



# Congressional Record

PLENARY PROCEEDINGS OF THE 18<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST REGULAR SESSION  
*House of Representatives*

Vol. 4

Wednesday, May 6, 2020

No. 55b

## RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 3:00 p.m., the session was resumed with Deputy Speaker Raneo "Ranie" E. Abu presiding.*

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Secretary General is hereby directed to read the Additional Reference of Business for referral to proper committees.

## ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

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

## BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 6674, entitled:

"AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE BALIK PROBINSYA PUBLIC HOUSING AND RELOCATION PROGRAM, AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES"

By Representative Tutor  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

House Bill No. 6675, entitled:

"AN ACT IMPOSING A MORATORIUM ON THE INCREASE OF PHILHEALTH PREMIUM

CONTRIBUTIONS OF OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS (OFWs), AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11223, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE ACT"

By Representative Castelo  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 6676, entitled:

"AN ACT PROHIBITING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST PERSONS WHO ARE CONFIRMED, SUSPECT, AND PROBABLE CASES OF COVID-19 VIRUS, REPATRIATED OFWs, HEALTH WORKERS, RESPONDERS, AND SERVICE WORKERS"

By Representative Belmonte  
TO THE DEFEAT COVID-19 *AD HOC* COMMITTEE

House Bill No. 6677, entitled:

"AN ACT PROVIDING FOR OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH STANDARDS TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF EMERGING INFECTIOUS DISEASES"

By Representative Belmonte  
TO THE DEFEAT COVID-19 *AD HOC* COMMITTEE

House Bill No. 6678, entitled:

"AN ACT PUTTING A CEILING ON INTEREST RATES UPON LOANS AND FORBEARANCES AND PRESCRIBING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION THEREOF"

By Representative Robes  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

House Bill No. 6679, entitled:

"AN ACT RENEWING THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES SYSTEM TO CONSTRUCT, ESTABLISH, MAINTAIN, AND OPERATE FOR EDUCATIONAL AND OTHER RELATED PURPOSES, RADIO AND

TELEVISION BROADCASTING STATIONS WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES AND IN SUCH OTHER AREAS WITHIN THE SCOPE OF ITS OPERATION, UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8160, TO ANOTHER TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS”

By Representative Hofer  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE FRANCHISES

House Bill No. 6680, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING SECTIONS 1, 2, 3 AND 16 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7925 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE PUBLIC TELECOMMUNICATIONS POLICY ACT OF THE PHILIPPINES”

By Representative Pichay  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

House Bill No. 6681, entitled:

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

By Representative Hofer  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON WELFARE OF CHILDREN

House Bill No. 6682, entitled:

“AN ACT UPGRADING THE RANK CLASSIFICATION STRUCTURE OF THE UNIFORMED MEMBERS OF THE BUREAU OF FIRE PROTECTION (BFP) AND THE BUREAU OF JAIL MANAGEMENT AND PENOLOGY (BJMP) ORGANIZATION, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6975, AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8551, AND REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9263”

By Representative Cabochan  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ORDER AND SAFETY

House Bill No. 6683, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING RELIEF TO MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (MSMEs) IN RELATION TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Tambunting  
TO THE DEFEAT COVID-19 *AD HOC* COMMITTEE

House Bill No. 6684, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING THE SALIENT PROVISIONS OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE ON THE SPECIAL EDUCATION FUND (SEF), AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE RA 7160 OR THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991, AS AMENDED”

By Representative Romulo  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 6685, entitled:

“AN ACT ALLOWING THE DEPED TO LEVY FUNDS FROM THE SPECIAL EDUCATION FUND (SEF) FOR PREEMPTIVE AND RESPONSIVE MEASURES IN TIMES OF NATIONAL EMERGENCIES OR WHEN THE EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT DEEMS IT NECESSARY, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE RA 7160 OR THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991, AS AMENDED”

By Representative Romulo  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 6686, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING SECTION 386 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7160 OR THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991”

By Representative Barbers  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 6687, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM BY BANKS AND GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, AS A RESPONSIVE MEASURE IN TIMES OF NATIONAL EMERGENCIES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Romulo  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

House Bill No. 6688, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A PANDEMIC AND OTHER PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREOF AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Robes  
TO THE DEFEAT COVID-19 *AD HOC* COMMITTEE

House Bill No. 6689, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO PURCHASE THE PRODUCE OF LOCAL FARMERS OR PRODUCERS FOR RELIEF AND SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMS”

By Representative Escudero  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

House Bill No. 6690, entitled:

“AN ACT INTEGRATING BASIC MEDICAL AND HEALTH TRAINING AND RISK REDUCTION, NATIONAL EMERGENCY OR DISASTER AWARENESS, PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE IN THE CURRICULUM OF SCHOOLS AND INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING”

By Representative Escudero  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE AND THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 6691, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING BLENDED LEARNING IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS DURING PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Escudero  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE AND THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 6692, entitled:

“AN ACT EXTENDING THE SOCIAL AMELIORATION PROGRAM DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENERAL COMMUNITY QUARANTINE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREOF”

By Representatives Zarate, Gaité, Cullamat, Castro (France), Brosas and Elago  
TO THE DEFEAT COVID-19 *AD HOC* COMMITTEE

House Bill No. 6693, entitled:

“AN ACT APPROPRIATING THE AMOUNT OF ONE TRILLION (P1,000,000,000) FOR THE CONTINUED EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE AND ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE FOR COVID-19 RESPONSE”

By Representative Lagman  
TO THE DEFEAT COVID-19 *AD HOC* COMMITTEE

## RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 818, entitled:

“RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES’ APPRECIATION OF THE EFFORTS OF THE INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE ON EMERGING INFECTIOUS DISEASES (IATF) TO PROTECT THE WELFARE OF THE SENIOR CITIZENS AND FURTHER URGING THE CONCERNED GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, INSTRUMENTALITIES, GOVERNMENT-OWNED AND CONTROLLED CORPORATIONS TO RELEASE MORE GUIDELINES ON BENEFITS FAVORABLE TO THE SENIOR CITIZENS”

By Representatives Datol and Pineda  
TO THE DEFEAT COVID-19 *AD HOC* COMMITTEE

House Resolution No. 819, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE DEFEAT COVID-19 COMMITTEE TO DIRECT THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE (DOF) AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS (LGUs) THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT (DILG) TO WAIVE FEES FOR THE DECLARATION OF CLOSURE/ CESSATION OF BUSINESSES AFFECTED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC FOR ONE CALENDAR YEAR”

By Representative Erice  
TO THE DEFEAT COVID-19 *AD HOC* COMMITTEE

House Resolution No. 820, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH JOINTLY WITH THE COMMITTEE ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT TO CONDUCT AN IMMEDIATE REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 51, REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10028, REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11148, AND REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10821 IN LIGHT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC”

By Representative Belmonte  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 821, entitled:

“RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE COMMITMENT OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO WORK WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO PASS

THE PROPOSED SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET OF THE DEPARTMENT TO SUPPORT ITS PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, PARTICULARLY IN THE AREAS OF FOOD SECURITY AND PRICE STABILITY”

By Representative Robes  
TO THE DEFEAT COVID-19 *AD HOC* COMMITTEE

House Resolution No. 822, entitled:

“RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE OPPOSITION OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE DECISION OF THE PHILIPPINE AMUSEMENT AND GAMING CORPORATION (PAGCOR), AS APPROVED BY THE INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE ON EMERGING INFECTIOUS DISEASES (IATF-EID), TO ALLOW PHILIPPINE OFFSHORE GAMING OPERATORS (POGOs) TO RESUME OPERATIONS AMIDST THE CURRENT COVID-19 STATE OF NATIONAL HEALTH EMERGENCY AND THEREBY URGES THE SAME TO RESCIND THE DECISION IMMEDIATELY”

By Representatives Villanueva (Eduardo) and Rivera  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GAMES AND AMUSEMENTS

House Resolution No. 823, entitled:

“RESOLUTION CALLING FOR AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE ALLEGED ANOMALIES/CORRUPTION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SOCIAL AMELIORATION PROGRAM”

By Representative Yap (Eric)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

#### MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

Message dated May 4, 2020, informing the House of Representatives that the Senate on even date passed Senate Bill No. 1365, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE ALTERNATIVE LEARNING SYSTEM IN BASIC EDUCATION FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH, ADULTS, AND CHILDREN IN SPECIAL EXTREME CASES AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

in which it requests the concurrence of the House of Representatives.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

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

#### NOMINAL VOTING ON HOUSE BILLS ON THIRD READING

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bills Nos. 6323, 6324, 6325, 6326, 6327, 6328, 6329 and 6330, and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measures, and call the roll for nominal voting.

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

*Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measures, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on March 10, 2020, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.*

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 6323, entitled: AN ACT CREATING ONE (1) ADDITIONAL BRANCH OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE FIRST JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF LA PAZ, PROVINCE OF ABRA, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14(A) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS “THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980”, AS AMENDED;

House Bill No. 6324, entitled: AN ACT CREATING TWO (2) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE FIFTH JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF DAET AND LABO, PROVINCE OF CAMARINES NORTE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14(F) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS “THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980”, AS AMENDED;

House Bill No. 6325, entitled: AN ACT CREATING EIGHT (8) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED IN THE CITY OF CALOOCAN AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14(D) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS “THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980”, AS AMENDED;

House Bill No. 6326, entitled: AN ACT CREATING ONE (1) ADDITIONAL BRANCH OF

THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE SEVENTH JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF MOALBOAL, PROVINCE OF CEBU, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14(H) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS “THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980”, AS AMENDED;

House Bill No. 6327, entitled: AN ACT CREATING TWO (2) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT AND FIVE (5) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURT IN CITIES IN THE NINTH JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED IN THE PROVINCE OF ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTIONS 14(J) AND 29 OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS “THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980”, AS AMENDED;

House Bill No. 6328, entitled: AN ACT CREATING ONE (1) ADDITIONAL BRANCH OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE SIXTH JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED IN THE CITY OF VICTORIAS, PROVINCE OF NEGROS OCCIDENTAL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14(G) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS “THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980”, AS AMENDED;

House Bill No. 6329, entitled: AN ACT CREATING FOUR (4) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE FOURTH JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF ROSARIO AND SAN JUAN, PROVINCE OF BATANGAS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14(E) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS “THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980”, AS AMENDED; and

House Bill No. 6330, entitled: AN ACT CREATING FIVE (5) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE SIXTH JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED IN THE CITY OF KABANKALAN, PROVINCE OF NEGROS OCCIDENTAL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14(G) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS “THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980”, AS AMENDED.

*The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading\* on the aforesaid measures is reflected in Journal No. 55, dated May 6, 2020.*

#### APPROVAL OF HOUSE BILLS ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). With 210 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bills Nos. 6323, 6324, 6325, 6326, 6327, 6328, 6329 and 6330 are approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### NOMINAL VOTING ON HOUSE BILLS NOS. 6498 AND 6499 ON THIRD READING

REP. AGLIPAY. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bills Nos. 6498 and 6499 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measures and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

*Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measures, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on March 11, 2020, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.*

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 6498, entitled: AN ACT INCREASING THE BED CAPACITY OF THE NAGUILIAN DISTRICT HOSPITAL IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF NAGUILIAN, PROVINCE OF LA UNION FROM TWENTY-FIVE (25) BEDS TO FIFTY (50) BEDS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR; and

House Bill No. 6499, entitled: AN ACT INCREASING THE BED CAPACITY OF THE QUIRINO MEMORIAL MEDICAL CENTER IN QUEZON CITY, METRO MANILA FROM FIVE HUNDRED (500) BEDS TO ONE THOUSAND (1,000) BEDS, UPGRADING ITS PROFESSIONAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES AND FACILITIES, AUTHORIZING THE INCREASE OF ITS MEDICAL PERSONNEL COMPLEMENT 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 measures is reflected in Journal No. 55, dated May 6, 2020.*

APPROVAL OF HOUSE BILLS NOS. 6498 AND  
6499 ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). With 216 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bills Nos. 6498 and 6499 are approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

PRIVILEGE HOUR

REP. LACSON-NOEL. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the Privilege Hour.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. LACSON-NOEL. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Hon. Dan S. Fernandez of the First District of Laguna for his privilege speech.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The honorable Representative from the First District of Laguna, Deputy Speaker Dan S. Fernandez, is recognized to avail of this Privilege Hour.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. FERNANDEZ

REP. FERNANDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The title of my privilege speech for today's session is "Beyond COVID-19: Focusing on Workers in the Informal Economy."

Mr. Speaker, dear colleagues, friends, and the Filipino people whom we serve, good afternoon. I stand before you during a time of great uncertainty and anxiety. The COVID-19 pandemic is wreaking havoc worldwide and the Philippines is no exception. As of May 4, there have been 3,580,330 cases with 248,452 deaths worldwide. Here, as of the same date, COVID cases have reached 9,485 with 623 deaths and around 20 percent of all our cases are those of health care workers, and at least 10 percent of the deaths are of doctors and nurses. Malaki at masalimuot po ang problema natin.

I never imagined that a day would come when we cannot hug, shake each other's hands, or even get near

another person without feeling anxious. We are being forced to change how we relate to each other. COVID-19 is changing our lives in more ways than one. This unseen enemy, this virus, is threatening not only our health but our very lives. Because of this pandemic, the economic activity has been almost at a standstill. We are facing a significant downturn in our economy.

Since the start of the lockdown in Metro Manila alone, millions of workers were forced to stay home and most businesses were ordered closed. Poor workers, especially the daily wage earners, have not even been earning and businesses have been incurring massive losses. We can expect that after the lockdown, our people will not have the same buying capacity as before. Whatever little money they had would have been used for their family's needs. Worse, a significant number of workers may lose their jobs because businesses will try to cut down their losses. This, likely, is the immediate future we face after the pandemic.

As the world is racing against time to find a cure and as our country works hard to cope with and contain COVID-19, this is also the right time to make plans for recovery. We want our people to be able to resume their lives as soon as circumstances get better. We cannot afford to be caught off-guard yet again. Dapat po tayong ay proactive at hindi lamang reactive. Kailangan natin tunay na matulungan ang ating bansa at mga kababayan upang makabangon sa lalong madaling panahon.

As Representatives of the Filipino people, it is incumbent upon this honorable House to learn from this pandemic and use this learning to formulate solutions by way of laws that will enable our people to reclaim and restart their lives. Government responsiveness is most important, especially for the welfare of our poor citizens.

Today, Mr. Speaker, my dear colleagues, I also stand before you on behalf of the workers in the informal economy. We all know that May 1 of every year is Labor Day, a national holiday. What many may not be aware of is that today, May 6, is the day of workers in the informal sectors. This is based on former President Fidel V. Ramos' Proclamation No. 1215, series of 1998. Ito po iyong proklamasyon ng atin pong dating Pangulo declaring May 1 to 7 every year as Linggo ng Paggawa: May 1 – all workers; May 2 – Overseas Filipino Workers; May 4 – workers in agriculture and industry; May 5 – workers in the service sector; and May 6 – entrepreneurs, self-employed and other informal sector workers. Hanggang ngayon po, Mr. Speaker, little is being done for them. These are the workers that I wish to recognize today, Mr. Speaker.

Sino-sino po ba ang manggagawang ito? Kagabi lang, nakita natin iyong pagsasara noong ABS-CBN at doon sa 11,000 na manggagawa ng ABS-CBN, 4,401

\* See ANNEX (printed separately)

ang included sa formal workers at almost 7,000 ang included naman po doon sa impormal na ekonomiya. Kabilang dito ang maraming mga artista na hindi nakakontra sa ABS. Kasama dito iyong mga nasa production tulad ng mga direktor, assistant director, make-up artist, stuntmen, stuntwomen, iyong atin pong mga tinatawag na “gofers,” and a lot more doon po sa atin pong mga production. Hindi lamang po iyong mga impormal sa aking industriya na kinabibilangan dati ang nabibilang sa informal workers. Kasama din po natin ang mga drivers sa pedicabs, sa taxi, sa bus, sa jeepneys. Sa market, iyong mga street ambulant vendors, pati na iyong mga nagtitinda sa market, kasama po natin ito, pati na mismo iyong mga magtataho, iyong mga waste pickers, mga street sweepers, garbage collectors, home-based workers, construction workers, small farmers, fisherfolk and on-call caregivers. Not to be forgotten are the volunteers, contractuels and job orders in government instrumentalities such as the BHWs, BNS, barangay tanods, day care workers, and other vulnerable sectors ng workers.

Mr. Speaker, my dear colleagues, the number of workers in the informal economy in the country is huge. The April 2018 data indicated that there are around 25.7 million workers—I repeat, 25.7 million workers—make up the informal economy. They comprise almost 63 percent of all economically active Filipinos. The women workers in the informal economy are 56.4 percent of all economically active women.

Based on the data from the Philippine Statistics Authority, sinasabi nila noong 2018 na mayroong 25.7 million informal workers, pero bakit ang ipinadala sa atin ng DSWD ay 18 million lamang? Hindi ba sila nag-coordinate sa Philippine Statistics Authority na kung saan mayroon na silang method of computation na 25.7 million are already included as informal workers? They are among the poorest of the poor workers, yet in the same year, they contributed around P5.7 trillion or 33 percent of our country’s Gross Domestic Product. Indeed, iyong sinasabi natin na binigyan natin under the social amelioration program na 18 million, mahihirap nga sila pero sila po ay productive.

Sadly, Mr. Speaker, these workers are not protected by our labor laws. They are without the benefits and social protection enjoyed by those formally employed. There are no labor standards that protect their rights, health, safety and well-being while working. Our labor laws favor workers in the formal employment setting and mostly ignore those in the informal economy. There is little government attention in terms of addressing their needs, honing their skills and supporting their enterprises and livelihood activities. We in Congress need to correct this injustice.

This Representation has been repeatedly filing the Magna Carta of Workers in the Informal Economy or what we call MACWIE. Natatandaan ko, Fourteenth

Congress, Fifteenth Congress, and Sixteenth Congress, na-file na po natin ito. Ito ay umabot sa Second Reading, hindi nakaabot sa Plenary—ang sabi ay hindi tayong puwedeng mag-create ng another department dahil another bureaucratic structure will be created, so, hindi daw. So, we made it from a department to an agency.

When COVID-19 broke out and the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) started, our poor citizens were hit the worst. The threats they faced and continue to face are twofold: COVID-19, and hunger because of loss of livelihood. Many of them are workers in the informal economy. We saw them in news reports arguing with those implementing the ECQ, in droves because as they said, kung hindi sila makakapagtrabaho ay hindi nila mapapakain ang kanilang pamilya, mamatay din lamang sila. This scene was repeated many times and the government needed to act fast because people were getting hungry. We, in Congress, did our share by immediately passing the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act.

When this Representation saw the various problems in the implementation of the law particularly related to the social amelioration program, my bill MACWIE, which as I said I filed several times before, came to mind. I thought that if only we already had the law, some of the major problems in the SAP implementation would have been averted. Allow me to tell you why, Mr. Speaker and my dear colleagues.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development, using 2015 census data, targeted 18 million families of workers in the informal economy as beneficiaries of the SAP for April and May. It is now 2020, and the population have significantly grown. Using 2015 data is simply wrong. Targeting only 18 million is wrong. Kulang na kulang, hindi po ba? Bakit iyong 18 million na nai-submit nila ay hindi na-icoordinate sa ating Philippine statistics agency para malaman natin kung ano talaga iyong total na status ng ating mga informal workers, na kung saan pala may data na tayo ng April 2018 at sinasabing 25.7 million na ang informal workers natin? We were fed the wrong information. Why?

Naturally, there have been many problems, from identifying eligible beneficiaries to verifying their identities. These, and the complex process set by the DSWD, resulted in a lot of our poor people getting angry. People are angry at the barangay officials and their local government units. Sigurado po, kahit naman tayo ang nasa kalagayan nila, kung nagugutom na ang ating pamilya at wala tayong magawang paraan ay magagalit din tayo.

In turn, the LGUs began complaining because of the small number of beneficiaries allocated to them by the DSWD. Mayors were saying that the numbers were very short of the actual number of families needing SAP assistance. Sa amin nga sa Sta. Rosa po e, ang nakalista sa DSWD ay 54,000, e in actuality po, mayroon na

kaming 100,000. Paano magbabalanse kung hindi na updated iyong record na isinubmit sa atin?

Outside of the problem with numbers—nagkaproblema na nga po tayo doon sa tungkol sa mga numero na binigay sa atin ng DSWD ay sobrang bagal pa po ang pag-release ng SAP. Alam natin lahat iyan. During a crisis, we cannot be slow. Time is of the essence. The long and complicated process required by the DSWD in the identification, validation and revalidation of beneficiaries is counterproductive. I have to say that the House leadership's specific recommendations to the DSWD for a more expeditious SAP process were sadly ignored.

Natatandaan ko, noong napanood ko iyong FB live feed ni Speaker Alan Cayetano kung saan nagbigay tayo ng recommendation na i-simplify natin, specifically iyong validation, ay apat na validation ang ginawa nila—validation sa barangay, representative ng DSWD, tapos validation sa LGU, tapos dadalhin sa sentral. Kung makikita mo iyong listahan nila, talagang napakahaba noong proseso. Isa lamang siguro doon sa mga rekomendasyon ng ating leadership ang tinanggap ng DSWD, I think iyong house-to-house lang ng pag-deliver noong atin pong SAP form.

Ang problem, ngayon na mangongolekta ng pera iyong ating mga taumbayan, e pinatawag naman ngayon sa mga barangay—naaalala ko iyong noong Monday noong pumunta tayo dito sa Kongreso, nakita natin sa may school dito, hindi ko alam kung anong school iyong kalapit ng Kongreso, ang haba ng pila, and the social distancing was being violated already. Kanina lamang tumawag iyong kababayan ko, “Cong, kawawa po...,” at may nag-text din sa akin, “Cong, kawawa po ang mga tao dito. Ang schedule ng DSWD, alas-ocho ng umaga, bigayan ng amelioration, pero 5:00 a.m. pa lang po, nakapila na ang mga tao. Ngayon po, 11:44 a.m., pinauuwi na kami dahil wala pa ang DSWD at bumalik na lang daw mamaya.”

Nakakaawa ang mga tao sa palpak na sistema ng DSWD. Tulungan ninyo po kaming mga mahihirap. Na-text ko na po ang lahat ng inaasahan naming makakatulong sa amin, kaso ni-isa po ay walang tumugon. Sabi pa: “Cong, nang namigay po ng forms ang DSWD, nagbahay-bahay sila. Bakit ngayong bigayan ay kailangang magkumpulan ang mga tao sa barangay, gayong alam nating delikado ang COVID? Hinde po kaya puwedeng magtungo ang DSWD sa bawat purok? Konting awa po sa mahihirap at nagugutom na mamamayan.”

Nakakalungkot na maraming ganitong mga problema na kinakaharap. This power of Congress, the oversight power of the Congress to look into the implementation of the laws that we have passed—this time, katulad ng sinabi ng ating leadership sa pangunguna ni Speaker Alan Peter Cayetano, this is a different time, this is a dangerous time, and that is the

reason why the power of oversight is being implemented right now, dahil nga po iba ang panahon na atin pong nararanasan sa pagkakataong ito. Ang katotohanan, iisa ang kalaban, ang COVID-19. Hindi po tayo naglalaban-laban dito. Tayo po ay dapat na nagkakasama upang gupuin ang iisang kaaway, ang COVID-19. Ang Kongreso ay hindi po kaaway. Kasama po tayo sa pagsugpo ng problema.

What this Representation knows is that of the targeted 18 million families as beneficiaries for April and May, only 13 million have actually received from SAP as per the last information that I received. Personal po nating nakita kung gaano kahaba ang pila ng mga tumatanggap ng SAP. Napakahirap pong ipatupad talaga ang physical distancing sa ganitong kalagayan. Not only are people angry and hungry because of the very long wait, many qualified families have also been excluded from the SAP.

If MACWIE were already a law, these problems would not have been as big as they are. First, data would not have been a significant problem despite the absence of a census this year as MACWIE has strong provisions for a database of workers in the informal economy from the LGU to the national level. To qualify as beneficiaries sa programs under the proposed law, the workers, their livelihood activities, no matter how small, as well as their organizations, will need to register with their LGUs. This means that the government, from the LGUs to the national agencies, will have the needed data about them.

Hindi po natin sana naging problema ang bilang ng dapat na tumanggap ng ayuda, ang kanilang lokasyon, pati na rin po ang level ng tulong na maaaring tanggapin. Hindi rin po sana naging problema ang mahabang proseso ng identipikasyon, validation, revalidation ng mga beneficiaries. Hindi po sana malaki ang kulang ng ating target beneficiaries. Mas naging mabilis po sana ang pagdating ng tulong sa mga nangangailangan. Hindi sana magugutom ang marami nating mga manggagawa, hindi sila magpipilit lumabas kahit may ECQ at ma-expose sa COVID-19. Hindi po magagalit sa pamahalaan ang ating mahihirap na manggagawa.

Pangalawa, if the government lacks human resources to deliver iyong assistance na hindi ma-deliver, the organization of workers in the formal economy could have been tapped to help. After all, under MACWIE, these groups would have been accredited by LGUs and national government. I know for a fact that these organizations are willing to help because MACWIE directly came from them.

Ikatlo po, the level of assistance needed from a single government agency may not be as big. This is because if MACWIE were already a law, workers in the informal economy would have social protection like membership in the Social Security System under customized programs. This social protection mechanism



would lessen the workers' vulnerability to risks such as those brought about by COVID-19. This means that the workers would not be at the mercy of one government entity because they will also stand to benefit from SSS as contributing members. Moreover, if MACWIE has been put in place, our government, both LGUs and national agencies, would have running programs for them as provided by the proposed law. Possibly, workers in the informal economy would be in a better position than now. This means that both government and workers would be a bit better prepared to face the COVID-19 pandemic. At ang huli, last, Mr. Speaker, if the MACWIE has been passed earlier, in our plans to move forward after COVID-19, we would be better informed because of the presence of data, pati iyong mga relevant program, consultation, coordination and implementation of structures, systems and mechanisms, with the active participation of accredited workers in the informal economy organizations.

I said earlier that this is the time to plan our next steps in helping our poor citizens restart and regain control of their lives. If MACWIE were already a law, we will not start from scratch. We will have a good idea of what our 25.7 million workers need. We will even have an understanding of what has to be done in relation with the major groups of workers like women and young workers, the senior workers, homeworkers, those in the service industry, the vendors and sellers, farmers and fisherfolk and others. We will only need to continue to update, upgrade or add on to the existing programs in coordination with workers' organizations. I can only imagine how easier and faster we can develop said plans, and how much more responsive these plans could be.

Another important thing that I would like to say is, all studies point to the fact that after all crises, the number of workers in the informal economy significantly increased. Those who lose their jobs, employment transfer, lahat sila babagsak as informal workers. Katulad nang nangyari sa ABS-CBN, kumbaga, kung mayroon silang 11,000, 4,000 iyong kanilang pormal, mapapapunta na po sila doon sa impormal. So, lahat noong 11,000, informal workers na po iyan. As it is, Mr. Speaker, the possibility of many workers losing their jobs is big. Add to this, we see that tens of thousands of our OFWs are coming back home. If they stay, what kind of livelihood activities will they engage in? Most possibly, they will also be in the informal economy. Thus, we in government really need to be better prepared.

This Representation knows the MACWIE remains to be a bill and that is why I am calling the leadership and also the Chairman of the Committee on Labor, Cong. Enrico A. Pineda. I hope that this honorable House now sees how important this Bill is, and I hope that we have learned from this COVID-19 crisis.

Mr. Speaker, my dear colleagues, let us now work on our roadmap to moving forward. Maraming mga naging pagkukulang at pagkakamali subalit tayo po ay may malaking magagawa upang ang mga ito ay mapunan at maitama. Marami po tayong dapat gawin upang umpisahan ang ating pagbangon. Twenty-five point seven million workers in the informal economy are waiting and more will be added to their ranks. Today is their day, araw po ng mga impormal na manggagawa sa ekonomiya.

This Representation, and I am sure that the whole House too would like to recognize their contributions and also address the decades of neglect they have experienced.

Mabuhay po tayong lahat. Mabuhay ang mga manggagawa sa impormal na ekonomiya. Maraming, maraming salamat po.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Maraming salamat, kagaglang-galang na Deputy Speaker Dan S. Fernandez from Laguna.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. TADURAN. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Hon. Arlene D. Brosas of GABRIELA Party-List for her interpellation.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Hon. Arlene D. Brosas is now recognized to interpellate Deputy Speaker Dan S. Fernandez.

REP. BROSAS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To our distinguished colleague, maraming salamat po Deputy Speaker Fernandez sa pagpapaalala sa Araw ng Paggawa.

Will the distinguished colleague yield to a few questions? Konti lang po na tanong kaugnay sa inyong...

REP. FERNANDEZ. Surely, to Congresswoman Arlene.

REP. BROSAS. Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker, to our distinguished colleague sa pagpapaalala po sa atin sa Araw ng Paggawa, at sa pangangailangang bigyan ng atensyon ang ating informal sector worker na kalakhan ay kababaihan. Marami po talaga diyan ay babae ano, halos kalahati iyong mga may sari-sari store, ito iyong mga nagbebenta ng gulay at iyong mga ano—kabilang po talaga sila sa mga nangangailangan na magtrabaho para makatulong sa gastusin sa bahay. Tama po ba na hindi kayang saklawin ng SAP at iba pang existing programs ang mga informal sector worker natin na humihingi ng saklolo sa ngayon, distinguished colleague, Mr. Speaker?

REP. FERNANDEZ. Yes, Mr. Speaker, 56.3 percent ng mga informal worker natin ay nabibilang sa mga kababaihan at nakakalungkot isipin na lahat ng mga informal workers natin, kumbaga sa gobyerno natin, ay invisible sila e. They cannot be seen because wala silang protection sa kanilang trabaho wala silang social protection, wala silang health insurance, wala silang benepisyo pero, still, nagko-contribute sila ng malaki sa ating ekonomiya. According dito sa ating record ay 33 percent ng growth development, iyong ating GDP, ay kino-contribute ng informal workers, and that is the reason why I think it is high time that we need to give benefits to these informal workers. Itong ating nararanasan, sa mga pagkakataong ito ay hindi natin nararanasan kung ang mga informal workers have been given the right benefits already by this government and the previous governments.

REP. BROSAS. Mr. Speaker, to our distinguished colleague, totoo po iyong sinasabi na malaki iyong naiaambag nila sa ekonomiya pero sila rin naman iyong nahihirapan ngayon dahil walang amelioration at hindi sila sinasaklaw ng Social Amelioration Program (SAP). Ito po iyong paulit-ulit naming sinasabi o pinupunto sa Makabayan bloc kada linggo, sa tuwing nagsusumite ang Malacañang ng ulat sa Joint Oversight Committee kaugnay ng implementasyon ng Bayanihan to Heal as One Act. Maliit na nga iyong target, hindi pa maabot hanggang ngayon ang target na 18 million para sa ating mga mahihirap na mamamayan. In fact, may 7.7 million pang pamilya ang hindi naaabot ng SAP. Nagsisimula po tayo sa pagtatanggal kaysa sa pagdadagdag. Ang marami pong reports sa amin, nagsisimula sa pag-aalis ng mga pangalan na hindi na-include doon sa social amelioration kaysa tulungan sila.

Ano po ang naging tugon ng (IATF) at saka ng DSWD kaugnay dito, Mr. Speaker, and our distinguished colleague?

REP. FERNANDEZ. Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fact, iyon pong pagtulong ng ating gobyerno pagdating po sa mga informal workers, which was submitted to Congress during the approval noong Bayanihan to Heal as One Act, ay 18 million iyong estimated number ng DSWD, kaya nagbigay tayo ng P200 billion para sa Abril at Mayo specifically for the 18 million. Unfortunately, the problem lies in the actuality of the situation dahil sa ground, hindi naman talaga 18 million lamang iyong mga informal workers e. According nga sa PSA, lumalabas na 25.7 million iyong mga informal workers that need to be attended to as well, kaya dito tayo nagkaroon ng problema.

Noong una, sabi ng leadership natin, ni Speaker, sinabi niya bigyan natin lahat ng SAP forms in anticipation na talagang tama iyong naaprubahan natin. Pero dito, lumalabas sa PSA report noong April 2018,

base sa kanilang statistics, ay 25.7 million kaya kulang tayo ng almost seven million. Tama ka, Mr. Speaker, na hindi pa nabibigyan noong tinatawag nating SAP. But, of course, maraming recommendation ang ating leadership that time, na inisip nga ng ating leadership that time that instead na dalawang buwan ang ibibigay, isang buwan na lang, hatiin na lang sa ating mga remaining seven million na informal workers para nang sa ganoon ay lahat ay nabigyan under the SAP.

Now, according to the report that was submitted to me as well, out of the 18 million, 13 million na ang nabibigyan ng SAP at kulang pa ng almost five million but hindi pa rin natin naisasama iyong sinasabi natin na 7.7 million na hindi kasama doon sa inaprubahan natin under the Bayanihan Act.

REP. BROSAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, actually, nahihirapan din po kaming pagkatiwalaan sa ngayon ang ating gobyerno kung hindi pa nga naibibigay iyong mga kulang na SAP at sinasabi sa PSA na 25.7 million pa at mas marami pa talaga iyong nasa informal sector. Tapos, mayroon tayong mga job order workers sa government mismo na hindi nabibigyan ng regular na trabaho, kahit mismo ang gobyerno ay hindi makapagbigay ng trabaho at sa ngayon ay mayroon tayong kaso na magpapasara ng trabaho, ng kabuhayan, ng libo-libo nating mamamayan na nagtatrabaho sa ABS-CBN.

Paano po iyon, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, makakatulong sa persepsyon natin na ang pamahalaan natin o ang gobyerno natin ay tunay na tinutulungan ang mga mamamayan natin at nagbibigay ng trabaho, hindi nagtatanggal ng trabaho at tumutulong talaga or nagpapalawig pa nito, bukod doon sa 18 million, ay paano pa hanapan na tulungan ang lahat ng nangangailangan, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague?

REP. FERNANDEZ. That is the reason why, Mr. Speaker, the more that we have to expedite the approval of this MACWIE Bill, ng Magna Carta for Workers in the Informal Economy, para kung sakali katulad niyan na nangyari din sa ABS-CBN na nawalan sila ng trabaho, they are protected under our existing laws, na kung saan may social protection sa kanilang kalusugan, at pati na iyong kanilang working condition will be protected by the state.

Ang problem natin ngayon, if ikaw ay isang informal worker, ang dating mo sa government ngayon, you are invisible at wala tayong record, data or any profile of those people who are in the informal economy. That is the reason why iyong nangyayari ngayon sa ABS-CBN, unfortunately, mayroon pa naman tayong ibang mga access sa atin pong pamahalaan, like sa DOLE na kung saan iyong atin pong informal workers can avail of the existing programs that they have.

So, in other words, hindi rin naman po salat iyong hindi pagtulong ng ating gobyerno sa mga mawawalan ng trabaho. Sa katotohanan, mayroon namang ibibigay na tulong ang ating government but the problem is, iyon na nga, hindi siya naka-specific sa iisang department that deals only with the problem of the informal economy. Kasi we have to consider also the contribution of these workers, they contribute 30 percent of the GDP ng atin pong national government kaya it is high time that we really recognize the contribution of informal workers in this country.

REP. BROSAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, maganda po iyong sinasabi ninyo. Matagal po namin na isinusulong dito sa Kongreso iyong magkaroon ng regular talaga na trabaho. Kasi alam naman natin, kapag tiningnan natin sa pangmatagalan, ang gusto talaga natin ay maging regular workers iyong mga nasa informal sector, at iyong magkaroon talaga sila at sumahod sila ng sang-ayon sa kanilang kakayanan, iyong just wage iyong ay mayroon sila. Kaya po hirap kaming isipin, ngayon na iyong mga nangyayari o ipinapakita ng mga nagaganap ngayon o kaganapan ngayon, na nawawalan ng kabuhayan lalo iyong ating mga mamamayan. Alam naman natin na ang idudulot ng pandemic na ito ay matindi. Ngayon, hindi po natin kailangan ng mga katulad ng nangyayari ngayon sa ABS-CBN alam ninyo po nang huling hindi umere ang ABS-CBN ay panahon pa ng diktaturang Marcos, kaya nakakalungkot pong isipin ngayon na off the air ang ABS-CBN at natanggalan ng kabuhayan ang mga tao.

Ito po iyong sinasabi namin na malinaw na malinaw na paglabag po sa kanilang mga karapatan at hindi lang iyon. Siyempre, sabi nga natin, sa mga informal workers natin, ang gusto sana natin ay magkaroon sila ng regular na trabaho pagdating ng araw. Iyon po iyong gusto nating ipunto, just wage and regular work, iyong nakakayanan po nila ang mga basic nilang mga pangangailangan. Sabi nga natin, hindi lang public health ang may problema, iyong ekonomiya din talaga natin, kung paano natin titingnan. Hindi po new normal iyong kailangan kasi kung iyong dati na ginagawa natin ay hindi na workable ngayon, dapat talagang pag-isipan na natin kung paano maiaahon ang mga informal workers natin in the long run.

REP. FERNANDEZ. Yes.

REP. BROSAS. Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker. Maraming salamat, distinguished colleague.

REP. FERNANDEZ. Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. TADURAN. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Lady from ACT TEACHERS Party-List, Hon. France L. Castro, for her interpellation.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The Lady from ACT TEACHERS Party-List is recognized, if Deputy Speaker Dan S. Fernandez is willing to yield or is willing to be interpellated.

REP. FERNANDEZ. Willingly, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). So, proceed.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Deputy Speaker Fernandez for yielding to some questions.

REP. BELMONTE. Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). What is the point of order of Rep. Jose Christopher Y. Belmonte?

REP. BELMONTE. With the indulgence of both colleagues in the House, Mr. Speaker, it was pointed out to me that certain matters being discussed by the proponent of the privilege speech are matters concerning pending bills; in particular, he has a pending bill in this matter and as I understand it, we are cautioned from discussing matters in Plenary, matters that are already pending under the committees and ...

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The point of Representative Belmonte is correct, with indulgence also to Deputy Speaker Dan Fernandez ...

REP. FERNANDEZ. I submit to the recommendation of the Hon. Kit Belmonte. Considering that the Magna Carta for Workers in the Informal Economy is already in the committee level, we can further discuss this issue that entails the benefits of the informal workers.

With due respect to our colleague, Congresswoman France, we can probably discuss this thoroughly in the committee level which, I believe, Cong. Eric Pineda of the Committee on Labor and Employment can somehow expedite the discussion, so, we can somehow approve this pending bill ...

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker Dan Fernandez. The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, yes, it is correct that under Rule XVI of the Rules of the House, there is a provision there which says "Members shall not avail of the Privilege Hour to speak on concerns that are

principally and directly related to the subject matter of measures already pending in any committee or in plenary session.”

The privilege speech of Deputy Speaker Fernandez was allowed because of the issue of COVID-19, but if it will tackle matters that are related to the pending bill, then, it should not be allowed, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). For that reason, Majority Leader, let us terminate the interpellation of the privilege speech of Deputy Speaker Dan S. Fernandez and proceed to another speaker.

The Majority Leader is recognized. Let us proceed to another speaker.

REP. SINGSON-MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to refer the speech and the interpellations thereon to the Rules Committee, the speech of Deputy Speaker Dan Fernandez.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. SINGSON-MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to recognize from the Lone District of Mandaluyong City, Deputy Speaker Neptali M. Gonzales II, to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The Representative from the Lone District of Mandaluyong City, the honorable Deputy Speaker Neptali M. Gonzales II, is recognized to avail of the Privilege Hour.

REP. GONZALES (N.). Can you hear me?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Yes, please proceed, Deputy Speaker. We can hear you. You may proceed.

REP. GONZALES (N.). (*Inaudible*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). You may proceed.

REP. GONZALES (N.). Can you hear me?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Yes, loud and clear.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. GONZALES (N.)

REP. GONZALES (N.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to our Majority Leader, maraming salamat.

G. Ispiker, sa aking mga kasama, isang mapagpalang hapon sa ating lahat.

Ayon po sa R.A. No.10069 na inakda noong April 6, 2010, bukas, ikapito ng Mayo 2020, ay ipagdiriwang natin ang National Health Workers Day. Ito ang araw ng pagkilala natin sa kahalagahan ng ginagampanang tungkulin ng ating mga health workers sa pangangalaga ng kalusugan ng ating mga mamamayan. Higit na tumingkad ang kahalagahan ng mga tungkulin nila sa araw na ito dahil humaharap tayo kasama ang ibang tao sa buong mundo ng isang naiibang pagsubok.

Humigit-kumulang na dalawang buwan na ang nakalilipas na ang ating mga health workers, mapadoktor, nurses, medical technologists man o mga simple o ordinaryong kawani o auxiliary aides lamang ng mga ospital at mga health centers ay hinarap ang panganib sa kanilang sarili dulot ng COVID-19. Marso pa lamang ng taong ito, ang ating mga health workers sa mga health facilities ng pamahalaan at pribadong ospital ay wala nang tigil sa pag-aasikaso sa paggamot sa mga tinamaan at nagkasakit ng COVID-19. Hindi nila inaalintana ang kakulangan ng mga personal protective equipment or PPE katulad ng mga face masks, goggles at mga medical disposable gowns. Sa katunayan, kahit na wala ito o sa kakulangan nito ay patuloy silang nagpupuyat, nagpapakapagod, at nawawalay sa kanilang mga pamilya o sa kanilang mga mahal sa buhay, at ang malungkot sa lahat, dahil sa kanilang pagtupad sa kanilang mga tungkulin ay marami sa kanila ang nabingit na sa kamatayan. Sa katotohanan ay mayroon din mula sa hanay nila na mga namatay din dahil sa COVID-19, at nakalulungkot at nakahihiya na kung minsan, sila ay pinandirihan pa at kung minsan ay nagiging biktima pa ng mga harassment.

Sa Mandaluyong na aking kinakatawan dito sa Kongreso, namalas ko ng personal ang kanilang kabayanihan—ang kabayanihan ng aming mga health workers. Ang mga kawani ng mga health centers, mga doktor at mga nurses, maging ang mga rank-and-file employees sa aming Mandaluyong City Medical Center, sa National Center for Mental Health, at ang pribadong ospital sa Mandaluyong, ang Victor Potenciano Medical Center, ay walang tigil sa pagtupad sa kanilang mga tungkulin. Dalawa sa aming mga health workers ang pumanaw na dahil sa COVID-19—isang doktor sa surgery department, si Dr. Cenover Nicandro Bautista, at si Mr. Manny Pacheco, ang aming nursing supervisor sa Mandaluyong City Medical Center, dahil sa katapatan sa pagganap ng tungkulin ng mga health workers.

Higit sa lahat, sa mapanghamong panahon ngayon na hindi nila inaalintana ang kanilang mga sarili, ang kanilang mga kaligtasan at kapakanan para sa kagalingan ng kanilang kapwa, marapat-dapat lang na kilalanin nating lahat ang kanilang kabayanihan. Sa katotohanan po, hindi lang sila mga bayani, kung hindi sa pananaw ng ating pananalig, ay sila ang kapahayagan

ng pagkalinga ng Poong Maykapal sa ating lahat. Sa pamamagitan nila ay namamalas at nararamdaman natin ang mapagkalingang kamay ng ating Panginoong Diyos. Kaya naman, higit na magiging makulay at napakamahalaga ang pagdiriwang ng National Health Workers Day natin ngayon dahil sa buhay, pagkatao at sakripisyo ng bawat isa sa kanila.

Alam ko pong walang sapat na gantimpala ang maaaring itapat sa kanilang mga nagawa at patuloy na ginagawa. Hindi namin masusuklian ang kanilang walang humpay na katapatan sa kanilang mga sinumpaang katungkulan at sa kanilang mga kadakilaan at kabayanihan. Hayaan ninyong idagdag ko ang aking maliit na tinig at hugutin ko mula sa ikabuturan ng aking puso ang isang taos-pusong pasasalamat sa aming mga health workers. Dalangin ko rin na ang pag-iingat at biyaya ng Poong Maykapal ang siyang bumalot at lumukob sa inyong lahat.

Sa inyo na aming dinadakilang mga health workers ng Pilipinas, mabuhay kayo!

Maraming salamat po, G. Ispiker at magandang hapon po sa ating lahat.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Maraming salamat, Deputy Speaker Neptali M. Gonzales II.

Sa pangalan po ng buong Kamara de Representante, sinasamahan namin kayo sa pagpupugay sa ating mga health workers.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. CRISOLOGO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of Hon. Neptali M. Gonzales II to the Committee on Rule for its appropriate action.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. CRISOLOGO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the honorable Minority Leader, Bienviendo M. Abante Jr., for his privilege speech.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The honorable Minority Leader from the Sixth District of Manila is recognized to avail of the Privilege Hour.

#### PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ABANTE

REP. ABANTE. Salamat po Kabayan.

Mr. Speaker, sa ating mga kaibigan at kasama dito sa House of the People, mga kababayan, magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat. Ako po ay tumatayo dito ngayong hapon on a matter of personal privilege to discuss

the need to abolish the National Telecommunications Commission o iyong tinatawag nating NTC, hindi sapagkat sa kanilang desisyon kahapon pero sapagkat ito po ay nasa isipan ko na matagal na panahon na dapat na ang mga ahensya ng gobyernong matatawag nating useless ay dapat ng tanggalin.

The National Telecommunications Commission was created under Executive Order No. 546, promulgated on July 23, 1979 and conferred with regulatory and quasi-judicial functions taken over by the Board of Communications and the Telecommunications Control Bureau, which were abolished in the same order. Then came Republic Act No. 7925, AN ACT TO PROMOTE AND GOVERN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PHILIPPINE TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND THE DELIVERY OF PUBLIC TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES, which expanded the powers of the NTC as the sole body that exercises jurisdiction over the supervision, adjudication and control over all telecommunication services throughout the country.

For the effective enforcement of this responsibility, Mr. Speaker and my colleagues, it adopts and promotes such guidelines, rules and regulations relative to the establishment, operation and maintenance of various telecommunication facilities and services nationwide. Although it is independent insofar as its regulatory and quasi-judicial functions are concerned, the NTC remains under the administrative supervision of the Department of Information and Communications Technology as an attached agency. However, with respect to its quasi-judicial functions, the NTC's decisions are appealable only and directly to the Supreme Court.

Here, we have a government body that is supposed to regulate a very powerful and rich industry, yet, over the years, the incompetence of its officials has resulted in a poorly regulated sector and that is telecommunications, whose pervasiveness and influence across all classes of society are beyond question. Bakit nga ba ang isa sa pangunahing programa ni President Duterte ay ang makapasok ang third telco sa bansa? Bakit nga ba ho? Ito ay dahil sa kapalakan ng NTC na bantayan ang sektor na ito. Kaya nga kinakailangan pa nating lumikha ng bagong departamento, ang DICT, dahil hindi magampanan ng NTC ang tungkulin nito.

We have an NTC that merely proposes and suggests policies to the industry. Violations of NTC regulations are supposed to be dealt with by suspension, if not cancellation of the license to operate. But did the NTC ever suspend or penalize the likes of PLDT, Globe or Smart kahit ang daming issues at problema sa telecoms katulad ng dropped calls, unregistered prepaid cards, expensive text messaging fees, phone scams, poor telephone services, lack of interconnection at marami pang iba? Ang mga kababayan na po natin na siyang gumagamit ng cellphone—tayo ang number one sa

texting sa buong mundo mga kaibigan at kinakailangang malaman natin ang mga bagay na ito.

We have seen how inutile the NTC has become. It came out with a memorandum circular that required mobile phone service providers to abide by certain minimum quality of standards. Unfortunately, the Commission does not even have the equipment to do an independent test. My goodness. It has to rely on data submitted by the telcos. When one of the cellular operators were accused of not meeting the required standards, the NTC could not find an independent body that would verify the claims against said operator.

The collection of fees by the NTC has increased twelvefold over the decade since 1992. Its budget has increased exponentially in the same period, given that the complexity of regulatory issues grows proportionately with the size of the industry, the growing disparity between the problems in the industry and the capacity of the NTC to respond can no longer be ignored. Do you recall the issue of Service Area Scheme or SAS? The NTC's forbearance on infraction of some licenses has greatly eroded its credibility as a regulator when the SAS participants defaulted in their obligation. The Commission had the recourse of revoking their provisional authority to operate but it did not, Mr. Speaker.

Another problem facing the NTC is its lack of dynamism to keep up with new technologies, particularly those built around data and internet protocol technologies. Telecommunications companies could, for example, provide mass media services and content just as cable companies can now easily provide internet-related services, including voice over IP telephony. Ang mga shows sa TV ay mapapanood mo na sa cellphone at ibang mga gadgets. Ang mga broadcast companies ay ginagamit na ang internet bilang platform para sa broadcasting.

Nasaan ang NTC? Anong regulasyon ang ginagawano? Ang PLDT ay kumuha ng prangkisa sa Kongreso. Matagal na proseso ito. Mahal ang bayad kapag overseas call o long distance, pero puwede ka na ngayon tumawag gamit ang internet—Voice Over Internet Protocol o VOIP. Kadalasan ay libre lang ito. Mayroong mga application gaya ng Viber, Whatsapp, Zoom, at Messenger na puwede ka pang mag-video calls. Walang mga prangkisa iyan galing sa Kongreso. Ano ang ginagawa ng NTC? Our National Telecommunications Commission is supposedly in charge of regulating and promoting the telecommunications industry; it has turned out to be one of the most inept and useless agencies whose only relevance lies in being another model of sheer wastage of the taxpayers' money. Its failure all these years to invoke sanctions against the companies which are poorly serving the people's telecommunications needs is a perfect reason to abolish it already.

~~The latest act of the NTC in issuing a cease and desist order against broadcast company ABS-CBN is a slap in the face of Congress and an outright act of defiance. The House Committee on Legislative Franchises in February 2020 urged the NTC to grant provisional authority to ABS-CBN until, as I quote, "has made a decision on its application". No less the House Speaker Alan Peter Cayetano and Palawan Rep. Franz "Chicoy" E. Alvarez, Chair of the House Committee on Legislative Franchises already sent a letter to NTC urging it to issue a provisional authority effective May 4, 2020.~~

~~The Senate also passed a Resolution calling on the NTC to issue a provisional authority to ABS-CBN. The NTC requested for a legal opinion from the DOJ. The opinion given by DOJ Sec. Menardo Guevarra is to the effect that there is a basis for ABS-CBN to be given authority to continue operating while its franchise renewal is pending; and I quote:~~

~~There is sufficient equitable basis to allow broadcast entities to continue operating while the bills for the renewal of the respective franchise remained pending with Congress. However, a more stable and legal environment could be created if Congress, by a concurrent resolution, would authorize the NTC to issue a provisional authority to these broadcasting companies until Congress' final disposition of their franchise renewal bills.~~

~~On this basis, NTC Commissioner Gamaliel Cordoba told the House Committee on Legislative Franchises on March 10, under oath, that the NTC will issue a provisional authority to ABS-CBN. Contrary to its previous pronouncement, the NTC issued a cease and desist order directing ABS-CBN to cease operations immediately.~~

~~I do not care about ABS-CBN. It can be another network. Hayagang binastos at binalewala ng NTC ang Kongreso at Senado. Papayag ba tayo na mabalewala ng isang ahensya ng pamahalaan na puro kapalpakan lamang ang ginagawa? Ang ginawang ito ng NTC ay hindi maaaring palampasin ng Kongreso. This is an open defiance and an insult to Congress. The NTC should be abolished and its functions and powers should be transferred to the DICT where it can be better exercised, and hopefully be more responsive to the needs of our changing time.~~

~~I say we do it now and we do it fast.~~

~~Maraming, maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker. Maraming, maraming salamat po sa inyong pakikinig.~~

REP. REMULLA. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The Sr. Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. REMULLA. Mr. Speaker, I wish to raise a point of order on the matter of ABS-CBN being discussed in the speech of Honorable Abante.

I move to strike out all remarks that have to do with ABS-CBN. The Committee on Rules made it clear that it prohibits the discussion of ABS-CBN in plenary today since it is already pending in committee level.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion to strike out statements related to ABS-CBN is approved.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. CRISOLOGO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the honorable Minority Leader, Rep. Benny Abante, to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

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

The Majority Leader recognized.

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

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

*It was 4:43 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 4:44 p.m., the session was resumed.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The session

is resumed.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we close the Privilege Hour.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that all the House bills approved today on Third Reading be transmitted to the Senate.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

There is a correction on the result of the nominal voting on House Bills Nos. 6498 and 6499. Instead of 216 affirmative votes, it should have been 218 affirmative votes.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to reiterate my motion that all House bills passed today on Third Reading...

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). That motion has been approved earlier.

#### ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

REP. BOLILIA. I move that we adjourn the session until three o'clock in the afternoon of May 11, 2020.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The session is adjourned until three o'clock in the afternoon of May 11, 2020.

*It was 4:45 p.m.*