



# Congressional Record

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

## House of Representatives

Vol. 4

Monday, February 10, 2020

No. 41

### CALL TO ORDER

*At 4:00 p.m., Deputy Speaker Dan S. Fernandez called the session to order.*

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

Please rise for the Invocation to be delivered by the honorable Rep. Rowena Niña O. Taduran of the ACT-CIS Party-List.

*Everybody rose for the Invocation.*

### INVOCATION

REP. TADURAN. *Before we begin, let us all approach the Lord with praise and thanksgiving. With all humanity, let us face our Lord.*

*While we are thankful for the gift of life, the past few days continue to be tough and trying times for Your children on earth, with calamities, literal and figurative, on the horizon of our humble nation. We ask for Your holy intervention to shelter those whose lives and work are threatened by seemingly unquenchable flames. We pray for the earth to finally find its calm and cease from its tireless quakes. Preserve anyone of us from harm, especially those whose lives are at the forefront of overcoming natural disasters.*

*We pray for safety and immunity against any viral threats to our health, but most importantly, peace of mind amidst these threats to humanity.*

*God Almighty, we believe we have been chosen. With the light in Your grace and presence, we have faith that each of us is precious in Your sight. May we never betray Your selection of us for Your set purpose and to serve our country.*

*We stand in this august Chamber of Congress today, asking for Your divine guidance and wisdom for the men and women who have been elected and sworn to represent the interests of the people of the Philippines.*

*We pray that each of us would serve with humility, dignity and honor, enact laws that would be fair, just and equitable. For the Members of this people's House, we*

*ask for a surfeit of wisdom and patience that we might work together and through the differences that are all too familiar, to a new vision of those qualities that might bring us together as one people.*

*May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory. Amen.*

*In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit.*

*Amen.*

### NATIONAL ANTHEM

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

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). There is a motion for the calling of the roll. Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the said motion is now approved.

The Secretary General is now—okay, the previous motion was for the deferment of the calling of the roll. Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the said motion is now approved.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). Yes. There is a motion for the deferment of the approval of the Journal of the previous session. Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the said motion is now approved.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

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

BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 6178, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE MINDANAO RAILWAYS CORPORATION PRESCRIBING ITS POWERS, FUNCTIONS AND DUTIES AND PROVIDING FOR THE NECESSARY FUNDS FOR ITS OPERATION”

By Representative Dalipe  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ENTERPRISES AND PRIVATIZATION AND THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 6179, entitled:

“AN ACT MAKING THE 16<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF JANUARY A SPECIAL WORKING HOLIDAY TO BE KNOWN AS THE NATIONAL BAPTIST DAY”

By Representative Abante  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF LAWS

House Bill No. 6180, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING ALL COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS AND MANUFACTURING COMPANIES TO MAINTAIN A SYSTEM OF RECOVERY, COLLECTION, RECYCLING AND DISPOSAL OF PLASTIC AND OTHER NON-BIODEGRADABLE MATERIALS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Go (Mark)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY

House Bill No. 6182, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE ROAD STRETCHING FROM THE MUNICIPALITY OF BAYOG, PROVINCE OF ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR TO THE BOUNDARY OF MUNICIPALITY OF BUUG, PROVINCE OF ZAMBOANGA SIBUGAY INTO A NATIONAL ROAD, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE BAYOG–BUUG NATIONAL HIGHWAY AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Babasa  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 6183, entitled:

“AN ACT INTEGRATING ALL THE PROVINCIAL AND SUB-PROVINCIAL JAILS WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF THE BUREAU OF JAIL MANAGEMENT AND PENOLOGY AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6975 AND REPUBLIC ACT 9263”

By Representative Babasa  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 6184, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE ON THE NATIONAL BUDGET”

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

House Bill No. 6185, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES AND AQUATIC RESOURCES, PROVIDING FOR ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFORE AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Salo  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION AND THE COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE AND FISHERIES RESOURCES

House Bill No. 6186, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE GOVERNMENT UNEMPLOYMENT ASSURANCE MUTUAL FUND FOR THE BENEFIT OF SEPARATED GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

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

House Bill No. 6187, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING SECTIONS 236 AND 237 (A), (B), OF CHAPTER IV, TITLE I, BOOK II, OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7160, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991”

By Representative Salo  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 6188, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE NATIONAL INFECTIOUS DISEASE TREATMENT AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Castelo  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 6189, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING ALLOWANCES TO SANGGUNIANG KABATAAN (SK) COUNCILORS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10742 ALSO KNOWN AS THE SANGGUNIANG KABATAAN REFORM ACT OF 2015”

By Representative Castelo  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 6190, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE PROTECTION OF EMPLOYEES IN THE BUSINESS PROCESS OUTSOURCING (BPO) INDUSTRY”

By Representative Castelo  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

House Bill No. 6191, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING SECTION 4 (f) OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9994 ‘AN ACT GRANTING ADDITIONAL BENEFITS TO SENIOR CITIZENS FURTHER AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7432, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS AN ACT TO MAXIMIZE THE CONTRIBUTION OF SENIOR CITIZENS TO NATION BUILDING, GRANT BENEFITS AND SPECIAL PRIVILEGES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES’”

By Representative Jalosjos  
TO THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON SENIOR CITIZENS

House Bill No. 6193, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING THE ROMBLON ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC. A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, ESTABLISH, OPERATE, OWN, MANAGE AND MAINTAIN DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS FOR THE CONVEYANCE OF ELECTRIC POWER TO THE END-USERS IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF BANTON, CORCUERA AND CONCEPCION, PROVINCE OF ROMBLON, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Madrona

TO THE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE FRANCHISES

House Bill No. 6195, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE NUEVA ECIJA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (NEUST) ACADEMIC EXTENSION CAMPUS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF NAMPICUAN, PROVINCE OF NUEVA ECIJA AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Suansing (Estrellita)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 6196, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING FEBRUARY 14 OF EVERY YEAR AS THE NATIONAL FAMILY DAY”

By Representative Abellanosa  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON POPULATION AND FAMILY RELATIONS

House Bill No. 6197, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING THE CONSTRUCTION AND INSTALLATION OF A SUBMARINE ELECTRIC DISTRIBUTION LINE TO HIGATANGAN ISLAND, NAVAL, BILIRAN FROM BRGY. JUBAY, CALUBIAN, LEYTE AND TO PROVIDE FUNDS THEREOF”

By Representative Espina  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY

House Bill No. 6198, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING THE 14<sup>TH</sup> MONTH PAY FOR ALL EMPLOYEES IN THE GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SECTOR REGARDLESS OF STATUS OF EMPLOYMENT”

By Representative Yap (Eric)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL REGULATION AND THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

House Bill No. 6199, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGAY MANAWE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF LORETO, AGUSAN DEL SUR”

By Representative Plaza  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 6200, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGAY KAPDA IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF LORETO, AGUSAN DEL SUR”

By Representative Plaza  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

KNOWN AS BARANGAY ILANG-ILANG IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF LORETO, AGUSAN DEL SUR”

By Representative Plaza  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 6201, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGAY ACES IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF LORETO, AGUSAN DEL SUR”

By Representative Plaza  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 6207, entitled:

“AN ACT REGULATING THE OPERATION OF PRIVATELY-OWNED PARKING SPACES AND FACILITIES”

By Representative Delos Santos  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND INDUSTRY

House Bill No. 6202, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGAY FERDINAND IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF LORETO, AGUSAN DEL SUR”

By Representative Plaza  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 6208, entitled:

“AN ACT REMOVING CARDBOARD WASTAGE IN THE PRODUCTION PROCESS OF CONSUMER PRODUCTS”

By Representative Delos Santos  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY

House Bill No. 6203, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGAY MABUHAY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF LORETO, AGUSAN DEL SUR”

By Representative Plaza  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 6209, entitled:

“AN ACT TO REGULATE THE FARE RATES OF TRANSPORT NETWORK COMPANIES AND TRANSPORTATION NETWORK VEHICLES SERVICE”

By Representative Sy-Alvarado  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 6204, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGAY BUGDANGAN IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF LORETO, AGUSAN DEL SUR”

By Representative Plaza  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 6210, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE MINIMUM ALLOWABLE AGE FOR SMOKING TO TWENTY-ONE (21) YEARS, HEREBY AMENDING R.A. 9211 OR THE TOBACCO REGULATION ACT OF 2003”

By Representative Singson  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 6205, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGAY MAITOM IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF LORETO, AGUSAN DEL SUR”

By Representative Plaza  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 6211, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE CONVERSION OF NRJ BAYUGAN CITY – MARCELINA – SAN LUIS – MALAYBALAY ROAD, LOCATED IN THE PROVINCE OF AGUSAN DEL SUR INTO A NATIONAL ROAD AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Bascug  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 6206, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY TO BE

House Bill No. 6212, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE CONVERSION OF NRJ SIBAGAT – VILLANGIT – NEW TUBIGON – SAN JUAN – DIVER ROAD, LOCATED IN THE PROVINCE OF AGUSAN

DEL SUR INTO NATIONAL ROAD AND  
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFORE”

By Representative Bascug  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS  
AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 6213, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING THE MANDATORY  
INSTALLATION OF HAND SANITIZER  
DISPENSERS IN ALL PUBLIC TRANSPORT  
TERMINALS, AIRPORTS, SEAPORTS,  
COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS AND  
GOVERNMENT OFFICES NATIONWIDE  
AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Bascug  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 6214, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE BORACAY ISLAND  
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY”

By Representatives Duterte, Yap (Eric) and  
Gonzalez (Sandro)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
ENTERPRISES AND PRIVATIZATION

House Bill No. 6215, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING STRONGER  
PROTECTION FOR CHILDREN AGAINST  
SEXUAL ABUSE”

By Representatives Acosta-Alba and Fortun  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF LAWS  
AND THE COMMITTEE ON WELFARE OF  
CHILDREN

## RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 691, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER  
AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION TO  
CONDUCT AN INQUIRY INTO THE  
ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY OF THE  
TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS  
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY IN THE  
IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS STATUTORILY  
MANDATED PLANS AND PROGRAMS”

By Representative Escudero  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 692, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION URGING PRESIDENT  
RODRIGO DUTERTE TO ALLOW FOR  
THE REVIEW OF THE VISITING FORCES  
AGREEMENT WITH THE UNITED  
STATES OF AMERICA BEFORE ITS  
TERMINATION”

By Representative Pimentel  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS

House Resolution No. 693, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE  
ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL  
EDUCATION TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY  
IN AID OF LEGISLATION TO ASSESS AND  
EVALUATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10687, OTHERWISE  
KNOWN AS THE UNIFIED STUDENT  
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SYSTEM FOR  
TERTIARY EDUCATION (UNIFAST)  
ACT TO ENSURE THAT THE MANDATE  
OF THE LAW IS EFFECTIVELY  
AND EFFICIENTLY CARRIED OUT”

By Representative Hernandez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 694, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION STRONGLY URGING THE  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND OTHER  
APPROPRIATE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES  
TO ESTABLISH CABALLO ISLAND AS  
A PERMANENT QUARANTINE AREA  
FOR NOVEL CORONAVIRUS ACUTE  
RESPIRATORY DISEASE (nCoVARD) AND  
OTHER INFECTIOUS DISEASES AND FOR  
THE APPROPRIATE HOUSE COMMITTEE  
TO MAKE A DETAILED REVIEW OF ITS  
VIABILITY AND FEASIBILITY”

By Representative Lopez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 695, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE  
ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS TO CONDUCT  
AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION,  
TO LOOK INTO THE PHILIPPINE PLAN  
FOR ENERGY SUFFICIENCY AND  
SUSTAINABILITY IN RELATION TO THE  
UNCOLLECTED RECEIVABLES OF THE  
POWER SECTOR ASSETS AND LIABILITIES  
MANAGEMENT CORPORATION”

By Representative Defensor (Michael)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 696, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION URGING THE  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS  
AND HIGHWAYS THROUGH ITS  
SECRETARY, THE HONORABLE MARK  
A. VILLAR, TO DECLARE AS NATIONAL  
SECONDARY ROADS THE LANCA –  
LUBAN – CABUAYA ROAD AND THE

DAWAN–MAMALI–MACAMBOL ROAD,  
BOTH IN THE CITY OF MATI, PROVINCE  
OF DAVAO ORIENTAL”

By Representative Almario  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS  
AND HIGHWAYS

House Resolution No. 698, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION URGING THE PROPER  
COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES TO CONDUCT AN  
INVESTIGATION IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON  
THE ALLEGATION THAT THE DEPARTMENT  
OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS  
TECHNOLOGY (DICT) UNDER SECRETARY  
GREGORIO BALLESTEROS HONASAN II  
DIVERTED THE AGENCY’S UNSPENT FUNDS  
AS CASH ADVANCES FOR HIS OFFICE’S  
CONFIDENTIAL AND INTELLIGENCE  
FUND”

By Representative Singson  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 699, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE APPROPRIATE  
NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES TO  
CONDUCT AN IMMEDIATE ASSESSMENT  
OF THE TOTAL DAMAGE CAUSED BY  
THE TAAL VOLCANO ERUPTION, AND TO  
COME UP WITH A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
CONTAINING THE TOTAL FINANCIAL  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE RELIEF,  
REHABILITATION, AND RESETTLEMENT  
OF THE AFFECTED COMMUNITIES”

By Representative Aguinaldo  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 700, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION TO URGENTLY CONSTITUTE  
THE LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT  
COMMITTEE TO MONITOR AND OVERSEE  
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VISITING  
FORCES AGREEMENT WITH THE UNITED  
STATES OF AMERICA”

By Representative Pimentel  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS

House Resolution No. 701, entitled:

“RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND  
COMMENDING ALEXANDRA M. EALA  
FOR WINNING IN THE 2020 AUSTRALIAN  
OPEN – JUNIOR GIRL DOUBLES”

By Representative Tiangco  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH AND  
SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

House Resolution No. 702, 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 ALLEGED USE  
OF CONFIDENTIAL FUNDS OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND  
COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY FOR  
SURVEILLANCE”

By Representatives Abante, Zarate, Gaité, Cullamat,  
Castro (France), Brosas, Elago, Belmonte,  
Fernando, Singson, Bordado, Quimbo, Dagooc,  
Fortun, Umali (Ma. Victoria), Saulog, Guya  
and Advincula

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

COMMUNICATIONS

Letter dated January 21, 2020 of Michael G. Aguinaldo,  
Chairperson, Commission on Audit, providing  
the House of Representatives with a copy of the  
Performance Audit Report (PAO-2019-02) entitled  
“Reported Increase in the Dairy Herd Not Enough  
to Warrant Attainment of the Desired Local Milk  
Sufficiency Level”.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated January 21, 2020 of Atty. Glen A.  
Pangapalan, General Manager, Philippine Fisheries  
Development Authority, Department of Agriculture,  
informing the House of Representatives that the  
following reports as of December 31, 2019 have  
been posted in the PFDA’s website:

1. BAR No. 1 - Performance Indicator – December 31, 2019;
2. FAR No. 1 - Statement of Appropriations, Allotments, Obligations, Disbursements and Balances (SAAODB);
3. FAR No. 4 - Monthly Report of Disbursements, December 2019; and
4. Statement of Allotments, Obligations, Utilizations and Balances.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report of the Committee on Higher and Technical  
Education and the Committee on Appropriations  
(Committee Report No. 221), re H.B. No. 6216,  
entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TECHNICAL  
EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT  
AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING AND  
ASSESSMENT CENTER IN THE CITY OF

ANTIPOLO, PROVINCE OF RIZAL, TO BE KNOWN AS THE ANTIPOLO CITY TESDA TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 209

Sponsors: Representatives Go (Mark), Ungab and Puno

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Health and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 222), re H.B. No. 6218, entitled:

“AN ACT RENAMING THE MALITA DISTRICT HOSPITAL IN BARANGAY POBLACION, MUNICIPALITY OF MALITA, PROVINCE OF DAVAO OCCIDENTAL TO MALITA WOMEN’S AND CHILDREN’S WELLNESS CENTER”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 4404

Sponsors: Representatives Tan (Angelina), Bautista-Bandigan and Ungab

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Local Government (Committee Report No. 223), re H.B. No. 6222, entitled:

“AN ACT REAPPORTIONING THE SECOND LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OF THE PROVINCE OF RIZAL INTO THREE (3) LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 336

Sponsors: Representatives Villanueva (Noel) and Nograles (Juan)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Public Works and Highways and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 224), re H.B. No. 6227, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A NEW DISTRICT ENGINEERING OFFICE IN THE THIRD LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OF THE PROVINCE OF ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 4439

Sponsors: Representatives Madrona, Ungab and Amatong

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Labor and Employment (Committee Report No. 225), re H.B. No. 6228, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING ALL BARANGAYS TO CREATE A REGISTRY OF SKILLED WORKERS”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 3147

Sponsors: Representatives Pineda and Romulo  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Labor and Employment (Committee Report No. 226), re H.B. No. 1338, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE SERVICE INCENTIVE LEAVE OF EMPLOYEES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE ARTICLE 95 OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 442, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LABOR CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES”

recommending its approval without amendment, in consolidation with House Bill No. 3463

Sponsors: Representatives Pineda, Go (Mark) and Villafuerte

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

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

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). The session suspended.

*It was 3:16 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 3:21 p.m., the session was resumed.*

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### PRIVILEGE HOUR

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). There is a motion for the opening of the Privilege Hour. Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the said motion is now approved. The Chair declares the Privilege Hour.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. FARIÑAS, RIA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to move for the recognition of Hon. Gabriel Bordado Jr. from the Third District of Camarines Sur for his privilege speech.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). The Chair recognizes Rep. Gabriel H. Bordado Jr. for his privilege speech.

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. BORDADO

REP. BORDADO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we are well in the second month of the New Year and the new decade. At this stage, we may have realized the shaky start of the period not only in the Philippines, but also in almost all parts of the world.

The beginning of the year 2020 saw the continuation and escalation of issues from years passed as well as the manifestation of new challenges which tested and are still testing our resilience and strength as a nation. The smoke from the New Year's fireworks had barely been cleared and we already felt the threat of rising global tensions, a worldwide health crisis, and the continuous and harrowing effects of climate change on our environment.

Mr. Speaker, tension between the United States and Iran continues to escalate, seemingly reaching a new peak when President Donald Trump ordered the assassination of the Iranian military commander, Qasem Soleimani, on January 3, 2020. While this appears to concern only the two countries, Mr. Speaker, further retaliations could lead to more breaches of international laws and could potentially spur global conflicts. In our own turf here in the Philippines, we seem to be crafting changes in alliances. The threat of the termination of the Visiting Forces Agreement with the United States of America still stands, sending shivers to the spines of certain top government officials. In fact, as pointed out by the Secretary of Foreign Affairs Teodoro L. Locsin Jr. himself, and I quote:

While the Philippines has the prerogative to terminate the VFA anytime, the continuance of the agreement is deemed to be more beneficial to the Philippines, compared to any benefits were it to be terminated.

Meanwhile, Mr. Speaker, there is a whole conflict between us and Mother Nature. We continue to address the deleterious consequences of the exploitation of our natural resources, but time, Mr. Speaker, is not on our side. For one, it is heavily impacting the agriculture industry which contributes up to 20 percent of the country's gross domestic product and makes up 39.8 percent of the country's total labor force, therefore, also putting food security in jeopardy. The effect of

rapidly changing climate becomes harder to combat as this brings stronger storms, longer periods of droughts, rains and destruction of property and livelihood. And just of the outset of the new year, Mr. Speaker, Taal Volcano had a phreatic explosion creating heavy ash fall that was felt in surrounding provinces and even in regions as far as Northern and Central Luzon. The volcano is one of the country's popular tourist spots and is at the center of a busy tourist hub. This explosion not only impacted on the safety and livelihood of the people in Batangas and outlying areas, but also affected numerous businesses and industries that rely heavily on the picturesque location of the volcano. But even more worrying Mr. Speaker, is the fact that this pointed us to the glaring lapses in our disaster preparedness plans and highlighted the need for us to put greater importance in mitigating damages due to natural disasters. And while we do have disaster preparedness plans in place, Mr. Speaker, we need to enact changes to ensure a swift, unified and effective response should similar occurrences happen again.

Mr. Speaker, January also saw the rise of a worldwide health crisis. The novel coronavirus acute respiratory disease, which originated from Wuhan, China, has found its way to our shores. According to the Department of Health, we have three confirmed cases of the virus here in the country, with one resulting in death, the first one that occurred outside of China. There were 57 cases that tested negative and 155 cases with pending results. Globally, Mr. Speaker, the nCoV-ARD numbers are sharply increasing. Currently, as of this morning, Mr. Speaker, there are 40,553 reported cases and 910 deaths around the world.

The year may seem off to a bleak start for the Philippines, but things are still looking good for us, Mr. Speaker. According to the Asian Development Bank, the Philippines' GDP growth rate might have been slightly down in 2019 at 6 percent compared to 6.2 percent in 2018, but is expected to bounce back to 6.2 percent in 2020. Inflation rate is also expected to be higher compared to 2019, with a forecast of 3 percent in 2020, compared to the 2.6 percent forecast in 2019, but is relatively low compared to the 5.2 percent inflation rate in 2018.

Mr. Speaker, this year also signals the implementation of numerous big-ticket infrastructure projects including the Metro Rail Transit 4, EDSA Greenways Project, Maritime Safety Enhancement Program, the Bataan-Cavite Interlink Bridge Project, the Cebu-Mactan Bridge, and the Coastal Road Construction Project in the New Mactan Bridge Construction Project. The World Bank, Mr. Speaker, also noted the consistent decline in poverty in the Philippines. According to this multilateral financial entity, poverty rate in the Philippines decreased from 21.6 percent in 2015 to 16.6 percent in 2018, and is still expected to decline further in the following years.



Indeed, Mr. Speaker, even though the start of the decade seemed to have unleashed chaos and uncertainties, hope is very much alive that we could turn things around and make the Philippine economy boom and flourish in the coming years. For all intents and purposes, Mr. Speaker, we must seize the moment. Despite the fact that the Philippines stands highly vulnerable to both natural and man-made calamities, it can still figuratively crawl out of the quagmire of poverty because of the effective legislation crafted by Congress and duly implemented by the President.

Mr. Speaker, the legendary Martin Luther King Jr. said, and I quote, “We must accept finite disappointments, but never lose infinite hope.”

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. FARIÑAS, RIA. Mr. Speaker, I move to refer the privilege speech of Congressman Bordado to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). There is a motion for the referral of the said privilege speech. Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the said motion is now approved.

REP. FARIÑAS, RIA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the Privilege Hour for the calling of the roll.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). There is a motion for the suspension of the Privilege Hour. Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the said motion is now approved.

#### ROLL CALL

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Fernandez). There is a motion for the calling of the roll. Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the said motion is now approved.

The Secretary General will please call the roll.

*The Secretary General called the roll, and the result is reflected in Journal No. 41 dated February 10, 2020.\**

*At this juncture, Deputy Speaker Fernandez relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Rodante D. Marcoleta.*

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. Mr. Speaker, the roll call shows that 225 Members responded to the call.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Marcoleta). With 225 Members responding to the call, the Chair declares the presence of a quorum.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

REP. FARIÑAS, RIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve Journal No. 40, dated February 5, 2020.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. FARIÑAS, RIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we acknowledge the presence of the guests in the gallery of the honorable Speaker Alan Peter S. Cayetano. They are from the province of Masbate, city of Masbate, namely: Vice Mayor Ruby Sanchez-Morano, DTI Asec. Demphna Du-Naga, Engr. Edgar Ramos, Ms. Lourdes Sunpet, Mr. Leo Gozum, Mr. Chester Du, Mr. Ralph Du, Mr. Sofronio Arizala, Ms. Myrna Guban, Mr. Clarke Nebraska and Ms. Maricer Sison.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Marcoleta). The guests mentioned, please rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. FARIÑAS, RIA. Mr. Speaker, we likewise acknowledge the presence of the guests of Cong. Luis N. Campos Jr. from the Second District of Makati City. We have with us from the United Nation World Peace Association and the JUNCA Group: Mr. Satoshi Okuno, Mr. Imoue Tadaaki, Mr. Hisayuki Nagatome, Mr. Hide, Mr. Toshi Itoh, Mr. Kazumi Saito, Mr. Darren Salazar and Ms. Monika Abad. (*Applause*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Marcoleta). Welcome to the House of Representatives.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Hon. Carlos Isagani T. Zarate from BAYAN MUNA Party-List, who wishes to rise on a question of privilege.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Marcoleta). Is

\* See ANNEX (printed separately)

there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

May I ask the Gentleman on what matter does he intend to rise.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ang Kinatawan pong ito ay tumitindig ngayon upang kondenahin ang pagdakip sa aking isang kasama sa Western Mindanao, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Marcoleta). The Gentleman has 10 minutes.

#### QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE OF REP. ZARATE

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Magandang hapon po, Mr. Speaker, at sa ating mga kasamahan sa Kapulungang ito.

Nitong nakaraang linggo, ang isa ko pong kasama sa Western Mindanao, si Jennefer Aguhob, Engineer sa Western Mindanao, ay aking tinawagan noong February 4, dahil siya po ay umaaktong paralegal sa aming samahan ng mga abogado sa Western Mindanao, ang National Union of Peoples' Lawyers. May ipinakiusap po ako na isang mahalagang kaso na kailangang asikasuhin sa Western Mindanao last February 4, 2020. Ang usapan po namin ay by February 5, magbibigay siya ng update sa akin tungkol sa kaso. Pero, Mr. Speaker, noong February 5, noong nakaraang Miyerkules, sa halip na update ang aking natanggap mula sa aming kasamahan na si Engr. Jennefer Aguhob, naibalita na lamang sa akin na siya ay hinuli sa kanilang bahay sa Oroquieta City, Misamis Occidental, sa kadahilanang mayroon daw isang warrant of arrest na na-issue ang isang korte sa Dipolog City sa isang kasong murder.

Ito po ay kinokondena ng Kinatawang ito, G. Ispiker, dahil kilala ko po si Engineer Aguhob. Siya ay dating nagtatrabaho sa local government unit, pagkatapos ay naging volunteer ng rights watchdog KARAPATAN, at noong nakaraang eleksiyon, siya po ay aming coordinator at kampanyador sa Western Mindanao. Sa katunayan, si Engineer Aguhob po, G. Ispiker, ay isa ring graduate ng Bachelor of Laws, and she was, in fact, preparing to take a review here in Manila by March para kumuha ng Bar exam by November.

Sa katunayan, last October, bilang kasapi ng National Union of Peoples' Lawyers representing the Law students, um-attend pa siya sa aming national assembly na ginanap dito sa Metro Manila, with no less than Supreme Court Associate Justice Marvic Leonen as our speaker and guest of honor. Likewise, last December of 2019, nagkaroon din ng Mindanao-wide assembly ang mga abogado at Law students sa General Santos City, kung saan si Engineer Aguhob, bilang kasapi ng Union of Peoples' Lawyers in Mindanao, kasama

ang ilang mga abogado from Western Mindanao, ay dumalo rin at doon ang aming naging tagapagsalita ay ang dating Supreme Court Senior Associate Justice Antonio Carpio.

Mr. Speaker, mga kapwa ko Mambabatas, ang napakasimpleng katanungan at direktang tanong ngayon, paano ang isang napaka-high profile na human rights worker, dating naging kawani ng local government unit, isang engineer, isang Law student, na visible sa kaniyang gawain—following up the cases of political prisoners, including the case of Bishop Carlo Morales of Pagadian City in 2018—na gumagalaw or naging miyembro ng mga legal na organisasyon, ay gagawa ng karumal-dumal na krimen gaya ng pagpatay at ni hindi man lang siya nagtago. Kaya malinaw sa amin, G. Ispiker, itong trumped-up charges against Engr. Jennefer Aguhob, na sa aking pagkakaalam, noon pang July 2019 nag-issue ng warrant of arrest ang Dipolog City Court. When I inquired, wala naman siyang natanggap na subpoena that she was being charged of murder.

Bilang isang abogado, alam po natin ang ganitong kalakaran, lalong-lalo na ang mga nasa security sector—sasampahan ka ng kaso, ang ilalagay na address sa complaint ay mali. Kaya ang mga subpoena ay ipinadala sa maling address, hindi natanggap ng respondent, kaya ito na nga ngayon, bigla ka na lang huhulihin dahil sa iyong mga ginagawa, lalong-lalo sa kaniyang ginawa-gawa bilang isang human rights worker.

Kaya muli, G. Ispiker, mariing kinokondena ng Kinatawang ito ang pagkahuli kay Engr. Jennefer Aguhob. Ito ay pagtampalasan sa kaniyang karapatan bilang isang human rights defender. Ito ay kabahagi ng panggigipit ng Estado, panggigipit especially noong mga nasa security sector sa mga katulad ni Engineer Aguhob na kumikilos para ipaglaban at depensahan ang karapatan ng ating mga inaaping kababayan.

Kaakibat po ryan, G. Ispiker, kinokondena ko rin ang paglabas ng isa namang warrant of arrest for alleged robbery with kidnapping and serious illegal detention sa halos 500 na mga indibidwal, kasama ang 78 na mga kilalang miyembro at lider ng iba't ibang people's organizations sa Northern Mindanao and Caraga Region noong January 30 of this year.

Ito po muli, gaya ng nabanggit ko kanina, kabahagi ito ng mga trumped-up charges to crack down, para patigilin ang mga indibidwal na nabanggit sa warrant of arrest na ito—trumped-up charges na ngayon ay nakasampa sa Regional Trial Court sa Agusan del Sur. Kasama sa mga indibidwal, as I mentioned earlier, these 78 individuals are officers and members of different organizations. Kasama na ryan ang ACT-Teachers Community-Based Health Program, members of the Union of Peoples' Lawyers in Mindanao, miyembro ng KABATAAN Party-List, miyembro ng Promotion of Church People's Response or PCPR, miyembro

ng Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, miyembro ng Malahutayong Pakigbisog Alang sa Sumusunod or an organization of indigenous peoples sa Surigao del Sur, members ng National Federation of Labor, members ng GABRIELA Party-List at iba pang mga progresibo at civil society organizations sa dalawang rehiyon—Caraga and Northern Mindanao.

Malinaw po ang naging padron dito, G. Ispiker, sasampahan ng gawa-gawang kaso ang mga taong ito upang sila ay tumigil sa kanilang ginagawa, lalong-lalo na ang kanilang pagbatikos sa hindi makatao at kontra-mamamayang mga patakaran ng kasalukuyang pamahalaan. Kaya kinokondena po natin ito, at gaya ng aking nabanggit, ito ay kabahagi ng tuloy-tuloy na paniniil sa mga miyembro at grupo ng mga progresibong grupo sa Mindanao, na kahit wala nang batas militar sa Mindanao ay umiiral pa rin ang mga patakarang ito na katulad ng nasa ilalim sila ng batas militar.

Nananawagan po ako sa Kapulungang ito, sa darating na mga araw, ang Kinatawang ito ay maghahain ng isang panukalang resolusyon para imbestigahan ang patuloy na political repression sa ating mga kababayan sa Mindanao. Nanawagan ang Kinatawang ito na dinggin ang mga resolusyong ito gaya ng dapat dinggin na rin ang mga nakabinbin pang panukalang resolusyon sa iba't ibang komitiba ng Kapulungang ito patungkol sa mga paglabag sa karapatang pantao ng ating mga kababayan.

Iyon lamang po, G. Ispiker. Maraming salamat po sa pagkakataon.

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

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

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### PRIVILEGE HOUR

##### *Continuation*

REP. FARIÑAS, RIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume the Privilege Hour.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Marcoleta). The honorable Rep. Eufemia Cullamat is recognized.

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. CULLAMAT

REP. CULLAMAT. Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker.

Magandang hapon sa ating lahat.

Mr. Speaker, mga kapwa ko Kinatawan, I speak on a matter of privilege para ipahayag ang ating pagtutol at pagkondena sa ginawa na namang malamagnanakaw na pag-atake ng mga pulis sa mga opisina ng BAYAN at Katungod-Sinirangan Bisayas sa Tacloban.

Noong Pebrero 7 ng madaling araw, mula ala-una hanggang alas-dos ng umaga, ni-raid ng PNP Region VIII at CIDG ang mga opisina ng mga progresibong organisasyon na nakabase sa Tacloban City. Kasama dito ang opisina ng BAYAN-Eastern Visayas, Rural Missionaries of the Philippines, Katungod-Sinirangan Visayas, Anakpawis-Eastern Visayas at Eastern Vista, isang alternative media outfit.

Sa kalaliman ng gabi, habang natutulog na ang lahat, sinalakay ng mahigit 50 elemento ng pulis at CIDG ang mga opisina, at sa inisyal na ulat ay nagtanim na naman ng mga bala, baril at granada.

Limang aktibista ang iligal na inaresto, kabilang dito sila Marissa Cabaljao, People’s Surge Disaster Survivors Network; si Mira Legion ng Bayan; si Mariel Domequil ng RMP; si Alexander Abinguna ng Katungod-Karapatan; at si Frenchiema Cumpio ng Eastern Vista at Stand With Samar-Leyte. Kasama ni Marissa Cabaljao ang kaniyang isang taong gulang na anak nang siya ay sinalakay.

Mr. Speaker, ang ginawang raid at iligal na paghuli sa mga aktibista sa Tacloban ay katulad din ng ginawang koordinadong pagsalakay at pag-aresto ng mahigit 57 na indibidwal sa Bacolod noong October 31, 2019. Sinampahan ng gawa-gawang kaso ang Tacloban 5 at ngayon ay iligal na nakakulong sila sa Palo, Leyte.

Mr. Speaker, bago hinuli ang limang aktibista ay nakaranas sila ng red-tagging, surveillance at mga pagbabanta. Makailang-ulit na pinaratangan silang mga lider komunista, mga terorista, mga salot at kung anu-ano pang paratang na wala namang basehan.

Inaresto sila batay sa warrant na inilabas ni Tacloban City RTC Branch 44 ni Judge Eligio Petilla noong ika-3 ng Pebrero, kaugnay umano sa paglabag ng Republic Act No. 10591 o “AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A COMPREHENSIVE LAW ON FIREARMS AND AMMUNITION.”

Noong November, dumulog na dito mismo sa Kongreso ang Stand With Samar-Leyte Network upang ipaalam sa atin lalo na sa kanilang mga Kinatawan sa Silangang Bisayas ang nangyayaring matinding militarisasyon at paglabag sa karapatang pantao sa Region VIII. Kasama sa mga magsasaka si Frenchiema

Cumpio na nakipag-usap sa mga kinatawan ng Samar at Leyte at naging pangunahing resource person sa legislative forum na pinangunahan ng tanggapan ng inyong lingkod hinggil sa agricultural crisis and militarisasyon noong November 20, 2019, na ginanap sa Perez Hall.

Mr. Speaker, nanawagan ang iba't ibang sektor at ang mamamayan: Palayain ang Tacloban 5!

Nanatiling nakapataw ang Memorandum Order No. 32 sa Bicol, Samar at Negros. Sa bisa ng Executive Order No. 70, patuloy ang pagtugis sa mga itinuturing na mga kaaway ng gobyerno, ngunit uulit-ulitin ko, mga simpleng aktibista ang inyong hinuhuli. Hindi sila mga armado.

Noong Pebrero 5, tulad ng sinabi ni Cong. Zarate, hinuli naman ang coordinator na si Engr. Jennefer Aguhob, coordinator ng KARAPATAN at BAYAN MUNA at Makabayan sa Western Mindanao Region. Sinampahan din siya ng gawa-gawang kaso, murder, at inaresto batay sa warrant ni Judge Victoriano Lacaya Jr. ng RTC Branch 9 sa Dipolog City, Zamboanga del Norte. Nakapiit ngayon si Jennefer sa Oroquieta City Police Station.

Mr. Speaker, mga kapwa ko Mambabatas, walang pagkakasala ang Tacloban 5, at si Engr. Jennefer Aguhob. Una sa lahat, sila ay mga sibilyang mamamayang Pilipino na nagagarantiyahan ng karapatan batay sa mga umiiral na batas. Sila ay mga aktibista na nanggigiit ng demokratikong karapatan at kagalingan ng mamamayan lalo na sa pinakamahihirap at pinakaaping sektor tulad naming mga katutubo, mga magsasaka at iba pang mga inaaping sektor.

Ang aktibismo ay hindi terorismo. Ang aktibismo ay malayang pagpapahayag ng opinyon, pagsusulong ng kagalingan ng masa, pagpuna sa mga mali at kalabisan, at pagtataguyod ng mga makabuluhang reporma para sa higit na nakararami. Walang mali sa aktibismo, Mr. Speaker.

Kailangang matigil na ang mga pagsampa ng gawa-gawang kaso at pagkriminalisa sa mga aktibismo. Kailangang matigil na ang paglabag sa karapatang pantao ng mamamayan. Kailangang maibasura na ang Executive Order No. 70 at Memorandum Order No. 32.

Mr. Speaker, mga kapwa ko Kinatawan, inuulit ko po ang panawagan ng mamamayan: Palayain ang Tacloban 5! Palayain sila Frenchiema Cumpio, Marielle Domequil, Alexander Philip Abinguna, Mira Legion, Marissa Cabaljao at si Jennefer Aguhob ng Western Mindanao. Palayain ang lahat ng bilanggong pulitikal.

Ito lamang po, Mr. Speaker. Magandang hapon sa ating lahat.

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

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

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

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

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

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ELAGO

REP. ELAGO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in response to the call for urgent intervention from the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders—a partnership of the World Organization Against Torture and the International Federation for Human Rights.

According to the information received by the Observatory on February 5, 2020, Engr. Jennefer Aguhob from Karapatan National Council was arrested based on a warrant for the charge of murder issued on July 26, 2019 by Judge Victoriano Lacaya of Branch 9 of the Regional Trial Court in Dipolog City, Zamboanga del Norte province.

Prior to her arrest, Mr. Speaker, Engineer Aguhob was not informed that such a complaint had been filed against her. At the time of publication of this urgent appeal for intervention, Engr. Aguhob remained detained at the Oroquieta City Police Station in Misamis Occidental province.

Ito po, iyong nilalaman ng talumpati ni Rep. “Kaloi” Isagani Zarate, isa pong kaka-graduate lamang ng Law school at ngayon ay naghahanda para sa Bar exams niya at kasalukuyan na nakadetina sa nasabing police station.

Moreover, on February 7 of this year, between 1:00 a.m. and 2:30 a.m., the Office of KARAPATAN’s Chapter in Region VIII, which shares with the political alliance BAYAN and the peasant’s organization SAGUPA, was raided by Philippine National Police officers led by Lt. Col. Pedere. During the raid, Mr. Alexander Philip Abinguna, Karapatan Council member in Eastern Visayas, was arrested along with Ms. Mira Legion, a member of BAYAN Eastern Visayas and a former student leader in the University of the Philippines Tacloban and Miss Marissa Cabaljao, spokesperson of People’s Surge Network, an organization that provides support to disaster survivors, together with her one-year-old baby.

At the same time, a raid was conducted in the staff house of the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines-Eastern Visayas and Eastern Vista, an alternative media organization in Tacloban City, during which Ms. Frenchiema Cumpio, a journalist and Executive Director of Eastern Vista, and Ms. Marielle Domequel, a staff member of RMP Eastern Visayas, were arrested. All were charged of illegal possession of firearms and remained detained at the Palo PNP Station.

Mr. Speaker, the Observatory recalls that since President Duterte took power in June 2016, human rights defenders have faced relentless vilification and red-tagging, and have been repeatedly subjected to trumped-up charges and lengthy pre-trial arbitrary detention, with the aim to discredit their legitimate work and to silence all critical voices.

The Observatory expresses its utmost concern over the arbitrary arrests of the above-mentioned human rights defenders as it seems to be only aimed at punishing them for their legitimate human right activities and urges the Philippine authorities to immediately and unconditionally release them and all other human rights defenders who are arbitrarily detained in the country, as well as to adopt effective measures to ensure the protection of human rights defenders in the country.

Ito po ang kanilang panawagan na aksiyon mula sa atin at sa lahat ng ating mga kapwa lingkod-bayan na nagnanais at kasalukuyan nang nagtatrabaho at buong-buong kumikilos at naninindigan para sa pagtatanggol ng karapatang pantao: unang-una po, to guarantee in all circumstances the physical integrity and psychological well-being of Engr. Jennefer Aguhob, Mr. Alexander Philip Abinguna, Mira Legion, Marissa Cabaljao, Frenchiema Cumpio, Marielle Domequel, as well as all human rights defenders in the Philippines; second, to immediately and unconditionally release Engr. Jennefer, Alexander, Mira, Marissa, Frenchiema and Marielle, as well as all other political prisoners arbitrarily detained in the Philippines since their detention is arbitrary as it seems to be merely aimed at punishing them for their human rights activities; third, to guarantee their unhindered access to a lawyer of their choice and their family members; fourth, to put an end to all acts of harassment, including at the judicial level, against Engr. Jennefer, Alexander, Mira, Marissa, Frenchiema and Marielle, as well as all other human rights defenders and political prisoners in the Philippines, and ensure in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate activities without any hindrance and fear of reprisals.

Ito po, G. Ispiker, ay katulad noong naging panawagan na natin sa mga nakaraang privilege speech na maipagtanggol ang kalayaang pang-akademiko sa mga eskuwelahan at ang pamproteksiyon, ang pagtatanggol sa mga demokratikong karapatan, sa mga fundamental freedom, ang karapatan na mag-

organisa, ang bumuo ng mga asosasyon, ang kalayaan sa pamamahayag sa loob ng ating mga pamantasan kung saan mayroong kritikal na espasyo para makapagdebate at makapagtalakay tungkol sa iba't ibang isyu na panlipunan. Ang nagiging epekto nito, G. Ispiker, ay tila ba sinasabi natin, at isang malaking discouragement itong nangyayaring ito para sa lahat na mga iskolar ng bayan, sa lahat ng mga estudyante, mga kabataan, kasama ang kanilang mga guro at mga university official, na gampanan ang kanilang historic, iyong kanila pong hindi matatawaran na kontribusyon sa pagbabagong panlipunan sa pamamagitan ng paggamit ng kanilang talino at napapag-aralan sa loob ng classroom, sa loob ng mga pamantasan para sa mga positibong pagbabago sa ating lipunan.

Fifth is to conform to the provisions of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 9, 1998, in particular with Articles 1 and 12.2; and sixth is to ensure, in all circumstances, the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with international human rights standards and international instruments ratified by the Philippines.

Sa ngayon, G. Ispiker, ang mga naibahagi nating nilalaman na mga panawagan, ang urgent appeal na ito ay nilalaman na rin at sinusugan, sinusuportahan, nagkakaroon ng pagbubuo ng mga pagkakaisa sa mga eskuwelahan, sa mga komunidad, sa mga iba't ibang espasyo kung saan nakakapag-usap ang iba't ibang mga organization at sasabihing tama na ang mga panggigipit na ito, tama na ang paggamit mismo ng ating mga batas para lamang gipitin, para lamang pigilan sa kanilang mga lehitimo at nasa batas na mga gampanin para bigyan ng boses ang kanilang mga panawagan, hindi lang bilang kabataan, kung hindi bilang mamamayang Pilipino.

Ang Tacloban 5 po, ang apat diyan ay mga kabataan at iyong apat na iyan ay nagkaroon din ng maningning na record ng achievement sa loob ng kanilang eskuwelahan, hindi lang sa academics, pero marami sa kanila, they figured in their student councils, in their campus press, in national alliances, kaya po hindi na rin kataka-taka na nang sila ay magtapos sa kanilang pamantasan, pinili nila na magsilbi sa iba't ibang people's organizations at magdala ng iba't ibang advocacies, hindi lang para sa sektor natin, kung hindi sa buong bayang Pilipinas.

Kaya naman, G. Ispiker, ang nangyari rin sa Tacloban 5—isang araw bago iyan, mayroon ding tinatawag na Cosmic 10, iyong 10 mga member ng union kasama iyong mga union organizer na illegal ding inaresto matapos po buwagin iyong kanilang legal na strike noong sila ay nag-picket nito lang nakaraang linggo. So, sila po ay na-detain mahigit isang araw ngunit nakalaya rin. Sa ngayon, wala naman pong kaso laban sa kanila, pero ang sinasabi natin dito, ganito na

tayo nababahala na lahat na lang ng porma ng pagbibigay boses doon sa karaingan ng mamamayan ay inaatake, ginagamit, at ang pinakamalupit dito, ginagamit mismo iyong mga institusyon katulad ng kapulisan at military para gipitin at tigilan iyong boses ng mga nag-exercise lamang ng kanilang political at civil rights para maiparating sa atin, sa mga kinaukulan at sa kanilang mga Representatives dito ang kanilang mga karaingan.

Kaya, G. Ispiker, magpapatuloy ang panawagan ng mga kabataan na itigil na ang mga panggigipit na ito at dapat nang maipabasura ang Executive Order No. 70. Malinaw na malinaw na ang target po niyan ay hindi naman iyong armado na conflict na nakasaad sa dokumento na ito kundi ang target niya, lahat po ng matapang at pursigido, lahat ng nagsisikap na magsalita para sa kanilang karapatan sa kabuhayan at para na rin sa soberanya ng ating bansa. Free all political prisoners. Stop the killings. Stop the harassment. Defend human rights.

Maraming salamat, G. Ispiker.

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

REP. VILLAR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of Hon. Sarah Jane Elago to the Committee on Appropriations for appropriate action.

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

REP. VILLAR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Lady from the Party-List GABRIELA, Rep. Arlene D. Brosas, to avail ...

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Marcoleta). I think the Majority Leader meant appropriate and not appropriation.

REP. VILLAR. Yes, to the Committee on Rules.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Marcoleta). Noted. Thank you for the clarification, Majority Leader.

REP. VILLAR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Lady from the Party-List GABRIELA, Rep. Arlene D. Brosas, to avail of the Privilege Hour.

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

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. BROSAS

REP. BROSAS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

Today, I rise once again to bring to the attention of this august Chamber the plight of our farmers, farmworkers, millers, and the Filipino people who are suffering from the disastrous impacts of the Rice Liberalization Law.

Sa pagdaan ng mga taon, nalugmok ang sektor ng agrikultura ng Pilipinas. Mula sa pagiging rice exporter at self-sufficient, nauwi tayo sa pagiging import-dependent. What is worse is that in 2019, Philippines was considered the world's number one rice importer beating China. Record-setting, pero hindi nakatutuwa, at bagkus, ito ay lubhang nakababahala.

Sa kasalukuyan, nananatiling atrasado ang pagsasaka sa ating bansa. Malaking bilang ng mga magsasaka ang walang sariling kagamitan sa pagsasaka at hindi nila pagmamay-ari ang kanilang lupang sinasaka. Nananatili pa ring nakakonsentra ang pagmamay-ari ng lupa sa iilan dahil sa huwad na repormang agraryo.

Mr. Speaker, noong Pebrero 14, 2019, pinirmahan ni Pangulong Duterte ang Republic Act No. 11203 or Rice Liberalization Law. Ang batas na ito ay bunga ng pagsunod sa dikta ng World Trade Organization o WTO na naglalayong tanggalin ang quantitative restriction o limit sa importasyon ng bigas, at bilang kapalit nito ay ang pagpataw na lamang ng taripa kung ito ay magmumula sa mga bansang ASEAN.

Mag-iisang taon nang ramdam ng mga maralitang magsasaka, rice millers, konsyumer at mamamayang Pilipino ang malagim na bunga at ang ibang klaseng hagupit na idinulot ng Rice Liberalization Law.

Matagal nang hiling ng mga magsasaka ang pagtaas ng presyo ng palay mula sa kasalukuyang pambabarat sa kanilang produkto, ngunit mula noong ipatupad ang batas na ito, tila suntok na sa buwan ang kanilang kahilingan.

Naitala ang pinakamababang presyo ng palay na umabot ng P7 kada kilo. Nangangahulugan ito ng pagkalugi, pagkabaon sa utang, pagkatanggal sa lupa ng mga magsasaka. Malaking dagok ito sa mga magsasaka dahil sa kawalan ng suportang serbisyo para sa pagsasaka. Marami na ring mga magsasaka ang tumigil sa pagsasaka. Hindi lalaon ay hahantong ito sa pagkamatay ng lokal na pagsasaka ng palay at lalong pagkalugmok ng ating agrikultura.

Resulta rin ng liberalisasyon ang pagkawala ng murang bigas tulad ng NFA rice at pagbaha ng imported rice na hindi naman nagagarantiya ng mababang presyo sa merkado. Nagtitiis na lamang ang mga mamamayan sa mas mahal na commercial rice na P32 hanggang P50 kada kilo. Hirap na nga mag-budget ang mga nanay natin dahil sa kakarampot na kita sa trabaho, mas lalo pang pahihirapan ng batas na ito.

G. Ispiker, bunga ng pagtanggap ng regulatory powers at ng mga mahahalagang tungkulin sa NFA, itinulak agad nito ang pagtanggap sa trabaho ng halos 1,000 empleyado ng NFA. Apektado rin ang 20,000

NFA-accredited retailers at 60,000 na trabahador nito, 6,000 maliliit na traders, 6,600 na millers at 55,000 na trabahador sa mga mill at iba pa sa manupaktura. Sa madaling salita, itong batas na ito ay nagbunga ng malawakang pagkawala ng trabaho at hanapbuhay ng mamamayang Pilipino.

G. Ispiker, naglunsad ng mga aktibidad at mga pagkilos ang iba't ibang grupo upang ipagbigay-alam sa nakararami ang epekto nito. Isa na rito ang petisyon para sa pagpapabasura ng batas na ito na pinirmahan ng 50,000 na mamamayan at ipinasá sa Kongreso at Senado. Patuloy na dumarami ang pumipirma sa panawagan para sa pagbabasura sa Rice Liberalization Law. Nakapaglunsad din tayo ng forum dito sa Kongreso na dinaluhan ng mga kapwa ko Kinatawan, iba't ibang organisasyon, research center, rice millers at mga magsasaka na nagresulta ng isang resolusyon na pinirmahan ng mahigit 50 Kinatawan na nananawagan na dagdagan ang pondo ng NFA para sa pagbili ng palay. Hanggang ngayon, naghihintay silang tingnan ang kanilang kalagayan at dinggin ang kanilang panawagan.

Sa kabila ng malalang sitwasyon ng ating mga magsasaka, lalo pang pinatindi ang kanilang kalagayan ng malawakang militarisasyon sa kanayunan na nagdudulot ng takot at pangamba. Pilit na sinusupil at pinatahimik ang mga nananawagan ng dagdag na serbisyo at iba pang lehitimong panawagan. Kamakailan nga lamang ay hinuli ang women's at human rights defenders sa Tacloban City at inakusahang kabilang daw sa rebeldeng grupo. Isa sa kanila ay si Frenchiema Cumpio, na nakasama natin dito sa loob ng Mababang Kapulungan noong nakaraang Nobyembre, kasama ang mga magsasaka mula sa Eastern Visayas. Narito sila upang lapitan ang kanilang mga Kinatawan kaugnay ng isyu ng tumitinding kahirapan ng mga magsasaka dahil sa rice liberalization, militarisasyon at kawalan ng access sa serbisyo. Dalawa rin sa mga ikinulong at sinampahan ng gawa-gawang kaso ay mga dating miyembro ng GABRIELA Youth. Noong nakaraang buwan, si Jennifer Tonag, isang organisador ng mga magsasaka sa Northern Samar, ay pinatay pagkatapos dumalo sa isang seminar na isinagawa ng DILG. Mr. Speaker, hindi makatuwiran na hulihin ang mga taong nagsisilbing boses ng mga magsasaka at aping mamamayan.

G. Ispiker, sa darating na February 14, mag-iisang taon na mula noong isabatas ang Republic Act No. 11203, batas na maituturing na walang puso at lubhang nagpapahirap sa mga magsasaka.

Ngayong darating na buwan ng Marso ay panahon na naman ng anihan. Muli na namang mararanasan ng mga maralitang magsasaka ang tindi ng hagupit ng batas na ito. Kaya naman, G. Ispiker at mga kapwa ko Mambabatas, dinggin natin ang panawagan ng mga magsasaka na muling tingnan ang nilalaman ng batas at ang mga naging epekto nito.

Sa darating na February 14, kasabay ng pagdiriwang ng Araw ng mga Puso, ipagdiriwang din natin ang pagkakaisa ng mga kababaihan sa buong mundo sa ilalim ng kampanyang One Billion Rising. Titindig ang mga kababaihan kasama ng mga magsasaka para sa panawagang ibasura ang R.A. No. 11203 o Rice Liberalization Law. Tumindig tayo para sa ating mga magsasaka at para sa ating agrikultura, at para sa mamamayang Pilipino.

Let us rise for rice! Junk the Rice Liberalization Law!

Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. VILLAR. Mr. Speaker, I move that the speech of Hon. Arlene D. Brosas be referred to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. VILLAR. Mr. Speaker, I now move that the Gentleman from the BUHAY Party-List, the honorable Rep. Jose L. Atienza Jr., be recognized to avail of the Privilege Hour.

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

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ATIENZA

REP. ATIENZA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you, Mme. Majority Leader.

I stand in defense of justice, fairness, the rule of law and the integrity of this House of Representatives, where we all belong.

Kagalang-galang na Speaker, ngayon Marso 30, matatapos po ang prangkisa ng isang institusyon na kaakibat, kasama, katulong sa ating nation-building sa nakaraang 25 taon. Mr. Speaker, I am talking about the case of the ABS-CBN network. They have applied for an extension and renewal of their franchise. As of this day, 11 resolutions have already been filed in the Committee, and referred to the Committee on Franchises so that this matter is given attention. But as of now, today, wala pong aksyon ang Committee on Franchises.

The franchise will expire in March of this year. Isang buwan na lang po iyon. Pagkatapos po noon, hindi natin malaman kung ano ang magiging desisyon ng Kongreso. Samantala, 14,000 katao ang nagtatrabaho dito sa korporasyong ito—14,000 katao na hindi malaman kung sila ay magtatrabaho pa pagkatapos ng

Marso o maglalakad na sila kabilang ng mga walang trabahong Pilipino.

Therefore, at this point in time, we at BUHAY Party-List and the voice of the Filipino people are all united in asking, demanding in fact, that action be taken up now by the Committee on Franchises. Personally, I am calling the attention of Chairman Alvarez on this matter.

Everyday, we take up franchises of non-entities, unknown groups, unknown companies, corporations applying for a franchise and we act on them judiciously, promptly. The question arises in my mind. Why are we dragging our feet on a very critical issue like the franchise renewal of a television network which has been part and parcel of our past, present and, well—it depends on the future?

Kaya minamahal kong mga Kasamahan, iginagalang kong mga Miyembro ng Kongreso, hindi tayo dapat manahimik dito sa isyung ito. Today, the Office of the Solicitor General filed a case in the Supreme Court for a quo warranto so that the franchise be ended. Tayo po ba ay manonood na lamang samantalang ang korte ang magde-decide sa kinabukasan nitong prangkisang ito?

I urge each and every Member of Congress today that we should demand the Committee on Franchise to meet on this issue. Otherwise, kung ayaw pong gumalaw ng Chairman, puwede na siyang mag-resign at pumalit ang magde-decide at mangunguna sa deliberations nitong prangkisang ito.

Ang sabi nila, marami daw kontra dito sa renewal. Ang sagot natin, pabayaang nating magsalita ang kontra, magsalita sila, pakinggan natin sa pagbubukas ng pag-uusap ng usaping ito sa Committee. Iyon ang pagkakataong maglahad ng katotohanan iyong mga naniniwalang hindi dapat ma-renew ang kontrata. Iyong naniniwala po namang dapat ipagpatuloy ang prangkisa ay mabibigyan din po dapat ng kanilang pagkakataong ipaliwanag sa bansa bakit kailangang ma-renew itong kontratang ito. Inaction will only spell the slow weakening of the foundations of our democratic system when the Executive now taking the task of acting on the franchise issue of ABS-CBN.

Kapag tayo po ay hindi gumalaw at ang Korte Suprema ang magbibigay ng desisyon, nangangahulugan lang that this Congress is really paralyzed with inaction, and we do not deserve to be called “Representatives of the People.” Each and every Member of Congress today should be considered as a duly elected Member of this Body that will decide on franchises in the country. That is the mandate of the Constitution, Mr. Speaker. Hindi po ito whimsical or discretionary. Hindi po puwede iyong puwedeng ibang araw, sa ibang araw ay ipapasá natin sa Executive ang desisyon.

We, as the Congress of the Philippines, are mandated by the Philippine Constitution. All franchises

are deliberated on in Congress. Prangkisang maliit o prangkisang malaki, kinakailangang may aksyon ang Kongreso ng Pilipinas. There are 11 resolutions pending, and there is an equal number of resolutions for the approval of the renewal pending. Wala akong alam na nag-file ng resolusyon na nagsasabing huwag aprubahan. Overwhelming ang nabasa kong mga resolusyon na aprubahan ang prangkisa. Maraming resolusyon ang nagsasabing pag-usapan na, mag-deliberate na ang Kongreso. Iyong mga Miyembrong ayaw pong makialam, ayaw ninyong lumahok, huwag kayong lumahok. But it behooves the Committee on Franchises Chairman Alvarez.

Speaker Cayetano, you should act on this matter. The integrity of the House is at stake. Shall we allow the Office of the Solicitor General to take up the issue in the Supreme Court while we watch from the sidelines? Iyan po ay magbibigay sa atin ng napakamasamang mukha, na ang Kongreso ng Pilipinas ay hindi Kongreso na gumaganap sa kanilang tungkulin. We are nothing; we will be considered as nothing, even non-existent, if we give up this function.

So, today, I take the opportunity to rise on a question not only of personal but also of collective privilege of each and every Member of Congress. We should demand the Committee on Franchises to immediately take up the different resolutions filed by distinguished Members of this House. Hinihingi nila na tayo ay magsalita, tayo ay kumuha ng kaniya-kaniyang bahagi—kung kayo ay kontra, magsalita kayo. Kung kayo naman ay sang-ayong ma-renew, magsalita rin kayo. Hindi puwedeng nanonood lang tayo while the Supreme Court tackles the issue. This is not a matter for the Supreme Court and we hope the Supreme Court does not even take up the matter simply because this is a matter that should be taken up in Congress as mandated, and I repeat, mandated by the Constitution. Mababalewala po ang respeto sa ating Saligang Batas at lalong mawawala ang respeto sa Kongreso ng Pilipinas kung hindi natin aaksyunan itong isyung ito.

No matter how sensitive an issue this is, this Congress, if given the challenge, should act accordingly. Hindi puwedeng tayong lahat ay magtitinginan na lang at magningitian. This is not a matter that can be settled by personal relations. This is a matter that concerns national interest and the national interest dictates that we act on this matter. If you ask me, I will take it up today not tomorrow. So, I do not know if Chairman Alvarez is listening, but I hope he is. I am challenging him: take up the issue and if you are not in favor, fight for it in the Committee while we work for justice, truth, the integrity of the House and the rule of law. We will fight for what we believe is right.

We are not a government ruled by men but by law and that is the essence of this message. We should act accordingly, my dear colleagues, respected Members



of the Congress of the Philippines. Huwag nating pabayaang na ang Kongreso ay daan-daanan na lang. This is not the first time; this is the second time that a quo warranto has been issued while Congress refuses to shoulder its responsibility. The responsibility lies on our laps and the power is within our hands. The duty of performing our duties is definitely primary and primordial than any other interest. The fate of 14,000 corporate employees, talents, and different members of the organization who are looking at us, and they form a sizable portion of our society and they have been very active in the shaping of the nation, is in our hands.

Aksyunan po natin ito, Mr. Speaker, and I also appeal to the Speaker of the House, Speaker Cayetano, to cause the immediate taking up of the issue of ABS-CBN not tomorrow, but today. The rule of law must be upheld at all times. That is what we are here for and that is our sworn duty, Mr. Speaker. Kaya ako po ay humihingi ng tulong sa inyong lahat, nananawagan sa lahat ng mga Miyembro na isantabi natin ang ating personal na damdamin. Ang pag-usapan natin ay kagalingang pambansa at pambayan.

Maraming salamat po sa pagkakataon.

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

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

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. VILLAR. Mr. Speaker, we would like to acknowledge the presence of the guests of the honorable Rep. Anthony Peter “Onyx” Crisologo.

They are Kapitan Timmy Ligon of Brgy. West Triangle of the First District of Quezon City, Kagawad Louie Aquino, Kagawad Andy Hiran, and Kagawad Jobert Atabug.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Marcoleta). May the guests so mentioned please rise. The guests of Rep. Onyx Crisologo are hereby welcomed to the House of Representatives.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

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

*It was 4:39 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 4:40 p.m., the session was resumed.*

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

#### ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn the session until three o'clock in the afternoon of Tuesday, February 11, 2020.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Marcoleta). The session is adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, at three o'clock in the afternoon.

*It was 4:40 p.m.*