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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.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

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

It was 3:00 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:47 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

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

The Secretary General will please read the Reference of Business.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

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

BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 6719, entitled:

"AN ACT ESTABLISHING A PANDEMIC, EPIDEMIC, OUTBREAKS AND OTHER NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES COUNCIL"

By Representative Crisologo

TO THE DEFEAT COVID-19 AD HOC COMMITTEE

House Bill No. 6720, entitled:

"AN ACT MANDATING THE GRANT OF HAZARD PAY TO PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYEES WHOSE WORK EXPOSES THEM TO OCCUPATIONAL RISKS AND PERILS TO LIFE DURING ACTUAL OR IMPENDING EMERGENCIES"

By Representative Mendoza

TO THE DEFEAT COVID-19 AD HOC COMMITTEE

House Bill No. 6721, entitled:

"AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE AGRICULTURE INFORMATION SYSTEM IN ALL CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES"

By Representative Defensor (Lorenz)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

House Bill No. 6722, entitled:

"AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11223 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE 'UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE ACT' "

By Representative Garbin

TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 6723, entitled:

"AN ACT PROVIDING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO WORKERS IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR AFFECTED BY SCHOOL CLOSURE DURING PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY AND OTHER ANALOGOUS CASES"

By Representative Escudero
TO THE DEFEAT COVID-19 AD HOC
COMMITTEE

By Representatives Plaza and Paduano
TO THE DEFEAT COVID-19 AD HOC
COMMITTEE

House Bill No. 6724, entitled:

“AN ACT RENEWING THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO FRANCISCAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8736 ENTITLED ‘AN ACT GRANTING THE FRANCISCAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, ESTABLISH, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN RADIO BROADCASTING STATIONS ANYWHERE IN THE PHILIPPINES WHERE FREQUENCIES AND/OR CHANNELS ARE STILL AVAILABLE FOR RADIO BROADCASTING’ FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS FROM THE EFFECTIVITY OF THIS ACT”

By Representative Sagarbarria
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE
FRANCHISES

House Bill No. 6725, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF PROVINCES”

By Representative Delos Santos
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL
GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 6726, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING CENTER TO BE KNOWN AS THE CABAGAN TESDA TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Albano
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND
TECHNICAL EDUCATION

RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 859, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION ALLOWING PROVINCIAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS IN LESS COMPROMISED AREAS FROM CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19) TO ADOPT AND IMPLEMENT QUARANTINE PROTOCOLS APPROPRIATE AND NECESSARY TO THEIR RESPECTIVE COMMUNITIES”

House Resolution No. 860, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE DEFEAT COVID-19 AD-HOC COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTED RISING NUMBER OF PRISONERS DYING FROM COVID-19 INSIDE HIGHLY CONGESTED PRISON FACILITIES AND ON THE SLOW RELEASES OF QUALIFIED PERSONS DEPRIVED OF LIBERTY AND OTHER PRISONERS ELIGIBLE FOR PAROLE, MAKING OUR PRISONS A VECTOR OF COVID-19 OUTBREAKS”

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

MESSAGES FROM THE SENATE

Message dated May 11, 2020, informing the House of Representatives that on March 23, 2020 the Senate adopted Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 9, entitled:

“CONCURRENT RESOLUTION CREATING A JOINT COMMITTEE OF BOTH HOUSES TO NOTIFY THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES THAT CONGRESS HAS CONVENED ITS FIRST SPECIAL SESSION AND THERE BEING A QUORUM, SAID CONGRESS HAS ALREADY ENTERED UPON THE EXERCISE OF ITS FUNCTIONS”

in which it requests the concurrence of the House of Representatives.
TO THE ARCHIVES

Message dated May 11, 2020, informing the House of Representatives that on March 23, 2020 the Senate adopted Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 10, entitled:

“CONCURRENT RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE FIRST SPECIAL SESSION OF THE EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE PHILIPPINES NOT LATER THAN TWELVE O’CLOCK, MIDNIGHT, TODAY, MARCH 23, 2020”

in which it requests the concurrence of the House of Representatives.
TO THE ARCHIVES

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

BILL ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 6732, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING THE ABS-CBN CORPORATION A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCASTING STATIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Cayetano (Alan Peter), Gonzales (Neptali), Abu, Puno, Fernandez, Villafuerte, Romualdez (Ferdinand) and Sy-Alvarado
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

RESOLUTION

House Resolution No. 861, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO DIRECT ALL LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS OF COVID-19-STRICKEN PROVINCES, CITIES, AND MUNICIPALITIES TO PREPARE AND SUBMIT THEIR RESPECTIVE ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLANS”

By Representative Abellanosa
TO THE DEFEAT COVID-19 AD HOC COMMITTEE

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

Message dated May 12, 2020, informing the House of Representatives that on May 11, 2020 the Senate approved the Conference Committee Report of the Bicameral Conference Committee on the disagreeing provisions of Senate Bill No. 1086 and House Bill No. 6312, both entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING AND ESTABLISHING THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SPORTS AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR”.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

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

REP. ROMUALDEZ (F.). Mr. Speaker, House Bill No. 6732 was referred to the Committee on Rules upon the authority granted to the Majority Leader by the Committee on Rules to act on House Bill No. 6732, and pursuant to Rule XVIII, Sections 137 and 138 of the Rules of the House, I move that the House be constituted into a Committee of the Whole in order for the House to consider the said measure.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ROMUALDEZ (F.). Mr. Speaker, I move that the Majority Leader be designated to preside over the Committee of the Whole and that the Dep. Majority Leader, Cong. Wilter “Sharky” II Wee Palma, be designated to act as the Floor Leader.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

The Majority Leader shall preside over the Committee of the Whole and Dep. Majority Leader Wilter Palma shall be designated as the Floor Leader.

The session is suspended to give way to the proceedings of the Committee of the Whole.

It was 3:52 p.m.

At 3:53 p.m., the Body constituted itself into a Committee of the Whole House (See Congressional Record, RCW No. 2, May 13, 2020, for the proceedings of the Committee of the Whole House).

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:30 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we proceed to the Additional Reference of Business.

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

The Secretary General will please read the Additional Reference of Business.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

Upon direction of the Chair, the Secretary General read the following Committee Report which was referred to the appropriate Committee hereunder indicated:

COMMITTEE REPORT

Report of the Committee of the Whole House, re H.B. No. 6732, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING THE ABS-CBN CORPORATION A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCASTING STATIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

recommending its approval without amendment
Sponsors: Representatives Romualdez (Ferdinand), Cayetano (Alan Peter), Villafuerte and Fernandez

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

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

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 6732
ON SECOND READING

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 6732 as reported out by the Committee of the Whole.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). 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. 6732, entitled: AN ACT GRANTING THE ABS-CBN CORPORATION A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCAST STATIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

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

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of sponsorship and debate.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the period of sponsorship is opened.

REP. ROMUALDEZ (F.). Mr. Speaker, as

Chairperson of the Committee of the Whole House, I shall authorize the Deputy Speaker, Cong. LRay Villafuerte from Camarines Sur, to deliver the sponsorship speech on the measure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). As authorized by the Chairperson of the Committee of the Whole House, Deputy Speaker LRay Villafuerte will sponsor House Bill No. 6732. You may proceed, Deputy Speaker LRay Villafuerte.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF REP. VILLAFUERTE

REP. VILLAFUERTE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am here to sponsor House Bill No. 6732. The main rationale of this Bill is to enable Congress to have an impartial, comprehensive and extensive hearing, because I believe, with my authors who filed this Bill, that if we do not extensively hear the issues surrounding this franchise, we will be renegeing on our constitutional duty and mandate to ensure due process that will enable us, Members of Congress, to decide freely and objectively whether to approve or deny this franchise.

So, basically, we want to grant a temporary, provisional franchise until October of this year because this is a contentious Bill. There are so many pros, there are so many against. We have to hear all sides. We have to hear the issues on labor, tax, foreign ownership, and of those who are against. In fact, one of our Deputy Speakers, Deputy Speaker for Political Affairs, Pulong Duterte, together with Appropriations Chairman Eric Yap and our Accounts Committee Chairman Bambol Tolentino, filed a resolution to investigate all issues against this franchise.

So, definitely, Mr. Speaker, we have to hear all sides. We have to provide due process both for pro and against. Importante po iyan because this will enable our Members to decide whether to approve or deny. And, again, I would like to clarify that iyong mga nagsasabi na dapat aprubahan na iyan, kaya naman aprubahan iyan nang isang araw, I think it is unfair because they have already prejudged the issue. Kailangan talaga ng isang malawakang pagdinig. Kaya po ito po, itinutulak po natin itong Bill na ito.

Marami ring nagsasabi, “Bakit tumagal?” Eh ang tanong ko naman po sa ating mga kababayan, ano ba ang gusto ninyong unahin ng Kongreso, mabigyan ng trabaho ang ating mga kababayan ngayong panahon ng lockdown o COVID, mapalakas po ang ating gobyerno para labanan ang COVID? Paano naman po iyong mga stranded worker na nasa Maynila na gustong umuwi sa probinsiya? Ano ba ang uunahin natin—the economic stimulus, Balik Probinsya, new normal o ABS-CBN?

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

So, I think it is just fair na bigyan natin ng panahon ang ating mga kasama dito sa Kongreso na dinggin po ang lahat ng sektor, lahat ng mga kontra, lahat ng pabor.

So iyan lang po, Mr. Speaker. I would like to sponsor this House Bill No. 6732.

Maraming salamat po.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that the sponsorship speech of Speaker Alan Peter “Compañero” Cayetano delivered earlier in the Committee of the Whole, be inserted as part of the Record and be made part of the sponsorship speech on House Bill No. 6732.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The sponsorship speech of Speaker Alan Cayetano with respect to House Bill No. 6732 is hereby adopted as one of the sponsorship speeches on House Bill No. 6732.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Likewise, Mr. Speaker, I move that the speech of the honorable Deputy Speaker Dan Fernandez be inserted also part of the Record and of the sponsorship speeches on House Bill No. 6732.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Same as with the sponsorship speech of Deputy Speaker Dan Fernandez in the Committee of the Whole, which is also adopted as a sponsorship speech in this Plenary on House Bill No. 6732.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, first to interpellate our good Sponsor, Hon. LRay Villafuerte, is Hon. Carlos Isagani T. Zarate of BAYAN MUNA.

I move that he be recognized to interpellate our Sponsor.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The honorable Representative from BAYAN MUNA Party-List, Rep. Carlos Zarate, is recognized, if the Sponsor is willing to be interpellated.

REP. VILLAFUERTE. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Congressman Zarate is recognized and he may proceed.

REP. ZARATE. Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor.

Puwede po bang maglinaw ng ilang mga katanungan sa ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor?

REP. VILLAFUERTE. Yes, Mr. Speaker, with honor po.

REP. ZARATE. Salamat po, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor.

So, ang atin pong panukalang batas ngayon ay malinaw na ito ay parang pantawid lamang habang tatalakayin pa ng Committee on Legislative Franchises ang renewal bills, at least 12 renewal bills, na pending ngayon sa Committee on Legislative Franchises. Tama po ba iyon?

REP. VILLAFUERTE. Yes. The objective of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, is to enable Congress to fulfil its mandate to have an extensive, impartial hearing. I think it is just fair to those who are in favor and against to be heard. Napakarami pong issues, napakaraming magsasalita, even our Congressmen. Just imagine po, just give them 10 minutes each, and if 100 Congressmen would want to speak, that will take already a longer period. So, ang importante po is mabigyan lahat ng due process at madinig. That is why we are giving this temporary provisional franchise, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you po.

REP. ZARATE. Atkung maipasá po ng Kapulungang ito itong temporary o provisional franchise na tinuran po ninyo, ito ay aakyat sa Senado at ipapasá rin ito ng Senado bago umakyat sa Palasyo, sa Malacañang, para po malagdaan ito at maging isang batas. Tama po ba ang prosesong iyon, G. Isponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. VILLAFUERTE. Tama po. Kapag na-approve po iyan sa atin dito, sa ating Kamara, ay ifo-forward po iyan sa Senado.

REP. ZARATE. At, pagdedebatehan din nila at ipapasá rin sa Senado. Tama po iyon.

REP. VILLAFUERTE. Kapag naipasá sa Senado po, based on the legislative process po, it will be subject to the approval of our President whether he approves or vetoes. He has the prerogative, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. So, tama po iyon. Ang lahat ng ito ay aakyat pa rin sa Malacañang kung ia-approve nga ito or ivi-veto ng Presidente.

In the meantime, kahit po naipasá na ng Kapulungang ito ang panukalang batas na iyan na magbibigay ng temporary franchise or provisional franchise sa ABS-CBN until October 31 this year ay hindi pa rin, wala tayong katiyakan na at this point, habang nag-uusap ho tayo, na talagang babalik sa ere ang ABS-CBN.

Tama po ba iyong aking pagkakapalagay na ganoon, G. Isponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. VILLAFUERTE. Mr. Speaker, the objective really is to have an extensive and impartial hearing and hopefully decide on whether to reject or approve this on or before October 30. And, of course, ito muna, pag naipasá po natin ito, dadaan talaga iyan sa Senado and is really the prerogative of the President.

And, based on the press release, the statement of Harry Roque, as per my understanding, Mr. Speaker, the President, the Executive Branch leaves it up to Congress to decide on what to do because based on the Constitution, Article VI, Section 24, all “private bills shall originate exclusively in the House of Representatives.” So, knowing that, I think it is just our duty to act on this now and let the Senate and the President do their duties as well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. Salamat po, G. Isponsor, Mr. Speaker.

Tama po kayo, tayo nga ho ang mayroong primary jurisdiction ayon sa ating Saligang Batas dahil ito nga ay isang pribadong panukalang batas or private bill. Tama rin iyong naturan ninyo na kailangang aktohan na ito ng ating Kapulungan dahil sa totoo lang din naman po, ang usaping ito ay nakabinbin sa atin, wala pa man itong pandemya ng COVID.

Now, ang aking sunod pong katanungan, G. Isponsor, bakit po hanggang October 31 ang ating ibinigay na panahon dito sa provisional franchise na ito at hindi Agosto or Setyembre o hanggang katapusan ng taon, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. VILLAFUERTE. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the questioning of our distinguished Gentleman from BAYAN MUNA. I think it is just the right time na by October, which is roughly over five months later, iyan po ay pasado na sa konsultasyon sa ating mga kasama, sa leadership, kasama po ang Majority Leader, dahil hindi lang naman po ito ang tatalakayin natin from now until October. At siyempre, kapag after the SONA po ay dadating din po ang ating budget deliberations diyan. So, I think this is based on estimates na by then, we would be able to decide on or before that date.

So, you know, depende rin po iyan sa gustong maraming magkokontra. Ilan ba iyan? Iyon iba po siguro i-invite natin for a hearing, iyong iba we might have to just ask for their position papers. Iyong estimate na iyan is based on consultations. I think it is good timing na until October, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

REP. ZARATE. Salamat, G. Isponsor, Mr. Speaker.

Tama po kayo dahil noong ginawa ho nating

pagdinig noong March 10, kung aking maalala, ang isa nating iniwan na kautusan doon sa mga gustong suportahan o kontra dito sa renewal ng franchise ng ABS-CBN ay mayroon sila ng 60 araw or 60 days to submit their position papers for or against the renewal of the franchise of ABS-CBN, at ang 60 days na iyan ay nag-lapse na. So, I suppose iyong mga position papers na iyan ay nasa kamay na ng Committee on Legislative Franchises.

At, kaisa ninyo rin po ang Kinatawang ito doon sa pagbatikos sa naging proseso na nagkaroon ng cease-and-desist order na ipinataw ng National Telecommunications Commission sa halip na isang provisional authority gaya ng ipinangako sa atin, dahil na rin sa ginawang pananakot ng Solicitor General’s Office na kung bibigyan ng NTC ng provisional authority ay sasampahan sila ng kaso. But be that as it may, ang bola ngayon ay talagang nasa ating kamay na, at bilang isa sa mga pangunahing sponsor ng renewal bills, siyempre gusto rin po nating kagyat na mapag-usapan na rin ang bills na ito. Pero ako rin po ay naniniwala na dahil this renewal of the franchise of ABS-CBN is imbued with public interest, hindi ho tayo dapat maging bulag at bingi sa mga issues na dapat kaharapin, na dapat pag-usapan bago maresolba o ma-grant ang renewal of franchise o kung anumang repormang gagawin sa prangkisa ng ABS-CBN.

Kailangang pag-usapan natin ito despite the limitations that we have now, na nasa quarantine na, nasa lockdown at nasa paghaharap tayo ng laban sa pandemya ng COVID. Kailangang pag-usapan ito at iresolba. Kung hindi man natin i-renew ang franchise ng ABS-CBN, so be it. Pero, hindi dapat hindi ito ni-renew natin dahil ito ang kagustuhan ng Pangulo ng Pilipinas or dahil mayroong ibang mga negosyante na gustong kunin or mapasakanila ang frequency ng ABS-CBN. Ayaw naman po ng Kinatawang ito na basta na lang po natin iapruba ito dahil ito ang kagustuhan ng mga may-ari ng ABS-CBN or ng mga artista ng ABS-CBN or dahil ayaw nating mawala sa ere ang Ang Probinsyano at mawala na rin si Cardo Dalisay. Hindi po dapat ganoon ang mangyari. Tama po kayo na kailangan talagang masusing pag-usapan ito.

Resolbahin natin ang isyung ito na kinokonsidera natin ang makabubuti sa ating bayan at sa ating mga mamamayan dahil noong nawala po sa ere ang ABS-CBN, hindi na lang ito usapin ng ang nawala ay ang negosyo ng mga Lopezes. Ang nawala, ang naapektuhan ay ang 11,000 na mga empleyado at mga manggagawa ng ABS-CBN at mga dependents nila. Kahit ano pa mang sabihin natin, napakalaki ng naging papel ng ABS-CBN sa dissemination ng impormasyon, lalo na sa panahon ngayon na nilalabanan natin ang krisis na dala ng pandemya ng COVID. Kaya these are the considerations. While we are also tackling, pina-prioritize natin iyong paano bang bumalik ang ating

ekonomiya, paanong ang kabuhayan ng ating mga kababayan ay matulungan natin sila, kailangan din pong bigyan natin ng pansin at harapin ito.

So, iyon lang po ang aking mga iilang mga paglilinaw na mga katanungan, with the assurance of the Sponsor and the leadership of the House na ang mga renewal bills, the bills pending with the Legislative Franchises Committee ay uusad na rin para finally, matuldukan ang isyung ito at maresolba na ng Kapulungang ito.

Maraming salamat, G. Isponsor, sa iyong panahon, at sa pagbibigay ng linaw, at sa ating kagalang-galang na Speaker.

Magandang gabi po sa ating lahat.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Maraming salamat po, Kagalang-galang Carlos Zarate.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Next to interpellate, Mr. Speaker, is Hon. Arlene Brosas of GABRIELA Party-List.

I move that she be recognized.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The Representative from the GABRIELA Party-List, Hon. Arlene D. Brosas, is recognized to interpellate the Sponsor.

You may proceed.

REP. BROSAS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Maaari po bang magtanong ng ilang mga clarificatory questions sa ating Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague?

REP. VILLAFUERTE. Yes, Mr. Speaker. I agree and it would be an honor to answer questions from our distinguished Gentlewoman.

REP. BROSAS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This Representation welcomes this development on the ABS-CBN franchise. However, iyong extension po na until October 30, sa tingin natin ay hindi sufficient ngayong walang kasiguraduhan kung hanggang kailan matatapos iyong pandemya. Lalong kailangan natin iyong pinakamalawak na media o network sa bansa sa usapin ng paghahatid ng impormasyon. Kung nag-agree po kayo dito, bakit po hindi hanggang 2021 or hanggang pagkatapos pa ng October ay magbigay ng provisional franchise ng hanggang ganoong panahon, Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor?

REP. VILLAFUERTE. Mr. Speaker, napakaganda ng tanong niya. Bakit hindi tatlong buwan? Bakit anim na buwan? Bakit hindi isang taon? Bakit hindi 2022 na? Alam ninyo po, as what the Speaker has said, let us just do what is right. People are saying, dinigin ninyo na iyan.

So, I think, it is incumbent upon us, this Lower House, this august Chamber, to decide on or before October, whether to approve or deny the franchise. Whether there is still COVID or not, I am sure that by that time, kahit wala pa naman vaccine, I think, it is incumbent upon us to hear extensively, with impartiality, whether through Zoom, actual hearings, para makapag-decide na tayo once and for all, Mr. Speaker. That is the intention why we put October of this year.

REP. BROSAS. Mr. Speaker, nais kong itanong iyong Section 5, kung saan nakalagay ay a special right is "reserved for the President" at walang pag-mention sa Congress. At ang nakalagay po dito, iyong may portion ng public peril, calamity, emergency, disturbance of peace and order, to take over. May ... *(No audio)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). May technical ah ...

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I presume that we are having technical difficulties.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Yes, Majority Leader.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, due to technical difficulties, may I instead proceed with a different interpellator and may we ...

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

REP. PALMA. ...and we will reconsider the interpellation of Hon. Arlene Brosas in a while.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Who is the next interpellator?

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Hon. Michael T. Defensor of the Party-List ANAKALUSUGAN to make his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The Representative from the Party-List ANAKALUSUGAN of the Batangas province, Hon. Mike Defensor is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR (M.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker, the most honored Batangueño of this august Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, if the honorable Sponsor be amenable to some interpellation.

REP. VILLAFUERTE. Mr. Speaker, with pleasure and it would be an honor.

REP. DEFENSOR (M.). Mr. Speaker, mga basic lang po iyong aking katanungan dito po sa batas na inihain ng ating tagapamahala, Speaker Alan Cayetano, and, of course, the Sponsor of the Bill, Hon. LRay Villafuerte.

Alam ninyo po, Mr. Speaker, iyong ABS-CBN franchise ay nag-expire na. So ang ibig pong sabihin, ang pinag-uusapan natin dito ay isang application. Ang tanong ko, Mr. Speaker, basic lang: Nag-apply po ba ang ABS-CBN ng panibagong franchise?

REP. VILLAFUERTE. Mr. Speaker, as far as I know, there were around 14 bills filed to renew the franchise.

REP. DEFENSOR (M.). Yes, Mr. Speaker. Dito po sa partikular na Bill natin, H.B. 6732, ito po ba ay pumayag ang ABS-CBN o gusto po ba nila ito? Pumapayag ba sila na bigyan sila ng panahon na sumagot sa komite para sagutin iyong mga batayang tanong tungkol sa kanilang prangkisa?

REP. VILLAFUERTE. Mr. Speaker, just to clarify. This Bill was filed with no interference or influence from ABS-CBN, from outside sources, private and public interests. The intention, basically, is for us, Congress, to have an impartial, comprehensive, extensive hearing to enable us to fulfill our constitutional duty to decide whether to approve or reject this franchise. So, hindi namin tinanong po ang ABS, kung sinuman, kung okay sa kanila ito because I think that is against the code of conduct of public officials, Mr. Chair.

REP. DEFENSOR (M.). Well, Mr. Speaker, natanong ko lang po iyan kasi kanina po, si Speaker Alan binanggit niya na nagkaroon ng Temporary Restraining Order, hindi naman nilabanan, voluntary na nagsara sila. Eh baka po dito sa hearing sa Bill natin, hindi ho sila um-attend dahil ayaw nila o hindi nila nagugustuhan iyong six months na binibigay natin na pagkakataong sumagot. But having said that, Mr. Speaker, baka puwede namang ma-request sa ating honorable Sponsor na iyong ABS-CBN naman, based on this House bill, eh magkaroon sila ng affirmative response na yes, they are willing based on this bill, na pumapayag sila sa batas na ito at pumapayag sila doon sa ating proseso ng pagdinig at paglilinaw sa mga issues tungkol sa ABS-CBN.

REP. VILLAFUERTE. Mr. Speaker, napakaganda po ng punto ng ating kagalang-galang na Representative ng ANAKALUSUGAN. I think I cannot answer for ABS-CBN or any other government entity, but I think the fact that this Congress is willing to give them a temporary permit to operate while we have hearings, I think it is a positive development. It will enable them to go on air, it

will enable the 11,000 employees to function and work. Again, we did this as our own decision. We were not asked nor have we been influenced by anybody. We are just fulfilling our constitutional mandate stating that a private bill shall originate exclusively from this House. So ...

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu) May I interject, Gentlemen. According to Section 7:

Acceptance and Compliance. Acceptance of this franchise shall be given in writing to the Congress within 60 days from the effectivity of this Act. Upon giving such acceptance, the grantee shall exercise the privileges granted under this Act. Nonacceptance shall render the franchise void.

REP. VILLAFUERTE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, definitely, once this franchise is approved, they have to either accept and comply. I think, Mr. Speaker, the question of honorable Cong. Mike Defensor was, will they comply or attend the hearings? I cannot answer for them but I feel that is a positive development, and I think they are compelled to attend.

REP. DEFENSOR (M.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker, iyon lang naman po iyong gusto kong linawin doon kasi nga po maraming question din, Mr. Speaker, such as, is this a renewal, is this a new franchise and so on and so forth. Pero iyon na po ay iniwan ko na doon sa magiging puwang na anim na buwan na pag-usapan iyan.

Pangalawa, Mr. Speaker, the constitutional provision, and if I may read Article 12, Section 11 of the Constitution, reads:

No franchise, certificate or any other form of authorization for the operation of a public utility shall be granted except to citizens of the Philippines or to corporations or associations organized under the laws of the Philippines, at least 60 per centum of whose capital is owned by such citizens.

Ang pangalawa kong tanong, Mr. Speaker, marami pong lumalabas na sinasabi ang pagmamay-ari ng ABS-CBN ay pag-aari ng isang US citizen. Nagre-renew po tayo ngayon ng isang prangkisa. Magiging batas po ito. Nakita na po natin ang ownership structure ng ABS-CBN sa ngayon at tayo po ay hindi nagba-violate ng isang constitutional provision on ownership. Batas na po ito, Mr. Speaker. Kahit sabihin po nating maghi-hearing tayo, may batas na po tayong papasukan, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VILLAFUERTE. Maganda talaga ang

mga punto ng ating kasama because malinaw talaga sa Article XVI, Section 11, "The ownership and management of mass media shall be limited to the citizens of the Philippines."

Napakaraming alegasyon po na one of the owners is not a Filipino citizen or dual citizen siya. So, these are the things that we have to address in the hearing: Did ABS-CBN violate the Constitution particularly on foreign ownership? Did ABS-CBN violate election laws by being biased or favoring another for a few candidates? Did ABS-CBN violate labor laws? Napakarami pong nagkaso sa kanila sa husgado, from the lower courts to the higher courts. Ano po ang status? Did ABS-CBN violate tax laws? Maraming nagsasabi that they set up another company to evade the payment of taxes. So, these are the things that we have to address. And I think, iyon nga ang sinasabi na iyong punto na ng ating kagalang-galang na Congressman Mike, hindi po ito mare-resolve in one hearing, two hearings, three hearings. Kailangan impartial, extensive.

Then, siyempre, kailangan din natin pasagutin ang ABS: Bakit ninyo kailangang ipagpatuloy? Bakit ba kailangang ma-grant kayo ng franchise? Dapat sagutin po nila ang akusasyon and answer the questions rightfully, extensively. So, tama po ang mga punto ng ating kagalang-galang na Cong. Mike Defensor. Kaya nga po nag-file tayo nitong Bill na ito.

REP. DEFENSOR (M.). Okay, for the record, Mr. Speaker, tinatanggap natin iyong Bill na ito at isinusulong natin dahil ang presumption natin sumusunod ito sa probisyon ng Konstitusyon. May mga alegasyon at iyon ang mga titingnan natin, Mr. Speaker.

So, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Before the reply of the Sponsor, iyong huli na lang po, kasi, iyong akin po iyong constitutional provision on ownership, citizenship at saka po itong pangalawa, ito pong 50 years lang ang deadline ng isang corporation na magkaroon ng prangkisa. Mr. Speaker, kanina ho, informally napag-usapan po natin iyan. Gusto ko lang pong malaman kasi ang ABS-CBN, 1986, hindi ba po ba? Pero kung iyong iyong 25 years, dapat 1995. So, Mr. Speaker, again, are we violating any constitutional provision to this effect dito po sa pag-apruba natin? Dahil sobra sa 50 years ang prangkisa ng ABS-CBN kung ito po ay aaprubahan natin sa darating na panahon.

REP. VILLAFUERTE. Mr. Speaker, napakaganda talaga ng mga tanong ni Mike Defensor. Congressman, precisely, kailangan talaga ng extensive discussion.

Can you imagine iyong mga constitutional questions ni Mike Defensor, isang Congressman pa lang iyan. Can you imagine how many more will raise issues like these? This is precisely the reason why we really have to have extensive hearings conducted

not influenced by outside sources, because precisely, iyong dalawang punto na ni-raise ni Congressman Mike Defensor ay valid. Did ABS-CBN violate the Constitution regarding ownership? May malinaw din, that they cannot have a franchise for over 50 years. So ito po ang mga bagay na kailangang maresolba, at hindi po maidadaan ito sa ordinaryong hearing, hindi po ito madadaan sa ordinaryong position paper dahil this is a question of law...

REP. DEFENSOR (M.). Yes.

REP. VILLAFUERTE. ...particularly, the Constitution.

REP. DEFENSOR (M.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know that the Rules Committee would like to do it because we already have a deadline, pero gusto ko lang ho sabihin, Mr. Speaker, for the record, alam ninyo, first time nangyari ito, na nag-Committee of the Whole tayo para ipasa ang isang batas. Sa isang banda ho maganda dahil may problema tayong kinakaharap, pero sa isang banda ang dami nating problemang dapat talagang harapin.

Mr. Speaker, nag-file po ako mismo ng bill, taasan ang suweldo ng mga doctor at saka nurses. Dahil ngayon, marami ng nag-i-imbata sa kanilang umalis ng bansa dahil nga sa nangyaring epidemya sa buong mundo, iyong pandemic sa buong mundo. Mayroon hong bill, kasama ko ho si Congressman Teves, pag-increase ng hazard pay ng mga LGU frontliners at national frontliners. Economic stimulus bills, nandiyan po si Congressman Stella Quimbo, kasama po sila diyan, marami silang bill na pinapasa para palakasin ang ating ekonomiya. Iyong improvement of facilities sa Department of Health. Ang dami po nating problema sa ngayon na COVID-19 talaga ang kinakaharap natin, and yet, ang Kongreso, para ma-accommodate itong problemang ito, nag-committee of the whole tayo para gawin ito.

Mr. Speaker, again, I reiterate my point, we have so many priorities, naipit lang talaga tayo. Iyong ginawa ng NTC, mali talaga, at nag-file po ako ng resolusyon diyan. Hindi dapat nagsinungaling para nagkaroon tayo ng maayos na hearing at hindi tayo natataranta nang ganito. But if and when the priority will become COVID-19 or ABS-CBN, I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, I will attend the hearings on COVID-19 laws, and the COVID-19 bills that are required of this country.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VILLAFUERTE. Mr. Speaker, just a few comments, magaganda talaga ang punto na sinabi ni Congressman Mike. Nakakalungkot man sabihin, COVID-19 bill, trabaho, dagdag suweldo, pero kapag nag-hearing kasi ang ABS-CBN, iyon ang kino-cover

ng media. So, iyon lang ang nakakalungkot, because this Congress is very productive, transparent, relevant, and responsible.

Ang nakakalungkot lang kasi, na ang dami na nating Zoom hearings, actual hearings to improve the lives of our people, pero hindi po nako-cover. Pero ngayon siguro itong pinag-uusapan natin na ABS-CBN, sigurado headline. Pero we would like to assure the Filipino people, we will do what is right, we will prioritize what is right, keeping in mind that we have to help our brothers and sisters na naghihirap while attending to this issue of ABS-CBN.

Salamat po, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, before we continue with our interpellation, I received a text message from Hon. Arlene Brosas, and she would like me to deliver her last comments before the technical difficulties, and I would like to make this part of the record as her manifestation, that their concern is on Section 5 of House Bill No. 6732, wherein sa Constitution po kasi, Congress lang ang may power to repeal or alter franchises, but if this is regular, okay lang naman daw. And Section 9, better formulation at self-regulation by an undertaking of the grantee. The grantee shall not require any previous censorship of any speech, play, act or scene, or any other matter to be broadcast and/or telecast from its stations. And lastly, and I am supposing, Mr. Speaker, that she is referring to the GABRIELA Party-List's stand on freedom and democracy. So, yes, to press freedom, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Noted.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, next to interpellate is Hon. Ferdinand R. Gaite of BAYAN MUNA Party-List. May I move that he be recognized.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Hon. Ferdinand Gaite of BAYAN MUNA Party-List is recognized for his interpellation.

REP. GAITE. Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker. Pahihintulutan ba ng Sponsor ang ilang katanungan hinggil sa pinapanukalang House Bill para sa ABS-CBN franchise?

REP. VILLAFUERTE. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Salamat po. Mr. Speaker, matagal-tagal na rin nating inaabangan ito, not only during this Eighteenth Congress. As I understand, previous Congresses ay nag-file na nitong franchise bill for ABS-

CBN and for reasons, ito ay naantala. Tanong ko lang po, ano ho ba ang pinaka—kami rin po ay nagtutulak na ito ay madinig na ng ating Kapulungan kasama ang Committee on Legislative Franchises pero ano ho ba iyong pinakabuod o pinakalayunin na sa harap nga ngayon na may COVID-19, ngayon ay ibibigay natin, sa pamamagitan ng panukalang batas na ito, ang limitadong franchise para sa ABS-CBN?

REP. VILLAFUERTE. Well, maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker. Maraming salamat kay Congressman Gaite na, at least, na-mention niya na itong prangkisa na ito ng ABS-CBN, which was already filed in the Sixteenth Congress, if I am not mistaken, 2014, hindi po naaksyunan ng previous Congress, ng Sixteenth Congress, hindi naaksyunan ng Seventeenth Congress at ngayon sa Eighteenth Congress ay wala pa naman tayong 10 buwan, pero kung iisipin mo, siyempre, napakarami na nating naipasá na bills like budget. Wala namang Taal issue noong previous Congresses kaya ngayon kahit may COVID ay tinatalakay pa rin natin.

Ang desisyon talaga, basically, as mentioned, is to do what is right, have an impartial, extensive and comprehensive hearings, not to be influenced by anybody, give the Congressmen the opportunity to hear all sides, whether pro or against, in order for us to fulfill our mandate and talagang maka-decide tayo what is right, not based on outside influence and pressure. Iyan po ang basic objective lang po nito, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Salamat po, Kgg. Speaker, at sa ating Sponsor. Naitanong ko po iyan kasi alam po naman natin na itong usapin ng prangkisa ng ABS-CBN liban sa mga binanggit na mga oposisyon, ng mga iba't ibang grupo ay hindi lingid sa ating kaalaman na mismong ang ating Pangulo ay nagpahayag ng kaniyang pagtutol sa renewal ng prangkisa ng ABS-CBN.

Kung gayon, bakit ngayon ay tila biglang nagkaroon ng pagbabago sa pagtulak ngayon ng prangkisa? Alam natin, hindi lingid sa kaalaman ng ating mga kababayan, ilang ulit sinabi ni Pangulong Duterte na hindi na babalik ang prangkisa ng ABS-CBN at dapat kung gusto nila, ibenta na lang nila ang prangkisa nila. Hindi ho ba? Paano ninyo ba tiningnan ang usaping ito sa panahon na ito nga po, importante ang impormasyon, ang sinasabi ng marami o ang usapin ng freedom of speech, ang freedom of the press na daluyan ng impormasyon lalo na sa panahon ng COVID-19? Ang epekto sa mga 11,000 na manggagawa ng naturang kumpanya. Totoong may violations maaari sila ng labor laws lalo na sa dami ng mga contractals pero nevertheless, trabaho pa rin iyan. Hindi pa natin mabilang ang ilan pang mga mamamayan na umaasa rin, in one way or another, sa industriya na ibinibigay ng ABS-CBN. Papaano natin ngayon ibabalanse iyong sinasabi ng ating Pangulo na siya ay tumututol pero, on the other hand, nakikita natin

ang kahalagahan din nito lalo na sa hinaharap nating napakabigat na pasanin ng COVID-19, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor?

REP. VILLAFUERTE. Mr. Speaker, all the statements of the President, we highly respect, sinabi niya noon na tutol siya but we also respect na sinabi na po ni Press Secretary Harry Roque na he will let Congress decide and if I am not mistaken, he will act or sign it once it is forwarded to him first.

Secondly, iyong issue on the freedom of the press, para sa akin po ay hindi po puwedeng gamiting issue iyan because mas malakas, mas malusog ang karapatan guaranteeing press freedom ngayon lalong-lalo na po may social media naman, nandiyan pa naman ang GMA, nandiyan pa naman ang TV 5, and many more at higit sa lahat ang ABS-CBN po ay napapanood pa natin, ang TV Patrol, through YouTube and Facebook. So, hindi naman po totoo na naputol. In fact, this morning, I was interviewed by ABS-CBN News Channel headstart, so tuloy po ang pag-air nila.

Iyong isyu po sa 11,000 employees, valid po iyong point na iyan. The same way na valid rin po ang mga labor laws violated by ABS-CBN, not only involving casual or contractual employees, kasama rin po ang mga permanent employees na na-violate. So, eto po ay papakinggan natin lahat. But, again, this Congress is balanced and fair. Even our Speaker has mentioned several times that when he run for Vice President, nagkaroon ng biased and unfair treatment. But despite that, the Speaker is pushing for this measure to grant an extension, provisional authority to operate, franchise, until October, so that there will be an impartial and comprehensive hearing. Iyan po ang sa aking kasagutan po diyan, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Maraming salamat po, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

Hindi ko na po papatagalin ang aking katanungan. Nasabi na, na-raise na ng iba nating kapita-pitagang mga kasamahan sa Kongreso na kalakhan ay nasa kanilang mga tahanan at mga opisina. Sa inyo na nandiyan mismo sa plenaryo, nagpapasalamat din kami dahil kayo iyong nagsisilbing tinig natin sa panahong ito. Sa ating mga kasamahan na manggagawa at kawani mismo ng House of Representatives, masasabi nga natin na karamihan sa kanila ay nagsasakripisyo ng trabaho at ng kanilang buhay bunga nitong COVID-19.

Ang babanggitin namin ay kami ay na-appreciate iyong pagbibigay ng pagpapahalaga rin sa isang napakalaking bahagi na ng ating buhay, ABS-CBN, na liban sa news, entertainment, iyong tulong sa serbisyo sa mamamayan, kailangang dinggin na talaga ang prangkisa nito para malaman, tulad ng nabanggit ng ating mga kasamahan, kung karapat-dapat bang mabigyan ng prangkisa ang naturang kompanya?

Maraming salamat sa pagkakataong ito, maraming

salamat sa ating mga kasamahan, at mabuhay po tayong lahat.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Maraming salamat.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Lady from the Third District of Laguna, Hon. Sol Aragon, for her manifestation.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The lady Representative from the Third District of Laguna, Hon. Sol Aragon, is recognized to interpellate the good Sponsor, Deputy Speaker Luis Raymund LRay F. Villafuerte Jr.

REP. ARAGONES. Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a manifestation.

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

REP. ARAGONES. Nais ko pong magpasalamat kay Speaker Alan Peter “Compañero” S. Cayetano at sa iba pang authors ng bill na ito, kasama ka na Deputy Speaker Raneo “Ranie” S. Abu at Deputy Speaker Luis Raymund LRay F. Villafuerte Jr.

Speaker, maraming salamat po, Speaker Alan, dahil malaking bagay po ito na posibleng magkaroon ng franchise ang ABS-CBN na tatagal hanggang October 31, 2020. Malaking bagay po ito na muling makabalik ang istasyon sa himpapawid at maging kaagapay ng gobyerno sa pagbibigay ng impormasyon sa taong bayan, o isa sa maging kaagapay sa pagbibigay ng impormasyon sa ating taong bayan, at malaking bagay din po ito para mabigyan ng pagkakataon na madinig ang iba’t ibang panig sa isyung ito. Sa ganang akin po, anuman munang kayang ibigay sa ngayon ay isang bagay na dapat na nating ipagpasalamat.

Muli, maraming, maraming, salamat po.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Maraming salamat, Hon. Sol Aragon.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, the next to interpellate is Hon. Sarah Jane I. Elago from the KABATAAN Party-List. I move that she be recognized.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Hon. Sarah Jane I. Elago from KABATAAN Party-List is recognized for her interpellation.

REP. ELAGO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Marami po sa aking mga katanungan ay nabigyan

na ng sagot. Ngunit hayaan ninyo po na maitanong ng KABATAAN ang isa na nangangailangan pa po ng mas ibayong paglilinaw.

Will the distinguished Sponsor yield to interpellation?

REP. VILLAFUERTE. Yes, Mr. Speaker, it will be a privilege.

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, what were the factors considered in determining the term of the franchise which shall be in effect until October 31, 2020? Ano po ang mga napag-usapan doon sa pagdedesisyon? Paano po tayo nagkaroon ng ganitong desisyon na hanggang October 31, 2020? Mr. Speaker, itinatanong po natin ito upang ang magandang balita ng pagbabalik ere, na bibigyan ng daan sa provisional franchise na ito ay hindi naman po magiging taning para doon sa mga manggagawa, lahat ng mga artista ng bayan na nakasalalay ang kabuhayan sa network po na ating pinag-uusapan sa ngayon.

REP. VILLAFUERTE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Basically, napag-usapan po iyan ng kasama naming mga authors, members of the House leadership, na until October 30, 2020 po. I think it is the right time frame to be able to have an impartial, extensive and comprehensive hearing despite the COVID-19 crisis, because as we know, marami rin naman talagang priorities ang ating kailangan na i-discuss. Na-mention na iyan, iyong mga bills na sinabi ni Congressman Mike Defensor, iyong mga pagdagdag ng hazard pay sa ating mga frontliner, iyong stimulus, iyong new normal, balik-probinsya at CURES Act.

So, we took all of these important priority measures into consideration and basically, we have to set a deadline among ourselves that by October, we should be able to decide whether to approve or reject this franchise application. So, you might ask why not nine months or three months? I think at this point, we did what is right. We think and we feel that October is the right timing, so that is why we filed a time frame, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ELAGO. G. Ispiker, nakikiisa po tayo sa layunin ng Sponsor na bigyan ng prayoridad ang mga patakaran na tutugon sa pangangailangan sa kalusugan at kabuhayan ng ating mga kababayan sa gitna ng COVID-19 pandemic. Ngunit bigyan din po natin ng halaga ang balita at impormasyon na sang-ayon po mismo sa World Health Organization, hindi lang po pandemic ang ating kalaban sa panahong ito, kundi ang natagurian nilang infodemic o iyong pagkalat po ng laganap na mga pekeng balita at disinformation na malaking hadlang sa pagsagip ng buhay sa pamamagitan ng balita at impormasyon.

Kaya naman, G. Ispiker, kasabay po ng pagtitiyak

natin na may mass testing, may contact tracing, may isolation, bilang support strategy at backbone po ng COVID-19 pandemic response, gayundin sa pinag-uusapan na nating mga recovery plan, ang kinakailangan po ay tiyakin ng ating pamahalaan na napoprotektahan ang flow ng tamang information at napoprotektahan po natin ang kalayaan sa pamamahayag at ang kalayaan sa pagpapahayag ng ating mga kababayan.

Ngayon higit kailanman, G. Ispiker, kinakailangan po na sa paglaban sa COVID-19, nandiyan ang ating pagkakaisa—pagkakaisa na nakabatay sa karapatang pantao at paggalang po sa boses ng mamamayang Pilipino.

Maraming salamat, G. Ispiker, distinguished Sponsor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Maraming salamat.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, there being no other Member who wishes to interpellate on the good Sponsor, I move that we close the period of sponsorship and debate.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the period of sponsorship and debate is closed.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of amendments.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, there being no Committee amendment, I move that we proceed to consider individual amendments.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, to introduce an individual amendment, I move that we recognize Hon. Argel Joseph T. Cabatbat of MAGSASAKA Party-List to introduce amendments.

I so move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The honorable Representative from MAGSASAKA Party-List, the Honorable Cabatbat is recognized for his individual amendment.

INDIVIDUAL AMENDMENTS

REP. CABATBAT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Sponsor, I would like to propose the following amendments, particularly on Section 14. I propose that we delete the word “ANNUAL” and change “APRIL 30” of the calendar year to “JULY 30, 2020,” so that Section 14 will be read as “THE GRANTEE SHALL SUBMIT A REPORT TO THE CONGRESS OF THE PHILIPPINES THROUGH THE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE FRANCHISES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SERVICES OF THE SENATE ON ITS COMPLIANCE WITH THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE FRANCHISE AND ON ITS OPERATIONS ON OR BEFORE JULY 30, 2020. The reportorial compliance certificate issued by Congress shall be required before any application for permit or certificate is accepted by NTC.

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

REP. VILLAFUERTE. I accept, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). What is the pleasure of the Majority?

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, we join the Majority.

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

The amendment is approved.
The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. CABATBAT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last proposed amendment.

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

REP. CABATBAT. Thank you.

I propose that we delete “fifteen (15) days” and replace it with—Section 17, I propose that we delete “fifteen (15) days after” and be replaced by IMMEDIATELY, so that Section 17 will be read as “This Act shall take effect IMMEDIATELY after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.”

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

REP. VILLAFUERTE. I accept the amendment, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). What is the pleasure of the Majority?

REP. PALMA. We join, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, there being no other Member who wishes to introduce amendments, I move that we close the period of amendments.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve on Second Reading House Bill No. 6732, as amended. I so move, Mr. Speaker.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). There is a motion for the approval of House Bill No. 6732, as amended, on Second Reading. As many as are in favor, please say *Aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

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

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 6732, AS AMENDED,
ON SECOND READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The *ayes* have it; House Bill No. 6732, as amended, is approved on Second Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we include Hon. Raul V. Del Mar’s manifestation, which he has submitted earlier to the Committee on Rules as part of the record of today’s session.*

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

Mar is adopted, to be included in the Journal of the session.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I also move that Hon. Edgar Mary S. Sarmiento be made as additional coauthor of House Bill No. 6732.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, likewise, Hon. John Marvin “Yul Servo” C. Nieto would like to be included as coauthor of House Bill No. 6732.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we include additional coauthors of House Bills Nos. 6623 and 6732, as contained in the list to be submitted by the Committee on Rules later on.

I so move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved. The additional coauthors of House Bills Nos. 6732 ...

REP. PALMA. ... and 6623, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). ... and 6623 upon submission of the list of the Secretariat will be considered as coauthors of both House Bills.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

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

It was 6:23 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 6:25 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we include the written manifestation of the honorable Deputy Speaker Baby Arenas, which she earlier submitted to the Committee on Rules as part of the Record of today's session.*

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I also move that the copies of House Bill No. 6732, the Third Reading copies, be distributed to the Members via electronic mail and the distribution of the actual and physical copy to the offices of the Members.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). I am directing the Secretariat to give the copies of House Bill No. 6732, as amended, through email and to their offices.

REP. PALMA. And through other electronic means, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). And other electronic means.

REP. PALMA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). May 18. The session is adjourned until Monday, the 18th of May at three o'clock in the afternoon.

It was 6:26 p.m.

* See ANNEX (printed separately)