



Congressional Record

PLENARY PROCEEDINGS OF THE 18th CONGRESS, FIRST REGULAR SESSION

House of Representatives

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Tuesday, March 3, 2020

No. 50

CALL TO ORDER

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

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

PRAYER

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

Everybody rose for the silent prayer and meditation.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

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

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

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

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

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Secretary General is directed to read the Reference of Business.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

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

BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 6408, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT 8298 ‘GRANTING METRO MANILA TURF CLUB, INC., A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN A RACE TRACK FOR HORSE RACING IN THE CITY OF KALOO CAN OR ANYWHERE WITHIN THE PROVINCE OF BATANGAS, CAVITE, LAGUNA, RIZAL AND QUEZON’ AND EXTENDING THE SAID FRANCHISE BY TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS FROM THE EXPIRATION OF THE TERM THEREOF”

By Representative Collantes

TO THE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE FRANCHISES

House Bill No. 6409, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE PROVINCIAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY CENTER INTO PROVINCIAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY OFFICE IN EVERY PROVINCE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Acop
TO THE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY

House Bill No. 6410, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY TO BE
KNOWN AS BARANGAY KINAPIAN IN
THE MUNICIPALITY OF SUYO, PROVINCE
OF ILOCOS SUR”

By Representative Singson-Meehan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL
GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 6411, entitled:

“AN ACT TO BE KNOWN AS ‘THE
PHILIPPINE GENETICALLY MODIFIED
ORGANISM (GMO) LABELING ACT, THE
RIGHT-TO-KNOW ACT’ REQUIRING
THE MANDATORY LABELING AND
REGULATION OF FOOD WHICH ARE
GMOs OR CONTAINING SUBSTANCES
DERIVED FROM GMOs AND THOSE
PRODUCED BY GENETIC ENGINEERING
TECHNOLOGIES, PROVIDING
FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES”

By Representative Reyes
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND
INDUSTRY

House Bill No. 6412, entitled:

“AN ACT RENEWING FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-
FIVE (25) YEARS THE FRANCHISE
GRANTED TO INDEPENDENT TELEPHONE
COMPANY, INC., UNDER REPUBLIC ACT
NO. 8615 ENTITLED ‘AN ACT GRANTING
THE INDEPENDENT TELEPHONE CO.,
INC. A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT,
ESTABLISH, INSTALL, MAINTAIN AND
OPERATE LOCAL EXCHANGE NETWORK
IN THE CITY OF BIÑAN, PROVINCE OF
LAGUNA’ ”

By Representative Alonte
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE
FRANCHISES

RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 734, entitled:

“RESOLUTION TO CONDUCT AN
INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION,
INTO THE CIRCUMSTANCES
SURROUNDING THE CASE OF PASKUHAN
VILLAGE IN PAMPANGA, HOW THE
HANDLING COURT REGIONAL TRIAL
COURT BRANCH NUMBER 42 OF SAN

FERNANDO, PAMPANGA RESOLVED
THE SAID CASE, AND WHY THE SAME
COURT APPROVED THE COMPROMISE
AGREEMENT INVOLVING THE ILLEGAL
CONVEYANCE OF PASKUHAN VILLAGE
CONSIDERED AS A CULTURAL VILLAGE,
RESULTING IN THE MANIFEST AND
GROSS DISADVANTAGE OF THE
GOVERNMENT AND TO THE DETRIMENT
OF THE FILIPINO PEOPLE DUE TO THE
LOSS OF PASKUHAN VILLAGE”

By Representatives Gonzales (Aurelio) and
Pimentel
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 735, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE NATIONAL
GOVERNMENT TO ALLOCATE MORE
RESOURCES FOR THE IMPROVEMENT
OF THE READING COMPREHENSION OF
STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS”

By Representative Taduran
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION
AND CULTURE

House Resolution No. 736, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES TO CONDUCT AN
INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION,
INTO THE CURRENT SITUATION OF THE
STEEL INDUSTRY IN THE LIGHT OF THE
RECENT SUSPENSION OF THE PHILIPPINE
STANDARD (PS) LICENSES OF SIX STEEL
MANUFACTURERS IN 2019”

By Representative Savellano
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 737, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE CONGRESS
TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF
LEGISLATION, INTO THE LEGALITY
OF THE KABATAAN KONTRA DROGA
AT TERORISMO (KKDAT) DIALOGUES,
LECTURES, AND SEMINARS OF THE
PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE IN VARIOUS
HIGH SCHOOLS AND VIOLATING THE
‘SAFE SCHOOLS PRINCIPLE’ ”

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

House Resolution No. 738, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE
ON BASES CONVERSION TO CONDUCT
AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION
TO INVESTIGATE THE DECISION OF THE

BASES CONVERSION DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND THE PROCESS BY WHICH IT REACHED ITS DECISION TO EXPROPRIATE LANDS IN BARANGAYS NAPARING, PAGASA, AND PINULOT IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF DINALUPIHAN, PROVINCE OF BATAAN, IN CONNECTION WITH ITS SUBIC-CLARK RAILWAY PROJECT”

By Representative Roman
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 739, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING PROFOUND CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON THE DEMISE OF NBA STAR KOBE B. BRYANT”

By Representative Olivarez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 740, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING ALEXANDRA M. EALA FOR WINNING THE FIRST JUNIOR GRAND SLAM TITLE IN 2020 AUSTRALIAN OPEN”

By Representative Olivarez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

House Resolution No. 741, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING PROFOUND CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON THE DEMISE OF SALVACION SANTO TOMAS GERONA”

By Representative Olivarez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 742, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE DELAYS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION IN ACCREDITING NEW SMOKE EMISSION TESTING CENTERS FOR MOTOR VEHICLES WHICH RESULTS IN DELAYS IN THE RENEWAL OF REGISTRATION OF MOTOR VEHICLES AND ON THE LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE IN CONTINUOUSLY CHARGING PENALTIES AND SURCHARGES FOR LATE REGISTRATION EVEN IF NOT THE FAULT OF THE VEHICLE OWNER”

By Representative Rodriguez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 743, entitled:

“RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE NUEVA SEGOVIA CONSORTIUM OF COOPERATIVES FOR ITS OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AND LEADERSHIP IN THE UPLIFTMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF COOPERATIVES IN THE COUNTRYSIDE”

By Representative Canama
TO THE COMMITTEE ON COOPERATIVES DEVELOPMENT

House Resolution No. 744, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION CONFERRING APPRECIATION AND RECOGNITION TO DR. POTENCIANO ‘YONG’ S. LARRAZABAL III FOR HIS RARE ACHIEVEMENT OF BEING THE FIRST FILIPINO TO COMPETE AND FINISH THE 2020 WORLD MARATHON CHALLENGE AND THUS JOIN THE SEVEN CONTINENTS MARATHON CLUB, BRINGING SINGULAR HONOR TO THE COUNTRY AND PROVIDING AN EXAMPLE TO FILIPINOS IN VARIOUS FIELDS OF SPORTS”

By Representative Del Mar
TO THE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

House Resolution No. 745, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO CONDEMN AND INVESTIGATE, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ALL KINDS OF PROFILING AND DISCRIMINATION TARGETING SPECIFIC INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS BASED ON, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, AGE, APPEARANCE, POLITICAL BELIEFS, RELIGION, ETHNICITY, RACE, GENDER IDENTITY OR SEXUAL ORIENTATION, AND TO DIRECT THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE AND THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES TO ISSUE AN UNEQUIVOCAL DIRECTIVE PROHIBITING PROFILING AND OTHER SIMILAR PRACTICES THAT VIOLATE ONE’S RIGHT TO PRIVACY AND SAFE SPACES”

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

House Resolution No. 746, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEES ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND GOOD GOVERNMENT TO JOINTLY CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF

LEGISLATION TO ASSESS AND EVALUATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TERTIARY EDUCATION SUBSIDY (TES) UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10931, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO QUALITY TERTIARY EDUCATION ACT TO ENSURE THAT THE MANDATE OF THE LAW IS EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY CARRIED OUT”

By Representatives Hernandez, Pichay and Oaminal
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 747, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE PAG-IBIG FUND (HOME DEVELOPMENT MUTUAL FUND) FOR EXEMPLARY PERFORMANCE AND RECORD-HIGH EARNINGS AND DIVIDENDS DECLARATION IN Y2019 BENEFITTING THE FILIPINO WORKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES”

By Representative Mendoza
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

House Joint Resolution No. 29, entitled:

“JOINT RESOLUTION EXTENDING THE FRANCHISE OF ABS-CBN CORPORATION UNTIL MAY 4, 2021”

By Representative Rodriguez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE FRANCHISES

COMMUNICATIONS

Letter dated January 27, 2020 of Betty A. Cabal, Municipal Mayor, Municipality of Hindang, Province of Leyte submitting to the House of Representatives their Local Government Support Fund Report on Fund Utilization and Status of Program/Project Implementation for the Quarter Ended December 31, 2019.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated 31 January 2020 of Governor Humerlito A. Dolor, MPA, Ph.D., Vice President for Luzon South League of Provinces of the Philippines, Province of Oriental Mindoro, submitting to the House of Representatives their Physical and Financial Quarterly Report of Operations for the Conditional Matching Grant to Provinces (CMGP) Implementation for Road Repair, Rehabilitation and Improvement for the quarter ending December 31, 2019 on the Local Government Support Fund.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated February 13, 2020 of Caesar R. Dulay, Commissioner, Bureau of Internal Revenue, forwarding to the House of Representatives the following Budget and Financial Accountability Reports (BFARs) as of December 31, 2019:

1. Statement of Appropriations, Allotments, Obligations, Disbursements and Balances (SAAODB) – FAR No. 1;
2. Summary of Appropriations, Allotments, Obligations, Disbursements and Balances by Object of Expenditures – FAR No. 1-A;
3. List of Allotments and Sub-Allotments – FAR No. 1-B; and
4. Statement of Obligations, Disbursements, Liquidations and Balances for Inter-Agency Fund Transfers – FAR No. 1-C.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report of the Committee on Tourism (Committee Report No. 252), re H.B. No. 6441, entitled:

“AN ACT INCLUDING AREVALO PLAZA IN THE ILOILO CITY CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM ZONE, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10555, ENTITLED: ‘AN ACT DECLARING THE JARO CATHEDRAL, MOLO CHURCH, THE ILOILO CITY CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT, FORT SAN PEDRO, JARO PLAZA COMPLEX, MOLO PLAZA COMPLEX AND PLAZA LIBERTAD COMPLEX, ALL LOCATED IN THE CITY OF ILOILO, AS CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM ZONE’”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 910

Sponsors: Representatives Aragonés and Baronda
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Tourism and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 253), re H.B. No. 6442, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING MOUNT ARAYAT, BORDERING THE MUNICIPALITIES OF ARAYAT AND MAGALANG, PROVINCE OF PAMPANGA A TOURIST DESTINATION, PROVIDING FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 918

Sponsors: Representatives Aragonés, Ungab and Gonzales (Aurelio)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Tourism and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 254), re H.B. No. 6443, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING GANGUB CAVE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BATARAZA, PROVINCE OF PALAWAN AN ECOTOURISM SITE, PROVIDING FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 671

Sponsors: Representatives Aragonés, Ungab and Abueg-Zaldivar

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Tourism and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 255), re H.B. No. 6444, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING TORRIJOS WHITE BEACH LOCATED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF TORRIJOS, PROVINCE OF MARINDUQUE AN ECOTOURISM SITE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 1074

Sponsors: Representatives Aragonés, Ungab and Velasco

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Tourism and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 256), re H.B. No. 6445, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING PILIS FALLS IN BARANGAY PALILI, MUNICIPALITY OF SAMAL, PROVINCE OF BATAAN AN ECOTOURISM SITE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 141

Sponsors: Representatives Aragonés, Ungab and Roman

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Tourism and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 257), re H.B. No. 6446, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING THE PALANI BEACH LOCATED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BALUD, PROVINCE OF MASBATE AN ECOTOURISM ZONE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 458

Sponsors: Representatives Aragonés, Ungab and Kho (Elisa)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Tourism and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 258), re H.B. No. 6447, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING THE BAT-ONGAN PEAK, CAVE AND UNDERGROUND RIVER LOCATED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF MANDAON, PROVINCE OF MASBATE AN ECOTOURISM ZONE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 465

Sponsors: Representatives Aragonés, Ungab and Kho (Elisa)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Tourism and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 259), re H.B. No. 6448, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING KAPANGYAN FALLS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BATARAZA, PROVINCE OF PALAWAN AN ECOTOURISM SITE, PROVIDING FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 672

Sponsors: Representatives Aragonés, Ungab and Abueg-Zaldivar

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Housing and Urban Development (Committee Report No. 260), re H.B. No. 159, entitled:

“AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE RIGHT OF GOVERNMENT TO EXPROPRIATE LANDS FOR SOCIALIZED HOUSING, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTIONS 9, 10, AND 11 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7279, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING ACT OF 1992’ ”

recommending its approval without amendment, in consolidation with House Bill No. 5986

Sponsors: Representatives Revilla, Belmonte and Cabochan

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Social Services (Committee Report No. 261), re H.B. No. 6451, entitled:

“AN ACT REGULATING PUBLIC SOLICITATIONS AND PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 4341

Sponsors: Representatives Eriguel and Ramirez-Sato

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

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

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. NOGRALES (J.F.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session.

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

It was 3:10 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:19 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

ROLL CALL

REP. NOGRALES (J.F.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we call the roll of the honorable Members.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Romero). 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. 50, dated March 3, 2020.**

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. Mr. Speaker, the roll call shows that 201 Members responded to the call.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Romero). With 201 Members present, including those who are deemed present in accordance with Section 71, Rule XI of our rules, specifically those attending Committee meetings as authorized by the Committee on Rules, 34 Members; attending the Commission on Appointments meeting, 11 Members; and on official business, three Members, the Chair declares the presence of a quorum.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. COLLANTES. Mr. Speaker, we move to acknowledge the presence of the guests of Cong. Cheryl P. Deloso-Montalla from the Second District of Zambales: the faculty members of President Ramon Magsaysay State University in the province of Zambales

and with them are the top three board passers in the 2019 Mechanical Engineer licensure exams. They are Engr. Deyn Edriel Oidem Estoque, Dean Dr. Marlon James Dicatoria, Engr. Jemar Dalusong, Ms. Jane Danila, Engr. Ar-Jay Magpantay and Jerwel Penales. (*Applause*)

Welcome to the House of Representatives.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Romero). Will the guests of Hon. Cheryl Deloso-Montalla stand up. Congratulations and welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I would move to recognize the Dep. Minority Leader, Hon. Janette L. Garin.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Romero). Hon. Janette L. Garin is hereby recognized.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO THE COMMITTEE ON MUSLIM AFFAIRS

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

On behalf of the Minority, I move for the election of the following Members to the Committee on Muslim Affairs:

As senior member:

Rep. Godofredo N. Guya

As additional member:

Rep. Angelica Natasha Co

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 5925 ON THIRD READING

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 5925 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. Romero). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on February 19, 2020, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 5925, entitled: AN ACT MAKING THE POSITION OF A COOPERATIVES 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 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. 50, dated March 3, 2020.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 5925
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Romero). With 182 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 5925 is approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 1338
ON THIRD READING

REP. COLLANTES. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 1338 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on February 20 and 24, 2020, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 1338, entitled: AN ACT INCREASING THE SERVICE INCENTIVE LEAVE OF EMPLOYEES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE ARTICLE 95 OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 442, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LABOR CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES.

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. 50, dated March 3, 2020.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 1338
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Romero). With 197 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 1338 is approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 6228
ON THIRD READING

REP. COLLANTES. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 6228 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on February 20 and 24, 2020, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 6228, entitled: AN ACT MANDATING ALL BARANGAYS TO CREATE A REGISTRY OF SKILLED WORKERS.

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. 50, dated March 3, 2020.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 6228
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Romero). With 203 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 6228 is approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 6312
ON THIRD READING

REP. COLLANTES. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 6312 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. Romero). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on February 20 and 24, 2020, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 6312, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SPORTS SYSTEM AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

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. 50, dated March 3, 2020.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 6312
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Romero). With 206 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 6312 is approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. NOGRALES (J.F.). Mr. Speaker, I move to acknowledge the presence of the guests of Hon. Bienvenido M. Abante Jr., Minority Leader. They are the following: Nelda San Juan, Priscilla Trufil, Josie Francisco, Fe Tolarba, Daisy Medina, Melinda Puntanar, Sophie Macaranas, Malou De Vera, Bernadette Cuizon, Aster Rubico, Corazon Resare, Fely Dalisay, Tess Ido, Remy Samson, Medy Rubio, Zeny Hermosura, Ogie Orande, Paz Amplayo, Dially Crispino, Melani Balbas, Lourdes Tanael, Jenny Flores, Lolit Abrazaldo, Beth Cruz, Josie Basarte, Tess Lopez and Leony Sudario.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Romero). To the guests of the very honorable Minority Leader Benny Abante, welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON HOUSE BILLS
ON THIRD READING

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bills Nos. 6167 and 6216 on the creation of TESDA training and assessment centers, and direct the Secretary General to read the titles of the measures, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the titles of the measures, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on February 20 and 24, 2020, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 6167, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF TUBOD, PROVINCE OF LANA DEL NORTE, TO BE KNOWN AS THE TUBOD TESDA TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR; and

House Bill No. 6216, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER IN THE CITY OF ANTIPOLLO, PROVINCE OF RIZAL, TO BE KNOWN AS THE ANTIPOLLO CITY TESDA TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

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 measures is reflected in Journal No. 50, dated March 3, 2020.*

APPROVAL OF HOUSE BILLS
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Romero). With 207 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bills Nos. 6167 and 6216 are approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 6181
ON THIRD READING

REP. FARIÑAS, RIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 6181 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. Romero). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on February 20 and 24, 2020, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 6181, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A PROFESSIONAL REGULATION COMMISSION (PRC) OFFICE IN THE CITY OF BACOLOD, PROVINCE OF NEGROS OCCIDENTAL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

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. 50, dated March 3, 2020.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 6181
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Romero). With 209 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 6181 is approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 6218
ON THIRD READING

REP. FARIÑAS, RIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 6218 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. Romero). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on February 20 and 24, 2020, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 6218, entitled: AN ACT RENAMING THE MALITA DISTRICT HOSPITAL IN BARANGAY POBLACION, MUNICIPALITY OF MALITA, PROVINCE OF DAVAO OCCIDENTAL TO MALITA WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S WELLNESS CENTER.

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. 50, dated March 3, 2020.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 6218
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Romero). With 213 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 6218 is approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 6227
ON THIRD READING

REP. FARIÑAS, RIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 6227 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. Romero). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on February 20 and 24, 2020, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 6227, entitled: AN ACT CREATING A NEW DISTRICT ENGINEERING OFFICE IN THE THIRD LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OF THE PROVINCE OF ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

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. 50, dated March 3, 2020.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 6227
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Romero). With 215 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 6227 is approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 6255
ON THIRD READING

REP. FARIÑAS, RIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 6255 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. Romero). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on February 20 and 24, 2020, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 6255, entitled: AN ACT RENEWING FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO ROMEO CABRESTATE SERVANDO, PRESENTLY KNOWN AS ROLIN BROADCASTING ENTERPRISES, INC., UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8202, ENTITLED "AN ACT GRANTING ROMEO CABRESTATE SERVANDO, A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, ESTABLISH, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCASTING STATIONS IN THE PROVINCE OF PALAWAN."

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. 50, dated March 3, 2020.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 6255
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Romero). With 218 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 6255 is approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 5832
Continuation

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

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

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary status of this Bill in consideration is that we are in the period of sponsorship and debate and with that, I move that we recognize Hon. Mario Vittorio "Marvey" A. Mariño, Chairman of the Committee on Government Reorganization, for the sponsorship of the Bill.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Romero). Hon. Marvey Mariño is hereby recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

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

It was 4:26 p.m.

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:28 p.m., the session was resumed with Deputy Speaker Garcia (P.) presiding.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). The session is resumed.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, to interpellate the good Sponsor, I move to recognize Hon. Jose L. Atienza, Jr. of the BUHAY Party-List for his interpellation.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, P.). Honorable Atienza is recognized for his interpellation.

REP. ATIENZA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Salamat po, Mr. Majority Leader.

Again, with the kind indulgence of the Gentleman-Sponsor, we would like to clarify many fundamental issues on the idea of creating another department in our bureaucracy. Ano po ba ang inyong overriding thinking on the present state of our Department of Labor and Employment and the agencies in charge of the overseas employees' employment—is it lacking, is it ineffective, thus, necessitating the creation of another level of bureaucracy? Ano po ba ang inyong pananaw sa nagawa at ginagawa nila para sa kinabukasan ng ating mga kababayan na nagtatrabaho sa labas ng bansa?

REP. MARIÑO. Mr. Speaker, sa ngayon po ay maraming ahensiya ang tumutulong sa ating mga overseas workers ngunit ang mga ito po ay ibat ibang opisina. Ang gusto po ng ating mga OFWs ay isa lamang na departamento ang kanilang pupuntahan para lahat po ng tulong ay doon na nila lahat itatanong dahil iba-ibang naman po ang problema ng ating mga OFWs, so iyon po ang rationale at para na rin sa proteksiyon ng ating mga OFWs ay isa na lamang pong departamento ang mamamahala upang sa gayon ay magkaroon din ng tamang datos at malaman talaga ang dapat pang mga polisiya na gagawin para po mas lalong mapagbigyan natin ang kahilingan ng mga OFWs, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Hindi po ba ang Department of Labor ang katangi-tanging kagawaran na mayroong kinalaman sa ano mang employment, local or foreign? Mayroon po bang iba—Department of Health, Department of Public Works, or sa Department of Labor ang lahat iyan?

REP. MARIÑO. Mr. Speaker, iba-iba po ang nagha-handle ng problema ng ating mga OFWs at mayroon pong opisina—for example, iyong

Undersecretary for Migrant Workers' Affairs o OUMWA, mayroon din pong DOLE, mayroon din pong POLO, mayroon din pong Social Welfare Attaché Office o iyong SWATO, at mayroon din pong OWWA and so, marami pong mga ahensiya ang nilalapatan ng mga OFWs sa ngayon.

REP. ATIENZA. Sa akin pong pagsusuri at kaalaman, lahat po ng binanggit ninyo—ang OWWA, iyong POEA, and even the private organizations involved and engaged with foreign employment—are all under one department now and that is the Department of Labor and Employment, kaya nga mayroong “Employment.” Unless we can say that the DOLE is not performing its job, then do you not think it would be redundant to have another department?

Ang akin pong napupuna ay ang ating ginagawang solusyon sa mga problema ng tao at ng bansa ay ang mag-create ng panibagong departamento. Mayroon tayong bagong departamento na itinuturing on water dahil mayroon daw problema sa tubig, ang Department of Water. Mayroon din tayong departamento na binuo dahil may problema sa housing at bumuo tayo ng Department of Housing na hanggang ngayon, dalawang taon na po ang nakakaraan, ay hindi pa rin nakapag-produce ng bahay and in fact, tumigil ang production ng bahay para sa mahihirap dahil dito sa panibagong departamento na binuo ng Kongreso. Mayroon tayong binuo na Department on Disaster Resiliency, na para bagang mapipigil natin ang dating ng mga bagyo kung mayroong Department na mangangalaga. Ang sabi nila at ang sinasabi ninyo ngayon, gusto natin na ang kagawaran na ang siyang tututok lang sa problema ay hindi po ganoon ang nangyayari. The Department of Housing that does not produce housing is an ineffective law. Here, we are going to create another department to simplify or to complicate the processes of foreign employment.

REP. MARIÑO. The creation of the Department of OFWs is to simplify iyong mga tulong na kinakailangan ng mga OFWs. Isa lamang po dapat ang nilalapatan nila na opisina kapag sila po ay lalabas ng bansa. Let us say, sa pre-departure, may mga trainings po iyan at kapag sila ay nandodoon na sa ibang bansa, siyempre may mga contracts o bilateral contracts. Kapag sila naman ay gusto nang bumalik or repatriation, iyan din po ang magiging trabaho noong bagong departamento, so that the department can prepare them for other opportunities here sa ating bansa. So, ito po ay kahilingan ng mga OFWs na alam naman natin na napakarami at matagal na rin po nila itong hinihiling at siyempre, ang trabaho naman po natin dito ay gumawa ng batas upang mag-improve ang ating mga departamento and make them more efficient and also, hindi na rin po iba-iba iyong pupuntahan nilang departamento.

REP. ATIENZA. Sa ngayon, ang lahat po ng sinasabi ninyo ay inaasikaso naman ng Department of Labor. Gaya ng sinabi ko, hindi naman Department of Public Works ang nakikialam diyan, hindi naman Department of Health. Ang Department of Labor and Employment lamang ang mayroong responsibilidad ng ano mang may kinalaman sa trabaho.

Ang sinasabi ninyo ay masi-simplify. Na-simplify po ba ang problema ng housing noong tayo ay bumuo ng Department of Housing, o na-complicate ito? Iyon lamang appointment ng mga mamumuno sa Department of Housing ay nakakasagabal na sa trabaho kaya walang bahay na itinatayo ang department sapagkat hindi pa sila nabubuo hanggang ngayon. Kapag bumuo tayo ng Department of Overseas Workers ay titigil naman po ang pag-aasikaso sapagkat may bagong mag-aasikaso pero hindi naman mabubuo iyan overnight at mabubuo iyan in a period of two or three years. Tapos na po ang administration ni Presidente Duterte by that time pero wala pa ring functioning performance ang bagong departamento na itinatayo natin. Kaya iyong sinasabi ninyong masi-simplify ang solusyon, sa pananaw po ng marami, dahil kinausap ko rin po naman ang mga may kinalaman sa employment abroad, ang sabi nila, kapag nag-create na naman ng bagong department ay panibago na namang red tape iyan at panibago na namang burukrasya. Ang tawag nga nila ay panibago na namang “bulokrasya”, panibago na namang korapsyon, panibago na naman—lahat panibago pero ganoon pa din po ang ating kalalagyan.

Ang OFW na nangangailangan ng tulong ay hindi rin makatatanggap ng dagliang solusyon kung hindi talaga nagtatrabaho ang DOLE, at kung sinasabi ninyong hindi nagtatrabaho ang DOLE, hindi po ba magandang irekomenda natin na palitan ang mga mamumuno sa Department of Labor? As far as my party-list and I are concerned, we are happy with the Department of Labor and the performance of Secretary Bello and so, we see no need for another bureaucracy to handle the task of taking care of the needs of our overseas workers. This will be an additional burden, additional red tape, and additional everything with no real actual benefit coming the way of an overseas worker.

REP. MARIÑO. Mr. Speaker, ang DOLE naman po ay isa lamang sa mga departamento na nag-aasikaso sa mga OFWs. Kapag na-create po ang department na ito, ang DOLE po ay makakapag-concentrate diyan sa ating mga local labor issues na dapat po ay iyon ang tinututukan nila. Kaya lang po ang nangyayari ngayon sa DOLE, na kapag may mga na-sensationalize na nangyayari sa ibang bansa, nawawala po ang kanilang focus dahil doon po sila—iyon ang nabibigyan ng pansin. Ang mas importante nga po dito ay iyong focus sa local labor issues natin ang ating mapalakas

para hindi na rin ho mag-a-abroad iyong mga OFWs, kaya nga po hinihiwalay na natin doon sa DOLE iyong responsibilidad ng pag-iintindi doon sa ating mga OFWs.

It does not mean that if you create a department, it is adding more red tape dahil ito po ay dating mga ahensiya na pinagsama-sama natin at ini-improve lamang po natin para iyong mga OFWs, bago sila umalis, ay mayroon na po silang isang opisina pupuntahan, alam nila kung hanggang kailan sila magtatrabaho abroad, at alam din nila kung mayroon silang opportunity sa pagbalik nila, let us say, in a year or two, ay mayroon din silang job opportunities pagbalik dito.

Iyon po iyong hangarin ng ating pag-create ng departamento. It is also to put up new policies para mapaghandaan iyong pagbabalik ng ating mga overseas workers. Sa ngayon po ay iba-iba iyong polisiya—mayroon pong polisiya iyong DOLE, mayroon po iyong DSWD, mayroon po iyong TESDA, mayroon po iyong OWWA, so, hindi po maintindihan ng ating mga OFWs kung alin sa kanila, kung papaano at kung kailan sila hihingi ng tulong. Mayroon po namang problemang ligal, so, iba naman po ang nag-aasikaso ng mga problemang ligal. Kung iisa lang po iyong departamento, iisa lang pong Secretary ang mananagot kapag hindi natulungan iyong ating mga OFWs, ay isa lamang pong departamento ang mananagot at ...

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, is the Gentleman saying that the OWWA and the POEA and the other agencies that are now operating are not taking orders from the DOLE, from Secretary Bello? Are they not coordinating, are they not falling under the Department of Labor? Is this not the responsibility of the DOLE? He is wrong because right now, these agencies are all under the Department of Labor. What he is saying is that they will just create another bureaucracy, but as claimed by those against its creation, it will not simplify matters as he is claiming.

Again, let me go back to the creation of the Department of Housing. Sabi nila kapag may Department of Housing, dadami ang mga bahay para sa mga Pilipino pero hindi po nangyayari iyon. Lalong bumagal ang production ng houses dahil may bagong department na tinitingnan ang lahat. This good intention of the Gentleman and the other Sponsors of the measure will not happen as it will only complicate matters in the hands of those in charge of employment in the country.

Let me just shift to another question. In your mind, Congressman Mariño, do you believe that foreign employment is the solution to the nation’s poverty problem and underemployment of our people? Do you think that overseas employment is the genuine way to improve the lives of our people?

REP. MARIÑO. Before I answer that, Mr. Speaker, can I go back to the previous question which is on the coordination effort of the Secretary of the DOLE. The problem is the word “coordination” and “coordination” is a less efficient way of addressing the concerns of our OFWs, kaya nga po dapat ay isang departamento lang para iyong instruction is hindi po coordination lang among agencies but is a straight directive coming from the Secretary.

Regarding the second question, if I think that our overseas workers are benefiting from working abroad. Is that the question, Mr. Speaker? Of course, there are OFWs being benefited when they work abroad at marami rin po ang gumaganda ang buhay. Siguro lang po, ang naririnig natin palagi ay iyong mga naabusado and those are sensationalized cases. Sa pagkakaalam ko po, marami din ang nagbago ang buhay. In fact, I was an OFW and I worked abroad for 10 years. So, hindi naman po lahat ay naka-experience ng masama. Ang ginagawa nga po natin ay protektahan iyong kanilang kagustuhan na sila ay makapaghanap ng opportunity abroad. If there is an opportunity here, why would they go abroad? Kaya nga po ipini-prepare natin sila. This agency will prepare any opportunities locally maybe in the next five years, in the next 10 years, but somebody has to do the preparations para makauwi rin po ang ating mga OFWs, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Uulitin ko po iyong tanong ko, Mr. Speaker—do you see the Philippines forever engaged in overseas work, or we are all working towards a country whose economy finds no Filipino separated from his family anymore and who will find a job locally in the Philippines?

Sa inyong sariling pananaw, sabi ninyo naging overseas worker kayo, hindi po ba ang panaginip ng lahat ay magkaroon ng pagkakataon na makapagtrabaho ang bawat isa sa sariling bansa na hindi nahihinalay pa sa pamilya? As an overseas worker, did you ever dream that you will be a Congressman one day and working for the benefit of the overseas workers? Did you ever consider that your fate could happen to any overseas worker and all of us will be happy with our families in working in the Philippines?

You are talking right now, Mr. Speaker, as if you are giving up already on the Filipino dream. Ano po iyon? Ito ay ang magkaroon ng maligayang buhay sa sariling bansa. Kung nakikita natin ang ating mga kababayan sa labas ng bansa at hiwalay sa kanilang mga pamilya, ay nagkakaroon ng maraming problema at nagiging malungkot ang buhay nila, lalu't lalo na kung pinagsasamantalahan sila ng pinaglilingkuran nila.

Ano po ba ang percentage, sa inyong kaalaman, ng overseas workers na domestic ang trabaho at ilan iyong professional? Just give us a rough equation of the two categories.

REP. MARIÑO. I will get the details in a few minutes, Mr. Speaker. For the 2017 record, ang land-based ay nasa 1.9 million or almost two million. I am sorry—for the land-based, it is 1.6 million; and for the sea-based, 378,000. Sa akin pong palagay, maraming Pilipinong nangangarap na makapagtrabaho sa ibang bansa dahil iyon ang nakikita nilang opportunity. It is their right at kaya nga po iki-create natin ang departamento to protect them from being abused abroad.

Having said that, my personal view is, marami po ang gustong bumalik ng ating bansa after working abroad because, tama po kayo, hindi naman lahat ay natutuwa na magtrabaho abroad. Napakahirap po ang magtrabaho abroad but it teaches us to be independent and to be hardworking. Lahat po halos ng nakilala ko, for example, in America, in Canada, ay nangangarap na makabalik dito at dinadala po nila ang kanilang success in working abroad para makapagnegosyo dito at makapagbigay ng opportunities, at isa po iyon sa mga programa ng Department of OFW. Iyon nga po ang isa na magandang hangarin ng departamento.

Sa ngayon, wala pong tumututok sa mga ganoong klaseng programa na after five years ay mayroong aasahan o babalikan na opportunity at hindi lang po para bumalik at magretiro dito sa ating bansa ngunit para magkaroon pa ng opportunity na mag-invest at magbigay ng dagdag trabaho. So, hindi naman po lahat ng konsepto ng OFW ay masama. Kung titingnan po ninyo sa buong mundo, lahat nga po ng bansa ay nagpapadala ng kanilang mga tao sa iba't ibang bansa para matuto at madagdagan ang kanilang kaalaman.

Aminin natin na nahihinalay sila sa kanilang pamilya pero meron naman ng mga bagong teknolohiya—may social media, may Facebook, may Viber—na nagkakausap na po araw-araw ang mga pamilya at ang kanilang mga mahal sa buhay, at hindi na po katulad noon na talagang sumusulat at bago dumating iyong sulat, tapos na ang graduation ng mga anak nila dito sa Pilipinas. It is now real-time communication. Iba po ang kalagayan ng OFW noon at ng OFW ngayon.

Ang departamento na ito ay para protektahan ang mga taong gustong magkaroon ng opportunity abroad. Hindi po polisiya ng ating bansa ang paalisin ang ating mga kababayan pero ang polisiya po ng ating bansa ay protektahan iyong mga gustong magkaroon ng opportunity abroad, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, nabanggit ng ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor iyong mga ibang bansa na nagpapadala ng overseas workers. Tiningnan po ba ninyo at pinag-aralan kung ano ang kanilang sistema? Meron po ba silang binuong department o lahat ay dumadaan lang sa Department of Labor dahil ito ang kanilang sistema? Of those countries sending their people abroad, which ones can you claim as having success in

giving their overseas workers a better life by creating a department? As far as my studies are concerned, halos lahat sa Department of Labor lang at ito lang ang nagpapatakbo ng kanilang foreign employment. Hindi po sila bumuo ng iba pang department kung meron silang Department of Labor.

The logic that is being used on us is to make us believe that creating a department will give the OFW a better life, a better deal, better service when these are not reflected in the experiences of other nation. Meron po ba kayong pagsusuri na ginawa tungkol diyan?

REP. MARIÑO. Mr. Speaker, ang Pilipinas po ang isa sa pinakamaraming overseas workers siguro dito sa Asya at sa mga ibang bansa na rin. Tayo po ang tinitingnan, tayo po ang ginagaya kung mayroon po tayong mga bagong gagawin dahil tayo po kasi ang mayroong maraming OFWs—Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, Singapore, Kuwait, Qatar, Hong Kong—kaya tayo po iyong puwedeng mag-lead na gagawa ng departamentong ito. Kung wala naman po tayong OFWs, maniniwala po ako na hindi natin kailangan ang departamentong ito pero milyun-milyon po ang ating mga OFWs at sila mismo ang nag-request ng departamentong ito. Sila ay pumunta rito at ito ay kahilingan nilang lahat, hindi lamang po ng mga Kongresista na nag-sponsor ng Bill na ito kung hindi pati kay Pangulong Duterte ay lumalapit sila at sila ay nag-request na magkaroon ng sariling departamento na mag-iintindi sa kanila.

Iyon po ang basehan ng panukalang ito—it is the request of the people and we are the Representatives of the people. Ito naman po ay magdudulot ng napakalaking efficiency in terms of taking care of our OFWs, considering that their contribution to this country, for example, our OFW remittances amount to \$33 billion a year, so, napakalaki po noong inaambag nila sa ating ekonomiya, at para po sila ay hindi natin pagbigyan ay isang napakalaking pagkukulang. Sa akin na lang po, para sa aking mga constituents, napakalaking pagkukulang ko po kung hindi natin ma-address iyong kanilang pangangailangan. Marami po sa kanila ay naaabuso pero wala po silang nalalapitan kung hindi iyong kanilang mga mayor, congressman, governor. Kung mayroon namang isang departamento po, siguro naman po ay mas makakapaglagay tayo ng mga programa para hindi na rin sila maabuso. Ito rin po ang kagustuhan ng ating departamentong ito.

REP. ATIENZA. Uulitin ko po iyong tanong ko—mayroon po ba kayong masasabing modelo na puwede nating pag-usapan, na ang kanilang naging solusyon ay bumuo ng isang Department of Overseas Workers? Iyong sinabi ninyong maraming Pilipino ang OFW, tama po iyon at ito ay hindi dahil sa sistema kundi dahil sa galing ng Pilipino. Talagang pinag-aagawan ang ating

labor, ang ating professionals, ang ating technical and medical practitioners. Kung wala po kayong modelo, ang sasabihin ko na naman at babanggitin ko uli iyong Department of Housing na binuo natin, ang tanong ko ay mayroon ba kayong masasabing naging solusyon ang creation ng isang department to the problem of housing?

Alam ninyo, ang Singapore ay very successful, pinaka-successful sa housing. Housing Authority ang mayroon sila pero walang Department of Housing. Hong Kong has one of the most successful housing programs in the world because lahat ng mga taga-Hong Kong ay mayroong maliit na tirahan. Wala silang Department of Housing pero mayroon silang National Housing Authority. Tayo ay mayroong National Housing Authority. Bibigyan na lang ng pondo pero bumuo pa tayo ng Department of Housing kaya ayan tumigil ang production at wala ngayong bahay ang mahihirap.

Ang akin pong pangamba, kung wala po namang modelo na masasabi nating “sila ay bumuo ng Department of Housing kaya iyong kanilang manggagawa ay natutulungan,” ito ang sinasabi nga ninyo in a different way, to which I do not agree. Kung hindi nakapagbibigay ng serbisyo ang DOLE, kasalanan ni Secretary Bello iyan at hindi kasalanan ng kabuuang administrasyon. There are people assigned to do the task. All they need, probably, is money, money and more money. Ang kailangan talaga sa pagpapatakbo ng isang kagawarang malaki ay pera. Ito pong department na pinag-uusapan natin, magkano ba ang pondong nakikinita ninyong kakailanganin nito?

REP. MARIÑO. Ang initial na pondo, kapag pinagsama-sama po natin iyong mga ahensiya under this department ay P3 billion pero mayroon ding Assistance to Nationals fund na P5 billion, and also, merong pagkukunan na manggagaling sa documentary stamp tax na humigit-kumulang P12 billion.

Kanina po nabanggit, for example, ang Singapore pero maliit lang naman kasi ang population ng Singapore and it is not comparable to our country na napakadaming population. Wala rin pong modelo akong masasabi dahil tayo nga ang ginagaya—ang ibig sabihin, tayo ang magli-lead, tayo ang mag-i-innovate, and it does not mean that we have to copy every country doon sa pagki-create ng departamento. The creation of the department depends on the needs of our people at hindi po tayo magki-create para lang gumaya sa ibang bansa. The problem with housing is a totally separate issue dahil hindi naman po ibig sabihin na ang creation ng Department of Housing, kung ito ay hindi naging successful, ay hindi rin po magiging successful itong Department of OFW because that is a totally different department.

I am not saying that this department will solve all the problems. I am just saying that this department will consolidate all the things on the protection that our OFW needs, and ito po ay malaking improvement sa present set-up ngayon. Our job is to improve our government and if we do not do anything, then, why are we here for? Wala naman po pala tayong gagawin. Pababayaan na lang po nating hindi mag-improve ang buhay ng ating mga OFWs.

So, my opinion is, if we need this department, talagang dapat ay magaling din iyong magiging Secretary at kailangan din po na mag-execute. Ang trabaho naman po natin is mag-create ng departamento and also to check on them. There is a mechanism kung papaano natin gagawin—through the oversight power ng Congress, kung papaano natin babantayan ang magiging departamento, at hindi naman po ito forever na departamento dahil mayroon pong sunset provision dito na 10 years. Kapag hindi na po natin kailangan ng departamentong ito for whatever reason, hindi na tayo magpapadala ng overseas workers, hindi na po natin kailangan ng departamentong ito.

Ang sinasabi ko lang po ay kailangan natin ito dahil kailangan ng ating mga mamamayan. We do not need a model from the different countries because we are the leading country in terms of OFWs. Tayo iyong may pinakamaraming tao na nasa ibang bansa. Ang Singapore po ay kakaunti ang tao. Ang Japan ay nangangailangan pa ng tao kaya they do not have any restrictions and in fact, nangangailangan pa po sila ng mga workers. Sila nga po ang nagkukulang.

Napakagaling po ng Pilipinas. Ang ating mga tao ay nagkakaroon ng different skills sa ibang bansa, na kapag nandito naman lamang po sila ay hindi po sila magkakaroon ng ganoong klaseng kaalaman at skills. So, sa pagbalik po nila dito, ang kailangan po natin ay mapabalik sila dito so that they can contribute to our own economy, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, babalikan ko lang po iyong aking tanong na napalayo na ang sagot—magkano po ang pondong iniisip ninyo na magpapatakbo ng departamentong ito? Hindi po ninyo nasagot.

REP. MARIÑO. Nasagot ko na po iyan, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Marami po kayong sinabi pero magkano ang total?

REP. MARIÑO. It is P3 billion po para sa mga ahensiya na pagsasama-samahin natin.

REP. ATIENZA. Bilangin po natin iyong total—ang total lahat noong sinabi ninyong mga pondo na pagsasama-samahin.

REP. MARIÑO. Plus P5 billion in Assistance to Nationals fund. Iyan po iyong mga itutulong natin sa mga kakailanganin ng mga...

REP. ATIENZA. Magkano po ang total budget na iniisip ninyo—iyon po ang tanong. Ang sagot po diyan, total budget hindi iyong mga partial dito, partial doon na contribution. Magkano po ang pondo para tumakbo iyong department na pinananaginipan ninyo?

REP. MARIÑO. Mr. Speaker, P3 billion po para pagsama-samahin iyong pang-suweldo ng mga ahensiya.

REP. ATIENZA. Three billion pesos will be needed to run the department, Mr. Speaker. Did I hear right?

REP. MARIÑO. Three billion pesos is the budget of the other agencies to be subsumed by this department.

REP. ATIENZA. The department will run on P3 billion?

REP. MARIÑO. That is aside from the P5 billion in Assistance...

REP. ATIENZA. Yes, you answer the question and this will be on record. You are saying that with the P3 billion, the department will be efficiently managed in favor of our people?

REP. MARIÑO. I am saying that it is the initial budget, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Magkano po?

REP. MARIÑO. The initial budget is P8.1 billion.

REP. ATIENZA. O ngayon P8.1 billion na. Sa tingin po ninyo that P8.1 billion will make the department run effectively and efficiently? Yes or no—iyon lang po ang sagot.

REP. MARIÑO. Well, it will initially operate the department. Siyempre, kapag mas malaki po ang budget mas maganda po ang takbo ng department and that depends on Congress if we are willing to give funds to this department later on.

REP. ATIENZA. Kayo ba ay isinasaalang-alang ninyo na para tumakbo effectively ang kagawaran na ito ay kailangan mayroon silang mga tao sa mga foreign missions o sa mga foreign countries like Saudi Arabia, Canada, Australia, USA, sa Asia? Maglalagay po ba sila ng mga employees and officers in the different foreign offices katulad noong mayroon na ngayong

labor attachés? Iyan po ay ginugugulan ng DOLE dahil mayroon po tayong iba't ibang mga labor employees abroad na nangangalaga sa kanila supposedly. I am not saying that they are doing their task but what I am saying, mayroong mga officers and men ang Department of Labor and Employment assigned sa foreign countries. Ito po bang Department of OFW ay magkakaroon din ng ganoon o inaasahan ninyong tatakbo ito by itself without assigning people abroad?

REP. MARIÑO. Mr. Speaker, we will subsume all the other agencies papunta sa departamento na ito at kung ano po iyong tumatakbo ngayon, iyon din po ang mga tao na mayroon tayo. Hindi naman po sila mawawala at posible rin po madagdagan. Ang sinasabi lang po natin dito is magiging under sila ng isang department at Secretary. So, pinagsama-sama po natin iyong mga agencies na iyon at siyempre depende po iyan sa magiging budget na ibibigay natin para makapag-recommend pa sila kung ano-ano pa iyong mga kinakailangan. Mag-e-establish po ang departamento na ito ng assistance—mayroon pong Assistance to Nationals ang departamento na ito which is amounting to P5 billion.

Bukod po doon ay mayroon pa tayong puwedeng pagkuhanan, kagaya po ng nasabi ko kanina, mula sa documentary tax doon sa mga dollar remittances ng mga overseas workers. So, madadagdagan po ang budget nito at hindi po mababawasan iyong mga serbisyo. Bagkus, mas lalo nga po madadagdagan iyong mga serbisyo para sa ating mga OFWs, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Samakatuwid, Mr. Speaker, the Sponsor is not envisioning the assignment of special labor attachés from its own department and will just rely on the present set-up of the Department of Labor and Employment. Tama po ba iyong aking pagkakaintindi na hindi na kayo bubuo ng mga foreign offices and you will rely on the Department of Labor and Employment to help the OFWs in their places of work?

REP. MARIÑO. Mr. Speaker, magkakaroon po ito ng tinatawag po nating ATN Career Officers Corps, sarili po, similar to a foreign service corps. Mayroon pong hiring at training dito, so, ito po iyong mga tutulong sa ating mga OFWs. Nakalagay po dito iyan sa Section 13 ng ating Bill. So, there is a provision na magkaroon ng mga officers to help out our overseas workers.

REP. ATIENZA. Samakatuwid, mayroon tayong parallel organization na titingin sa kapakanan ng ating mga OFWs equal to those of the Department of Labor and Employment?

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

At this juncture, Deputy Speaker Garcia (P.) relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Johnny Ty Pimentel.

REP. ATIENZA. Hypothetically, kung magkaroon ng problema, sino ang susundin ng labor attaché, iyong Secretary of the Department of OFW o Secretary of Labor?

REP. MARIÑO. Depend po sa problema.

REP. ATIENZA. Hindi po puwedeng depende iyan. Kapag may problema, a decision has to be made especially when it concerns the life of the OFW. Who will now make the decision, the Department of Labor and Employment or the Department of OFW?

REP. MARIÑO. Wala na po iyong Department of Labor and Employment kasi iyong labor attaché ay maa-absorb po dito.

REP. ATIENZA. Maa-abolish ang Department of Labor?

REP. MARIÑO. Hindi po. Iyon pong component ng foreign assistance ...

REP. ATIENZA. What the Gentleman is saying is that the Department of OFW will now be on its own.

REP. MARIÑO. Yes, that is correct. With regard to ...

REP. ATIENZA. Hindi po ba magiging agrabyado iyong ating mga OFWs kung hindi sila makalapit sa labor attaché na ang trabaho ay pangalagaan iyong kanilang kapakanan? Aasa sila sa Department of OFW na baka wala namang tao roon dahil wala namang opisina ito doon. So, ano, uuwi muna sila dito para humingi ng tulong? Ang tanong ko nga po, iyong labor attaché, ang trabaho niyan talaga at wala siyang gagawin kung hindi iyong alagaan ang kapakanan at proteksiyunan ang interes ng ating mga manggagawa at mga OFW. Kung aalisin natin ito sa kaniya, dapat may ipapalit tayo. Kung wala po e hindi kayo makadadagdag—makakaperwisyo kayo sa kalagayan ngayon ng ating mga empleyado sa labas ng bansa because in cases of need and emergency, they may not know where to go. So, in our desire to provide better services to them, baka lalo silang malagay sa alanganin. Iyan po ba ay tiningnan ninyo sa pagsusuri ng inyong panukalang batas?

REP. MARIÑO. Opo, Mr. Speaker. Iyon pong POLO, which is the Philippine Overseas Labor Office under the DOLE ay maa-absorb po ng bagong departamento. So, sila rin po iyong magiging under

noong bagong department. Ibig sabihin, hindi na po sila under ng DOLE. Iyong mga labor attachés natin under the POLO ay magiging part na ng bagong departamento.

REP. ATIENZA. With all due respect to the Gentleman Sponsor who is impassioned by his desire to see the fruition of his creation of a department, you may be put in a very, very sensitive position when the employees abroad are not provided what they need because you have created another department to whom the Department of Labor will point to—“doon kayo sa Department of OFW dahil inalis na kami diyan sa pagpapatakbo ng inyong mga trabaho at pag-aasikaso ng inyong pangangailangan.”

So, again, I reiterate my doubts on the practicality of creating another department rather than ensuring the efficient performance of the present department. We are creating another hope, a false hope on the part of our people that they will get a better deal when in reality they will not because, again, of shortage of funds. Alam ko na isasagot ng DBM pagdating ng panahong hihingi kayo ng budget especially sa officers and men to be designated or assigned abroad at sasabihin sa inyo, “walang pera.”

Kung iyong Department of Foreign Affairs, hindi nga po mapatakbo nang tama, ang mga embassy natin nabubulok na at ang ating mga konsulada ay nabubulok na rin dahil walang pera. Pagkatapos, bubuo na naman tayo ng department na magkakaroon ng pangangailangan sa foreign assignment pero sasagutin na naman tayo, “wala tayong pera.” I do not believe that your estimate of P3 billion or P8 billion will be sufficient to run a department that will take good care of our laborers and our men and women working abroad.

This is again one of those departments that will not go the right way as you envision it, similar to what the Sponsor of the Department of Housing promised the country, “We will have more houses if a department is made created by Congress.” If your measure is approved, that, in effect, will be the promise—the OFW will get a better deal—when in reality, you will not be able to deliver what you are saying this afternoon. As time comes along and problems arise, this discussion will have to be reviewed by those who will now be litigating cases filed against certain people. Let it be registered that Congressman Atienza pointed out the danger ahead—let those people be responsible for creating an additional problem which may not be solvable by another department. Pagtrabahuin ang Department of Labor, make sure that the OWWA and the POEA—the agencies involved with foreign employment—perform their tasks, but to create another level, Mr. Speaker, is not a solution. Making the present bureaucracy work harder is a better one but not creating another department which, as you said, “kapag nagbago

na ang buhay sa Pilipinas, puwede nang ma-abolish.” Iyon po ba ang sinabi ninyo kanina? Nabanggit po ninyo na hindi permanente ito.

Tatanungin ko po ang ating Sponsor, mayroon na po bang department na binuo noong araw katulad ng Department of Health which was well-studied and necessary, a requirement of good government? The Department of Public Works and all the other departments existing now, has any of them been abolished because hindi na sila kailangan?

REP. MARIÑO. Well, Mr. Speaker, depende nga po ito sa pangangailangan ng ating mga OFW. I have a different optimistic view about this department. We cannot depend our decisions on the failure of other departments. If we do not create other departments to improve the present situation, wala na po tayong magagawa na improvement—wala na pong innovation. So, we cannot have a pessimistic view that since one department failed, all the other departments cannot be created.

So, ito po, alam natin na malaki ang maitutulong nito sa ating mga OFWs. Siyempre po, iba-iba naman po ang mga opinyon at ginagalang ko rin naman po ang opinyon ng ating BUHAY Party-List Representative. Sa mga overseas Filipinos, nakadepende po dito ang kanilang hanapbuhay, at kung minsan nga po ay talagang ang mga pamilya nila ang nagri-request na magkaroon ng isang departamento na tutulong sa kanila. Hindi lang po ito iyong overseas workers na nagtatrabaho abroad but it is also their families who are also our constituents. Naniniwala po ako na talagang kailangan po ang departamento na ito. Now, whether it fails or not, that depends on the executive branch as they will be the ones responsible for the failure or the success of the department. It is not the responsibility of Congress per se alone. We have oversight functions, but it is the job of the Executive and we cannot blame it, you know, on the failure of, for example, our Housing Department and use that as a reason not to create another department—not just this department but also the following department, which creation is also under my Committee, the Department of Disaster Resilience which, later on, we will discuss.

Ang sinasabi ko lamang po na ito—again, I will go back na ito po ay request hindi lamang ng mga OFWs pero request din po ito ng kanilang mga pamilya—ng napakarami pong pamilya—na matagal nang hinihiling na magkaroon ng isang departamento na tutulong sa kanila. The efficiency of these agencies will depend on how the Secretary will be able to manage this department, and it is not just one Secretary also as it is, of course, kailangan din natin magtulung-tulong. Hindi naman po ibig sabihin na dahil may Secretary na ang Department of OFW ay hindi na puwedeng tumulong ang DOLE. I mean, alam naman po natin na kailangan magtulungan ang lahat ng departamento

para ma-solve natin iyong mga problema at hinaing ng ating mga OFW.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, let me make it very clear. The interpellation that I have conducted is in support of the welfare of the OFW. Baka naman lumabas—ang pinalalabas ay kailangan nila at hinihingi nila ang mas higit na atensiyon at tulong, at si Congressman Atienza ay kumontra. Hindi po as I am for giving our OFW all the support that we can give.

In fact, I have been fighting na kapag sila ay dumating sa airport, dapat bigyan sila ng red carpet dahil ganoon kahalaga ang kanilang ginagampanan sa ating buhay at ekonomiya ngayon. Kaya ko ipinaglalaban at tinatanong ang mga katanungang ito sapagkat hindi po ako naniniwala na gaganda ang kalagayan ng OFW kapagka nagkaroon ng another department other than the Department of Labor because that is creating another bureaucracy that will only engage itself with more problems and require more money which should be given to them already. It should be given for job generation. It should be given to the Department of Health para iyong mga pamilya nila ay mabigyan ng health protection. Marami pong pangangailangan ang isang OFW pero hindi po ito ang solusyon.

Iyan ang akin pong pananaw, iyan ang aking damdamin. I would like to put it on record, and I am appealing to all the Members of Congress, that we consider this measure very carefully. Do not rush into a vote. You may be pushing the OFW to desperation. After this ay baka wala na po silang kakapitan na pag-asa sapagkat we have created a false hope which we may not be able to deliver.

Creating a department is never the solution. Making the bureaucracy today function well is the genuine way to national development and a better life of each and every Filipino. I beg to disagree with the Gentleman and I respect his passion for it but please respect and understand our position and be careful in the final wordings of the law. If you have no money, there is no efficiency because money is always the problem of new creations; and power, again, comes very second. Who will be appointed to these positions will again, be, the problem samantalang may Department of Labor tayo. Kung hindi nagtatrabaho si Secretary Bello, punahin siya ng ating Pangulo. Kung siya naman ay nagtatrabaho, payuhan na lang ng Kongreso as an oversight function but definitely, creating another level which will only be a further complication of the functions of the DOLE and will place the OFW in a worse condition.

Sana po ay tingnan ninyo ang mga pinag-usapan natin at tingnan po ninyo ang aming punto de vista na gusto lamang namin tumulong sa ating mga OFWs, as I am not definitely lesser—lest we be misunderstood that you are the only one concerned about the fate of

the OFW. I know that the Members of Congress have that sentiment in their hearts pero kailangan pong pag-usapan pa at pag-aralan pa bago tayo bumoto dito sa panukalang ito. I urge all the thinking Members of Congress to consider the answers given by the Sponsor to prove that this measure—even he himself is not sure whether this will solve the problem or not—but as we see it now, it will complicate the decision-making process which will give the OFW a lesser opportunity at a better deal.

Maraming-maraming salamat sa ating Sponsor. I wish him well, but I hope he will study this measure much more than what he had done to be able to answer the questions that will arise later on.

Why did you sponsor it? Why did you vote for it? I have a clear conscience and I insisted on what is right. E kung mananalo ito dito sa ating Kapulungan, let it be, but I am not part of that. I will stand on my own, on my theory that an efficiently-run department with the sole responsibility on a particular sector should be supported and not undermined by another office.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor.

REP. MARIÑO. Mr. Speaker, I respect the view of the Gentleman from BUHAY Party-List, but I am very sure that this department will change the lives of our OFWs. We will never find out if it will be successful or not unless we create this department and so, we cannot have a pessimistic view on creating this department.

We are very hopeful that all of us will decide on this matter. I encourage all our Members to ask also their constituents whether or not this department will help them in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, to continue with his interpellation is Hon. Edcel Lagman. Based on the records, Hon. Edcel Lagman requested 30 minutes for the continuation of his interpellation. I therefore move that he be recognized and given 30 minutes to continue with his interpellation.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pimentel). Hon. Edcel Lagman is recognized. You have 30 minutes.

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

Earlier, I heard the distinguished Sponsor say that Singapore has a small population, so much so that a Department of Housing is not justified in that country. Mr. Speaker, although I am ready to

continue with my interpellation, like Singapore, the Plenary is not populated. It is sparsely populated and so, I move for a recess so that I can confer with the Majority Leader.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the session.

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

It was 5:21 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

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

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 5832

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I join Hon. Edcel Lagman and I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 5832.

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

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

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

It was 5:24 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:48 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we immediately transmit to the Senate the bills earlier approved on Third Reading.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

PRIVILEGE HOUR

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, with leave of the House, I move that we open the Privilege Hour.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Chair declares a Privilege Hour.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Hon. Raul V. Del Mar of the First District of Cebu to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pimentel). Hon. Raul V. Del Mar is recognized.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. DEL MAR

REP. DEL MAR. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Majority Leader.

For the record, this Representation denies that:

1. The Visayas bloc had met and agreed to take a stand on the controversy over the renewal of the ABS-CBN franchise; and
2. That the Visayas bloc supported the stand of the Speaker that there was no urgent need to act on the bills for the network's continued operation.

Each member of the Visayas bloc has been allowed to express or not to express his or her opinion on the issue. No position has been taken by the Visayas bloc as a group on the ABS-CBN issue. Reports in the media and in other forums, however, attributed to a fellow Congressman from Cebu, are therefore not true and have no basis in fact. Not a shred of truth in it.

For myself, I know I did not express support to the purported view of the Visayas bloc. I know the Visayas bloc did not meet, did not call a meeting, did not even attempt to meet over the ABS-CBN issue. To say and circulate that the Visayas bloc did is a falsehood and a misrepresentation that wound the core of the reason for its being as an alliance of legislators from the Visayas Region.

On the issue of renewal of the ABS-CBN franchise, I, personally and on my own, have expressed my stand clearly and explicitly. The broadcast network should be given its day in Congress and its day in court. Due process and fair hearing are major components under a rule of law. To us legislators, the hearing is crucial to our vote on the network's fate. I also owe it to my

constituents who have watched and listened to the network's programs, have liked some of its programs and disliked others, have accepted and at times, rejected its information and opinion, in sum, have turned to ABS-CBN, as they have also turned to other networks, as source of entertainment and enlightenment.

Pursuant to what I believe, Mr. Speaker, I filed a resolution for the extension of the authority of ABS-CBN to operate until the closing day of this Eighteenth Congress in June 2022, or until we decide on the renewal or rejection of the pending bills on the network's fate. It has become increasingly clear, however, that there is no more time either for consideration of the main franchise or the resolution on its provisional operation. The windows and the gates to any of those are inexorably closing.

I and my colleagues may just have to pin our hopes that the honorable Speaker will be faithful to the vow and promise he has repeatedly made on various public forums that ABS-CBN will be given a fair hearing to inform us legislators on the merits of its application and that until the said hearing is complete and the votes taken, the broadcast network will be allowed to continue its operations.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, next to avail of the Privilege Hour is Hon. Mark O. Go.

REP. ABELLANOSA. Mr. Speaker, may I interpellate on the speech of ...

REP. PALMA. I withdraw my motion, Mr. Speaker, and I move that Hon. Rodrigo A. Abellanosa be recognized for his interpellation.

REP. ABELLANOSA. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pimentel). Hon. Rodrigo A. Abellanosa is recognized.

REP. ABELLANOSA. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I would just like to express—I am sorry, I will just move to the other podium.

Mr. Speaker, this Representation would like to express his disappointment over the press statement issued by our colleague, a fellow Cebuano legislator from the Fifth District of Cebu Province, Hon. Vincent Franco "Duke" D. Frasco, to the effect of grossly misrepresenting, in a way, by saying that almost all the 48, if not the 48, Congressmen from the Visayas bloc are supportive of the direction of the Speaker in

delaying or in not acting immediately on the renewal of the franchise of ABS-CBN.

I wish to say here that I signed Resolution No. 639, and before I proceed, I beg the pardon of our colleague here, Hon. Raul V. Del Mar, if I may be allowed to continue with my expression of my sentiment with regard to the issue that you have raised?

REP. DEL MAR. Certainly, to my partner in Cebu City. I represent the First District and he, the Second. Please go ahead.

REP. ABELLANOSA. To the effect that I, being a Representative coming from the Visayas was alluded to be part of these 48 representatives who are in favor of not acting on the renewal of the ABS-CBN franchise immediately because I signed Resolution No. 639, Mr. Speaker, which urges the Committee on Legislative Franchises to consolidate all these pending bills and to immediately report in Plenary the action of the Committee with regard to the pending application of renewal of the franchise of ABS-CBN. To me, Mr. Speaker, this is deplorable because I have made a stand on this matter that the renewal of the franchise of ABS-CBN must be acted upon immediately. Sometimes, I feel challenged by some of my constituents who confront me on why the House of Representatives is not doing anything despite the call of the President himself for Congress to act on it, despite the call of Senator Bong Go that Congress, the House of Representatives, must already tackle this issue of the renewal of the franchise.

So, I am one with the Members of this august Body, Mr. Speaker, who wish that immediately, the Committee on Legislative Franchises, without shortcutting it, without omitting it. We are not saying that we should shortcut the process because it has been there in the Committee since last year or many, many months ago. So, it is not that we do not wish it to be rushed, because it is not a point about rushing this matter because it has been there for a long time already.

So, in response to the call of the President, in response to the call of some of the Senators who wish that we take up this matter, I once again make it clear, Mr. Speaker, that I am offended, that I take offense, and I take exception to the statement of Cong. Duke Frasco that I am one of those who do not want this matter of the renewal of the ABS-CBN franchise delayed further.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. DEL MAR. Mr. Speaker, I believe there is no interpellation to answer. The Gentleman has made a manifestation, so, it is duly noted, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we also note the manifestation of Hon. Rodrigo A. Abellanos. I move that the speech given by Hon. Raul V. Del Mar be referred to the Committee on Rules for appropriate action.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pimentel). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the privilege speech of Hon. Raul V. Del Mar is referred to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, next to avail of the Privilege Hour is Hon. Mark O. Go of the Lone District of Baguio City. I move that he be recognized.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pimentel). Hon. Mark O. Go is recognized.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. GO (M.)

REP. GO (M.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To my esteemed colleagues here in the House of Representatives, and to all the guests who have graced us with their valued presence, a pleasant and fruitful afternoon. Friends and colleagues, I stand on a matter of privilege. In the past 10 years, the country has continuously boasted increases in our gross domestic product. In fact, the Philippines is frequently cited as a rising tiger among emerging economies but despite strong macroeconomic performance, income inequality throughout the country remains evident. In order to lift millions out of poverty and to elevate the Filipino's standard of living, we need to ensure that our growth is not only sustainable but also inclusive. It is toward this end that we must continue to focus on generating productive and higher quality employment.

The Philippines closed 2019 with a record low of 4.5 percent unemployment rate. This is the lowest unemployment rate we had in a period of 25 years, from 1994 to 2019. With unemployment reaching an all-time high in 2000 at 13.9 percent and averaging at 8.24 percent throughout the 25 years span, our 4.5 percent record is indeed noteworthy, and we wish to commend all our partners in the executive branch and in the private sector for making this happen. That being said, we have to understand that unemployment as a metric, although effective, is still crude as the unemployment rate only measures the number of persons actively looking for work as a percentage of our national labor force. It does not take into account those who have unwillingly dropped out of the workforce. Further, we may be lowering the unemployment rate but we are not

ensuring that we truly optimize the skills, talents and trainings of our working class.

Meanwhile, the country's labor force participation currently stands at 61.47 percent, which is at par with the global figure. Underemployment, on the other hand, dropped to 14 percent. In terms of where we are at in eradicating poverty, there are, as of latest figures, 17.6 million poor Filipinos which is about 16.6 percent of the total population. With the government's adjustment of its target to trim down our poverty rate to only 11 percent by 2022, there is a need to better understand the state of our employment and the current labor market.

According to the latest World Bank figures, labor productivity in the Philippines lags behind our regional peers. In 2019, productivity among the Philippines' employed labor force was \$20,671 per worker which was 3.8 percent higher than 2018's \$19,900. This, however, is still below the global average of \$37,739 and is lower than our neighbors: Brunei with \$170,536, Singapore with \$153,852, Malaysia with \$60,187, Thailand with \$31,007, and Indonesia with \$25,805. Our labor productivity, on the other hand, is above that of Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia. Currently, there is very limited incentive to encourage productivity, so, even if our GDP continues to grow annually, we still fall below the regional average.

According to the PSA data, the services sector accounts for 57.8 percent of the country's GDP, industry contributes 34.1 percent and the agricultural sector contributes 8.1 percent of the national economy. Likewise, the services sector is our biggest employer, providing livelihood to 56.66 percent of our working population. Meanwhile, 24.95 percent is employed in the agricultural sector while the remaining 18.93 percent is in the industry. While our services sector continues to grow, reaching a growth of 7.1 percent last year, our agricultural sector still falls significantly behind. Although employing almost a quarter of our working population, agriculture only registered 1.5 percent growth in 2019. Low productivity and high production costs have long been the problem of our agricultural sector. Job and skills mismatch is another often cited hindrance to the full utilization of our labor force and development of employment conditions. According to the DOLE, there were 1.29 million job applicants for 4.23 million domestic and international job vacancies in 2016. Of these, only around 400,000 successful applicants were hired. With the reforms in our educational system, we were able to increase the number of our human capital but whether they are qualified or not, is a different question altogether. As observed by employers, a college diploma by itself does not automatically equate to being job ready. According to the PSA data as of July 2019, 30.2 percent of those who are unemployed are in fact college graduates. Meanwhile, the percentage of college graduates over

the total employed sector is only 17.6 percent. We can observe that many job applicants do not have the right degrees, skills and trainings that suit the demands of the growing industries.

According to the study of the Philippine Institute for Development Studies or PIDS, there are four observable difficulties in producing the appropriate manpower and skills. First, there is no one-to-one correspondence between courses and jobs such that an engineer's involvement in an enterprise is not constrained to the stages of production only, but he can also be part of management. The second observation is that our indicators are not specific enough. As mentioned earlier, unemployment rate is a very crude measure. We have to consider what the skills and competencies of our people are, their reasons for not landing jobs, and the demands of the industries that prevail. The third observation is the rapid change in technology. We live in a fast-paced, technologically-driven environment. The pace by which new technologies and new methodologies are being developed is unprecedented. According to the Philippine Institute for Development Studies, in many cases, by the time the students graduate, half of what they learn in school is already obsolete. Last is the skill production lag. In order to keep applicants abreast with up-to-date and relevant skills and competencies, they would need to undergo continuous trainings and learning programs, and these would require adequate time and resources.

As observed, the service sector is our fastest growing sector and biggest employer. Business process outsourcing played a significant role in the growth of our services sector and in providing gainful employment to many Filipinos. Participation however in this growing sector demands specific skill sets and higher educational requirements which may alienate many. Another important segment in the service sector is tourism. Tourism accounted for 5.4 million jobs in the Philippines in 2018. In the same year, the theme of the ASEAN tourism was "Accessible Tourism for All." It was a recognition of the potential tourism for inclusive growth. It is projected that ASEAN tourism will rake up \$222.8 billion in 2027; however, of the 10 ASEAN member-countries, the Philippines ranked sixth place in terms of tourist arrivals. It should be noted, however, that said projection was made before the hit of the coronavirus outbreak.

According to the estimate of Tourism Sec. Bernadette Romulo-Puyat, we could lose as much as P14.8 billion in February alone due to the outbreak. That being said, we have been reassured by the good Secretary during last month's joint Committee hearings of the Committees on Tourism and Economic Affairs that efforts are being taken to soften the blow of the outbreak such as rolling out discounted packages and strengthening our domestic tourism. If we are truly to

capitalize on the potentials of our tourism sector in this particular case, the development of the capacities of our human capital through education and training must be complemented with sustainable environmental policies and construction of sufficient facilities and infrastructures.

Another significant contributor to our economy, and what actually spared us from the major effects of the fluctuating global economy, is our OFW sector. The remittances of Filipinos working overseas have continually grown over the years as the types of work the OFWs now land have also changed from low-end service jobs to professional jobs requiring higher education. In fact, the Bangko Sentral reported a record high of \$33.5 billion in OFW remittances in 2019 and this is 3.9 percent higher compared with the 2018's \$32.2 billion. For college graduates who are either unable to land jobs domestically or are unable to land jobs that pay satisfactorily, working overseas is a common option. In fact, in 2014, 54.9 percent of OFWs are college graduates, which is more than twice as high as our domestic labor market. Does this mean that our graduates are able to find jobs abroad suitable with their college degrees? Not necessarily but the wide salary difference between overseas and local jobs is a sufficient motivation for many Filipinos to prefer working abroad.

To our partners in government, we need to develop new mechanisms and matrices to measure our progress in addressing job and skills mismatch. We are successfully bringing down unemployment in the country, but without considering the kind of jobs our working class lands on, it may give us skewed appreciation of how things truly are at the grassroots. Are these jobs capable of lifting the standard of living of the working class? Are we maximizing the full potential of our college graduates and our skilled workers?

Especially now that we are fully subsidizing the education of students in SUCs and LUCs, we have to ensure that our investment in human capital is not put to waste when four years later, these graduates will not be able to land gainful employment because of their either overqualification or underqualification and so, they will have to settle for jobs that do not make use of the knowledge and skills they had acquired and developed in college which were paid for through taxpayers' hard-earned money. Apart from unemployment and underemployment, and labor participation rate, we have to integrate in the regular analysis of our prevailing labor conditions the profile of our workforce, the profile of jobs in demand, the rise and fall of industries, and such other factors that address job mismatch. We have to identify where the jobs are and what skills and competencies are required to fill up these vacancies. We should not stop at asking if our graduates were able to land jobs, but focus more on whether we were able to truly utilize the skills and competencies of our workforce.

In 2016, the PIDS released a study entitled: “Are Higher Education Institutions Responsive to Changes in the Labor Market?” The results of the study showed that there is a shortage of college graduates in the fast-growing service sectors. According to the study, our education curriculum is no longer responsive to the demands of industries and businesses operating in this global economy. The CHED has consistently encouraged incoming students to enroll in courses like agriculture, engineering, science and math, IT, teacher education, and health sciences; however, of last year’s 751,301 college graduates, more than one in four were graduates of business administration and related fields. Meanwhile, of the total number of graduates for the year, only three percent finished a degree in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary.

The low level of productivity and slow growth in the country’s agricultural sector has resulted in high incidence of poverty within the sector and because of the shift in our economy from agriculture to service and the displayed low economics share of agriculture in the national economy, students are now less interested in pursuing a degree and a career in agriculture. This is in turn detrimental to the state of our agricultural sector. Without scholars, innovators, investors and workers to sustain the future of agriculture, it will always be an uphill battle to ensure food security and inclusive growth, eradicate poverty and spur rural development. Apart from securing our agricultural sector, we need to be efficient and dynamic in developing and improving the curriculum of the programs we offer in order to address industry needs. There must be established, open and continuous communication lines between learning institutions and the business sector in order to sustain a mutually edifying symbiotic relationship between them. These partnerships would hopefully yield an updated curricula, the development of standards and industry practices, an increased productivity, on-the-job training programs and mentoring programs, and other mutually beneficial initiatives.

With the help of the appropriate government agencies, there is a need to study which industries or sub-industries are already saturated with the appropriate college graduates; which industries require more graduates and skilled workers; which degree programs are more needed in the domestic market; and which ones are more marketable overseas. We also have to determine the industries with which we have a comparative advantage and develop the appropriate programs to capitalize on these. There is also a need to determine if we are able to truly prepare students for professional work after graduation. The performance of our graduates in the PRC-administered licensure examinations would tell us otherwise. At a passing rate of only 37.87 percent on the average as of the CHED’s 2019 data, we have to determine where the gaps are in the education and

training of professionals and act accordingly. After years of studying in college, subsidized by the government, college graduates who are unable to pass the board exams would not be able to practice the professions they trained for and instead, would have to land jobs where their skills are not fit for.

Armed with this information, there is a need to develop information dissemination campaigns among the youth and engage them towards degree programs that would lead to gainful employment that support industries which are significant in building the economy of our country. In order to ensure that we catch those who have fallen through the cracks of development, we have to give priority to the development of the competencies of persons with disability and the elderly who are still very much able to contribute to national productivity. Let us help SUCs and LUCs in creating a qualified and competent workforce. Let us fully utilize the CHED and TESDA by expanding their responsibilities and strengthening their powers that would allow them to respond to the growing needs of present-day educational system.

On the part of the industries, we need to ensure that the lives of our employees develop along with our rise. Employers and labor are our partners in pursuing the growth of industries and sustaining our economy. We must all work together in order to raise the productivity in our industries, and such growth should lead to the creation of more jobs and ensure decent lives for the working class. Over the years, brain drain is becoming a problem as our college graduates and skilled workers leave the country for higher salaries abroad. The OFW sector is very much responsible for the continuous growth of the national economy, but working overseas should be a free choice for Filipinos seeking employment, and should not be seen as the only option for survival. For education to fully serve its purpose of being an equalizer, we must have industries that would be able to absorb the 700,000 graduates we produce annually.

We have to strengthen our domestic industries by encouraging firms and workers to become more productive. Increasing productivity should be treated as part of the national agenda and priority, and not merely as a goal at the company level. We can do this by strengthening bipartite mechanisms and introducing productivity concepts to our workforce early on by requiring the incorporation of concepts in the curricula of basic and higher education. We must also require businesses to adopt schemes that would incentivize productivity among workers, which includes service incentive programs, profit-sharing mechanisms and the improvement of working conditions. These are only a few of the things that we can do to encourage productivity and fully utilize the skills and competencies of our graduates and skilled workforce.

For far too long, the word “inequality” has so adequately captured the socioeconomic landscape of the country. Increased labor productivity, complemented with education and skills training that are responsive to the modern day demands of the industries—these must be our focus to curb poverty and inequality, and to fully utilize the strengths of the Filipino working class. Employment is a key towards growth that is not merely reflected in our strong macroeconomic indicators, but is actually translated in the lives of the Filipino people. Nation-building is a responsibility shared by all, and I believe in what a Filipino can do, given the right opportunities to share in the joy and pride of contributing to the productivity and growth of our nation. To create decent jobs is to further social justice.

My esteemed colleagues, let us work together to ensure productive, gainful and dignified jobs for the Filipino people. After all, they were first to give us our jobs that fateful election day.

Again, marami pong salamat at magandang gabi po sa inyong lahat.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Hon. Ferdinand R. Gaité for his interpellation.

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

REP. GAITE. Salamat, Mr. Speaker. Sa ating kapitapang Kinatawan na si Mark Go, papahintulutan ba na magbigay ako, o magtanong, ng ilang questions regarding sa privilege speech ninyo, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GO (M.). Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Salamat po. Kaisa namin kayo, Cong. Mark Go, sa isang napakabigat na suliranin ng ating bayan, ang problema sa employment at hindi lang ito, pero pati na rin ang problema sa underemployment. Iyan ang dalawang factors na nagko-cause ng matinding kahirapan as shown in your PowerPoint presentation during your speech.

Mr. Speaker, sa inyo bang pananaw ngayon, ang gist ng pagkaunawa ng Kinatawan ito ay iyong nangyayaring mismatch sa usapin ng edukasyon o training at iyong trabaho na available sa kasalukuyang employment opportunities sa ating bansa. Dati po, ang isang naging solusyon ay iyong K to 12 Program na tulad ng modelo sa Estados Unidos at mga ibang bansa, na kapag ikaw ay nakatapos ng high school, ikaw daw ay employable. Sa inyong ipinakitang datos, marami ang ating graduates, college na nga, pero hindi

pa rin ma-employ dahil sa isang problema nga, iyong mismatch. Ano po ba ang tingin ninyo sa suliranin ito hinggil sa existing education program at iyong mismatch nito sa ating employment opportunities sa ating bansa?

REP. GO (M.). Gusto ko pong sagutin iyong tungkol sa K to 12 Program muna. Iyon pong hindi nakakapagtrabaho after graduation, ito iyong mga kumuha ng tech-voc track. Ang objective po ng K to 12, kapag ikaw ay nakatapos ng tech-voc track under the K to 12 Program, dapat ready ka nang magtrabaho pero sa mga industriya natin sa Pilipinas, dahil siguro maraming mga graduates ng kolehiyo, ang gusto nilang piliin ay iyong mga nag-graduate ng kolehiyo. Even then, karamihan sa graduates natin ay hindi pa rin nakakahanap ng trabaho sa ating bansa.

Pinakita ko kanina sa aking talumpati na out of 1.3 million Filipinos na nag-apply given about more than four million jobs, ang nakapasok lang is about 700,000. So, parang iyong mga pinag-aralan nila at mga degree na tinapos nila ay hindi sapat sa pangangailangan ng mga kumpanya sa ating bansa. Kailangan dito ay gumawa tayo ng paraan na magkaroon ng tunay na ugnayan ang industriya at ang ating edukasyon para mag-match, at kung ano ang kailangan ng industriya, dapat iyon ang ituro natin sa ating iba't ibang paaralan. Ito ay kailangan nating gawin. Kanina nga ay nag-file ako ng bill to strengthen the Commission on Higher Education para magingnan nila at mabigyan ng solusyon itong problema natin sa mismatch. Inaasahan ko na kapag binigyan natin ng kapangyarihan ang CHED, mabibigyan natin ng kalutasan itong problema sa mismatch.

Pangalawa rito, ang gusto natin sa pagkakaroon ng ugnayan ng mga industriya at ng ating edukasyon, kailangan na nag-aaral pa lang ang ating mga estudyante ay mayroon na silang karanasan at ito ay kanilang makukuha kung sila ay mabibigyan ng tinatawag nating OJT o on-the-job training. Importante ito at ito ang magiging daan para mabigyan natin ng kalutasan ang problema sa mismatch.

REP. GAITE. Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker, at sa ating kagalang-galang na Cong. Mark Go sa paglilinaw. Sa inyong pananaw, doon sa mga nakatapos ba ng high school, ng K to 12, bagamat may mga datos na sinasabi na iilan lang, actually ang nakakatapos hanggang kolehiyo, ayon sa isang nabasa kong pahayag, wala pang 10 porsiyento ng buong populasyon ng mag-aaral ay makakatapos ng kolehiyo. Ibig sabihin, 90 porsiyento ay maaaring umabot college level o hindi kaya ay mas mababa pa. Mas marami talaga ang hindi nakakaabot ng kolehiyo sa napakaraming dahilan kagaya ng being financially inadequate, nawalan ng interest para ituloy pa o i-pursue ang pag-aaral at iba pang mga dahilan, ngunit mas madalas kaysa hindi

iyong financial problem na panustos sa pag-aaral sa kolehiyo.

Kung mamarapatin ng ating kagalang-galang na Cong. Mark Go, sa tingin ninyo po, anong klase o anong uri ng trabaho ang nakukuha ng ating high school graduates sa pagtatrabaho? Nabanggit po ninyo ang tech-voc ang kadalasang tinatapos. Ito ba ay masasabi ba natin na nagbibigay ng decent o nakabubuhay na sahod? Masasabi ba nating mas maganda ang trabaho ng high school graduate kaysa sa college level, Mr. Speaker?

REP. GO (M.). Dapat we should have jobs, you know, better than those sa high school. Dapat kung ikaw ay isang college graduate, talagang kailangan magkaroon ka ng magandang trabaho pero sabi nga natin, iyong ibang mga kababayan natin, they do not like to pursue college education, so, sila ay kumukuha ng tech-voc courses para kaagad silang makapagtrabaho.

Ang ating gobyerno, when we passed the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education, have given a lot of opportunities para sa ating mga kababayan na makapagaral ng libre, lalong-lalo na sa state universities and colleges at sa lahat din ng local universities and colleges. So, ito ay isang paraan o one-step forward para ma-address natin iyong kakulangan ng edukasyon ng ating mga kababayan at ito ang sinasabi nating isang equalizer, but we should not only be interested on sending people sa mga iba't ibang paaralan, kundi kailangan siguraduhin natin na sila ay matuto ng tamang skills and competencies that are needed in the various industries in our country at iyon ang kailangan nating i-address. It is not sufficient that you finish a degree, but it is also important how you are going to use the skills and competencies that you learned.

Ito ay kailangang bigyan natin ng masusing atensiyon kaya nga iyong ating na-file na bill para amyendahan ang probisyon sa mga responsibilidad ng Commission on Higher Education ay para ma-address natin ito. Hindi lamang ang mismatching pero ang gusto rin natin dito ay iyong pagandahin ang resulta ng mga eksaminasyon na ibinibigay ng PRC. Can you imagine, only 37 percent on the average ang pumapasa sa lahat ng board exams na ibinibigay ng PRC? Just imagine, you finished a degree, take the board exam, but you cannot work because you do not have the necessary qualifications in terms of passing the board exam. Ito ay isang problema and so, I challenge iyong ating iba't ibang unibersidad at ang Commission on Higher Education na ma-address ito.

REP. GAITE. Maraming salamat sa kasagutan sapagkat tama po. Liban nga sa problemang mismatching, marami sa ating mga mamamayan ay hindi equipped para makapasok doon sa trabaho na gusto nilang pasukin, bunga na nga ito ng binabanggit na kakulangan

ng pagsasanay, edukasyon at iba pa. Nakakabahala dahil sa datos na ipinakita ng ating kagalang-galang na Congressman, ipinakitang seemingly na mababa ang kawalan ng empleyo at 4.5 percent, pero kung ang tanong ay ano iyong kalidad ng trabaho, kung iyong usapin ng underemployment ay hindi pa masyadong nalinaw sapagkat, though as defined, sinabi na sa underemployment, ito ay iyong mga manggagawang naghahanap pa ng karagdagang trabaho, kadalasan ang dahilan kung bakit naghahanap ng trabaho ay dahil sahod na tinatanggap ng kasalukuyang manggagawa ay hindi sumasapat sa kaniyang pangangailangan.

Nabanggit ng ating kagalang-galang na Congressman, Mr. Speaker, na kailangan nating itaas ang produktibidad at totoo iyon, napakahalaga nito lalo na kung inihambing sa mga ibang bansa ay mas mataas na produktibidad. Naipaliwanag iyong sa agrikultura na napakababa ng ating produktibidad ngunit tulad ng na-observe po natin, mas marami na, lalo na iyong mga anak ng mga magsasaka natin, ang ayaw nang piliin na tumuloy sa pagsasaka. Ano po kaya ang dahilan dito? Maaari bang sabihin na may mga patakaran ngayon na nadi-disincentivize iyong pagpasok nila sa agrikultura? Hindi kaya iyong Rice Import Liberalization Law na nagtulak sa mas mababang presyo ng palay ay dini-disincentivize ang mga estudyante o ng mga bata na kumuha ng agrikultura dahil hindi na profitable, hindi na magiging kaaya-aya bilang isang career ng isang mamamayang Pilipino, Mr. Speaker?

REP. GO (M.). Mr. Speaker, hindi natin puwedeng sabihin na ito iyong nag-discourage o nag-disincentivize sa ating mga estudyante para kumuha ng agrikultura, itong mga nangyayari ngayon at mga pinaiiral na mga polisiya kasi ito ay matagal nang panahon na nangyayari. Year in year out, bumababa ang interes ng ating mga kababayan na mag-take ng mga kurso related to agriculture. Nakita natin na ang gusto kasi ng karamihan ay ang white collar jobs at para makuha iyan ay kailangan ibang kursong ang kunin nila.

At this juncture, Deputy Speaker Pimentel relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Aurelio "Dong" D. Gonzales Jr.

So, there is definitely a need that we encourage our kababayans na kumuha ng kurso na related to agriculture kasi ang ating bansa ay, sabihin na natin, isang agricultural country at para maibsan natin ang kahirapan, we should utilize this resource of the country. Kung makita natin na iyong mga kumukuha ng kurso sa agrikultura, veterinary at fishery ay napakababa at ang resulta ng productivity nito year to year, ang increase lang is 1.5 percent compared to the other industries, kailangan talaga bigyan natin ng pansin ito, at ayaw ko namang sisihin ang mga polisiya. I think there should

be a collective effort. Iyong mga binibigyan natin ng scholarships sa college, siguro, simulan na natin ngayon na dagdagan ang pondo para sa mga estudyante natin na kukuha ng agrikultura.

REP. GAITE. Salamat po, Mr. Speaker. Kaisa po kami ng ating kagalang-galang na Cong. Mark Go sa pagbibigay ng prayoridad o emphasis sa agrikultura dahil alam naman natin na ang ating mga magsasaka ang nagpapakain ng ating bayan. Napakahalaga ito, tulad ng nabanggit ninyo, sa larangan ng agrikultura dahil ito ang natural resource natin na hindi pa natin talaga nama-maximize kung kaya't napakababa ng produktibidad. Nabanggit din po ninyo, at isa pang mayor na usapin ito at kami po ay kaisa rin dito, doon sa usapin ng ating overseas workers na napipilitan na magtrabaho sa ibayong dagat, at mayroon po kayong magandang pagsusuri at binanggit po ninyo: maraming napipilitang magtrabaho sa ibang bansa dahil maaaring hindi sapat iyong bilang ng job opportunities sa ating bansa, at nabanggit din iyong mababang pasahod, sa esensiya, iyon ang nagda-drive sa ibang mga Pilipino na magtrabaho sa ibang bansa.

Ang tanong ko po, bale kung gayon, kung profitable in the same way sa OFWs, kung profitable ang ating pagsasaka, maging ito ay magpupuno sa kaniyang mga pangangailangan at labis na makakatulong ito, hindi lamang sa sarili niya kung hindi sa ating bansa, hindi ba maaaring isang paraan ito para i-incentivize iyong pagpasok muli sa agrikultura bilang isang undertaking, at bilang isang mamamayan na kayang buhayin ang kaniyang pamilya, kayang pakainin ang normally ang family size na lima, na magpo-provide rin ng additional value-added products and services na mas malaki pa ang impact kaysa nga sa binabanggit na services, na sa totoo lang iyan ang pinakamalaki ngayon pero in terms of value-added, pagkatapos na ibigay iyong services, tapos na. Hindi po tulad sa agrikultura at isa pa sa industriya, at kanina nga sa Committee on Labor and Employment ay nababahala tayo dahil may mga manufacturing enterprises tulad nang nababalitaan, na ang Honda, ang kanilang car manufacturing division ay magsasara. May balita na ang ibang manufacturing companies ay nagbabalak na ring mag-downsize dahil sa nababanggit, at paulit-ulit na sinasabi during the hearing, na global strategy ng mga multinational corporations to reconcentrate their operations in a few or selected areas. Hindi po ba iyon puwede rin nating gawan ng kongkretong policy para maging kaenganyo na ang ating mga mamamayan ay piliin muli iyong mga programa o mga kurso sa agrikultura para magkaroon muli ng pagkabuhay ang ating agrikultura para makatulong sa ating ekonomiya, Mr. Speaker?

REP. GO (M.). Mr. Speaker, I agree with you na kailangan talagang bigyan natin ng malaking atensiyon

at i-encourage natin o magbigay ng incentive para mabigyan ng focus ang ating agrikultura. Alam mo, noong ako ay nag-aaral sa Pamantasan ng Pilipinas, ako ay naniniwala sa tinatawag kong “balanced growth,” na hindi puwede na industriyalisasyon lang tayo at kailangan may growth din ang agrikultura. Ang agrikultura will supply the raw materials to our industries, at iyong industriya natin ang magpo-produce ng mga produkto na gagamitin sa agrikultura kaya balanse ang development. Kailangan natin iyan pero tayo ngayon ay naiiwan na. Ang pinakamalaking pinagkakakitaan ng bansa natin ay ang service sector.

Of course, na-save tayo dahil ng ating OFWs. They remitted about \$222 billion last 2019, napakalaki nito. It is high time, and this is a wake-up call, that we start looking back dito sa ating agrikultura dahil napabayaan ito. Siguro, we focused more on other things, but I think this is the time to look back. As Chair of the Committee on Higher and Technical Education, I see na marami tayong state universities and colleges and out of the 111 state universities and colleges, siguro about 50 ay mayroon silang mga kurso na ino-offer sa agrikultura at ibang related programs sa agrikultura.

So, kailangan matutukan natin ito para ma-strengthen iyong mga programa sa agrikultura sa iba't ibang universities na ito para ma-encourage iyong ating mga estudyante na kumuha nito, at kung sila ay makatapos, hindi lamang sila ay magiging empleyado at magiging magsasaka kundi puwede silang maging entrepreneurs within the agricultural sector.

REP. GAITE. Salamat po, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. Talagang nasasapol, at kami ay nakikiisa, sa inyong pananaw na talagang napakahalaga ng agrikultura. Tama po iyong nabanggit na dapat balanse sa pangangailangan ng ating industriya sapagkat iyan ang ating, kung sasabihin, ay comparative advantage. As a matter of fact, may balita nga na maraming mga bansa na gustong ma-maximize o ma-exploit iyong ating resources at pinipili nga nila na magtanim ng iba't ibang produkto pero hindi para sa ating sariling domestic demand kung hindi para sa kanilang pangangailangan. Iyon yata ang blessing ng ating bansa dahil malapit tayo sa tropical zone, mayroong ample dapat tayo ng tubig at araw para sa ganitong uri ng masaganang agrikultura.

Panghuli po, nabasa ko lang sa ating sinasabing SDGs na sinasabi sa ilalim ng development goals, na sa goal no. 8, ang sabi dito ay dapat mayroon tayong decent work and economic growth and that we should achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading innovation, through a focus on high value-added and labor-intensive products. Naniniwala po kami na ang agrikultura ay magpo-fall under this category. Tama po iyong observation na hindi maaaring puro services lamang ang i-provide natin sapagkat iyong tenability

nito, tulad nga ng problema natin at nabanggit iyong turismo na dahil sa COVID-19 ngayon ay apektado ang lahat ng industriya patungkol sa turismo. Kahit iyong ating overseas Filipino workers, batay na nga sa datos mismo ng Department of Labor, bagamat, at nagugulat rin ako, na tumaas iyong remittances pero iyong bilang ng mga manggagawa na nade-deploy abroad apparently ay bumababa. That was the data presented by the Department of Labor, whether sea-based or land-based.

REP. GO (M.). Yes.

REP. GAITE. Ang point po, hindi talaga natin maaasahan ito sa matagal na panahon at kung tamang ipofocus natin ang ating sistemang edukasyon para mag-fit doon sa pangangailangan ng ating empleyo, malaki ang advantage na makukuha ng mga mamamayang Pilipino sa ganitong larangan na magkaroon ng isang sistema ng edukasyon na angkop o sang-ayon sa pangangailangan ng ating agrikultura, ng ating industriya at ng iba't ibang sektor ng ating lipunan.

Kaya maraming salamat po sa inyong mga paglilinaw at kami po ay nakikiisa sa panawagang lalo nating paunlarin ang ating edukasyon para ang edukasyon ang paraan para makalaya sa kahirapan.

Maraming salamat po.

REP. GO (M.). Marami pong salamat, Congressman Gaité. Mr. Speaker, marami pong salamat at magandang hapon po.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that the speech of Hon. Mark O. Go and the interpellations thereon be referred to the Committee on Rules for appropriate action.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The privilege speech of Cong. Mark Go will be referred to the Committee on Rules for appropriate action.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 59

Continuation

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 59, contained under

Committee Report No. 73, and for this purpose, that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.). 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 proposed measure.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 59, entitled: AN ACT SETTING THE MINIMUM PAID-UP CAPITAL AND LOCALLY PRODUCED STOCK INVENTORY REQUIREMENTS FOR FOREIGN RETAIL BUSINESS ENTERPRISES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8762, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "RETAIL TRADE LIBERALIZATION ACT OF 2000."

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, our parliamentary status is that we are in the period of sponsorship and debate and with that, I move that we recognize Hon. Victor A. Yap to continue sponsoring the measure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.). The Gentleman from Tarlac, Cong. Victor Yap, is recognized.

REP. YAP (V.). Mr. Speaker, thank you very much to the Rules Committee for bringing this up again which got stalled late last year, and we are open to the debate and discussion on this proposed Bill, Mr. Speaker.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, with that, I move that we recognize Hon. France L. Castro of the Party-List ACT TEACHERS to interpellate our Sponsor.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.). Hon. France Castro is recognized.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker. Iyong atin po bang kagalang-galang na Kinatawan mula sa Tarlac, si Cong. Victor Yap, ay puwedeng sumagot sa ilang mga katanungan ng Representanteng ito?

REP. YAP (V.). For sure, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay. Unang-una, Mr. Speaker, gusto ko munang magpakita ng PowerPoint presentation noong ilang mga retail stores na nandidito sa ating bansa at later on, tatanungin ko po ang ating Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, kung ano po ba iyong problema natin kaugnay noong existing law at kung bakit gusto nating mapalitan or ma-amend ang batas na ito.

So, puwede po bang ma-request ang ating Secretariat o iyong Committee on Rules secretariat para ipakita po ang ating presentasyon?

(PowerPoint Presentation)

Marami po dito, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, iyong mga brand o ito iyong mga retail na nakikita natin sa iba't ibang mga mall, sa kapaligiran at iba pa like, for example po, iyong una, sa garments and RTW, iyong Uniqlo at ito po ay Japanese casual wear, designer, manufacturer and retailer. Uniqlo's first store in the Philippines opened at the SM Mall of Asia on June 15, 2012. Uniqlo has 60 stores across the Philippines as of October 2019 in a span of seven years.

Another, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, ay iyong H&M. It is a Swedish multinational clothing retail company known for its fast fashion clothing for men, women, teenagers and children, and its associated companies operate in 62 countries with over 4,500 stores and as of 2015, has employed around 132,000 people around the world. It is the second largest global clothing retailer.

Next, Cotton On, this is Australia's largest global retail known for its fashion, clothing and stationery brands. It has over 1,400 stores in 18 countries and employs 22,000 workers globally. It has 36 stores in the Philippines.

So, ito na po iyong mga local brand natin pero later na iyan.

Ang tanong ko po, Mr. Speaker, doon po sa mga examples na mga nabanggit natin na mga multinational retailer stores na malalaki, ang general question, Mr. Speaker, bakit kailangan nating palitan o i-amend itong batas natin on retail trade samantalang nakikita natin, at ang dami nito na nasa paligid natin, iyong examples ng mga ganyang mga retailers, at kung ating babanggitin, Mr. Speaker, kagaya ng 7-Eleven at iba pang mga retailer stores, ay talagang kalat na kalat na sa ating bansa? So, ano po ba iyong problema natin, Mr. Speaker, kasi wala naman magpi-prevent dito sa mga multinational na mga retailers na ito na pumasok sa ating bansa and in fact, more than 100 na nga—more or less 100 iyong mga retail stores, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. YAP (V.). Mr. Speaker, the wholesale retail trade business redounds to about 20 percent of the employment now in the country. Second, we believe that it is not just an embrace of capitalism but we realize

that the important value here is that competition, at the end of the day, will be a net benefit to the entire Filipino community. Why is that, Mr. Speaker? Iyong consumer na makaka-benefit, katulad din ng mga nabanggit na brands na Uniqlo, H&M—siguro, Mr. Speaker, nakabili na rin kayo ng ilang piraso mula dito, mura at matibay e, kaya gusto ng tao. In a world that is very much connected now, Mr. Speaker, na nabibili na nila online ang mga ito, magkakaroon ng net benefit at the end of the day, perhaps, not only in the increase in taxes, increase in employment opportunities for the Filipinos, but at the same time, mas makakabuti ito, a net benefit to our consumers to have more choices, better and cheaper products. At the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, I think that is the point.

Now, I am not saying that to paint entirely that the entry of these shops will close down the garments industry, for example, in Taytay, but I believe na puwede pa rin naman mabuhay ang mga industriya na iyan provided na talagang they keep up with the competition. I think that is the rule of the game and “babying” the industry, meaning to say, huwag nating papasukin si ganiyan, huwag nating papasukin si ganoon, ito na ang atin—this was proven in the past na hindi iyan ang nakakabuti at the end of the day sa ating mga kababayan because we will not come up with competitive brands or competitive products for the Filipinos as well, if not for the world market, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Thank you, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker. So, iyon nga po ang basic na tanong dahil hindi naman natin pini-prevent iyong pagpasok ng mga retail stores dito sa ating bansa. Katulad nga nang ipinakita kong example kanina na very obvious, these stores are mushrooming sa ating mga malls, sa ating mga iba't ibang lugar sa Pilipinas, pero magki-create ba ito ng jobs? Yes, nagki-create naman ito ng jobs. Tama nga, kasi wala namang magpi-prevent sa kanila e. Kahit naman nililimitahan iyong kanilang pagpasok dito dahil doon sa previous na batas, itong RA 8762, mayroon ditong Category A, Category B, Category C, Category D. Ano ba ang pagkakaiba-iba nito, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor? Alam natin iyong foreign equity participation. So, kahit na mayroon ito dito sa existing na batas natin, marami pa rin sila kasi napakaliit kung tutuusin iyong P10 million or \$2.5 million na capital. Halimbawa nga lang, kung papasok dito, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor—nababasa ko na papasok dito iyong largest store ng mga hardware et cetera, iyong IKEA, so sisiw o napakaliit nitong P10 million na ito na paid-up capital kung titingnan natin.

Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, dito sa foreign equity participation, halimbawa, dito sa Category A, enterprises with paid-up capital of the equivalent in Philippine peso but less than \$2,500,000 shall be reserved exclusively

for Filipino citizens, so, ito pong \$2.5 million ay reserved ito para sa mga Pilipino. Iyong Category B hanggang Category D, binago na natin ang mga ito at ginawa na nating 100 percent foreign ownership. Wala nang category dito kung saan 60 percent lang para doon sa ating Pilipino at 40 percent doon sa foreigner. So, sa batas na ito, ang ibig sabihin ay wala na itong Category A to Category D at bale isang category na lang na, with \$10 million ay puwede na ang foreigner ang mag-may-ari ng 100 percent ng ating mga retail stores.

So, paano po nakikita, Mr. Speaker, ng ating tagapagtaguyod ng batas na ito na makakatulong ito lalong-lalo na doon sa ating mga maliliit o iyong micro, small and medium enterprises? Hindi ba papatayin nito iyong ating mga micro, small and medium enterprises, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor?

REP. YAP (V.). Iyon pong category na nababanggit, Mr. Speaker, honorable interpellator, na-simplify na po natin iyan at ginawa na lang po natin with a minimum paid-up capital of the equivalent in Philippine peso of US \$200,000, so, mga P10 million something. Ito po ay consistent doon sa ipinasa natin na Foreign Investments Act kung saan ni-reduce din natin ng \$200,000 and so with that, we are just being consistent.

Totally, hindi pa rin naman nila kino-compete directly iyong mga maliliit na negosyo. For example, karamihan ng nagko-comprise ng mga micro entrepreneurs ay mga sari-sari stores. I do not think na aabot sa punto, Mr. Speaker, na iyong mga sari-sari stores natin ay magsasara because of competition nitong pagpasok o pag-open up ng foreign retail or retail trade amendment na ginagawa natin.

For one, open competition nga, Mr. Speaker. Hindi makakapag-compete, sa aking pananaw, ang isang foreigner na nangangailangan ng P10 million para mag-set up ng tindahan sapagkat ang mga sari-sari stores ay mahirap talunin ng isang negosyante na nag-employ ng tao at nagrerenta ng mahal na lugar, so, hindi direktong lalabanang iyong mga negosyong ito. Kung sasabihing bawasan pa natin iyong mga 7-11 stores, then I think that is a naive way of attacking the problem na bawasan pa iyong 7-11 sapagkat nandiyan na nga sila. Kung ang mga iyon na nakakaapekto sa mga maliliit nating hanapbuhay, let us take a second look: the 7-11 store sells goods at 70 percent higher than basic sari-sari stores for the mere fact na, katulad ng ginagamit kong example or metaphor na dito, iyong maliliit na tao ay hindi nga tatamaan noong mga negosyante na may P10 million above na negosyo. Bakit? Mag-e-employ sila, magrerenta sila ng tindahan tulad ni 7-11. Mag-hire siya ng mga tao tulad ni 7-11 at hindi rin siya, sa palagay ko, exempted doon sa BIR katulad ng maliliit na mga negosyo. So, kung may fear man, Mr. Speaker, ako na mismo ang magsasabi na hindi tatamaan ang mga sari-sari stores at ang pananalita na ito, sa palagay ko,

nandito sa halls of Congress ang debate na ito and I will stand up to it, five years or 10 years after this measure will be passed.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, balik po tayo doon sa foreign equity dahil ito nga iyong gusto nating palitan, na sabi ng ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor ay i-simplify na natin. So, tinatangal iyong iba't ibang category na nagli-limit o naglilimita doon sa foreign ownership noong mga retail stores at merong mga categories pa.

So, sinasabi dito sa House Bill No. 59 sa Committee Report No. 73, maaaring pumasok ang mga dayuhang kumpanya sa retail trade basta may minimum paid-up capital na \$200,000, or more or less P10 million.

Sa Categories A and D, ni-repeal na ito; dapat maintained and buong paid-up capital maliban na lang kung sabihin niya sa DTI at SEC na magre-repatriate na at puputulin na ang operasyon sa bansa. Ano-ano na iyong mangyayari, halimbawa, kasi hindi naman natin mapipigilan, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, na kung ang mga retail trade na ito ay magpasya na umalis na, hindi ba? Napakarami niyan. Ano ba iyong guarantee natin doon sa sinasabi na magpapatuloy ito magbigay ng maraming mga trabaho?

REP. YAP (V.). Mr. Speaker, going back again to the, I think, similar question, Categories A, B, C and D have been removed and we only have a simple requirement of \$200,000 for a foreign entrepreneur to put up a retail shop, a restaurant, a tobacco shop, a coffee shop or whatever. Wala na po iyong mga categories, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Kaya nga, Mr. Speaker, kung tatanggalin natin ang mga categories na ito, halimbawa, Mr. Speaker, sa Category C or sa enterprise na may paid-up capital na P7.5 million pataas, nakalagay din dito sa category na dapat mayroong \$830,000 investment per store. So, ibig sabihin po ba, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, basta mayroon lang, halimbawa, ang Uniqlo na P10 million na capital, puwede na siya mag-mushroom kahit na saan diyan with the P10 million capital? Kasi napakaliit nito para sa mga multinational na mga retail stores, kayang-kaya nila iyong paid-up capital na P10 million.

REP. YAP (V.). The caveat there, Mr. Speaker, is that, well, again, to reiterate, wala na itong mga P2.5 o P7.5 million. Niliitan na natin kasi nga ang purpose noon kaya nilalagay iyan is to protect but at the end of the day, we lost out to competition when other ASEAN countries situated like the Philippines gave out more liberal terms in investing in their territory for retail. That is true, na puwedeng magtayo ang Uniqlo, kung papasok

man si Uniqlo sa Pilipinas, ng isang shop na maliit. That is it. Iyong capital na sinasabi natin, regardless of size, it is the demand but then again, we have to accept the fact that a market leader like H&M and Uniqlo will not open a store that does not resemble their reputation in the industry, Mr. Speaker. That means hindi talaga sila maglalagay na magmumukha silang kawawa dahil industry leaders na sila. Uniqlo, by the way, its owner is the richest man in Japan, I was told.

Mr. Speaker, I will go back to the point that we should not be really nervous about this move because for me, Mr. Speaker, opening up the field of retail and having more competition and possibly, more set-ups of logistics and wholesale to support this, would create more jobs for our industry which, by now, kahit na ganiyan pa tayo, ay pangatlo sa pinakamalaking nagbibigay ng trabaho sa ating bansa. So, Mr. Speaker, by opening this up, definitely, we are putting more gist in the competitive environment and therefore, more solid backing in terms of the future of those workers in this industry, in retail, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Thank you, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker. So, sinasabi ng ating Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, iyong competitiveness sa kaparehas na countries na nasa region natin. Magbigay po tayo ng example, Mr. Speaker, kaugnay nito na mga Asian countries. Halimbawa po, sinasabi po ng ating Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, iyong enterprise reserved for Filipinos ay pinakamataas sa buong ASEAN. Tama ba ito, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor? Iyon bang sinasabi nating P10 million capital ng mga retail stores ay ang pinakamataas po doon sa lahat ng mga ASEAN countries?

REP. YAP (V.). Hindi ko naman siguro masasabing pinakamataas, based on my knowledge, pero definitely, hindi rin tayo ang pinakamababa. We are just placing ourselves within probably an average of what is being set and for me, personally, if we are going to open up and the winner at the end of the day is the consumer who are all Filipinos—you know, for our people, definitely itong \$200,000 compared with other countries like, for example, Vietnam, ang restriction nila is 500 square meters. Ang Cambodia, Laos, Brunei—ang kanila, they garner by the size of the store and so, typically, Mr. Speaker, a P10 million or \$200,000 shop would be in the vicinity of about 200 square meters, Mr. Speaker. So, andito tayo sa vicinity ng aspect of competition na ito, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Thank you, Your Honor. Tootoo po iyong binabanggit ninyo tungkol sa Vietnam. Nakalagay dito, wala nga siyang capital requirements for FDIs but it does require FDIs in retail to make a capital contribution to Vietnamese economy and buy stocks. One report says three billion kada kumpanya. Bukod

dito, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, retail is considered as a conditional investment sector that is subject to various restrictions. Ano ba iyong mga restrictions na ito? Number one, isang retail sales outlet lang. Number two, kung magdadagdag, dadaan sa hiwalay na proseso to secure a separate license. Pangatlo po na restriction, dapat pumasa ito sa Economic Need Test ng Local People's Committee at the Ministry of Industry and Trade.

So, napakalaki ng safeguards nila doon sa local retail stores o companies nila kasi isa lang, samantalang dito sa atin, gusto natin may P10 million lang siya na paid-up capital at puwede na siyang magtayo sa kung saan niya gusto. Iyon po ba ang gusto natin dito sa batas na ito?

REP. YAP (V.). Ang gusto natin, Mr. Speaker, is that at the end of the day, talagang magkaroon ng competition for the benefit of the consumer. In terms of the seller, for example, say, who comprises our Philippine Retailers Association, most of them are real retailers, the big ones, and we do not have a law really that restricts them from selling imported items.

Mr. Speaker, iyong sinasabi natin, “o kinakailangan may 30 percent,” ewan ko kung ang DTI ay talagang na-check iyan, but nabibili mo lahat ng imported din doon. If that is our situation, Mr. Speaker, the point here is that opening it up further to more competition will not in any way put a bad light or bad effect on the competition but rather put better competition for us to have better choices and cheaper goods, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay.

REP. YAP (V.). We subscribe to this economic law, not a theory, but an economic law on competition, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Thank you, Your Honor. So, para dagdagan ko pa iyong sinasabi natin, kung iko-compare natin iyong ating bansa sa ibang bansa kaugnay ng restrictions nila doon sa mga retail stores nila, halimbawa po, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, sa Laos, liberalized iyong kanilang retail trade pero dapat hindi bababa sa capital ng about \$490,130 plus local equity participation requirement pa. For 100 percent foreign-owned companies, ang paid-up capital ay \$2.45 million, na hindi nga nalalayo doon sa Pilipinas, per store. Sa Thailand, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, their retail store reserves for citizens businesses in which Thai nationals are not yet ready to compete with foreigners. So, itong sa kanila po, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, mas mataas kaysa sa Pilipinas iyong \$2.5 million. In fact, mayroon po silang \$3.2 million. Myanmar also has quantitative and qualitative restrictions: no FDIs in small-size retail plus they must have a local citizen

share of more than 40 percent. So, wala talagang 100 percent dito sa Myanmar. Indonesia din, Mr. Speaker, also puts quantitative and qualitative restrictions for FDIs in retail. FDIs only in large-scale retail plus must involve local SME partners. Certain businesses close to FDIs include retail in textiles, footwear, electronics, food and beverages.

So, kung titingnan natin, Mr. Speaker, iyong sinasabi po ng ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor kaugnay noong competitiveness natin, halimbawa noong ating batas, doon sa ibang mga batas ng iba't ibang mga bansa ay makikita natin ganoon din naman, very protectionist nga iyong kanilang batas kaugnay nitong mga retail trade stores.

REP. YAP (V.). Ang basehan siguro noong sinasabi nating protectionism, ang embodiment na nasa Constitution natin. Hindi na ako tatayo rito kung nasa Constitution natin na kinakailangan may kahit 40 percent limit ang foreign ownership. Wala e, nandoon talaga na open na ang industriyang ito at sa industriya na ito, kahit may 2.5 o 200, it makes no difference. Why? Because iyong pinakamalaki na maaapektuhan ay iyong maliliit na tao. I subscribe not for protectionism to protect their interest; no, it is purely competitive environment. Why? I will reiterate, Mr. Speaker, my position: iyong maliliit na negosyante, kaya hindi malalabanan ay dahil lamang sila. Lamang sila, bakit? Una, hindi sila magrerenta ng lugar, hindi sila magrerenta ng puwesto. Pangalawa, hindi rin sila nagbabayad talaga dahil iyong mga sari-sari stores, karamihan nito ay mga entrepreneurs na Pilipino na pang-isa iyong negosyo nila, iyon ang binabantayan nila, Mr. Speaker. Ang pinag-uusapan natin dito, sources of capital, sources of goods na malalaki na ipapasok. Malakihan talaga ang labanan nito.

Kaya ang masasabi ko, Mr. Speaker, ang source noong babbakan na binabanggit dito ngayon ay galing ang position paper na ito sa Philippine Retailers Association na, sa aking palagay, ay mga negosyante na ayaw na magkaroon ng kompetisyon sapagkat sa palagay nila doon sa kanilang sitwasyon ay mas maganda nga na walang kalaban.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Nabasa ko rin po, Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor, iyong position paper ng Philippine Retailers Association. Nababanggit nila nga dito iyong sinasabi nating hindi nga sila sang-ayon doon sa pagpapababa noong paid-up capital na parang sinimplehan na lang na isa na lang, at ang pagbibigay ng masyadong luwag doon sa foreign capital. Iyong pong mga dahilan kung bakit not competitive iyong ating bansa, ayon sa sinasabi nila dito sa kanilang position paper, hindi iyong batas natin dito sa retailer ang problema pero ang problema natin dito ay iyong economic performance, at least for 2001 to 2010,

which curtailed FDIs in Philippine retailing. This may be inferred from among the data, the gross domestic product per capita. So, iyong information and the same selected Association of Southeast Asian Nation countries are listed below.

Sinasabi dito, Mr. Speaker, na hindi naman ang problema ay iyong to reduce the minimum capital requirement imposed by the Retail Trade Liberalization Act, pero bakit sila nadi-disappoint dito sa pagnenegosyo o pagpasok noong mga foreign capital? Hindi naman iyon pagpapababaan e, kasi kahit naman nandidiyan iyong existing law, anytime ay puwede silang magtayo ng kanilang negosyo. So, ang pinoproblema po dito ay iyong iba pang mga problema like iyong taxes, iyong ating sistema ng ating ekonomiya at iba't iba pang mga factors, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. YAP (V.). Mr. Speaker, I join the interpellator in the wish to protect our small Filipinos but then again, as agreed or as admitted, the position paper cited is one that was created by the Philippine Retailers Association, Mr. Speaker. As I speak here, I am protected by immunity, but I will also say this outside of these halls, if only to say that those retailers are now even sometimes subjected to question about contractualization, or about right taxes, Mr. Speaker, and smuggled goods perhaps.

Now, Mr. Speaker, kung mga foreigners, kadalasan iyan pa iyong mga takot e, iyan ang talagang diretsong lumaban dahil nagbabayad sa atin. What is the fear of this big Philippine Retailers Association, ang dami na nilang advantage. They positioned themselves. Ang sa akin, I subscribe to the tenet that at the end of the day, our consumers, Mr. Speaker, will always be the net beneficiary. Unlike that point taken by tariffication where, at the end of the day, lugi iyong mga farmers ng ilang bilyon dahil hindi naman bumaba iyong presyo ng bigas. Dito, Mr. Speaker, for sure, lahat tayo ay consumers. If I may pose the question, how many of these big retailers in this association have been manufacturing, Mr. Speaker? Karamihan sa ekonomiya na natin ngayon ay panay consumer spending na lang at sila ay doon na lang sila kumikita lahat. Wala namang tumataya in making a good company, na proud na itong sabihin na Philippine made. Wala naman silang na-push na ganyan, Mr. Speaker, and so, kung ganyan na iyong mundo natin, why protect them? Why give them, Mr. Speaker, advantages when it is undebatable at the end of the day that more competition will lead to cheaper goods and better choices for our people.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Thank you, Your Honor. Para dagdagan pa natin kung bakit ang Representasyong ito ay sinasabi natin na hindi tayo pabor doon sa amendments nito, ito ay dahil mayroon tayong data na nagsasabi rin na sa pamamagitan ng batas na ito sa kasalukuyan, wala naman ditong barrier or hadlang.

In fact, may mga data nga po, halimbawa iyong foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows ay tumaas noong 2000 matapos ipasa iyong R.A. No. 8762. So, sinasabi nga na tagumpay daw iyong R.A. No. 8762 at naging \$31.33 million mula sa zero based noong 1991 iyong kinita. So, maaaring bumaba sa \$1.83 million sa 2001 at naging volatile pero noong 2006, tumaas din po ito pero ang ibig sabihin ay may pumapasok pa rin na mga retailers, ayon dito sa batas na ito.

So, sinasabi pa nga din kung kukunsultahin po natin iyong mga sinasabi nating Pinoy retailers, pati iyong mismong foreign retailers ay nagpapahayag na gustong pumasok sa Pilipinas, so, ito iyong sinasabi na ilan sa mga barriers. So, ang mga rason nila ay specific to retail. Sinasabi pa nila na ang laman nitong House Bill No. 59 ay parang iisa na lang iyong paid-up capital, hindi iyong per store investment. Iyong sourcing of stock inventory from the local goods, ito pa iyong isa pang tinuturing nila na isa pang balakid dito o problema. So, iyong mga rason din na cited by all FDIs, ang numero uno daw po ay iyong korapsyon, lack of infrastructure, expensive utilities kagaya ng tubig, kuryente at iba pa, which result to higher cost of operations and unreliable legal conditions o ang pag-iba-iba ng batas, regulations and interpretations sa batas.

Isa pa—mas internal sa foreign companies ang rason kung hindi man sila mag-iinvest sa Pilipinas. Ayon nga sa Cushman and Wakefield, “xxx the dwindling numbers can be attributed to the shift in investment strategies of international retailers and weak global expansion xxx” So, halimbawa po sa retail ng furniture gaya ng NITORI Japan at IKEA, European, mostly sa Sweden, hindi gaano sa Pilipinas since ready to assemble or do-it-yourself furniture sila. Sa tingin nila ay hindi na sila makakapag-expand sa mga bansang gaya ng Pilipinas sa ngayon dahil batay sa current business standing nila, mas local muna o near their base countries kung saan nila kinuha ang materials nila ang gagamitin.

So, ito iyong mga dahilan, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, kung bakit iyong ating mga foreign investors ay lumalayo dito. Kaya kung luluwagan natin itong batas na ito, iyong Retail Trade Liberalization Act, ito ngayon ang magiging problema natin, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. Ang tama po nito ay hindi naman sa consumer, ang tama nito ay doon sa small, medium and micro enterprise na siya naman po iyong laging pinagkukunan lang ng hanapbuhay noong ating mga maliliit na mga mamamayan kahit na nasa mga barangay.

REP. YAP (V.). As I have mentioned, Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, every one—each and every one—a country, a community, a province, a firm, a corporation, a venture, an idea, a business, an entrepreneur will be engaged in the field of competition, Mr. Speaker. Kung iyong produkto natin ay maganda at mura, bibilhin iyan ng Pilipino kahit marami pa o 100 pa iyong kalaban.

Hindi naman tama na kung iyong ating ginagawang produkto rito—mas gusto noong 100 Pilipinong bumili ng isang produktong galing sa Malaysia o galing sa Vietnam o kung saan supposed to be mayroon tayong tariff-free agreement sa mga bansang iyan, ay supilin natin ang pagpasok nila through different policies.

At the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, kinakailangan talaga iyong policy natin is—sometimes it is a balancing act in the sense na tinitingnan natin iyong net benefit at the end of the day. Kung mayroon mang tatamaan na maliliit na manufacturing, tinatamaan na ito ngayon as we speak, Mr. Speaker, dahil hindi siya ganoon ka-competitive at binibili. So, opening it up sa maliliit lang na negosyanteng puwedeng pumasok dito in the field of retail ng pagkain, business sa tourism or what have you, ay mas malaki ang mage-generate nito kaysa doon sa paboran pa nating proteksyunan ang isang maliit na negosyante. Notwithstanding, Mr. Speaker, of course, these halls of Congress had passed numerous laws that will benefit and give competitive advantage to our Filipino entrepreneurs.

I think that competition enjoins—ano ba iyong binibili doon sa isang produkto na iyon? Nakikita nila dito, ah, consumer preference is very strong dahil sa design, dahil sa material or dahil sa cost. I guess that iyong mga Pilipino stand at a very good advantage as I speak, Mr. Speaker. Mayroong advantage iyong gawang Pilipinas, iyong gawa dito. Bakit natatalo? Sometimes sa quality, sometimes doon sa, siguro, mga pagkukulang pa rin ng gobyerno in terms of harnessing iyong mga ibang craft like, for example, sa Europe na nabanggit ang furniture. Sometimes may advantage sila dahil talagang iyong craftsmanship was handed down, mga traditions for hundreds of years not just one or two or three generations, but rather a long line of generations.

We have seen that, Mr. Speaker. Marami pa rin ang lumalaban sa furniture dahil magagaling tayong mag-design, marami pa rin ang mga nag-e-export sa mga bagay na ito na natulungan ng gobyerno. They still thrive up to this day, and to talk about na baka mawala sila, baka mamatay sila kapag ibinaba natin from \$2.5 million to \$200,000, Mr. Speaker, I do not see that.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Nakakalungkot pakinggan, Mr. Speaker, sa salita pa mismo ng ating Sponsor na sa ngayon ay nakita na natin ang reyalidad na tinatamaan na kahit na hindi pa i-amend ang Retail Trade Law na ito ay nakikita na natin iyong mga maliliit na mga retail stores natin, iyong mga maliliit na industriya natin, ay tinatamaan na dahil hindi nga sila makapag-competite doon sa sinasabi nating mga multinational stores or mga multinational restaurants or whatever na magko-competite dito.

So, ang problema talaga natin dito, Mr. Speaker, kung titingnan natin iyong flow ng usapan natin ng ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor ay iyong kung

paanong pinoprotektahan mismo ng ating gobyerno sa pamamagitan ng batas iyong mga maliliit na mga retail stores na ito, na kung saan lalo pa nitong babansutin at talagang papatayin ang mga retail stores na ito dahil P10 million lang na capital ay puwede na iyong mga multinationals na talagang mag-proliferate o mag-mushroom dito sa ating bansa.

So, sinasabi rin sa isa sa mga argumento ng ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, ang panukalang batas daw na ito ay magresulta ng greater variety of products kahit na nakikita nating nagkalat na diyan sa paligid-ligid natin iyong iba't ibang produkto. Pumunta lang kayo sa Divisoria, sa Baclaran at sa Quiapo at kung saan pa, nagkalat na talaga. So, sa tingin ba ng ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor ay mahalaga pa ba sa mga Pilipino iyong variety ng mga products sa kasalukuyang kalagayan ng ating retail trade sa ating bansa, Mr. Speaker, G. Sponsor?

REP. YAP (V.). Yes, Mr. Speaker. I would like to clarify the point na noong sinabi kong tinatamaan na, it is not a result, Mr. Speaker, dahil gusto nating ibaba or because ipinasa natin iyong Foreign Retail Trade. At the end of the day, ang kina-clarify ko rito, Mr. Speaker, while we may be cheaper in cost, it is not necessarily that our consumers will prefer that as it is a free, open choice. I am not saying na pinabayaan natin sila. Again, nililinaw ko na maraming ipinang mga bills for MSMEs, et cetera. Naipasa na, for example, iyong MSME Law, iyong amendments na ginawa noong 2008, Go Negosyo Act, Barangay Micro Business Enterprises, et cetera.

Now, let us get to the point since economic talaga iyong binabanggit dito, that at the end of the day, we fear the bigger ones. The bigger ones like \$2.5 million or perhaps, kahit ginawa pa nating \$5 million, iyong Uniqlo, magkano ang investment na ni-require kay Shoe Mart diyan? A billion, P2 billion? Baka doon sa mga kinakailangan pa lang niyang inventories ay millions of dollars na, way beyond \$2.5 million or what we have now in the law.

Mr. Speaker, kapag sinabi mong “competitive,” talagang uubusin kayong lahat, iyong mga malalaking iyan. Iyong maliliit na mga may capital na \$200,000, \$300,000, \$400,000, \$500,000, ano talagang magiging effect na kompetisyon niyan compared doon sa mga malalaking retailers present now in our country? What do we need to fear in terms of that point, Mr. Speaker? I do not know of a company na \$200,000 o \$300,000 ang capital—maliit lang ako, siguro, ito ay isang entrepreneur na gusto nang mag-retire sa Pilipinas—ang magse-set up. Maraming ganyan na mga foreigners tulad ng Europeans, dinadala na lang ang capital dito and we see that. The South Koreans are also doing that here pero pinapangalan pa kung kani-kanino at baka hindi nagbabayad ng tax dahil Pilipino. Maraming pagkukulang at kapag binanggit natin, Mr. Speaker,

iyong point na ang daming nagkalat na mga imports galing China dito, hindi na iyon gusto ng batas na ito, Mr. Speaker. Ang gusto nga natin ay magrehisto sila ng tama at magbayad sila ng tax. Ayon sa batas na ito, Mr. Speaker, kung magbubukas sila dito tulad lang ng iba, parehas lang tayo pero may advantage pa rin sa batas na ito ang Pilipino, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay, ayon sa ating Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, sinasabi natin na iyong mga nabanggit natin na mga ilang retail stores na malalaki ay nagbabayad pa rin sa mall o sa mga malalaking malls kung saan nagtatayo sila ng kanilang store pero baka hindi ito iyong tamang batas para doon. Baka ang mas tamang batas, Mr. Speaker, ay iyong pag-aayos kung paano ba sila mabubuwisan at kung paano ba tayo hindi madadaya ng mga malalaking malls na ito doon sa kanilang tax payment at iba pa. Katulad ng tinanong ko kanina, iyong tungkol doon sa variety of products na sinasabi natin kanina, hindi siguro interest ng mamamayang Pilipino iyong greater variety of products. At the end of the day naman, ang magdidikta kung ano iyong bibilhin nila ay iyong kakayanan lang ng kanilang sahod sa pang-araw-araw.

Kaya kung babaha man ang presyo sa merkado ng mga foreign products, malamang mas mahal ito o walang relevance sa buhay ng mga mamamayan like iyong mga leisure and luxury goods or everyday consumption goods pero brand lang naman nito ang binabayaran at siyempre, hindi gawang pinoy. So, ang tanong, paano na ngayon mapapangalagaan ng batas na ito iyong mga programa noong ating Department of Trade and Industry gaya ng mga Go Negosyo, Go Lokal, One Town, One Product, et cetera? Ina-advertise pa man din natin iyong iba't ibang produkto ng bawat region, bawat probinsiya, pero dito sa batas na ito ay gusto nating mag-propagate ng mga foreign products, na pumunta dito at makipag-compete para mabili ng mga Pilipino.

So, ano na ang mangyayari dito sa mga sinasabi nating mga local initiatives para sa ating mga local entrepreneurs, iyong mga maliliit na mga negosyante, kung ito ay maipapasa?

REP. YAP (V.). They will definitely compete in the environment, hindi ba? I guess no one is exempted and should be exempted towards that, and I beg to disagree with the interpellator, Mr. Speaker, when she says na walang choice o ang mga Pilipino ay hindi naman kailangan ng mga wide choices. I guess that goes against the very grain of what we are pushing for in lowering the capital from \$2.5 million, as we did in the Foreign Investments Act, to \$200,000, Mr. Speaker, even to the point lang na maging consistent itong ating Congress sa legislation, sa Executive at sa gobyerno natin. Kung sa Foreign Investments Act ay na-lower na natin ng

\$200,000 in the Seventeenth Congress of which I was also the Sponsor, ano pa ang point na retail lang? E iyong isang negosyanteng maliit na gustong mag-retire dito at dalhin iyong capital niya ay pagbabawalan pa natin dahil baka madisplace ang Pilipino? I do not believe so, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). So, hindi pa po nasasagot, Mr. Speaker, iyong katanungan ko kanina regarding doon sa mga initiatives para sa ating mga entrepreneurs. So, paano makakapag-compete kaya sila sa mga malalaking foreign retailers na gusto nating papasukin dito with minimal paid-up capital sa mga lokal na mga industriya natin?

REP. YAP (V.). Specifically, anong industry? Hindi naman po ako nagbanggit na iyong pinapapasok na smuggled Chinese goods sa bandang Maynila ay naglipana at nagkalat, ano, and notwithstanding na posibleng ibang batas ang kailangang pag-usapan, but that is not the gist of my proposition, Mr. Speaker.

My proposition, as it stands now, is that at the very least, the benefit to the consumers and perhaps, at the end of the day, even the small manufacturers or iyong ibang mga retailers natin, na makikita nila how competition really is in a global world para mag-i-improve sila at makakabuti iyon, at the end of the day, para sa ating mga kababayan. Hindi appektado, as I am saying again, not to protect but inherently, in competition lamang ang mga maliliit na negosyante sa atin for the very fact that hindi na sila nag-e-employ, hindi na sila nagpapa-renta and iyong kanilang advantage as I said, at tinatanong din ng ating interpellator, ano ang bentahe, iyong mga BMBEs at iyong mga micro, ay mas mababa ang kanilang tax rate, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Mas mababa iyong kanilang mga tax rate pero tingnan naman natin kung paano iyong magiging competition nila dito sa malalaking market na ito. Anyway, Mr. Speaker, nakikita natin dito, ano, puwede bang ipakita iyong slides natin? Next please.

(Slide presentation)

So, at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, kapag naipatupad ang batas na ito, iyong mga initiatives ng ating mga mamamayan, lalo na doon sa mga MSMEs katulad ng mga local initiatives—iyong kanina doon sa Taytay, so, iyan tinitingnan natin, example pa rin iyong mga convenience stores. So, iyong mga local brands, halimbawa, itong sa Taytay, garments ito. Sinasabi natin na itong mga initiatives ng ating mga mamamayan, halimbawa, sa Taytay kung saan pinalalakas iyong kanilang mga garment production, so, ito iyong makaka-compete sa mga multinational retailers.

Okay. Next, ito pa, ito nakita natin. Although Philippine brand ang Bench, dahil ito nga ay Pilipino rin, dapat isa rin ito doon sa mapalakas dahil magiging kakumpetensiya ito sa mga papasok na iba pa. Okay,

next. Okay, wala na, Mr. Speaker. So, to end my interpellation, Mr. Speaker, ito pong panukalang batas po ng ating Sponsor, iyong House Bill No. 59 contained in Committee Report No. 73, malaki po ang aking takot na kung maipapasa po ito, Mr. Speaker, ay magkakaroon ng malaking kakumpetensiya iyong ating mga MSMEs, babagsak ang ating mga maliliit na retailer stores at iba't iba pang mga maliliit na industriya.

Thank you, Mr. Sponsor. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.). The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 59

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 59 under Committee Report No. 73.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The consideration of House Bill No. 59 is hereby suspended.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

DESIGNATION OF MEMBERS TO THE CONF. CTTEE. ON H.B. NO. 6312 AND S.B. NO. 1086

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we designate the following as members of the Conference Committee on the disagreeing provisions of House Bill No. 6312 and Senate Bill No. 1086, establishing the National Academy of Sports System: Reps. Roman T. Romulo, Eric M. Martinez, Paolo Z. Duterte, Mark O. Go, Victor A. Yap and France L. Castro.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Members nominated are so designated.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CHANGE OF REFERRAL OF CERTAIN MEASURES

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

1. House Bill No. 189, from the Committee on Labor and Employment to the Committees on Government Reorganization and Labor and Employment;
2. House Bill No. 2052, from the Committee on Labor

and Employment to the Committees on Government Reorganization and Labor and Employment;

3. House Bills Nos. 4407, 4470 and 5250, from the Committee on Social Services to the Committee on Poverty Alleviation;

4. House Resolution No. 5, from the Committee on Basic Education and Culture to the Committees on Good Government and Public Accountability and Public Accounts; and

5. House Resolution No. 686, from the Committees on Public Information and Health to the Committees on Public Accounts and Health.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REFERRAL OF SPEECHES ON INQUIRIES IN AID OF LEGISLATION

REP. FARIÑAS, RIA. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to our Rules Governing Inquiries in Aid of Legislation, I move that we refer the following speeches to the appropriate committees:

Speeches delivered on July 29, 2019:

Rep. Way Kurat Zamora, to the Committee on Trade and Industry

Rep. Arnolfo “Arnie” A. Teves Jr., to the Committee on Appropriations

Rep. Jose L. Atienza Jr., to the Committee on Basic Education and Culture

Rep. Carlos Isagani T. Zarate, to the Committee on Economic Affairs and the Special Committee on West Philippine Sea

Rep. Eufemia “Ka Femia” C. Cullamat, to the Committee on Public Order and Safety; and

Rep. Arlene D. Brosas, to the Committee on Women and Gender Equality.

Speeches delivered on July 30, 2019:

Rep. France L. Castro, to the Committee on Appropriations

Rep. Sarah Jane I. Elago, to the Committee on Youth and Sports Development

Rep. Gabriel H. Bordado Jr., to the Committee on Transportation

Rep. Dan S. Fernandez, to the Committee on Games and Amusements; and

Rep. Rosanna “Ria” V. Vergara, to the Committee on Agriculture and Food.

Speeches delivered on July 31, 2019:

Rep. Ferdinand R. Gaité, to the Committee on Labor and Employment; and

Rep. Joel Mayo Z. Almario, to the Committee on Housing and Urban Development.

Speeches delivered on August 5, 2019:

Rep. Presley C. De Jesus, to the Committee on Energy

Rep. Rico B. Geron, to the Committee on Agriculture and Food

Rep. Sergio C. Dagooc, to the Committee on Energy

Rep. Godofredo N. Guya, to the Committee on Energy

Rep. Adriano A. Ebcas, to the Committee on Energy

Rep. Michael L. Romero, PhD to the Committee on Energy

Rep. France L. Castro, to the Committee on Public Order and Safety; and

Rep. Lorenz R. Defensor, to the Committee on Transportation.

Speeches delivered on August 6, 2019:

Rep. Jose Christopher Y. Belmonte, to the Committee on Justice

Rep. Eufemia “Ka Femia” C. Cullamat, to the Committees on Ecology and Natural Resources

Rep. Mark O. Go, to the Committees on Energy, Good Government and Public Accountability, and Public Accounts

Rep. Gabriel H. Bordado Jr., to the Committee on Transportation; and

Rep. Dan S. Fernandez, to the Committee on Transportation.

Speeches delivered on August 7, 2019:

Rep. Jose L. Atienza Jr., to the Committees on Government Enterprises and Privatization, Good Government and Public Accountability and Public Accounts; and

Rep. Sarah Jane I. Elago, to the Committee on Basic Education and Culture.

Speeches delivered on August 13, 2019:

Rep. Bayani F. Fernando, to the Committees on Metro Manila Development and Transportation

Rep. France L. Castro, to the Committee on Public Order and Safety

Rep. Jose L. Atienza Jr., to the Committee on Dangerous Drugs

Rep. Enrico A. Pineda, to the Committee on Public Works and Highways

Rep. Eufemia “Ka Femia” C. Cullamat, to the Committee on Public Order and Safety

Rep. Sarah Jane I. Elago, to the Committee on Public Order and Safety

Rep. Ma. Lucille L. Nava, MD, to the Committee on Transportation; and

Rep. Ruth Mariano-Hernandez, to the Committee on Health.

Speeches delivered on August 14, 2019:

Rep. Micaela S. Violago, to the Committee on Agriculture and Food

Rep. Romeo M. Jalosjos Jr., to the Committee on Dangerous Drugs; and

Rep. Arlene D. Brosas, to the Committee on Women and Gender Equality.

Speeches delivered on August 27, 2019:

Rep. Florida “Rida” P. Robes, to the Committee on Health

Rep. Lorenz R. Defensor, to the Committee on Appropriations

Rep. Elpidio F. Barzaga Jr., to the Committee on Basic Education and Culture

Rep. France L. Castro, to the Committee on Basic Education and Culture; and

Rep. Raul V. Del Mar, to the Committee on Transportation.

Speeches delivered on August 28, 2019:

Rep. Ramon C. Nolasco Jr., to the Committee on Public Works and Highways

Rep. Eufemia “Ka Femia” C. Cullamat, to the Committee on Indigenous Cultural Communities and Indigenous Peoples

Rep. Sarah Jane I. Elago, to the Committee on Public Order and Safety; and

Rep. Eduardo “Bro. Eddie” C. Villanueva, to the Committee on Women and Gender Equality.

Speeches delivered on August 02, 2019:

Rep. Eufemia “Ka Femia” C. Cullamat, to the Committee on Basic Education and Culture; and

Rep. Alfredo A. Garbin Jr., to the Committee on Justice.

Speech delivered on September 3, 2019:

Rep. Sharon S. Garin, to the Committee on Justice.

Speeches delivered on September 9, 2019:

Rep. Arlene D. Brosas, to the Committee on Agriculture and Food; and

Rep. Sarah Jane I. Elago, to the Committee on Transportation.

Speeches delivered on September 23, 2019:

Rep. Manuel F. Zubiri, to the Committee on Health

Rep. France L. Castro, to the Committee on Basic Education and Culture

Rep. Eufemia “Ka Femia” C. Cullamat, to the Committees on Public Order and Safety and National Defense and Security

Rep. Ferdinand R. Gaité, to the Committees on Public Order and Safety and National Defense and Security

Rep. Sarah Jane I. Elago, to the Committee on Youth and Sports Development

Rep. Arlene D. Brosas, to the Committee on Welfare of Children; and

Rep. Robert Ace S. Barbers, to the Committees on Dangerous Drugs and Games and Amusements.

Speech delivered on September 24, 2019:

Rep. Jose Enrique “Joet” S. Garcia III, to the Committee on Ways and Means.

Speeches delivered on September 25, 2019:

Rep. Fredenil “Fred” H. Castro, to the Committee on Appropriations; and

Rep. Bienvenido M. Abante Jr., to the Committee on Dangerous Drugs.

Speeches delivered on September 30, 2019:

Rep. Bernadette “BH” Herrera-Dy, to the Committee on Health

Rep. Loren Legarda, to the Special Committee on Climate Change

Rep. Ferdinand R. Gaité, to the Committee on Health

Rep. Gabriel H. Bordado Jr., to the Special Committee on Climate Change; and

Rep. France L. Castro, to the Committee on Basic Education and Culture.

Speeches delivered on October 1, 2019:

Rep. Jose L. Atienza Jr., to the Committee on Health

Rep. Gabriel H. Bordado Jr., to the Committee on Suffrage and Electoral Reforms

Rep. Jocelyn F. Fortuno, to the Committee on Basic Education and Culture

Rep. Sabiniano S. Canama, to the Committee on Cooperatives Development

Rep. Rico B. Geron, to the Committee on Cooperatives Development

Rep. Edgar R. Erice, to the Committee on Metro Manila Development

Rep. Eufemia “Ka Femia” C. Cullamat, to the Committee on Indigenous Cultural Communities and Indigenous Peoples; and

Rep. Arlene D. Brosas, to the Committees on Public Order and Safety and National Defense and Security.

Speeches delivered on October 2, 2019:

Rep. Raneo “Ranie” E. Abu, to the Committee on Appropriations

Rep. Rodante D. Marcoleta, to the Committee on Agriculture and Food

Rep. Sarah Jane I. Elago, to the Committee on Youth and Sports Development

Rep. Janette L. Garin, to the Committee on Health; and
Rep. Manuel DG. Cabochan III, to the Committee
on National Defense and Security.

Speeches delivered on November 4, 2019:

Rep. Manuel F. Zubiri, to the Committee on
Disaster Management

Rep. Edgar M. Chatto, to the Committee on Basic
Education and Culture

Rep. Carlos Isagani T. Zarate, to the Committee
on Public Order and Safety

Rep. Adriano A. Ebcas and Rep. Presley C. De Jesus,
both speeches to the Committee on Energy; and

Rep. Eufemia “Ka Femia” C. Cullamat, to the
Committee on Basic Education and Culture.

Speech delivered on November 5, 2019:

Rep. Bienvenido M. Abante Jr., to the Committee
on Overseas Workers Affairs.

Speeches delivered on November 11, 2019:

Rep. Sol Aragonés, to the Committee on Tourism
Rep. Shirlyn L. Bañas-Nogralés, to the Committee
on Suffrage and Electoral Reforms

Rep. Jose L. Atienza Jr., to the Committees on
Government Enterprises and Privatization, Good
Government and Public Accountability, and Public
Accounts

Rep. Presley C. De Jesus, to the Committee on Energy

Rep. Adriano A. Ebcas, to the Committee on Energy

Rep. Carlos Isagani T. Zarate, to the Committee
on Justice; and

Rep. Gabriel H. Bordado Jr., to the Committee on
Dangerous Drugs.

Speeches delivered on November 12, 2019:

Rep. Carlos Isagani T. Zarate, to the Committee on
Housing and Urban Development

Rep. Mark O. Go, to the Committee on Higher and
Technical Education; and

Rep. Angelica Natasha Co, to the Committee on
Health.

Speeches delivered on November 18, 2019:

Rep. Yedda Marie K. Romualdez and Rep.
Bernadette “BH” Herrera-Dy, both speeches to the
Committee on Welfare of Children

Rep. Lawrence “Law” H. Fortun, to the Committee
on Population and Family Relations

Rep. Rozzano Rufino B. Biazon, Rep. Irene Gay F.
Saulog and Rep. Carlos Isagani T. Zarate, all speeches
to the Committee on Welfare of Children

Rep. Arlene D. Brosas, to the Committee on
Agriculture and Food

Rep. France L. Castro, to the Committee on Public
Order and Safety

Rep. Sarah Jane I. Elago, to the Committee on Youth
and Sports Development; and

Rep. Eufemia “Ka Femia” C. Cullamat, to the
Committee on Agrarian Reform.

Speeches delivered on November 19, 2019:

Rep. Eufemia “Ka Femia” C. Cullamat, to the
Committee on Indigenous Cultural Communities and
Indigenous Peoples; and

Rep. Bienvenido M. Abante, to the Committee on
Energy.

Speeches delivered on November 20, 2019:

Rep. Esmael G. Mangudadatu and Rep. Carlos Isagani
T. Zarate, both speeches to the Committee on Justice

Rep. Ferdinand R. Gaité, to the Committee on
Agriculture and Food

Rep. Edgar M. Chatto, to the Special Committee
on Climate Change

Rep. Sarah Jane I. Elago, to the Committee on Basic
Education and Culture

Rep. Edgar Mary S. Sarmiento, to the Committee
on Dangerous Drugs

Rep. Arlene D. Brosas, to the Committee on
Ecology; and

Rep. Aurelio “Dong” D. Gonzales Jr., to the
Committee on Agriculture and Food.

Speeches delivered on November 25, 2019:

Rep. Manuel F. Zubiri and Rep. Mercedes “Didi”
C. Cagas, both speeches to the Committee on Disaster
Management

Rep. France L. Castro, to the Committee on Basic
Education and Culture; and

Rep. Arlene D. Brosas, to the Committee on Women
and Gender Equality.

Speech delivered on November 26, 2019:

Rep. Gabriel H. Bordado Jr., to the Committee on
Dangerous Drugs.

Speeches delivered on December 2, 2019:

Rep. Carlos Isagani T. Zarate, to the Committees
on National Defense and Security, and Public Order
and Safety

Rep. Arnolfo “Arnie” A. Teves Jr., to the Committee
on Population and Family Relations

Rep. Jose L. Atienza Jr., to the Committee on Basic
Education and Culture; and

Rep. Cheryl P. Deloso-Montalla, to the Committee
on Public Works and Highways.

Speech delivered on December 4, 2019:

Rep. Jose L. Atienza Jr., to the Committees on Good
Government and Public Accountability, and Public
Accounts.

Speeches delivered on December 9, 2019:

Rep. Presley C. De Jesus, to the Committee on Disaster Management

Rep. Sergio C. Dagooc and Rep. Gabriel H. Bordado Jr., both speeches to the Committee on Energy

Rep. Alfonso V. Umali Jr., to the Committee on Social Services

Rep. Eufemia “Ka Femia” C. Cullamat, to the Committee on Indigenous Cultural Communities and Indigenous Peoples

Rep. Bernadette “BH” Herrera-Dy, to the Committees on Good Government and Public Accountability, and Public Accounts

Rep. Sarah Jane I. Elago, to the Committee on Youth and Sports Development

Rep. France L. Castro, to the Committee on Human Rights; and

Rep. Ma. Lourdes Acosta-Alba, to the Committee on Women and Gender Equality.

Speech delivered on December 10, 2019:

Rep. Alfred C. Delos Santos, to the Committee on Disaster Management.

Speech delivered on December 11, 2019:

Rep. Carlos Isagani T. Zarate, to the Committee on Human Rights.

Speeches delivered on December 17, 2019:

Rep. Bienvenido M. Abante Jr., to the Committee on Youth and Sports Development

Rep. Francisco G. Datol Jr., to the Special Committee on Senior Citizens

Rep. Ron P. Salo, to the Committee on Youth and Sports Development

Rep. Eric M. Martinez, to the Committee on Youth and Sports Development; and

Rep. Mohamad Khalid Q. Dimaporo, to the Committee on Mindanao Affairs.

Speeches delivered on January 20, 2020:

Reps. Ma. Theresa V. Collantes, Vilma Santos-Recto and Lianda B. Bolilia, all speeches to the Committee on Disaster Management; and

Rep. Rowena Niña O. Taduran, to the Committee on Public Order and Safety.

Speech delivered on January 22, 2020:

Rep. Lucy Torres-Gomez, to the Committee on Disaster Management.

Speeches delivered on January 27, 2020:

Rep. Rico B. Geron, to the Committee on Transportation

Rep. Manuel F. Zubiri, to the Committee on Disaster Management

Rep. Presley C. De Jesus, to the Committee on Trade and Industry

Rep. Eufemia “Ka Femia” C. Cullamat, to the Committee on National Defense and Security

Rep. Sarah Jane I. Elago, to the Committee on Basic Education and Culture; and

Rep. Aurelio “Dong” D. Gonzales Jr., to the Committee on Disaster Management.

Speech delivered on January 28, 2020:

Rep. Angelina “Helen” D.L. Tan, MD, to the Committee on Health.

Speeches delivered on February 3, 2020:

Rep. Edgar R. Erice, to the Committee on Justice; and

Rep. Sergio C. Dagooc, to the Committee on Energy.

Speeches delivered on February 4, 2020:

Rep. France L. Castro, to the Committee on Basic Education and Culture; and

Rep. Sarah Jane I. Elago, to the Committee on Higher and Technical Education.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The various privilege speeches are referred to the appropriate committees.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

REP. FARIÑAS, RIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn the session until three o'clock in the afternoon of Wednesday, March 4, 2020.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, A.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the session is adjourned until Wednesday, March 4, 2020 at three o'clock in the afternoon.

It was 7:56 p.m.