



Congressional Record

PLENARY PROCEEDINGS OF THE 18th CONGRESS, FIRST REGULAR SESSION
House of Representatives

Vol. 4

Tuesday, February 18, 2020

No. 45

CALL TO ORDER

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

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

PRAYER

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The Chair would like to ask everybody to please rise and remember that we are in the holy presence of the Lord. Please say a silent prayer.

Everybody rose for the silent prayer.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Amen. Please remain standing for the singing of the Philippine National Anthem.

Everybody remained standing for the singing of the Philippine National Anthem.

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

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, I move we defer the calling of the roll.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we proceed to the Reference of Business.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella.). 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. 6260, entitled:

“AN ACT RENAMING THE LOBOG BRIDGE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF PLARIDEL, PROVINCE OF MISAMIS OCCIDENTAL AS ALFONSO BURLAT APDUJAN BRIDGE”

By Representative Ty (Diego)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 6261, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING THE OVERSIGHT AND AUDIT OF GOVERNMENT INTELLIGENCE AND CONFIDENTIAL FUNDS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Gaité, Zarate and Cullamat
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

House Bill No. 6262, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE BENEFITS OF BARANGAY OFFICIALS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 393 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7160 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991, AS AMENDED”

By Representative Crisologo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL
GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 6263, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE MAGNA CARTA
FOR BARANGAY HEALTH WORKERS,
AMENDING THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CODE, INCREASING THEIR BENEFITS,
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Romero
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL
GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 6264, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR ADDITIONAL
BENEFITS AND PRIVILEGES TO PUBLIC
COUNSELORS, OTHERWISE KNOWN
AS THE MAGNA CARTA FOR PUBLIC
COUNSELORS”

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

House Bill No. 6265, 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 Roman
TO THE COMMITTEE ON WELFARE OF
CHILDREN

House Bill No. 6266, entitled:

“AN ACT RENEWING FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-
FIVE (25) YEARS THE FRANCHISE
GRANTED TO PANAY TELEPHONE
CORPORATION, UNDER REPUBLIC ACT
NO. 8704, ENTITLED ‘AN ACT GRANTING
THE PANAY TELEPHONE CORPORATION,
INC. A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT,
INSTALL, ESTABLISH, OPERATE
AND MAINTAIN LOCAL EXCHANGE
NETWORK IN THE PROVINCE OF AKLAN
AND ANTIQUE’ ”

By Representative Marquez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE
FRANCHISES

House Bill No. 6267, 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 Alonte
TO THE COMMITTEE ON WELFARE OF
CHILDREN

House Bill No. 6268, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE BAGUIO CITY,
LA TRINIDAD, ITOGON, SABLAN, TUBA
AND TUBLAY SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE
(BLISTT ECOZONE) IN THE PROVINCE
OF BENGUET AND APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Go (Mark)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS
AND THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND
INDUSTRY

House Bill No. 6269, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING AUTOMATIC
CIVIL SERVICE SUB-PROFESSIONAL
ELIGIBILITY TO GRADUATES OF
FOUR YEAR COURSES IN COLLEGES
OR UNIVERSITIES, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES”

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

House Bill No. 6270, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY TO BE
KNOWN AS BARANGAY BATUCAN IN
THE MUNICIPALITY OF TALACOGON,
PROVINCE OF AGUSAN DEL SUR, AND
PROVIDING FUNDS THEREOF”

By Representative Bascug
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL
GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 6271, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY TO BE
KNOWN AS BARANGAY DOÑA MAXIMA
IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SAN LUIS,
PROVINCE OF AGUSAN DEL SUR, AND
PROVIDING FUNDS THEREOF”

By Representative Bascug
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL
GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 6272, entitled:

“AN ACT SUPERSEDING PRESIDENTIAL
DECREE NO. 851 AND ITS IMPLEMENTING
RULES AND REGULATIONS INSTITUTING
THE NEW THIRTEENTH MONTH PAY LAW
AND REQUIRING A DOLE APPROVED
COMPLIANCE REPORT PRIOR TO THE

ISSUANCE OF A LOCAL GOVERNMENT
BUSINESS PERMIT”

By Representatives Yap (Eric), Tulfo and Taturan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND
EMPLOYMENT

House Bill No. 6273, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING THE REVISED PENAL
CODE’S ARTICLE 315 TO INCLUDE
WILFUL NON-PAYMENT OF CORRECTLY
IMPOSED PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
FEES AS A MODE OF COMMITTING
ESTAFA”

By Representatives Yap (Eric), Tulfo and Taturan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF
LAWS

House Bill No. 6274, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE PHILIPPINE
VETERINARY HOSPITAL, DEFINING ITS
PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES, PROVIDING
FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES”

By Representative Lopez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
AND FOOD

House Bill No. 6275, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING SECTION 6, CHAPTER
II, TITLE II OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE #
198, AS AMENDED”

By Representative Del Mar
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL
GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 6276, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING A
NATIONAL ORAL HEALTH PROGRAM
AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR”

By Representative Tan (Angelina)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 6277, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE MAGNA
CARTA FOR BARANGAYS, PROVIDING
FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES”

By Representative Dalipe
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL
GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 6278, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE MUNICIPALITY
OF BATARAZA IN THE PROVINCE
OF PALAWAN INTO A COMPONENT

CITY TO BE KNOWN AS THE CITY OF
BATARAZA”

By Representatives Abueg-Zaldivar and Acosta
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL
GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 6279, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING THE CREATION
OF AN EXTENDED PRODUCER
RESPONSIBILITY SCHEME TO ADDRESS
LEAKAGE OF PLASTIC WASTE INTO
THE ENVIRONMENT, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES”

By Representative Rodriguez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY

House Bill No. 6280, entitled:

“AN ACT TO REFORM THE KOMISYON
SA WIKANG FILIPINO (COMMISSION
ON THE FILIPINO LANGUAGE) INTO
THE KOMISYON NG MGA WIKA
SA PILIPINAS (COMMISSION ON
PHILIPPINE LANGUAGES), REVISING
ITS STRUCTURE, POWERS, DUTIES
AND FUNCTIONS, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES”

By Representative Rodriguez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION
AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 6281, entitled:

“AN ACT PENALIZING THE USE OF
SIDEWALKS FOR COMMERCIAL AND/
OR PERSONAL PURPOSES”

By Representative Guico
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL
GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 6282, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL IN BARANGAY PALDIT,
MUNICIPALITY OF SISON, PROVINCE
OF PANGASINAN TO BE KNOWN AS
THE PALDIT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR”

By Representative Guico
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION
AND CULTURE

RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 710, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE
ON LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT TO
CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF

LEGISLATION ON THE CONTINUING VIOLENCE AGAINST WORKERS AND CRIMINALIZATION OF LABOR DISPUTES”

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

House Resolution No. 712, entitled:

“RESOLUTION EXPRESSING FULL SUPPORT OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE BID OF THE CITY OF SAN JOSE DEL MONTE IN BULACAN TO BECOME A ‘UNESCO CREATIVE CITY’ AND BE INCLUDED IN THE UNESCO CREATIVE CITIES NETWORK (UCCN) TO GIVE HONOR AND PRIDE TO THE COUNTRY”

By Representative Robes
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Resolution No. 713, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING ALL NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES TO CONDUCT CONGRESSIONAL CONSULTATIONS AS MANDATORY PROCEDURE IN PREPARING THEIR PROPOSED ANNUAL BUDGETS”

By Representative Savellano
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

House Resolution No. 714, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7305, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ‘THE MAGNA CARTA OF PUBLIC HEALTH WORKERS’ ”

By Representative Castelo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 715, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION URGING HIS EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE TO TEMPORARILY SUSPEND THE OPERATIONS OF ALL PHILIPPINE OFFSHORE GAMING OPERATORS (POGOs) IN THE COUNTRY”

By Representative Suntay
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GAMES AND AMUSEMENTS

House Resolution No. 717, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE HOUSE COMMITTEE(S)

TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE ALLEGED VIOLATIONS OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 1529 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘PROPERTY REGISTRATION DECREE’ WITH RESPECT TO CASE 10 OF THE BARAS CADASTRE”

By Representative Acop
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 718, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING CONGRESSIONAL COMMENDATION AND CONGRATULATIONS TO DALISAY BY RENUCCI RICE FOR WINNING THE THIRD BEST RICE IN THE WORLD DURING THE 11TH ANNUAL WORLD RICE CONFERENCE HELD LAST 12 NOVEMBER 2019”

By Representatives Romualdez (Yedda) and Romualdez (Ferdinand)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

COMMUNICATIONS

Letter dated January 24, 2020 of Caesar R. Dulay, Commissioner, Bureau of Internal Revenue, Department of Finance, submitting their Consolidated Monthly Report of Disbursements (FAR 4) and Statement of Approved Budget, Utilizations, Disbursements and Balances for Trust Receipts (FAR 6) for the quarter ending December 31, 2019.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated 28 January 2020 of Minerva M. Virtucio, Vice President, Development Bank of the Philippines, informing the House of Representatives of the Status of Implementation of the “Barangay Micro Business Enterprises (BMBEs) Act of 2002” as of 31 December 2019.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Letter dated 31 January 2020 of Aurora C. Ignacio, President and Chief Executive Officer, Social Security System (SSS), providing the House of Representatives a copy of the 2019 Report of Operation and 2018 Annual Report of the SSS.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ENTERPRISES AND PRIVATIZATION

Letter dated January 31, 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 4 February 2020 of Marilou P. Mendoza, Chairperson, Tariff Commission, informing the House of Representatives that the following reports are posted on the Commission's website www.tariffcommission.gov.ph:

1. Update on the Status Report of the Agency Action Plan and Status of Implementation (AAPSI) on Audit Observation and Recommendation for CY 2018; and
2. Quarterly Financial and Physical Report of Operations for the Period October to December 2019.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated February 5, 2020 of Ernesto M. Pernia, Secretary of Socioeconomic Planning and Head, Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council (LEDAC) Secretariat, submitting the Fourth Quarter Financial and Physical Accomplishments that includes the following:

1. Statement of Appropriations, Allotments, Obligations, Disbursements and Balances (FAR No. 1, FAR No. 1-A, FAR No. 1-B); and
2. Quarterly Physical Report of Operation (BAR No. 1).

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letters dated 6 and 7 February 2020 of Janice G. Ayson-Zales, Deputy Director, Office of the General Counsel and Legal Services, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), furnishing the House of Representatives with duly certified and authenticated BSP issuances, to wit:

1. Memorandum No. M-2020-001 dated 30 January 2020;
2. Memorandum No. M-2020-002 dated 30 January 2020; and
3. Circular No. 1072 dated 31 January 2020.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

A Conspectus of the Optical Media Board 2019 Annual Report.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INFORMATION

2019 Volume III, Balitang DAR, The Official Newsletter of the Department of Agrarian Reform – Special Edition entitled “DARE2Give It All”.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON AGRARIAN REFORM

COMMITTEE REPORT

Report of the Committee on Basic Education and Culture, the Committee on Youth and Sports Development, the Committee on Ways and Means and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 232), re H.B. No. 6312, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SPORTS SYSTEM AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bills Numbered 303, 545, 2545, 2867, 2875, 3277, 4013, 4128, 4249, 4344, 4492 and 5480

Sponsors: Representatives Romulo, Martinez, Salceda and Ungab

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

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

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, may I request that the presence of this Representation's guests be acknowledged. They are Rotarians from the Republic of Korea from Rotary International District 3710: District Governor Dongho Park, Mr. Hyung Suk Kim, Mr. Sang Gu Kang, Mr. Shin Heng, President Mark Hongjae, Ms. Inye Kim, accompanied by District Governor Evette Oliván from Rotary International District 3820, District Governor Nominee Designate Gina Sy, and past District Governor Rey David from District 3780.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). To the distinguished guests of Hon. Bernadette “BH” Herrera-Dy, welcome to the House of the People. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct honor and privilege to acknowledge the presence of the guests of Cong. Luisa Lloren Cuaresma, namely: Brgy. Captain Segudio Ferrer of Barangay Bonfal West, Brgy. Captain Ronnie Acob of Barangay Magsaysay, Brgy. Captain Barnacha of Barangay Sta. Rosa, Brgy. Captain Pagtulingan of Barangay District IV, Brgy. Captain Bausel of Barangay Magapuy, Kapitan Arthur Fortes of Barangay Ipil-Cuneg, Kapitan Butali of Barangay Cabuaan, Kapitan Soliven of Barangay Bansing, and Kapitan Dumelod of Barangay Don Tomas Maddela.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). To the guests of Cong. Luisa Lloren Cuaresma of Nueva Vizcaya, the barangay officials of Nueva Vizcaya,

welcome to the House of Representatives. Naimbag nga malam kada kayo amin apo. *(Applause)* Please, thank you.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session for a few minutes in order to prepare for the incoming interpellations and other sponsorship speeches.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the session is hereby suspended for a few minutes.

It was 3:14 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:17 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

With the indulgence of the Majority Leader, the Chair would like to take this opportunity to greet one of the distinguished Members of this House a Happy Birthday. Cong. Bernadette “BH” Herrera-Dy, Happy Birthday! *(Applause)*

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, before I move to call the roll, we in the Majority, in the Rules Committee especially, would also like to greet our colleague, Cong. Bernadette “BH” Herrera-Dy, a very Happy Birthday.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Happy Birthday. *(Applause)*

ROLL CALL

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

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

The Secretary General will please call the roll.

*The Secretary General called the roll, and the result is reflected in Journal No. 45, dated February 18, 2020.**

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. Mr. Speaker, the roll call shows that 213 Members responded to the call.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). With 213 Members responding to the call and, as provided for or in accordance with our rules, those attending the meetings of the CA, they are 11; and those in the authorized Committee meetings, there are 33 Members who are there; and on official mission, there are eight of them—53 Committee meetings, they are also included. They are also deemed present in today’s session and, therefore, the Chair declares the presence of a quorum.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 78

Continuation

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 78, and that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). 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.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary status of this Bill is that we already finished and have terminated the period of amendments. So, right now, Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Second Reading for the approval of House Bill No. 78.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, as an addendum, this is principally authored by the genius of the House, Congressman Salceda.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). There is a motion for the approval on Second Reading of House Bill No. 78, authored by the very distinguished Chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, Congressman Salceda.

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

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

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

FEW MEMBERS. *Nay*.

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 78
ON SECOND READING

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

House Bill No. 78 is approved on Second Reading. (*Applause*) Congratulations!

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 5832
Continuation

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 5832, Committee Report No. 142, and that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). 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. 5832, entitled: AN ACT CREATING THE DEPARTMENT OF FILIPINOS OVERSEAS AND FOREIGN EMPLOYMENT, DEFINING ITS MANDATE, POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

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

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary status of the measure is that we are still

in the period of sponsorship and debate. I move that we recognize the Chairman of the Committee on Government Reorganization, Hon. Mario Vittorio "Marvey" A. Mariño, to continue his sponsorship of the measure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The Chairman of the Committee on Government Reorganization is recognized to continue his sponsorship of the measure.

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Like I said a while ago, the parliamentary status of the said Bill is that we are in the period of sponsorship and debate and I move that we recognize the Hon. Edcel C. Lagman for his interpellation.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The distinguished Gentleman from Bicol is hereby recognized, Honorable Lagman.

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, from Albay, because Bicol is comprised of six provinces.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The distinguished Gentleman from Albay is hereby recognized.

REP. LAGMAN. Would the distinguished Sponsor yield?

REP. MARIÑO. It would be an honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, what is the national policy on the deployment of Filipino workers overseas?

REP. MARIÑO. The policy of the government right now is to protect and help our Filipino overseas workers working abroad, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Is that all?

REP. MARIÑO. Well, as far as I know, that is the primordial policy and also to help them when they come back to the Philippines, with programs and concerning new opportunities when they return to the Philippines.

REP. LAGMAN. Has the distinguished Sponsor read the Declaration of Policies under Republic Act No.

8042 or the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995?

REP. MARIÑO. No, Mr. Speaker, but the policy of this new Bill would be similar to those mentioned by the Honorable Lagman, which is to protect the rights and promote the welfare and interests of Filipino overseas workers, to provide job opportunities here in our country, to recognize that they are the primary concern of the government, that they be empowered as far as the protection of their rights and also their skills when they return to the Philippines.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, that is not the overriding policy, but does the distinguished Sponsor have a copy of Republic Act No. 8042?

REP. MARIÑO. I will get a copy, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Meanwhile that the distinguished Sponsor is looking for a copy, may we request for a suspension of the session so that the time will not be taken against this Representation.

REP. MARIÑO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Majority Leader, please put that into a motion.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, before we grant a suspension—oh no, let us just suspend—Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The session is suspended for two long minutes.

It was 3:39 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:42 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 5832

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 5832, as contained in Committee Report No. 142.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). There is a motion to suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 5832. Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the consideration of House Bill No. 5832 is hereby suspended.

The distinguished Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. CASTELO. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Before we continue, may we acknowledge the presence in the gallery of the guests of Hon. Florida “Rida” P. Robes, Representative from the Lone District of San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan. We have with us, Mr. Speaker, the City Government Employees Association of San Jose Del Monte City, Bulacan, namely: Atty. Antonio Andres Jr., Mr. Jesus Sabit, Mr. Edcel Quiben, Ms. Ginalyn Ignacio, Ms. Margaritte Lyn Martinez, Ms. Diodalyn Quezon, Mr. George Hayagan, Ms. Helen Plandano, Mr. Randy Dela Pena, Mr. Renato Baldos, Mr. Jaypee Diaz, Mr. Michael Naig, Ms. Gemma Cruz and Ms. Shirley Mendoza.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). To the guests of Hon. Florida Robes, the City Government Employees Association of San Jose Del Monte City in Bulacan, mabuhay po kayong lahat. Welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. TADURAN. Mr. Speaker, may we also acknowledge the presence of the guests of Hon. Francisco Jose “Bingo” F. Matugas II, CPA, CESO, LLB. From the local government unit of Malimono, Surigao del Norte, we have with us Mayor Wallace R. Sinaca, Sangguniang Bayan Member Marianne Marina A. Escaño, Punong Brgy. Reynaldo T. Paño of Barangay Karihatag, Punong Brgy. Candelario Sinaca of Barangay Pili, Punong Brgy. Renato M. Borja of Barangay Can-aga, Punong Brgy. Arthyller Jun Quiño of Barangay Villariza, Punong Brgy. Adelard Mantala of Barangay Cantapoy, Punong Brgy. Mary Jane S. Capistrano of Barangay Masgad, Punong Brgy. Leda J. Lubang of Barangay Cansayong, Punong Brgy. Carlito B. Orias Sr. of Barangay Bunyasan, Punong Brgy. Jesselou V. Ortiz of Barangay Hanagdong, Punong Brgy. Romualdo B. Bibera of Barangay Cavawan, Punong Brgy. Samson O. Macarine of Barangay Tinago, Punong Brgy. Eulogio Q. Ferol Jr. of Barangay San Isidro and Punong Brgy. Anacleto A. Senaca Jr. of Barangay Binocaran.

With them are Ms. Rosalina A. Sering, Municipal Local Government Operations Officer or MLGOO; Mr. Ronald L. Dela Cerna, Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Officer or MENRO; and Mr. Artemio S. Suarez, Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Officer or MDRRMO.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). To the distinguished guests of Hon. Francisco Jose “Bingo” Matugas II, the barangay officials, Sangguniang Bayan Members, the MLGOO, the MENRO and the MDRRMO, mabuhay po kayong lahat! Welcome to the House of the People. (*Applause*) Welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. TADURAN. Mr. Speaker, may we also acknowledge the presence of the guest of Cong. Vincent Franco “Duke” D. Frasco from the Fifth District of Cebu. We have Mayor Christine Garcia Frasco of Liloan, Cebu, the wife of Cong. Duke Frasco.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Our distinguished guest, the Mayor-wife of Congressman Frasco of Cebu, welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 5925 ON SECOND READING

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, I move we consider House Bill No. 5925, contained in Committee Report No. 191, as reported out by the Committee on Cooperatives Development.

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

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 5925, entitled: AN ACT MAKING THE POSITION OF A COOPERATIVE OFFICER MANDATORY IN THE MUNICIPAL, CITY AND PROVINCIAL LEVELS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7160, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991.

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

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DBATE

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of sponsorship and debate. For this purpose, may we recognize the Hon. Estrellita B. Suansing for her sponsorship speech.

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

The distinguished Sponsor, Congresswoman Suansing, is hereby recognized to deliver her sponsorship speech.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF REP. SUANSING (E.)

REP. SUANSING (E.). Mr. Speaker, allow me to deliver my sponsorship speech. Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, as one of the principal authors of this measure, I rise today to sponsor House Bill No. 5925 which seeks to make the position of a Cooperatives Officer mandatory in the local government units. Cooperatives, as we all may know, have always played a significant role in the country’s economic growth and development. They are regarded as one of the pillars of people empowerment and are highly organized in many countries of the world, because they inspire people to actively participate and contribute to progress and development. Consequently, cooperatives aid in achieving our desired social change.

In developing countries like the Philippines, cooperatives are essential and fundamental to community development and poverty reduction. In my district, in the province of Nueva Ecija, I have been a witness to the success of many cooperatives. Truly, they have contributed to our government’s effort to uplift the living conditions of our people, especially those who are underprivileged and marginalized.

As of December 31, 2018, the Cooperative Development Authority or CDA reported that there are around 18,065 cooperatives existing throughout the country. In that same year, 1,157 new cooperatives registered to the CDA and were expected to run fervently the following year. These numbers include farmer cooperatives whose core membership includes marginalized farmers and fisherfolk.

In recent years, we are all witnesses to the continuing decline of the agricultural sector in the country, especially with the advent of globalization and free trade. In this age where countries of the world are fast becoming inter-dependent, cooperatives can factor in the vibrant economic force that will fuel the engines of economic growth and empower our people to become potent forces of our society.

Mr. Speaker, the Local Government Code of 1991 does not provide for the compulsory position of a Cooperatives Officer in our local government units. This Bill then seeks to create the position of a Cooperatives Officer in our local government units, particularly in our municipalities, cities and provinces. In this proposed measure, one of the duties of a cooperatives officer will be to develop plans and strategies

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

in consultation with the cooperatives sector. In this way, the concerns of the cooperatives in the municipalities, cities and provinces are in line with the sustainable development plans of the national government. This will then ultimately further the development of our cooperatives and consequently of our great nation.

Cooperatives are nothing more like an average business that runs and depends on its people. As such, they must operate efficiently and effectively, be properly managed and must be financially viable. Without the proper assistance from our local government units, we cannot expect our cooperatives, especially those that are just starting out, to be immediately successful without the appropriate guidance and assistance. This Bill now aims to address this problem by making the position of a Cooperatives Officer mandatory in our local government units.

Seeing that educating and training the membership of cooperatives pose quite a challenge in our country, many of our cooperatives close down after some time because of their inability to indoctrinate, educate and train their members. This inability to sustain cooperatives thus requires us to pass such a measure so that we may be able to provide more guidance and support to our cooperatives.

With this short note, Mr. Speaker, I humbly ask for the immediate passage of this Bill that I know will serve as a great help to our existing cooperatives in the country.

Thank you and magandang hapon po.

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

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

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, I move for a one-minute suspension of the session.

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

It was 3:54 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

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

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, since we have just closed the period of sponsorship and debate on House Bill No. 5925, I now move that we open the period of amendments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). There is a motion to open the period of amendments. Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is hereby approved.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, there being no Committee amendments, I move that we recognize the Hon. Xavier Jesus D. Romualdo for his individual amendment.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The distinguished Gentleman from Camiguin, the Honorable Romualdo, is hereby recognized.

INDIVIDUAL AMENDMENTS

REP. ROMUALDO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we just like to propose an amendment to the Bill. On page 3, line 12, we propose to delete the word "appointment" and replace it with the word POSITION. That is our proposed amendment, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). What is the pleasure of the distinguished Sponsor?

REP. SUANSING (E.). I accept, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The amendment is hereby accepted. The Majority Leader will kindly put that into a motion.

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, since the Sponsor has accepted the amendment of the Honorable Romualdo, I move that we approve the amendment.

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

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, there being no more individual amendments, I move that we now close the period of amendments.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session for a minute.

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

It was 3:58 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:58 p.m., the session was resumed with Deputy Speaker Prospero A. Pichay Jr. presiding.

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

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Honorable Romualdo.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). Congressman Romualdo is recognized.

INDIVIDUAL AMENDMENTS

Continuation

REP. ROMUALDO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have just one more amendment, and this is with regard to the title of the measure.

We propose to add the letter "S" after the word "COOPERATIVE" and so the title will now read as follows: AN ACT MAKING THE POSITION OF A COOPERATIVE(S) OFFICER MANDATORY IN THE MUNICIPAL, CITY AND PROVINCIAL LEVELS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7160, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). Is the proposed amendment acceptable to the Sponsor?

REP. SUANSING (E.). I accept, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, since the distinguished Sponsor has accepted the proposed amendment, I move that we approve the amendment.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, again, since there are no more amendments, I move that we close the period of amendments.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). There is a motion to close the period of amendments.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary status of this Bill is that we already closed the period of sponsorship and debate, as well as the period of amendments.

Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on House Bill No. 5925 on Second Reading.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). There is a motion to put it on vote for Second Reading.

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

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). As many as are in favor of House Bill No. 5925, as amended, please say *Aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

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

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 5925, AS AMENDED, ON SECOND READING

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

House Bill No. 5925, as amended, is approved on Second Reading.

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

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

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, I

move that we suspend the session for a minute in order to give the next Sponsor time to go to the podium.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). One-minute suspension.

It was 4:01 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:04 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. TADURAN. Mr. Speaker, may we acknowledge the presence of the guests of Hon. Paolo Z. Duterte, our Deputy Speaker. They are the Brgy. Captains of the First Congressional District of Davao City: Barangay Captains Ariel Lagmay, Lito Maquiling, Nestor Cirunay, Jupiter Jorgio, Arnel Policarpio, Erlan Guevara, Fidelino Almirante, Mark Anthony Cayetano, Rolando Bantayan, Joel Landero Sr., Eddie Ilao, Pacito Cañete, Edmundo Altizo Sr., Gary Barriga, Benedicto Ramento Jr., George Balite, Jessie Mar Culaste and Jaime Gorre.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). The presence of the Barangay Captains of the First District of Davao City is hereby acknowledged. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. TADURAN. Mr. Speaker, may we also acknowledge the presence of the guests of Hon. Sarah Jane I. Elago, Representative of KABATAAN Party-List. They are the workers of Cosmic Enterprises Inc. Independent Labor Union – Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino, headed by Mr. Rico Marcellana, Amy Paluga Maguate, Chadli Sadorra, Jerrynold Daigo, Jojie Sinugbojan, Roy Bacalso, Ponciano Cabanag, Nenita Montallana, Eustiquio Polinar, and Mr. Gilbert Benlot.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). The presence of the guests of Cong. Sarah Elago is hereby acknowledged. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. TADURAN. Mr. Speaker, may we also acknowledge the presence of the guests of Hon. Jose L. Atienza Jr. of BUHAY Party-List. They are the Senior High School students of Kids World Christian Academy,

under Grades 11 and 12: Mr. Rogelio Caidic, Senior High School Teacher; and Pastor Menard Amoroso, School Director and owner.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. TADURAN. Mr. Speaker, may we also acknowledge the presence of the guests of Hon. Luisa Lloren Cuaresma of the Lone District of Nueva Vizcaya. They are the barangay officials of the municipality of Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya, headed by Barangay Captain Segudio Ferrer, Barangay Captains Ronnie Acob, Rodinante Barnacha, Benjamin Pagtulingan, Efren Bausel, Arthur Fortes, Jerry Butali, Wilfredo Soliven and Amado Dumelod.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). The presence of the guests of Congresswoman Cuaresma is hereby acknowledged. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

The Majority Leader is recognized.

OMNIBUS CONSIDERATION OF HOUSE BILLS ON SECOND READING

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, under the Calendar of Business for Thursday and Friday, and pursuant to our rules, allow me to put forth an omnibus motion for the consideration of the following measures:

1. House Bill No. 1079, contained in Committee Report No. 180;
2. House Bill No. 5889, contained in Committee Report No. 182;
3. House Bill No. 497, contained in Committee Report No. 183;
4. House Bill No. 5890, contained in Committee Report No. 184;
5. House Bill No. 5891, contained in Committee Report No. 185;
6. House Bill No. 5892, contained in Committee Report No. 186;
7. House Bill No. 5919, contained in Committee Report No. 188;
8. House Bill No. 5920, contained in Committee Report No. 189;
9. House Bill No. 5921, contained in Committee Report No. 190;
10. House Bill No. 1497, contained in Committee Report No. 192;
11. House Bill No. 656, contained in Committee Report No. 193;
12. House Bill No. 5944, contained in Committee Report No. 194;

13. House Bill No. 5945, contained in Committee Report No. 195;

14. House Bill No. 5955, contained in Committee Report No. 196;

15. House Bill No. 6030, contained in Committee Report No. 201;

16. House Bill No. 6035, contained in Committee Report No. 202;

17. House Bill No. 6036, contained in Committee Report No. 203;

18. House Bill No. 6087, contained in Committee Report No. 205;

19. House Bill No. 6088, contained in Committee Report No. 206; and

20. House Bill No. 6144, contained in Committee Report No. 215.

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker I move that we consider the respective Explanatory Notes of the bills as the sponsorship speeches on the said measures, and close the period of sponsorship and debate, there being no Member who wishes to interpellate on or speak against the said local bills.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of amendments and approve the Committee amendments, if any, as contained in the respective Committee reports of the aforementioned bills.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, there being no individual amendment, I move that we terminate the period of amendments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). There is a motion to terminate the period of amendments.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve on Second Reading the bills earlier mentioned.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). As many as are in favor of the approval of the bills enumerated in the omnibus motion, please say *Aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

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

OMNIBUS APPROVAL OF LOCAL BILLS ON SECOND READING

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

The bills enumerated in the omnibus motion are hereby approved on Second Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 5832

Continuation

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 5832, under Committee Report No. 142, and that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). 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. 5832, entitled: AN ACT CREATING THE DEPARTMENT OF FILIPINOS OVERSEAS AND FOREIGN EMPLOYMENT, DEFINING ITS MANDATE, POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary status of the Bill is that we are currently in the period of sponsorship and debate. To continue his sponsorship of the measure, I move that the Chairman of the Committee on Government Reorganization, Rep. Mario Vittorio "Marvey" A. Mariño, be recognized. To continue his interpellation, I likewise move that the Gentleman from the First District of Albay, Rep. Edcel C. Lagman, be recognized.

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

Representative Mariño is hereby recognized. To interpellate, Cong. Edcel Lagman is recognized. Please proceed.

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

May we know from the distinguished Sponsor whether he now has a copy of Republic Act No. 8042 or the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995.

REP. MARIÑO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I do have a copy of RA No. 8042, the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995.

REP. LAGMAN. I asked this question relative to Republic Act No. 8042 because it is a basic statute determinative of the creation of the Department of Filipinos Overseas and Foreign Employment. May I direct the distinguished Sponsor to Section 2(c) of the Declaration of Policies which indelibly pronounces the national policy on the deployment of Filipino workers overseas.

For the record, may we request the distinguished Sponsor to read this particular Section 2(c) on the Declaration of Policies under Republic Act No. 8042.

REP. MARIÑO. Mr. Speaker, letter c of Section 2, under the Declaration of Policies, states:

While recognizing the significant contribution of Filipino migrant workers to the national economy through their foreign exchange remittances, the State does not promote overseas employment as a means to sustain economic growth and achieve national development. The existence of the overseas employment program rests solely on the assurance that the dignity and fundamental human rights and freedoms of the Filipino citizen shall not, at any time, be compromised or violated. The State, therefore, shall continuously create local employment opportunities and promote the equitable distribution of wealth and the benefits of development.

REP. LAGMAN. In essence, what this Declaration of Policy would say is that the export of Filipino manpower is not a continuing policy for two reasons. One, “the State does not promote overseas employment as a means to sustain economic growth and achieve national development”; and two, the State “shall continuously create local employment opportunities

and promote the equitable distribution of wealth and the benefits of development.” Does the distinguished Sponsor concur with this restatement of the essence of the national policy?

REP. MARIÑO. I agree with the Gentleman from Albay, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. May we know whether House Bill No. 5832 has any reference to this national policy.

REP. MARIÑO. Mr. Speaker, the creation of this new Department is basically about the structure of how the agencies will be consolidated into one Department so that the Filipino overseas workers will only have to go through one agency in terms of their needs as far as their protection and also all the other things that they are requesting. The promotion of employment—the overseas employment—is not actually the priority of the agency.

In fact, the new Department to be created has a sunset provision in which 10 years to be reviewed by Congress as far as its—that there is a mandatory review of this Department in case this is created under Section 25. The reality is, it is a need right now by our overseas Filipino workers because of the number of overseas workers that we have. But times could change that it might no longer be or it might be reviewed, as I have said, 10 years from now or 10 years from its effectivity.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, that answer unfortunately does not respond to my question. My question is: Is the national policy stated in Republic Act No. 8042 reflected in House Bill No. 5832, creating the Department of Filipinos Overseas and Foreign Employment?

REP. MARIÑO. Well, Mr. Speaker, the policy does not change as far as the creation of jobs here locally is concerned. So, it does not change the policy of our national government. We are only responding to the need of our overseas Filipino workers as far as the creation of this Department is concerned.

REP. LAGMAN. What does the policy declaration of House Bill No. 5832 provide?

REP. MARIÑO. In Section 2(c), under the Declaration of Policy, which I will read:

While recognizing the significant contribution of Filipinos overseas, including Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), to the national economy through their foreign exchange remittances and investments, the State does not promote overseas employment

as a means to sustain economic growth and achieve national development. The State's overseas employment program rests solely on the assurance that the dignity and human rights of OFWs shall neither be compromised nor violated. The State, therefore, shall continuously create local employment opportunities and promote the equitable distribution of wealth and the benefits of development. Towards this end, the State shall continually aim to make overseas employment a choice and not a necessity for every Filipino citizen.

REP. LAGMAN. In other words, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, this Bill under consideration practically repeats verbatim the national policy expressed under Republic Act No. 8042. Is that correct?

REP. MARIÑO. That is correct, Mr. Speaker. Like I said, there were some similarities as far as the policy is concerned, and it is the same policy. The only thing this House Bill No. 5832 will do is it will create a structure in which the agency will exist and all the other bureaus will be merged into one for the benefit of our OFWs. It is also the request of our OFWs by and large.

REP. LAGMAN. Just to express what is obvious, may I quote the Declaration of Policy under the proposed House Bill No. 5832: one, "The State does not promote overseas employment as a means to sustain economic growth and achieve national development," and two, "The State, therefore, shall continuously create local employment opportunities and promote equitable distribution of wealth and the benefits of development."

These were copied verbatim from the declaration of policy under Republic Act No. 8042. Is that correct?

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

REP. LAGMAN. This Bill, House Bill No. 5832, proposes the creation of five Undersecretaries. Is that correct?

REP. MARIÑO. At least five, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. But the five Undersecretaries are enumerated in the Bill.

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

REP. LAGMAN. May we know whether, consistent with the national policy already stated by the distinguished Sponsor, there is an Undersecretary for the generation of domestic employment?

REP. MARIÑO. There is no Undersecretary particularly for domestic employment.

REP. LAGMAN. Despite the national policy that the State shall continuously create local employment opportunities, and promote equitable employment, equitable distribution of wealth and the benefits of development, there is no Undersecretary for the generation of domestic employment.

Now, is there an Undersecretary for OFW reintegration?

REP. MARIÑO. Mr. Speaker, that would be under the attached agency which is the OWWA. So, there is no Undersecretary for ...

REP. LAGMAN. No, my question is, is there an Undersecretary?

REP. MARIÑO. That is also an Undersecretary position, but it is with an attached agency, Mr. Speaker,

REP. LAGMAN. It is only an attached agency. The proposed Department will have administrative jurisdiction, but no control over OWWA.

My question is, is there an Undersecretary for the reintegration of OFWs?

REP. MARIÑO. There is none, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. There is none.

REP. MARIÑO. It would still be under the function of the OWWA, which has an Undersecretary position.

REP. LAGMAN. Now, why is it that despite the declaration of policy that the export of Filipino manpower is not a continuing policy of the government, there is no Undersecretary for generation of domestic employment, as well as an Undersecretary specifically for the reintegration of OFWs? Is this designed or an oversight?

REP. MARIÑO. Mr. Speaker, the OWWA has the primary responsibility.

REP. LAGMAN. The OWWA has very different and various objectives and functions, but an Undersecretary for OFW integration has a very specific function. Why is it that there is no such Undersecretary proposed in the Bill, and also an Undersecretary for the generation of domestic employment, considering that the national policy is that the export of Filipino manpower overseas is not a continuing policy?

REP. MARIÑO. The creation of Undersecretaries is not limited to five Undersecretaries, Mr. Speaker. In fact, it can also be created later on when the agency is created, but the setup right now is that OWWA is the attached agency and that, too, will be reviewed. Under this law, it will also be reviewed and it could be part of the Department later, as included in the provisions of this House Bill.

REP. LAGMAN. My question is, the Bill enumerates five Undersecretaries. Why is it that very important positions of Undersecretaries consistent with the national policy are not included in the Bill?

REP. MARIÑO. It was not included, like I said, Mr. Speaker, because the OWWA has the primary responsibility as far as that reintegration is concerned, but it does not prevent the agency from creating another Undersecretary for the purpose of the creation of this Department. And due to budgetary concerns, it was not created. It did not create a specific Undersecretary like I mentioned, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. May we know whether under the Charter of OWWA, one of its principal functions is the reintegration of OFWs? Kindly go over the Charter of OWWA.

REP. MARIÑO. Under the OWWA Charter, the following is stated:

SEC. 35. Benefits and Services to OFWs. (a) Reintegration of OFWs. – The reintegration of OFWs, taking into consideration the needs of women migrant workers, shall be one of the core programs of the OWWA. In this regard, and for purposes of policy and program coordination, the National Reintegration Center for OFWs created under Republic Act No. 10022 shall be an attached office of the OWWA.

So, it is included as far as the Benefits and Services to OFWs section of that OWWA Charter is concerned, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. But that is not the only function of OWWA, is it?

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

REP. LAGMAN. Now, in what part of the Bill or provision of the Bill is the OWWA Administrator considered as an Undersecretary of the Department of Filipinos Overseas and Foreign Employment?

REP. MARIÑO. Mr. Speaker, it is not actually stated in this Bill, but since he is under the administrative control of the Cabinet Secretary, that would be similar to an Undersecretary position.

REP. LAGMAN. What is not stated in the Bill is not stated at all. So, we could not submit that the OWWA Administrator is equivalent to an Undersecretary for OFW integration.

Now, let me go to another function of the OWWA. Is the OWWA charged with the generation of the domestic employment under its Charter?

REP. MARIÑO. No, Mr. Speaker, only...

REP. LAGMAN. There is none.

REP. MARIÑO. ... overseas Filipino workers.

REP. LAGMAN. So, there is a need for an Undersecretary for the generation of domestic employment because that is the national policy. Since the export of Filipino manpower is not a continuing policy, both Republic Act No. 8042, as well as House Bill No. 5832 underscore that “the State shall continuously create local employment opportunities” and that is not reflected in the Bill with respect to the creation of positions for Undersecretaries. So, we are not giving meaning to the policy spelled out in R.A. No. 8042, as well as in House Bill No. 5832. Is that a correct statement?

REP. MARIÑO. Mr. Speaker, the domestic workers, if they are considered as reintegrated or repatriated here, that would be under the job responsibility of the DOLE. That is why it was specified that after reintegration and repatriation, local employment will be under the DOLE. That is the main core function of the DOLE.

REP. LAGMAN. But with the creation of the Department of Filipinos Overseas and Foreign Employment, the functions of the DOLE with respect to migrant workers are assumed by the proposed Department. Is that correct?

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

REP. LAGMAN. So, we should not be referring to DOLE anymore because the functions of the DOLE with respect to OFWs will be assumed by the new Department.

REP. MARIÑO. That is correct, Mr. Speaker. Once they are reintegrated, DOLE will assume the jurisdiction over those domestic workers.

REP. LAGMAN. May we know whether the distinguished Sponsor has a copy of the Philippine Development Plan for 2017 to 2022?

REP. MARIÑO. One-minute, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. May I request for a suspension of the session so that my time will not be consumed.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. DE VENECIA. We move to suspend the session, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). The session is suspended for one minute.

It was 4:33 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:37 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. CRISOLOGO. Mr. Speaker, may we acknowledge the presence of the guests of our Deputy Speaker, Hon. Michael L. Romero, PhD. The guests are from the Australian Embassy: Ms. Fleur Calcutt, Second Secretary, Embassy's Political Officer, involved in work relating to international and local politics; and Ms. Amanda Fedelino, Researcher Officer of the Embassy. May we acknowledge their presence, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). Please stand up. *(Applause)* The presence of the guests of Cong. Michael Romero is acknowledged.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. CRISOLOGO. Mr. Speaker, also with us today are the guests of the honorable Representative from the PHILRECA Party-List, Hon. Presley C. De Jesus. They are the guests from the electric cooperative from Samar, SAMELCO II, namely: Ms. Gilda Lause, Ulysses M. Abasolo, Mercy Gaddi Caboboy, Marrychan Pimentel, Rowehla Mendova and Dolores Cayas.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). Kindly stand up. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. TADURAN. Mr. Speaker, may we acknowledge the presence of the guests of Hon. Eric Go Yap of the

ACT-CIS Party-List. Cong. Eric Yap is also the Legislative Caretaker of the Lone District of Benguet. The guests are the following: Mayor Faustino Aquisan of Kabayan, Benguet; Barangay Captains and SB members of Kabayan, Benguet. From the municipality of Kabayan, Benguet, we have Vice Mayor Basilio Louie Daoal; Chief of Police Peter D. Camsol Jr. We also have the following SB members: Councilor Minas, Councilor Ngensayan, Councilor Badival, Councilor Baskial, Councilor Lamsis; and the Barangay Captains headed by Roy Tomilas, Pelino Bugnay, Efren Tellama, Mike Botangen, Lope Atas, Eric Postino, Agosto Tasing, Amy Belting, Sofronio Bayas, Pio Calansi, Sandy Wais, and Mr. Ervin Busilan.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 5832

Continuation

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. BARONDA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 5832, under Committee Report No. 142.

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

REP. BARONDA. Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary status is that we are now in the period of sponsorship and debate. Is the Sponsor ready?

REP. MARIÑO. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). Yes. Cong. Edcel C. Lagman, please proceed with your interpellation.

REP. LAGMAN. May we know whether the distinguished Sponsor has a copy now of the Philippine Development Plan for 2017-2022 which is prepared principally by NEDA and has the imprimatur of the President of the Republic?

REP. MARIÑO. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. What does the Philippine Development Plan or PDP 2017-2022 say about the creation of a Department of Filipinos Overseas and Foreign Employment?

REP. MARIÑO. It is not specifically noted in this Philippine Development Plan, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. If it is not specifically noted, is it impliedly noted?

REP. MARIÑO. It is not included here as far as I know, Mr. Speaker. It only mentions certain strategies to be achieved by 2022, which include: the Philippines will have a high level of human development by 2022; unemployment rate will decline from 5.5 percent to 3.5 percent in 2022; there will be a greater trust in government and in society; individuals and communities will be more resilient; and Filipinos will have a greater drive for innovation. Those are the strategies included in the plan.

REP. LAGMAN. And the three major strategies for Filipinos overseas and migrant workers do not include the establishment or creation of a Department of Filipinos Overseas and Foreign Employment. Is that correct?

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

REP. LAGMAN. The national policy that the export of Filipino manpower is not continuing and that the State does not promote it as a means to sustain economic growth and to achieve national development is consistent with the origin of the export of Filipino manpower. Is that correct?

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

REP. LAGMAN. Then, what is the origin of the export of Filipino manpower overseas?

REP. MARIÑO. As far as I know, Mr. Speaker, the Filipinos have been working abroad even in the 1950s, Mr. Speaker. As far as, for example, working in Hawaii, like working in the agricultural farms in Hawaii, and also it was in the 1960s and the 1970s which we had a lot of skilled Filipinos who went abroad mainly to the United States, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, I am not talking of the sporadic deployment of Filipino manpower abroad, because if we do that, we can even go back to the galleon trade which was the start of the placement of Filipinos abroad. What I am asking about is the advent of this policy during the time of President Marcos. It was just a stopgap measure to give opportunities for jobless Filipinos to seek employment abroad and to cash in on petrodollars awash in the Middle East. Is that correct?

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

REP. LAGMAN. So, it was a stopgap measure, not a permanent measure. But the establishment of

a Department of Filipinos Overseas and Foreign Employment would further incentivize labor migration. Is that correct?

REP. MARIÑO. Mr. Speaker, I think we are just responding to the present situation in which we have a lot of overseas Filipino workers, but again, it is not the policy of the government to send the Filipinos abroad, but it is their right to work abroad. It is just so that we have a lot of Filipinos, 10 million Filipinos, working abroad, so it is our duty to take care of these Filipinos working abroad.

In fact, this creation of the Department has a limited time, in which case, 10 years. It is not really to promote overseas workers. For as long as we are working on job creation in our economy locally, there is a chance that we do not have to send Filipinos abroad, specifically, personally, the domestic helpers working abroad, should not be a priority.

In this case, it is not really a policy of the government. It is just a response to the clamor of our kababayan, in which case, they voiced it out to the President, and not only to the President, most of us here have constituents voicing out the creation of this Department.

So, it is the voice of the people that is the main reason why we are creating this Department. It is not in the plan of the national government, but it is in the clamor of our OFWs that this creation will be based on. And, in fact, since the Sixteenth Congress, this has been a proposal and when President Duterte became President, it was the primary request of the President specifically during the SONA, as a clamor also of our Filipino workers abroad and their families, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Mr. Speaker, would I kindly request the distinguished Sponsor to shorten his answers because my time is being eroded.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). The Sponsor is hereby directed to be brief with his answers.

REP. MARIÑO. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Is the distinguished Sponsor saying that the establishment of this new Department will disincentivize labor migration?

REP. MARIÑO. No, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. It will not. On the contrary, it will incentivize labor migration.

Now, is the creation of this new Department a campaign promise of the incumbent President?

REP. MARIÑO. It was not a campaign promise since he was not really running for election but it is a ...

REP. LAGMAN. No, when he ran for President, did he not promise that in his incumbency, to address the needs of OFWs that a Department of Overseas Filipinos and Foreign Employment will be created?

REP. MARIÑO. I think I remember that during the SONA, ...

REP. LAGMAN. That was a promise.

REP. MARIÑO. ... he mentioned it, yes.

REP. LAGMAN. That was a promise.

REP. MARIÑO. Mr. Speaker, yes.

REP. LAGMAN. And he reiterated that in his SONA before the Congress.

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

REP. LAGMAN. That is correct.

Now, has the distinguished Sponsor gone over the article of then Professor Pernia, now the Secretary of NEDA, with respect to the detriments of labor migration?

REP. MARIÑO. No, Mr. Speaker. May I be refreshed what article it is.

REP. LAGMAN. If we have time, most probably we will discuss that article further, but I am running out of time. Now, since President Marcos institutionalized labor migration under the Labor Code of 1974, has there been any President after him who has detoured from such policy?

REP. MARIÑO. Not that I remember, Mr. Speaker. Only now.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay. But in the case of President Corazon Aquino, she resumed the licensing of overseas employment agencies. Is that correct?

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

REP. LAGMAN. For the first time, the Filipino overseas contract workers were heralded as “bagong bayani.” Is that correct?

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

REP. LAGMAN. What do we understand from the affiliation that OFWs are “bagong bayani”?

REP. MARIÑO. Well, number one, the value of contribution to our economy, which are the remittances, which amount to around US\$32 billion in 2018 and US\$34 billion in 2019. Alam naman po natin na ang ibig sabihin ng bayani ay sila ang nagtatrabaho abroad, nagpapakahirap upang maitaguyod ang kanilang mga pamilya. So, that is what I understand why OFWs are regarded as “bagong bayani.”

REP. LAGMAN. Well, actually, it is the affirmation of the Filipino concept of the sufferings and sacrifices of a bayani. Is that correct?

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

REP. LAGMAN. And, truly, these OFWs are sacrificing and suffering in their host countries. Is that correct?

REP. MARIÑO. Yes, they are sacrificing, but not all are suffering, Mr. Speaker, because I also know some great stories about OFWs—workers and also migrants who have been successful.

REP. LAGMAN. They are more the exceptions than the rule. Well, let us go to the time of President Fidel Ramos. The export of Filipino manpower continued during that time. Is that correct?

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

REP. LAGMAN. Although he is credited with the enactment of Republic Act No. 88042. Is that correct?

REP. MARIÑO. Eight-eight-zero-four-two, Mr. Speaker?

REP. LAGMAN. Yes. During the time of President Joseph Estrada, again, there was the continuous exodus of Filipino workers abroad. Is that correct?

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

REP. LAGMAN. Now, let us go to the incumbency of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. How would you describe the Presidential policies on OFWs during the time of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo?

REP. MARIÑO. It was a continuation of the previous policies as far as I can remember, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Yes. It was not really just a continuation. There was an aggressive promotion of overseas employment to prop up the economy. In fact, included in the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan of 2004 to 2010 is the goal of sending one million overseas workers every year. Is that correct?

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

REP. LAGMAN. She also labeled domestic workers abroad as “supermates.” Is that correct?

REP. MARIÑO. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. She likened OFWs to expats in their host countries. Is that correct?

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

REP. LAGMAN. She issued Proclamation No. 76, series of 2001, declaring the year 2002 as the year of the overseas employment providers or the employment agencies, despite the fact that there were so many violations committed by these agencies including the exaction of exorbitant fees. Is that correct?

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

REP. LAGMAN. And finally during her time, she called the OFWs the “backbone of the new global workforce” and our “greatest export.” Is that correct?

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

REP. LAGMAN. All of these would only show that there was a departure from this stopgap policy of exporting Filipino labor. During the time of President Aquino III, what was the situation with respect to migrant workers?

REP. MARIÑO. During the time of President Noynoy Aquino, it was still a continuation of the same policy, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. But was there an attempt to depart from that policy of foreign employment of Filipino workers?

REP. MARIÑO. I do not remember any specific policy, Mr. Speaker. But I guess the counter to that is the generation of local employment in the local economy.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, let me put this on record that President Aquino III expressed his goal of moving “from a government that treats its people as an export commodity and as a means to foreign exchange, disregarding the social cost to Filipino families to a government that creates jobs at home so that working abroad will be a choice rather than a necessity; and when its citizens do choose to become OFWs, their welfare and protection will still be the government’s priority.” Do you remember that statement of President Aquino III?

REP. MARIÑO. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. However, the fact is, even with this attempt to depart, there was a continuing flow of migrant labor of the Philippines to almost 200 states and territories worldwide. Is that correct?

REP. MARIÑO. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Now, let us go to the incumbent President Rodrigo Duterte. As we have already said and as admitted by the distinguished Sponsor, one of his campaign promises was the creation of the Department of OFWs. Is that correct?

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

REP. LAGMAN. And this Bill is supposed to be in compliance with that promise. Is that correct?

REP. MARIÑO. Yes, as well as a need, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. He also endorsed the setting-up of one-stop service centers at the POEA to expedite the documentation and processing of applicants for overseas employment. Is that correct?

REP. MARIÑO. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. And finally, this is the intended enactment of the Department of Filipinos Overseas and Foreign Employment. Is that correct?

REP. MARIÑO. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. In other words, all of the Presidents after Marcos virtually did not depart from the export of foreign labor, despite the fact that it started as a stopgap measure, and despite the fact that a national policy was provided for this in Republic Act No. 8042. Is that correct?

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

REP. LAGMAN. Now, the creation of this Department should not be in a vacuum. We should depend on data and statistics. I heard several times the distinguished Sponsor saying that there are currently 10 million OFWs across the world. Is that correct?

REP. MARIÑO. Approximately, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Approximately. When you say 10 million, these 10 million are currently employed abroad.

REP. MARIÑO. Some of them are permanently staying in other countries.

REP. LAGMAN. In other words, these 10 million Filipinos are not limited to OFWs, but they include Filipinos overseas who are permanently residing abroad or even have changed their nationality from Filipino to foreign citizenship. Is that correct?

REP. MARIÑO. That is correct, Mr. Speaker. In fact, the breakdown is 48 percent permanent, 41 percent temporary, and 11 percent irregular.

REP. LAGMAN. Now, in absolute figures more or less, out of the 10 million, how many in 2019 were OFWs?

REP. MARIÑO. All of those are OFWs, Mr. Speaker, the 10,000,238.

REP. LAGMAN. So, this is different from your previous answer, distinguished Sponsor, that the 10 million would consist of OFWs and Filipinos overseas because there is a distinction between the two.

Now, let me just be clear about this: how many in 2019 were OFWs or contract workers?

REP. MARIÑO. Mr. Speaker, the documented deployment for 2017 is 2,044,877; for 2018, it is 2,097,589. This is the overseas employment statistics, annual deployment.

REP. LAGMAN. In other words, when we talk of 10 million, that is a gross approximation, because the true data imply that it is much less than 10 million. As the distinguished Sponsor has admitted, in 2017 and 2018, the number of OFWs did not reach 3 million. It was in the vicinity of over 2 million only. Is that correct?

REP. MARIÑO. That is correct, Mr. Speaker. But the purpose of this Bill is also to address all the overseas Filipinos including the immigrants from abroad for them to return to this country or also invest in our country. So, the creation of this Department will also address all the 10 million overseas Filipino workers.

REP. LAGMAN. Now, historically, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, with respect to previous bills filed in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Congresses, what was the thrust of the bills? Was it not the creation of a Department for OFWs?

REP. MARIÑO. I remember Seventeenth Congress, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. How about in the current

Congress? What was the principal purpose of the various bills? The creation of the Department for OFWs or for all Filipinos overseas?

REP. MARIÑO. Basically, it is for OFWs but it includes all Filipinos overseas as far as the scope of the Department will be later on.

REP. LAGMAN. I was reviewing the bills filed in the Eighteenth Congress. Majority of the Bills proposed the creation of the Department of OFWs. Is that correct?

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

REP. LAGMAN. But eventually what was reported out by the Committee was to cover all Filipinos abroad including both Filipinos overseas as well as OFWs. Is that correct?

REP. MARIÑO. That is correct, Mr. Speaker, because the immigrants are already well to do...

REP. LAGMAN. But with respect to Filipinos overseas who are not contract workers, is it not that they are already subject to the jurisdiction of the Department of Foreign Affairs?

REP. MARIÑO. As of now, yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Yes, they are. They are.

REP. MARIÑO. That is why we are creating this Department so that they will be covered under this Department.

REP. LAGMAN. And there is a feeling that the coverage of the proposed Department was increased to cover all Filipinos abroad. Is that to justify further the creation of this Department because the clientele would be more than the number of overseas Filipino workers because they would now include all Filipinos abroad?

REP. MARIÑO. No, Mr. Speaker, in fact, OWWA members as of right now, active and inactive, already amount to 8.6 million. So, based on that, as of December 2019, we have a lot of constituents clamoring for the creation of the Department. In fact, that was the result of our Committee hearings when it was held.

REP. LAGMAN. Can we possibly hear again the figures on how many OFWs are members of OWWA?

REP. MARIÑO. Members of OWWA, active and inactive, is 8.6 million.

REP. LAGMAN. And, what is the basis of that figure?

REP. MARIÑO. These are from OWWA records.

REP. LAGMAN. OWWA.

Now, if there were about 2.3 million overseas Filipinos—no, Filipino contract workers or OFWs in 2018, what is the latest figure on the number of OFWs in 2019? Do you have that figure or is there no figure yet disclosed?

REP. MARIÑO. The active OWWA members as of right now amount to 1.375 million.

REP. LAGMAN. But, you could not depend, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, on the figures of OWWA because the figures of OWWA would include both current OFWs employed abroad and those who have already returned. So, that will not give us the proper perspective.

My question is, in 2019, how many OFWs are abroad compared to the 2.3 million in 2018 as per the report of the POEA or the concerned government agency?

REP. MARIÑO. Mr. Speaker, I only have the data for 2019 up to the first semester which amount to ...

REP. LAGMAN. And what is the data?

REP. MARIÑO. 1.128 million.

REP. LAGMAN. So, it is much less than the alleged 10 million because, these 10 million would include all other Filipinos abroad, known as the Filipinos overseas and they will also include the collation of all overseas Filipino workers, both currently employed and those who have already returned. So, let us not try to magnify the figure to justify the creation of this agency.

Now, may we know from the distinguished Sponsor, based on their records, the various reasons why Filipinos work overseas?

REP. MARIÑO. Number one is economic reason or job employment, among others, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, what are the others?

REP. MARIÑO. Well, most of our Filipino workers, they always think that it is always greener on the other side of, if they work abroad. But, that is not always the case. In fact, I have spoken to other businessmen that there is already a shortage of workers here in our own country. So, they are appealing to some of our OFWs to return and work here instead.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay. Well, I have counted eight major reasons why Filipinos work overseas. The distinguished Sponsor is correct, first and foremost is the unstable economic situation in the Philippines. Is that correct?

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

REP. LAGMAN. Will the Department of Filipinos Overseas and Foreign Employment solve this problem and remove this reason for overseas employment?

REP. MARIÑO. I am not sure if it will totally solve the problem, but it will very well be part of the solution because before they can be deployed, there is already a program for them to let them know about their rights, and what is going to happen abroad. And also, we are also including in this Department the appeal to all the other immigrants abroad who are also doing well. So, this Department will not 100 percent solve the situation, but it will be faster for our Filipinos to learn more about what is going to happen to them when they return here in our country because there is information dissemination. Also, part of the job of this Department is to work on early reintegration of our OFWs.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, I would submit that the creation of this new Department will not solve this economic problem because this Department is not anchored on the formulation and implementation of economic policies.

Another reason why Filipinos work overseas is the high unemployment rate in the country. Is that correct?

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

REP. LAGMAN. What is the latest figure on the unemployment rate and the underemployment rate in the Philippines?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). Honorable Lagman, kindly wind up your interpellation.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, as a matter of fact, I would be asking for a suspension because ...

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). You are not yet satisfied with the answers.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, definitely, most of the answers are not responsive to my question.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). Can you make that into a motion, so that we can suspend?

REP. LAGMAN. I move that the interpellation of this Representation be suspended for the time being so that I could confer with the distinguished Sponsor, and may I request for an additional 30 minutes to wind up my interpellation.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). Yes. There is a motion. Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved. The session is suspended.

It was 5:17 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

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

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 5832

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 5832.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. CRISOLOGO. Mr. Speaker, again, may we acknowledge the presence of the guests of Deputy Speaker Michael L. Romero, PhD and Rep. Enrico A. Pineda from the Australian Embassy, who were not yet around when we were ready to acknowledge them earlier. Our guests from the Australian Embassy, Ms. Fleur Calcutt and Ms. Amanda Fedelino.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). Please rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*) Thank you.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session.

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

It was 5:20 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:21 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REFERRAL OF HOUSE RESOLUTIONS ON INQUIRIES IN AID OF LEGISLATION

REP. DE VENECIA. Mr. Speaker, in accordance with our Rules Governing Inquiries in Aid of Legislation, I move that we refer the following House resolutions to the appropriate Committees:

1. House Resolution No. 641, to the Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs;
2. House Resolution No. 642, to the Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs;
3. House Resolution No. 643, to the Committee on Disaster Management;
4. House Resolution No. 644, to the Committee on Transportation;
5. House Resolution No. 646, to the Committee on Public Works and Highways;
6. House Resolution No. 647, to the Committee on Transportation;
7. House Resolution No. 649, to the Committee on Transportation;
8. House Resolution No. 652, to the Committee on Population and Family Relations;
9. House Resolution No. 653, to the Committee on Health;
10. House Resolution No. 656, to the Special Committee on Senior Citizens;
11. House Resolution No. 664, to the Committee on Basic Education and Culture;
12. House Resolution No. 691, to the Committee on Higher and Technical Education;
13. House Resolution No. 693, to the Committee on Higher and Technical Education;
14. House Resolution No. 694, to the Committee on Health;
15. House Resolution No. 695, to the Committees on Good Government and Public Accountability, and on Public Accounts;
16. House Resolution No. 699, to the Committee on Disaster Management;
17. House Resolution No. 704, to the Committee on Public Works and Highways; and
18. House Resolution No. 705, to the Committee on Agriculture and Food.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

REP. DE VENEZIA. Mr. Speaker, there being no other agenda to be tackled in today's session, I move that we adjourn until tomorrow, February 19, 2020, Wednesday, at three o'clock in the afternoon.

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

The session is adjourned until tomorrow, February 19, 2020, Wednesday, at three o'clock in the afternoon.

It was 5:23 p.m.