christ” book, many suffered, dedicated their lives because the Word of God is life to many, and this is the reason why this book has consistently been the number-one bestseller in the history of the entire Earth because this is precisely a genuine book of the living God, the Word of God.

REP. LAGMAN. It has been said that wars have been waged or fought over its circulation and interpretation. Governments have been toppled on account of the Bible and kings have been disposed of because of it, and this is a historical fact. Would you agree with that statement?

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). Absolutely, I agree, empirical evidence as well as biblical evidence. I just want to cite two Scriptures, in Psalm 75, it states that promotion does not come from the East nor from the West, nor from the South but from God alone who is the judge. In Psalm 75, you can read that.

Last but not the least, in Daniel 2:20-22, it states that might and wisdom cometh from God. He changes the times and the seasons. He removes kings and puts new kings. That is why, occupying viable positions in the government is destiny. That is why many are saying that such position is destiny because ultimately, God, the creator of heaven and earth, has the final say in our existence.

REP. LAGMAN. The third reason is that the Bible is the most accurate book of antiquity. Where this book can be verified by external events such as archaeology, geography, custom, politics, culture, and known world history and writings in other ancient texts, it has been verified as to be accurate in all respects. Could you elucidate further with respect to this statement?

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). First of all, if we will study carefully the whole Bible, the Old and the New Testaments, numerous prophecies revealed in the Old Testament were already accurately fulfilled in the New Testament. For instance, the prophecies concerning the birth, the life, the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 332 prophecies in the Old Testament were already accurately fulfilled in the New Testament. That is why, not to believe the Bible, to me, is the most dangerous decision that a man can do in his earthly existence.

Last but not the least, evidence, Mr. Gentleman from Albay, whom I have been admiring since I was still a young student leader, Congressman Lagman, my life—I used to challenge the military and the police for gun duel in Camp Olivas. I was imprisoned twice during martial law. I went to the Tinago Island in Bicol hiding with some activists with me from Manila as well as in Infanta, Quezon. I was an object of assassination

attempts several times. In a grenade explosion on June 17, 1983, I was an object of a grenade explosion; I was just one meter away. It was headlined in *Tempo*. The Lord spared my life. Why? Because I was teaching that night. If you are facing giant enemies, the name of the Lord is a strong tower. The righteous runneth into it and is safe. When I saw the grenade, I just said, I just uttered, "Lord Jesus." And I was carrying my youngest daughter at that time, Joni, a five-year old. I covered her with my body and then in one or two seconds, "boom," the deafening explosion destroyed the frontage of the house of my mother-in-law where we were staying, and not even one shrapnel touched our bodies because I was teaching the people, the name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it, and is safe. *(Applause)*

That young girl, five years old, my daughter, is now the, pardon me to say, the outstanding Mayor of Bocaue, the known "Toss Coin Mayor" before of Bocaue, Bulacan. *(Laughter)*

REP. LAGMAN. Okay.

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). That is why if we were killed as a family, there can be no Senator Joel, there can be no Mayor Jonjon, there can be no Mayor Joni, there can be no JIL Ministry, probably, in this world. Now, this JIL Ministry has reached 60 countries of the world for the glory of God and in almost all provinces of the Philippines, not with struggling. I just let the Holy Spirit move and fulfill the Word of God. We never begged for any dollar, we never begged for any pound, we never treat people as VIPs because the Church entrusted to us by the Lord is just to teach the pure Word of God, as Church of the people regardless of social status, regardless of economic status. And my life, like the lives of many people here, I was surprised to see many people here from different provinces or cities, many of them did not believe in God, many of them were problem citizens in their communities. Now, the Lord proved to them that 2 Corinthians 5:17 is true, that anyone who is in Christ Jesus is a new creation. All things have passed away, all things have become new. I can cite Coney Reyes, our great friend in show business. Her testimony is confirming that the Word of God is true; Gary Valenciano, his testimony confirms that the Word of God is true; our champion Pambansang Kamao, Senator Manny Pacquiao who was submerged in all kinds of vices, *(Applause)* when he encountered Jesus and became "born again" to the Words of God, he is now an ideal father, ideal husband, and suddenly, he became a new creation, no more vice, no more womanizing, no more gambling, no more vices, because the Word of God is really effective and true. *(Applause)*

REP. LAGMAN. The fourth reason is, the Bible

contains a life-changing message of freedom. Let me repeat that, the Bible contains a life-changing message of freedom.

The Bible has liberated many from oppression by its clear teachings. It raises the dignity and rights of every human being ever born. It is truly an amazing and remarkable piece of writing. It contains clear teachings on the value and worth of every individual. Could you further elucidate on this fourth reason that the Bible contains a life-changing message of freedom?

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). Life-changing message of freedom, the Word of God says, once you are in Christ, you are liberated from the bondages of the enemy of God, Satan in this world. There are many prisoners today. They are inside jails but they experienced spiritual regeneration because of the power of the Word of God. Many of them refuse to leave the prison because they are enjoying their freedom inside by sharing the love of God through the Word of God rather than be outside the prison but still slave to all kinds of bondages of the devil.

Many people have experienced genuine liberty and freedom because of the spiritual food. The Word of God is considered as spiritual food because the human being is a spirit with a body and a soul. The soul will read books to nourish our mind. Our soul, our body, we eat good food for our physical health. That is why many people are physically healthy, mentally healthy, but sad to say, many people are spiritually malnourished, spiritually bankrupt because of their failure to give quality time in reading and meditating on God's Word.

Before I close my answer to that, I remember the formula for success and prosperity, especially for young people. In Joshua 1:8, if you want to be successful, really successful, not just in terms of money, but holistic success, maranasan po natin, meditate on God's Word day and night, so that you can observe the things written therein. If you do that, anything you do, you will prosper and you will have great success. You will avoid being physically alive, physically healthy, mentally healthy but spiritually malnourished. The answer is the Word of God. *(Applause)*

*At this juncture, Deputy Speaker Pichay relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Roberto V. Puno.*

REP. LAGMAN. Well, and finally, the fifth reason is that the Bible connects one to history's most important figure, Jesus of Nazareth.

The entire Old Testament points to His coming, and the entire New Testament testifies to His teachings and action. Could you further explain and expound on this fifth reason, distinguished Deputy Speaker?

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). May I request the Gentleman from Albay to just summarize again the question.

REP. LAGMAN. On the fifth reason, the Bible connects one to history's most important figure, Jesus of Nazareth. The entire Old Testament points to His coming, and the entire New Testament testifies to His teachings and action. Would the distinguished Deputy Speaker further expound on this fifth major reason?

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). Absolutely, you cannot separate the Old Testament from the New Testament or vice versa. The Old Testament is just the foundation of the New Testament; there is an interlinking. We can be reminded by the Old Testament which was 700 years before the birth of Jesus Christ in a manger in Bethlehem. Prophet Isaiah prophesied, "The Virgin will give birth to a son and His name will be Emmanuel."

Now, in Matthew, chapter 1 of the New Testament, we have the birth of Jesus Christ, tatagalugin ko na po, when Joseph discovered that the Blessed Mary was pregnant, akala niya nasalisihan siya ng ibang lalaki. He was planning to divorce or to separate and not to accept Blessed Mary as his wife. Nakalagay po iyan sa Matthew chapter 1. But Joseph is a good man, a kind man. He does not want Blessed Mary to suffer the sufferings of other women and married women who suddenly became pregnant, because their culture at the time, once a woman became pregnant without a husband, she will be stoned to death in the plaza. So, the angel of the Lord talked to him when he was sleeping, at sinabi kay Joseph na hindi siya nasalisihan ng ibang lalaki at ang batang nasa sinapupunan ni Blessed Mary ay hindi anak ng sinumang tao. Inilagay Siya ng Diyos sa kapangyarihan ng Holy Spirit as the begotten Son of God who needs to be a man. Because God is a Spirit, he cannot die on the cross for the redemption of human race. The begotten Son of God, Jesus, became flesh, so that at the age of 33, he could be crucified on the cross and shed His holy blood without original sin, the only blood in heaven and earth that has the power to remit sin or to wash away the sins of mankind by virtue of His virgin birth. Without the virgin birth of Jesus, mankind has no salvation whatsoever, because religion has no power to save. We can see the different happenings, prophecies in the Old Testament. Historically, what they discovered in the New Testament were absolutely fulfilled, and more are being fulfilled until the actual second coming of Jesus.

All I can say, in the entire Bible, historically, there is a study that all geniuses in science, in politics, in governance, in the different disciplines of human endeavors are all founded in the book of life, in the Holy Bible. That is why many are saying, I cannot live

without the spiritual food. That is all I can say at this point in time, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Since Jesus of Nazareth is the main figure in the Bible, time itself has been divided into two epochs or eras—BC or Before Christ and AD or Anno Domini for the year of our Lord. This is how this Bible has influenced the world. No less than time has been split into two epochs. Just to recap, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Deputy Speaker, let me restate the five reasons why we must read the Bible and why the Bible is the most important book in this world. One, the Bible has transformed the world. Two, people are willing to die for the Bible. Three, it is the most accurate book of antiquity. Four, the Bible contains a life-changing message of freedom. Finally, five, it connects one to history's most important figure—Jesus Christ. *(Applause)*

Thank you, distinguished Representative of CIBAC Party-List, for giving me the opportunity to ask these questions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. *(Applause)*

REP. VILLANUEVA (E). I cannot help but congratulate the Gentleman from Albay, considered as a living statesman in our generation, Congressman Lagman, for acknowledging the Word of God in your precious life. I just want to add one thing, in 1 Samuel 2:30, this is for the consumption of everybody, where God said:

Those who honor me, I will honor them.  
I will honor their earthly existence, but those who despise me, they shall be disdained or be less esteemed.

I believe in my heart, in the pages of history, not only for being a patriotic lawmaker in our country, but before the eyes of God and before the eyes of eternity. I believe in my heart, you have a good prominence there because God said it, those who honor me, they shall be highly esteemed.

Congratulations po. *(Applause)* Maraming salamat. God bless you more. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

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

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you again and congratulations for your grand privilege speech on the Bible. *(Applause)*

REP. DELOS SANTOS. Mr. Speaker.

REP. VILLANUEVA (E). Welcome po. To God be the glory, to God be the glory.

REP. DELOS SANTOS. I move that we extend the Privilege Hour to another hour, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Privilege Hour is extended to another hour.

REP. DELOS SANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Jose L. Atienza Jr. from BUHAY Party-List for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Puno). The Gentleman from the BUHAY Party-List, Hon. Jose L. Atienza Jr., is recognized for his interpellation.

REP. ATIENZA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maraming salamat po, Mr. Majority Leader.

With the kind approval of the Gentleman, our Deputy Speaker, we would like to share with him this glorious moment of truth. Alam kong pagod na pagod na sila pero kung sasang-ayunan po ninyo, gusto ko lang lumahok sa katuwiran na ibinigay ninyo sa hapong ito. Puwede po ba?

REP. VILLANUEVA (E). Kindly repeat your statement, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Puwede po bang makapagtanong sa inyong mga tinuran?

REP. VILLANUEVA (E). With pleasure po, Congressman Atienza.

REP. ATIENZA. Alam mo ngayon, sa mga sinabi ninyo, para bagang maituturing nating dalisay na hangin ang dumaraan sa Kongreso sapagkat nagbibigay kayo ng katotohanan, and I would like to thank you for this book. (*Applause*)

REP. VILLANUEVA (E). You are most welcome, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. This is the genuine book of knowledge, Book of Wisdom, much more important than the Internet, and I wish everyone would read this book together with the rest of the country.

Nakikinig ako at sinabi ninyo na ang mga dahilan sa paghihirap ng tao ay marami. May mga iilang nagsasabi—at iyong mga iba nga ay leader pa ng ating pulitika—na hangga't tayo raw ay naniniwala sa librong ito, tayo raw ay patuloy na maghihirap. Ano po ang reaksiyon ninyo roon?

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). Unang-una po, ang ganyang paniniwala ay baligtad sa katotohanan. Kapag

ang aklat, ang Salita ng Diyos, ay namumuhay sa ating puso at isipan, ang konsiyensiya po natin ay nasa ilalim ng kapangyarihan ng Diyos na lumikha. Hindi tayo makagagawa ng anumang uri ng in hustisya sa ating kapwa. Hindi tayo makagagawa ng mga batas na ang tanging pinaglilingkuran lamang kung minsan ay ang ilang vested interest groups, sapagkat ang konsiyensiya po natin kapag napasok ng salita ng Diyos ay pupunuin ng Diyos ng pagmamahal sa Diyos, pagmamahal sa bayan at pagmamahal sa kapwa.

Kaya baligtad po iyong paniniwala. Magbalik-loob ang tao sa Diyos. Sa pamamagitan po ng Salita ng Diyos, in Deuteronomy 28, it states:

If you fully obey, not just obey but fully obey, and carefully follow, not just follow but carefully follow all my commands, I will command the coming of the blessings to you.

Not lahar, not earthquakes, not floods, not calamities, not disasters, not poverty, but blessings will overtake you and you will no longer borrow but you will lend. You will no longer beg but you will lend if you fully obey and carefully follow all my commands. That is why in Matthew 6:33, ang sabi po, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

Baka makalimutan ko po, napakaganda noong binanggit ninyo, Congressman Atienza, na kapag tayo ay nagpatuloy sa Salita ng Diyos ay lalo tayong maghihirap. Sa Deuteronomy 8:18, ang sabi ng Diyos, “Do not forget your God, remember your God who gives you the power to produce wealth or to get wealth.” God wants His people to be wealthy. In John 10:10, Jesus said:

The thief, referring to Satan cometh not but to steal the blessings of God to kill and to destroy, but I came to give life and have it more abundantly.

That is why baligtad po iyong premise sa sinasabing nabalitaan ninyo na kapag nagpatuloy tayo sa Salita ng Diyos, lalong maghihirap ang bayan. Kaya naghihirap ang bayan, the prescription of the Creator has been violently violated by the concerned leaders of the nations of the world. Once we obey the Creator, heaven will be open and everybody would be prosperous. That is what I believe.

Thank you po.

REP. ATIENZA. Salamat po.

Ang dagdag pa po nila ay tayong mga Kristiyanong ay sadyang pinaghihirap ng ating pananampalataya. Mayroon po bang basehan ang ganoong klaseng uri

ng salita ninuman? Pinaghihirap daw tayo ng ating pananampalataya.

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). Mayroon po kasing traditional belief na nanggaling sa mga Kastila noong unang panahon. Mapalad ang mga mahihirap sapagkat malapit sila sa Diyos. Wala po sa Bible iyon. Kaya iyong iba, ang kayamanan nila ay ibinibigay kung minsan sa relihiyon, at nagsasamantala naman iyong ibang exploiting religious leaders.

Mayroon pong mangilan-ngilan siguro na ganyan sa buong mundo pero ang genuine Christian leaders na mayroong banal na takot sa Diyos, nangyari sa kanila ang Proverbs 9:10, “Fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.” Kaya kapag mayroon tayong banal na takot sa Diyos, mayroon tayong wisdom. Hindi natin ipapasá dito sa ating august Body ang mga panukalang batas na magpapahirap lang sa bayan, at ang makikinabang laang ay iyong mga naghaharing uri kung minsan o iyong mga dayuhan dahil mayroon tayong fear of God because God is a God of justice; He is a God of love. As I said, He is also at the same time a God of justice. Kaya baligtad po. I have to correct that, or else, I will be a traitor to God.

REP. ATIENZA. Kaya nga po sinabi ko na tila dumaraan ang inyong salita na para bagang dalisay na hangin sa mga nilalason na ating kapaligiran. Ang tao ngayon kung anu-ano ang pinaniniwalaan at hindi bumabasa nitong Banal na Libro, ang Salita ng Diyos.

Nasabi ninyo kanina, corruption is the number one problem that makes us all poor. Iyon po ba ay gawa ng tao o gawa ninuman, ang corruption?

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). Of course, ang corruption po ay gawa ng kasalanan. Ang kasalanan ay hindi nanggagaling sa Banal na Diyos. Ito ay nanggagaling sa kaaway ng Diyos na si Satan, the god of this world. Kaya po napakagandang mabasa sana ng lahat ng liders iyong libro na “Why Nations Fail.” Makikita po natin doon the failure of many governments in building right institutions that will reinforce the foundation of the prosperity of the people, allowing corruption, allowing abuses in the exercise of political power. Iyan po ay contributory factors sa miseries and injustices of a nation. Kaya po, the Word of God, I believe in my heart, is the major key to prevent a violent revolution. Why? Because once the Word of God enter our hearts, we will repent for our sins, we will be forgiven, we will have new values, and we will be good citizens and good leaders of the nation, and all the resources gifted by God to every nation can be properly managed to have equitable distribution of wealth; hence, the

entire citizenry will experience prosperity in fulfilling 3 John 2, King James version, which states: “My beloved, God said, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper, be in health, as your soul prospereth.” Gusto ng Diyos ng holistic blessings sa lahat ng tao, hindi lang po sa iilan.

I believe in my heart, all the Members of this august Body have innate goodness. That is why I got the courage to deliver this privilege speech although there is that fear that I might be criticized, I might be ridiculed. But the word “gratitude” in the Bible says, “Blessed are those who are being persecuted for my sake and for the sake of righteousness, they are only multiplying your rewards in heaven.” That is why I have the courage to reveal the truth whether people believe or not, at least when I face my God, I will not be condemned to eternity.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, ako po ay magtatapat sa inyo. Ang aking mga desisyon, ang aking mga dinadalang usapin dito sa Kongreso, lahat ay nanggagaling dito, (*Applause*) sapagkat naniniwala po ako na ang Pilipino ay naghihirap. Galing tayo sa kasaganahan dahil sa kagagawan ng mga namumuno. Corruption starts from the top. Para bagang hindi natin nakikita iyon. Para bagang ayaw nating tanggapin na talagang tayo ay pinagdurusa ng corruption. Hanggang ngayon, mayroong corruption sa ating bansa. Kapag hindi pinigil ang corruption, walang pagbabagong mangyayari sa atin.

Iyon po bang mga naghaharing uri na sinasabi ninyo na siyang may mga kontrata sa ating tubig, sa ating kuryente, na lahat ay galing sa Panginoong Diyos, na sila ang nagkakamal ng salapi samantalang pinaghihirap tayo. Kaya suportahan natin si Pangulong Duterte sa isyung iyan. I would like to hear more Congressmen denounce the oligarchs of today, because they are the ones making all of us wallow in poverty. Tama po ba ito?

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). Just a reminder to our respected independent Minority Leader, (*Laughs*) Congressman Atienza, ang kasalanan po kasi ay greed. Maraming mga oligarchs—mayayaman, mayroong spirit of greed, pero marami rin hong oligarchs at mayayaman na walang spirit of greed. Depende ho sa puso ng tao iyan.

Maraming mahihirap, walang pera pero puno ang puso ng greed and covetousness. Mayroong mga mayayaman, hindi makapasok ang covetousness sapagkat ang puso nila ay mayroong fear of God. Kaya it depends on the condition of the heart.

I just want to emphasize, we cannot make what we call “wholesale” charge or accusation that all

wealthy people or oligarchs are greedy. It depends on the experiential evidence because I know that there are some rich people, even in the Christian Churches, who are super rich and yet their heart is really helping the poor, paying the right taxes. But you are right that there could be some exceptions, as others are saying.

To me it is simple. The business deals must be properly scrutinized. If there is a violation of the Constitution, there is a violation of our laws, and there is a violation of legal and moral laws, and we can see clearly that only the vested few are benefiting—that is stealing the blessings of God and of the nation from the vast majority. The lawmaking body should have the courage to stop it and let justice prevail.

REP. ATIENZA. Tama po lahat iyong sinabi ninyo at sinasang-ayunan ko. Ang hinihingi ko lang, sana ay ang mga nakarinig ng inyong salita na nagmumula sa Salita ng Diyos ay magbago ng kanilang pananaw. Alam ko dito sa Kapulungang ito, maraming mga alaga ang mga mayayamang bilyonaryo. Hindi kayo iyon, hindi ako iyon, pero marami iyan. (*Laughter*) Kaya kapag ang pinag-uusapan ay abuso sa mahihirap, nawawala ang mga Miyembro. Tumitingin ako sa paligid, nawawala sila. Para bagang itong dinala ninyong usapin dito ay walang halaga, subalit sa mga nakikinig at naniniwala sa ating pananampalataya at sa Salita ng Diyos, napakahalaga po nitong paalalang ito.

Sa gitna ng lahat ng mga isyu, sa lahat ng mga ipinadarama ng ating Panginoon—pumutok ang bulkan, tinamaan tayo ng virus, tinatamaan tayo ng ASF—tuloy-tuloy ang karahasan sa tao, paglapastangan sa buhay ng nilalang. Ito pong lahat ng ito ay nanggagaling sa kasalanan, sabi nga po ninyo. And again, I will agree with you. Kaya kayo ang gusto ko kausap e, sapagkat lahat ng sinasabi ninyo, totoo. Sabi nila, “Iklian mo ang iyong interpellation.” Palagay ko hindi ko magagawa sapagkat paminsan-minsan nating makausap si Bro. Eddie, haba-habaan na natin. (*Applause*) (*Laughter*)

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). With pleasure and joy.

REP. ATIENZA. Sa dami ng dapat pag-usapan sa hapag na ito, iyong pumuputok na isyu ng mga tubig—iyang tubig na iniinom ninyo, galing sa Panginoong Diyos pero ang mahal mahal ng presyo niyan. (*Laughter*) Sabi nga ni Manny Pacquiao, “Bakit kailangang may bayad ang tubig e galing sa Panginoong Diyos iyan?” Tama. Sa kaniya ko narinig iyan, and I would like to give credit to a very simple mind, a simple but God-fearing man, si Manny Pacquiao. Siya ang nagsabing ang tubig sa Pilipinas ay dapat libre dahil galing sa kalikasan iyan. (*Applause*)

Pero alam ba ninyo ang tubig natin, isa sa pinakamahal sa Asya? Bakit? E punung-puno ng katubigan ang ating kapuluan na ibinibigay ng

Panginoon. Ano ang tinuran ng ating Panginoon sa Deuteronomy 8? Alam ko kabisado ninyo iyan. Sabi doon ay “Not on bread does man live alone.”

Ipinangako ng Panginoon, “Bibigyan ko kayo ng lupa na punung-puno ng yaman, gubat na luntian, may mga tubig na dumaraan, sapa, ilog.” Aba, Pilipinas iyon ah. “Mayroon kayong tanso sa inyong bato. Mayroon kayong bakal sa inyong buhangin. Magkakaroon kayo ng lahat ng mineral.” Aba, Pilipinas iyon ah.

Ang pangako ng Diyos, ibinigay na sa atin, hindi po ba? Pero hindi natin nagagamit para sa kapakanan ng mamamayan. Nagagamit ito ng mga mayayamang naghaharing-uri. Kanila ang lahat ng minahan. Kanilang lahat ng forestry. Kanila lahat ang paggamit ng tubig. Nasaan si Juan Dela Cruz? Patuloy siya sa paghihirap.

Again, I will reiterate: I am taking advantage of your message because I agree with it, 101 percent, that corruption is the greatest evil that has hit the Filipino nation. And for as long as we do not do anything about it, lahat nitong mga batas na ating pinag-uusapan, mawawalan ng saysay iyan kung patuloy naman ang kabulastugan sa pamamahala ng ating mga may kapangyarihan. So, we need to be more vigilant. We need to be more active. We must follow what you are saying today, indeed, in our lawmaking.

Bago ako mag-decide sa anumang malaking desisyon sa pamilya, pulitika, sa ating sambayanan, sa Kongreso, nagtatanong ako sa librong ito. Magdasal kayo nang kaunti, magbukas kayo ng aklat, bibigyan kayo ng direksyon ng Panginoong Diyos. (*Applause*) Iyan sana ang mensahe na makuha nating lahat. Iuwi natin itong librong ito na mayroon tayong tiwala.

Nilikha ang Pilipinas at ang Pilipino hindi upang pahirapan at sabihin ng mundo, “Kaya kayo naghihirap kasi naniniwala kayo sa Diyos.” Tayo raw ay Kristiyano kaya tayo ay magiging mahirap magpakailanman. Ang nagsasabi noon, darating ang araw, lahat ng tinuran ninyo na sumpa sa mga ganoong uring pag-iisip ay mararamdam nila. Doon lang nila malalaman, katulad noong sinasabi noong si Steve Jobs, isang batikan at matalinong tao na nagkamal ng bilyun-bilyong dolyar, noong siya ay binabawian na ng buhay, sabi niya, “Wala palang halaga lahat ng ito. Kapag ikaw ay nasa huling baitang na ng iyong buhay, matututo kang magdasal.

Kaya alam ko, lahat iyong mga mangmang at baligtad mag-isip, pagdating ng kanilang oras, hahanap-hanapin ang kabuluhan ng Banal na Kasulatan, Salita ng Diyos. Walang makakawala diyan. Lahat tayo ay daraan at dumaraan lang sa mundong ito. Pagdating ng iyong sinasabi nga ni Congressman Datol na ikaw na ang naroon sa departure area, matututo ka ring magdasal. (*Laughter*) Huwag mo nang hintayin iyon. Huwag na nating hintayin iyon. Ngayon pa lang, sa paggawa natin ng batas, ito ang ating sandigan. (*Applause*) Hindi tayo magkakamali kailanman.

Again, let me congratulate you, Bro. Eddie.



REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). Thank you.

Mayroon lang po sana akong gustong idagdag bago tayo matapos.

Iyon hong akusasyon na kaya naghihirap ang sambayanang Pilipino ay dahil sa ating pananampalataya sa Diyos at sa Kaniyang Salita, ay isipin po ninyo, the last commandment sa 10 Commandments, the 10th Commandment, “Covet not your neighbor’s wife as well as your neighbor’s possession.”

Kapag ho ito-tolerate natin iyong covetousness sa neighbor’s possession, not only neighbor’s wife, possession—get rich quick—talaga hong direct rebellion iyon, an assault against God.

Kaya ho dapat labanan natin itong proliferation ng sugalan at casino sa buong Pilipinas. Napakahirap tanggapin para sa mga tunay na Pilipino. Pinagbawal sa China ang casino, pinagbawal sa China ang gambling industry, pero binuksan ng Pilipinas ang gambling industry sa mga Tsino. Marami hong reports akong tinanggap, sa mga beaches, sila ang naghahari at ang Pilipino, nagiging second-class citizen. Eh, kasi ho, iyong POGO, I am sorry, talaga hong direct assault iyon sa Diyos. Biro mo, iyong pera ng kapwa mo, gusto mong makuha. Covet not your neighbor’s wife, your neighbor’s possessions. This is a gross violation of the command of God.

Kaya ho maraming nagpapakamatay sa casino. Pumunta kayo sa Macau, may chapter ho kami sa 60 countries of the world, iyong may mga casino, makikita ninyo pag-uwi noong mga tao, mga natalo, ay daig pa ang namatayan at wasak ang buhay. Kaya bilib ako sa isang Taipan, hindi ko na babanggitin ang pangalan. Maaaring nabasa ninyo few years ago, mayroon isang multibillionaire sa ating bansa, multibillionaire, hindi siya santo, pero sabi niya, “I will never invest in casinos because I do not want to be an instrument in destroying the families of our people. I can be rich and be richer without destroying the families.” Ganoon ho sana ang maging lesson ng mga mayayaman. Puwede namang maging mayaman, pero huwag natin payagang masira ang pamilya at ang kultura at ang lahing Pilipino, kaya ho “Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people,” Proverbs 14: 34.

Kaya, mahalaga po ang Salita ng Diyos. Iyon pong aming iniregalo sa inyong Bible, iyan ay out of God’s love to everyone. Everyone has a chance to be a citizen of heaven.

John 1:12 states: “For as many has received Jesus,” not religion dahil hindi ko pinakikialaman ang religion ng tao, “to them gave He the right to become children of God.” Ibig sabihin, ang immigration paper as a citizen of heaven, ibibigay ng Diyos kapag tinanggap natin ang Diyos na nagkatawang-tao, namatay sa krus ng kalbaryo dahil sa ating kasalanan, nabuhay na muli upang ang sinumang sumampalataya sa Kaniya ay mabubuhay ding muli at magtatamo ng buhay na walang hanggan.

Ang huli ko pong gustong sabihin, Congressman Atienza, iyon hong central text ng Bible, John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Sa Tagalog, “Gayon na lamang ang pagsinta ng Diyos sa sanlibutang makasalanan, inihandog Niya ang Kaniyang kaisa-isang bugtong na Anak na si Hesus upang ang sinumang sumampalataya sa Kaniya,” Protestante ka man, Katoliko ka man, Muslim ka man, Komunista ka man katulad ko dati na hindi naniniwala sa Diyos, “sinuman ang sumampalataya sa Kaniya ay hindi mapapahamak kung hindi ay magtatamo ng buhay na walang hanggan.” Iyon lang po.

Thank you for your patience. To God be the glory and God bless the Philippines.

REP. ATIENZA. Again, congratulations, Bro. Eddie, and I hope, you speak more often on this floor, so that we may hear from you the Word of God. Congratulations. (*Applause*)

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). Maraming salamat po.

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

REP. DELOS SANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I move to recognize the honorable Minority Leader, Bienvenido M. Abante Jr. of the Sixth District of Manila.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Puno). The Gentleman from Manila, Hon. Benny Abante, is recognized for his interpellation.

REP. ABANTE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Would the Gentleman from the CIBAC Party-List, my brother in Christ, allow me to ask some questions?

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). With pleasure.

REP. ABANTE. Noon pong January 16, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, ako naman po ay tumayo dito po sa ating plenary upang mag-deliver ng privilege speech tungkol sa Bible. Ang titulo po ng aking speech ay, “The Bible, The Ages of our Nation and People.”

Ibig sabihin po, na ang Bibliya ang dapat maging standard ng bansa at ng bayan sa lahat ng moral issues and spiritual issues. Palagay ko, Mr. Speaker, the Gentleman from CIBAC Party-List, the Deputy Speaker would agree with me na ang mga bansang yumaman, ang mga bansang pinagpala, ang pasimula po nito ay sapagkat kanilang ni-recognize ang Bibliya sa kanilang bayan.

Naalala ko ang Estados Unidos noong sila ay nagsimula bilang bansa, ang unang-unang nagtayo ng bansang iyan ay ang mga Puritans at ang mga Bible-believers na nanggaling sa Europa. Dumaong sila doon sa Massachusetts aboard the Mayflower boat. Doon po nagkaroon ng kauna-unahang Thanksgiving sa kanilang pagpunta sa bagong republika. Nagpasalamat sila sa Diyos. Gayundin po sa Inglatera, gayundin po sa Switzerland.

Subalit ngayon, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, kayo rin po ba ay nag-a-agree sa akin na napakalayo na ng Amerika, iniwanan na ang prinsipyo ng Bibliya at naging suwapang na sa pera. Nakikita po natin ang judgment ng Panginoon sa mga bansa na noong araw, noong araw itinayo ang mga bansang iyan ayon sa Salita ng Diyos. Kayo po ba ay sumasang-ayon sa aking sinabi?

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). Ayon sa history, the founding fathers of the United States of America were all Bible-believing Christians, including one Catholic who was very passionate in believing in God and the Bible. That is why the founding fathers of the United States of America were used as instruments in making America's history great. But later on, even prayers in schools and universities were banned because of one lady, an atheist who filed a petition in a liberal-dominated Supreme Court of America, and prayers were banned in schools. Then after that, all kinds of violence and killings in schools became rampant. Even the 10 Commandments are prohibited from being displayed in public places and there were states, Mr. Minority Leader, Congressman Abante, in America where you cannot pray before the food, mention the name of Jesus.

I would say, at this point of time, despite probably criticisms to President Trump and Vice President Mike Pence, who is a genuine born-again Christian, they are now working towards the restoration of prayers in schools, colleges and universities. They are fighting the so-called evils of abortion and all kinds of immoral things. I do hope the body of Christ in America will continue to obey God even against the sentiments of some politicians.

REP. ABANTE. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. In fact, to put more evidence to what I said a moment ago, the very first President of the United States, George Washington, even said that it is impossible to govern the world without the Bible, and he firmly believed that.

In the same token, Mr. Speaker, as I made mention in my speech on January 27, while every Filipino is guaranteed his freedom of religion and the free exercise of his religious beliefs and practices, we are one in recognizing God as the Supreme authority who directs

and governs the destiny of men and nation. Do you agree with that, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor?

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). Well, of course, the Word of God is premium in building and rebuilding the nation, because God said that apart from me, you can do nothing. St. John 15:5 states that you cannot do anything apart from the Creator because the Creator is the source of wisdom, the source of knowledge, and Divine protection.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, I absolutely agree with the Minority Leader, Cong. Bienvenido M. Abante Jr., that all of us, regardless of our religious affiliations, must be united in honoring God by honoring His Word.

REP. ABANTE. One of the pointers, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, in my speech last week was that, I said that the Bible is God's love letter to man.

Let me again echo your statement in your speech today when you said the month of February being the month of love, you made mention, and I quote: "because I am here to talk about the Book of Love that was written through and by God's own love for us, the Holy Bible."

The question is, why do you believe that the Bible is the Book of Love when the Bible also teaches that God condemns sin and the Bible has pronounced death to every sinner, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor?

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). First of all, sin is the reason why people are worthy to be punished because the wages of sin is death. Even though God is the God of love, if the people are living in sin, violating His commands, assaulting His rules and regulations for righteous living, God cannot contradict His words that He can bless the good and, at the same time, He can bless the sinful ones or the wicked ones. God will be a liar. So, God has to fulfill His principle, His prescription. If you will seek first the kingdom of God, you will be blessed. If you will seek first the kingdom of Satan, you will be punished. That is why, there is hell. Hell was originally created by God not for people, not for men but for Lucifer and the third fallen angels who became demons, who are here on this earth to steal the blessings of God, to kill and to destroy. This is the modus operandi of Satan's camp, to steal the blessings of God, to kill, to destroy. In John 10:10, Jesus said that, but I came to give life and have it more abundantly. That is why, God sacrificed His life, the life of His Son. That is why, in Romans 5:8, it states that God commended or demonstrated His love for you and me, in that, when we were yet sinners, Christ Jesus died for us.

So, there is no contradiction. God is a God of love. He gave His only begotten Son to die on the Cross, not

for Himself but to give redemption, to give salvation to the sinners who will accept the supreme sacrifices of Jesus on the Cross. Jesus who knew no sin, but was made sinned for us on the Cross of Calvary so that the sinners can be acquitted. Jesus who knew no sickness but became so sick, he was afflicted through our transgressions, he was bruised so that by His strifes, we are healed. And Jesus who was so rich yet became so poor when He became a man so that we can be redeemed from the curse of poverty and become rich, 2 Corinthians 8:9.

So, I would say that there is no contradiction among the implemented laws of God. The good people, the obedient people will be blessed but those who rebelled against God will surely be punished. That is why in Deuteronomy 30, make a choice. Do you want a life with God? You have to receive life with God. Or, do you want curses? You have the right because God respects the freewill of every human being. God is not a dictator. He does not want a single soul to be perished in hell, 2 Peter 3:9. But, He is not a dictator or else Satan can just insult Him. That is why He respects the freewill of every man. God does not want all of us, anyone of us, to be in hell. But, if you want to go to hell, God cannot do anything, because he is not a dictator, He has to protect our soul.

REP. ABANTE. It means, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, while we believe that from God's perfect righteousness and justice, Mr. Speaker, while we believe that to God belongs perfect righteousness and justice, and that it was God that gave the 10 Commandments to Moses. It was a perfect law. And, even at that, Mr. Speaker, that the Lord made a way in His love to fulfill that perfect law and to be able to give justice to all, that it was Jesus Christ that died on the Cross of Calvary as a manifestation of God's justice and also a manifestation of God's divine love. Do you agree with that, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor?

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). Absolutely, if Jesus Christ did not die on the cross, the cry for justice can never be satisfied in the Supreme Court of the universe. That is why the sacrifice of Jesus must be acknowledged by humanity. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, whosoever believes in the name should not perish but have everlasting life.

The Lord simplified the salvation of humanity, but the religious system made salvation compound and complex.

REP. ABANTE. That is right.

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). That is why God needs preachers of truth and righteousness, those who are not compromising the truth of God.

REP. ABANTE. And, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, you made mention in your speech and I quote:

I feel with deep conviction that I am duty bound, both to God and to you, my dear colleagues, to make sure that the celebration will not just simply pass as that, a celebration mandated by a Republic Act, for even though the National Bible Day is but only a day in the Philippine's list of national holidays, the truth it conveys must be trumpeted in all corners of the society, every single day, that the living God has revealed to the world the truths necessary to guide us as we endeavor to live our earthly existence and these truths are contained in God's book, the Holy Bible.

This, I fully agree and I fully believe. But how is it, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, that as the Philippines is considered the only Christian country in the Far East, yet it seems that the Bible is not being widely read and even obeyed?

A moment ago, while you are being interpellated by a good friend of mine, Cong. Edcel C. Lagman, he made mention that the Bible is a life-changing book, and that is true, Mr. Speaker, if only all Filipinos will realize that. The Philippines being a Christian country, so to speak, therefore, not only should the Bible be in every Filipino home but it must be read and obeyed, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

Would you agree with that? (*Applause*)

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). There is no room to oppose the perfect will of God. Mr. Speaker, I just want to remind the Gentleman from Manila, Cong. Bienvenido M. Abante Jr., who is the Minority Leader in this august Body, although the Bible Month or the Bible Day in our country is only one day, I just want to inform the Filipino people that the Christian community in this country never attempted that the Bible Day be a nonworking holiday. It is holiday but working, not disrupting the economic activities in our country, not creating economic disruptions that could make an impact in worsening the poverty of our people, and that is because of the integrity of the Word of God in the heart of the Christian community. I just mentioned that because God said, "Give honor to whom honor is due."

REP. ABANTE. Yes.

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). There are Christian leaders here in our midst who are responsible for such a working holiday for the Bible Day in the Philippines. Aside from Senator Manny Pacquiao and Senator Joel Villanueva, with us is the President of Philippine

Council of Evangelical Churches in the Philippines, the highly respected Dr. Noel Pantoja, and also the National President of the Philippines for Jesus Movement, Bishop Leo Alconga. They never insisted that the day of the Bible in this country be a non-working holiday. They decided to make it a working holiday, just be a holiday but working so that at least, our dream for economic improvement and progress that would lead to prosperity for our people would not be imperilled. So, that is just to remind the Filipino people, because of the power of the Bible, for integrity, for justice and truth, we are experiencing, living a life with honor and integrity.

REP. ABANTE. Of course, we know, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, that the Bible is the number-one bestseller in the world and the Bible is a literary masterpiece. But there are also many people that think that the Bible is just a religious book, Mr. Speaker. What can you say about that?

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). That is another falsity in our society. The Bible is not just a book containing the word of God, no. The Bible itself is the very Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, written by 40 writers, in different times, in different places, in a span of 1,600 years, and yet, you cannot see any major contradiction, showing the perfection of the Holy Spirit, the real writer of the Holy Bible.

REP. ABANTE. May I belabor the statement that you said that the Bible does not have any error in it, of which, I fully believe because in my speech last week, I spoke on the infallibility of the Bible. I said that it is infallible because of its inexhaustibleness and freshness, that the Bible is like a spring of water that never runs dry. I said that the Bible wrote the histories and biographies of men and wrote them with the unmistakable honesty of the writers. The Bible speaks of fulfilled promises. So, therefore, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, believing that there exists no error, no contradiction in the Word of God, may I also mention that I have been teaching Hermeneutics and Problem Texts for about 45 years now, Mr. Speaker. Therefore, we can, every Filipino can have full confidence on the divine authority of the Bible, Mr. Speaker. Would you agree with that?

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). Absolutely, there is no reason, I would say, to malign the Word of God, although, there could be some alleged contradictions. If we cannot fully study the basis of contradiction, it is merely the utter absence of understanding of the contextualized interpretation, because some religious people are interpreting the Bible without understanding the context, the contextualized revelation.

REP. ABANTE. It is ...

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). But if we properly and carefully study the Bible, there is no real contradiction...

REP. ABANTE. Yes.

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). ... showing that the Bible is really the Word of God.

REP. ABANTE. It is because, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, the Apostle Paul said that the Bible can only be spiritually discerned, not intellectually discerned, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

You made mention also in your speech of the reeling effects of local and international conflicts, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, other calamities, novel coronavirus now in many countries in the world. Do you believe, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, that what is happening in the world today are signs that the coming of Jesus Christ is near, as recorded in Matthew 24 and Luke, chapter 21, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor?

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). You know, Mr. Speaker, I have been reminding the people not to be afraid of the prediction of authorities that there would be the great one—the “Big One”—that may happen in our country, that even buildings could be swallowed by a big earthquake because of earthquake faults scattered in our country. I pacified them. I told them this, that could be true, scientifically proven by scientists, but do not forget the Bible. Do not forget Job 26:7, where God said, I hangeth the earth upon nothing. The planet earth is revolving around the sun together with other planets in the Milky Way galaxy, without bumping on each other because of the awesome power of God and, therefore, it is in the hands of God if He would allow the “Big One.” But if the people of God are pleasing to God, if the people of God have passionate love for God and full obedience to God, God can easily remedy the fault line of the earth because He hangeth the earth upon nothing.

And then those signs, my prayer, Lord, do not allow the “Big One.” If earthquakes are necessary as signs of the second coming, as you said in Matthew 24, when the disciples asked Jesus, “What are the signs of your second coming?” Jesus Christ enumerated the signs of the second coming: famines, earthquakes, calamities, wars, rumors of wars, et cetera, et cetera. “Lord, I am appealing to you. If there is a need for you to allow earthquakes, just to warn the people, just to wake up the people to repent and go back to you. Do it mildly, mildly only, not the ‘Big One,’ ” because one of my pastors saw it through spiritual vision while driving his car along EDSA, the Lord allowed him to see through his spiritual eyes the tall buildings were collapsing.

And I told him, “Pastor, the Lord allowed you to see that to warn the Body of Christ, to really be serious in prayer, we have to be serious in prayer, or else, the Lord may allow the “Big One,” where thousands, if not millions, would die. So, we have to approach God and be serious in fulfilling 2 Chronicle, chapter 7, verse 14, and I quote:

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

Before I close my answer, Mr. Speaker, to our distinguished Gentleman from Manila, Minority Leader Benny Abante, God is not against prosperity. Some people cannot accept God and the Bible because they love money more than God. God can prosper you without mortgaging your soul to hell.

If you study carefully the Bible, God wants his people to prosper. That is why the Bible has so many scriptures. The wealth of the wicked is being prepared for the righteous, Proverbs 13:22. But in Proverbs 10:22, it states that if God blesses you, you will be wealthy, and there is no trouble, there is no pain because your wealth is due to legitimate enterprises. But when your wealth is not legitimate but ill-gotten, it will be full of pain and troubles, and you might even find yourself in prison. The Bible is very clear.

REP. ABANTE. In the same manner, Mr. Speaker, one of our Congressmen approached me and said that money is the root of all evil. I said, “No.” There is nothing wrong with money. There is something wrong when you love money. There is nothing wrong with having things of the world. There is something wrong when you love the world, Mr. Speaker.

I remember the experience of Elijah when they had that great revival in Mount Carmel. The Lord gave the thunder and the Bible says that God is not in a thunder. The Lord produced a lightning, but God is not in the lightning, but then, a still small voice.

Maybe, Mr. Speaker, earthquakes can come, calamities can come, all the troubles can come, yet, it will not convert men because the only way for men to be converted is for him to listen to the Holy Spirit of God, and what the Bible says about conversion. Am I right, Mr. Speaker?

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). Absolutely, without the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, no person can humble himself because of the inherent simple nature of man. But when the Holy Spirit use the Word of God, the Word of God is becoming “Rhema,” alive in the spirit, in the soul of man, then man can understand the Word of God.

Many years ago, I was invited by a scholar, a great intellectual. Everybody knows him, almost everybody, he is Randy David. Professor Randy David had a television program before called, “*The Truth Forum.*” I was invited to be one of the guests and the other one is a Baptist scholar, a Bishop named Dr. Gavino Tica. Professor Randy David said, “Bro. Eddie, Dr. Tica, I do not know why I cannot understand the Bible. I have been reading the Bible but I cannot understand it.” The old man, a theologian, Dr. Tica, who was still alive at that time ...

REP. ABANTE. Yes.

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). ... he said, “Randy, you can never understand the Bible if you are just using your mental intellect. You cannot understand it because you do not have the Holy Spirit.”

REP. ABANTE. Right.

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). He was very frank. I was really surprised, but no malice, we really need, sincerely, to receive Jesus. Repent and surrender our life to Jesus, then the Holy Spirit will operate, then that is the only time then when you can understand the Bible.

REP. ABANTE. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, distinguished colleague, for this opportunity.

REP. ABANTE. Mr. Speaker, Dr. Gavino S. Tica was a very good friend of mine being a fellow Baptist also. You were very bold when you said and quoted Psalm 34:17, “When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears and delivers them out of all their troubles.” Realizing this verse, Mr. Speaker, there is no question that the answer to all our troubles is to call upon the name of the Lord. Is it not, Mr. Speaker?

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). God said, “Call unto Me and I will answer thee, and show the great mighty things that thou knowest not,” that is in Jeremiah 33:3. “You do not receive because you do not ask,” James, chapter 4. But when you ask with faith, with humility and faith in God, and even reminding God of His promises, God cannot say “no.” Why? Because God cannot be a liar.

REP. ABANTE. In ending your speech, Mr. Speaker, you spoke of the Bible as the book of truth. The book of John tells us that He shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free. It means, Mr. Speaker, that there is no law of the land nor even prison in any

part of the world that can provide freedom, but only the Word of God that can set man free.

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). First of all, Jesus said, in John 14:6, I quoted this one time 10 days before the election to then Mayor Duterte because he said this, “If you do not know the password in heaven, you cannot also enter heaven.” He then made a joke that his password is Pastor Quiboloy. I told him, “Mr. Mayor, the Word of God says differently...”

REP. ABANTE. Stop! *(Laughing)* No, well, go ahead, continue. *(Laughing)*

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). Pastor Quiboloy is also one of my friends. Among all the religious leaders, I do not quarrel with anyone. That is the truth, and you can ask His Excellency.

The Bible says, “Jesus said, ‘I am the way, the truth and the life, and no one can come to the Father except through me.’” I told the President, Mr. Mayor, he was not yet the President then, “You are a lawyer, you are a prosecutor, you know the difference between “a” and “the.” Jesus did not say, “I am ‘a’ way,” implying He is only one of the many ways. He used the term “the.” It is definite, in the word “the.” “I am ‘the’ way, ‘the’ truth and ‘the’ life. No one can come to the Father except through me.”

In fairness to then Mayor, now President Duterte, he told me, “Bro. Eddie, I was only joking.” Yes, I know you were joking, but it was shown on YouTube all over the world. In fairness to Mayor Duterte, he said, he was only joking. But he believed. He said, he believed in Jesus. That is why there is hope for our country.

REP. ABANTE. Mr. Speaker, in 2007, I also stood in this Plenary Hall and delivered a speech on the Bible. I was interpellated by about 12 Congressmen for three hours, and one of the statements that was said was this, “You are trying to make the Plenary Hall a part of your pulpit.” Mr. Speaker, are you also trying to make the Plenary Hall a part of your pulpit?

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). *(Laughing)* That is far-fetched. *(Laughing)* No iota of interest whatsoever for me to make the Plenary Hall a pulpit. I feel it is my duty, not only to God, during the so-called “Bible Month of the Year,” if I did not say anything in promoting the Word of God. To me, that is treason in the highest order against my God. Besides, I have a duty to my colleagues here. If some of them, God forbid, may find themselves in the eternal fire of hell someday, they can point their fingers on me, “You, Bro. Eddie, you did not inform me that there is heaven and hell.”

REP. ABANTE. To me also, Mr. Speaker. *(Laughter)*

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). That is why we are doing our duty first to God and our duty to our fellowmen, especially to our fellow comrades, to our fellow Members of this august Chamber.

REP. ABANTE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Deputy Speaker Bro. Eddie Villanueva for a well-said, well-researched privilege speech. Once again, I have a very good partner in Congress, who does not only believe in the Bible but also believe in a personal experimental relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. *(Applause)* Therefore, Mr. Speaker, as I end my interpellation at this time, let me just quote two verses. It says in Psalm 119:105, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path,” and in Psalm 119:11, “I will hide His words in my heart that I might not sin against God.”

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

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). Mr. Speaker, just to end also my last word with the Scripture. This is my prayer that all of us Members of this Eighteenth Congress in the Lower House may experience the sweetest words from the lips of Jesus on judgment day. In Matthew, 25:21, verse 23, Jesus said:

On that day, I will tell my faithful people, well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful with few things, I will make you in-charge of many things. There is promotion after the second coming of Jesus. I will make you in-charge of many things. Come now and enter into the presence of your Lord.

These are the sweetest words of Jesus Christ from His very mouth. In Matthew 25:21 and repeated in verse 23, “Well done, good and faithful servants,” because as public servants, we are considered as ministers of God in the government. But there is a warning, if there is a sweetest word from the mouth of Jesus, there is these bitterest words in Matthew 7:21-23, wherein Jesus said:

On that day of judgment, a multitude of people will come to Me paraphrasing many religious people and they will tell Me: “Lord, Lord, why did You close the door of heaven to us? We have been calling unto Your name, we have been prophesizing Your name, made miracles in Your name, cast off demons in Your name. Why? Why, Lord, did you close the door of heaven to us?”

Jesus Christ said to those multitudes of people on that day:

Get out of my sight, get out of my sight. I do not know You. Not everybody who calls Me, Lord, will enter the kingdom of God. But only those who obey the will of My Father in heaven.

My question is, how can we obey the will of the Father in heaven if we do not know the will? How can we know the will if we have no time to read the one and only love letter of God to humanity—the Holy Bible, hence, the importance of the Bible in nation-building.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, beloved colleagues. God bless you more and God bless the Philippines. *(Applause)*

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

REP. DELOS SANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we extend the Privilege Hour to another hour.

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

The Privilege Hour is extended to another hour.

REP. DELOS SANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I move to recognize Hon. Rufus B. Rodriguez from the Second District of Cagayan de Oro City for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Puno). The Gentleman from Cagayan de Oro City, Hon. Rufus Rodriguez, is recognized for his interpellation.

REP. RODRIGUEZ. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To our distinguished Deputy Speaker, Representative of the CIBAC Party-List, and the spiritual leader of Jesus is Lord, would the Gentleman accept some interventions from this Representation?

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). With pleasure, Mr. Speaker.

REP. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I would like to first congratulate the honorable Deputy Speaker for this privilege speech on the Bible in state-crafting and nation-building. Certainly, very enlightening spiritually, historically and culturally.

We also would like to thank the Deputy Speaker for giving us copies of the Bible that we have now on our tables, and which we hope to really read as much as we can.

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). You are most welcome, Mr. Speaker.

REP. RODRIGUEZ. First of all, you mentioned George Washington, the first President of the United States; and Abraham Lincoln, the best President of the United States. Is that correct, Deputy Speaker?

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). Yes, according to history and the information I received in my personal research, yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. RODRIGUEZ. George Washington said, and can you again quote for us the specific lines of Pres. George Washington and also that of Abraham Lincoln, because I think these are very good words worth repeating for all of us.

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). George Washington, the first President of United States of America, according to history, once said that it is impossible to govern a nation or the world without God and without the Word of God and prayer.

While Abraham Lincoln, considered as the greatest President in the history of America, the one who authored the emancipation of the slaves said, “The greatest gift of God to humanity is the Bible.”

REP. RODRIGUEZ. Thank you, distinguished Deputy Speaker.

George Washington took an oath when he became the President, the first President of the United States of America. The Constitution of the United States of America states that the President shall swear to the following words: “I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully and conscientiously fulfill the duties of the Presidency.” In the Constitution of the United States of America, there is no phrase, “So help me God.” Is that correct, distinguished Deputy Speaker?

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). I have to verify that phrase that there is no “So help me God.” What I know is that Thomas Jefferson, one of the founding fathers and also a subsequent President of United States of America, wrote a letter to the Baptist Assembly. I think at that time, the Baptist Church is one of the biggest Protestant churches in America. That was more than 200 years ago.

Thomas Jefferson said that he was assuring the Christian Assembly of the Baptist Church that they should not be afraid in the very Constitution being crafted. There was an assurance in the protection for freedom of religion and freedom of worship. The State will never interfere in the affairs of the Church, in the ecclesiastical affairs of the Church. That was the primary reason why there was a separation of the State

and the Church, the protection of religious freedom and freedom of worship, and not vice versa. But after many years, hundreds of years, many people have distorted the real authentic reason behind the inclusion of the separation of Church and State. It is never designed to suppress the freedom of the people in studying, teaching and preaching the Word of God in their country.

REP. RODRIGUEZ. Thank you, distinguished colleague.

Indeed, the United States Constitution up to now does not have the words “So help me God.” But, then, in the first oath-taking of the first President of the United States at the Federal Hall in New York, President George Washington asked for a Bible. There is also no procedure because he was the first President, and there was no precedent of having a Bible in the oath-taking of the president. He asked for the Bible and St. John’s Lodge No. 1 of the ancient Mason lodge of New York gave him a Bible. Therefore, he took the Bible—and it was held by the person who was giving his oath—put his left hand on the Bible and after recited the statement, as provided for in the US Constitution, that he will solemnly swear that he will conscientiously and faithfully perform the duties of President. Mind you, George Washington was not a religious person. During church services, he would not even sit at the chair in the church, he would always be at the back, but when he took the office of the Presidency of the United States, he got a Bible, put his hand on the Bible, and after reciting the oath, included these four words that are now being used by all Presidents of the United States and all Presidents of the Republic of the Philippines. He said, with his left hand on the Bible and his right hand raised, after he made his oath, “So help me God.”

That just shows, Mr. Speaker, that President Washington, as stated by our distinguished colleague, really said that we cannot govern a nation of the world without the Bible. That is the reason why since the time of President George Washington, all 45 Presidents—Donald Trump is the 45th President of the United States—and all of them had a Bible, and had to say, “So help me God.” Even if it is not in the Constitution, even if there is some separation-of-Church-and-State violation, because in this particular case the American Constitution is very clear on the separation of Church and State, George Washington, a non-religious person now given the task of leading a new country that was born by revolution, now invoked the name of the Almighty God to help him discharge his duties as the President of the United States of America.

So, we see here that from the time of President George Washington up to the 45th President, except for Theodore Roosevelt who did not have a Bible, and President Franklin Pierce and John Quincy Adams who did not have a Bible but books of law, they took

their oath on books of law. The fourth one is Lyndon Johnson because he took his oath on the Air Force One and what was there was the church missal of the Roman Catholic Church, and not a Bible. On that, he took his oath of office as the President after the assassination of President Kennedy.

And so, Mr. Speaker, all of us, from the time we had the 1935 Constitution, we, therefore, copied the oath. In spite of the separation of Church and State in the Philippine Constitution, as you see on Section 5 of the Article on the Executive Department, after the oath which says “I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully and conscientiously fulfill my duties as President of the Philippines,” there are these four words: “So help me God”. That is why our Presidents up to President Duterte, the 16th President of our country, would always have a Bible and invoke God’s help so that he as President, he is able to lead our country towards development and towards the Rule of Law.

Therefore, at this point, Mr. Speaker, we can see that when the President of the Republic of the Philippines takes his oath of office, he has a Bible and would say, “So help me, God.” The head of the Judiciary, the Supreme Court Chief Justice would, likewise, have a Bible and will take his oath and will ask “So help me, God.”

My question, distinguished Sponsor, here in Congress, when we take our oath, we always, of course, say, after we vow to discharge our duties, “So help me, God.” But do we have a Bible with us when we take our oath as Representatives of our different Districts, when we have our oath-taking?

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). Mr. Speaker, that is a very good question.

REP. RODRIGUEZ. We have none. We took our oath of office with the Speaker without the Bible being held by us. If our Chief Executive would need the help of God, if the head of the Judiciary would need the Bible to be able to take their oath, and also invoke, “So help me, God,” then why do the heads, the officers of the Legislative branch, the House of Representatives and the Senate not have the Bible when they say, “So help me, God.”

It lessens really the help of God to all of us because we do not have the Bible. So would the distinguished Speaker be agreeable that, henceforth, the taking of oath of office of Members of the House of Representatives and the Senate representing the Legislative branch of the government, aside from invoking the help of God should hold the Bible? You have already given us a Bible; we should hold a Bible when we take our oath of office so that we will always be under the guidance of the Bible that we have. *(Applause)*

Would the distinguished Deputy Speaker convince also our Speaker that, as procedure, when we take our



oath in the succeeding Congresses, because we have already taken our oath for the Eighteenth Congress, aside from invoking the help of God, that we should hold a Bible? On that Bible, we will pledge to work, and with that pledge on that Bible, we will work for the best interests of our constituents and our country. Do you agree with that, distinguished Speaker?

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). Mr. Speaker, I sincerely believe that the Holy Spirit has taken over your heart, your soul, your tongue in sharing this vital information and making this suggestion. First, I would like to thank you for your vital information of history, part of your being a resourceful lawyer. At the same time, thank you for that suggestion, which obviously has been neglected in some parts of our society or agencies in the government.

I just want to remind you, as well as everybody, that if ever there is a separation of Church and State in the Philippine Constitution, the Philippine Constitution clearly says, “no religious test shall be required for the exercise of civil or political rights.”

Two, the separation of Church and State refers to the administration, operation, financial affairs of the State, as well as the Church having no interference whatsoever. But this is the absolute rule: We can never separate God from any State, because every State is a creation of God. Psalm 24:1 says that the earth belongs to the Lord, and the fullness, thereof. Therefore, even every government is a creation of God, so we cannot separate God from the State, who is the creator of the heavens and the earth. Just a reminder to all concerned.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. RODRIGUEZ. In fact, while we have a separation of Church and State, there is no separation of State and God. These are two different matters. There is a separation of Church and State, but we have no separation between God and State.

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). And State. *(Applause)*

REP. RODRIGUEZ. Therefore, I would like to end this interpellation by congratulating the Deputy Speaker for reminding us of the importance of the Bible, and that we should always read the Bible and then be able to do what is right because with the Bible, we have God always helping us.

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

REP. VILLANUEVA (E.). Mr. Speaker, let me say thank you to everyone, especially to our Speaker, and to everyone who patiently listened to the presentation of this privilege speech.

I am just reminding everybody that when God is so pleased with your life, He will lead you to your Promised Land, Numbers 14:8.

Thank you again, and God bless you more, and God bless the Philippines. To God be the glory. *(Applause)*

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

REP. DELOS SANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the honorable Representative, Bro. Eddie Villanueva, and the succeeding interpellations to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

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

The speech of the honorable Deputy Speaker Villanueva and the interpellations are referred to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

The Majority Leader is recognized. *(Applause)*

REP. DELOS SANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Rep. Edgar R. Erice of the Second District of Caloocan for his privilege speech.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Puno). The Gentleman from Caloocan, Hon. Egay Erice, is recognized for his privilege Speech. *(Applause)*

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ERICE

REP. ERICE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, my dear colleagues.

I rise to ensure that the rights of each and every citizen of our country are upheld and protected, especially those who are threatened and abused. Allow me, my dear colleagues, to share with you the plight of the residents of Pangarap Village located in Caloocan City. *(Applause)*

Here with us this afternoon are the two barangay captains of Pangarap Village, Barangay Captain Bernardo Quiboy of Barangay 181 and Barangay Captain Rowel Brin of Barangay 182, together with all their barangay kagawad, including their SK officials. *(Applause)*

We have also the President of the Senior Citizens, Kagawad Erlinda Reguera, together with the senior citizens of Pangarap. *(Applause)*

We have also here the President of the Malacañang Homeowners Association of Pangarap, President Edwin Feliciano. *(Applause)*

Mr. Speaker, Pangarap Village is a 156-hectare land located in North Caloocan, near the boundaries of Quezon City; San Jose del Monte, Bulacan; and Montalban, Rizal. It is composed of two barangays, and is home to more or less 40,000 residents.

Through Presidential Decree No. 293 issued by then President Ferdinand Marcos which cancelled all the sale certificate issued in favor of Carmel Development Incorporated known as CDI in Pangarap Village, the land was declared open for disposition to Malacañang employees, which bind themselves into the Malacañang Homeowners Association Incorporated.

Subsequently, a new certificate of title was issued by the Register of Deeds of Caloocan to each and every beneficiary of the presidential decree. At mula sa kanilang mga lifesavings, marami sa mga benepisyaryo ang nagtayo na ng kanilang mga tahanan sa Pangarap. Pinangarap nila na sila ay matahimik na mananahan sa nasabing lugar at maipamana sa kanilang mga anak ang mga tahananang kanilang itinayo para sa kanilang kinabukasan. Subalit, Mr. Speaker, ang pangarap na yaon ay naging bangungot ngayon.

Marami sa mga benepisyaryo, dahil sa kalayuan ng lugar, ay hindi nakapagtayo ng bahay. Sa halip, ang iba ay pinatirhan na lamang sa mga caretakers, ang iba naman ay napabayaan at natirahan ng mga informal settlers kaya lumago ang populasyon sa tinataya mga 40,000.

In 1988, during the term of President Corazon Aquino, the Supreme Court declared PD 293 as unconstitutional. Dito po nagsimula na ang kalbaryo ng mga taga-Pangarap, but as law-abiding citizens, the Malacañang Homeowners Association Incorporated fought their battles in the courts, as their case is now pending before the Court of Appeals, unlike Carmel Development Incorporated. Instead of going to the courts to recover their property and secure a writ of demolition, Carmel Farms resorted to the law of the jungle by employing blue guards, with long rifles and garbed in full battle gear just like a private army, threatening and harassing residents and making sure that life shall be very difficult in Pangarap Village.

Our Constitution expressly states, “No person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law; nor shall any person be denied the equal protection of laws.” As of now, the private army of Carmel Development Incorporated controls the main road. Access of the residents and their vehicles are being prevented. Even ambulances, rescue vehicles, and fire trucks are being prevented from entering the village. Likewise, these same security guards do not allow people to converge and break apart any groups who appear to conduct meetings and the like, further denying the residents their right to peaceably assemble.

Residents of Pangarap Village are also denied access to basic commodities, such as electricity and water. In 2014, the main waterline installed by Maynilad and servicing the entire village was deliberately struck and damaged. Security guards prevented residents and Maynilad workers from repairing the damaged water pipes.

Now, residents only have running water for about two to three hours a day. Worse, Maynilad served a notice of termination of contract for its water services to the residents of Pangarap Village, citing Carmel Development Incorporated’s demand to terminate its services. The management of Carmel Development Incorporated refused entry to Meralco workers who came to repair and/or maintain power lines, resulting to blackouts in the area especially after typhoons and strong winds.

Pangarap Village residents always have to secure a temporary restraining order from the court in order for Meralco workers to come in and restore power. Worst of all, houses and commercial stores are being illegally demolished, either by fire or by bulldozers. Since 2016, these are being done despite the absence of court orders issued.

Mr. Speaker, ang malaking tanong sa akin, bakit ayaw ng Carmel Farms na dumulog sa korte at dumaan sa proseso upang mabawi ang inaangkin nilang mga lupain? Bakit kailangan nilang mag-demolish ng mga tahanan nang walang mga demolition permit? Bakit maraming tahanan ang nasusunog at sinusunog ngunit walang nagresponde mula sa pamahalaan? Bakit kailangan ng harassments? Bakit nahaharangan ang mga lansangan, natatabunan ang mga creeks? At bakit natatabunan ang mga pangunahing lansangan? Bakit nangyayari ito na para bang pinahihintulutan ito ng pamahalaan?

It is still a mystery to me why Carmel Farms instead of employing extra-legal means does not want to go through the legal process. They could have filed a petition for the recovery of the property in the case of the formal settlers. And they could have filed ejectment cases against the informal settlers. Bakit ayaw po ng Carmel Farms na maghabla sa korte, bakit po sila nangha-harass?

I think there is more here than meets the eye. That is why, there is a need for this to be investigated by this House. My dear colleagues, we must not ignore the plight of our kababayans in Pangarap Village. We must not turn a blind eye on their sufferings and the violation of their basic human rights.

I call on Congress to conduct a legislative inquiry in aid of legislation on the particulars surrounding Pangarap Village so that this will not happen to any of your constituents.

Mr. Speaker, colleagues, let not all this injustice be suffered by anybody else ever again. I am suggesting that the Committee on Justice and Committee on Human Rights investigate this particular situation in aid of legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, my dear colleagues. *(Applause)*

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

REP. SINGSON-MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to recognize Hon. Carlos Isagani T. Zarate of BAYAN MUNA Party-List.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Puno). Hon. Carlos Isagani T. Zarate is recognized for his interpellation.

REP. ZARATE. Maraming salamat po Mr. Speaker. Magandang hapon ho sa ating lahat. Mamarapatin po ba ang ating kagalang-galang na nagsasalita sa kasalukuyan, na si Hon. Edgar R. Erice, na sumagot ng ilang mga katanungan?

REP. ERICE. Gladly, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. Salamat po. Mr. Speaker, kung panoorin lang natin ang lumabas sa ating screen, iyong mga bahay na nasira, iyong mga kagamitan na nasira at ang buhay ng mamamayan na nasira ay talagang tama ang sinabi ng ating kagalang-galang na kasama na hindi narapat ang katawagang Pangarap Village kundi ito ay isang Bangungot Village.

Pero, Mr. Speaker, ang Kinatawang ito ay hindi lang nakita ang mga larawang iyon. Ang Kinatawang ito mismo ay naging saksi kung paanong nasira ang mga pangarap ng marami sa Pangarap Village.

Ilang beses na rin po tayong nakapunta sa lugar na iyan at tama po ang tinuran ng ating kasamahan, mistulang ang Pangarap Village ay wala sa Pilipinas dahil ito ay pinaghaharian ng isang malaking korporasyon na kahit na ang mga opisyal ng bayan, o mga halal na mga opisyal, ay hindi puwedeng pumasok nang hindi dumadaan doon sa kanilang isinarang daanan.

Siguro po ang una kong katanungan, nabanggit ninyo kanina, Mr. Speaker, kagalang-galang na Congressman Erice, ang buong village na ito, iyong kinasasakupan ng dalawang barangay, ay dati ng idineklarang for disposition under Presidential Decree No. 293. Tama po ba iyon?

REP. ERICE. Tama po, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. Bago po nagkaroon ng Presidential Decree No. 293, ano po ang status ng lupang ito na ngayon ay kinatitirikan ng kabahayan ng ating mga kababayan sa ...

REP. ERICE. Ito po, Mr. Speaker, ito po ay inaangkin ng Carmel Development, Inc. At sa aking pagkakaalam, sila po ay nagbebenta—ibinebenta po nang parte-parte ang nasabing lupain.

REP. ZARATE. So ito po, ang Carmel Development Inc. ay isa pong subdivision developer. Tama po ba iyon?

REP. ERICE. Tama po.

REP. ZARATE. Ang Presidential Decree No. 293 ay in the 70s. Tama po ba iyon?

REP. ERICE. Opo, during the term of President Ferdinand Marcos.

REP. ZARATE. At dahil po nagkaroon nga ng Presidential Decree at pinayagan na ang mga dating mga empleyado ng Malacañang ay magtayo ng mga bahay doon kaya nabuo iyong Pangarap Village, para iyon sa mga dating empleyado ng Malacañang. Tama po ba iyon?

REP. ERICE. Opo, tama po iyon.

REP. ZARATE. At hanggang ngayon, marami pa rin sa mga anak at sa mga sumunod na henerasyon ng mga empleyadong iyon, doon pa rin nakatira. Tama po ba iyon?

REP. ERICE. Yes, Mr. Speaker, second and third generation, I think, of the employees and even the Presidential Security Command personnel.

REP. ZARATE. Salamat po sa inyong kasagutan.

At pagkatapos nga na mapatalsik ang dating Pangulong Marcos ay napasama ang Presidential Decree No. 293 sa sinabi ninyong idineklarang “unconstitutional” ng Korte Suprema. Tama po ba iyon?

REP. ERICE. Tama po iyon.

REP. ZARATE. Pero sa inyo pong pagkakaalam, dahil na-declare na “unconstitutional” ang Presidential Decree No. 293, automatic po ba na ang naging occupation at paninirahan doon ng ating mga kababayan ay iligal sa tingin ninyo?

REP. ERICE. Sa aking palagay po ay hindi po. Masalimuot ang legal issues, marami pong, sa aking pagkakaunawa, sa aking pagbabasa sa mga dangkal-dangkal na dokumento na ibinigay sa akin ng mga matagal nang nakikipaglaban para sa isyung ito, napakamasalimuot po ng legal issues sa Pangarap Village. Kaya nga po, sapagka’t ngayon lang po ako nakakita ng isang developer, na mayroon naman pong deklarasyon ang Korte Suprema na “unconstitutional” iyong Presidential Decree na iyon, nagtataka po ako bakit hindi nagfa-file ng petition for the recovery of the property o kaya ay ejectment sa mga nakatira na informal settlers. Sa palagay ko po ito iyong tamang proseso, ligal na proseso para mabawi niya iyong inaangkin niyang lupain.

REP. ZARATE. Salamat po doon sa kasagutan ninyo.

Tama po kayo, dahil kahit na iyong usapin, ng sila nga ba ang tunay na may-ari ng lupang iyan, ay masalimuot din. Kaya nga po ang mga mamamayan na nakatira sa Pangarap ay, maliban doon sa usaping ligal, ay naghahanap sila ng isang katugunan o solusyon, beyond legalism, sa ating mga iba't ibang ahensiya ng pamahalaan. Alam ninyo po ba ito o tama po ba ang aking tinuran, Mr. Speaker?

REP. ERICE. Tama po. At sa aking pagkaka-unawa, ang pangunahing dahilan ni dating Pangulong Marcos nang kaniyang kanselahin ang titulo ng Carmel Development, Inc. ay sa paniniwala niya ay spurious at hindi tama ang kanilang pagmamay-ari ng nasabing lupain.

Kaya nga po ang pagdedeklara naman ng Korte Suprema na unconstitutional ang Presidential Decree ay hindi naman nangangahulugan na, ika nga ay, basta-basta na lamang makukuha niya ang property na iyon without going through the legal process.

REP. ZARATE. Tama po. Dahil ang Kinatawagang ito ay naniniwala din kahit na granting na tama iyong naging desisyon ng Korte Suprema ay hindi ito isang dahilan na basta na lang walisin o alisin ang ating mga kababayan na matagal nang panahon nang sila ay pumunta doon at nagtayo ng kanilang mga tirahan, nag-invest sila. In fact, hindi lang mga pribadong mga residente kundi sa pagkakaalam ko nandoon din ang barangay hall na isang government property. Mayroon din mga public schools, mayroon ding simbahan sa loob ng Pangarap Village.

So, sa matagal nang panahon, kagaya ng nabanggit ko kanina, ay naghahanap ang mga mamamayan diyan ng isang pangmatagalang solusyon labas doon sa usaping legal. Sa inyo pong pagkakaalam ano po ang ginawa ng ating pamahalaan sa iba't ibang administrasyon, nangyari ito sabi ninyo nakansela, nagdesisyon ang Korte Suprema sa panahon pa ni dating Pangulong Cory Aquino. So, nagdaan na ang ilang administrasyon at umabot na nga hanggang ngayon ay nalagay pa rin sa alanganin ang kabuhayan at ang buhay ng ating mga kababayan. Sa ipinakita ninyo po kanina, ang dami nang mga nangyari sa Pangarap Village. So, ano po sa tingin ninyo o ano po sa pagkakaalam ninyo ang ginawa naman ng iba't ibang ahensiya ng ating pamahalaan para mabigyan ng lunas o mabigyan na ng sagot ang matagal nang tinatanong at hinahanap ng ating mga kababayan sa Pangarap Village, hanggang kailan ba matatapos itong bangungot nila?

REP. ERICE. Alam ninyo ho, ito ay isang bangungot para sa kanila pero ako po ay humahanga sa mga naninirahan sa Pangarap Village dahil sa hirap na dinaranas nila, hindi pa rin nila isinusuko ang kanilang pangarap. At, sa aking pagmuni-muni, iyan po ang

nagbigay sa akin ng inspirasyon upang ito ay dalhin sa Kongreso, ito ay maimbestigahan ng Committee on Justice, kung ano talaga ang tunay na puno't dulo ng pagmamay-ari ng Carmel Development Incorporated sa Pangarap Village.

Kung minsan po naririnig ko na iyan, ako po kasi ay Kinatawan ng Second District. Noong ako po ay naging konsehal, ako po ay konsehal ng Second District. Naging vice mayor po ako ng Caloocan subali't hindi ko gaanong napagtuunan ng pansin iyang issue na iyan. Ang sinasabi nila, there is a Supreme Court decision.

So, parang ang naging katotohanan sa marami, sa pamahalaan, sa mga hindi nakakaunawa, ang katotohanan para sa kanila ay mayroon nang ruling ang Korte Suprema na ito ay sa Carmel Farms. So, lahat po ng nilalapitan na ahensiya, ang sinasabi nila, mayroon nang ruling ang Korte Suprema. Pero sa aking pagre-research, napag-alaman ko hanggang ngayon, sa tingin ko, bakit ayaw mag-file ng petition for recovery? Bakit ayaw mag-file ng ejectment? Dahil ba na kapag hinanapan na sila ng titulo ay magkakaroon tayo ng pagkakataon na masuri talaga ang katunayan o authenticity noong titulo ng Carmel Farms?

Kaya po malaking bagay, malaking tulong para sa mga taga Pangarap Village kung ang Kongreso na ito, ang Committee on Justice ay pag-aaralang mabuti. Saan ba nagmula ang titulo ng Carmel Farms, at iyan pong allegation na spurious ang kanilang titulo ay mula pa sa pag-aaral ng dating Pangulong Marcos. Kaya nga niya idineklara na alienable and disposable ang nasabing lupain.

Pangalawa po, hindi naman ibig sabihin, granting for the sake of argument, that this really belongs to Carmel Development Incorporated, hindi naman puwedeng ibig sabihin noon ay pagsisipain niya na lang iyong mga nakatira doon dahil may isang proseso ang batas.

Kung siya ay pinagkalooban ng batas ng karapatan, dapat igitang niya ang batas. *(Applause)* Nararapat lang po na humingi siya ng demolition order sa mga korte, at naniniwala po ako na ang mga taga-Pangarap Village ay mga law-abiding citizens. Hindi po sila—eh ako ho siguro kung ako ay aagawan ng lupa ko baka mag-aaklas ako, hahawak na ako ng tabak, pero hindi po sila naghawak ng tabak. Sa kabila ng kanilang kahirapan, sa kabila noong mga dinaranas nilang mga harassment, sila po ay naniwala, dumulog, hanggang ngayon, nakikipaglaban sa ating mga korte. *(Applause)* Naniniwala sila sa legal process, pero ang mayamang angkan na nagmamay-ari ng Carmel Farms, komportable ang buhay subalit pinahihirapan ang buhay ng mga libu-libong naninirahan sa Pangarap Village. *(Applause)*

REP. ZARATE. Maraming salamat po sa inyong naging kasagutan. Tama po kayo, pero ang isinusulong

ninyo po ay maimbestigahan ito ng Kongreso, in aid of legislation, lalung-lalo na ang ating Komitiba ng Hustisya o ang Komitiba ng Karapatang Pantao, Committee on Justice or Committee on Human Rights.

Sa pagkakaalam ninyo po ba, mayroon pa hong ibang mga ahensiya na kumikilos para magkaroon ng sagot itong problema ng mga kababayan natin sa Pangarap Village?

REP. ERICE. Sa aking palagay po ay, sa ngayon ay wala, kaya nga po kinakailangang ma-establish natin iyong the real truth about the Pangarap Village upang iyong mga ahensiya ng pamahalaan ay kumilos at matulungan itong mga kawawa nating mga kababayan.

REP. ZARATE. So, sa pamamagitan po ng imbestigasyong ito na inyong ipinanunukala ay maipatawag ng Kongreso itong mga ahensiyang ito, halimbawa, ang Presidential Commission on the Urban Poor, ...

REP. ERICE. Human Rights.

REP. ZARATE. ... Human Rights, ang ...

REP. ERICE. And also the owners of Carmel Development Incorporated.

REP. ZARATE. ... may-ari.

REP. ERICE. Hindi po humaharap ang mga may-ari. Dapat malaman natin sa kanya, straight from the horse's mouth, bakit niya ginagawa ito, ang mga pagpapahirap na ito sa mga mamamayan ng Pangarap Village?

REP. ZARATE. Salamat po.

REP. ERICE. Dapat din pong imbestigahan iyong security guards, iyong security battalion na nandoon. (*Applause*) Bakit po parang private army, garbed in full battle gear, with long rifles at hindi na malaman kung sinu-sino iyong mga iyon, kung totoo bang mga blue guards iyon, kung mga lisensyado bang mga blue guards iyon, pati po ang kapulisan, ayaw pong pumasok sa Pangarap Village. Ang sabi nila, ang dahilan ng mga kapulisan, private property daw po, pero kung may arson, may sinusunog, may commission of crime, mayroon bang private property kung may sinusunog o tinatambakan na mga creek para magbaha ang mga kabahayan ng mga taga-Pangarap, kung ninanakaw ang mga transformer ng Meralco? Hindi na po, parang wala ng batas, parang ang batas na lamang sa lugar na iyan ay ang Carmel Development Incorporated.

REP. ZARATE. Salamat po, pero sigurado po kayo na ang lugar na iyan ay nasasakop pa sa Pilipinas? (*Laughter*) Kasi po, sa inyo pong tinuran, parang isa ho silang, nasa isang bansa na sila. Mayroon silang sariling army, mayroon silang sariling batas na hindi pinapairal ang ating batas. Pero nakita ko ho kanina, hindi lang blue guards, may mga riot police din. So, ibig sabihin, kahit na iyong kapulisan, riot police natin, ay nagagamit na rin ng may-ari ng company na ito.

REP. ERICE. Sa aking pananaw, noong una po akala ko because they are so powerful, they are untouchables. Pero sa aking pagmuni-muni, nakikita ko rin po, siguro ang gobyerno, ang pamahalaan, ang maraming opisyal ng pamahalaan ay misinformed dahil nga siguro sa haba ng pagdaan ng panahon, sa dami ng mga dokumento na kailangan mong basahin upang maunawaan mo iyong suliranin, tinatanggap na lang ng maraming ahensiya na puwedeng gawin ng Carmel Farms ang lahat ng gusto nitong gawin sa nasabing property. Subalit last week po, nagpunta ako sa opisina ng ating kagalang-galang na Secretary of the Interior and Local Government, si Secretary Año, at ipinangako niya naman po na siya ay bubuo ng isang task force upang pag-aralan iyong violations ng Carmel Development Incorporated sa karapatan ng mga mamamayan sa Pangarap.

REP. ZARATE. Salamat po sa inyong naging katanungan.

Sana nga po misinformed lang sila, ang mga opisyal ng pamahalaan. Pero gaya po ng naturan ko kanina, dumaan na ito ng ilang administrasyon at ang kalagayan ngayon ng ating mga kababayan sa Pangarap Village, sa totoo lang, hindi ito isang isolated incident. Nangyayari rin ito sa ibang bahagi pa ng ating bansa na walang kasiguruhan ang kabuhayan at pabahay ng ating mga kababayan dahil sa pakikipagkutsabahan ng ilang mga opisyal ng ating pamahalaan, para mapagbigyan at masunod ang gusto ng mga malalaki at mayayamang developers or mayayamang may-ari ng lupa. Pinapaalis sa kinatitirikan ng kanilang mga kabahayan ang ating mga mahihirap na mga mamamayan. Sa totoo lang, alam rin po ninyo ito dahil naging Konsehal kayo, naging Vice Mayor at naging Mambabatas. Kung gugustuhin ng ating pamahalaan, puwede naman talagang mabigyan ng solusyon. There are many ways. Mayroong poder ang pamahalaan for expropriation at mayroong mga programa na puwedeng gawin ng pamahalaan para hindi na mapaalis o hindi na madistorbo sa kinatitirikan ng kanilang bahay ngayon at ng kanilang kabuhayan.

Sa tingin ko, hindi lang ito dahil hindi nila naintindihan at talagang sa sitwasyon po natin ngayon, kasama pa ang iba't ibang issues, ito ay labanan ng mga malalaki at ng mga mahihirap. Kaya tama po kayo na dapat pagpugayan natin ang ating mga kababayan sa Pangarap Village, dahil ang nagiging armas lang ng mga

mahihirap at maliliit nating kababayan ay ang kanilang pagiging united, at patuloy na naninindigan sa kanilang karapatan laban sa kanilang malalaki ... (*Applause*)

REP. ERICE. Yes, Mr. Speaker. I just would like to give the benefit of the doubt to some government officials. Pero alam ko din po na marami talagang pagkukulang. Siguro isa rin po ako dahil ako ay naging konsehal bagamat hindi ko ito distrito at naging vice mayor din ako na hindi ko gaanong pinag-aralan until these days. Habang pinag-aaralan ko, nai-inspire po ako sa ipinapakita ng mga kababayan natin sa Pangarap Village na courage, pagkakaisa at determinasyon para even against all odds, maabot nila ang kanilang pangarap para sa kanilang pamilya. Kaya sabi ko nga po, "First things first, we must investigate. Let us find out the real truth." Kasi po iyong truth na naipalaganap ay maaaring hindi iyong ang real truth.

REP. ZARATE. Fake news.

REP. ERICE. Sabi nga po ninyo na masalimuot ang problema, at ayoko naman magbigay din ng mga solusyon na sa tingin ko ay hindi makatotohanan. Of course, we can always expropriate, the government can always expropriate, but only for socialized housing. We cannot expropriate and give 800 square meters to beneficiaries of the Presidential decree. Only to the informal settlers, we can expropriate for them. Only to those who are willing to accept socialized housing, we can help through the government. Even the local governments can help the residents by simply buying the land through expropriation. Iyan po ang pinakamadaling magagawa para masiguro na magkakaroon ng kasiguruhan ang pananahanan, lalo na iyong mga maliliit na mahihirap na taga-Pangarap Village by expropriation.

Ang tanong, kanino ibabayad iyong lupa? Of course, it would be deposited to the courts, either to the Malacañang Homeowners Association, the Carmel Farm Development or any other entity if the courts would finally find the real owner of the property.

REP. ZARATE. Salamat po.

Kami po ay kaisa ninyo sa inyong panukala na magkaroon ng kagyat na imbestigasyon dito dahil nga napakahaba na ng panahon. Sa pagkakaalala ko, kami rin po ay naghain ng panukalang resolusyon noon na maimbestigahan din ito ng Kongreso. Kaya siguro ito ay hamon din sa ating liderato dito sa Kongreso na tingnan itong usaping ito para makatulong ang Kongreso para mahanapan ng solusyon.

Ang bangungot na nabanggit po ninyo kanina ay talaga namang literally and figuratively bangungot sa kanila ang nangyayari ngayon, at sana matigil at manumbalik na ang kanilang lugar ngayon na talagang lugar na pinapangarap nila, ng mga anak nila at anak

ng kanilang mga anak, dahil ito rin po ay pinagpaguran nila. Sana po ang inyong panukala ay mapagbigyan at mai-refer sa appropriate committee for immediate action.

REP. ERICE. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. Ito po ang problema ng Sitio Pangarap.

Maraming salamat po sa inyong mga kasagutan. (*Applause*)

REP. ERICE. Especially po ang harassment, ang pagba-violate ng kanilang karapatang pantao, ito ang unang-unang dapat aksyunan ng pamahalaan na matigil na. (*Applause*)

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

REP. SINGSON-MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Hon. Sarah Jane I. Elago of the Party-List KABATAAN for her manifestation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Puno). The Lady from the Party-List KABATAAN, the Honorable Elago, is recognized for her manifestation.

#### MANIFESTATION OF REP. ELAGO

REP. ELAGO. Maraming salamat, G. Ispiker.

Sa bahagi po ng Representasyon ng KABATAAN, nais din nating diinan ang pangangailangan na ito ay maimbestigahan na sa lalong madaling panahon (*Applause*) dahil nais natin na magpatuloy ang pangarap ng mga taga-Pangarap nang malayo sa pangamba.

Ako po mismo ay saksi bilang parte ng mga nagsulong ng panukalang resolusyon sa Seventeenth Congress para maimbestigahan ito kung paano naapektuhan ang kalagayan ng bata at kabataan, lalo na iyong mga nag-eeskuwela. May student leaders po nanggaling sa iba't ibang eskuwelahan sa Maynila ang nagbibigay sa atin ng mensahe na papasok na lamang sila sa school, hindi pa sila makatuloy dahil biglang may trak, na nangangamba sila na kung papasok sila sa eskuwelahan baka pagbalik nila wala na silang bahay.

Ang mga ganoong mga pagkakataon, na hindi lang sa mga pumapasok nang malayo sa Caloocan, pero maski po iyong mga pumapasok sa malapit na kailangan pa nilang umikot ng daan dahil may roads o mga daanan na hindi na nila ma-access. Iyan po ang mga kalagayan na sa tingin natin ay hindi talaga makatao. Kaya ang usapin dito ay hindi lang para mag-imbestiga kung sino ba talaga ang nagmamay-ari ng lupa o kung ano na po iyong status ng usaping ito kundi imbestigasyon talaga.

Una, imbestigahan kung sino ang dapat managot sa mga harassment. Pangalawa, bigyan po ng hustisya ang lahat ng mga naglaan ng oras at nagsakripisyo upang maipaglaban ang karapatan sa ligtas at matitirahan na bahay sa ating bansa. Ito po ay isang karapatan na lahat tayo, hindi lang mga Miyembro ng Kongreso, kundi mga lingkod-bayan, tayo ay titindig para diyan. Lalung-lalo na po sa panahon ngayon, nasa 4.1 million ang walang tirahan sa Pilipinas, ang tatlong milyong diyan ay nasa Maynila. Ito pong nasa Pangarap ay mayroon ng bahay. Ibigay natin ang lahat upang manatili sa kanila ang pagmamay-ari ng mga tahanan, para ang mga bata at kabataan ay hindi na mamanahin pa ang problema na iyan sa Pangarap Village. Iyan po ang hangad ng Representasyon ng KABATAAN, kaya maaasahan po ninyo ang aming buong-buong suporta.

Maraming salamat po, G. Ispiker. *(Applause)*

*At this juncture, Deputy Speaker Roberto V. Puno relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Johnny Ty Pimentel.*

REP. ERICE. Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. SINGHON-MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to refer the speech of Rep. Edgar Erice and the interpellations to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

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

The privilege speech of Honorable Erice is hereby referred to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action. *(Applause)*

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. SINGHON-MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Rep. Sergio C. Dagooc from the Party-List APEC to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pimentel). The Hon. Sergio C. Dagooc is hereby recognized.

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. DAGOOC

REP. DAGOOC. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good evening everyone.

Mr. Speaker, the subject matter of my privilege speech is, again, about the impending electricity price spikes and brownouts during summer which is becoming normal and acceptable to all electricity end-users.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express pressing concerns faced by the power industry. Although

undeniably, they are matters of national significance, they are seemingly taken for granted.

*At this juncture, Deputy Speaker Johnny Ty Pimentel relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Roberto V. Puno.*

The greatest task at hand in our clarion call, through legislative measures, Mr. Speaker, is to amend Republic Act No. 9136 or the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001 or the EPIRA.

This Representation carries the urgency to perform my duty as a protector of the interests of the electricity end-users, particularly, those that are served by the 121 electric cooperatives all over our archipelago, the energy sector and the Filipino people in general, because the progress of a nation is driven by its strong economy, and economic activity requires reliable and least-cost electricity in modern times.

We in the Power bloc, together with my colleagues from Philreca, Ako Padayon Pilipino and Recoboda, are in solidarity with the cause of amending the EPIRA. At the outset of a new decade, a barrage of issues has surfaced and it is quite understandable that the shaping of public opinion on what matters has been divided. However, this Representation strongly believes that as electricity becomes an essential need in modern times, it is my duty, it is our duty as a collegial body, to ensure that proper measures are to be prioritized by this august Chamber.

The dilemma of power shortage is not new to us Filipinos. Indeed, since the dawn of the electrification program five decades ago, it has been an accompanying struggle, and even more so in today's age. With power shortage, it is then inevitable that brownouts will follow. The main factors contributing to the forecast price hikes and rotating brownouts would be the following, Mr. Speaker: lack of power plants which provide ancillary services to the grid and to cover the ever-increasing demand in electricity annually. Ancillary services support the transmission system in order to maintain power supply reliability and security of the grid, including the regulating reserve, contingency reserve, dispatchable reserve and block start.

At present, Mr. Speaker, we have the Kalayaan Pump Storage Power Plant in Luzon, which is part of the 728 MW Caliraya-Botocan-Kalayaan Hydro Electric Power Plant Complex. Kalayaan has four units and is the only remaining main government-owned ancillary power plant in Luzon. What is more alarming, Mr. Speaker, is that this power plant is, again, up for bidding this year as announced by the PSALM or Private Sector Asset and Liabilities Management Corporation which is tasked by the EPIRA to privatize the assets of the government-owned and -controlled corporation Napocor.

Lack of new power plants to cover the increasing demand is indeed a rising concern. As of August last year, the total dependable capacity of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao is only 21,258 MW. From a report issued by the Department of Energy, only three power plants have been commissioned last year or in 2019. While there are two power plants with a total dependable capacity of 175 MW commissioned in Visayas and one power plant of 276 MW, alarmingly, there is none in Luzon, which is ironic since Luzon consumes the bulk of our energy requirement.

This being said, Mr. Speaker, insufficiency of new power plants means that the available capacity is not enough to cover the annual demand power growth, especially in Luzon. While there is a submarine cable connecting Luzon to the Visayas to augment the thinning supply in Luzon, there are frequent line congestions which limit the flow of excess power supply from the Visayas to Luzon.

Sumisikip na po, Mr. Speaker, iyong linya ng National Grid Corporation of the Philippines na ginagamit ngayon that will transmit power from Visayas to Luzon in case magkaroon ng power supply shortage ang Luzon, which typically, nangyayari taun-taon.

Another case we have to consider are the following, Mr. Speaker: the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market rules. Based on 2019 WESM data, the spot settlement price peaks every summer. Tumataas po ito tuwing summer, lalung-lalo na po dito sa Luzon, to be specific, during the months of April to June. The contributing factor to this is the thinning supply margins. Papanipis na po iyong supply tuwing summer kaya isang planta lang po ang magkaroon ng problema, magkakaroon agad ang Luzon ng yellow o red alert at tataas iyong kuryente. The demand every year increases and available generation capacities are now unable to adequately bolster up the demand.

For 2020, Mr. Speaker, the projected price spikes, what we are calling for are for the new-generation capacities to meet the increasing demand and to help prevent the recurrence of a high-market clearing price. Under our existing market rules, the market clearing price of daily electricity trading is based on the highest bid price, which I could not understand, Mr. Speaker. To elaborate, for example, if in a 24-hour trading in the electricity spot market, the highest price is at P15 or P20 per kilowatt hour, but early on that particular day, there were power plants that will offer less than P15 or P20, let us say, only P5. At 8:00 a.m., there is a power plant that will trade at P10, but at the end of the day, the highest a power plant will trade at is P20. That P20 will be paid by all the distribution utilities that are trading in the market on that particular day or in the 24-hour trading interval.

So, I could not understand kung saan ba mapupunta iyong difference. Kapag ba iyong planta ay nagbenta

ng P5 at iyong bumili ay nagbabayad ng P20 at the end of the trading hour or at the end of the 24-hour trading interval, saan mapupunta iyong P15 on top of the P5 na in-offer sa akin? Sino ang maghahati-hati doon? This is something which the wholesale electricity spot market needs to explain to the Representatives of the people in Congress in this august Body.

As a result, distribution utilities like electric cooperatives are the ones being blamed by the consumers for the electricity prices when, in fact, this is a generation cost-related component, which is a pass-on charge, and the distribution utilities are only collectors of these charges.

There are also spikes in the market price due to line congestions, line constraints. Hindi po kasalanan ng distribution utilities kung inefficient po iyong transmission line natin because it is not the distribution utilities, like electric cooperatives and Meralco, that are operating the transmission lines; it is the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines. Ngayon, kung may congestion sa linya nila, bakit ang paparusahan ay ang mga ordinaryong kumukunsumo ng kuryente at pinapakolekta sa mga distribution utility at nire-remit sa wholesale electricity spot market, sa power plants at sa National Grid Corporation na binabayaran din natin iyong transmission charge nila?

We certainly need to look into the current rules and further study how the consumers will not be burdened by the inefficiencies of the market. Mr. Speaker, we need to review the wholesale electricity spot market rules, the IEMOP or the Independent Market Operator. All of those rules should be reviewed in order to prevent anti-competitive behavior and to protect consumers against market collusion. As a consequence, though it is not their fault, the price spikes are then passed on ultimately to the ordinary consumers.

Needless to say, we in the Power bloc believe that something can be done and I enjoin everyone in this august Chamber, whose constituents are also electricity end-users, constituents who will bear the brunt of rotating brownouts and price spikes, we need to go with them in their uphill battle and we need to stop their bleeding or their payment of unnecessary costs for the electricity that they consume.

We, Filipinos, have always been forced to constantly readjust spending patterns just to be able to keep up with the ever-rising electricity bills and make ends meet. Sa patuloy na pagtaas ng presyo ng bilingin, hindi maikakaila na ang nakaambang pagtaas ng presyo ng kuryente ay malaking pahirap sa ating mga kababayan. Hindi po natin ito dapat ipagsawalang-bahala.

We will make it our priority, Mr. Speaker, to investigate the major factors contributing to this problem. As keen as we are to uncover the grounds for this, we are much more determined to lay out possible solutions.



Hindi po sapat na alam natin ang dahilan. Panahon na po upang ito ay ating aksyunan at mabigyan ng solusyon sa pamamagitan ng mga bagong batas na sasagot sa kahinaan at kakulangan ng EPIRA. Real problems, Mr. Speaker, require concrete solutions and the best time to act on it is now, N-O-W, Mr. Speaker.

It is, therefore, our urgent call to amend EPIRA. We need to amend EPIRA in order for the government, through the National Power Corporation, to be able to again generate energy power plants for ancillary purposes that will mitigate price spikes and ensure the sufficiency of supply. Bakit po? Dahil kapag Napocor, it is government-controlled, pero kapag private, they are deregulated, wala pong makakontrol sa kanila.

Likewise, Mr. Speaker, open access transmission rules and wholesale electricity spot market rules should also be reviewed. With that, I hope that we are one in this endeavor.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. DELOS SANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the privilege speech of Hon. Sergio Dagooc to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

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

The speech of Honorable Dagooc is referred to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

REP. DELOS SANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we terminate the Privilege Hour.

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

The Privilege Hour is hereby terminated.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

REP. DELOS SANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn the session until tomorrow, at three o'clock in the afternoon.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Puno). The session is adjourned until tomorrow, February 4, 2020, Tuesday, at 3:00 p.m.

*It was 7:29 p.m.*