



# Congressional Record

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## House of Representatives

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No. 44

### CALL TO ORDER

*At 3:00 p.m., Deputy Speaker Evelina G. Escudero called the session to order.*

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

Everybody will please rise for the Invocation to be delivered by Hon. Florida “Rida” P. Robes of the Lone District of San Jose del Monte City.

*Everybody rose for the Invocation.*

### INVOCATION

REP. ROBES. *Dear Lord, before we begin our session today, we take a moment to thank You for the opportunity to be here working together towards the common goal of serving the country and the Filipino people through our work at the House of Representatives.*

*Guide us Lord, so that we may be united in the spirit of mutual respect and exchange of ideas and aspirations, not as individual entities, but as one in the service of our country and our fellow Filipinos. As always, we seek Your guidance and inspiration in all our thoughts and decisions.*

*Strengthen us as we make tough decisions.*

*Dear Lord, finally, as Members of the House of Representatives and Your children, we pray that You mold us to become vanguards of integrity, of honesty, of discipline, of morality, of compassion and of service to others.*

*All these things we beg and pray in the name of our Lord and Savior, Christ Jesus.*

*We place You at the center of all these.*

*Amen.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Amen.

### NATIONAL ANTHEM

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero.). Everybody will 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. Escudero). The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

The Secretary General will please read the Reference of Business.

### REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

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

### BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 6244, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NURSING HOME FOR HOMELESS AND ABANDONED ELDERLY FILIPINOS IN EVERY PROVINCE AND ANOTHER SEPARATE NURSING HOME FOR EVERY CITY IN THE PHILIPPINES APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Sy-Alvarado

TO THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON SENIOR CITIZENS

House Bill No. 6245, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE PROVINCIAL ROAD STRETCHING FROM THE MUNICIPALITY OF SIOCON IN THE PROVINCE OF ZAMBOANGA DEL

NORTE TO THE BOUNDARY OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF ROSELLER T. LIM IN THE PROVINCE OF ZAMBOANGA SIBUGAY INTO A NATIONAL ROAD, TO BE KNOWN AS THE SIOCON-CANATUAN NATIONAL ROAD, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Amatong  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 6246, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE ROAD STRETCHING FROM THE BOUNDARY OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF GUTALAC IN BARANGAY MAMAWAN TO BARANGAY KAUSWAGAN, ALL IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BALIGUIAN, PROVINCE OF ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE, INTO A NATIONAL ROAD, TO BE KNOWN AS THE GUTALAC-BALIGUIAN NATIONAL ROAD, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Amatong  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 6247, entitled:

“AN ACT REFORMING THE COUNTRY’S BASIC EDUCATION SYSTEM, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10533, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ‘THE ENHANCED BASIC EDUCATION ACT OF 2013’ ”

By Representative Salceda  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 6248, entitled:

“AN ACT PROFESSIONALIZING PARALEGAL PRACTICE IN THE PHILIPPINES, CREATING FOR THIS PURPOSE A PROFESSIONAL REGULATORY BOARD OF PARALEGALS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

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

House Bill No. 6249, entitled:

“AN ACT RENEWING FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO REAL RADIO NETWORK, INC. (FORMERLY ENRIQUE M. OROZCO & SONS, INC.) UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO.

8717 ENTITLED ‘AN ACT GRANTING THE E.M. OROSCO & SONS, INC., A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, ESTABLISH, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCASTING STATIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES’ ”

By Representative Remulla  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE FRANCHISES

House Bill No. 6250, entitled:

“AN ACT RENEWING FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO BLOCKBUSTER BROADCASTING SYSTEM, INC. UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8726, ENTITLED ‘AN ACT GRANTING THE BLOCKBUSTER BROADCASTING SYSTEM INC., A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, ESTABLISH, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCASTING STATIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES’ ”

By Representative Remulla  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE FRANCHISES

House Bill No. 6251, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE PHILIPPINE COAST GUARD AUXILIARY (PCGA), AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 11 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9993, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE PHILIPPINE COAST GUARD LAW OF 2009, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Deloso-Montalla  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 6253, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING MENTAL HEALTH WELLNESS LEAVE TO ALL EMPLOYEES IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR”

By Representative Delos Santos  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

House Bill No. 6257, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING ADDITIONAL BENEFITS TO PROSECUTORS OF THE NATIONAL PROSECUTION SERVICE, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10071, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘PROSECUTION SERVICE ACT OF 2010’ ”

By Representatives Bustos and De Jesus  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 6258, entitled:

“AN ACT CODIFYING THE ALTERNATIVE CHILD CARE LAWS, REORGANIZING THE INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION BOARD INTO THE NATIONAL AUTHORITY FOR CHILD CARE, AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Defensor (Michael)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON WELFARE OF CHILDREN

House Bill No. 6259, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING ALL MUNICIPAL MAYORS, CITY MAYORS AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNORS THE APPROPRIATE CIVIL SERVICE ELIGIBILITY, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

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

#### RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 707, entitled:

“RESOLUTION COMMENDING JOSHUA PACIO, STEPHEN LOMAN, AND EDUARD FOLAYANG FOR THEIR EXEMPLARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO BENGUET AND TO THE FIELD OF MIXED MARTIAL ARTS”

By Representative Yap (Eric)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

House Resolution No. 708, entitled:

“RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING FILIPINO TENNIS JUNIOR CHAMPION ALEXANDRA ‘ALEX’ EALA FOR WINNING THE AUSTRALIAN OPEN JUNIORS’ DOUBLES TITLE HELD IN MELBOURNE PARK, AUSTRALIA ON JANUARY 31, 2020”

By Representative Martinez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

House Resolution No. 709, entitled:

“HOUSE RESOLUTION EXPRESSING CONGRESSIONAL COMMENDATION TO THE PERSONNEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, THE FOREIGN SERVICE, PHILIPPINE OVERSEAS LABOR OFFICES, BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION, BUREAU OF QUARANTINE, AND THOSE WORKERS FROM THE PRIVATE

SECTOR FOR THEIR INDIVIDUAL SACRIFICES, DEVOTION TO DUTY AND PATRIOTISM SO AS TO PREVENT THE OUTBREAK OF THE NCOV-ARD IN OUR COUNTRY”

By Representative Mendoza  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

#### COMMUNICATIONS

Letter dated 22 January 2020 of Juanito Victor C. Remulla, Governor, Office of the Provincial Administrator, Trece Martires City, Province of Cavite, submitting the Quarterly Financial Report of Operations on the Conditional Matching Grant to Provinces for Road Repair, Rehabilitation and Improvement (FY 2017-2019 CMGP) for the Ending of 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2019.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated January 23, 2020 of Edmund B. Kierulf, M.D., M.P.H., OIC-City Mayor, Ormoc City, transmitting the Report on Fund Utilization and Status of Program/Project Implementation for the Quarter Ended December 30, 2019 on the Local Government Support Fund – Financial Assistance to Local Government Units (LGSF-FA to LGUs) and on the Local Government Support Fund – Assistance to Cities (LGSF-AC).

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated January 27, 2020 of Gen. Ricardo R. Visaya (Ret), Administrator, National Irrigation Administration (NIA), submitting the CY 2019 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Progress Report for Mindanao Sustainable Agrarian and Agriculture Development (MinSAAD) Project.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

Letter dated 27 January 2020 of Secretary Ramon M. Lopez, Chairperson, Export Development Council (EDC), submitting the EDC Consolidated 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Report for 2019.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Letter dated 28 January 2020 of Ernesto M. Pernia, Secretary, National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), submitting the NEDA’s List of Foreign Retailers Selling High-End or Luxury Goods as of 20 August 2019.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Letter dated 29 January 2020 of Eduardo M. Año, Chairman, National Police Commission, furnishing the House of Representatives with a copy of the NAPOLCOM 2019 Year-End Report.  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ORDER AND SAFETY

Letter dated January 30, 2020 of Ernesto M. Pernia, Secretary, National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), submitting the NEDA's Physical Report of Operations (PRO) as of December 31, 2019.  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Letter dated 31 January 2020 of Alan V. Bornas, Officer-in-Charge, Land Bank of the Philippines, submitting their Report on the Utilization of Funds for the Unconditional Cash Transfer Program (4th qtr-CY 2019).  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated February 3, 2020 of Mario G. Lipana, Director III, Officer-in-Charge, Regional Office No. IV-A, Commission on Audit, furnishing the House of Representatives with copies of the CYs 2015 to 2018 Annual Audit Reports on the following Water Districts:

1. Mauban Water District, Mauban, Quezon; and
2. Pagsanjan Water District, Pagsanjan, Laguna.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated February 5, 2020 of Roderick A. Ongcarranceja, President, Calapan Waterworks Corporation (CWWC), submitting their Operational Report for year 2019.  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

2018 Annual Report of the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA).  
TO THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON BASES CONVERSION

Full Speed Ahead: 17th National Health Research Forum for Action held on September 19-20, 2018 at EDSA, Shangri-la Hotel, Mandaluyong City of the Department of Health.  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

#### COMMITTEE REPORT

Report of the Committee on Youth and Sports Development (Committee Report No. 231), re H.R. No. 716, entitled:

“RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING CARLOS EDRIEL YULO FOR WINNING THE FIRST-EVER GOLD MEDAL IN THE 49<sup>TH</sup> FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE GYMNASTIQUE (FIG) WORLD ARTISTIC MEN’S FINALS GYMNASTICS CHAMPIONSHIPS HELD IN HANNS-MARTIN-SCHLEYER-HALLE, STUTTGART, GERMANY ON OCTOBER 4 TO 13, 2019”

recommending its adoption in substitution of House Resolutions Numbered 427, 429, 432, 435, 437, 445, 451, 461, 466, 478, 498 and 515

Sponsors: Representatives Martinez, Elago, Romero, Estrella, Tolentino, Velasco, Cabochan, Bagatsing, Albano, Nieto, Bautista, Castelo and Delos Santos

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

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

REP. TADURAN. Mme. Speaker, at this juncture, I move that we acknowledge the presence of the guests of Hon. Jeffrey D. Khonghun, Representative, First District, Zambales. They are the staff from the Office of the Vice Governor and the Office of Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Zambales as follows: Vice Governor Jefferson Khonghun, Edwin Reyes, Evelyn Gimena, Jane Solano, Mark Anthony Agas, Angelito Aguja, Richard Espiritu, Sandyfer Trimor, Elenita Samson, Concepcion Abungin, John Dale Sanchez, John Carlo Bardolla, Rhina Catubay, Kevin Patrick Alejar, William Merto, Maria Teresa D. Panes, Jocelyn Pronto, Sonia Sebastian, Maria Lourdes Fortin, Godofredo Velasco Jr., Milagros Bendoy, Soledad Josafat, Eva Marcha, Arlene Esperas, Mary Joy Dela Cruz, Ariel Hilario, Ma. Ellen Corrales, Noriegene Mae Borja, Teodoro Apostol, Gina Encarnacion and Fermarc Abdon.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). The guests of Hon. Jeffrey Khonghun from the Office of the Vice Governor and the Office of Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Zambales, please rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we defer the approval of the Journal.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. TADURAN. Mme. Speaker, we also move to acknowledge the presence of the guests of Hon. Presley C. De Jesus of PHILRECA Party-List, Rep. Sergio C. Dagooc of APEC Party-List, Rep. Adriano A. Ebcas of AKO PADAYON Pilipino Party-List and Rep. Godofredo N. Guya of RECOBODA Party-List. They are the 700 line workers from different electric cooperatives.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). The guests of the Representatives of PHILRECA, APEC, AKO PADAYON, and RECOBODA Party-Lists, please stand. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### PRIVILEGE HOUR

REP. TADURAN. Mme. Speaker, I move that we open the Privilege Hour.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. TADURAN. Mme. Speaker, I move that the Gentleman from PHILRECA Party-List, Hon. Presley C. De Jesus, be recognized to avail of the Privilege Hour.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Rep. Presley De Jesus of Party-List PHILRECA is now recognized.

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. DE JESUS

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

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

Mme. Speaker, it is a privilege to stand before you in this momentous occasion to honor the people that this Representation stands for, the line workers of electric cooperatives, our Warriors of Light. *(Applause)*

Mme. Speaker, this Representation is and will always be for our line workers who have tirelessly dedicated their lives to this advocacy. Marahil ay hindi alam ng nakakarami ang hirap at pagsasakripisyo ng ating mga line workers. Habang tayo ay ligtas at komportable sa loob ng sarili nating mga tahanan sa oras ng sakuna, ang ating mga line workers ay patuloy na itinataya ang kanilang buhay sa ngalan ng tungkulin. Sila ang patotoo na buhay pa ang kultura ng bayanihan sa ating bansa.

In the olden times, we Filipinos were always known for our spirit of kinship and camaraderie displayed through our culture of bayanihan. Before, within our barrios, people displayed bayanihan by moving houses literally and today, the term has evolved to refer to local civic efforts of regular Filipinos working together to uplift their fellow compatriots. This connection, the need to help one another, has been strengthened through the advancement of technology. Cries for help through different media platforms are answered instantaneously by our fellowmen from all over the country and this increased connection cannot be achieved without that energy source that powers our devices, and that is electricity. We have our electric cooperatives which championed rural electrification and rural development.

*(Applause)*

This same spirit of bayanihan has been displayed by the very people in our electric cooperatives, especially the line workers who we are honoring today. The Task Force Kapatid, initially launched in 2002 and now known as the Power Restoration Rapid Deployment Task Force or we call it PRRD-TF, is a volunteer service initiated by the Philippine Rural Electric Cooperatives Association or what we call the PHILRECA, the Philippine Electric Cooperatives. The Task Force has provided a platform for electric cooperatives to mobilize their personnel and logistics to assist other electric cooperatives needing immediate rehabilitation of distribution lines in times of calamities in order to speedily restore power service to member-consumer-owners and alleviate the plight of the rural folks. Bearing the name “Kapatid,” it recognizes how we see each other—as brothers and sisters. Magkakapamilya po tayong lahat. Last year, two of the most severe typhoons, typhoon Tisoy and typhoon Ursula, wreaked havoc on parts of southern Luzon and Visayas one after the other. According to reports, typhoon Tisoy left at least nine people dead and almost a billion pesos in agricultural damages, and inevitably caused electric outages in 226 areas in Regions IV-B, V and VIII. Then, as if Mother Nature is testing our resilience, Ursula unleashed its intensity right before Christmas, Mme. Speaker, in some parts of Luzon and Visayas. According to NDRRMC reports, almost half a million houses were affected, with 106,772 totally damaged.

Mme. Speaker, our brothers and sisters in the electric cooperatives sector of the affected areas have experienced their fair share of these disasters but when I heard that my constituents were in danger, the first thought that came into my mind was our Task Force and their readiness to respond to this dire situation. I immediately called upon our electric cooperatives to mobilize our Task Force. This Task Force, composed of our very courageous line workers, were deployed at the earliest possible time during the restorations. Along with other Representations here in the House of

Representatives, the One Electric Cooperative Network Foundation and the unwavering support of the National Electrification Administration, nag-uunahan na silang magpakita ng suporta sa ating adbokasiya at agad-agarang sumagot sa tawag ng bayanihan ang ating magiging at matitikas na mga lineman.

Mme. Speaker, this would not have been possible without the incredible support from the National Electrification Administration under the leadership of its brilliant Administrator Edgardo Rama Masongsong, the former Representative of 1-CARE Party-List. Salamat po sa mahal naming Administrator sa walang sawang pagsuporta ninyo. (*Applause*)

On top of the hazards that our line workers have to face in their everyday jobs, they were still kind enough to extend a helping hand when their kapatid in the different regions needed it. Isang tawag lang ay sumugod agad sila doon sa mga bayang nasalanta ng bagyo. Inabot na sila ng Pasko at Bagong Taon na malayo sa kanilang mga pamilya pero hindi sila nagreklamo dahil nasa puso nila ang pagtulong sa kapwa Pilipino.

Mme. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, this is cooperativism at its best, cooperativism at its truest sense! Everyone supports and never leaves each other in times of relative stability, in times of need and in times of calamities. Mme. Speaker, it is our genuine offering to our sister electric cooperatives and more specially, to our member-consumer-owners.

Mme. Speaker, let me have this opportunity to address the fearless men that we have here today in the gallery and those who were not able to join us here due to other, equally important duties that they need to attend to.

Nandito po ang ating mga linemen, ang ating Warriors of Light. (*Applause*) Warriors of Light, you are the true testimony of the spirit of bayanihan. Kayo ang patunay na buhay ang kultura ng bayanihan sa mga Pilipino. Kayo po ang naglagay ng “bayani” sa “bayanihan.” Sa ngalan ng mga kooperatibang inyong natulungan, nais ko at taos pusong magpasalamat sa inyong serbisyo sa ating mga kapatid. Nawa ay magsilbi kayong inspirasyon sa ating mga kababayan. Nawa ay patuloy ang matibay nating pagsasamahan at paulit-ulit nating isisigaw: United we stand, we stand united! The electric cooperatives in the Philippines will never be defeated!

Mme. Speaker, my esteemed colleagues, thank you for the opportunity to give our thanks to our hardworking linemen. Patuloy naming isusulong ang pagbabayanihan sa ating mga kooperatiba at sa kapwa nating Pilipino. Muli, isang magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat.

Mabuhay ang One EC–MCO Movement! Mabuhay ang sambayanang Pilipino!

Maraming salamat po. (*Applause*)

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

REP. CASTELO. Mme. Speaker, may we please recognize Hon. Alfredo A. Garbin Jr. of AKO BICOL Party-List for his manifestation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Representative Garbin is now recognized.

#### MANIFESTATION OF REP. GARBIN

REP. GARBIN. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

In behalf of the Bicolanos, the six provinces of the Bicol Region which suffered the wrath of typhoon Tisoy, alam po namin kung ano ang naitulong ng Union of Lineman Association of the Philippines. Two days after ng bagyong Tisoy, tinawagan ko si Cong. Presley De Jesus at ang mga kasamahan niya sa Power Boys and he assured me that at least 100 linemen will be going to the Bicol Region, at dadagdagan pa para i-disperse sa iba’t ibang lalawigan, munisipyo sa Bicol Region. Hindi nga nagtagal at dumating sila, pagod na pagod, may mga bitbit na ekipahe upang i-restore kaagad iyong mga nasirang poste at kable, at sa madaling panahon ay naikabit at naibalik iyong kuryente sa iba-ibang parte ng Bicol Region (*Applause*), lalong-lalo na po sa lalawigan ng Albay.

Nakita ko rin po sa Camarines Sur at maging sa Sorsogon iyong tulong ng Union of Lineman Association of the Philippines. Sana ho ay patuloy ninyong gawin ito sa mga lalawigan o lugar na nasalanta ng bagyo at ano man na kalamidad. Malaki ho ang inyong nagagawa para mabigyan ng normalcy iyong mga biktima ng kalamidad, lalong-lalo na kapag bagyo ho. Kaya taos puso ho kaming nagpapasalamat mula sa AKO BICOL Party-List sa Union Lineman Association of the Philippines.

Salamat ho at mabuhay po kayo. (*Applause*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Thank you very much, Congressman Garbin. Thank you very much sa mga linemen. Ako po ay taga-Bicol din, and we are very grateful.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. TADURAN. Mme. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of Hon. Presley De Jesus of PHILRECA Party-List, and the manifestation of Representative Garbin of AKO BICOL Party-List to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. TADURAN. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize Hon. Loren Legarda, Representative from the Lone District of Antique, to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Deputy Speaker Loren Legarda from the Lone District of Antique is now recognized.

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. LEGARDA

REP. LEGARDA. Mme. Speaker, distinguished colleagues in Congress, we are living our days in fear of even casual contact with each other. In fact, many of us wear masks here while in session and likewise in our offices, in our homes, in our vehicles and in public areas. Events have been cancelled, travel plans have been cancelled or changed, because the public's attention is consumed by a threat that the world has just woken up to—the 2019 novel coronavirus, a new strain of coronavirus first identified in Wuhan, Hubei, China in December last year. The latest news reports indicate that the World Health Organization has already given this virus the official name COVID-19. The Chinese uses two characters to write the word “crisis”—one character stands for “danger” and the other for “opportunity.” In a crisis, be aware of the danger but also recognize the opportunity.

As the courageous workers in our health care system and local governments tackle the dangers, we as Filipinos and human beings must also recognize a historic opportunity to rethink our relationship with nature and the lifestyles that compel us to kill wildlife to sell and consume as food or medicine. In a little over two months, the COVID-19 outbreak has infected more than 49,000 people in 28 countries and territories around the world, and has claimed the lives of over a thousand people, including a Chinese national who died in Manila. Outside China, cases have been reported in Australia, Belgium, Cambodia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, the Philippines, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Taiwan, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, US and Vietnam. As a country, we offer our prayers to the families who have lost their loved ones amidst this health crisis. Yet as we continue to stand in solidarity with the international community in containing this outbreak and in ensuring the safety of the Filipino people, we must reflect on the causes of this outbreak and on ways to avoid and overcome future and interconnected threats.

Experts from the WHO say there is a high likelihood that the new coronavirus came from the illegal wildlife trade in China and people eating various kinds of wildlife. According to an online portal, scientists initially suggested that nCoV originally came from

bats, a proposal based on the similarity of its genetic sequence to those of other known coronaviruses. It goes on to say that researchers have identified the pangolin as a potential source of the nCoV also on the basis of a genetic comparison of coronaviruses taken from the animals and from humans infected in the outbreak and other findings. The sequences are 99 percent similar, that is, with the pangolin and coincidentally, it was World Pangolin Day yesterday.

Humans have cast pangolins as the latest villains in the animal kingdom but have you all seen a pangolin? A gentler mammal we will not just find, with an elongated scaly body simply curling into a ball whenever it is under attack, nearly defenseless against hunters coveting its scales that are dubiously believed to have medicinal uses. Pangolin poaching has risen exponentially in the country in the past couple of years, with apprehensions of traders even exceeding the records for 17 full years prior. There are even restaurants already serving pangolin meat in Metro Manila and prices can be up to P14,000 per animal. A study by the conservation group World Wildlife Fund showed that the illegal wildlife trade is worth around 20 billion US dollars per year. It is the fourth biggest illegal trade worldwide and has significantly contributed to a catastrophic decline in the populations of some species.

The Living Planet Index of the World Wildlife Fund and the Zoological Society of London indicate that populations of thousands of animal species around the world have declined 60 percent on the average since 1970. Extinction rates are currently 10 times faster than in previous extinction events and across animal and plant taxa, hundreds of times up to tens of thousands of times faster than the background extinction rate. Moreover, a report last year by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services found that one million species are at risk of extinction. They ranked the main factors as follows: 1) changes in land and use; 2) exploitation of organisms; 3) climate change; 4) pollution; and 5) invasive alien species. The intertwined web that sustains humans, plants and animals is at risk of unravelling in a matter of decades.

Despite all these, humans continue to extract wildlife from forests at more than six times the sustainable rate. Wildlife smuggling, trafficking and poaching remain rampant across many Asian countries. Legal and illegal trade for wild animals are still operational across the globe. The demise of one species may not be felt directly, but its intricate connection with other species in the wild will reverberate throughout the food chain. Multiple extinctions will lead to ecosystem spasm where chains of extinctions will leave the ecosystems we depend on gasping for life.

So, this ongoing public health crisis is only one of many that besets us if we continue to ignore the

warnings of scientists. If we continue the path to a warming planet as we seem to be doing, we could use this crisis in three ways: 1) as a test of our current coping mechanism; 2) as a drill for future crises; and 3) as a wake-up call to the connection of this public health crisis to the destruction of biodiversity and ecosystems on which we all depend. We therefore laud, in a sense, the decision of the Chinese government to temporarily ban the sale of wildlife in all markets but this temporary ban is only the beginning. We have an opportunity to make the necessary shift to avoid similar events in the future.

The international community should collectively step up its efforts towards successfully regulating the wildlife trade. Let us end the unsustainable use of wildlife animals for food or medicinal value. I call for a whole-of-government approach for the Philippines to recognize that overcoming threats, like COVID-19, will require functioning local ecosystems, local sufficiency of prime commodities, avoidance of mass hysteria and the ability to survive lockdowns. On the international front, I call on the United Nations, the WHO and other international cooperation agencies and instrumentalities to:

First, reinforce the provisions of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora or CITES on transformative change in wildlife conservation and management and in combating wildlife trafficking on all fronts. CITES should be the primary legal framework for regulating international trade in species of wild animals and plants. We must note, however, that only through adequate and efficiently enforced national policies can CITES really work. So, member states, including the Philippines, should take decisive steps to ensure effective wildlife trade controls on all fronts.

Second, ensure an ambitious, meaningful and inclusive post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity will adopt a post-2020 global biodiversity framework as a stepping stone towards the 2050 Vision of “living in harmony with nature.” That phrase sounds like a cliché until nature teaches us hard lessons such as what is happening now. Armed with the latest science enriched by indigenous knowledge systems, we must deepen our understanding of our ecosystems and what levels of change they can sustain. We need to ensure equitable access and benefits associated with biodiversity.

Third, develop improved science-based standards, guidelines and recommendations on disease prevention, detection and control. We need to develop international policies on wildlife disease prevention, monitoring and control that will enable governments to safeguard biodiversity and public and animal health worldwide. This will include policy

framework on disease risk management catering to the interface among wildlife, domestic animals and humans. These measures will not only strengthen international efforts to tackle illegal wildlife trade and prevent public health crises, but also contribute to the sustainability of our planet.

At the end of the day, our generation must be accountable to the next one for our actions. We must recognize that everything we do here will have an impact on the environment and biodiversity. Awareness is no longer enough as the time for decisive action has come. We have ignored the laws of nature to our peril. It is time to heed her warnings—in short, do not eat what is not intended for human consumption, do not trade what should not be traded. We must relearn to coexist with animals and their habitats. We have so many laws in place but we need to treat them as measures for survival rather than mere obstacles to the relentless pursuit of an economic future that will be mired in new dangers. We will not survive this and other coming changes unless we value the intricate interrelationships of all life on earth, unless we see that the rules of the game have changed and we need a fundamental shift in the way we live.

From what we eat, from how we travel, how we manage our discards, to how we do business and how we even treat each other, this august Body has to forge new ways to support these changes with policy. With human creativity and a deeper understanding of our planet, we have the human capacity to overcome this.

Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker, I move that the speech of Deputy Speaker Legarda be referred to the Committee on Rules.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). The speech of Deputy Speaker Legarda is referred to the Committee on Rules.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we suspend the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion to suspend the Privilege Hour is approved.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

ROLL CALL

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we call the roll.



THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). 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. 44, dated February 17, 2020.\**

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. Mme. Speaker, the roll call shows that 233 Members responded to the call.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). With 233 Members responding to the call, the Chair declares the presence of a quorum.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 137 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). The Secretary General is directed to read House Bill No. 137...

REP. ATIENZA. Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). ... and call the roll for nominal voting.

REP. ATIENZA. Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Rep. Jose L. Atienza Jr. is now recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. Again, we are amazed by the count of the Secretariat on the roll call. There are 127 of us present physically on the floor but they announced that 233 Members are in attendance.

May I inquire where the 106 who are not physically present are right now.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). The Majority Leader will please answer the query of the Gentleman.

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session.

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

*It was 3:53 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 3:55 p.m., the session was resumed.*

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker, in response to the remarks of Honorable Atienza, we would like to manifest that, of the number counted by the Secretary General, we have 43 Members who are not physically present on the floor but are considered present according to our rules: we have 11 Members who are attending the meeting of the Commission on Appointments; we have 7 Members who are on official travel; 15 Members are attending the meeting of the Special Committee on Flagship Programs and Projects; and 10 Members are attending the meeting of the Committee on Higher and Technical Education. So, we reiterate, Mme. Speaker, that we do have a quorum and we stand by the count of the Secretary General.

With that, Mme. Speaker,...

REP. ATIENZA. Mme. Speaker,...

REP. ROMUALDO. I move that we ...

REP. ATIENZA. ...we request that we be given a chance to question this further. Upon hearing the explanation of the Majority Leader, he is saying that 43 could still be considered present. Granting that the number cited by the Majority Leader is accurate, are they, indeed, authorized to be outside of the Session Hall? Forty-three plus 127 is 170. I would grant the fact that we may have considered a quorum, but not an actual quorum and so, for as long as we do not vote on any measure, we will not question the figure cited by the Majority Leader. If we are going to vote on any measure, then we will insist that only those physically present be allowed to vote. Otherwise, this will be a violation of our rules, a violation of fundamental parliamentary rules, a violation of the people's trust, a violation of anything we stand for. If we do not vote, fine; but if we vote on any measure, anyone who votes should be physically present; otherwise, we are further making a mockery of the congressional proceedings.

Thank you.

\* See ANNEX (printed separately)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Duly noted, Congressman Atienza.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker, we concur with the manifestation of Honorable Atienza. Those who are not physically present but are deemed present will not be part of the voting and only those who are physically present in the Session Hall will be able to vote on the matters that we will consider this afternoon.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 137  
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Noted.

The Secretary General is now directed to read the title of House Bill No. 137 and thereafter call the roll for nominal voting.

*Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on February 13, 2020, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.*

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 137, entitled: AN ACT IMPOSING STIFFER PENALTIES FOR CHILD ABUSE, EXPLOITATION AND DISCRIMINATION, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7610, AS AMENDED.

*The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading\* on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 44, dated February 17, 2020.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 137  
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). With 228 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, the Body approved on Third Reading House Bill No. 137.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker,...

REP. ATIENZA. Mme. Speaker.

REP. ROMUALDO. ... I move that Secretary General be directed to transmit to the Senate ...

REP. ATIENZA. Mme. Speaker.

REP. ROMUALDO. ... House Bill No. 137 as approved on Third Reading, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). The Majority Leader, please respond.

REP. ATIENZA. As we warned earlier, we would not allow those who are not physically present to be counted in the voting but it seems that the Secretariat still counted those who are not physically present. Only 146 are now present on the floor, so the total number of votes that should be counted should not be more than 146. You may have a quorum with those absent counted as “Members with permission to be absent” but they cannot vote. That is going to be a mockery of a good measure.

I voted “Yes” on this measure but I will not allow this measure to be questionable in its passage.

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

REP. ATIENZA. Wala po tayong 220 Members on the floor. Saan nanggagaling iyong boto—imagination, imbento? Hindi po batas iyan at sayang ang pagod ng mga Sponsors ng batas na iyan sapagkat maganda ang panukala pero mali ang ating proseso.

So, I reiterate our point, Mme. Speaker: the Secretariat cannot be allowed to continue doing this kind of shenanigans on the official proceedings of the House. Wala po tayong 220 on the floor, saan nanggaling ang boto? Imaginary votes, I would call them.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Majority Leader, please take note.

REP. ROMUALDO. Yes, Mme. Speaker, the Secretary General is so reminded but they assure us that only those who are physically present on the floor were counted for voting. With that, Mme. Speaker, I reiterate my motion for the transmittal of House Bill No. 137, or that the Secretary General be directed to transmit House Bill No. 137 to the Senate.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Is there any objection? The Chair hears none; the Secretary General is directed to ...

REP. ATIENZA. Objection.

\* See ANNEX (printed separately)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). ... transmit House Bill No. 137.

REP. ATIENZA. Objection.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). The Majority Leader please.

REP. ATIENZA. As we objected earlier, we continue to object unless we count the votes on the floor and not in the minds of the Secretariat. Wala po tayong 220 who voted and so, they cannot invent a number just so this measure will be passed. Kailangan po totohanan ang ating trabaho sapagkat kung hindi, mawawalan ng sagsay ang ating ginagawang trabaho sa Kongreso ng Pilipinas.

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

*It was 4:11 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 4:23 p.m., the session was resumed.*

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker, with regard to the comments of Honorable Atienza on the count conducted by the Secretary General, the Committee on Rules assures the Gentleman that all the errors that may have been committed by the Secretary General with regard to the counting of the Members present on the floor and on the voting will be rectified. The Majority Leader himself assures the Gentleman that he will rectify any errors committed by the Secretariat on the matter.

REP. ATIENZA. Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Noted.

REP. ATIENZA. We thank the Gentleman, the Majority Leader, for his understanding on the issue. At this point in time, after meeting with the Majority Leader himself, we would grant the Secretariat the leeway to defend their position but at this point also, we would like to demand from them—and this is not a request, this is a demand coming from the floor and yours truly—that the Secretariat should not play around with the value of the voting on the floor.

You have not been elected; we are. You have not been sent by the people here, you are appointed by the powers that be, so we have the right to question your actions and decisions when we see that you are not following the rules, the basic tenets of parliamentary democracy. Mme. Speaker, Majority Leader, on this point and on this measure, we withdraw our violent reaction but we continue to admonish the Secretariat—do not play around with the calling of the roll and do not play around with the votation that goes on the floor. You have not been elected by the people, you are appointed only. We are elected and we have a duty to perform. So, please do your duty and you will keep your jobs; otherwise, I will make it my own personal move to prove that there is a mockery of the procedures going on today.

Thank you.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. CASTELO. Mme. Speaker, before we continue, I move that we acknowledge the presence of the guests of Hon. Estrellita B. Suansing, Representative of the First District of Nueva Ecija. We have with us the local government officials from the municipality of Sto. Domingo, Nueva Ecija, namely: the Municipal Mayor, Hon. Imee De Guzman; and Sangguniang Bayan Members: Hon. Junior Bugaoan, Hon. Arland Ryan Andres, Hon. Edgar S. De Leon Jr., Hon. Wilfredo A. Maniego, Hon. Olivia S. Pascual, Hon. Emerson Matias and Hon. Ronnie Dela Cruz.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). The guests of Hon. Estrellita B. Suansing, please stand up. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. TADURAN. Mme. Speaker, I move that we also acknowledge the presence of the guests of Hon. Joseph Stephen “Caraps” S. Paduano of ABANG LINGKOD Party-List. They are the group of professors and students of St. Mary’s College, Quezon City headed by the former Undersecretary of the DSWD, Ms. Lourdes Balanon and accompanied by Ms. Imee Macaraig, Program Head; Mr. John Mora; Mr. Nishimura; Gabriel Mendez; Owen Casido; Jhumyl Alonte; Elowin Telan; Meil John Pateño; Rodney Lopez; Jelly Anne de Luya; Christinsen Suelen; Gennilyn San Carlos; Louisiana Olea; Dennice Bag-ao; Farhana Maruhom; Stephanie Niebres; Erica Toledo; Darlyn Gallardo; April Dela Cruz; Jolina Talan; Erica Gunday; Crystal Jade Gache; and Ms. Michelle Co. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). The guests of Honorable Paduano, please rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. CRISOLOGO. Mme. Speaker, we would also move to acknowledge the presence of the guests of the Representative from MAGSASAKA Party-List, Hon. Argel Joseph T. Cabatbat, belonging to different farmers' cooperatives and organizations of Northern Luzon Farmers' Association. They are composed of 66 representatives from farmers sectors and magsasaka, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). The guests of Hon. Argel Joseph T. Cabatbat of the Party-List MAGSASAKA, please rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. CRISOLOGO. Mme. Speaker, we would also move to acknowledge the presence of the guests of our Minority Leader, Hon. Bienvenido M. Abante Jr. They are officers of the Taiwan Association, Incorporated in the Philippines, namely: Mr. Seimo Huang, Mr. Allan Lin, Mr. Chiang Fu-Long, Ms. Huang Yan-Hui, Mr. Richard Lee, Mr. Robert Uy, Mr. Momo Lin, Ms. Angie Chen and Mr. Tom Lin.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). The guests of Minority Leader Abante, please rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ABANTE. Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Representative Abante is recognized.

REP. ABANTE. I just would like to make a manifestation, please, if that may be allowed?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Yes, you are recognized, Congressman Abante.

REP. ABANTE. The guests that we have from Taiwan who are actually based here in the Philippines came here just to thank the House of Representatives, particularly the Committee on Economic Affairs headed by Rep. Sharon S. Garin, and the Committee on Tourism headed by Rep. Sol Aragon, because we raised the issue of the travel ban on Taiwan, Mme. Speaker. Now, two days later, the DOH lifted the ban because of the House of Representatives, and so, our Taiwanese friends are here just to thank us, Mme. Speaker.

Thank you. *(Applause)*

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

TRANSMITTAL OF H.B. NO. 137  
TO THE SENATE

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker, we reiterate our motion to have the Secretary General transmit House Bill No. 137 to the Senate.

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

The Secretary General is hereby requested to transmit House Bill No. 137 to the Senate.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 78  
*Continuation*

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 78, as contained in Committee Report No. 5, and that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 78, entitled: AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE DEFINITION OF PUBLIC UTILITY, FURTHER AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE COMMONWEALTH ACT NO. 146, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "PUBLIC SERVICE ACT", AS AMENDED.

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker, the parliamentary status is that we had terminated the period of sponsorship and debate. Now, I move that we recognize Hon. Sharon S. Garin, the Chairperson of the Committee on Economic Affairs to continue sponsorship of the measure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Hon. Sharon S. Garin is recognized to continue sponsoring House Bill No. 78.

REP. GARIN (S.). Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

## PERIOD OF AMENDMENTS

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker, I now move that we open the period of amendments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the period of amendments is hereby opened. The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker, there being no Committee amendments, I move that we proceed to consider individual amendments.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker, earlier, we distributed to all the Members copies of the substitute bill to House Bill No. 78. Mme. Speaker, pursuant to Section 104 of our rules, I move to amend by substitution the entire Bill as contained in Committee Report No. 5 with the contents of the substitute bill earlier distributed to all the Members.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

## INDIVIDUAL AMENDMENTS

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker, I now move that we consider individual amendments.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker, I now move that we recognize the Gentleman from Cagayan de Oro, Rep. Rufus B. Rodriguez, for his chance to propose individual amendments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Hon. Rufus B. Rodriguez is recognized.

REP. RODRIGUEZ. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. With the kind permission of the honorable Speaker and Mme. Sponsor, I would like to introduce the following individual amendments to the substitute bill:

On page 7, line 4, on Section 7 amending Section 14 of the Public Service Act, to please insert as number (3) the following phrase: IN THE INTEREST OF NATIONAL SECURITY, THE RESTRICTION ON FOREIGN OWNERSHIP IMPOSED ON PUBLIC UTILITIES UNDER THE 1987 CONSTITUTION SHALL CONTINUE TO APPLY TO A PERSON THAT MANAGES, OPERATES AND CONTROLS PUBLIC SERVICE INVOLVING AIR TRANSPORTATION.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (S.). I accept, Mme. Speaker.

REP. RODRIGUEZ. Thank you very much, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker, the Majority concurs with the amendment.

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

REP. REMULLA. Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Hon. Jesus Crispin C. Remulla is now recognized.

REP. REMULLA. I wish to propose an individual amendment anterior to the one proposed by the Gentleman from Cagayan de Oro.

## SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

*It was 4:35 p.m.*

## RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 4:36 p.m., the session was resumed.*

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. REMULLA. Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Honorable Remulla is recognized.

REP. REMULLA. I wish to propose an anterior

amendment to the one proposed by the Gentleman from Cagayan de Oro on page 5.

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

REP. REMULLA. On the enumeration of public utilities, it is limited to four matters, Mme. Speaker, (a), (b), (c) and (d). I am proposing that for (e), we add another matter to read TELEPHONY—TELEPHONE SYSTEMS; followed by (F) INTERNET AND ALL THE INTERNET APPLICATIONS; and (G) TRANSPORTATION.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Honorable Garin (S.) is recognized.

REP. GARIN (S.). Mme. Speaker, the proposal of Congressman Remulla is not accepted by the Committee.

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker, the Majority supports the Sponsor in rejecting the proposed amendment.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from Bukidnon, Rep. Manuel F. Zubiri, for his chance to propose his individual amendments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Representative Zubiri is now recognized.

REP. ZUBIRI. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. With your permission, and of course, Mme. Sponsor, may I introduce the following individual amendments?

REP. GARIN (S.). Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ZUBIRI. Thank you. On page 7, line 17, replace the word “may” with the word SHALL.

REP. GARIN (S.). I accept, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ZUBIRI. On page 30, line 23, to replace the phrase “under Section 7 of” with the phrase PURSUANT TO.

REP. GARIN (S.). I accept, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ZUBIRI. The ports and airports inclusion as public utility—on page 7, line 4, to insert a new paragraph to be denominated as paragraph 3 followed by the following wordings: IN THE INTEREST OF NATIONAL SECURITY, THE RESTRICTION ON FOREIGN OWNERSHIP IMPOSED ON PUBLIC UTILITIES UNDER THE 1987 CONSTITUTION SHALL CONTINUE TO APPLY TO A PERSON THAT MANAGES, OPERATES, AND CONTROLS PUBLIC SERVICE INVOLVING PHILIPPINE PORTS AND AIRPORTS.

REP. GARIN (S.). Mme. Speaker, I accept but since the proposal or the previous amendment is similar to the current proposal of Congressman Zubiri, then I would like to propose a rewording so that we do not repeat the same paragraph.

On page 7, line 4, on Section 7 amending the Section 14 of the Public Service Act, we can insert it as number (3) so that it will include both proposals of Representative Rodriguez and Representative Zubiri: IN THE INTEREST OF NATIONAL SECURITY, THE RESTRICTION ON FOREIGN OWNERSHIP IMPOSED ON PUBLIC UTILITIES UNDER THE 1987 CONSTITUTION SHALL CONTINUE TO APPLY TO A PERSON THAT MANAGES, OPERATES, AND CONTROLS PUBLIC SERVICES INVOLVING AIR TRANSPORTATION, PHILIPPINE PORTS AND AIRPORTS.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker, the Majority concurs with the amendment as worded by the Chairperson, by the Sponsor.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ZUBIRI. Okay.

REP. GARIN (S.). Accepted.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Accepted.

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session.

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

*It was 4:40 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 4:41 p.m., the session was resumed.*

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker, there being no more Member who wishes to propose individual amendments, I move that we close the period of amendments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the period of amendments ...

REP. GO (M.). Mme. Speaker, may I be allowed to present my individual amendment, a very simple amendment at that, if that is acceptable to the Sponsor, Mme. Speaker?

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker, we withdraw our earlier motion to close the period of amendments and instead, I move that we recognize Rep. Mark O. Go to propose his amendments.

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

Rep. Mark O. Go is now recognized.

REP. GO (M.). Thank you, Mme. Speaker. On page 5, line 1, after the word "PERSON," we include OR ENTITY.

REP. GARIN (S.). I accept, Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker, the Majority concurs with the amendment.

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

REP. GO (M.). On the same page, line 15, after the word "PERSON," we add OR ENTITY.

REP. GARIN (S.). I accept, Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker, we concur with the amendment.

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

REP. GO (M.). I think that is all that I have. Thank you.

REP. GARIN (S.). Thank you.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. LAGMAN. Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker, I move that Rep. Edcel C. Lagman be recognized.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Representative Lagman is now recognized.

REP. LAGMAN. Just a point of inquiry, Mme. Speaker. When there is an amendment by substitution to a bill like what happened to House Bill No. 78, what is the procedure? Is it sufficient that the amendment by substitution be distributed to the Members of the House or is there a need for prior action by the sponsoring Committee to consider the amendment by substitution?

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker, under our rules, an amendment by substitution is allowed after the Committee amendments and before the individual amendments. The procedure is that the Chairperson of the Committee will submit a draft of the proposed substitute bill to the Committee on Rules and then, this is later distributed to the Members before we approve the bill as an amendment by substitution.

REP. LAGMAN. May we know whether this amendment by substitution was considered by the sponsoring Committee before it was submitted to the Members of the House?

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker, the Chairperson of the Committee on Economic Affairs tells us that it was so considered by her Committee.

REP. LAGMAN. I beg your pardon, Majority Leader.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker, according to the Chairperson of the Committee on Economic Affairs, Rep. Sharon S. Garin, the substitute Bill was indeed considered by her Committee.

REP. LAGMAN. May we know whether there is a Committee report adopting the amendment by substitution to attest to the fact that it was considered by the sponsoring Committee?

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker, according to our rules, the matter is a plenary action by the Majority Leader. There is no need for the Committee to come up and submit a separate Committee amendment. The proposed draft is submitted to the Committee on Rules and the Majority Leader makes the motion on the floor.

REP. LAGMAN. Then how do we prove that the amendment by substitution has been considered by the sponsoring Committee? What document will attest to such Committee action?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Majority Leader, I think there were no objections before.

REP. ROMUALDO. Yes, Mme. Speaker. Well, the Committee on Rules recognizes the transmittal by the Chairperson of the concerned Committee, and the Majority Leader makes the appropriate motion on the floor.

REP. LAGMAN. The Chair of a Committee does not act alone. A Committee is a collective body and so, any action by the Chair of the Committee should be with the concurrence of the majority of the members of the sponsoring Committee just like an amendment by substitution.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker, once the matter is brought to the Committee on Rules, the matter is within the jurisdiction of the Committee and the Majority Leader, and that is why it is only the Majority Leader that can make a motion to amend by substitution. So, once the Committee on Rules receives the transmittal from the Committee of the proposed amendment by substitution on the floor, the matter is entirely up to the discretion of the Committee on Rules and the Majority Leader.

REP. LAGMAN. In other words, the Majority Leader is saying that the Committee on Rules has the sole power, jurisdiction and authority to make a substitution, a wholesale substitution for a pending bill under deliberation?

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

REP. ROMUALDO. That is correct, Mme. Speaker. According to our rules, it is only the Majority Leader who can make the motion to amend by substitution based on the recommendation of the Chairperson of the sponsoring Committee.

REP. LAGMAN. Can we have that particular provision read for the record that it is the sole authority of the Majority Leader to make an amendment by substitution upon the recommendation of the Chair of the Committee?

REP. ROMUALDO. Yes, Mme. Speaker. The rule is Rule XIII, Section 104, paragraph 2: "A motion by the Majority Leader to amend by substitution of the entire bill or joint resolution shall precede consideration of individual amendments to the bill or joint resolution under consideration". It is from this provision of the rules that the Majority Leader derives the authority to make the motion to amend by substitution.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, I understand that the Committee on Rules is in the process of introducing amendments or revising the Rules of the House. Is that correct?

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. This revision is still ongoing?

REP. ROMUALDO. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Most probably we would suggest that one of the amendments should be that any amendment by substitution should go back to the sponsoring Committee for the collective action of the proper Committee.

REP. ROMUALDO. Yes, we take note of the manifestation of Representative Lagman. Mme. Speaker, the Committee on Rules would welcome any and all proposed amendments to the rules from our Members.

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you, Majority Leader.



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

REP. LAGMAN. I have also proposed a number of amendments and I hope they would be considered by the Committee.

REP. ROMUALDO. Thank you.

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you.

REP. ROMUALDO. Thank you, Mme. Speaker, and we also thank the Gentleman from Albay.

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

REP. ROMUALDO. With that, Mme. Speaker, I move that we close the period of amendments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the period of amendments is hereby closed.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 78

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 78.

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

The consideration of House Bill No. 78 is hereby suspended.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### PRIVILEGE HOUR *Continuation*

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we resume the Privilege Hour.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mme. Speaker, the next Member who wishes to avail of the Privilege Hour is the Gentleman from Party-List RECOBODA. I move that Rep. Godofredo N. Guya be recognized.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Rep.

Godofredo N. Guya of Party-List RECOBODA is now recognized.

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. GUYA

REP. GUYA. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

To our esteemed Members of this Chamber, magandang hapon po.

I stand before this Chamber on a matter of privilege as this is a special day to honor our fearless Warriors of Light. (*Applause*)

Last December, our countrymen suffered the onslaught of typhoons Tisoy and Ursula, consecutively. These two disasters caused significant damage in the affected regions. In times of devastation like these where crucial power supply and communication lines were compromised, the most important thing to do is to repair these critical infrastructures for faster recovery. This, Ladies and Gentlemen of this Chamber, is where our silent heroes came to work—our Warriors of Light.

Kabilang po sa mga linemen na rumesponde at tumulong sa power restoration ay ang mga linemen mula sa Mindanao na nakaranas din ng trahedya dulot ng magkakasunod at malalakas na lindol. This is a testament of how selfless, resilient and dedicated our Warriors of Light are. These linemen heeded their duty as they offered their help and worked tirelessly in order to immediately restore power and help rebuild lives, while they themselves were still trying to recover from the series of earthquakes.

Bukod sa pagsakripisyo ng kanilang oras at malayo din sa kanilang mga pamilya ay isinasakripisyo din nila ang kanilang buhay. Mme. Speaker, lingid po sa kaalaman ng lahat, marami na pong mga linemen na nagbuwis ng kanilang buhay sa ngalan ng serbisyo. Kami po sa Power Bloc ay lubos na nagdadalamhati sa pagkamatay ng ating magiting na lineman na si Jose Pablo Biaco. Isa po siya sa mga linemen ng Capiz Electric Cooperative (CAPELCO) na tumulong maibalik ang kuryente sa mga lugar na naapektuhan ng bagyong Ursula.

Mme. Speaker, I would like to request a moment of silence for Mr. Biaco and for all the valiant fallen Warriors of Light. (*Video presentation*)

Gaya ni Mr. Biaco, ang ating mga linemen ay nagtatrabaho kahit nagdiriwang ang lahat ng Pasko at Bagong Taon, mga araw na sila ay dapat nasa kani-kanilang mga bahay at kasama ang kani-kanilang pamilya. Pinagsawalang-bahala nila ang kabi-kabilang panganib na nakaamba sa pagtupad ng kanilang tungkulin, na walang kasiguraduhan kung sila ay makakauwi nang ligtas sa kani-kanilang tahanan. Sa kabila ng kanilang mga sakripisyo, Mme. Speaker, nakakalungkot na marami sa ating mga kababayan ang hindi nakikita ang kanilang kahalagahan sa ating bayan.

Lest we forget, line workers are not just mere routine workers, but are an important part of our nation-building. In this time and age of advanced technology, having a steady supply of electricity is an utmost necessity. Unfortunately, these heroic deeds are unappreciated in the eyes of our countrymen. Being the first responders, the linemen are the first people to receive the complaints of those who are only thinking about the inconvenience of brownouts.

Kaya naman bilang kanilang Kinatawan dito sa Kongreso, ako ay taos pusong nagpapasalamat sa kanilang kabayanihan at sakripisyo para sa ating kababayan, sa kanilang katatagan at katapangan na magbigay tulong kahit na marami rin silang pagsubok na hinaharap. Ang kuwento ng buhay ng ating mga Warriors of Light ay nagpapatunay ng kanilang katapangan at sakripisyo para sa bayan, na kahit tayo ay sinalanta ng unos, mapalindol man o mapabagyo, ay kaya pa rin natin magtulongan upang makaahon. This, my colleagues in this Chamber, is what resiliency means. Resiliency is being steadfast in the midst of calamity. It is having the courage and the spirit to face adversities and the belief that this will be surpassed.

Maraming salamat po at muli, ako ay lubos na sumasaludo sa tapang at sakripisyo ng ating Warriors of Light. *(Applause)*

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

REP. CASTELO. Mme. Speaker, thank you very much for the privilege speech of the Honorable Ebcas.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Of Honorable Guya.

REP. CASTELO. I move that we refer the privilege speech of Honorable Ebcas ...

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Honorable Guya.

REP. CASTELO. ... or rather, of Honorable Guya to the Committee on Rules for appropriate action.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. CASTELO. Mme. Speaker, before we continue, I move that we acknowledge the presence of the guests of Speaker Alan Peter “Compañero” S. Cayetano, the beauty queens from Mrs. Philippines

Universe, Mrs. Philippines ASEAN and Mrs. Face of Beauty pageants: Mrs. Riza Dormiendo, Mrs. Philippines Face of Beauty International 2019; Mrs. Divinagracia Carpio, Mrs. Philippines South East Asia 2019; Mrs. Marie Abigail Abalos, Mrs. Philippines National Universe 2019; and their publicist, Mr. Joy Sarmiento. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). The guests of Speaker Alan Peter “Compañero” S. Cayetano, please stand. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. CASTELO. Mme. Speaker, may we now recognize the distinguished Gentleman representing the AKO PADAYON Party-List, Cong. Adriano A. Ebcas, for his privilege speech.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Representative Adriano Ebcas of Party-List AKO PADAYON is now recognized.

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. EBCAS

REP. EBCAS. Mme. Speaker, distinguished colleagues who make up this Chamber, and to our guests in the gallery, a pleasant afternoon to everyone.

I rise today to relay the experience of those who have witnessed first-hand the onslaught of typhoon Tisoy and typhoon Ursula. Mme. Speaker, as a matter of privilege, I would like to maximize this time to talk about a sector of society who had been unappreciated and unnoticed. They are the modern-day superheroes in this society filled with technological advancement and globalization.

To my esteemed colleagues in the House of Representatives, I am very proud to have been given the opportunity to introduce the backbone of this country’s power industry, the men and women who make it possible to light up our roads and highways at night so that we can return safely to our homes, who keep our businesses functional and our manufacturing running, and even for us, who cool our scorching summer days—our very own linemen.

The National Electrification Administration estimated that around 1.4 million households in 16 provinces in Luzon and Visayas were without electricity. Electric cooperatives throughout the country sent more than 900 linemen to take care of the harm brought about by typhoons Tisoy and Ursula in the affected electric cooperatives. We, the Power Bloc Representatives of the rural electric cooperatives and member-consumer-owners stood in solidarity with the victims of this catastrophe. Together with our linemen from the

affected electric cooperatives, we have mutually reestablished power to more than 500,000 families. On January 14 this year, more than 100 linemen from the Power Restoration Rapid Deployment Task Force Team helped electric cooperatives on the ground to meet the full reclamation target.

These Warriors of Light needed to leave their own families and sacrifice their days off to help in the forced reclamation. They were anxious to rebuild the damage and affected facilities at the earliest conceivable time. These warriors, our linemen, worked day and night, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Be that as it may, regardless of these endeavors, some affected areas experienced a slower pace in rebuilding as compared to others due to the unforeseeable and uncontrollable conditions that typhoons Tisoy and Ursula brought about. We call the attention of government authorities and affected member-consumer-owners to make the best out of the circumstances and our current predicament.

Ang ating mga lineman ay nalayo at hindi nakapagdiwang ng Pasko at Bagong Taon kasama ang kani-kanilang mga pamilya dahil mas iniisip nila ang kapakanan ng ating mamamayan. Mas pinili nilang magtrabaho at maglingkod sa gitna ng mga kasiyahan upang makapagbigay liwanag sa tahanan ng mga nasalanta ng bagyong Tisoy at Ursula. Mme. Speaker, hanga ako sa tulong at serbisyo nila noong typhoons Tisoy at Ursula dahil ang ating mga linemen ay nakauwi lamang noong January 31 pagkatapos nilang maibalik ang supply ng kuryente sa iba't ibang sambayanan.

When one looks at the statistics, news articles and other data given to us by the media regarding power outages, it is human nature to perceive only our own inconvenience without regard for the hardships and struggles of the people who maintain and repair the transmission and distribution lines. These are the people who sacrificed their safety to ensure electrification in their areas. These are the linemen and they are the ones in the frontline against power outages.

I declare them as the modern superheroes, not to exaggerate their contribution to our economy but I declare them to be so to point out that they literally risked their lives and voluntarily left their families when duty called.

Mme. Speaker, I would like to take this moment once again to recognize all of our linemen who helped during the onslaught of typhoons Tisoy and Ursula, and the past catastrophes that we were able to surpass. Saludo kami sa kakayahan at kahusayan na ipinakita ng ating mga linemen habang sila ay naglilingkod upang maibalik ang mga linya ng kuryente sa mga mamamayang naninirahan sa Sorsogon, Bicol, Mindoro, Samar, Leyte, Biliran, Aklan at iba't iba pang parte ng Pilipinas. Sa kabila ng masamang panahon na kanilang dinanas, ang ating mga linemen ay nagpakita ng lakas

ng loob at katapangan kahit na alam nilang malalagay sa panganib ang kanilang mga sarili.

Mm. Speaker and my esteemed colleagues, I thank you for this opportunity to be heard on this experience that we have encountered. Kaming mga bumubuo ng electric cooperatives ay hindang-hindi magsasawa, hindi matatakot at hindi susukong magbigay ilaw at magsiguro na may tuloy-tuloy na supply ng kuryente kahit sa harap ng bagyo at panganib. Hindi mabubuo ang electric cooperatives kung wala ang ating mga magiging na linemen.

Maayong hapon kaninyong tanan at mabuhay ang ating mga linemen. Daghang salamat. (*Applause*)

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

REP. CASTELO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of Honorable Ebcas to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. CASTELO. Mme. Speaker, may we now recognize the Gentleman representing APEC Party-List, Hon. Sergio C. Dagooc for his privilege speech. (*Applause*)

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Rep. Sergio Dagooc of Party-List APEC is now recognized.

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. DAGOOC

REP. DAGOOC. Thank you very much, Mme. Speaker. Thank you, distinguished colleagues.

Mme. Speaker, the subject matter of my privilege speech this afternoon is the expeditious passage of the measures we have filed in the House to honor, and in appreciation of, the hard work and heroism of our Warriors of Light. (*Applause*) Mme. Speaker, this Representation, together with the rest of the Power Bloc Representatives from PHILRECA, RECOBODA and AKO PADAYON, rise before you today on a momentous event dedicated to recognize our selfless, unsung heroes—our linemen who are here in the gallery. Para po sa lahat ng daan-daang magiging na linemen na nandito ngayon, isang magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat. (*Applause*)

Mme. Speaker, I feel very much honored to deliver this privilege speech because I am fortunate enough to be allowed a platform to serve as a voice for these

underappreciated heroes of the energy sector. It gives me pride that years ago, I was one of these men who placed the interests of the nation first more than the comforts of their own homes. Before I became a Congressman, I was first a lineman for nine long years, Mme. Speaker. *(Applause)*

I started my 34 years of employment in an electric cooperative of the Rural Electrification Program in 1984 as a lineman of Siargao Electric Cooperative. Mme. Speaker, it was a hard life because at that time, linemen were only earning P25 a day but being a lineman was for me a decent job because it feeds my family. In the years that followed, Mme. Speaker, I juggled finishing my degree while working as a lineman in the electric cooperative. I go to school at night after my duty.

Hindi ko po ikinakahiya na ako ay isang lineman, Mme. Speaker. Bilang lineman, sa katunayan, palagi ko po itong ibinabahagi ng paulit-ulit upang magsilbing inspirasyon para sa lahat na nagsisimula sa ibaba ay walang ibang pupuntahan kundi paitaas, with the guidance of the Almighty Father. *(Applause)* Ako po at ang mga linemen na ito ay nagsusumikap at ginagawa ang aming mga tungkulin. Taas-noo ko po itong dadalhin bilang parte ng aming mga buhay saan man kami patungo, saan man kami dadalhin ng kapalaran, at saan man kami pupunta, na kagaya ko na napunta sa Bulwagang ito.

When I took my oath as a Representative of the people, it became a sacred duty for me to ensure that, along with forwarding the interests of the greater good, it is a covenant to my humble beginnings as a lineman. Mme. Speaker, hard work, perseverance, discipline and fortitude—all of these are qualities essential to the people around here, my co-line workers. *(Applause)* While safety and security are essential in choosing a career, most of us linemen do not have the luxury of certainty. Considering the meager pay and the hazard coupled with it, staying in this profession is definitely a matter of passion and dedication to serve not only our interest, but that of our countrymen and in nation-building in general.

Sa katunayan po, Mme. Speaker, ang pagiging lineman ay isa sa pinakadelikadong trabaho sa buong mundo. Sa bawat pag-akyat po namin sa poste ay itinataya na namin ang aming buhay habang kami ay nasa itaas dahil maaaring anumang oras, Mme. Speaker, ay maaaring makuryente kami, kagaya noong nakalista kanina na more than 300 linemen ang nawala na sa mundong ito dahil dito. Ang latest, Mme. Speaker, ay iyong taga-Capiz na si lineman Biaco na pinuntahan ko noong January 6 kasi nakuryente siya noong nag-repair siya ng linya sa Capiz Electric Cooperative.

Para rin pong sundalo, Mme. Speaker, ang mga linemen na kung saan kailangang magpailaw ay agad kaming tutugon. Kapag may kalamidad ay agad kaming ipapadala upang ibalik ang kuryente. Araw man ng

Pasko at Bagong Taon ay nandoon kami sa taas ng mga poste para maibalik lang ang kuryente para sa convenience sa ating mga mamamayan.

Mme. Speaker, ang ating mga sundalo have been recognized by the government and by Congress dahil sila po ang nagbibigay ng peace and order, ng kapayapaan, para ang mga investors natin ay papasok at magkakaroon tayo ng trabaho, magkakaroon ng tax collections and revenues ang gobyerno para maihatid ang serbisyo.

Ang mga linemen po, Mme. Speaker, ay kagaya din ng mga sundalo. In nation-building, we make a robust economy and our economy can only be fueled by a reliable source of electricity at a least cost. Hindi po mangyayari ang economy na iyon at hindi tatakbo ang mga industriya natin para magkaroon ng trabaho ang ating mga kababayan at magkaroon ng magandang kinabukasan ang susunod na henerasyon kung hindi po aakyat sa poste ang mga linemen para patuloy na daloy ng kuryente. *(Applause)* That is why they equally deserve appreciation like that given to our soldiers, Mme. Speaker.

Noong ako ay lineman ay ganito rin po ang aking pinagdaanan, kung kaya't ngayon na ako ay isang halal na Representante nila ay hindi ko po sila tatalikuran. Sinisiguro ko po na ako ay magsusulong ng mga karampatang benepisyo at pagkilala sa kanilang mga sakripisyo at habang ako po ay may pagkakataong isulong ang pagkilala sa kanila ay gagawin ko ito, Mme. Speaker. *(Applause)* Kaya lang, Mme. Speaker, ako po ay nalulungkot dahil habang itinataya namin ang aming buhay at ang National Electrification Administration ay pinamumunuan kami, mayroong mga grupo na wala na ngang naiambag na kabutihan sa ating bayan, ay gumagawa ng palaging paninira sa mga electric cooperatives at sa liderato ng National Electrification Administration. Mayroon po tayong mga ahensiya na nasa enerhiya na iniimbestigahan ngayon. Gusto lang nila ilihis ang isyu. Bakit po ang liderato ng National Electrification Administration at electric cooperatives, na araw-araw ay itinataya ang buhay para maiangat ang ating bansa at kabuhayan ng ating mamamayan, ang kanilang pinupuntirya? Sana po ay maliwanagan sila na nandiyan at nakaupo sa Department of Energy na iyong dapat imbestigahan ay iniimbestigahan na ngayon ng Committee on Energy. *(Applause)*

Mme. Speaker, as legislators, the Power Bloc has filed House bills to honor these men in the course of our first 100 days in Congress. Filing them was honoring my roots and remembering the hardships I faced. Once enacted into law, these bills will be contributing to the future of this noble profession.

Through House Bill No. 472, which proclaims the first Monday of August of every year as Linemen Appreciation Day, this Representation aims to recognize the unrelenting efforts of these linemen who are often

unappreciated. (*Applause*) Under House Bill No. 3247, Mme. Speaker, which also provides for additional insurance coverage of not less than one million pesos and benefits for all linemen and other power lineworkers, including all lineworkers in the energy sector, both from the private utilities and the 121 electric cooperatives across the country. (*Applause*) Through this measure, Mme. Speaker, the employers of our lineworkers will be required to shoulder the insurance premiums and provide additional benefits. These additional benefits shall consist of a retirement package and mortuary assistance of not less than P500,000 which shall triple if the lineworker dies in the line of duty. This also includes disability benefits of P500,000 for any injury sustained while in the line of duty and reimbursement of actual medical expenses up to P300,000. Wala pong gagastusin dito ang ating pamahalaan dahil ang mag-shoulder nito lahat ay ang kaniya-kaniyang employer ng electric cooperatives at private distribution utilities. Kaya wala po akong nakikita na dahilan para hindi maipasa ang dalawang measures na iyan. Ito po ay mga benepisyo na nararapat lamang para sa kanilang serbisyo na hanggang ngayon po ay ipinagkait pa sa kanila.

Today, Mme. Speaker, honorable Members of this esteemed Chamber, I call on the leadership of the House to answer our clarion call to recognize the heroism of our lineworkers. Through humanistic policymaking, we can only aim to compensate for the dangers and risks they are facing everyday and pay tribute to our fallen linemen who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty. More than the recognition, Mme. Speaker, I also count on the wisdom of this honorable Chamber for the expeditious passage of these bills. Let us work together to alleviate their living conditions by increasing their benefits and assuring them, through legislation, that we recognize their efforts and honor their significant contributions to nation-building and sustainable rural development.

Sa aking mga kapwang lineman na nandito ngayon, hindi dahil nandito ako sa Kongreso ay nakalimutan ko na kayo, na aking pinanggalingan, bagkus, nandito ako sa Kongreso at ang tatlo nating mga kasamahan upang magkaroon po kayo ng kakampi at ng boses upang maisabatas ang inyong mga karapatan. Lubos po akong naniniwala na ang ating mga Kinatawan na nandito ay kasama ko sa adhikaing ito. (*Applause*)

Sa lahat po ng mga Kinatawan na bumubuo ng House of Representatives, delikado man po ang kanilang kasalukuyang trabaho bilang mga linemen ay gagawin po nila ito araw-araw upang masiguro ang kinabukasan ng ating bansa at hindi lang ng kanilang pamilya. Nasa ating mga kamay na po ang kakayahang ito na maisabatas ang mga measures na tinutukoy ko.

Sa lahat po ng mga kasamahan ko na magigiting na mga linemen na nandito ngayon at wala dito, isang pagpupugay po sa inyong lahat. Mabuhay ang

manggagawang marangal, matapang at magiting! Nawa ay patnubayan kayong lahat ng Poong Maykapal. (*Applause*)

Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, we would like to remind the honorable Gentleman, Congressman Dagooc, of Rule XVI, Section 122 which says: "Members shall not avail of the Privilege Hour to speak on concerns that are principally and directly related to the subject matter of measures already pending in any committee or in plenary session."

So, we advise other Members moving forward that if you would like to speak on measures, do so before you file and not after you have filed. Other than that, we would like to refer the speech of Hon. Sergio C. Dagooc of APEC Party-List to the Committee on Rules for appropriate action.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

The speech of Congressman Dagooc is referred to the Committee on Rules.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, we have passed the one-hour mark. We would like to move that we extend the Privilege Hour for another 30 minutes.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mme. Speaker, next to avail of the Privilege Hour is Hon. Juan Fidel Felipe F. Nograles of the Second District of Rizal.

I move that he be recognized for his privilege speech.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Rep. Juan Fidel Felipe Nograles of the Second District of Rizal is now recognized.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. NOGRALES (J.F.)

REP. NOGRALES (J.F.). Mme. Speaker, my fellow Representatives of the People, I stand on a matter of privilege about something very close to my heart. This matter is where I started my journey to become a

Member of this Chamber. My journey is dedicated to make this matter happen.

Ten years ago, Congress passed a landmark legislation providing free legal assistance to the poor—supposedly. Nobody will ever be wrongfully convicted anymore only because he or she could not afford to pay a lawyer to defend himself or herself—supposedly. While all lawyers were required to render a minimum number of hours per month of pro bono service, they were given the benefit of a tax deduction for any legal assistance rendered over and above the minimum—supposedly.

Why supposedly? Because it appears that it is not enough for Congress to pass a legislative measure: RA 9999 or the Free Legal Assistance Act of 2010. Why supposedly? Because it appears that it is not enough that the President signed the bill into law—signed on February 10, 2010 by former Pres. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. Why supposedly? Because the Supreme Court was supposed to formulate the implementing rules and regulations with respect to the legal services covered under the law as well as the processes of accreditation of organizations and associations; and because the Bureau of Internal Revenue was supposed to formulate the necessary revenue regulations for the proper implementation of the tax component of the law; and both did not. Ten years after, still no implementing rules and regulations from the Judicial Branch of the government and still no revenue regulations from the Executive Branch of the government.

What little hope Congress offered to the poor—to those who could not afford to pay for a lawyer, to those whose lives and properties depend on whatever justice they could get from a system they could never understand—the Supreme Court and the BIR took away. They took it away by not making it happen despite the passage of the law.

Mme. Speaker, my fellow Representatives of the people, we should not allow the Judicial Branch or the Executive Branch to render meaningless any law that we pass just by not formulating the rules and regulations necessary to implement the law. Otherwise, we become powerless and laughable. How many more laws have become useless for the same reason? Nobody knows, but this we know, that for 10 years, countless of poor people were deprived of a lawyer's services. For 10 years, plenty of innocent indigents may have gone to jail without reason or lost their property without compensation, and the list goes on. For 10 years, access to justice was denied.

*At this juncture, Deputy Speaker Escudero relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Ferdinand L. Hernandez.*

Mr. Speaker, fellow Representatives of the people, this is no longer justice delayed, this is already justice

denied. We need to make sure that the laws we pass get implemented. We need to find a way to make the Judicial and the Executive Branches of the government do their share of the work. We need to provide hope to our people, especially the poor, that the law will protect them when they are in the right; that the law will defend them when they are wrongfully attacked; that the law will serve them even if they do not have money to pay. We need to make this Free Legal Assistance Act work even if it is 10 years late.

This humble Representation verified the existence of the pertinent implementing rules and regulations to execute the law and finding none, I hereby invite the honorable Supreme Court and the Bureau of Internal Revenue to apprise Congress as to the status of implementation of the said law and finally reach the law's set point by issuing the required rules and regulations.

I am confident that we are all one in deeming this matter as long overdue.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of Honorable Nograles (J.F.) to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, next to avail of the Privilege Hour is Hon. Carlos Isagani "Caloy" T. Zarate from BAYAN MUNA Party-List.

I move that he be recognized.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). Rep. Carlos Isagani T. Zarate is hereby recognized.

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ZARATE

REP. ZARATE. Maraming salamat po, G. Ispiker. Magandang hapon po sa ating lahat.

G. Ispiker, sa pagitan ng ala una at alas dos ng madaling araw noong ika-7 ng Pebrero ay sapilitang pinasok ng mga armadong kapulisan ang opisina ng Katungod Sinirangan Bisayas, ang chapter ng human rights organization na Karapatan sa Region VIII. Nasa gusali ring iyon, G. Ispiker, ang opisina ng Bagong Alyansang Makabayan or Bayan at Sagupa, isang organisasyon ng mga magsasaka sa Tacloban. Kasabay ng mga panahong iyon, G. Ispiker, payapang natutulog

sa opisina sina Alexander Philip Abinguna, Karapatan National Council member ng Eastern Visayas; si Mira Legion ng Bagong Alyansang Makabayan or Bayan, Eastern Visayas; at si Marissa Cabaljaio na siyang tagapagsalita ng People Surge o ang organisasyon ng mga biktima ng bagyong Haiyan at ang kaniyang isang taong gulang na anak. Sa raid na ito, lahat sila ay pinaghuhuli. Samantala, kasabay ng raid na iyon ay pinasok rin ng iba pang grupo ng mga armadong kapulisan ang opisina ng Rural Missionaries of the Philippines sa Eastern Visayas at ang media group na Eastern Vista sa Calanipawan, Tacloban City. Dito ay pinaghuhuli rin ang staff ng RMP na si Marielle Domequil at ang community journalist na si Frenchie Mae Cumpio.

Tulad ng bulok na modus na ginawa sa iba pang mga aktibista at iba pang kritiko ng kasalukuyang pamahalaan, tinaniman ng mga baril at mga bomba ang mga opisina at saka inaresto ang mga natagpuan nilang mga tao sa loob ng opisina. Katulad na katulad ito, G. Ispiker, sa naging raid na ginawa din sa mga opisina ng mga progresibong grupo, kasama na ang aming opisina, ang BAYAN MUNA Party-List sa Bacolod City at sa Escalante City noong October 31, 2019.

Itong nangyaring raid sa Tacloban City nitong nakaraang mga araw, ilang araw bago nangyari ito, G. Ispiker, ay nakatanggap na ng ulat ang mga kasamahan namin sa posibleng paghahalughog sa mga opisina. Kasunod ito ng mahigpit na paniniktik na kanilang nakikita sa kanila. Sa katumayan, naka-schedule na nga na muling magpapa-inspeksiyon sa Commission on Human Rights ang mga nasabing opisina upang mapatunayan lamang na walang bomba, walang baril o anumang ilegal na mga kinukubli sa loob ng mga ito, at ang mga tao sa loob nito na nag-oopisina ay hindi mga armado, ngunit bago pa man mangyari ang inspeksiyon na gagawin sana ng Commission on Human Rights ay tuluyan na ngang nilusob ang mga opisina ng mga armadong kapulisan.

G. Ispiker, bitbit ang dati nang paratang ng mga nasa security sector na ang mga lehitimo at kinikilalang mga organisasyon sa media ay mga “communist terrorist” ay binibigyang katuwiran nila ang pag-aresto at pagtanim ng ebidensiya. Kasuklam-suklam itong mangbubusabos sa batas at direktang atake sa demokratikong karapatan ng ating mga mamamayan. Mariin namin itong kinokondena at hinihimok namin ang aming mga kapwa Mambabatas na tutulan ang ganitong mga pakana laban sa ating mga mamamayan lalo at higit sa mga kasamahan nating nasa media. Ang pangyayaring ito ay isa na namang patunay sa patuloy na pagkitid ng demokratikong espasyo sa ating bansa. Ang pag-aresto kay Frenchie Mae Cumpio, isang miyembro ng media group na AlterMidya, ay mariing kinokondena rin ng National Union of Journalists of the Philippines.

Sa katumayan, G. Ispiker, noong Oktubre, akin pang naaalala na nasa bulwagang ito si Frenchie Mae Cumpio at sinamahan niya ang ilang mga kababayan niya sa Eastern Visayas upang makausap ang kanilang mga Kinatawan, lalo na sa mga usapin ng ayuda ng mga biktima ng bagyong Yolanda. Ang pag-aresto kay Frenchie ay hindi ang unang insidente ng pag-aresto sa isang miyembro ng media sa kasalukuyang administrasyon. Kung ating matatandaan at ating babalikan, kasama sa 50 aktibistang inaresto sa mga magkakasabay na raid sa Bacolod at Escalante ang journalist na si Anne Krueger noong October 31 ng nakaraang taon.

Sa kasalukuyan, G. Ispiker, inaatake na ang isang napakahalagang institusiyon sa ating lipunan, ang mass media. Ang pag-aresto kay Anne Krueger at Frenchie Cumpio ay isang mapanganib na pangyayari lalo na sa mga community at alternative media groups. Ang ginawa sa kanilang dalawa ay pawang pananakot ng mga puwersa ng Estado sa mga katulad nilang mamamahayag na nag-uulat ng mga pang-aabuso, partikular ang pang-aabuso ng mga ahente ng Estado sa mga magsasaka, katutubo, manggagawa at iba pang aping sektor sa ating lipunan. Nais busalan ng mga pasista ang mga reporter at manunulat, ang mga mamamahayag na inihahayag lamang ang mga paglabag sa karapatang pantao, korapsiyon at iba pang isyung kinasusuklamang ng mga nasa posisyon at kapangyarihan.

Hindi na malayo rito ang ginagawa din sa iba pang mga media outfits. Biktima rin ng red-tagging or red-baiting ang National Union of Journalists of the Philippines, gayundin ang marami pang mamamahayag at iba pang mga grupong dumedepensa para sa kalayaan ng pamamahayag or press freedom. Tuloy-tuloy, halimbawa, ang pang-uupat sa *Rappler* at sa *Philippine Daily Inquirer* upang ito ay mapasara. Sa kasalukuyan nga, tuloy-tuloy rin ang panggigipit at hindi pa rin nare-renew ang prangkisa ng ABS-CBN.

G. Ispiker, ang lahat ng mga ginagawang atake ng kasalukuyang administrasyon sa pamamahayag ay bahagi ng pagpipilit nitong patahimikin ang malayang pagpapalitan ng mga ideya at kuro-kuro at ipilit na ang tanging boses na mamamayagpag ay ang nakaupo sa Malakanyang at ang mga nasa paligid nito. Halimbawa, hindi natin makakalimutan ang pag-ayaw ni Pangulong Duterte sa pagbabago o pag-renew ng franchise ng ABS-CBN. Ang sabi niya, “I will see to it that you are out” sa kabila ng nasa kapangyarihan naman ng lehislatura ang pagbibigay o pag-renew ng prangkisa ng mga broadcast networks. Magkakahiwalay ang kapangyarihan ng lehislatura, hudikatura at ehekutibo para hindi mapasakamay ng isang sangay ang kapangyarihan pero parang naging taliwas dito ang reyalidad.

Likas ng lumalabas sa bibig ng kasalukuyang administrasyon at mga tauhan nito ang mga katagang “bias,” “dilawan” at “bayaran” patungkol sa mga media outfits, mga atake sa mga independiyenteng media outfits na hindi lamang press releases ng gobyerno ang kanilang ibinabalita o nilalathala. Maging ang ginagawa nitong National Task Force to End the Local Communist Armed Conflict or NTF-ELCAC ay naging instrumento upang atakihin ang mga kritikal na mga mamamahayag bilang mga kaaway raw ng Estado. Ang mga alternative media outfits ay sumailalim sa magkakasunod na cyberattacks nitong mga nakaraan at cyberbullying. Malala pa nga dahil ang mga miyembro ng alternative media ay hina-harass din, kinukulong at kinakasuhan ng mga gawa-gawang kaso. Ipinapakita ng kasalukuyang administrasyon ang kaniyang bagsik sa determinadong pag-atake sa mga nabanggit kong media outlets—Rappler, Inquirer, ABS-CBN. Kung kaya nitong ipasara ang mga media outlets na ito, ano pa kaya ang laban ng mga maliliit na alternative news outfits katulad ng Bulatlat at AlterMidya?

Ang usapin ng pagsasara ng mga media outlets ay hindi pagdedepensa sa mga negosyong ito. Ito ay isyu ng pagtatanggal ng isang media outfit ang buong makinarya at impluwensiya ng Estado. Usapin ito ng administrasyong tila may pabrika ng disimpormasyon at kasinungalingan. Ito rin ay usapin ng kabuhayan ng maraming taong mawawalan ng trabaho kapag ito ay naipasara. Buhay ang kalayaan ng pamamahayag dahil ang mga mamamahayag at ang mamamayang Pilipino ay naninindigan para dito. Hiling namin na maging bahagi tayo, G. Ispiker at mga kapwa ko Mambabatas, sa laban para depensahan ang kalayaan sa pamamahayag.

Demokrasya, hindi tiraniya! Kalayaan ng pamamahayag, ipaglaban! Malayang pamamahayag, isang malayang mamamayan!

Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of Hon. Caloy Zarate to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, there being no more Member who wishes to avail of the Privilege Hour, I move that we terminate the Privilege Hour.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, given that copies of the Journal were already distributed to the Members, I move that we approve Journal No. 43, dated February 12, 2020.

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

The Majority Leader please.

#### ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, there being no other agenda to be tackled today, I move that we adjourn the session until tomorrow, February 18, 2020 at three o'clock in the afternoon.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). I object. (*Laughter*)

REP. DE VENECIA. I so move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the session is hereby adjourned and the session will resume on February 18 at three o'clock in the afternoon.

*It was 5:43 p.m.*