



Congressional Record

PLENARY PROCEEDINGS OF THE 18th CONGRESS, FIRST REGULAR SESSION

House of Representatives

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No. 58b

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:00 p.m., the session was resumed with Deputy Speaker Deogracias Victor "DV" B. Savellano presiding.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, good afternoon.

I move that we proceed to the Reference of Business.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The Secretary General is hereby directed to 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, Communication and Committee Reports which were referred to the appropriate Committees hereunder indicated:

BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 6801, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NETWORK OF POP-UP BICYCLE LANES AND EMERGENCY PATHWAYS FOR USE DURING THE DURATION OF THE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19) PANDEMIC”

By Representative Castelo

TO THE DEFEAT COVID-19 *AD HOC* COMMITTEE

House Bill No. 6802, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A UNIVERSAL, COMPREHENSIVE, RELIABLE AND ACCESSIBLE WIRELESS INTERNET CONNECTION IN ORDER TO FACILITATE THE DELIVERY OF DIGITAL EDUCATION

AMID THE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19) PANDEMIC”

By Representative Castelo

TO THE DEFEAT COVID-19 *AD HOC* COMMITTEE

House Bill No. 6804, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NETWORK OF POP-UP BICYCLE LANES AND EMERGENCY PATHWAYS FOR USE DURING THE DURATION OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Zamora (Ronaldo)

TO THE DEFEAT COVID-19 *AD HOC* COMMITTEE

House Bill No. 6805, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A COMPREHENSIVE CONSOLIDATION OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS, TITLING OF UNTITLED AGRICULTURAL LANDS, PROVIDING FOR POST-HARVEST FACILITIES TO RICE FARMERS, ESTABLISHING IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM TO LAND OWNER/FARMER AND AGRICULTURAL TENANTS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Gonzales (Aurelio)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

House Bill No. 6806, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11036, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE MENTAL HEALTH ACT”

By Representative Angara

TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 6807, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING SECTION 3 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7797, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ‘AN ACT TO LENGTHEN THE SCHOOL CALENDAR FROM TWO HUNDRED (200) DAYS TO NOT MORE

THAN TWO HUNDRED TWENTY (220)
CLASS DAYS’ ”

By Representative Gatchalian
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION
AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 6808, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE
VIROLOGY SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
INSTITUTE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR”

By Representative Tan (Angelina)
TO THE DEFEAT COVID-19 *AD HOC*
COMMITTEE

House Bill No. 6809, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTING THE MEDICAL
RESERVE CORPS, APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES”

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

House Bill No. 6810, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NETWORK OF POP-
UP BICYCLE LANES AND EMERGENCY
PATHWAYS FOR USE DURING THE
DURATION OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC,
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

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

House Bill No. 6811, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT 11469
OR ‘AN ACT DECLARING THE EXISTENCE
OF A NATIONAL EMERGENCY ARISING
FROM THE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019
(COVID-19) SITUATION AND A NATIONAL
POLICY IN CONNECTION THEREWITH,
AND AUTHORIZING THE PRESIDENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES FOR
A LIMITED PERIOD AND SUBJECT TO
RESTRICTIONS, TO EXERCISE POWERS
NECESSARY AND PROPER TO CARRY OUT
THE DECLARED NATIONAL POLICY AND
FOR OTHER PURPOSES’ BY EXTENDING
ITS EFFECTIVITY FOR ANOTHER THREE
MONTHS”

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

House Bill No. 6812, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NETWORK OF POP-

UP BICYCLE LANES AND EMERGENCY
PATHWAYS FOR USE DURING THE
DURATION OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC,
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Fariñas (Ria) and Fariñas
(Rudys Caesar)

TO THE DEFEAT COVID-19 *AD HOC*
COMMITTEE

House Bill No. 6813, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING ALL
EMPLOYERS, BARANGAYS, CITIES
OR MUNICIPALITIES TO ACCOUNT
AND REGISTER ALL STRANDED OR
DISPLACED WORKERS WITHIN THEIR
TERRITORIAL JURISDICTION DURING
TIMES OF LOCKDOWN OR COMMUNITY
QUARANTINE DUE TO CALAMITIES
AND PANDEMICS AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES”

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

House Bill No. 6814, entitled:

“AN ACT PROMOTING THE
ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND
MANAGEMENT OF E-WASTE IN
THE PHILIPPINES, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES”

By Representative Romulo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY

House Bill No. 6818, entitled:

“AN ACT IMPOSING FOR A MANDATORY
MORATORIUM ON THE ENFORCEMENT
OF MONTHLY PRINCIPAL PAYMENTS
OR MONTHLY AMORTIZATIONS ON ALL
LOANS, CREDIT ACCOMMODATIONS, OR
FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS TO FINANCIAL
INSTITUTIONS OR FINANCIAL
INTERMEDIARIES ENGAGED IN THE
LENDING AND BORROWING OF MONEY
FOR THE ENTIRE DURATION OF THE
NATIONAL HEALTH EMERGENCY AND
FOR 180 DAYS FROM THE TIME OF ITS
TERMINATION OR LIFTING”

By Representative Gonzales (Aurelio)
TO THE DEFEAT COVID-19 *AD HOC*
COMMITTEE

House Bill No. 6819, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING ADDITIONAL
DIVISIONS IN THE COURT OF APPEALS,
INCREASING THE NUMBER OF COURT
OF APPEALS JUSTICES FROM SIXTY-

NINE (69) TO SEVENTY-EIGHT (78), AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE BATAS PAMBANSA BILANG 129, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Suarez (David)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 6820, entitled:

“AN ACT REGULATING THE PLANNING, DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION, OCCUPANCY, AND MAINTENANCE OF BUILDINGS, PROMOTING BUILDING RESILIENCE VERSUS FIRE, FLOOD, STORM, EARTHQUAKE AND MULTIPLE HAZARDS, ENACTING A NEW PHILIPPINE BUILDING ACT, THEREBY REPEALING PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 1096, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Suarez (David)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 6821, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTING THE MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Suarez (David)
TO THE DEFEAT COVID-19 *AD HOC* COMMITTEE

House Bill No. 6822, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING ONE ADDITIONAL DIVISION IN THE NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS COMMISSION, INCREASING THE NUMBER OF COMMISSIONERS FROM FOURTEEN (14) TO SEVENTEEN (17), AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 442, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LABOR CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Suarez (David)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

House Bill No. 6823, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A UNIFIED SYSTEM FOR SEPARATION, RETIREMENT, AND PENSION OF THE MILITARY AND UNIFORMED PERSONNEL (MUP) SERVICES OF THE REPUBLIC OF

THE PHILIPPINES, CREATING THE MILITARY AND UNIFORM PERSONNEL RETIREMENT FUND AUTHORITY, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Suarez (David)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY

House Bill No. 6825, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING ARTICLES 183 AND 184 OF ACT NO. 3815, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE REVISED PENAL CODE”

By Representative Deloso-Montalla
TO THE COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF LAWS

House Bill No. 6826, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE CHILDREN’S MEDICAL CENTERS IN VISAYAS AND IN MINDANAO AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Oaminal
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 6828, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE BED CAPACITY OF IGNACIO L. ARROYO SR. MEMORIAL DISTRICT HOSPITAL (ILASMDH) FROM TWENTY-FIVE (25) TO ONE HUNDRED (100) BEDS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Arroyo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 6829, entitled:

“AN ACT RENEWING THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO NEWS AND ENTERTAINMENT NETWORK CORPORATION UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8197 OR ‘AN ACT GRANTING THE NEWS AND ENTERTAINMENT CORPORATION, A FRANCHISE TO ESTABLISH, CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, MAINTAIN, AND OPERATE FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES CABLE/ COMMUNITY ANTENNAE TELEVISION SYSTEMS AND MULTIMEDIA SERVICES IN THE PHILIPPINES’ FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS FROM THE EFFECTIVITY OF THIS ACT”

By Representative Legarda
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE FRANCHISES

House Bill No. 6830, entitled:

“AN ACT RENEWING FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO THE ASSOCIATION FOR ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICE COOPERATIVE, UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8090, ENTITLED ‘AN ACT GRANTING THE ASSOCIATION FOR ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICE COOPERATIVE A FRANCHISE TO INSTALL, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN RADIO BROADCASTING STATION IN THE PROVINCE OF ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR’ ”

By Representative Babasa
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE FRANCHISES

House Bill No. 6831, entitled:

“AN ACT TO BOLSTER THE PRODUCTION AND POST HARVEST SUPPORT OF THE FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE INDUSTRY AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Savellano
TO THE COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE AND FISHERIES RESOURCES

House Bill No. 6832, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING MASS TESTING, CONTACT TRACING, AND INFECTION PREVENTION PROTOCOLS AND DISEASE SURVEILLANCE MEASURES FOR THE SAFE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS”

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

House Bill No. 6833, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7305, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE MAGNA CARTA OF PUBLIC HEALTH WORKERS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Revilla
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 6837, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR ONE DOCTOR AND ONE NURSE FOR EVERY PUBLIC ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOL”

By Representatives Castro (France), Zarate, Gaité, Cullamat, Brosas and Elago
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 6838, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE VIROLOGY SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY INSTITUTE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

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

House Bill No. 6839, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING R.A. NO. 9262 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ‘AN ACT DEFINING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN, PROVIDING FOR PROTECTIVE MEASURES FOR VICTIMS, PRESCRIBING PENALTIES THEREFORE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES’, EXPANDING ITS COVERAGE AND COVERED ACTS PRESCRIBING PENALTIES THEREFORE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Lopez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

House Bill No. 6840, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NETWORK OF POP-UP BICYCLE LANES AND EMERGENCY PATHWAYS FOR USE DURING THE DURATION OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

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

House Bill No. 6841, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NETWORK OF POP-UP BICYCLE LANES AND EMERGENCY PATHWAYS FOR USE DURING THE DURATION OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Cayetano (Maria Laarni)
TO THE DEFEAT COVID-19 *AD HOC* COMMITTEE

RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 903, entitled:

“RESOLUTION CALLING FOR ENDING THE CURRENT ACADEMIC TERM AND FOR A UNIVERSAL PASS POLICY DUE TO COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY”

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

House Resolution No. 904, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO INVESTIGATE, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, THE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS PERPETRATED DURING THE COMMUNITY QUARANTINE AND TO BRING THE PERPETRATORS TO JUSTICE”

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

House Resolution No. 905, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION URGING THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT, COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, TO ESTABLISH AND APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR SUBSIDY AND LOAN PROGRAMS FOR THE TEACHING AND NON-TEACHING STAFF AND PERSONNEL OF PRIVATE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, AND CONTRACTUAL AND JOB ORDER TEACHING AND NON-TEACHING STAFF AND PERSONNEL OF THE PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN TIMES OF STATE EMERGENCIES, CALAMITIES, AND OTHER SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES”

By Representative Gonzales (Aurelio)
TO THE DEFEAT COVID-19 *AD HOC* COMMITTEE

House Resolution No. 906, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, TO ENSURE THE CONTINUED SAFE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MANDATED NATIONAL IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM (NIP) FOR CHILDREN DESPITE THE CHALLENGES POSED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, AND, TO SECURE AND ENSURE A STABLE SUPPLY OF AVAILABLE VACCINES THROUGH CONTINUED CONDUCT OF OPEN, FAIR, AND COMPETITIVE BIDDING, THEREBY PREVENTING OUTBREAKS OF VACCINE PREVENTABLE DISEASES DURING THE TIME OF THIS PANDEMIC (‘OUTBREAK WITHIN AN OUTBREAK’)”

By Representatives De Jesus, Dagooc, Guya and Ebcas
TO THE DEFEAT COVID-19 *AD HOC* COMMITTEE

House Resolution No. 907, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT, SEC. SILVESTRE H. BELLO III, TO IMMEDIATELY IMPLEMENT MEASURES TO ADDRESS THE NON-ACCOMMODATION OF ELIGIBLE BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS FOR THE COVID-19 ADJUSTMENT MEASURES PROGRAM (CAMP)”

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

House Resolution No. 908, entitled:

“RESOLUTION EXTENDING HIGHEST RECOGNITION AND COMMENDATION TO SECOND LIEUTENANT GEMALYN DEOCARES SUGUI FOR EARNING THE HIGHEST HONOR AS CLASS VALEDICTORIAN OF CLASS 2020 ‘MASIDLAWIN’ OF THE PHILIPPINE MILITARY ACADEMY”

By Representative Albano
TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY

House Resolution No. 909, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE AGENCIES CONCERNED TO ENCOURAGE AND ENHANCE THE PARTICIPATION OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS (CSOs) IN THE AGRI-INDUSTRIALIZATION DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS, IN LINE WITH THE ‘BALIK PROBINSYA, BAGONG PAG-ASA’ PROGRAM DURING THIS TIME OF PANDEMIC”

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

House Resolution No. 910, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE EXTENSION OF THE EFFECTIVITY OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11469 OR THE BAYANIHAN TO HEAL AS ONE ACT UNTIL SUCH TIME THAT A CURE OR A VACCINE FOR THE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 19 (COVID-19) HAS BEEN DEVELOPED”

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

House Resolution No. 911, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE HOUSE COMMITTEE(S) TO IMMEDIATELY INVESTIGATE, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, THE SUDDEN INCREASE IN MERALCO ELECTRICITY RATES AND BILLS, WITH THE END IN VIEW THAT CORRECTIVE MEASURES BE IMPLEMENTED TO ENSURE THAT CONSUMERS ARE CHARGED BASED ON THEIR ACTUAL ELECTRICITY CONSUMPTION”

By Representatives Duterte and Yap (Eric)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 912, entitled:

“RESOLUTION ON THE PROPOSED MANDATORY QUARANTINE OF SENIOR CITIZENS”

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

House Resolution No. 913, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION URGING EXECUTIVE SECRETARY SALVADOR MEDIALDEA AND THE COVID-19 INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF EMERGING INFECTIOUS DISEASES TO INCLUDE IN THE COVERAGE OF THE SECOND TRANCHE OF THE SOCIAL AMELIORATION PROGRAM (SAP) AREAS UNDER GENERAL COMMUNITY QUARANTINE (GCQ)”

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

House Resolution No. 914, entitled:

“RESOLUTION CONDEMNING IN THE STRONGEST TERMS THE ILLEGAL ARRESTS, DETENTION, AND OTHER VIOLATIONS OF RIGHTS UNDER THE 1987 CONSTITUTION AND LAWS AGAINST SEVERAL TEACHERS AMIDST THE COMMUNITY LOCKDOWNS DURING THE PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY DUE TO COVID-19 AND URGING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO CONDUCT AN IMMEDIATE INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE SAME”

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

House Resolution No. 915, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND OTHER RELEVANT AGENCIES TO COME UP WITH A NATIONAL POLICY GUIDELINES FOR PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS THAT WILL BALANCE THE INTEREST OF LEARNERS, SCHOOLS, TEACHERS AND PARENTS IN THE RETURN TO SCHOOL PROCESS IN THE INCOMING ACADEMIC YEAR”

By Representative Nograles (Juan)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 916, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION TO POSTPONE THE OPENING OF CLASSES UNTIL THERE IS AN ESTABLISHED FRAMEWORK AND CLEAR GUIDELINES FOR AN ALTERNATIVE LEARNING SYSTEM DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC”

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

House Resolution No. 917, entitled:

“RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE SUPPORT OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE PRONOUNCEMENT OF PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE NOT TO OPEN SCHOOLS WITHOUT A VACCINE FOR CORONAVIRUS DISEASE-19 (COVID-19) TO PROTECT STUDENTS FROM POSSIBLE INFECTIONS”

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

COMMUNICATION

Letter dated 18 May 2020 of Janice G. Ayson-Zales, Deputy Director, Office of the General Counsel and Legal Services, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), transmitting to the House of Representatives duly certified electronic copies of the following BSP issuances:

1. Circular No. 1083 dated 22 April 2020;
2. Circular No. 1084 dated 28 April 2020;
3. Circular No. 1085 dated 29 April 2020;
4. Circular Letter No. CL-2020-019 dated 14 April 2020;
5. Circular Letter No. CL-2020-020 dated 7 April 2020;
6. Circular Letter No. CL-2020-021 dated 7 April 2020;

7. Circular Letter No. CL-2020-022 dated 23 April 2020;
 8. Circular Letter No. CL-2020-023 dated 27 April 2020;
 9. Circular Letter No. CL-2020-024 dated 27 April 2020;
 10. Circular Letter No. CL-2020-025 dated 27 April 2020;
 11. Memorandum No. M-2020-017 dated 1 April 2020;
 12. Memorandum No. M-2020-018 dated 6 April 2020;
 13. Memorandum No. M-2020-019 dated 6 April 2020;
 14. Memorandum No. M-2020-020 dated 7 April 2020;
 15. Memorandum No. M-2020-021 dated 7 April 2020;
 16. Memorandum No. M-2020-022 dated 8 April 2020;
 17. Memorandum No. M-2020-023 dated 8 April 2020;
 18. Memorandum No. M-2020-024 dated 8 April 2020;
 19. Memorandum No. M-2020-025 dated 13 April 2020;
 20. Memorandum No. M-2020-026 dated 14 April 2020;
 21. Memorandum No. M-2020-027 dated 21 April 2020;
 22. Memorandum No. M-2020-028 dated 22 April 2020;
 23. Memorandum No. M-2020-029 dated 23 April 2020;
 24. Memorandum No. M-2020-030 dated 24 April 2020;
 25. Memorandum No. M-2020-031 dated 25 April 2020;
 26. Memorandum No. M-2020-032 dated 27 April 2020;
 27. Memorandum No. M-2020-033 dated 27 April 2020;
 28. Memorandum No. M-2020-034 dated 28 April 2020;
 29. Memorandum No. M-2020-035 dated 28 April 2020;
 30. Memorandum No. M-2020-036 dated 29 April 2020; and
 31. Memorandum No. M-2020-037 dated 30 April 2020.
- TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report of the Committee on Higher and Technical

Education (Committee Report No. 320), re H.B. No. 6842, entitled:

“AN ACT RENAMING THE SURIGAO DEL SUR STATE UNIVERSITY (SDSSU) IN THE PROVINCE OF SURIGAO DEL SUR TO NORTH EASTERN MINDANAO STATE UNIVERSITY (NEMSU)”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 6500

Sponsors: Representatives Go (Mark) and Pichay
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Higher and Technical Education and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 321), re H.B. No. 6843, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTERS IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF CATAINGAN, CAWAYAN, PLACER AND USON, LOCATED IN THE PROVINCE OF MASBATE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 4935

Sponsors: Representatives Go (Mark), Yap (Eric) and Kho (Wilton)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Higher and Technical Education and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 322), re H.B. No. 6844, entitled:

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

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 5050

Sponsors: Representatives Go (Mark), Yap (Eric) and Olivarez

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Higher and Technical Education and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 323), re H.B. No. 6845, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING

AND ASSESSMENT CENTER IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF LABO, PROVINCE OF CAMARINES NORTE, TO BE KNOWN AS THE LABO TESDA TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 5291

Sponsors: Representatives Go (Mark), Yap (Eric) and Tallado

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Higher and Technical Education and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 324), re H.B. No. 6846, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF LOON, PROVINCE OF BOHOL, TO BE KNOWN AS THE LOON TESDA TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 4143

Sponsors: Representatives Go (Mark), Yap (Eric) and Chatto

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Health and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 325), re H.B. No. 6849, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE BED CAPACITY OF THE BENGUET GENERAL HOSPITAL IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF LA TRINIDAD, PROVINCE OF BENGUET FROM TWO HUNDRED (200) TO FOUR HUNDRED (400) BEDS, PLACING THE HOSPITAL UNDER THE DIRECT SUPERVISION AND CONTROL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 6171

Sponsors: Representatives Tan (Angelina) and Yap (Eric)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Health and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 326), re H.B. No. 6850, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A GENERAL HOSPITAL IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ROSALES, PROVINCE OF PANGASINAN

TO BE KNOWN AS THE EASTERN PANGASINAN REGIONAL MEDICAL AND TRAUMA CENTER, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 6159

Sponsors: Representatives Tan (Angelina), Yap (Eric) and Estrella

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

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

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 6816

Continuation

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, under the Calendar of Unfinished Business, I move that we continue the consideration of House Bill No. 6816, under Committee Report No. 313, and request that the Secretary General be directed to read the title of the measure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The Secretary General is hereby directed to read the title of the Bill.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 6816, entitled: AN ACT ENSURING PHILIPPINE FINANCIAL INDUSTRY RESILIENCY AGAINST THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary status of the Bill is that we are in the period of sponsorship and debate. With that, I move that we recognize the Sponsor of the said measure, the Chairman of the Banks and Financial Intermediaries Committee, Hon. Junie E. Cua. I move that he be recognized, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The honorable Chairman Junie Cua is hereby recognized.

REP. CUA. Hello, Mr. Speaker.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, with that, I move that we recognize the interpellator, the honorable Representative of the BAYAN MUNA Party-List, Hon. Ferdinand R. Gaité, for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Hon. Ferdinand Gaité is hereby recognized.

REP. GAITE. Magandang hapon sa ating lahat, lalo na sa ating kagalang-galang na Speaker at sa ating Sponsor ng panukalang batas sa usapin ng

FIST. Pahihintulutan ba ng ating Sponsor, ang aming Chairman sa Committee on Banks and Financial Intermediaries, na mag-pose ang Kinatawag ito ng ilang questions patungkol sa ipinapanukalang batas, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. CUA. Mr. Speaker, ikinagagalak ko po na tumugon sa mga tanong ng kagalang-galang na Ferdinand Gaité.

REP. GAITE. Maraming salamat po.

Mr. Speaker, clarification lang po, hindi po ba dati na ay may kahalintulad na batas ang ipinapanukala natin ngayon? Ito po iyong Republic Act No. 9182. Ano ba ang rationale kung bakit ngayon ay kailangan nating baguhin iyong dating batas at ipanukala ngayon itong Financial Institutions Strategic Transfer Act, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. CUA. Napakaganda po ng inyong tanong, Ginoong Interpellator. Marami pong dahilan kung bakit kinakailangang baguhin na itong lumang batas. Iyan pong lumang batas na iyan ay ating naipasá humigit kumulang na 20 taon na, dalawang dekada ang nakakaraan. Sa loob po ng ganyan kahabang panahon ay nagkaroon na ng maraming pagbabago. Naranasan na natin ang mga praktikal na problema, praktikal na mga hadlang, at maayos na pagpapatupad nitong tinatawag nating “Special Purpose Vehicle Act” noon at ngayon po ang tawag dito ay “FIST” o “Financial Institutions Strategic Transfer Law.”

Unang-una po, noong ating ipinatupad iyong lumang batas na atin pong naipasá (*inaudible*) gahol na o huli na sa oras. Nagkaroon po ng maraming mga kaso sa pagitan ng borrowers at iyong financial institution na nagpautang noong kanilang inilipat itong mga non-performing assets, foreclosed assets or non-performing loans doon sa special purpose vehicle, na ang purpose naman po ay para maging liquid ang mga bangko sapagkat napakalaki na ng kapital na naipit sa mga non-performing loans.

Iyan pong paglipat na iyan ay nagkaroon ng maraming kaso at maraming mga temporary restraining orders na napakadali namang kunin sa mababang korte natin o Regional Trial Court. Kaya po ang implementation o execution nitong napakahalagang batas na ito o mekanismo na ito ay hindi naging epektibo sapagkat gawa po diyan sa napakaraming kaso na na-file at restraining orders na na-issue. Kaya dito po sa bagong batas, ang atin pong (*inaudible*) o ang Korte Suprema lamang ang puwedeng mag-issue ng TRO upang maiwasan iyang mga hadlang na iyan sa maayos na pagpapatupad ng batas.

Pangalawa po, naranasan din natin noong nakaraang dalawang dekada na iyon na marami pong mga foreign investors na gustong pumasok, ngunit dahil

po sa constitutional restrictions laban sa pagpasok ng foreign investors at pagka-involve sa pagbentahan ng asset, lalong-lalo na ng lupa, ay marami na pong hindi nakapasok kahit na po maraming interesado.

Kaya po ito ay ating ginagamot sa pamamagitan nitong bagong batas na ina-allow iyong sistema na akin pong in-adopt mula sa existing banking law natin na pinapayagan natin na ang mga foreigners ay makapag-invest diyan sa programang iyan. So, maliban po doon ay marami pong konsepto na na-introduce ang Securities and Exchange Commission tungkol sa mga bagay na related dito sa special purpose vehicle lalong-lalo na po iyong tinatawag nating “qualified buyer concept.” So, iyan lang po ang ilan sa mga panukala na atin pong ipinasok dito sa bagong Bill na ito na wala po doon sa unang batas.

REP. GAITE. Salamat po, Mr. Sponsor, ating kagalang-galang na Congressman Cua sa pagpapaliwanag hinggil sa nakita na nga nating lumang batas na ngayon ay balak baguhin.

Nabanggit din iyong ilang mga dahilan kung bakit kailangang baguhin ang naturang batas, ngunit puwede ninyo bang ipaliwanag, bakit sa tingin ng iba ay iyong dating batas, liban sa nabanggit ninyong mga dahilan, kung bakit hindi na siya effective o angkop sa kasalukuyang sitwasyon o kalagayan, bunga na nga rin ng problemang hindi siya naging maayos na paraan para mismo ang mga bangko ay mag-participate dito sa supposed expeditious process of resolving the problem of the natutulog o non-performing loans? Nabanggit ninyo po iyong ilan tulad ng problema sa litigation, iyong ilang problema hinggil sa proseso ng mabilis na ma-load iyong naturang mga non-performing loans or assets. Mareresolba ba ng current proposed na batas na FIST Law itong mga problemang ito, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. CUA. Hindi po, kagalang-galang na Kinatawan, sapagkat ito po ay hindi puwedeng gawin. Kongreso lamang po ang puwedeng mag-ayos ng batas na ito. Hindi po pupuwede na basta lang natin i-revive itong batas na ito. Alam naman natin kung anu-ano iyong mga kakulangan niya. Hindi po kayang gawin ng implementing agency iyang pagko-correct o pagsasaayos noong mga kulang na mga mekanismo na kinakailangang maisabatas.

Gusto ko lang pong liwanagin na iyon pong lumang batas ay epektibo iyong konsepto. Ang konsepto nito ay upang mabigyan ng mekanismo ang ating banking industry na iyong mga kapital nila na naipit sa mga non-performing loan at non-performing asset na lumobo nang husto dahil sa wala tayong batas na ganoon noon, inabot pa ng ilang taon bago natin maipasá iyong batas na iyon, so nagkaipit-ipit ang mga bangko at hindi naging liquid ang mga bangko kung kaya apektado po ang health condition ng banking sytem.

It was an effective concept and it could have been a lot more effective kung iyong mga problemang iyon ay nandoon na sa batas noong una pang beses na iyan ay ating naipatupad. So, iyan lang po ang tanging paraan upang maging epektibo itong ating programa, kung papabayaang lang natin po nang ganoon ay ganoon pa rin po ang mangyayari katulad noong nakaraang panahon.

REP. GAITE. Mr. Speaker, babalik ako sa tanong na iyon, kasi nabanggit ninyo po na effective po iyong batas. Kung effective iyong batas, eh bakit kailangan natin ngayong baguhin?

REP. CUA. Hindi po. Ang sabi ko po ay epektibo po iyong konsepto, Mr. Speaker. Hindi iyong batas, sapagkat iyong batas po ay may pagkukulang, Mr. Speaker. Gusto ko pong liwanagin iyong aking sagot sa inyo kanina.

REP. GAITE. Mr. Speaker, kung gayon, ano po iyong mga pagkukulang noong nabanggit ninyo pong, currently iyong SPV, at ano po ngayon iyong mga kailangang baguhin dito sa ipinapanukala ngayong FIST partikular sa mga nabanggit ninyong mga—paano magiging effective o papaano iyong pagbabago hindi lamang sa mga paraan o proseso dito sa panukalang batas, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. CUA. Iyon na nga po iyong aking nabanggit na at least tatlo. Mayroon pa pong iba subalit sa aking pananaw ito po ang pinakamahalaga na hindi kaya pong magawa kung hindi natin aayusin iyong batas: number one, naging rampant ang issuance ng restraining order doon sa paglipat ng non-performing loans mula sa financial institutions patungo po doon sa asset management company or special purpose entity or vehicle. Marami pong mga borrower ang nag-file ng kaso kaya hindi nailipat kaagad iyong mga asset. Inabot po ng napakatagal sapagkat nare-restrain. So, iyan po ay malaking sagabal sa maayos na pagpapatupad ng ating batas. Isa po iyan. Hindi po natin iyan puwedeng gawin ngayon dahil ang atin pong gustong mangyari ay hindi na Regional Trial Court o RTC ang mag-issue ng temporary restraining order o TRO kundi ang Court of Appeals na, na sa ating experience, sa ating datos ay alam po nating medyo hindi ganoon kadalang makakuha ng TRO doon. Iyan po ang isang reality sa ating justice system.

Pangalawa po, uulitin ko uli, nasabi ko nang gusto nating ma-encourage iyong foreign investors kaya po natin nilalagyan ng mekanismo ngayon na wala po doon sa dating batas itong mekanismo na ito upang sila ay mahikayat na mag-invest.

Iyon lang po ang dalawa, sa tingin ko po ay hindi ho talaga iyan maisasaayos ng lumang batas.

REP. GAITE. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, salamat po sa clarification. Pero, ang tanong po tungkol sa nabanggit po ninyo sa Section 14 nga po sa naturang panukalang batas, iyong Issuance of Injunctive Relief Against Transfer of Assets at nabanggit ninyo, no court other than the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court can issue any TRO, preliminary injunction, etcetera, pero hindi ba po sa sistema ng ating korte, normally po ang binabanggit po nila ay ang i-elevate lang po sa Korte Suprema ay matters involving transcendental importance? Ibig sabihin, in the hierarchy nung cases na will be resolved ay inabot na siya ng pag-clarify sa mga ilang concerns. Although, of course, sabi nga natin, maaari nga naman talagang gawin ito, bakit natin ie-exempt ang non-performing assets sa jurisdiction ng RTCs in terms of injunctions and orders? Why exclude the RTC from having jurisdiction over these cases, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. CUA. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Interpellator, ito pong panukalang ito ay hindi lang po ito panukala dito sa ating panukalang batas na ito. Ito pong sistemang ito ay makikita rin natin sa ibang mga batas na nagkaroon din tayo ng observation na dapat ay medyo mahirap na ma-restrain. Ang ating experience hindi lang noon ngunit kahit na ngayon ay talagang napakadali namang kumuha ng restraining orders sa ating mga regional trial courts. This is a sad fact, but it is a reality.

If we want the program to be unimpeded, sapagkat napakahalaga na itong mga non-performing loans and assets na ito ay ma-liquify nang madaliang panahon sapagkat time is of the essence, ang ating banking system cannot afford to become illiquid. Ang ating mga negosyo, lalo na ang mga MSMEs ay nangangailangan ng suporta ng mga bangko. At kung ang kanilang mga pera at kapital ay nakaipit dito sa mga non-performing loans at hindi ma-monetize dahil lamang sa TRO, malaking kawalan po iyan sa ating ekonomiya.

REP. GAITE. Salamat, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, sa inyong kasagutan, ngunit sa tingin ko rin, tama namang protektahan din natin iyong mga bangko, pero nabanggit ninyo rin, dapat ding protektahan natin iyong mga borrower. Kaya't nagtataka lang ang Kinatawag ito, bakit mas malaki—totoo iyong pangangailangan ng liquidity ng ating mga bangko at naiipit ang kanilang kapital sa panahong iyong kanilang non-performing assets ay natutulog, magagamit sana sa mas productive na mga paraan, pero fast-forward na po ako doon sa dalawang katanungan ko po.

Nabanggit ninyo po na magtatayo nga ng tinatawag na “FISTC” na siyang magiging—ito ay katulad noong SPV noong nakaraan, special purpose vehicle sa dating batas na magsisilbing tagaresolba ng mga non-performing loan kung saan ililipat ang sinasabing mga assets.

Doon sa modelo na ipino-propose, iyong mga bangko ay ia-unload ang kanilang non-performing assets to the said FISTC at sila na iyong magli-liquidate ng naturang mga asset. Pero ang tanong ko po, bakit po ang proposal ninyo, sa halip na tulad sa ibang bansa, sa China, sa Thailand, sa Korea, dito po ang ginamit nila ay government-led asset management companies, pero dito sa proposal ninyo ay gagawa tayo ng pribado, private sector-led approach? Hindi ninyo ba nakikitang mas mainam na gobyerno, na mas malaki ang kanilang so-called “pisi,” mas mahaba ang kanilang pisi, mas kaya nilang i-absorb ang mga ganitong sitwasyon na lumalaking mga non-performing loan or asset? Hindi ba mas mainam na gobyerno na lamang ang magsilbing asset management company to provide liquidity for our banking sector, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. CUA. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, nakikita ko po ang punto ng inyong panukala, subalit sa modelo po ng ibang bansa at itong modelo natin dito sa ating bansa, sa tingin po natin ay mas epektibo at mas maayos ang management sapagkat nandiyan po ang entrepreneurial spirit at iyong malasakit sapagkat may private interest. So, ito po ang isang driving force kung bakit sa tingin natin, ang private sector ay mas magiging epektibo sa mga bagay na ganito. Subalit nari-realize din natin ang pangangailangan ng government-owned FIST companies, kaya dito po sa ating panukala ay hindi rin natin ipinagbawal na ang government financial institutions o GFIs, o kaya ang mga government-owned and -controlled corporations o GOCCs na involved sa credit guarantee ay magkaroon din ng ganitong prebiblehiyo na magtayo ng sarili nilang asset management company. So, I think that as a model, it has always been proven that private sector initiative invariably has been more efficient or effective because of the vested interests of these shareholders.

So, even on another point na inyo po ring nabanggit kanina, gusto ko lang pong balikan iyong issue na proteksyon ng bangko at proteksyon ng borrower. Dito po sa batas na ito ay wala rin naman pong napapabayaang na interes ng borrower. The interest of the borrower is never diminished. What happens only is that the creditor has been transferred, kumbaga, ang kausap noong umutang ay ibang tao na. So, wala naman pong nabawas sa kanyang karapatan to redeem the property or whatever rights still accrue to the owner of the property, just because of this transfer.

So, thank you, Mr. Speaker, iyan po ang aking katugunan sa magandang tanong ng ating kasama.

REP. GAITE. Salamat po sa ating kagalang-galang na Chairman ng ating Committee on Banks and Financial Intermediaries.

Kaya ko po naitanong iyan, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, ay dahil nga dito sa COVID-19 ay siguradong

maraming apektadong mga maliliit na mga negosyante, ito iyong mga small- and medum-scale enterprises na mga borrowers, na ngayon ay siguradong nalalagay sa matinding panganib. Marami na ang napabalitaang nagsara o magsasara o nag-scale down ng kanilang operations dahil nga during these difficult times. Sabi nga natin, iyong mga mahahaba ang pisi, iyon ang kayang makapag-survive nang matagal-tagal, pero itong mga SMEs na kulang na kulang sa kapital, maliit ang investment, kadalasan para sa imbentaryo lang nila ang kanilang mga pautang and other procurement of raw materials, ay ngayon siguradong maraming maiipit.

Paano natin matitiyak na mapoprotektahan iyong ating mga maliliit na borrowers tulad ng SMEs lalo na iyong mga displaced worker from losing their assets *vis a vis* the plan to provide liquidity to our banks and other financial institutions? Hindi ba dapat bigyan din natin sila ng parang moratorium para kahit paano, sa halip na mag-proceed patungong pag-foreclose ng mga loan at asset, hindi ba dapat paluwag at hindi pahigpit ang ating direksyon, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. CUA. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, nauunawaan ko po ang ibig sabihin ng ating kaibigan, but I would like to bring to the attention of the Gentleman that the issue involved here is not the issue that he is trying to raise, but the issue here is about a mechanism.

Iyon pong sinasabi ng ating kaibigan na kinakailangang magkaroon ng kaluwagan, iyon po ay ibang programa. Ito po naman ay ibang programa, programa po ito upang matulungan natin ang mga bangko na maging liquid. Iyon pong concern natin sa mga maliliit na negosyante ay programa na sa aking pananaw ay ina-address noong ating PESA Bill.

Iyong concern po ninyo, ay matutugunan doon sa mga probisyon noong PESA Bill natin, subalit ito pong ating pinag-uusapan ngayon ay problema na humantong na sa foreclosure. Iyon pong inyong sinasabi ay hindi pa humantong sa foreclosure at maayos pa ang relasyon noong umutang at nagpautang. Ito po ay sitwasyon na kahit na nagkaroon ng maayos at may kaluwagan ng ibinigay, ay napilitan na iyong nagpautang na i-foreclose iyong property. At iyan po ang pinagmumulan nitong ating programa, na kung ang property ay na-foreclose na, at iyong kapital ng bangko ay naipit na doon sa account na iyon, kailangan po nating tulungan iyong bangko para iyong kanyang kapital ay ma-free up at maipautang niya naman muli sa ibang nangangailangan pang MSMEs.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Maraming salamat po, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

Sa panahong ito ay iyon lang po muna ang aking mga katanungan hinggil sa ipinapanukalang batas at nagpapasalamat ako sa ating kagalang-galang na

Sponsor ng ating batas na ito at sa ating Speaker at sa lahat ng kasamahan natin ngayon sa loob ng Kongreso at gayundin ang lahat ng nasa teleconferencing na ito.

Salamat po sa inyong mga kasagutan at nakatulong po sa paglilinaaw hinggil sa panukalang batas patungkol sa FIST.

Salamat po, Mr. Chair. Salamat po, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. CUA. Maraming salamat din po, kagalang-galang na Kinatawan.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, next to interpellate our good Sponsor, may I move that we recognize the Hon. Teodorico T. Haresco Jr. of the Second District of Aklan.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The Hon. Teodorico Haresco is hereby recognized.

REP. HARESCO. I would like to make a manifestation, Mr. Speaker. To the honorable Sponsor, our illustrious Rep. Junie E. Cua, napakaganda po ng House Bill ninyo. Napakaganda na mayroon tayong Special Purpose Vehicle para there is more liquidity in our economy.

Sa experience po ng Special Purpose Vehicle, sa power po, napakadami ng stranded costs na ultimately, binayaran po ng ating gobyerno. Hanggan ngayon, nagbabayad pa rin po tayo kasi umabot yata sa humigit-kumulang ng P900 billion. Now, we are having an Economic Stimulus Bill, P1.3 billion, sa CURES Act, another P500 billion, eh nakakatakot po na mag-i-inject tayo fiscally ng funds sa private sector on the premise that they are kind of honest, efficient and all that.

I remember, Mr. Speaker, honorable Sponsor, during the time of Pres. Cory Aquino when there were very few NGOs so, working at PMS we chose to partner with the top 10 corporations, foundations. When they implemented a lot of projects, nakita po on the average na nag-charge po sila ng overhead na about 60 to 70 percent. Dito po sa atin na injection of a lot of funds, which may reach up to 9 percent of our deficit, kung puwede po bago mangyari na malugi sila in times of doom—sa U.S. po iyong kanilang TARP Bill, naglagay po sila ng Oversight Committee on Financial and Monetary Accountability. Congress po, naglagay sila ng Oversight Committee para masigurado ang polisiya na iyong pondo ay doon talaga pupunta sa targeted

needs ng tutulongan po natin. Kaya doon po dynamic ang Oversight Committee, binabantayan, ina-avoid ang mga biases and prejudices of our big banks which tend to lend out to large and very large corporations. Since 86 percent of our economy depends on SMSEs, sana po mayroon po tayong—Mr. Sponsor, kung puwede ninyo po ma-consider, katulad din po ng Amerika, ang Committee on Financial and Monetary Oversight Committee para po mabantayan, bago mangyari, at bago ma-charge na naman sa atin ang mga non-performing loans, ay nakikita po natin regularly and dynamically kung ano, saan, at paano ginagamit po ang pera.

Pangalawa po, nilagyan po nila ng Performance Audit Committee para makita po with the Treasury, the AMLA and Inspector General Timothy C. Watkins, para ma-avoid po ang mga leakages na nangyayari sa Ehekutibo, ang mga fraud, possible fraud and possible diversions by the private sector na, of course, when it comes to our recession, deflated balance sheet, ang sasagot po ng garbaje na iyan ay ang gobyerno pa rin po kasi ililipat ng special purpose vehicle chargeable to the government over the next generations.

Sana po, mahal na Speaker, G. Isponsor, ay ma-consider ninyo po ang Dynamic Oversight Committee along with a special inspectorate team to dynamically monitor and watch where the money is spent, how the money is spent to avoid the biases of our Philippine Wall Street.

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

REP. CUA. Thank you, thank you, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

I think the point from the Gentleman is very well taken and what he said are actual experiences that we have seen in the U.S. and in many other places. I think his proposals will be best well-placed in the PESA Bill. Now, with regard to the FIST Bill, on the other hand, the FIST Bill talks about the transfer of private assets to a private Special Purpose Vehicle. And in the case of GFIs and GOCCs, this Bill when passed into law is not really concerned with disbursement or expenditure of public funds, they are just mere mechanisms in the liquidation and monetization of non-performing loans and non-performing assets. But having said that, I would like to acknowledge that the suggestion of the Gentleman will be well-placed in the stimulus package which we have deliberated on yesterday.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you, Your Honor.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, there being no other Member who wishes to interpellate on or speak

against the measure, I move that we close the period of sponsorship and debate.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the session for a few seconds.

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

It was 3:51 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:52 p.m. the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, earlier I moved that the period of sponsorship and debate be terminated. However, I withdraw such motion and request that the period of sponsorship and debate be opened again.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we again recognize the Chairman of the Committee on Banks and Financial Intermediaries, the Hon. Junie E. Cua. I also move that we recognize the Hon. Kaloi Zarate of BAYAN MUNA Party-List for his interpellation.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The Hon. Kaloi Zarate is hereby recognized.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

To our good Sponsor, magandang hapon po.

Puwede po bang mapagbigyan ng pagkakataon na makapaglinaw ng ilang mga puntos sa nakasalang ngayon na panukalang batas, G. Isponsor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CUA. It will be my pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to respond to my dear colleague.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

Iilang katanungan na lang po ito dahil iyong ibang mga katanungan po ay parang nasagot na rin ng mga naunang nagtatanong. Pero para ho sa kalinawan lang ng Kinatawang ito at nang ating mga kababayan na nakikinig, ano po ba ang pagkakaiba ng kasalukuyang isinusulong na pinapanukalang batas sa batas na pumapayag noon na magkaroon tayo ng Special Purpose Vehicle or SPV Law, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. CUA. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, I think this is a question that had been raised earlier. Iyon pong lumang batas ay marami nang kakulangan dahil sa marami na pong mga bagong pagbabago tungkol po sa bagay na ito.

At dito po sa bagong batas na ito ay we are trying to correct some of the implementation obstacles that were experienced in the past. And one of the obstacles that was experienced by the implementing agency, which was the Securities and Exchange Commission before, was the numerous cases where the transfer of assets, non-performing assets and non-performing loans from financial institutions or from the lenders to the special purpose entity or special purpose vehicle by way of a TRO issued by the regional trial courts. There were so many cases that the transfer of assets, in fact, were so delayed that the very purpose of the law, which is to liquidate and monetize the capital and the funds that have been tied down in these assets, ay hindi po mangyari. So, iyan po ay ating ikino-correct by way of providing in this law that only the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court would be empowered to issue the TRO. This is in realization of the fact that talaga naman po, it is a reality in our judicial system, na medyo madali po talagang kumuha ng TRO sa lower court, so, isa po ito.

Ang pangalawa po, ay iyong una pong batas ay walang probisyon para ma-encourage natin ang foreign investment into this asset management company or itong tinatawag nating FIST ngayon. So, sa ngayon po ay maraming mga foreign investors na sa ating pananaw ay mag-i-interes dito sa programa na ito. At mayroon din pong mga policy issues na over the years had been developed and have evolved na without a new law, hindi po iyan ma-i-implement, so, iyan are a few of the reasons why a new law is needed, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker. So, in effect, this current proposed Bill now will amend the old law on SPV, and in fact, not only SPV, the law on SPV, but if I may say so, it will also amend some provisions of the law that gives concurrent jurisdiction among our courts – like the Regional Trial

Court, the Court of Appeals, and even the Supreme Court which issue temporary restraining orders on issues involving matters like these.

Now, my next question, Mr. Chair, you mentioned na this law is now necessary to correct or to fill-in some gaps in the implementation of the law. If I may recall, ang batas ho ng SPV noon ay ipinasa rin ng Kongreso, at dahil ito rin ay pagresponde doon sa isang krisis na nangyari noong panahon na iyon, na dahil sa financial crisis na iyon, ay napakaraming mga utang na collateralized ay na-foreclose iyong mga property nila. At dahil nga, ayon sa ating batas iyong mga financial institutions naman, they are not in the business of holding on to a lot of real properties kaya napag-isipan na ang solusyon nito ay mag-create ng isang korporasyon, ano, ng SPV, at doon ipapasa para sabi ninyo nga ma-monetize iyong “natutulog” na capital noong bangko.

Now, bago ako pumunta diyen, if that is the case, na halos ang purpose ay kapareho din noong SPV, hindi ho ba dito ho ba sa ating panukalang batas na ito ay mayroon ho tayong nilagay naman na probisyon o solusyon para sa halip na mag-create tayo ng SPV or iyong kailangan pa nating i-monetize iyong sinasabi nating collateral noong pagkakautang ay maiwasan ang pagkakataong ito?

What I am saying, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, ang nangyari noon kaya nagkaroon ng SPAV ay dahil din sa mga patakaran ng mga financial institution na talagang naipit iyong mga nangungutang, at hanggang sa wala na silang kakayahang magbayad kaya nagresulta ito na ma-foreclose ang kanilang mga pag-aari o iyong mga collateral nila.

Dito po ba sa panukalang batas na ito, mayroon ba tayong inilagay na probisyon na iyong ugat noon kung bakit nagkaroon ng krisis pinansyal ay ating masolusyunan sa halip na naging reaksyon na lang ito dahil, halimbawa, ngayon, mayroon na namang krisis, ang ating solusyon ay ito muli—enhanced SPAV—if I may call it so, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. CUA. Mr. Speaker, napakaganda po ng tanong na iyan na ang ibig sabihin ay i-solve natin iyong ugat, huwag na nating singilin para walang problema, kumbaga, ganoon ang mangyayari. Alam ninyo, hindi naman po maaaring mangyari iyon sapagkat kung walang koleksyon ang mga bangko, wala pong ipapautang o mawawala iyong liquidity ng bangko, kasi ang puwede namang gawin kung ganoon ang gusto nating mangyari, huwag na lang mangolekta ang bangko. Kapag hindi nangolekta ang bangko, sarado ang bangko. Ganoon lang po ang mangyayari dito. Sa tingin ko po, ang pinakamagandang solusyon sa ating naiisip na problema ay ayusin natin ang Stimulus and Assistance Program. I think we are going into that direction because we are also talking about a stimulus

package. Iyong problema na iyon should be taken care of in that bill, at ito pong Bill na ito talks about a different problem. Hindi po maaari na itigil ang pagbabayad sapagkat magsasara lahat ng bangko. Kapag nangyari po iyon, lalong malaki ang problema natin. We have to solve the problem one at a time, one at a different stage. Dumating na po tayo sa stage na ito, kumbaga ibang gamot ito. I hope I was able to answer the Gentleman for his very good question.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

Hindi naman po natin sinabi na hindi na nga mangolekta dahil kung pagkakautang iyan at valid naman iyong pagkakautang, dapat nga bayaran talaga. Pero sa isang panahon na napakatindi ng krisis na kinakaharap ng ating mga kababayan, lalong-lalo na halimbawa ang ating mga micro, small and medium enterprises o MSMEs, hindi problema siguro iyong mga top 50, top 100 corporations, but our micro, small and medium enterprises, sa halip ang ating solusyon ay ituloy-tuloy pa rin iyong pag-ilit o pag-foreclose ng kanilang properties at ibigay sa special purpose vehicles, sa halip po na matulungan natin sila na makabangon, mas lalo pa natin silang idinidiin kaya hindi na sila makabangon sa kinasasadlakan nilang krisis ngayon. Iyon po ang gusto kong puntuhin.

Maniningil pa rin tayo sa kanila pero hindi po ba mas magandang solusyon na bigyan natin sila ng alternatibo—ang ating mga maliliit na mga negosyante halimbawa—to tide them over in the months or years to come that we are fighting this crisis brought about by the pandemic of COVID-19. Iyon po ang aking pinupunto doon dahil sa karanasan natin, halimbawa, noong ipinasá ang batas ng SPAV, ang ginawa lang po ng mga bangko ay nagtayo ng mga sister corporation nila at doon ipinasa iyong non-performing assets nila, and in fact devalued these non-performing assets. Halimbawa, instead of P1 million iyan, ibinigay sa kanya ng sister company o sister corporation na P500,000, so hindi pa rin nabawasan ang utang noong entrepreneur dahil iyong kanyang collateral ay masyado nang bumaba ang value, kaya lalo pang nadiin, malaki pa rin ang utang noong creditor. Iyon po ang gusto kong puntuhin doon. The good Sponsor mentioned na iyong dating batas ay kailangang i-enhance, kaya nga ayaw na daw natin ng TRO dahil nakakasagabal ito.

What also piqued my curiosity, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, iyong kagustuhan nating participation ng mga dayuhang interes o kapital. But since we have a worldwide pandemic now, worldwide crisis, baka mas lalong, sa halip na ang ating purpose dito ay buhayin ang ating ekonomiya, mas lalo pang masasadlak tayo, malulubog ang ating ekonomiya kung ito ang ating magiging solusyon, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CUA. Mr. Speaker, unang-una po, ako ay naniniwala, I am certain that the banks, the individual banks, all banks of all sizes—universal, commercial, rural banks, small banks—they also do not want to lose their clients. I am sure of that because they would not have extended loans to these people if, in the first place or in the beginning, they do not find them to be creditworthy. Syempre, business conditions would change and I am sure, if there is a way, they will find a way to extend accommodation.

Ang ating ine-envision dito ay iyong sitwasyon na hindi na talaga maayos iyon, hindi na kakayanin na palugitan pa, at siguro talagang nagkasundo na sila na iyong kanilang asset, iyong collateral ay ifo-foreclose na. Ang pinag-uusapan dito ay hindi lang naman asset, hindi lang naman iyong collateral; ang pinag-uusapan dito pati na ang pautang o non-performing loans. Iyong pautang, iyong non-performing loans, kino-consider din dito sa ating batas, kahit na iyong lumang batas na ililipat sa another company na mas may expertise na mag-manage ng non-performing loans. That is the concept.

Your point is that, hanggang maaari ay bigyan natin ng paraan para hindi ma-foreclose, ganoon po ba ang sinasabi ninyo? Ang sabi ko naman, maaaring iyan ay pinilit na nilang dalawang ayusin. But in the event na talagang hindi, ang sinasabi ko nga, dapat ibang programa na iyan. Hindi na iyan programa dito sa panukalang batas na ito. Dapat iyan ay pumasok na sa ating PESA Bill, assistance to MSMEs. Nandoon naman po ang programang iyon.

Tama po kayo na kinakailangang mayroon ding programa na ganoon. Ang sinasabi ko lang, ang sagot diyan sa inyong panukala ay nandoon sa kabilang magiging batas. Itong batas na ito ay patungkol sa sitwasyon na talagang wala nang recourse kung hindi i-foreclose iyong asset, o kung hindi ilipat sa ibang management, iyong pagma-manage noong accounts receivable para iyong kanyang kapital ay bumalik at maipautang din sa iba. Kasi kinakailangan na maging liquid ang bangko, and liquidity is the lifeblood of our economy. We cannot afford to have a banking system na ang dugo ay hindi na umiikot, mamamatay po talaga iyong pasyente. Kaya po iyan ang isang analogy na aking palaging inuulit-ulit, na ito ay parang dugo—lifeblood iyong liquidity. Pangalawa, tungkol doon po sa inyong pangamba about foreign investment, alam ninyo, wala namang masama kung itong panukala ay lagyan natin ng ganoong probisyon, sapagkat kung dumating iyong pagkakataon na maraming nag-i-interest, bakit po natin hindi sila bibigyan ng pagkakataon kung ito ay makatutulong sa ating industriya? Iyan lang naman po ang dahilan kung bakit nilagyan natin ng ganyang probisyon, na naniniwala tayo sa experience natin noong nakaraan, na hindi natin na-take advantage, napunta pa sa ibang bansa, mas mabuti nang dito na sa atin.

Ngayon, maaaring hindi sila dumating dito, pero kung sakaling dumating sila dito, mabuti na rin iyong naka-ready tayo. It is always better to be ready just like a boy scout. Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

Dito po ba sa ating panukalang batas ay mayroon tayong inilagay na mga, if the good Sponsor can point out, safety nets? Dahil sa nabanggit ninyo kanina, monetization—we have to monetize the non-performing loans and non-performing assets of the banks. We know in the not-too-distant past, itong mga pagkakautang, mga non-performing assets, non-performing loans, especially in the US ay talagang naging source ito or another form of investment na may companies na nag-i-invest, bumibili ng mga pagkakautang hanggang pumasá nang pumasá. A few years ago, ito iyong naging cause ng financial crisis worldwide. In this proposed Bill, mayroon ba tayong inilagay na safety nets na maiwasan ng—kasi nag-i-invite po tayo ng mga sabi ninyo foreign investors? By the time that they have the capacity to invest in this kind of product, we are ready, sabi nga po ninyo, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

Dahil gusto nating matugunan, sabi ninyo, iyong dating batas ay ma-strengthen natin, ang tanong ko po, in this current Bill that we are proposing now, mayroon bang safety nets na ganoon, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. CUA. Unang-una, ang isang safety net na ating inilagay diyan ay patungkol sa inyong unang nabanggit na nagtatayo iyong mga bangko ng kanya-kanyang sister company para ilipat lang iyong assets doon. Ang atin pong ginawa ay naglagay tayo ng probisyon na kung sila man ay magkaroon ng interes doon ay limitado lang, maximum of 10 percent. Isa po iyon na safety net.

Mr. Speaker, ang programang ito ay always based on “business logical and rational judgment, pera ng private sector lalong-lalo na. At dahil iyan ay pera ng private sector, iyong paglilipat ng value na iyan, syempre iyan ay pinag-aaralan.” Hindi naman basta-basta maililipat iyan. Kung nakikita noong bibili na malulugi siya, bakit bibilhin pa niya?

I think that is the greatest safeguard. This is a business judgment and business judgment, always, is based on rational and logical thinking na hindi siya malulugi. Kaya ang mahalaga, nandiyan iyong self-interest ng private sector.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor.

I hope aside from, you know, gawing istrikto natin iyong pag-create ng mga Special Purpose Asset Vehicle ay talagang maglagay pa tayo ng ibang probisyon diyan. I think it was in 2006 o 2007, noong nagkaroon nga ng crisis sa tinatawag nilang sub-prime loans,

when banks sold too many mortgages dahil sobra-sobra iyong natutulog nilang loans and assets, may mga creative people na nakaisip na, “Puwede palang gawing negosyo itong mga pagkakautang” because there is this secondary market for these non-performing loans and non-performing assets, and we know what happened after that. When these derivatives na wala naman talagang pinagkikitaan lang ng mga nasa stock market or nasa greedy capitalist, wala talagang value, kaya nagresulta ito, as I mentioned earlier, nagkaroon tayo ng financial crisis in the late 2006, 2007 or 2008. I am worried dahil we have another crisis now of global proportion. Dahil sa COVID-19 pandemic, magkakaroon uli ng opportunity na maulit iyong sub-prime crisis noon where derivatives, at mga loan na na-foreclose. Iyon po ang point kaya ko itinanong what are the safety nets o safeguards since we are trying to amend that old law that, in fact, resulted in or contributed sa crisis noong 2006, 2007, 2008, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CUA. Mr. Speaker, if I may respond, let me say that it might be difficult to make a comparison between the crises in 2006 or 2007 and in 2008 which also became slightly like a pandemic of some sort because of its global proportion.

Now, if I recall correctly, the situation at that time had a boom in the construction industry. It actually started with that.

REP. ZARATE. Housing boom.

REP. CUA. Yes. I think the situation today is different. The situation at that time was when the housing market had a normal beginning and started to appreciate, and the appreciation became so much that it encouraged everybody, every home owner tried to own one or more houses. Everybody invested in that, and the commercial papers resulting out of those purchases of house and lots were the ones traded in the market. These documents, these commercial papers, as the value of the assets went up and appreciated, everybody knew at that time that it was going to burst at some point. Yes, it was going to burst at some point because value was rising uncontrollably fast where the assets were already overvalued. When the housing industry started to correct itself, the whole thing collapsed because the assets were really overvalued.

So, that could happen in such a scenario just like a balloon that grows and grows without real value, but we are talking of a different situation here. We are talking of assets that are really being sold at a bargain, at a discount. So, there is no overvaluation of assets and there is no balloon to burst. So, the way I look at it, there are two entirely different scenarios, and so, I appreciate the question but, I think, I am confident

that the situation we are having today is not similar to that path.

So, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, thank you for that very nice question.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor. Mr. Speaker, wala na ho akong ibang mga katanungan na gustong linawin. Ang gusto ko lang hong iwanan na punto na sa ating mga mabilisang itinutulak na mga panukalang batas ngayon, dahil nga dito sa naranasan nating krisis na dala ng pandemya ng COVID-19, ay isaalang-alang natin na sa lahat ng pagkakataon dapat ang matulungan nito ay ang nakararami lalong-lalo na ang ating mga nahihirapang mga kababayan. Kung sa usapin ng komersiyo, lalong-lalo na sa ating mga micro, small and medium enterprises, sila rin ay gustong bumangon, makabalik at bumalik, tumulong na maibangon ang ating ekonomiya. Pero kung may mga batas naman na ipapasá tayo na baka mas lalong maglulugmok sa kanila sa kahirapan, sana ito ay ating iwasan na at huwag nang itulak. So, iyon lang po ang aking mga paglilinaw, G. Isponsor. Maraming salamat, as always, sa inyong accommodation at pagpapaliwanag sa mga batas na itinutulak ng inyong Komite. Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker. Maraming salamat, Mr. Sponsor.

REP. CUA. Mr. Speaker, by way of parting words, I have to express my appreciation for the questions propounded by the Gentleman, but I also would like to assure our colleagues, the Members of our august Congress, that the Bill that I am proposing does not involve any appropriation, does not involve any money. This is just a Bill that proposes to put in place a mechanism that will make our banking or financial sector liquid, viable and resilient so that it can survive this pandemic.

At the end of the day, a vibrant and healthy financial sector is what we need if we are aspiring for a speedy economic recovery. We cannot afford a banking industry that has become anemic, sickly, and may have to be put in an ICU. That is the first thing that we must avoid as an economy.

At the end of the day, we have a banking industry that responds to the credit requirement of our businesses, big or small, micro or even smaller than micro. We need a healthy banking industry, and this model has been proven to be effective in many economies not only in our region but all over the world.

Maraming salamat. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor. Finally, before I end, I would like to manifest that Congresswoman Legarda, Congressman Del Mar and Congressman LRay have all signified their intention to be coauthors of this Bill.

So, maraming, maraming salamat po at magandang hapon po sa ating lahat.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Thank you, Representative Cua.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, we further move that the Representatives mentioned by the honorable Chairman, namely: Deputy Speaker Loren Legarda—I am sorry, but the other two Members mentioned by ...

REP. CUA. LRay and Del Mar.

REP. PALMA. ... Hon. Raul Del Mar and Deputy Speaker LRay Villafuerte be made coauthors of this Bill.

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

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

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

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

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, there being no Committee or individual amendment, I move that we close the period of amendments.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve House Bill No. 6816 on Second Reading.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). There is a motion for the approval of House Bill No. 6816 on Second Reading.

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

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

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

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 6816 ON SECOND READING

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

House Bill No. 6816 is approved on Second Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 6768 ON SECOND READING

REP. PALMA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 6768, contained in Committee Report No. 310, as reported out by the Committee on Banks and Financial Intermediaries.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). 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. 6768, entitled: AN ACT AFFORDING MORE PROTECTION TO CONSUMERS OF FINANCIAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES.

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

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary status of the Bill is that we are in the period of sponsorship and debate. With that, Mr. Speaker, I move that we again recognize the Chairman of the Committee on Banks and Financial Intermediaries, Hon. Junie E. Cua, for his sponsorship speech.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Hon. Junie Cua is hereby recognized.

REP. CUA. Mr. Speaker, thank you. Thank you for unmuting me.

Mr. Speaker, by way of sponsorship, may I be allowed to submit into the records of the House the

* 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.”

Explanatory Note that I have prepared accompanying my Bill, and that the same be considered as my sponsorship speech on the measure.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Explanatory Note of the Bill be made as the sponsorship speech of the honorable Chairman.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

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

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, there being no Committee amendment—I withdraw, Mr. Speaker.

I move to suspend the session for a few seconds.

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

It was 4:29 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:30 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, earlier, I moved to open the period of amendments on House Bill No. 6768. There being no Committee or individual amendment, I move that we close the period of amendments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Is

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve House Bill No 6768 on Second Reading.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). There is a motion for the approval of House Bill No. 6768 on Second Reading.

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

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

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

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 6768 ON SECOND READING

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

House Bill No. 6768 is approved on Second Reading. The Majority Leader is recognized.

RECONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 6816 ON SECOND READING

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, earlier we have approved on Second Reading House Bill No. 6816. Unfortunately, one of our Members who wish to interpellate on the said matter just recently informed this Representation and with that he wishes to interpellate on the said matter. With that, I move that we reconsider the approval on Second Reading of House Bill No. 6816.

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

REP. PALMA. Likewise, Mr. Speaker, I move that we reconsider also the approval on the closure of the period of amendments of House Bill No. 6816.

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

REP. PALMA. Likewise, Mr. Speaker I move that we reconsider the termination of the period of sponsorship and debate of House Bill No. 6816.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Is

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

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 6816
ON SECOND READING

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open again the period of sponsorship and debate on House Bill No. 6816, and then after, I request the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the said measure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). 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 6816, entitled: AN ACT ENSURING PHILIPPINE FINANCIAL INDUSTRY RESILIENCY AGAINST THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Chairman of the Committee on Banks and Financial Intermediaries, Hon. Junie Cua, Sponsor of this House Bill. I would also like to move that Hon. Edcel C. Lagman of Albay be recognized to interpellate our good Sponsor.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The honorable Rep. Junie Cua is hereby recognized.

REP. LAGMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Majority Leader in moving for the reconsideration of the approval on Second Reading of this measure as well as the closure of the period of sponsorship and debate so that I could be accommodated to interpellate. Incidentally, I earlier manifested my intention to interpellate before the period of sponsorship and debate was closed.

Will the distinguished Sponsor yield to some clarificatory questions?

REP. CUA. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, it will be my pleasure to respond to the good Gentleman, a colleague of many years since the Eighth Congress. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, NPAs and NPLs which are secured would refer to foreclosed collaterals of bank loans and accommodations, is that correct?

REP. CUA. That is correct, non-performing assets

or foreclosed collaterals. NPLs refer to non-performing loans, the loan itself.

REP. LAGMAN. But these loans could be secured or not secured according to the definition. Is that correct?

REP. CUA. It can be secured or unsecured.

REP. LAGMAN. Now, when a borrower submits a collateral or collaterals for purposes of securing a loan mortgage, it is ordinary for the bank to exercise due diligence in order to determine that the collateral is an asset which could be depended on once the borrower defaults in his obligation. Is that correct?

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

REP. LAGMAN. Now, we have heard before of collusions between the borrower and the bank wherein practically valueless collaterals are admitted to secure bank loans. Is the distinguished Sponsor aware of these instances?

REP. CUA. That can happen, Mr. Speaker, but personally, I have not been privy to such a situation.

REP. LAGMAN. Is the distinguished Sponsor aware of what is known as behest loans?

REP. CUA. Behest loan, yes, I have heard of that.

REP. LAGMAN. And, in this kind of loan which is considered behest, the collateral submitted by the borrower is virtually worthless but the bank will still accept the same as collateral. Is that correct?

REP. CUA. That could happen, as I have said, but, of course, that is considered to be highly irregular.

REP. LAGMAN. Now, are there standards provided for in the Bill which would disqualify certain foreclosed collaterals from being considered as non-performing assets because they have been the product of collusion or behest loans?

REP. CUA. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, that particular detail is not really in the Bill, but the details which are very important and details that should protect the participants in the program should be spelled out eventually in its implementing rules and regulations, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, I think, once we enact a bill into a law, it must be complete, and standards should be provided for rather than having us rely on implementing rules and

regulations which could not really amend or improve the measure. So, at the proper time, would the distinguished Sponsor, through his Committee, introduce standards by which certain foreclosed collaterals may not be considered as non-performing assets, because they are the product of collusion or behest loans?

REP. CUA. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, we will be more than willing to entertain proposals for amendment that will enhance the effectiveness of this Bill. But I also would like to point out the fact that enshrined in the declaration of principles is the spirit of this Bill, and I would imagine that the spirit of the Bill would include such kind of a protection which can very well be taken up later on in the implementing rules and regulations. But I would hasten to say that I think the effectiveness of the Bill would be improved if we listen to the proposal of the good Gentleman.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, I think the spirit of the Bill, or eventually of the Act, will have to be articulated in a precise language by putting up certain standards in the provisions of the Bill, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

REP. CUA. I agree, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Now, one of the purposes of this measure is to attract foreign investors. Is that correct?

REP. CUA. I would like to agree to that statement. We would like to put in place a mechanism that would allow foreign investors to invest in the program.

REP. LAGMAN. I also surmise from the answers of the distinguished Sponsor that the existing law does not allow foreigners to invest in non-performing assets. Is that correct?

REP. CUA. My impression is that with the present law, because of the requirement with respect to land ownership, foreigners are discouraged from participating in the program.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, under the present law, are there constitutional restraints by which foreigners are not allowed to participate in the program, more particularly with respect to land ownership?

REP. CUA. That is my impression, Mr. Speaker. The present law has that weakness. Foreigners cannot participate in the purchase of land because they are foreigners.

REP. LAGMAN. Because there is a citizenship or nationality requirement with respect to the ownership of lands under the present Constitution. Is that correct, Your Honor?

REP. CUA. That is correct, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Are we dispensing with this constitutional provision prohibiting foreigners from owning lands in the Philippines when we say that the purpose of this Bill is to encourage foreign investments, more particularly with respect to land ownership?

REP. CUA. No, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, that is farthest from our minds. (*Inaudible*) We need to respect the constitutional restriction on land ownership but this law provides a mechanism that is similar to existing laws, provisions that you find in the Rural Bank Charter and Foreign Investment Banking Law, if I am not mistaken. Correct me if I am wrong, but there is a mechanism by which foreigners or foreign companies may be able to possess land for a specific period of time, within which they need to dispose of said land.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, under this Bill, may we know, distinguished Sponsor whether there is any specific provision which would allow foreigners to participate in the ownership or management or possession of non-performing assets with respect to land?

REP. CUA. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

If my recollection serves me well, I think there is a provision somewhere here that allows that. Let me just peruse the Bill and find out where exactly it is. I would like to assure you, Mr. Speaker, that it is somewhere here.

REP. LAGMAN. I can wait, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, for the exact provision as provided for today.

REP. CUA. Can you just look on for a few minutes? Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, I think it is found on Section 4, second paragraph. I am so sorry to keep you waiting, my dear colleague.

REP. LAGMAN. What does it say?

REP. CUA. It says:

FISTCs which are not qualified to acquire or hold land in the Philippines shall be allowed to bid and take part in foreclosure sales of real property mortgaged to them, as well as to avail of enforcement and other proceedings, and accordingly to take possession of the mortgaged property, for a period not exceeding five years from actual possession: Provided, That in no event shall the title to the property be transferred to such FISTC. In case the FISTC is the winning bidder, it shall, during the said five-year period,

transfer its right to a qualified Philippine national, without prejudice to a borrower's rights under applicable laws. Should a FISTC be not able to transfer such property within the five year-period, the FISTC shall be penalized one-half of one percent per annum, x x x

Et cetera, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, is that Section 4, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. CUA. Yes, yes, Mr. Speaker. It is on page 4, Section 4.

I am sorry, if you have a different ...

REP. LAGMAN. I am sorry, I do not think I have the correct or updated copy of the measure.

REP. CUA. I am sorry, I am sorry. We can provide you with an updated copy, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you, thank you, distinguished Sponsor.

Now, one last question: Once a foreclosed property, which is considered a non-performing asset, is transferred by the bank to a corporation which would manage the NPA, this is transferred for a cost, for which the bank would receive payment. Is that correct?

REP. CUA. That is correct, that is correct, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. And then once it is transferred to this management corporation, is the borrower relieved of any further liability?

REP. CUA. Is the borrower relieved of further liability?

My understanding, Mr. Speaker, is that, the rights, privileges, and obligation over that property are unchanged. With respect to rights, he continues to have the right of redemption. When that property is transferred, when that mortgaged property is transferred and the value is sufficient to cover the obligation, then, I suppose he is relieved of the obligation.

REP. LAGMAN. But in the first place, it is considered a non-performing asset because the foreclosed collateral cannot cover the obligation of the borrower to the bank. Is that correct?

REP. CUA. My understanding is that the operation of existing laws continues.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, what benefit, if any, does a borrower get from the transfer of this non-performing

asset by the lending bank to another corporation which would manage the said non-performing asset?

REP. CUA. Well, my understanding, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, is that rights and privileges, obligations and responsibilities, are unchanged. The only change that happens is the creditor. That is my understanding, that the primary purpose, anyway, of the law, of this Bill is to allow the monetization of this asset to release the capital that had been tied down in this particular account.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, thank you so much, distinguished Sponsor, for accommodating my clarificatory questions. I would be awaiting the updated copy of the Bill.

May I request from the Speaker and the Majority Leader that I be allowed to prepare my amendments, unless the Committee would make the necessary committee amendments? Most probably, upon receipt of said updated Bill, I could prepare the perfecting amendments which I could submit.

REP. CUA. In the interest of time, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, if I may suggest to the good Gentleman, maybe he can craft the language now, and that will be subject to styling. My understanding of the proposal is that the Gentleman wants to ensure that certain standards are put in place in the Bill to ensure that the criteria for eligibility of transfer of assets are really there.

One of the provisions that we have put there is that the transfer of an asset will be subject to approval to ensure that the assets are eligible. So at that point in time, the eligibility of the asset will have to be ascertained. This is a detail that the Securities and Exchange Commission has done before, and I am sure they already have existing standards. But if you wish, Your Honor, to ensure that that is part of the Bill, I have no objection.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, the essence of my projected amendment, distinguished Sponsor, is that foreclosed collaterals, the acceptance of which have been the product of collusion or of behest loans, should not be eligible to qualify as non-performing assets. That is the essence of my amendment, just based on record, a standard by which eligibility could be assessed.

REP. CUA. Okay. We will take note of that, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. Shall we await your language? That is all? That is all that we need to put there?

REP. LAGMAN. That is the essence...

REP. CUA. Okay.

REP. LAGMAN. ... of the amendment, distinguished

Sponsor. And I would rely on your technical staff to make the necessary parliamentary language.

REP. CUA. Okay. Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. We will effect that immediately so we can go through the process.

REP. LAGMAN. It could be entered as a Committee amendment, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CUA. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, thank you so much again.

REP. CUA. Thank you so much, Congressman.

REP. LAGMAN. A colleague for so many, many years—since 1987.

REP. CUA. Yes, my colleague of three decades. Nice to be engaged with you.

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

REP. PALMA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, with the request of Hon. Edcel Lagman that he will be given the opportunity to make some perfecting amendments, and there being no other Member who wishes to interpellate on the subject matter, I move that we close the period of sponsorship and debate.

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

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 6816

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 6816, under Committee Report No. 313.

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

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

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

It was 4:57 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:02 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 6756 *Continuation*

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 6756, under Committee Report No. 309, and request that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the said measure.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 6756, entitled: "AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MEDICAL SCHOLARSHIP AND RETURN SERVICE PROGRAM FOR DESERVING STUDENTS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR."

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary situation is that the measure is still in the period of sponsorship and debate. And with that, I move that we recognize the Chairwoman of the Health Committee, Hon. Angelina "Helen" D.L. Tan, MD, to deliver her sponsorship speech.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Hon. Angelina Tan is hereby recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mme. Chairwoman, you are on mute.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF REP. TAN (A.D.L.)

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Sorry.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity to sponsor what I consider as a vital piece of legislation that has now become even more important in the face of the current pandemic confronting the country. I do not doubt that the enactment of this measure is one of the enormously significant reforms which time has come.

House Bill No. 6756 under Committee Report No. 309 seeks to establish a Medical Scholarship and Return Service Program for deserving students. This measure which was approved on Third and final Reading during the Seventeenth Congress has always been on top of my priority legislation since my first term. So, allow me to echo once again the need to pass this Bill not only on behalf of the Universal Health Care Act that we need to fast-track, but of the many frontliner doctors whose precious lives had been claimed by the current war that we are waging against COVID-19 pandemic. This service and ultimate sacrifice for the country will never be forgotten.

The Philippine Statistics Authority has conducted a survey on occupational shortages covering the response of professionals to job vacancies from 2015 to 2016. In that survey, PSA revealed that occupational shortages which occur when there are insufficient applicants to fill up job vacancies, or only two to four per vacancy, have been most pronounced among medical professionals, as there are only 1.2 applicants per vacancy. Years ago, it has been reported that the Philippines is short of 15,000 doctors to be able to adequately meet the health needs of Filipinos each year.

Accordingly, the country is producing only 2,600 doctors a year, hence, the ratio of one doctor for every 33,000 patients, and to make things worse, not much volunteers are willing to go to the rural areas. There are many factors contributing to the problem. Of course, compensation is a big issue and there is a large concentration of medical pools in urban areas on top of the inability of LGUs to pay and absorb doctors in their localities.

It is also a fact that medical studies in the country are too costly that it has become beyond the reach of Filipino families even those belonging to the higher middle income class. Additionally, some doctors, at least in the past, have taken up Nursing and have left the country for more lucrative jobs overseas. It is a fact that the Philippines is the top exporter of doctors including nurses in the world.

Now more than ever, we need to address the shortage of doctors by establishing a medical scholarship and service program. This Bill provides the institutional mechanism for the envisioned sustained human resource development for the Philippines' public healthcare system. The scholarship program seeks to provide the financial and other educational resource support mechanisms for the pursuit of studies in the field of medicine by deserving and qualified young people.

It is envisioned that the scholar shall undergo higher post-graduate internship in the State universities and colleges or SUCs or in private higher educational institutions in regions where there are no SUCs offering the medical course or a public health and medical institution. It mandates the acceptance of at least one scholar from each municipality in the country, but

will consider other applicants if there is no qualified applicant from a certain municipality.

After passing the medical board examination, the scholar shall commence integration into the public health service system and shall, accordingly, be given the appropriate rank and salary grade. The integration into the public service system shall be required for a period equivalent to at least four to six years for those who availed of a four-year program and seven years for those who have availed of a five-year program.

The mandatory return service shall be in addition to the required post-graduate internship after graduating from a four-year Doctor of Medicine program and will also be in addition to the return of service requirement of the SUC or the private higher educational institution. The student's financial assistance for Medical Scholarship and Return Service Program will include free tuition fees and other school fees, allowance for prescribed books, supplies and equipment, clothing or uniform allowance, allowance for dormitory or boarding house accommodation, transportation allowance, internship fees, medical board fees, annual medical insurance and other education-related miscellaneous subsistence or living allowances.

In the name of those medical professionals who have dedicated their lives to heal the sick and to keep the nation healthy, I am asking this Chamber to enact the Medical Scholarship Bill now.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon.

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

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 6756

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 6756.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The consideration of House Bill No. 6756 is hereby suspended.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 6803 ON SECOND READING

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 6803, contained in Committee Report No. 311, as reported out by the Committee on Health and the Committee on Appropriations.

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

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). 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. 6803, entitled: “AN ACT MANDATING THE PROVISION OF COMPREHENSIVE RENAL REPLACEMENT THERAPY (RRT) TO PATIENTS WITH END-STAGE RENAL DISEASE IN NATIONAL, REGIONAL, AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS, INCREASING FOR THE PURPOSE THE PHILHEALTH PACKAGE RATE FOR MEMBERS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.”

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

REP. PALMA. To sponsor the measure, Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Chairwoman of the Committee on Health, Rep. Angelina “Helen” D.L. Tan, MD, for her sponsorship speech.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Hon. Angelina Tan is hereby recognized.

REP. TAN (A.D.L.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May I request that the Explanatory Note of the substitute Bill be considered as my sponsorship speech.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Explanatory Note of the Bill be made as the sponsorship speech of the honorable Sponsor.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of amendments. However, there being no Committee or individual amendment, I move that we close the same.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve on Second Reading House Bill No. 6803, under Committee Report No. 311.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). There is a motion for the approval of House Bill No. 6803 on Second Reading.

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

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

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

FEW MEMBERS. *Nay*.

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 6803 ON SECOND READING

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

House Bill No. 6803 is approved on Second Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 6599 ON SECOND READING

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 6599, contained in Committee Report No. 300, as reported out by the Committee on People’s Participation.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Is

* 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.”

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. 6599, entitled: "AN ACT ESTABLISHING A FRAMEWORK FOR CITIZENS PARTICIPATION IN LEGISLATIVE POLICYMAKING THROUGH THE USE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY PLATFORMS."

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

REP. PALMA. To sponsor the measure, Mr. Speaker, we have the distinguished Chairwoman of the Committee on People's Participation. May we recognize Hon. Florida "Rida" P. Robes for her sponsorship speech.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Hon. Rida Robes is hereby recognized.

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

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank each and every one for acknowledging our Committee report and I move that the Explanatory Note of the Bill be considered as the sponsorship speech on the measure.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Explanatory Note of the Bill be made as the sponsorship speech.

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

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Is

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of amendments. However, there being no Committee or individual amendment, I move that we close the same.

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

REP. PALMA. I move that we approve House Bill No. 6599 on Second Reading.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). There is a motion for the approval of House Bill No. 6599 on Second Reading.

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

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

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

FEW MEMBERS. *Nay*.

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 6599 ON SECOND READING

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

House Bill No. 6599 is approved on Second Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 6555 ON SECOND READING

REP. PALMA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.
Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 6555, contained in Committee Report No. 281, as reported out by the Committee on People's Participation.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). 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.*

* 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."

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 6555, entitled: “AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING VOLUNTEERISM AS A STRATEGY FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND DECLARING DECEMBER AS NATIONAL VOLUNTEER MONTH, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTIONS 12 AND 13 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9418, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘VOLUNTEER ACT OF 2007’ ”

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

REP. PALMA. To sponsor the measure, Mr. Speaker, we have the distinguished Chairwoman of the Committee on People’s Participation. May we recognize Hon. Florida “Rida” P. Robes for her sponsorship speech.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Hon. Rida Robes is hereby recognized.

REP. ROBES. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Majority Leader. I would like to seek the approval of House Bill No. 6555, under Committee Report No. 281. I move that the Explanatory Note of the Bill be considered as the sponsorship speech on the measure. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Explanatory Note of the said House measure be made as the sponsorship speech on the Bill.

I so, move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, to interpellate our good Sponsor, may I move that we recognize the honorable Representative of the KABATAAN Party-List, Hon. Sarah Jane I. Elago.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Hon. Sarah Elago is hereby recognized.

REP. ELAGO. Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker. Will the distinguished Sponsor be open to a few clarifications from this Representation?

REP. ROBES. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. ELAGO. Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker. Unang-una po, may we know the rationale behind the Bill of having a framework as the national strategy to mobilize our volunteers?

REP. ROBES. Okay. I am sorry, I did not get your question right. Ano po iyon, Mme. Speaker?

REP. ELAGO. Ano po, G. Ispiker, ang layunin ng ipinapasá at pinag-uusapan po natin ngayong panukala?

REP. ROBES. Ano ang ating layunin? Okay. Para palakasin natin ang ating espiritu ng bolunterismo at para mabigyang-buhay ang kanilang pagbibigay-laan sa kanilang buhay sa kanilang paglilingkod.

REP. ELAGO. G. Ispiker, ano po ang pagkakaiba nito sa kasalukuyan na nating mga ahensya na mayroong mobilization din po ng mga volunteer? Halimbawa, mayroon po tayong national agency para sa mobilization ng mga volunteer sa buong bansa. Sa katunayan, marami pong mga kabataan ang nag-aambag ng kanila-kanilang mga effort sa mga eskuwelahan, sa mga komunidad at sa iba-ibang mga adbokasiya para diyan, sa kalikasan, sa paglaban para sa pantay na mga karapatan para sa ating mga kababayan. Ano po ang magiging pagkakaiba nito, G. Ispiker?

REP. ROBES. Mahal na Speaker, ito ay nagbibigay-layon sa ating mga volunteer o pagbibigay-buhay sa bolunterismo. Akin nga pong sinabi, ito ay mare-recognize at magiging institutionalized tuwing December or buwan ng Disyembre. At kung sila po ay mabibigyan ng kanilang sariling anyo sa paglilingkod nang walang bayad o walang katumbas ng kahit na ano, sa aking palagay ay ang espiritu nito ay mas magiging malayang makakapagbigay ng tunay na, sabihin na nating, kaaya-aya sa ating mamamayang Pilipino.

REP. ELAGO. G. Ispiker, bakit po natin napili ang buwan ng Disyembre para po ipagdiwang at ipagpunyagi ang espiritu ng bolunterismo sa ating bansa?

REP. ROBES. Okay. Ako po ay sagradong Katoliko at naniniwala po ako sa John 3:16 kung saan nakasaad na ibinigay ng ating Panginoong Diyos ang kanyang Anak para magligtas sa sambayanan, at ito po ay puwede nating itugon dito at puwede nating sabihin na

ang ating mga volunteer ay siyang ibinigay ng ating Panginoong Diyos para magbigay-buhay nang muli. Lagi kong binibigyang-daan ang salitang “buhay” dahil sila po talaga ang ating mga bayani na kadalasan ay hindi naman talaga napapansin.

Maaaring tayo ay lehitimong naglilingkod sa ating bayan, tayo ay halal ng bayan, tayo po nire-recognize ng buong Pilipinas at ng ibang bansa pa nga minsan, pero ang mga volunteer na ito ay ni minsan ay hindi napapansin. So, ang pagbibigay ng kanilang buhay ay naghahayag ng pagkakapanganak kay Kristo. Iyon po, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ELAGO. Kaya, G. Ispiker, ang buwan po na ito ay bilang pagpupugay po sa ating mga volunteer. Ano-ano po ba ang mga magiging aktibidad, mayroon po bang mga nakalaan na pondo? Ano-ano pong mga ahensya ang nakaatas na mamuno sa pagdiriwang na ito, G. Ispiker?

REP. ROBES. Okay, Mr. Speaker, ang nakalaan po dito, nakaatas po ito sa Philippine National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency o PNVSCA, at syempre po ito po ay nakapailalim po sa National Economic and Development Authority o NEDA. Kung pondo po ang pinag-uusapan ay mayroon po silang konti at ito po ay tinutugon din ng inyong Chairman ng Committee on People’s Participation dahil ginawa na rin po natin ito ngayong taon na ito, ngunit hindi nga lang po ng Disyembre. Pero talagang napakalaking bagay po nito sa kanila dahil may nagbibigay-pugay po talaga sa kanilang mga ginagawa na walang hinihinging kapalit. Mr. Speaker.

REP. ELAGO. Kaya po, G. Ispiker, wala po itong nakalaan pang pondo para po sa pagdiriwang nito sa Disyembre?

REP. ROBES. Ngayong Disyembre, kung ito po ay hindi pa maaprubahan, ito pa rin po ay itutuloy ng inyong Kinatawan at kasabay po natin ang PNVSCA, kasama rin po ang NEDA, dahil mayroon po silang pondo na nakalaan dito. Hindi ko nga lang po makita kung gaano pa ito kalaki o kaliit, pero ito po ay nilaanan nila ng pondo. Pero bilang pagpapatibay at pagiging institutionalized nito, mas nakakahigit po na ito ay maging batas at kaaya-aya po sa lahat ng ating mga naglilingkod sa ating bayan.

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, how does the distinguished Sponsor envision the commemoration of this month?

REP. ROBES. Okay. As a legit elected official, I would really say that once you have given honor to our people and given light, it is like opening a tunnel to all

of them and a song for these people once they come to Congress. Probably, the President would be joining us, as it is actually waving their strength and saying “thank you” once we are there. Isang pagpapasalamat po at isang pagpupugay at isang pagbubukas ng isang liwanag para po sa kanila.

REP. ELAGO. G. Ispiker, sa bahagi po ng Representasyon na ito, nananawagan din po tayo sa ating distinguished Sponsor na sa pagbibigay po ng prayoridad ng Kongresong ito sa pagkilala, sa pagpupugay sa ating mga volunteers, kinakailangan din po na gawin natin ang lahat ng mga hakbang upang tiyakin na sa espiritu ng bolunterismo ng ating mga kabataan at ng ating mga kababayan ay natitiyak po natin ang kanilang proteksyon kapag sila po ay nagpupunta sa mga relief efforts, kapag sila po ay nagka-conduct ng iba’t ibang mga donation drives. Kitang-kita po natin iyan sa mga nakaraang pinagdaanan na mga sakuna dito sa Pilipinas kung saan ang atin pong mga kababayan, they rose to the challenge and hanggang ngayon po ay tuloy-tuloy iyong mga isinasagawang mga relief efforts, iyong mga ginagawang fund raising, paggamit ng talento at iba pang mga creative na mga pamamaraan para mag-pool po ng resources para makatulong sa ating mga kababayan na nangangailangan, lalong-lalo na po iyong hindi pa naaabot ng mga emergency subsidy at iba pang mga assistance para doon sa mga pinaka-naapektuhan ng kawalan ng trabaho, walang kita, at walang kabuhayan sa gitna ng krisis ng COVID-19.

Kaya, G. Ispiker, nawa ay magkaroon pa tayo ng pagkakataon upang makapagdagdag po ng probisyon sa panukala ng ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor, Rep. Florida “Rida” P. Robes, upang mapalakas ang proteksyon, ang pagkilala at ang pagpupugay sa ating mga volunteers na katuwang po natin sa pagtulong sa ating mga kababayan at pag-ambag sa laban sa COVID-19.

Iyon lamang po. Maraming salamat, G. Ispiker. Maraming salamat po sa ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor.

REP. ROBES. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank you for giving me the chance na maipaliwanag ito. Asahan ninyo po na ang inyong Kinatawan ng lungsod ng San Jose del Monte ay titindigan ang lahat po ng nananalig sa espiritu ng bolunterismo. Walang iwanan, itataguyod ang laban sa lahat po ng sakuna o kung ano pa man at siguraduhin po natin—sisiguraduhin ko po talaga na ito po ay hindi lang dahil nandito tayo kung hindi ito po ay sa mga susunod pang henerasyon, higit lahat sa ating mga kabataan.

Iyon lamang po, Mr. Speaker, and thank you very much po.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

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

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 6555

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 6555 under Committee Report No. 281.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The consideration of House Bill No. 6555 is hereby suspended.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 6554 ON SECOND READING

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 6554, contained in Committee Report No. 280, as reported out by the Committee on Revision of Laws.

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

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). 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. 6554, entitled: AN ACT DECLARING JANUARY 22 OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL WORKING HOLIDAY IN THE ENTIRE COUNTRY TO BE KNOWN AS “NATIONAL FARMERS’ DAY”.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move ...

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

REP. PALMA. Sorry, Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Chairperson of the Revision of Laws Committee, Hon. Cheryl P. Deloso-Montalla, for her sponsorship.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Hon. Cheryl Deloso-Montalla is hereby recognized.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF REP. DELOSO-MONTALLA

REP. DELOSO-MONTALLA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Majority Leader.

Allow me to read my sponsorship speech.

Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker, my dear fellow legislators of this august Chamber.

I am Zooming before you today as Chairperson of the Committee on Revision of Laws to ask for your support for the approval of House Bill No. 280, under Committee Report No. 6554, seeking the declaration of January 22 of each year as Farmer’s Day making it a special working holiday in the entire country.

The Bill has been filed as early as the Fourteenth Congress. Four Congresses had already passed and I hope that this Bill will finally see the light of the day during this Eighteenth Congress. January 22, 1987 is a day to remember for all of us because it was during that unfortunate day, 33 years ago, when 13 farmers shed their blood in the altar of sacrifice which prompted the passage of Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law, the hallmark of social justice agenda which is the centerpiece of the 1987 Philippine Constitution.

In declaring January 22 as Farmer’s Day, we Filipinos who directly or indirectly struggled to lead to the passage of the Agrarian Reform Program recognize our peasants’ sacrifices for all of us. More than ever, Mr. Speaker, our farmers who are our frontliners not only in our fight against COVID-19 but also in our existence as a people and as a nation deserve the acknowledgment of their selfless and heroic act of providing for our nutrition and sustenance.

During this pandemic, we were again awakened from our deep slumber by the thundering cry of the Filipinos for food. This is a gargantuan task that we have entrusted to our farmers, the provision of food to our burgeoning population amidst all the restrictions resulting from this medical crisis. Our farmers deserve all the praises for a job well done day in and day out and declaring January 22 as their day is a miniscule act compared to the greatness of their deeds.

In line with this, Mr. Speaker, I am earnestly seeking for the immediate passage of this Bill.

Thank you very much and good afternoon.

* 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.”

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Representative of the KABATAAN Party-List for a manifestation on the said matter. I move that we recognize the Hon. Sarah Jane I. Elago.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The Hon. Sarah Elago is hereby recognized.

REP. ELAGO. Maraming salamat po, G. Ispiker.

Ang KABATAAN Party-List po ay nakikiisa sa ating distinguished Sponsor bilang isa rin sa mga principal na may akda ng National Farmers' Day. Kinakailangan na po ito upang bigyan po natin hindi lang—kanina pinag-usapan po natin ang kalagayan ng ating mga volunteers at ang kinakailangang proteksyon at lahat po ng suporta para ma-empower ang kanilang ranks para maisulong pa at ma-enrich natin ang kanilang mga ginagawa. Ngunit ngayon po pagdating naman sa National Farmers' Day, kinakailangan na bukod po sa pagpasa ng araw na kinikilala ang kanilang kontribusyon sa pag-unlad ng ating bayan at ang kasaysayan ng kanilang paglaban para sa tunay na reporma sa lupa, sa pagpapaunlad ng kanilang kabuhayan at ng kanilang mga komunidad at pag-ambag sa soberanya sa pagkain at paglaban sa gutom sa ating bansa. Higit po na kinakailangan na bigyan natin ng prayoridad ang mga hakbang upang tunay na makamit ang pagkakaroon po ng lupa ng ating mga magsasaka. Magpasahanggang ngayon po ay malaking bahagdan pa rin ng mga nagbubungkal ng kanilang mga lupa ay hindi po buong-buo na nagkakaroon ng ganansya at benepisyo mula sa kanilang pinagtrabahuhan. Bukod po diyan, nakakabahala rin po, G. Ispiker, ang dami ng bilang ng mga magsasaka na nagiging biktima po kapag sila ay nagsasalita at patuloy na nakikipaglaban at naggigiit ng kanilang karapatan sa lupa na kanilang binubungkal.

Kaya, G. Ispiker, muli, maraming salamat po sa pagbibigay ng prayoridad sa pagpasá nito sa Second Reading at makakasama ninyo po ang KABATAAN Party-List, kasama ng buong Makabayan bloc, bilang may-akda ng National Farmers' Day na magsulong pa ng mga makabuluhan na reporma para po sa hustisya, para sa kabuhayan, para sa lupa, at para sa karapatan ng mga magsasaka.

Maraming salamat po.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Representative of BAYAN MUNA, the Hon. Carlos Isagani T. Zarate, for his manifestation.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The honorable Rep. Isagani Zarate is hereby recognized.

REP. ZARATE. Maraming salamat, G. Ispiker.

Ang Kinatawang ito po ng BAYAN MUNA ay kaisa at nagpapasalamat sa ating kagalang-galang na Chair, Rep. Cheryl Deloso-Montalla, sa pagsulong ng panukalang batas na ito na kilalanin ang araw ng January 22 bilang Pambansang Araw ng ating mga Magsasaka.

Kung maaalala po natin, kagalang-galang na Speaker at sa ating Sponsor, on January 22, 1987 ang pakikipaglaban ng ating mga magsasaka para sa lupa at kabuhayan ay nagresulta sa the infamous Mendiola massacre kung saan maraming mga magsasaka natin ang namatay dahil sa kanilang paggigiit sa kanilang karapatan sa lupa.

Habang nag-uusap po tayo ngayon, ilang programa na ng reporma sa lupa ang ipinatupad ng iba't ibang administrasyon pero—at bilyun-bilyon ang ginugol natin dito, pero sa kasalukuyan ay walo o hanggang siyam sa bawat sampung magsasaka ang hindi pa rin nila hawak at pag-aari ang lupang kanilang sinasaka.

Sana darating ang araw, dahil mayroon naman ding nakabinbin na mga panukalang batas dito para sa pagtutulak ng tunay na repormang agraryo, ng libreng pamamahagi ng lupa sa mga magsasaka ay magpapasá muli ang Kongresong ito, hindi lang batas na kilalanin ang ating mga magsasaka gaya nitong very historic na ipapasa nating National Farmers' Day, January 22, kung hindi mas makabuluhang batas pa sana ang ating itulak gaya ng tunay na repormang agraryo o ang libreng pamamahagi ng lupa sa ating mga magsasaka, dahil sinabi naman natin kahit sa mga napakaraming debate ngayon nitong economic stimulus, para malampasan natin itong krisis na dala ng pandemya ng COVID-19, ang ating bayan ay sa kalakhan, isa pa ring agrikultural na bayan, na nakasandig ang ating kinabukasan sa magiging kinabukasan rin ng ating milyon-milyong mga magsasaka na ngayon ay naapektuhan din ng pandemya ng COVID-19 at ng krisis na ito.

Kaya, muli, G. Ispiker, at kagalang-galang na Chair Montalla, salamat sa pagsulong ng panukalang batas na ito na kinikilala ang January 22 na araw ng ating mga magsasaka.

Maraming salamat, G. Ispiker.

Maraming salamat sa ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor.

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

REP. PALMA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, next to give a manifestation, Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Representative of the ACT TEACHERS Party-List, Hon. France L. Castro.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Hon. France Castro is hereby recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mm. France Castro, you are on mute.

Ma'am, may I suggest that you remove your headset instead because there is no audio.

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

REP. PALMA. Yes, yes, there you go, please.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Nagpapasalamat po ako at nagpupugay kay Rep. Cheryl Deloso-Montalla dahil doon sa pag-i-sponsor niya for the Second Reading nitong pagbibigay ng pugay sa ating mga magsasaka for January 22. Very historic po ito. Ako po ay nasa college nang makita at masaksihan ko po iyong naganap na Mendiola massacre at talaga pong napakasakit iyong 13 na mga magsasaka na namatay na humihiling lang po ng kanilang lupang sinasaka, humihiling lang po na iyong kanilang mga kagustuhan para ma-improve ang kanilang mga buhay ay ganoon pa ang nangyari sa kanila. Alam ninyo po ang mga magsasaka po ay iyong bumubuhay ng anumang sosyedad. Sila po iyong gumagawa ng ating mga pagkain. Kung wala po ang mga magsasaka, ay wala po tayong kinakain dito sa siyudad, so talaga pong sila ang nagbibigay ng buhay sa ating mga mamamayan. Kaya po nagpupugay po ako, kasama po ng ACT TEACHERS Party-List, sa pagbibigay ng January 22 as National Farmers' Day.

Mabuhay po ang Committee at mabuhay po ang mga magsasaka!

Salamat po, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. PALMA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there being no other Member who wishes to make a manifestation or to interpellate the good Sponsor, I move that we close the period of sponsorship and debate.

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

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. PALMA. For a few seconds, Mr. Speaker, may I move for a suspension of the session.

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

It was 5:36 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:37 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, since there are no Member who wishes to interpellate or speak against the measure, I move that the period of sponsorship and debate be closed.

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

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

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, there being no Committee or individual amendment, I move that we close the period of amendments.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve House Bill No. 6554 on Second Reading.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). There is a motion for the approval of House Bill No. 6554 on Second Reading. As many as are in favor, please say *Aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

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

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 6554 ON SECOND READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The ayes have it; the motion is approved. House Bill No. 6554 is approved on Second Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 6570
ON SECOND READING

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 6570, contained in Committee Report No. 289, as reported out by the Committee on Revision of Laws.

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

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 6570, entitled: AN ACT DECLARING THE CHINESE NEW YEAR'S DAY A SPECIAL NONWORKING HOLIDAY IN THE PHILIPPINES.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary status of the said measure is that we are in the period of sponsorship and debate. I move that we recognize the Chairperson of the Revision of Laws Committee, Hon. Cheryl P. Deloso-Montalla, for her sponsorship.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Hon. Cheryl Deloso-Montalla is hereby recognized.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH
OF REP. DELOSO-MONTALLA

REP. DELOSO-MONTALLA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Majority Leader.

Esteemed colleagues, the House of Representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen, good afternoon.

It is my honor and privilege as Chairperson of the Committee on Revision of Laws to sponsor today Committee Report No. 289 on House Bill No. 6570, entitled: AN ACT DECLARING THE CHINESE NEW YEAR'S DAY A SPECIAL NONWORKING HOLIDAY IN THE PHILIPPINES.

It is a known fact that Chinese culture is deeply ingrained in, as much as it is influential, in Philippine society. As such, the celebration of the Chinese New Year or Lunar New Year is considered as the most important holiday for the Filipino-Chinese Community in our country.

The elaborate celebration of the Lunar New Year and the mysticism of this festivity are blissful and satisfying to be significantly ignored by the majority

of Filipinos, as this occasion has already become an amalgamation of Chinese and Filipino culture, it has already become part of our yearly tradition.

Mr. Speaker and Members of this august Body, there had been several attempts in the previous Congresses to make Chinese New Year's Day a legal public holiday in the Philippines. These attempts have resulted in futility. However, Mr. Speaker, this issue has already been resolved and addressed during the committee deliberations on this proposed measure. The stakeholders, including the Department of Labor and Employment, the Employers Confederation of the Philippines, and the Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, have given their unanimous support for the passage of this measure in recognition of the enormous possibilities that this celebration may bring to the business and the tourism sectors.

Furthermore, it is worthy to mention that in 2012, Chinese New Year was celebrated in the Philippines as special non-working holiday, which became possible as a result of a Presidential Proclamation issued by the past administration in solidarity with our Chinese-Filipino brethren who had been part of our lives in many respects as our country and as a people.

In order to establish permanency, it is high time for Congress to legislate a bill declaring the Chinese New Year's Day as special non-working holiday in the entire country to allow both Chinese-Filipinos, Filipinos and tourists to revel at its magnificence and splendor.

I, therefore, appeal to this Chamber that we pass immediately House Bill No. 6570, under Committee Report No. 289, without amendments.

Thank you again, Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon dear colleagues.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

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

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

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

* 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."

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, there being no Committee or individual amendments, I move that we close the period of amendments.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve on Second Reading House Bill No. 6570, under Committee Report No. 289.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). As many as are in favor, please say *Aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

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

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 6570 ON SECOND READING

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

House Bill No. 6570 is approved on Second Reading. The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 6470 ON SECOND READING

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 6470, contained in Committee Report No. 266, as reported out by the Committee on Suffrage and Electoral Reforms.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). 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. 6470, entitled: "AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10366, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS TO ESTABLISH PRECINCTS ASSIGNED TO ACCESSIBLE POLLING PLACES EXCLUSIVELY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND SENIOR CITIZENS."

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Chairperson of the Committee on Suffrage and Electoral Reforms, Hon. Juliet Marie De Leon Ferrer, for her sponsorship speech.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Hon. Juliet Ferrer is hereby recognized.

REP. FERRER (J.). Mr. Speaker, as the Chairman of the Committee on Suffrage and Electoral Reforms, I would like to submit Committee Report No. 266 with regard to House Bill 6470. May I request that the Explanatory Note of the said Bill be considered as its sponsorship speech.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Explanatory Note of the Bill be considered as its sponsorship speech.

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

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

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

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

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

* 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."

It was 5:44 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:54 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 6470

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 6470.

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

OMNIBUS CONSIDERATION OF HOUSE BILLS ON SECOND READING

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move for the omnibus consideration of the following local bills contained in the Calendar of Business for Thursday and Friday:

House Bill No. 4786, contained in Committee Report No. 286;

House Bill No. 6569, contained in Committee Report No. 288;

House Bill No. 6585, contained in Committee Report No. 290;

House Bill No. 6597, contained in Committee Report No. 297;

House Bill No. 6598, contained in Committee Report No. 299;

House Bill No. 6727, contained in Committee Report No. 303;

House Bill No. 6728, contained in Committee Report No. 304;

House Bill No. 6729, contained in Committee Report No. 305;

House Bill No. 6730, contained in Committee Report No. 306;

House Bill No. 6731, contained in Committee Report No. 307;

House Bill No. 6753, contained in Committee Report No. 308;

House Bill No. 6824, contained in Committee Report No. 315;

House Bill No. 6827, contained in Committee Report No. 316;

House Bill No. 6835, contained in Committee Report No. 318; and

House Bill No. 6836, contained in Committee Report No. 319.

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

REP. PALMA. I move that the Explanatory Notes of the aforementioned House Bills be considered as the sponsorship speeches on the measures.

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

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

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

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

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, there being no Committee or individual amendments on the respective bills, I move that we close the period of amendments.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve on Second Reading the following local bills: House Bills Nos. 4786, 6569, 6585, 6597, 6598, 6727, 6728, 6729, 6730, 6731, 6753, 6824, 6827, 6835 and 6836.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

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

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

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

APPROVAL OF HOUSE BILLS ON SECOND READING

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

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

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. Savellano). The session is suspended.

It was 5:58 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 6:07 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 6816

Continuation

PERIOD OF AMENDMENTS

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 6816, and that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). 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. 6816, entitled: AN ACT ENSURING PHILIPPINE FINANCIAL INDUSTRY RESILIENCY AGAINST THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary status of the measure is that we are in the period of amendments. Therefore, I move that we open the period of amendments.

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

REP. PALMA. Before we continue, Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Chairman of the Banks and Financial Intermediaries Committee, Hon. Junie Cua.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Hon. Junie Cua is hereby recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, Hon. Edcel Lagman earlier manifested that he would introduce individual amendments. I am sorry—before we continue, Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of amendments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). 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 consider individual amendments.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, with my reiteration, Hon. Edcel Lagman has provided the individual amendments and I see him already on the Zoom platform. May I, therefore, recognize Hon. Edcel Lagman to introduce his individual amendments.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Hon. Edcel Lagman is recognized.

INDIVIDUAL AMENDMENTS

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Since I have not received a copy of the updated Bill, I would introduce these amendments subject to its proper location in the Bill and the amendment would read this way: ANY COLLATERAL TO SECURE A BANK LOAN WHICH IS ACCEPTED BY THE CREDITOR-BANK UPON COLLUSION WITH THE BORROWER DESPITE ITS LACK OF ADEQUATE VALUE COMMA [,] AS WELL AS BEHEST LOANS COMMA [,] SHALL NOT BE ELIGIBLE TO BE CONSIDERED AS NON-PERFORMING ASSETS AND/OR NON-PERFORMING LOANS PERIOD [.]

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

REP. PALMA. May we hear the comment of our good Sponsor?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The honorable...

REP. CUA. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, I understand the essence of the Gentleman sa proposed amendment,

but may I, at the same time, suggest a modification of the language by simply saying that—may I read what I would like to suggest, Mr. Speaker.

If the Gentleman would agree, on page 8, line 7, Section 13, insert a new paragraph to read as follows: IN THE TRANSFER OF NPAS THE PARTIES SHALL EXERCISE THE REQUISITE DUE DILIGENCE AND ANY FRAUD, COLLUSION OR IRREGULARITY SHALL BE SUBJECT TO SECTION 24 OF THIS ACT AS WELL AS OTHER PERTINENT LAWS, RULES, AND REGULATIONS.

I propose this language, Mr. Speaker, to make it a little broader. After all, behest is part of a fraud and, therefore, collusion as well is part of a fraud. So, I would want to propose instead that language so that its application can be widened.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, ...

REP. CUA. Would that be okay, my dear colleague?

REP. LAGMAN. ... if under the explanation of the distinguished Sponsor, collusion and behest loans would be ...

REP. CUA. Part.

REP. LAGMAN. Part of the broader terminology and as long that this is on record.

REP. CUA. Yes.

REP. LAGMAN. I would accept the modification suggested by the distinguished Sponsor.

REP. CUA. Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. Let me express my deepest and sincere appreciation of the understanding of the Gentleman from Albany.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, therefore, due to the meeting of the minds of our colleagues, we join the honorable Sponsor, and we would like to note that on page 8, line 7, Section 13, a new paragraph shall be inserted to read as follows: IN THE TRANSFER OF NPAS COMMA [,] THE PARTIES SHALL EXERCISE THE REQUISITE AS DUE DILIGENCE AND FRAUD COMMA [,] COLLUSION OR IRREGULARITY SHALL BE SUBJECT TO SECTION 24 OF THIS ACT COMMA [,] AS WELL AS OTHER PERTINENT LAWS COMMA [,] RULE COMMA [,] AND REGULATIONS.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve the proposed amendment.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). 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 Committee or individual amendment, I move that we close the period of amendments.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve House Bill No. 6816, as amended, on Second Reading.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). As many as are in favor of House Bill No. 6816, as amended, please say *Aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

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

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 6816, AS AMENDED, ON SECOND READING

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

House Bill No. 6816, as amended, is approved on Second Reading.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. PALMA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

It was 6:15 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 6:32 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL

Continuation

PERIOD OF AMENDMENTS

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration on Second Reading House Bill No. 6470, under Committee Report No. 266, and may I request that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 6470, entitled: "AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10366, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS 'AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS TO ESTABLISH PRECINCTS ASSIGNED TO ACCESSIBLE POLLING PLACES EXCLUSIVELY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND SENIOR CITIZENS.'" "

REP. PALMA. Before we continue, may I move to recognize Hon. Juliet Marie De Leon Ferrer, the Chairwoman of the Committee on Suffrage and Electoral Reforms.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Hon. Juliet Ferrer is hereby recognized.

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

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

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

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

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

INDIVIDUAL AMENDMENT

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I received a message that the author of House Bill No. 6470 would like to change a word in the title, that the word "ESTABLISH" be replaced with the word DESIGNATE, such that it will now read as: AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10366,

OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS TO DESIGNATE PRECINCTS ASSIGNED TO ACCESSIBLE POLLING PLACES EXCLUSIVELY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND SENIOR CITIZENS."

The Sponsor has accepted the proposal and, therefore, we move that it be approved.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, there being no other individual amendments, I move that we close the period of amendments.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve House Bill No. 6470, under Committee Report No. 266, as amended, on Second Reading.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). As many as are in favor of House Bill No. 6470, please say *Aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). As many as are against, please say *Nay*. *(Silence)* The ayes have it; House Bill No. 6470, as amended, is hereby approved on Second Reading.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 6815

Continuation

PERIOD OF AMENDMENTS

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we continue the consideration of House Bill No. 6815. I request that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The Secretary General is hereby directed to read the title of the measure.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL, House Bill No. 6815, entitled: "AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN ECONOMIC STIMULUS STRATEGY FOR THE COUNTRY'S GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE AFTERMATH OF COVID-19 AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR."

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

REP. PALMA. We have just recently terminated the period of sponsorship and debate. With that, before we continue, I move that we recognize the Sponsors of the Bill, namely, Hon. Stella Quimbo, Hon. Sharon Garin and Hon. Joey Salceda.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Hon. Sharon Garin is hereby recognized.

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

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

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

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

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, earlier we have distributed to all the Members of the House a copy of the substitute Bill of House Bill No. 6815 via electronic means and a physical copy to those who are physically present in the session hall.

Now, Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Section 104 of our rules, I move to amend by substitution the entire Bill, as contained in Committee Report No. 312, with the contents of the substitute Bill earlier distributed to the Members.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, may we recognize Hon. Wes Gatchalian for his proposal to introduce his individual amendments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Hon. Wes Gatchalian is hereby recognized.

INDIVIDUAL AMENDMENTS

REP. GATCHALIAN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

This Representation would like to insert a provision under Section 14, under the heading General Requirements and Provisions, Chapter IV. May I respectfully add the following items:

D. THE GOVERNMENT AS PROCURING ENTITY, SHALL GIVE PREFERENCE TO PRODUCTS, MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES MADE OR MANUFACTURED IN THE PHILIPPINES, OFFERED BY A DOMESTIC BIDDER VIS-À-VIS FOREIGN BIDDERS TOWARDS THIS END, THE AWARD SHALL BE MADE TO THE LOWEST DOMESTIC BIDDER PROVIDED HIS BID IS NOT MORE THAN 20 PERCENT IN EXCESS OF THE LOWEST FOREIGN BID. PROVIDED, THAT THE LOWEST DOMESTIC BIDDER SECURES A CERTIFICATION FROM THE DTI STATING THAT THE PRODUCTS, ARTICLES, MATERIALS OR SUPPLIES ARE GROWN, PRODUCED, MADE OR MANUFACTURED IN THE PHILIPPINES.

PROVIDED FURTHER, THAT IN CASE OF INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS AS DEFINED IN SECTION 5, LETTER K OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9184, THE PROCURING ENTITY SHALL REQUIRE BIDDERS TO DETERMINE THE LOCATION AND AVAILABILITY OF CONSTRUCTION AGGREGATES AND OTHER MATERIALS AND SOURCE THEM LOCALLY WITH DUE CONSIDERATION TO THE STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY OF THE ENTIRE PROJECT. FOR THIS PURPOSE, THE BIDDER SHALL SECURE A CERTIFICATION FROM THE DTI THAT THE CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS OR SUPPLIES ARE PRODUCED, MADE OR MANUFACTURED IN THE PHILIPPINES.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (S.). We accept, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, we join the author and accept the proposal.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, next to propose his individual amendments, I move that we recognize Hon. Edcel Lagman.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Hon. Edcel C. Lagman is hereby recognized.

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I propose that we conduct the introduction of individual amendments on a page-by-page basis. So, in fact, I have an anterior amendment on page 4. Can I now proceed, Mr. Speaker?

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

REP. LAGMAN. On page 4, after line 22, delete the definition of “Mass testing” and, in lieu thereof, provide for the following new definition as follows:

f.) MASS TESTING REFERS TO TESTING OF ALL INDIVIDUALS BY METHODS REGISTERED WITH, AND AUTHORIZED BY THE FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION (FDA) WHO ARE AT HIGH-RISK OF CONTRACTING COVID-19 INFECTION, MORE PARTICULARLY BUT NOT LIMITED TO 1) SUSPECT CASES; 2) INDIVIDUALS WITH RELEVANT HISTORY OF TRAVEL, OR EXPOSURE, OR CONTACT, WHETHER SYMPTOMATIC OR ASYMPTOMATIC; 3) HEALTH CARE WORKERS WITH POSSIBLE EXPOSURE, WHETHER SYMPTOMATIC OR ASYMPTOMATIC; 4) WORKERS WHO ARE RETURNING TO WORK OR TO THEIR PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT; 5) INDIVIDUALS WITH COMORBIDITIES, LIKE OLD-AGE, DIABETES, HYPERTENSION, AND CANCER; AND (6) OTHER HIGH-RISK POPULATION GROUPS.”

REP. GARIN (S.). We accept, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. PALMA. We join the author, Mr. Speaker, in accepting the proposal.

REP. LAGMAN. If there are no anterior amendments, I have an amendment on page 11.

REP. GARIN (S.). Page 11?

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

REP. LAGMAN. On page 11, before line 1, provide for a new paragraph which shall read as follows:

d.) THE OVERSEAS WORKERS WELFARE ADMINISTRATION (OWWA) IS MANDATED TO USE ITS AVAILABLE FUNDS TO EXTEND LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT TO REPATRIATED AND DISPLACED OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS (OFWs).

REP. GARIN (S.). We accept, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

On page 11, between lines 24 and 25, include a new section which shall read as follows—incidentally, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, I am introducing this amendment together with Hon. Raul V. Del Mar.

The amendment would read as follows:

SECTION 9. THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT (DSWD) SHALL CONTINUE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS:

DSWDs SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD PROGRAM—LIVELIHOOD ASSISTANCE GRANTS (SLP-LAG) FOR 20 PERCENT OF THE 17,900,000 TARGETED BENEFICIARIES FOR THE SOCIAL AMELIORATION PROGRAM; AND THE ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR THOSE WHO WERE LEFT OUT OF THE SOCIAL AMELIORATION PROGRAM OF MARGINALIZED HOUSEHOLDS FOR A PERIOD OF TWO MONTHS. THE AMOUNT OF FIFTY-FOUR BILLION PESOS (P54,000,000,000) IS APPROPRIATED FOR THE SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD PROGRAM-LIVELIHOOD ASSISTANCE GRANTS (SLP-LAG) FOR IMPLEMENTATION BY DSWD AND THE AMOUNT OF SEVENTY-FOUR BILLION PESOS (P74,000,000,000) IS APPROPRIATED FOR THE SOCIAL AMELIORATION PROGRAM FOR TWO MONTHS BE LIKEWISE IMPLEMENTED BY DSWD. I submit.

REP. GARIN (S.). Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to Cong. Edcel Lagman and his noble intentions, due to the limitations of budget and lack of consultation with the concerned agencies, we respectfully deny the proposal of Cong. Edcel Lagman, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, thank you for that answer. We have submitted, together with the proposed amendments, the documentation from the Department of Social Welfare and Development which would justify these proposals, but since it has not been accepted by the sponsoring Committee, I wish that we could take this up in the Bicameral Committee.

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

REP. LAGMAN. On page 14—may I continue, Mr. Speaker?

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

REP. LAGMAN. Between lines 5 and 6, provide for the following: SUBSIDY FOR ONLINE LEARNING, THE AMOUNT OF TWENTY BILLION PESOS (P20,000,000,000) IS ALLOCATED FOR IMPLEMENTATION BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DEPED) TO FUND ITS ONLINE LEARNING OR DISTANCE LEARNING MODALITY FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL PUPILS AND STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS. I submit.

REP. GARIN (S). Thank you, Cong. Edcel Lagman. With all due respect again, in view of the budget constraints, not for the principle behind the proposal, but due to budget constraints, we respectfully deny the proposal of Cong. Edcel Lagman. Likewise, we will be amenable should we find enough justification in the Bicameral Conference Committee.

REP. LAGMAN. Again, I would submit that I have forwarded to the sponsoring Committee the justification for this amendment and I hope that in the Bicameral Committee this will be taken up, distinguished Sponsor.

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

REP. LAGMAN. Let me proceed. On page 32, between lines 12 and 13, include a new provision as follows: SUBSIDY TO COVID-19 RESPONSE PROGRAM UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM, THE AMOUNT OF TWO BILLION TWO HUNDRED MILLION PESOS (P2,200,000,000) IS APPROPRIATED FOR IMPLEMENTATION BY THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM (DAR) BROKEN DOWN AS FOLLOWS:

FIVE HUNDRED TWENTY-SEVEN MILLION SEVEN HUNDRED FIFTY-FIVE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED PESOS (P527,755,500) AS FUNDING FOR PHASE 2 OF THE “The PaSSOver: ARBold Move” FOR DELIVERANCE OF OUR FARMERS FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC COVERING 225,511 AGRARIAN REFORM BENEFICIARIES; AND

ONE BILLION FIVE HUNDRED SIXTY-SEVEN MILLION SIX HUNDRED FIVE THOUSAND PESOS (P1,567,605,000) AS FUNDING FOR THE “GULAY BUHAY SA SAMBAYANAN” COVERING 15,000 HECTARES OF CARP-AWARDED LANDS OR 1,000 HECTARES PER REGION.

I submit, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (S.). Mr. Speaker, with all due respect

again to Cong. Edcel Lagman, we will review the budget constraints, but for now, we have to respectfully deny the proposal of Cong. Edcel Lagman.

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you, and I hope again that in the Bicam, we will be able to consider this amendment.

Next. Section blank. This has to be re-sectioned. SUBSIDY TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS (LGUs), THE AMOUNT OF ONE HUNDRED BILLION PESOS (P100,000,000,000.00) IS APPROPRIATED FOR IMPLEMENTATION BY THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT (DILG) FOR GRANT OR SUBSIDY OR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS (LGUs) NATIONWIDE TO ENABLE LGUs TO RESPOND MORE EFFECTIVELY AND IMMEDIATELY IN THE CURRENT COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND THE POST-PANDEMIC PHASE AND TO SUPPLEMENT THE ASSISTANCE FROM THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT.

I submit.

REP. GARIN (S.). Mr. Speaker, again, we salute the intentions of the good Congressman, but due to budget constraints, we respectfully decline the proposal of Congressman Edcel Lagman.

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you, distinguished Sponsor. And again, I hope that in the Bicameral Conference Committee, we could take up these proposed amendments.

REP. GARIN (S.). Yes, Mr. Speaker, definitely.

REP. LAGMAN. On page 46, between lines 14 and 15, provide for the following new provisions:

One, Section blank, this has to be numbered, CONTINGENT FUND, THE AMOUNT OF TWENTY-FIVE BILLION PESOS (P25,000,000,000.00) IS APPROPRIATED FOR IMPLEMENTATION BY THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT (OP) AS A CONTINGENT FUND TO COVER ANY FUNDING DEFICIENCY HEREIN, RESOLVE THE NEED FOR FUND AUGMENTATION AND ADDRESS UNSERVED BENEFICIARIES.

I submit, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

REP. GARIN (S.). Thank you, Cong. Edcel Lagman. Again, with the constraints that we have on the budget, but should those constraints be settled during the Bicameral Committee, we will surely consider the proposal of Cong. Edcel Lagman. But for now, we respectfully decline the proposal of Congressman Lagman, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. With that understanding that

this could be revived in the Bicameral Conference Committee, and I am proposing this contingent fund in lieu of the omnibus authorization to the President to realign or reallocate budgeted funds for programs and projects which may not be consistent with the Supreme Court decision in *Arroyo vs. Aquino*.

REP. GARIN (S.). Yes, Mr. Speaker, duly noted.

REP. LAGMAN. And finally, on page ...

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

REP. LAGMAN. I am sorry for that disturbance.

On page 46, between lines 15 and 16, before Final Provisions, provide for a new Section 37 which shall read as follows:

REP. GARIN (S.). Page 36, Congressman Edcel?

REP. LAGMAN. Page 46.

REP. GARIN (S.). Page 46. A new Section 37.

REP. LAGMAN. Yes. It would read: SECTION 37. PENALTY FOR CORRUPT PRACTICES.

REP. GARIN (S.). That would be page 48, Section 37 in the new substitute Bill, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. I stand corrected. I do not think I have that kind of revision. But anyway, "Penalty for Corrupt Practices." ANY PUBLIC OFFICIAL OR EMPLOYEE AND ANY PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL IN CONSPIRACY WITH SUCH OFFICIAL OR EMPLOYEE WHO SHALL BE FOUND GUILTY BY THE PROPER COURT OF CORRUPT PRACTICES IN THE UTILIZATION AND/OR DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS APPROPRIATED, HEREIN, SHALL SUFFER THE PENALTY OF TWELVE (12) YEARS IMPRISONMENT AND A FINE TREBLE THE AMOUNT OF THE FUNDS DEFRAUDED, MALVERSED AND/OR, CORRUPTED AND SHALL LIKEWISE BE PERPETUALLY DISQUALIFIED FROM HOLDING PUBLIC OFFICE, EITHER BY APPOINTMENT OR ELECTION.

I submit.

REP. GARIN (S.). Mr. Speaker, in view of the common and popular concerns of the Members on the proper implementation of the programs provided in this measure, the Committee, therefore, accepts the proposal of Congressman Lagman, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you.

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

REP. LAGMAN. Yeah. Thank you so much, distinguished Sponsor.

REP. GARIN (S.). Thank you, Congressman Edcel Lagman.

REP. PALMA. Thank you, Mister...

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

REP. PALMA. Thank you, Honorable Lagman.

Next to introduce his individual amendments, Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Hon. Rufus B. Rodriguez of the Second District of Cagayan de Oro City.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Hon. Rufus Rodriguez is hereby recognized.

REP. RODRIGUEZ. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, our Deputy Majority Leader, our distinguished Lady Sponsor, and I was tempted to say Gentelady Sponsor, but you know, ladies, Mr. Speaker, are always gentle and so especially our Ladies in the House are always gentle so we called them distinguished Ladies, not Gentelady. But men, Mr. Speaker, may not be gentle and that is why you have to affix "gentle" to "men", so Ladies and Gentlemen.

So, could the distinguished Lady Sponsor...

REP. GARIN (S.). Accept.

REP. RODRIGUEZ. ... may I know whether you would accept some interventions from this Representation.

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

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

REP. RODRIGUEZ. Mme. Sponsor, last November 3, 2015, we passed Republic Act No. 10693, strengthening the microfinance non-governmental organizations in the Philippines. This group of NGOs in the microfinance field now comprise 32 organizations duly accredited by the SEC, and they cater to 6.5 million microentrepreneurs—mga nanay. These are those in the markets and the carinderia and small businesses. So small, the loans given by this group range from P5,000 to—average is P20,000 payable in six months, payable weekly and the monthly interest is only 2.5 to

3.5 percent, comparing that with those engaged in 5-6 business. So, this really provides our people with better loan interest rates.

Now, my proposal, Mme. Chair, is that under Section 3. Definition of Terms, I propose this following amendment. It could say now, "BUSINESS ENTITY REFERS TO SOLE PROPRIETORSHIP DULY REGISTERED WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY (DTI), A PARTNERSHIP DULY REGISTERED WITH THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION (SEC), A CORPORATION DULY ORGANIZED AND EXISTING UNDER PHILIPPINE LAWS, A BRANCH OF FOREIGN CORPORATION DULY LICENSED TO DO BUSINESS IN THE PHILIPPINES, A COOPERATIVE GOVERNED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9520, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE COOPERATIVE CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES, AS AMENDED. And then we add these following phrases to this definition of business entity. "AS AMENDED," then this is now the phrase we wish to ask for your kind acceptance of this individual amendment.

It will say now: OR MICROFINANCE NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AS GOVERNED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10693, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE MICRO-FINANCE NGOs ACT.

I so move, Mme. Sponsor.

REP. GARIN (S.). Thank you, Congressman Rodriguez.

We accept, Mr. Speaker.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, we join, therefore, with the author and accept the amendments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Okay, please, proceed.

REP. RODRIGUEZ. Thank you very much, distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Majority Leader, Mr. Speaker.

May I proceed now, Mr. Speaker, Mme. Sponsor, to the next amendment.

My next amendment will be on the definition of MSMEs, "g. Micro, small and medium-scale enterprises (MSMEs) refers to any business activity or enterprise engaged in industry, agribusiness and/or services excluding banks and other financial institutions under the supervision of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas where the self-employed professional, sole proprietorship, cooperative" then comma (,) MICROFINANCE NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS insert that after "cooperative" and before "partnership or corporation", Mme. Sponsor.

I so move for amendment and individual amendment.

REP. GARIN (S.). Mr. Speaker, we accept. Mr. Speaker.

REP. PALMA. We join, Mr. Speaker, and accept the proposed amendment.

REP. RODRIGUEZ. Thank you, Mme. Sponsor. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Majority Leader.

The last one is on "SEC 11. *Extension of Principal Loan Payments.*" As you see, Mr. Speaker, Mme. Sponsor, this organization, a small organization, catering to small, micro entrepreneurs requiring them to extend loans to December 31, will make their operations in peril because we are only having the small borrowers of P5,000, P10,000, and the capitalization is not so big unlike banks, so therefore, our proposal, on behalf of the microfinance non-government organizations, is "SEC. 11. *Extension of Principal Loan Payments.* It says: "Banks, other non-banks financial institutions (NBFIs) under the supervision of the BSP, and lending and financing companies under the supervision of the SEC", and we would like to make an exemption to the small organizations, catering small nanays all over the country in 81 provinces, which they serve, and this will, therefore, after the word "SEC," we put EXCEPT MICROFINANCE NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS COMMA (,) that will be before "are encouraged to extend the term of or agree to the existing consumer ..." so forth and so on.

I so move, Mme. Sponsor.

REP. GARIN (S.). Mr. Speaker. We accept, Mr. Speaker, but I just want to remind Congressman Rufus that these are banks and non-banks under the supervision of BSP. I would believe that the microfinance non-governmental institutions are not under the BSP, as well as the proposal is only to encourage, but given that, I think, Congressman Rodriguez is aware of that. We accept the proposal of Cong. Rufus Rodriguez.

REP. RODRIGUEZ. Thank you very much, Mme. Sponsor, because, precisely, we would like to assure our microfinance non-governmental organizations that we are sensitive to their being small and the service is very small, nanays, and the micro entrepreneurs and, therefore, I thank the distinguished lady Sponsor for accepting my proposed amendments, Mr. Speaker, Majority Leader.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, for the last proposal, we also accept the proposed amendments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The proposal is accepted.

REP. RODRIGUEZ. That will be all, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Deputy Majority Leader and our distinguished Lady Sponsor, our Chair of the Economic Affairs Committee, Hon. Sharon Garin who, together with the other members of the glorious trinity in our Philippine economy LGU including, of course, the Chair, Rep. Joey Salceda of the Committee on Ways and Means, and Rep. Stella Quimbo. We thank the three of you who have really worked hard on this very well-crafted Bill that we are about to approve on Second Reading. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (S.). Thank you.

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

REP. SALCEDA. Thank you, Honorable Rodriguez.

REP. GARIN (S.). It is a Bill authored by almost all the Members also, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, next to introduce individual amendments, may I move that we recognize Hon. Jose Enrique “Joet” S. Garcia III of the Second District of Bataan.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Hon. Joet Garcia is hereby recognized.

INDIVIDUAL AMENDMENT

REP. GARCIA (J.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To provide assistance for our local government units, I am proposing, Mr. Speaker, four additional provisions. I therefore move to make the following amendments on page 41, Section 28, paragraph ...

REP. GARIN (S.). 41, 28?

REP. GARCIA (J.). Page 41, Section 28, paragraph (f), number (ii). In line 13, after the word CAPACITY DELETE PERIOD [.] AND INSERT “THE FOLLOWING MEASURES ARE HEREBY AUTHORIZED COLON [:] NUMBER ONE [1] BEFORE THE ACRONYM LGUs.”

REP. GARIN (S.). We accept, Mr. Speaker, Majority Leader.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, we also accept.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The proposal is accepted.

REP. GARCIA (J.). In Line 16, REPLACE PERIOD [.] WITH SEMICOLON [;] AND INSERT NUMBER TWO [2] BEFORE THE WORD THE.

REP. GARIN (S.). We accept, Mr. Speaker.

REP. PALMA. Likewise, we accept, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The proposal is accepted.

REP. GARCIA (J.). In Line 18 after the sentence, REPLACE PERIOD [.] WITH SEMICOLON [;] AND INSERT THE FOLLOWING: NUMBER THREE [3] THE ALLOWABLE DEBT SERVICE CEILING OF LGUs IS INCREASED TO THIRTY PERCENT OF THEIR ANNUAL REGULAR INCOME INCLUDING THEIR SHARE IN NATIONAL TAXES SEMICOLON [;].

REP. GARIN (S.). We accept, Mr. Speaker.

REP. PALMA. Likewise, on behalf of the Majority, we accept, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The proposal is accepted.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Then next, number four: THE LGUs MAY ALLOCATE NOT MORE THAN FIFTY PERCENT OF THEIR SHARE IN NATIONAL TAXES FOR DEBT SERVICING SEMICOLON [;].

REP. GARIN (S.). We accept, Mr. Speaker.

REP. PALMA. Likewise, we accept, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The proposal is accepted.

REP. GARCIA (J.). NUMBER FIVE, LGUs WITH OUTSTANDING LOANS FROM GOVERNMENT ACCREDITED BANKS AND GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS SHALL BE GRANTED LOAN PAYMENT MORATORIUM UPTO DECEMBER 31, 2021 AND LOAN TERM EXTENSION OF NOT MORE THEN TEN YEARS FROM THE ORIGINAL DUE DATE SEMICOLON [;] AND.

REP. GARIN (S.). We accept, Mr. Speaker.

REP. PALMA. Likewise, we accept, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The proposal is accepted.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Lastly, NUMBER SIX. LGUs MAY CONTRACT NEW LOANS FROM GOVERNMENT ACCREDITED BANKS AND GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AT PREFERENTIAL INTEREST RATE OF NOT MORE THAN ONE AND A HALF PERCENT PER ANNUM PERIOD [.] THE LOAN PROCEEDS SHALL BE USED EXCLUSIVELY FOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS DESIGNED TO ENHANCE THE RESILIENCY OF LGUs TO THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19 PERIOD [.]

REP. GARIN (S.). We accept, Mr. Speaker.

REP. PALMA. Likewise, we accept, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The proposal is accepted.

REP. GARCIA (J.). That is all, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much, Mme. Sponsor.

REP. GARIN (S.). Thank you, Congressman Joet Garcia.

REP. PALMA. Thank you, Honorable Garcia.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, next to introduce individual amendments, I move that we recognize Hon. Ferdinand R. Gaité for his individual amendments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Hon. Ferdinand Gaité is hereby recognized.

REP. GAITE. Salamat po. Sa ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, pahihintulutan ba ng kagalang-galang na Mme. Sponsor na magpahayag ng ilang posibleng amendments sa naturang panukalang batas, Mr. Speaker, Mme. Sponsor?

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

REP. GAITE. Sa Chapter III, Transitional Interventions, Section 7, ...

REP. GARIN (S.) Section?

REP. GAITE. ... partikular po sa usapin sa wage subsidy.

REP. GARIN (S.). Section 7?

REP. GAITE. Opo.

REP. GARIN (S.). Okay.

REP. GAITE. Ang nakasulat po sa letter (i), sa unang paragraph:

“i. The wage subsidy shall cover the basic salary ...”

REP. GARIN (S.). Mr. Speaker, we are talking about Section—page 10?

REP. GAITE. Page 10.

REP. GARIN (S.). Page 10, letter (i), line 5?

REP. GAITE. (i).

REP. GARIN (S.). Correct, line 5 of page 10.

REP. GAITE. Page 10, letter (a)—Section 7, letter (a), first item: “The wage subsidy shall cover the basic salary cost”—Mme. Sponsor, nasusundan po?

REP. GARIN (S.). Yes, please proceed.

REP. GAITE. The wage subsidy shall cover the basic salary cost OR COMPENSATION of the rank and file PERSONNEL REGARDLESS OF EMPLOYMENT STATUS and shall exclude the senior and executive officers of the relevant business entities, Mme. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (S.). I will just repeat: The wage subsidy shall cover the basic salary cost OR ...

REP. GAITE. ...OR COMPENSATION po.

REP. GARIN (S.). ...OR COMPENSATION, delete “of the rank and file.” Is that correct?

REP. GAITE. No, no, we will retain. Again, I will try to read, Mme. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

The wage subsidy shall cover the basic salary OR COMPENSATION of the rank and file PERSONNEL REGARDLESS OF EMPLOYMENT STATUS and shall exclude the senior and executive officers of the relevant business entities, Mme. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (S.). We accept, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Mr. Speaker.

Secondly, on the same Section 7, letter (a), item 5 ...

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, before we continue, may we accept also?

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

REP. PALMA. We would like to accept also the proposal of the Honorable Gaité.

REP. GAITE. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The proposal is accepted.

REP. GAITE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mme. Sponsor.

On the same Section 7, same paragraph (a), item (v):

For the duration of the wage subsidy, a non-essential business entity must retain such number of employees or workers in proportion to the percentage of wage subsidy to basic salary cost as offered under this Section PERIOD (.).

The following item shall be deleted: “excluding those employees whose employment are terminated, etc., etc.”, Mme. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (S.). Mr. Speaker, we respectfully decline the proposal of the good Congressman from BAYAN MUNA.

REP. GAITE. Thank you, Mme. Sponsor.

The objective of this Representation is to insert the original rationale that job retention should be the objective of the Bill and we hope that this can still be introduced during the Bicameral Conference Committee hearings.

Thank you, Mme. Sponsor.

REP. GARIN (S.). Duly noted, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. And just finally, I am still trying to look for the provision regarding the OFWs in terms of their contribution.

REP. GARIN (S.). Section ...

REP. GAITE. Ten.

REP. GARIN (S.). Ten.

REP. GAITE. Section 10, Economic Relief to Overseas ...

REP. GARIN (S.). ...page 14.

REP. GAITE. ... Filipino Workers. Pursuant to Section 4(z) of the Republic Act No. 11469, otherwise known as the “Bayanihan To Heal As One Act,” and to provide relief to OFWs who are uniquely burdened by the impacts of COVID-19 on the global economy, OFWs shall be charged by the PhilHealth Insurance Corporation no more than P300 per month for premium contribution in 2020, no more than P375 per month in 2021, and no more than P450 in 2022. PROVIDED, THAT THIS SHALL BE ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS AND IN ADDITION, Provided, That, unpaid premium contributions due from March 15 to December 31 shall not be charged interests and penalties, Mme. Sponsor, M. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (S.). Mr. Speaker, we respectfully decline the proposal of Congressman from BAYAN MUNA, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Thank you, Mme. Sponsor, and again I hope that said demand of our OFWs, ating tinawag na mga bayani, ay bigyan din natin ng kaluwagan sa panahon ng COVID-19 at ito rin ay sana ma-consider sa Bicameral Conference Committee sa darating na pagtatalakay nito.

Iyon lang po, Mme. Sponsor. Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. PALMA. Thank you, Honorable Gaité.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, the next to introduce individual amendments, may I move that Hon. Sarah Jane I. Elago of the KABATAAN Party-List be recognized for her individual amendments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Hon. Sarah Elago is hereby recognized.

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, I move to amend House Bill No. 6815 on page 34, line 13.

REP. GARIN (S.). Thirty-four, line 13.

REP. ELAGO. Yes, insert after the word “public school” the word CLINICS AND ALL OTHER, before the word “facilities”.

REP. GARIN (S.). Before—can you kindly repeat that Honorable Elago. Section—page 34 ...

REP. ELAGO. Page 34.

REP. GARIN (S.). Letter (b)?

REP. ELAGO. Line 13.

REP. GARIN (S.). Line 13.

REP. ELAGO. Section 26, letter (b).

REP. GARIN (S.). Okay.

REP. ELAGO. Now, it would read, “The construction and improvement of public-school CLINICS ...

REP. GARIN (S.). Clinics.

REP. ELAGO. ... AND ALL OTHER facilities.”

REP. GARIN (S.). So, line 13, after “public-school” add CLINICS AND ALL OTHER before facilities?

REP. ELAGO. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (S.). We accept, Mr. Speaker.

REP. PALMA. Likewise, we accept, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep Savellano). The proposal is accepted.

REP. ELAGO. Next, a proposed amendment from this Representation, Mr. Speaker, on page 4, Section 3, letter (f), line 26. Insert the words FREE AND ACCESSIBLE before the word “testing”.

REP. GARIN (S.). Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, we respectfully decline the proposal of Congresswoman Elago.

REP. ELAGO. Next, Mr. Speaker, on the Section for subsidies for students.

REP. GARIN (S.). Is that in Section 9?

REP. ELAGO. It is on page 12, line 5(a).

REP. GARIN (S.). On page 12, line 5, on emergency subsidy?

REP. ELAGO. On line 22, Mr. Speaker, instead of the amount “seven thousand five hundred pesos (P7,500.00),” replace it with the amount of TEN

THOUSAND PESOS (P10,000), for subsidy per student for the payment of second semester tuition and other fees.

REP. GARIN (S.). Mr. Speaker, we have actually provided for P7,500 so that more students can avail of the limited budget. We respectfully decline the proposal of Congresswoman Elago, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, as I have explained in my interpellation yesterday, the computation is more than enough to cover all private higher education students. This Representation would continue to push for expanding the coverage of subsidies for our students.

My next amendment, Mr. Speaker, is to insert in the following section ...

REP. GARIN (S.). On what page and line, Mr. Speaker?

REP. ELAGO. On page 14, Mr. Speaker, after the whole section on the subsidy for students, insert the phrase: PROVIDED THAT EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS SHALL REFUND UNUSED FEES FOR ON-CAMPUS UTILITIES AND SERVICES SUCH AS BUT NOT LIMITED TO ENERGY FEES, LIBRARY FEES, LABORATORY FEES, COLLECTED ON THE SECOND SEMESTER OR THE DISRUPTED TERM OF ACADEMIC YEAR 2019 TO 2020.

REP. GARIN (S.). Mr. Speaker, can we specify on which line in Section 9 are we going to insert the proposal?

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, this will be in addition to the whole section after line 14, on page 14, after the last sentence of Section 9.

REP. GARIN (S.). Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, we are inclined to decline the proposal of Congresswoman Elago.

REP. ELAGO. Let me move to my final proposed amendment, Mr. Speaker. This would also be an addition to the whole section on educational subsidy to students pertaining to tuition and other school fee increases for the upcoming academic year, to insert the phrase: PROVIDED FURTHER THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION SHALL IMPOSE A MORATORIUM ON INCREASES IN TUITION AND OTHER SCHOOL FEES UNTIL THE POLICY GUIDELINES FOR APPROVING PROPOSED HIKES UNDER A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY HAVE BEEN REVIEWED.

REP. GARIN (S.). Mr. Speaker, we respectfully decline the proposal of Congresswoman Elago.

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, that would be all the amendments this Representation will offer to the distinguished Sponsor.

Thank you.

REP. PALMA. Thank you, Honorable Elago.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, next to introduce individual amendments, may we recognize Hon. Mark O. Go from Baguio City.

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

REP. GO (M.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker, our Deputy Majority Leader and our Sponsor.

I would like to propose two amendments. On page 11, Section 9(i), line 19.

REP. GARIN (S.). Yes, on page 11, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GO (M.). On page 11, Section 9(i), line 19, I propose that we change the words and figure “Seven Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (P7,500.00)” to FIFTEEN THOUSAND PESOS (P15,000.00), considering that under Republic Act No. 10931, all those students in private higher educational institutions who are not part of the “Listahan of DSWD” are not entitled to receive the tertiary education subsidy. The proposal indicated here is that they will receive a tuition subsidy of P7,500. My proposal is that we change “seven thousand five hundred pesos (P7,500.00)” to FIFTEEN THOUSAND PESOS (P15,000.00).

Right now, private higher education students are not receiving anything from the national government, while all those who are studying in public schools, including those in SUCs and LUCs are receiving and are qualified to receive the Tertiary Education Subsidy amounting to around P60,000.00. So I am proposing, Mme. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, that from “Seven Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (P7,500.00)” we change it to FIFTEEN THOUSAND PESOS (P15,000.00).

REP. GARIN (S.). Mr. Speaker, considering that we have made calculations of the students who will be in need of such assistance, and we have specified a certain budget for such assistance, we respectfully decline the proposal of Cong. Mark Go. But it will be subject to consideration during the Bicameral Conference should

we be able to recalculate the proper budget for the proposed amendment of Cong. Mark Go.

REP. GO (M.). Okay. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, Mme. Sponsor. I hope we will really consider this in the Bicam due to the fact that they are not entitled to receive the Tertiary Education Subsidy because they are not in the list of the DSWD. Also, in the Budget of 2021, the Student Financial Program under Republic Act No. 10931 will not be included. Therefore, I think it is incumbent upon us to be ready to help them this coming school year by increasing the subsidy that we can provide them from P7,500 to P15,000, Mr. Speaker, Mme. Sponsor.

REP. GARIN (S.). Yes, Mr. Speaker, that is duly noted. We will seriously consider that so we can calculate that specific assistance, as well as its aggregate in the whole Bill, Mr. Speaker. We will take it up in the Bicam, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

REP. GO (M.). Thank you very much, Mme. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

On page 12, this is another additional budget that we need. I would like to propose that the P4,000 provided to our high school senior students be increased to P5,000. Right now, they are enjoying in being able to get around P19,000 to P20,000. The P4,000 is very low, that is why I am proposing that we change it to P5,000.

Therefore, on page 12, line 3, we will change the words and figure “Four Thousand Pesos (P4,000.00)” to FIVE THOUSAND PESOS (P5,000.00), Mme. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (S.). Mr. Speaker, for the same reason, we respectfully decline until we are able to calculate the aggregate amount.

REP. GO (M.). Thank you very much, Mme. Sponsor. If you need help in the calculation, please let us know.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. GO (M.). That is all, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much, and good evening.

REP. GARIN (S.). Thank you.

REP. PALMA. Thank you very much, Hon. Mark Go.

Mr. Speaker, next to propose some amendments, I move that we recognize the Hon. Sol Aragones from Laguna.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). The Hon. Sol Aragonés is hereby recognized.

REP. ARAGONÉS. Mr. Speaker, Mme. Sponsor, may I propose the following amendments: In Section 3, Definition of Terms, letter (m), instead of the phrase “convention organizers,” it should read as follows: ORGANIZERS OF CONVENTION AND OTHER SIMILAR LIVE EVENTS SUBJECT TO A CERTIFICATION OF DOT.

REP. GARIN (S.). Mr. Speaker, can we just indicate the page and line number please.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, the proponent should state the line number and the page so that we may be able to follow through with her proposal.

REP. GARIN (S.). Is that section on the Department of Tourism?

REP. ARAGONÉS. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (S.). That will be in section...

REP. ARAGONÉS. Section 3, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (S.). ... Section 20?

REP. ARAGONÉS. First, Section 3, Definition of Terms

REP. GARIN (S.). That is on page 6, letter m, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ARAGONÉS. Yes, on page 6. May I propose this amendment, Mme. Sponsor, in Section 3, Definition of Terms, letter (m), instead of the phrase “convention organizers,” it should read as follows: ORGANIZERS OF CONVENTION AND OTHER SIMILAR LIVE EVENTS SUBJECT TO ACCREDITATION OF DOT.

REP. GARIN (S.). Mr. Speaker, that would be on the second to the last line of letter m, line 28. Is that correct, Mr. Speaker?

REP. ARAGONÉS. Yes, Mme. Sponsor, on line 15.

REP. GARIN (S.). Line 15?

REP. ARAGONÉS. No, I am sorry, it is on line 19.

Line 19, from the words “scuba diving and similar sports activities of significant tourism potential.” So, instead of the words “convention organizers,” we propose that it should read as follows: ORGANIZERS OF CONVENTION AND OTHER SIMILAR LIVE EVENTS SUBJECT TO ACCREDITATION OF DOT.

REP. GARIN (S.). Yes, technically we accept that because it is already incorporated in the substitute Bill, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ARAGONÉS. Thank you, Mme. Sponsor.

Another amendment is on page 23, Section 20, paragraph 2, line 21, where the phrase “assistance to the tourism industry” should be amended to read as follows: FOR PURPOSES AS ITEMS A AND B HEREIN, GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS THE LBP AND DBP SHALL ADMINISTER THE LOANS FOR DOT BUT SUBJECT TO GUIDELINES FROM DOT THAT SHALL BE PREPARED FOR THESE PURPOSES PROVIDED THAT THE LOAN INTERVENTIONS IMPLEMENTED UNDER THIS SECTION SHALL BE EXCLUSIVELY FOR ACCREDITED TOURISM ENTERPRISES ONLY, Mme. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (S.). We accept the amendment, Mr. Speaker.

REP. PALMA. We join the Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. ARAGONÉS. Thank you very much, Mme. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (S.). Thank you.

REP. PALMA. Thank you, Honorable Aragonés.

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

REP. PALMA. Next to propose individual amendments, may I move that we recognize the Representative from BAYAN MUNA, Hon. Carlos Isagani T. Zarate.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Honorable Zarate is hereby recognized.

REP. ZARATE. Thank, Mr. Speaker. Will the good Sponsor admit an amendment to the proposed Bill?

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

REP. ZARATE. On page 32, line 23.

REP. GARIN (S.). Page 32, line 23. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. May I read the current statement first before the proposed amendment. The current statement says, “*Provided, further,* That the Land Bank of the Philippines shall issue the appropriate certification to the agrarian reform beneficiary after the write-off of the principal, unpaid interest, penalties and surcharges condoned to facilitate reintegration into the financial and banking system.”

The proposed amendment, Mr. Speaker, Mme. Sponsor, instead of the phrase “facilitate reintegration into the financial and banking system,” the proposed amendment, in lieu thereof insert: TO FACILITATE THE IMMEDIATE ISSUANCE OF A CERTIFICATE OF LAND TITLE OWNERSHIP TO THE CONCERNED AGRARIAN REFORM BENEFICIARIES, and add the phrase: PROVIDED, FINALLY, THAT CONDONATION AS PROVIDED HEREIN SHALL LIFT ALL LIENS AND ENCUMBRANCES ATTACHED TO THE LAND ACQUIRED.

Will the good Sponsor accept such an amendment, Mr. Speaker?

REP. GARIN (S.). We accept the amendment, Mr. Speaker.

REP. PALMA. We join the author, Mr. Speaker, in accepting the proposal.

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

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mme. Sponsor. That is all.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 6815

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend consideration of House Bill No. 6815.

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

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

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

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

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

The Secretary General read the following Committee Reports, and House Bill on First Reading, and the Deputy Speaker made the corresponding references:

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report of the Committee on Higher and Technical Education and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 327), re H.B. No. 6852, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF KAWAYAN, PROVINCE OF BILIRAN, TO BE KNOWN AS THE KAWAYAN TESDA TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 1231

Sponsors: Representatives Go (Mark), Yap (Eric) and Espina

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Higher and Technical Education and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 328), re H.B. No. 6853, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BADIAN, PROVINCE OF CEBU, TO BE KNOWN AS THE BADIAN CEBU TESDA TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 3509

Sponsors: Representatives Go (Mark), Yap (Eric) and Calderon

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Higher and Technical Education and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 329), re H.B. No. 6854, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE BALICUATRO

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND TRADES IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ALLEN, PROVINCE OF NORTHERN SAMAR, INTO THE NORTHERN SAMAR POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR” recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 2542

Sponsors: Representatives Go (Mark), Yap (Eric) and Daza

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Higher and Technical Education and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 330), re H.B. No. 6855, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER IN BARANGAY SANTA CRUZ, MAKATI CITY, TO BE KNOWN AS THE BARANGAY SANTA CRUZ, MAKATI CITY TESDA TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 4617

Sponsors: Representatives Go (Mark), Yap (Eric) and Peña

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Higher and Technical Education, the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Ways and Means (Committee Report No. 331), re H.B. No. 6858, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE BICOL STATE COLLEGE OF APPLIED SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY (BISCAT), IN THE CITY OF NAGA, PROVINCE OF CAMARINES SUR, INTO A STATE UNIVERSITY, TO BE KNOWN AS THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 6414

Sponsors: Representatives Go (Mark), Yap (Eric), Salceda and Villafuerte

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Defeat COVID-19 *Ad Hoc* Committee (Committee Report No. 332), re H.B. No. 6864, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND PUBLIC HEALTH SAFEGUARDS FOR THE BETTER NORMAL IN THE WORKPLACE, PUBLIC PLACES AND COMMUNITIES

TOWARD SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY FROM COVID-19 PANDEMIC”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 6623

Sponsors: Representatives Cayetano (Alan Peter), Romualdez (Ferdinand),

Villafuerte and Duterte

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Defeat COVID-19 *Ad Hoc* Committee (Committee Report No. 333), re H.B. No. 6865, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING THE CONDUCT OF BASELINE POLYMERASE CHAIN REACTION COVID-19 TESTING FOR THE VULNERABLE MEMBERS OF SOCIETY TO STOP THE TRANSMISSION OF THE DISEASE”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 6707

Sponsors: Representatives Cayetano (Alan Peter), Romualdez (Ferdinand), Tan (Angelina) and Garin (Juliet)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Defeat COVID-19 *Ad Hoc* Committee (Committee Report No. 334), re H.R. No. 925, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE COMMITMENT OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO ENACT THE PROPOSED PHP 66-BILLION SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO SUPPORT ITS PROGRAMS IN ADDRESSING THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, PARTICULARLY IN THE AREAS OF FOOD & NUTRITION, SECURITY AND PRICE STABILITY”

recommending its adoption in substitution of House Resolution No. 821

Sponsors: Representatives Cayetano (Alan Peter), Romualdez (Ferdinand), Villafuerte, Torres-Gomez and Robes

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Defeat COVID-19 *Ad Hoc* Committee (Committee Report No. 335), re H.R. No. 926, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT TO FAST TRACK THE DISBURSEMENT OF THE SECOND TRANCHE OF THE SOCIAL AMELIORATION PROGRAM EMERGENCY CASH SUBSIDY BY AUTHORIZING THE BARANGAY TO IDENTIFY THE BENEFICIARIES AND DISBURSE THE

ALLOCATION FAIRLY, EFFICIENTLY AND RESPONSIBLY”

recommending its adoption in substitution of House Resolution No. 807

Sponsors: Representatives Cayetano (Alan Peter), Romualdez (Ferdinand), Villafuerte, Torres-Gomez and Fernando

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

BILL ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 6868, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING THE EXISTENCE OF A CONTINUING NATIONAL EMERGENCY ARISING FROM THE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19) SITUATION, AMENDING SECTION 9 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11469, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘BAYANIHAN TO HEAL AS ONE ACT’, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Villafuerte and Romualdez (Ferdinand)

TO THE DEFEAT COVID-19 *AD HOC* COMMITTEE

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

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

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

It was 7:40 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 7:40 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 6864
ON SECOND READING

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 6864, contained in Committee Report No. 332, as reported out by the Committee on Defeat COVID-19 *Ad Hoc*.

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

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 6864, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND PUBLIC HEALTH SAFEGUARDS FOR THE BETTER NORMAL IN THE WORKPLACE, PUBLIC PLACES AND COMMUNITIES TOWARD A SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY FROM THE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE-19 (COVID-19) PANDEMIC.

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

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary status of the Bill is that we are in the period of sponsorship and debate. With that, Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the former Senator and our dear colleague, Hon. Loren Legarda, to give her sponsorship speech.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Hon. Loren Legarda is hereby recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

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

It was 7:41 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 7:42 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I reiterate my motion that we recognize the honorable Senator Loren Legarda for her sponsorship speech on House Bill No. 6864.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Hon. Loren Legarda is hereby recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mme. Senator, you may proceed now.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF REP. LEGARDA

REP. LEGARDA. Mr. Speaker, I hope that my— Am I online? Is it clear? Just to make sure.

REP. PALMA. Yes, Ma'am. You are very clear, Ma'am.

REP. LEGARDA. Thank you, distinguished colleague. I have witnessed all your hard work since we went on session this afternoon at 3:00 p.m. and I thank you for this opportunity to deliver the sponsorship measure.

The raging COVID-19 pandemic has brought out the sobering reality that the world is not as advanced, prosperous, and as resilient as we thought it to be. We have realized that our societies and economic systems are fragile and that we are only as strong as our most vulnerable. The only way forward is to heed science and to make decisive actions towards staging a recovery that will pave the way for a better normal for the Filipino people.

The choices we will make today will shape our collective future. If we are not careful, pandemics could happen more frequently, spread more quickly, and could have greater social and economic impacts than what COVID-19 has brought about.

This is why we must ensure that our actions from now on do not restore the same vulnerabilities and risks that we had before the pandemic or more so, spawn new risks of future outbreaks and crises. It is imperative that resources mobilized by governments to recover from COVID-19 also support the transition towards a sustainable, climate-resilient future. We need to ensure that our policies and interventions are green and blue, if we are going to come out of the pandemic stronger.

We relied so much on nature to the extent that the pain it had endured from our exploitation and rampage and from our abuse had reverberated through every corner of our planet. It is high time that we reflect on our actions to prevent the same habits we had been accustomed to, and transform towards a better normal to keep our people safe, healthy and secure.

Sustainability is the key aspect of these interventions for a better normal. We should act, not only based on band-aid solutions, but we should also foresee and prepare policies, laws, rules, ordinances for the long-term and for a more efficient, sustainable governance.

In this regard, the Committee Report before us today essentially gives us a silver lining on how to further improve our laws, our regulations, our policies, our individual and collective action ranging from health, environment, biodiversity, education, agriculture, labor,

the industrial sector, tourism, even arts and culture, and how we can all adapt, adjust towards a better normal.

As we ensure that we are protected and we have the discipline to abide by stringent health and safety measures, we also take advantage of the digital infrastructure and platforms in our way of living. Through this Bill, we are able to bridge sectors, digitally link trade and commerce, education, labor, health and governance.

Primarily guided by constitutional provisions that seek to protect our fundamental rights to health and to a balanced and healthful ecology as well as the indicators of what we call the "Gross National Happiness," House Bill No. 6864, under Committee Report No. 332, seeks to achieve an equitable and liveable future in this better normal.

This proposed measure consolidates the submission of various, so many of our esteemed colleagues, as well as the different government agencies represented during our public hearings and technical working group meetings. Allow me to highlight some of its key provisions.

The Bill defines "better normal" in the context of pandemic recovery and it refers to transformative behaviors and interventions informed by science which address the underlying vulnerabilities of people and communities that the pandemic has highlighted, and fosters a just and equitable transition to a climate-resilient, inclusive and sustainable future. This Bill enumerates universal mandatory health and safety measures and protocols to ensure that we are shielded and protected from viruses of such a grand scale. The Bill further details the policies imposed on the management of spaces and public transport so as to stem the spread of the virus. It strengthens the synergy between and among national government agencies, local government units and the private sector by defining their roles and responsibilities in the better normal.

The Bill seeks to develop our digital infrastructure through the National Broadband Plan of the Department of Information and Communications Technology, the effectivity of a better normal for governance, for the education system, and even for our micro, small and medium enterprises or MSMEs, as we shift most of our work transactions and businesses online, and depend heavily on the DICT's achievement of its goals for wider connectivity and stronger and more reliable Internet services for the public.

Similarly, the Bill highlights the need to address issues on water supply, sanitation and waste management which are key to containing the spread of viruses. The Bill also seeks to protect the vulnerable sectors of our society not only from the affliction of COVID-19 but also by helping them cope with the changes brought about by the pandemic.

It encourages adaptation behaviors that would protect surroundings and nature that has always been the source of food, water, our very source of life, survival and existence. It adopts relevant adaptation measures such as multi-hazard early warning systems, construction of rainwater harvesters, seed banks and vegetable gardens.

The Bill provides for a sunset clause, such that after its enactment, the law will be effective for three (3) years, or sooner upon official declaration that the pandemic caused by COVID-19 has already been eradicated. However, a proviso has been included to indicate that the standards, protocols and other measures which are not rendered useless or impractical by the eradication of COVID-19 shall still continue to be implemented.

Our actions perpetuate habits, our habits perpetuate behavior. COVID-19 has jolted us, away from what we may have been doing wrong all this time. But let us see this as an opportunity now to rise and do better, to act with discipline, with compassion and with consideration. With such virtues as our driving forces, this Representation thus hopes with fervor that we can pass this measure as soon as possible, as we all seek to prepare and live in a better normal.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 6864

REP. PALMA. Thank you, honorable Sponsor. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 6864.

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

The consideration of House Bill No. 6864 is hereby suspended.

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. Savellano). The session is suspended.

It was 7:53 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 8:38 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 6864 *Continuation*

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. NIETO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume

the consideration of House Bill No. 6864, and that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 6864, entitled: "AN ACT ESTABLISHING POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND PUBLIC HEALTH SAFEGUARDS FOR THE BETTER NORMAL IN THE WORK PLACE, PUBLIC PLACES, AND COMMUNITIES TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC."

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

REP. NIETO. Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary situation is that the measure is still in the period of sponsorship and debate. I move that we recognize Hon. Loren Legarda to continue her sponsorship of the measure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Honorable Loren Legarda is hereby recognized.

REP. NIETO. And, Mr. Speaker, we recognize Rep. Carlos Isagani T. Zarate for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Zarate). The honorable Cong. Isagani Zarate is hereby recognized.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. LEGARDA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Will the good Sponsor, the honorable Deputy Speaker Legarda, entertain some questions and interpellations?

REP. LEGARDA. It is my pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to be interpellated by one of the esteemed members of the Makabayan bloc, Congressman Kaloi Zarate.

REP. ZARATE. Maraming salamat po. Magandang gabi po ulit sa lahat ng ating mga kasamahan.

Ang termino po na "new normal" ay naging tanyag pagkatapos ngang magkaroon at nang sumabog itong pandemya ng COVID-19. Nagkaroon tayo ng quarantine noong buwan ng Marso at napag-usap-usapan na kapag natapos itong quarantine na ito at ang lockdown na ito ay hindi na natin puwedeng balikan ang

dating kaayusan. Magkakaroon na ng bagong kaayusan dahil sa mga nangyari na rin na dulot nitong pandemya ng COVID-19.

Ang una ko sigurong katanungan sa ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor, G. Ispiker, ay ano po ba ang pagkahulugan natin kapag sinabi nating magkakaroon na ng “new normal” at ano ang ibig sabihin nito, G. Ispiker, Mme. Isponsor?

REP. LEGARDA. Salamat sa inyong napakagandang tanong dahil iyan ang buod ng ating sinasabi sa ating panukalang batas.

Totoo po, marami nagsasabi na bago na dapat ang ating pag-akto, ang ating paggawa ng mga bagay dahil sa “new norm.” In fact, ang in-adapt po natin dito sa ating panukalang batas ay ang “better norm.” Ano ba ang ibig sabihin po ng “better normal”? Ito pong better normal ay nagsasabi po na dapat magkaroon ng pagbabago ng kaisipan, hindi lamang ayon sa ating gawi, kung hindi base sa siyensya. So, it is science-based. At ito po ay base na rin sa mga vulnerabilities, sa mga hazards, at sa mga risks na nagdulot po ng ating pandemic. Ito po ay hindi nangyari overnight. Ito po ay nangyari sa ating pang-aabuso ng ating kapaligiran, sa ating pagwawalang-bahala sa ating kalusugan, at sa ating hindi pagsunod sa mga batas na nandiyan na. Ang mga batas na ginawa hindi lamang sa Pilipinas, kung hindi mga batas ng kalikasan kaya nangyari ito. So, ang pagbabalik po natin, pagkatapos po—hindi lang pagkatapos ng lockdown, pagkatapos ng pandemyang ito ay hindi na dapat pagbabalik sa dating gawi na ating pang-aabuso sa lahat ng nagbibigay ng buhay at pagkain sa nilalang sa ating planeta.

Kaya sa pagbabalik po sa tinatawag na “new norm” or a “better norm” ay science-based ang ating pagbabalik sa kinagawian natin para mas mahusay po ang ating pagtugon sa mga pangyayari. Hopefully, this lockdown of the world which was never imagined in our lifetime could teach us not just a lesson or two, but could really change the way we do things, the way we think, and the way we take care of our planet. So, I hope that this measure would reflect—it is not a matter of just wearing a mask, it is not just a matter of distancing for 1.5 to 2.5 meters, it is not a matter of locking down some villages or barangays or some LGUs. In fact, sa pagtanggap po ng lockdown, moderate ECQ, GCQ, maski CQ, at maski wala na ito, hindi po ibig sabihin ay babalik na. So, in our way of living, thinking, and doing, we must overhaul the wrong things we have been doing before and we continue to do now. So, iyon po sana ang ating gagawin kung maipasá, at para po maipasá ang ating panukalang batas na ito.

So, I would like to read some important measures. I will just wear my glasses, I was trying to read without glasses. Okay. So, ito po, may mga mechanisms for a healthier working environment na gumagamit ng mga hindi toxic na materyales, na mga low global warming

potential na mga equipment, at sustainable cooling technologies. Marami pa po if you want me to go through that, but that is my long answer to your short question, Cong. Zarate.

I am sorry. Hello? I was muted.

REP. ZARATE. Okay. Salamat, Mme. Sponsor sa inyong sagot. So, kung hindi ako nagkakamali doon sa inyong naging katugunan, ninanais ng panukalang batas na ito na magkaroon ng panibagong framework at hindi na nga dapat nating balikan iyong mga nakaraan na sinasabi ninyong nagpapalala sa kondisyon o sa ating mga vulnerableng mga sektor ng ating lipunan—the vulnerabilities that we face prior to pre-COVID pandemic at alam ho natin na kung ano iyon. Iyon ang sistema na nagbunsod o nagdulot ng matinding kahirapan sa ating mga kababayan. So, iyon po ang sunod kong katanungan, in particular, halimbawa, Mme. Sponsor, nabanggit ninyo kanina na hindi lang naman ito sa pagsusuot ng facemask at social distancing. I agree. It should go beyond this, dahil hindi naman po natin talaga, at this point, alam kung kailan ba matatapos itong pandemyang ito and we all know for a fact that this will not be the first nor will this be the last probably pandemic na haharapin ng ating bayan. Dahil bilang isang environmentalist, alam ninyo na ang isang malaking dahilan ng pagsulpot ng mga ganitong mga sakit ay iyong pagsasamantala rin natin sa ating kalikasan.

So, in concrete terms, Mme. Sponsor, if you may, saan napapaloob dito sa probisyon ng ating panukalang batas ang sinasabi nating framework? For example, when we speak of pangalagaan natin ang ating natitirang kalikasan na sa ating bansa ngayon, na alam naman natin, even as we speak now, ay walang hinto iyong paggahasa ng ating naiiwang natural resources na kailangan nating i-preserve ngayon dahil sa leksyon na dinala sa atin ng pandemya ng COVID-19. Kailangan pala nating pangalagaan ang ating kalikasan, hindi lang sa usapin na kailangang mapaniguro natin ang ating pagkain o food security. Ito iyong isang napakalaking usapin na itinuro sa atin, na kailangan pala na ang bawat bansa ay mapaniguro niya iyong kanyang kasiguruhan sa pagkain. But more than that, kasiguruhan ng survival ng ating mamamayan sa darating pang mga panahon, Mme. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LEGARDA. Salamat po sa inyong katanungan. Hindi lang po ito isang health measure. Tama po kayo, Cong. Kaloi. Talagang natumbok ninyo. Kasi kung health lang, to prevent it, tapos na sana sa face mask at distancing, pero hindi e. What spawned it? Ang nagdulot nito ay ang ating pagsasawalang-bahala sa ating kalikasan at sa ating kapaligiran, hindi ba? Again, experts would say, saan ba nagsimula ito? Dahil sa virus na galing sa hayop. Ang virus na galing sa hayop ay paano napunta sa tao? Ayon sa siyensya, ito ay lumukso. O, bakit lumukso? Mayroon ba tayong mga kinain?

Nagsimula iyan dahil kaya lumipat ang virus na iyan ay isang palaisipan sa siyensya. Dahil din sa mga pinuputol na puno sa mga lugar ay naglabasan tuloy ang mga paniki o ibang mga hayop kaya kumalat sa mga lugar kung nasaan ang human beings na sinasabi.

And so, the Better Normal Bill does not only deal with health requirements and health protocols. It does not just say social distancing, wear face masks until we have a vaccine or we will do massive testing. It is much broader, greener and possibly just bluer than that. If I may just read, for example, it deals even with the vulnerable sectors. It has provisions on gender and social equity. It has provisions on MSMEs. It has provisions to protect the environment.

Let me just read some portions:

It will ensure that pandemic recovery will lead to a greener, resilient, inclusive and sustainable future. Hence, recovery needs should be addressed with long-term sustainability goals.

It also says:

It will give importance to other aspects of well-being of the people based on the gross national happiness indicators, namely, equitable and sustainable socio-economic development, the preservation and promotion of cultural values, the conservation of the natural environment and the establishment of good governance.

Napakarami po ng mga provisions nito na hindi lang po sa health dahil tama po kayo, and I am one with you in believing that it is the protection of biodiversity and our natural ecosystems that would change the way we live and improve our health standards.

If I may also read other portions, let me check, please. Marami pa ho dito on the environment. It also deals with public spaces na hindi lang po sinasabing parke. Ang opisina ay hindi lang iyong four walls. Public spaces now would mean even, it says here, “protected areas and parks, and nature reserves.” Because we have to respect also kung sino ba ang covered nito? Lahat ng Pilipino. Higit sa 10 milyon ang ating mga katutubo. Saan nakatira ang ating mga katutubo? Sila ay nakatira sa ating kabundukan, at sa ating mga forest. So, ang ibig sabihin, if this is the better normal or the new norm that will protect our home and our workplaces, we are saying, we are protecting everything about us. Kaya hindi na puwedeng pabayaang at hindi na puwedeng abusuhin gaya ng dating gawi ang ating kapaligiran.

You are correct in saying that this goes beyond health. Well, health is equally important, but what spawned it, ano pa ang nagdudulot ng sakit? Hindi ba ang mga infectious diseases, dahil sa kadumihan natin?

It reiterates also the implementation of already existing environmental laws. It mandates the Department of Public Works and Highways to do the National Septage and Sewerage Law. It mandates at the implementation of the 1989 law on Rainwater Harvesters. It mandates the effective implementation of R.A. No. 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act. Dahil pagkatapos nito ay tag-ulan na at dengue naman. Kung itatapon natin ang basura na naman diyan at hindi tayo magse-segregate ng waste sa nabubulok at hindi nabubulok, at tayo na naman ay magtatapon ng plastic sa ating mga ilog, tayo na naman ay mag-aabuso at magtatapon ng mga nonbiodegradables waste sa ating mga lawa, sa ating karagatan ay hindi lang COVID-19, hindi lang second surge at third wave ito, mga bagong virus naman ang mangyayari sa atin. Kaya, sugpuin na natin ito at baguhin natin ang ating pamamaraan ng buhay, not just into a new norm, but a better norm. And the only way we could do that is if we merge our health standards with environmental standards well.

Cong. Kaloi, narinig po ninyo? Sir, I lost you, Cong. Kaloi.

REP. ZARATE. Yes, kaka-unmute lang sa akin ng host.

REP. LEGARDA. Okay.

REP. ZARATE. Salamat, Mme. Sponsor. Precisely, ang sinasabi natin, dapat itong pagbabalangkang ng batas na ito, sa akin ngang pagkakaintindi, ito ay dapat nating tugon dahil nga sa nangyayaring krisis ngayon, itong pandemya ng COVID-19 at dala ng pandemya ng COVID-19. Sa katunayan, ngayong gabi lang, ilang batas din ang ipinasá ng Kapulungang ito on Second Reading. Ang sabi ay ito rin ay tugon dito sa pandemya nga ng COVID-19. Now, siguro ang dugtong ko na tanong tungkol dito, Mme. Sponsor, I observed dito sa panukalang batas na new normal pagdating doon sa, halimbawa, paano i-finance itong implementation ng batas na ito na napakalawak ng gusto niyang sakupin. Wala tayong makita namang appropriation dito at ano ang relasyon nito sa ibang panukalang batas. How will this jibe with the other laws, for example, or bills now pending? For example, there is this PESA Bill; we also filed on Second Reading kanina iyong FIST and the others. Saan siya lulugar dito, dahil inaano nga—nagiging bukambibig ngayon iyong better normal, but kung titingnan mo iyong ibang batas, hindi naman better normal ang gusto nila, dahil gustong balikan pa rin iyong dati, halimbawa iyong mga patakaran ng pagtutulak noong mga neoliberal economic policies sa tingin namin ay hindi na dapat siyang balikan. So, saan ho lulugar itong panukalang batas natin na ito na gusto nating magkaroon ng panibagong framework, pero mayroon namang ibang mga batas na sa aming

palagay ay hindi naman siya tumutungo o pumupunta doon sa panibagong framework na gustong-gusto nating mangyari, Mme. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. LEGARDA. Maganda iyong tanong ninyo at titingnan ko lang sa Section—page 36. Kung titingnan po ninyo iyong kopya po ninyo, page 36, iyon po iyong area ng appropriation. Nakita po natin:

The amount necessary to effectively carry out the provisions of this Bill shall actually be charged against the current appropriation of the concerned government agencies. And thereafter, such sums as they be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the General Appropriations Act.

Having been the Chair of the Finance Committee for several years in the Senate, I know how constrained sometimes and how difficult it is to allocate resources. However, ito pong batas na ito, hopefully ay maipapasá po natin, gawa na po ang ating budget for this year.

It is simple. We have already passed a huge budget. Gawin lang tama ang paggastos ng ating budget sa bawat ahensya ng gobyerno at sa susunod na taon ay ganooon din. Hindi kailangan ng karagdagang appropriations. What am I trying to say? Because we are just correcting the way we have spent the funds. Bakit ba kailangan ng karagdagang pondo para maghiwalay ng basura, iyong food waste gagawing organic compost? At iyong bote, lata at plastic ay ating ise-save para maibenta? Makakatipid pa nga tayo hindi ba? Bakit naman natin kailangan ang karagdagang pondo para mas malinis ang hangin sa ilalim ng Clean Air Act, e dati pa naman iyan dapat ini-implement at hinuhuli ang mga smoke belchers? Bakit naman kailangan ng karagdagang pondo para magtanim ng punongkahoy o magtayo ng mga gulayan sa mga paaralan na ginagawa na rin dati? So, ang ibig ko pong sabihin, it does not require new appropriations for this year. But in the crafting of the budget for 2021, this should be mainstreamed in the budget call. Ibig sabihin po, nakalatag po ito sa bawat ahensya ng gobyerno—sa edukasyon man, sa trade man, sa labor, sa health, at hanggang sa single-use plastic, nandito po kung babasahin ninyo, ipinapagbawal po iyong ganooon.

It reiterates the major environmental laws we have offered jointly in both Houses since the beginning in 1998, clean air, clean water; it talks about, as I have said, sewage and septage. It talks about ESWMA or R.A. 9003 and its strict implementation. It talks about all the things that we should have done, that are already enshrined in our laws, in the past two decades or more in our country, those which we have neglected, perhaps not totally, but almost neglected, which the

world has neglected. And so, it does not require new appropriation. It just corrects the way we think and the way we live.

In our crafting of the budget in the 2021 NEP, I hope and pray that the mainstreaming of the better normal concepts which will include adaptation measures, which will include stringent health standards, will be mainstreamed already—hindi na po kailangan. Sa pakiramdam ko po, maski na sabihin nating may vaccine na at may sunset clause ito na tatlong taon, bakit tayo hindi magpapatuloy ng magandang gawain kung ito naman ay makakabuti sa kalusugan, kalikasan at sa kabuhayan ng mga tao?

REP. ZARATE. Maraming salamat, Mme. Sponsor. I am now in my last series of questions.

Kaya ko lang naman talaga nabanggit din kung saan kukunin ang appropriations nito, we are setting here new standards. May mga bagong standards tayong gustong ipatupad dito, at syempre madaling sabihin na, halimbawa, na kailangan nga nating magsuot ng mask para maproteksyonan ang ating kalusugan, lalo na ngayon na hindi pa rin natin napipigilan itong spread ng infection; kailangang mag-wear ng mask, face shield, magkaroon ng social distancing ba.

Alam po natin, Mme. Sponsor, sa usapin ng kabuhayan ng informal settlers natin, na napakarami hindi lang sa Metro Manila, pero maging sa ibang malalaking siyudad. It is difficult to implement social distancing, lalong-lalo na halimbawa sa informal settlers natin in major cities, na sa isang bahay ay mayroong nakatirang dalawa, tatlo o apat na pamilya. How can you implement social distancing there? Paano mo rin maipipilit o mare-require ang isang manggagawa na hindi nga umaabot sa minimum wage ang kanyang suweldo, na kailangang araw-araw ay bumili at magsuot ng face mask? Napakarami ang gusto nating ipatupad dahil nga may kinakaharap tayong problema.

Ang isang gusto kong puntuhin dito sa panukalang batas, while may sunset provision ito, mayroon ding penal provisions for violations. Ang isa po nating worry diyan, dahil nito ngang nakaraan, kahit na directives lang ito from the Inter-Agency Task Force, and I do not believe it has a force and effect of the law, these are being cited, for example, sa mass arrest na nangyari—not mass testing—dahil sa so-called violators of the ECQ or protocols.

May we be clarified, Mme. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, dito po sa ating panukalang batas, mayroon bang proteksyon ang ating mga kababayan? May human rights angle ba rito, na iyong karapatan ng ating mga kababayan ay mapangalagaan naman, lalong-lalo na iyong ating mahihirap na mga kababayan, Mme. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. LEGARDA. Opo, kasama po. Every aspect,

every page, every line of this Bill, of course, respects human rights, and I do not think there is any provision here that would violate the rights of any human being. In fact, gender and social equity has a special provision here, even the reproductive health rights and care of women are also here. Napakahalaga po na ang karapatang pantao ay rerespetuhin, and I do not think there is any provision here that would violate the rights of other people. But you mentioned about the difficulty in implementing this, and I would agree with you. Hindi po madaling magbago ang ating pamumuhay. Totoo po, I will agree, na hindi madali i-implement ito sa informal settler communities na dikit-dikit ang mga tao. Tama po kayo, isang hamon iyan. I do not have a magic wand to be able to say yes, for sure, kaya iyan.

It is an aspiration, it is a vision. We are implementing the law but yes, we should take it to consideration that, in fact, in crowded informal settler communities, it is a challenge to implement as we have seen in the past two months and a half. Pero iyong mask, we can innovate. Hindi naman kailangan palaging bumili ng bago. Iyong mga washable mask, marami iyan. Kami sa Antique, gumawa nga ako ng patadyong, at iyong mga retaso po ng patadyong, ipinamigay ko at ginawang mga mask na hinuhugasan, iyong ganoon ba.

I agree with you, hindi ko kayo bobolahin at sasabihin na napakadali itong i-implement, because how do you really do physical distancing when you live in a squatter shanty. I cannot answer you there, sabihin nating three meters distancing, kaso iyong maliit na bahay, iyon na nga ang size ng three meters. You are correct in that, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. Maraming salamat, Mme. Sponsor.

I know may mga iba pang mga kasamahan natin na gustong magtanong sa panukalang batas na ito. Bilang pagtatapos lang ng aking mga paglilinaw sa panukalang batas, ang gusto po nating puntuhin, tama, malaki ang leksyon na itinuro sa atin nitong pandemya ng COVID-19, na kailangan nga talaga na we have to review at ating tingnan ang ating mga ginawa noong mga nakaraan and how to go forward. Ang gusto natin ay magkaroon na talaga ng better tomorrow for our people, at hindi na natin balikan iyong mga nakaraang sistema na actually nagluwal nitong problemang kinakaharap natin ngayon.

Hopefully, I do not think a singular bill will solve all the ills and problems of our country. But I hope this Bill may improve and just go beyond the wearing of masks and social distancing, dahil ang gusto lang talaga nating solusyunan, if you want to have a better future, ang Kongresong ito ay magbalangkas ng batas na babaklasin iyong mga sistemang nagluwal ng paghihirap sa ating bayan, nagluwal ng pagsasamantala sa ating kalikasan, nagluwal ng maraming paglabag sa karapatan ng ating mga kababayan.

Iyon lang po ang iiwanan kong mga punto, Mme. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, dahil marami pa tayong mga kasamahan na gusto ring maglinaw tungkol sa panukalang batas na ito.

Maraming salamat po.

REP. LEGARDA. Salamat, Cong. Kaloi Bilang pagtapos po sa inyong sinabi, ito iyong definition ng “better normal.”

It really articulates the principle of fairness and equity. It essentially tackles the injustices that the pandemic has highlighted, together with the permanent and no longer postponable challenges of climate, digital and demographic transition.

Iyan po ay mga buod ng better normal, na challenge sa atin kung makakaya nating gawin ito.

Thank you very much for your questions, and I agree with you that both health standards and environmental regulations go hand in hand. Thank you, Cong. Kaloi Zarate.

REP. ZARATE. Maraming salamat po, Mme. Sponsor. Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. NIETO. Mr. Speaker, the next Member who wishes to interpellate the Sponsor is the Gentleman from BAYAN MUNA Party-List, Hon. Ferdinand R Gaité. I move that he be recognized.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Honorable Ferdinand Gaité is hereby recognized.

REP. GAITE. Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker, at sa ating kapita-pitagang dating Senador at ngayon ay Congresswoman, Loren Legarda. Pahihintulutan po ba ninyo akong magbigay ng ilang katanungan hinggil sa iminumungkahing bagong batas tungkol sa better normal, Mme. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. LEGARDA. Yes, Mr. Speaker, karangalan ko po na sumagot sa mga katanungan sa ating kasamahang Congressman Gaité.

Thank you.

REP. GAITE. Salamat po, ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor. Noong Senator pa po kayo ay ilang beses namin kayo nakaugnayan. Dati, bilang pangulo pa ako ng COURAGE o Confederation for Unity Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees, para

sa kapakanan ng mga kawani at ng mamamayan. Sa pagkakataong ito, kami ay natutuwa na may mga isinusulong ngayon na mga panukala para tugunan itong rumaragasang bagyo, ang bagyo ng COVID-19. Tulad ng nabanggit ko sa interpellation kahapon sa isa pang panukalang batas, sa bagyong ito, we are not all in the same boat. Some of us will be in sturdy, large boats or ships that can withstand the storm, however, mas marami sa atin ang nasa mga maliliit na bangka, balsa, na kaunting alon lamang ay lulubog na. Kaya nga po ang pagtugon na ito ay isang recognition ng ating matagal nang mga neglect sa ating mga mamamayang Pilipino.

Hindi kataka-taka na noong itinatakda iyong Bayanihan to Heal As One Act, nakakagulat, o hindi pala nakakagulat, kung hindi isang eye-opener na 18 million out of 21 million families or households in our country are considered poor and should be supported under this program. Pero ngayon po, ang tatanungin ko lang ay patungkol sa ating mga manggagawa.

Last May 15 lamang ay nag-endeavor nga ang gobyerno na i-lift na iyong Enhanced Community Quarantine depende sa levels ng dating mas mahigpit, ang direksyon ay patungo na sa pagluwag. Ngunit ang isang malaking suliranin ng mga manggagawa, mga kawani sa pamahalaan at gayundin sa pribadong sektor, paano ba ang batas na ito tutugon sa kanilang mga suliranin hinggil sa pagbalik sa mga pagawaan, sa opisina, na ngayon pa lamang ay hindi malinaw iyong gagawing pagte-test o mass testing na sinasabi?

Iyong sinasabing paano titiyakin ang iba't ibang alternative work arrangements tulad ng telecommuting, iyong hindi kailangang physically pumasok sa mga opisina, considering na naglalagay ng limitations, one meter apart sa mga opisina. Alam naman natin, Congresswoman Legarda, kung nakita mo iyong ibang opisina ng gobyerno ay halos dikit-dikit na, face to face na iyong mga ibang mga kawani, liban pa sa pagpasok ng ating mga kliyente, ng publiko, na ating pinagsisilbihan.

Ano po ba ang aasahan ng mga manggagawa sa ganitong pagkakataon na alam natin, kulang na kulang pa nga iyong services na hinahanap natin? Sabi natin, testing, tracing, isolation, then treatment. Mayroon po bang pag-address sa usaping iyan para sa ating manggagawa na babalik o pinababalik na sa mga pagawaan, mga impresa at mga opisina, Mr. Speaker, Mme. Sponsor?

REP. LEGARDA. Salamat at maganda ang inyong katanungan. Ang buong panukalang batas na ito ay para po talaga sa manggagawa sa pribado at sa pampublikong sektor. Example po, sa page 8, number (7), sa LGUs, let us say, iyong mga trabahante, mga opisyal sa LGUs at mga nagtatrabaho doon, there is a mandated task for local chief executives na sila po ay maglagay ng containment zones or critical zones,

isolation areas, at kailangan ding magtatag ng testing centers, mag-procure ng COVID-19 testing kits, ng PPE, iba pang mga equipment at supplies na kailangan para sa testing sa kanilang respective jurisdictions, including iyong establishment ng drive-thru testing centers and other contactless modes of testing for the detection of COVID-19. Tapos ang DOH po, with the assistance again of the LGUs and the other agencies of government, should also endeavor to do more active and effective contact tracing of individuals who have had contact or have been exposed to certain people. Ginagawa na po iyan ngayon. In short, ipapagpatuloy po ito at dapat mas maigting.

The DOH shall also conduct contact tracing for individuals suspected or those afflicted with the disease, and the DOH will also establish and manage government operated and maintained quarantine facilities, gaya po nang itinayo na sa ibang mga pampublikong lugar dito. Kaya hindi po matatapos pagka-lift ng ECQ at GCQ, na iiwanan na lang ang testing centers. In fact, dapat magtayo pa ng mas marami like containment facilities. Ang isolation or quarantine centers ay patuloy pa ring gagamitin. Ang makikinabang po dito, ang mga empleyado ng gobyerno rin at mga manggagawa ng pribadong sektor. Marami pa po. In fact, even in the management of spaces, the whole Bill really applies to employees in the government and in the private sector as well. For employees in the private sector and private businesses, the Bill requires the submission of a better normal workforce and a workplace management plan. It will specify how the businesses can comply with the safeguard measures while taking into consideration their own capabilities and resources. What am I trying to say? Ito po ang magiging bagong patakaran sa pribadong sektor, pero mahalaga ang compliance. Ibig sabihin, mapipilitan silang pangalagaan ang kalusugan ng mga tao nila, hindi iyong pagbalik sa trabaho ganoon pa rin. Gagawa sila hindi lang ng management plan para sa kanilang negosyo, kundi kasama na rin ang kalusugan ng kanilang mga empleyado. For example, ang mga LGU, mayroon naman silang IRA, mayroon din silang ibang sources of funding. If I may, gaya po sa amin sa Antique, wala kaming PCR laboratory. Noong umpisa pupunta pa kami sa RITM, tapos noong na-accredit na ang West Visayas Medical Center, pag pupunta kami, three hours away pa.

Ang tagal po bago bumalik ang resulta ng may suspected COVID-19, seven to 10 days, pero nagkusa kami, at ngayon ay inaaral na ng DOH iyong biocontainment facility ng isang firm na Pilipino po ang nag-imbento. Maaari in the next few weeks, magkakaroon na ng sariling PCR laboratory ang aming lalawigan dahil malayo sa amin ang pinakamalapit na accreditation facility. Kung kaya naman siguro ng hindi napakayamang probinsiya ng Antique ang isang biocontainment facility na PCR lab, dapat sikapin ng

iba't ibang mga distrito o ng ibang mga probinsiya na magkaroon ng ganoon. These are just some. Of course, the one in Antique is an example, that is not in the law. It is going to be funded by the provincial government.

All I am saying is that this proposed measure will change the mindset of people. It will not be governance as usual, business as usual, making the same mistakes or ignoring the hazards, risks and vulnerabilities. Magfocus po tayo sa kalusugan, focus po tayo sa kapakanan ng ating mga staff, empleyado at mga manggagawa, kasi kung hindi natin alagaan ang kalusugan ng isang manggagawa, maaaring siya ang maging sanhi ng panghahawa.

So, because of this virus, we learned to care, we learned to have more compassion and to be kinder, and know that if we do not have malasakit for the other, tayo ay pasa-pasa iyong virus na iyan. So, there are many provisions in this almost 40-page Bill, and some are those which I just mentioned.

Congressman Gaite. Are you there?

REP. GAITE. I am, but ...

REP. LEGARDA. Okay.

REP. GAITE. Salamat po. Dahil talagang iyon iyong concern ng maraming manggagawa, na ngayon, bunga na nga ng pangangailangan na muling makapagtrabaho para magkaroon ng kikitain para sa lumalaking gastusin nila sa pang-araw-araw ay haharap sila sa ganitong napakamapanganib na sitwasyon. Pero tama naman po iyong binabanggit ano, na talagang dapat ang gobyerno ay gumawa ng mga kongkretong hakbang para matulungan ang mga mamamayan pati ang kanyang mga manggagawa sa loob ng pamahalaan, pati ang mga manggagawa sa pribadong sektor.

Maitanong ko lang po, Mme. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, binabanggit po dito, example, paano natin matutulungan iyong ating mga manggagawa. Kunwari po iyong sa usapin ng paggamit nga ng face masks. Ang pagkasulat po, "Provided, that the government shall endeavor to implement the free distribution of masks to the general public." Ang ibig sabihin ho ba ng "the government shall endeavor" ay susubukan lang nila na makapagbigay ng libreng mask? Or is it going to be a program wherein the government itself, instead of i-bear iyong cost noong ordinaryong mamamayan, na kulang na nga ang suweldo niya, kulang din iyong kinikita niya ay maghahagilap pa siya nitong mga face mask? Totoong sinasabi na maaari tayong gumamit ng handkerchiefs or other protective material, but according to the advice of other mga science-based na mga eksperto, baka hindi sasapat iyong ganoong gamit ng face mask. Kung kaya, kung sana iyong mga medical mask na kahit paano ay mas mataas ang reliability na ikaw ay hindi mahawa. Ganoon ho ba ang pagkaintindi ko? When the wording

states "the government shall endeavor," sisikapin o susubukan lang po o ito ay gagawing parang mandatory na tulong ng gobyerno sa kanyang mga mamamayan, Mme. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. LEGARDA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Congressman Gaite.

The reason for that is gawa na ang budget for this year. And while we gave the President the leeway for the allocation of the budget, then, we cannot ask every government agency to do that now. But when we do the budget for 2021, there could be an allocation for masks or PPE when needed. Kaya kung ganyan nga iyong wording po na nabasa ninyo ay dahil hindi naman natin na-provide iyan. But, of course, we gave the Bayanihan Act the leeway to realign funds. Kaya libre ang ibinibigay na iba. But I am not certain how many exactly are needed. And, of course, you have to change the masks every day. So, it would be very difficult for me, honestly, to say kailangang magbigay ng libreng masks to, example, how many, 50 million, a hundred million, that would be impossible. And in the appropriation portion, as you see, it did not say that there is an appropriation for the purchase of masks. So, it would be very difficult for me.

I was Chairman of Finance before, I have legislated for more than two decades. It would have been a very contentious issue if I put the mandatory purchase of the government when I have no source of funding, to be honest,

REP. GAITE. Salamat po, Mme. Sponsor. Kasi nga po pati na nga sa pagkasulat ng probisyon patungkol sa pagsuot ng masks, sinabing mandatory, and as such, naglagay pa ng penalties. Kung kaya nababahala ang Kinatawag ito na kapag in-impose natin iyong mandatory wearing of masks and imposing penalties thereof, baka sa halip na makatulong tayo, baka mas mahirapan pa iyong ating mga mamamayan sapagkat parang, kumbaga, hindi ba po sa mga opisina, mayroong clothing allowance o uniform allowance, ibig sabihin, kasama sa expenditures ng opisina iyong lahat ng kailangan o necessary na para makapag-operate ka nang maayos sa opisina. Kaya iyan iyong isang concern lang ng Kinatawag ito. At nabanggit ninyo po, maganda pong example iyong nabanggit ninyo po sa Antique, na sigurado na isang malaking suliranin ng ating mga local government unit probably except for those which have more and are financially capable. Marami sa mga LGUs natin ay hindi sapat iyong kanilang pondo, at na-cite ninyo po kanina, kagalang-galang na Sponsor, na iyong LGUs ang magpo-provide ng funding for the implementation of this program. Hindi ho ba natin tinitingnan ang mga ibang kaparaanan para po matulungan din, actually, iyong mga local government to implement this project, this program? Actually,

kahit sa private sector, nabasa ko po dito na kailangang magkaroon ng testing in terms noong temperature at gagamit ng thermal scanners. Medyo mahal po iyan. Kung ang LGU ay walang sapat na pondo, baka hindi nila ito o mahihirapan silang i-implement ito. Kung maliit na establishment ng negosyo, papaano niya mate-test iyong kanyang mga customer o di kaya iyong mga employee kung maliit nga o kulang na kulang nga iyong pondo nila? Papaano ito makakatulong o papaano natin maa-assure na mai-implement itong mandatories na ito? And yet, resource-wise, hindi natin binibigyan ng supisyenteng tulong o suporta ang local governments, mga small business enterprises at iba pa. Naglalagay po ba tayo ng proviso para dito, Mme. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. LEGARDA. Thank you for that question. Actually, that is a very pragmatic question because, yes, there are LGUs na kayang gumastos para dito at mayroon namang hindi kaya. But remember, ang mga medical-grade masks po na mina-mandate ay para sa mga health worker lang. Maaari tayong mag-innovate ng mga mask gaya ng sinabi ko po, maski galing sa mga retaso o galing sa mga panyo na recyclable naman at puwedeng hugasan o linisin at hindi naman kailangang bago nang bago ang mask. But other PPEs, that would really depend on the kind of livelihood, kung saan ka nagtatrabaho. Hindi naman po lahat ng mga Pilipino ay magre-require ng PPE at hindi naman lahat kailangan ng mask unless they are in public places. So, we also give the LGUs and the DOH flexibility in rule-making and further exemptions. Mahirap sabihin na ganito lang ang gagawin. This Bill is clear in its desire to make the environment healthy for everyone, and the implementation of public health safeguards will be guided by the principle of helping the needy LGUs.

Let me just read the portion here in the Declaration of Policy, to “regulate, institute, and establish standards and protocols that would simultaneously protect the vulnerable from COVID-19 and prevent its transmission.” To “pursue the restoration of livelihood opportunities and sources of income for all, especially the poor, in the event of widespread disease outbreak and the resulting slowdown of economic activity, and building adaptive capacity and resilience for future shocks.” And if the government is unable to provide the masks, then the LGU and the DOH can have the flexibility. So, there is no clear-cut rule. Some LGUs can afford. For those who cannot afford, the national government would have the facilities and the budget to assist that LGU.

REP. GAITE. Salamat po. Dahil po sa karanasan ninyo rin sa mga LGU, kitang-kita ninyo naman talaga po iyong suliranin, iyong kakulangan ng pondo ng ating mga LGU. Totoong mayroon silang IRA pero marami pa

rin ang humaharap sa malaking pagkukulang sa pondo lalo na nitong mga nakaraang buwan na nag-provide sila ng relief and other assistance to their constituents.

Panghuli na lang po, Mme. Sponsor. Ang isang suliranin po ng ating maraming mga manggagawa ay hinggil sa transportasyon. May probisyon po sa ating proposed Better Normal Bill, sa page 11, regarding management of public transportation pero bunga na nga rin po ng mga measure na gagamitin, universal and mandatory safety measures sa management ng public transportation, sigurado po, kung noon pang pandemya ay problema na ang pagpasok ng mga manggagawa na kalakhan ay umaasa sa public transport system, ngayon ay lilimitahan ang bilang ng maaaring sumakay sa mga public transport at ang suliranin pa, ipagbabawal pa rin iyong motorcycle taxis dahil nga po ito daw iyong isang hindi pa natitiyak ang kasiguruhan na maaaring magkaroon ng transmission ng sakit dahil sa proximity nila. Mayroon ho ba tayong mga proposal na mismo ang mga opisina o mga kumpanyang pribado ay magpo-provide ng iba’t ibang porma ng services tulad ng shuttle, tayo po, dito sa Kongreso, ang ating mga empleyado ay nabibiyayaan ng shuttle services. Pero hindi po ganyan sa karamihan ng government agencies. Hindi ho kaya na kaysa makipag-agawan pa iyong mga government worker sa mga iba pang empleyado sa kulang na nga na public transport ay nalilimitahan pa? Hindi kaya maaari ring isulong din natin na katulad sa Kongreso, katulad sa Senado, ay gumawa rin ng mga hakbang para magkaroon ng libreng shuttle services ang mga kawani at manggagawa para una, mabawasan iyong possibility ng pagkahawa sa iba pang mga mamamayan, at ikalawa, mabigyan din sila ng konting alwan dahil mababawasan iyong halaga ng kanilang expenditure sa transportation cost? So, iyon po iyong isang sana ay isama natin bilang isang tulong sa ating mga manggagawa katulad na rin sa pribadong sektor na suliranin pa rin ang problema ng public transport system, Mme. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LEGARDA. Yes, you are correct in citing that, and if I may mention and read this portion of the proposed measure:

The local chief executives of LGUs, in coordination with the private sector, shall implement, monitor and maintain a planned schedule for people traveling to and from their respective workplaces or residences located in the LGU and if possible or applicable, the charter of various means of transport for the use of residents and workers to and from their respective destinations.

Taken into consideration po, Congressman Gaité, Mr. Speaker, ang inyong sinabi na makikipag-ugnayan

po ang lokal na pamahalaan, ang local chief executive at ang pribadong sektor sa transport po ng shuttle kagaya ng sinasabi ninyong mayroon tayo sa House of Representatives. At maalala po natin na hindi na po ganoon karami ang papasok, hindi ba? Baka 50 percent na lang dahil i-encourage po natin na work from home, stay at home, maski po wala nang lockdown, para konti na lang po ang papasok at iyong iba naman po ay mananatili sa bahay.

REP. GAITE. Maraming salamat po sa inyong mga kasagutan na nakatulong para maglinaw sa Kinatawagang ito. Maraming usapin na bumabagabag lalo na sa haharapin natin na better normal. At tama po iyong inyong obserbasyon na sa usapin ng kalusugan, sa usapin ng ating kapaligiran, ay matagal talagang na-neglect ito, kung kaya now, we are reaping what we have sown, the inadequate resources that we have provided for our social services and now biting us in the proverbial (*inaudible*).

Kaya po salamat po sa inyong mga kasagutan, Mme. Sponsor. Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker, at sa lahat ng ating kasamahan sa loob ng Kongreso at sa lahat ng mga nanonood o nakikinig sa ating talakayan.

REP. LEGARDA. Salamat at maganda po iyong mga tanong ninyo. Mayroon pa akong karagdagang sagot sa inyong huling tanong, sa page 11, number 4, iyong land use, planning at zoning can help people move closer to work. Kaya nga po ay tama po kayo at I am glad that you agree with me that itong pandemic ay nag-jolt sa atin sa mga maling ginagawa natin dati. So, this is clearly not just a health measure, but it is a health, environmental, ecological measure because it cannot be business as usual or living our lives as usual. We really have to evolve to become the better normal.

Maraming salamat po, Congressman Gaité, sa inyong mga enlightening questions. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Thank you, Deputy Speaker. Thank you, Congressman Gaité. The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Hon. France Castro is hereby recognized.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and to our Sponsor of the Bill, Cong. Loren Legarda.

So, would the distinguished honorable Cong. Loren Legarda yield to some of my questions?

REP. LEGARDA. It will be my pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to answer the questions from my esteemed colleague, Cong. France Castro.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Yes. Natatandaan ko rin po kayo, Cong. Loren Legarda, when you were Senator. Ang ACT po ay partner ninyo doon sa education. Kaya po ang aking mga tanong, Mme. Sponsor, would go around iyong education, new normal natin, okay. So, alam natin, Cong. Loren Legarda, iyong sitwasyon ng ating mga eskuwelahan, hindi po ba, distinguished Sponsor? Nakita natin iyong ating mga eskuwelahan ay, lalong-lalo na sa public school, parang kung titingnan po natin iyong inilagay po natin dito sa panukalang batas na new normal, physical distancing, at iba pa po ay parang in three years ay hindi siya matutupad lalong-lalo na po iyong physical distancing, not unless talagang i-impose po natin lalong-lalo na po doon sa class size. So, siguro, bago ako magpatuloy, baka puwede ninyo pong i-describe generally po iyong ini-envision nitong batas na ito kaugnay noong ating schools or facilities, lalong-lalo na po sa public schools.

REP. LEGARDA. Napakagandang tanong dahil iyon po ang concern ng marami. On page 13, letter D, Better Normal for Schools and Educational Institutions, allow me to read:

The Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) are authorized to determine the start of the academic year 2020 to 2021 for all public and private schools, state universities and colleges (SUCs), local universities and colleges (LUCs), private colleges and universities, and other learning institutions.

You will recall, this is very important na maipasá po natin bago po tayo mag-adjourn dahil ayon po sa batas, ngayon iyong present Republic Act, ay dapat magbukas ang klase na ang pinakahuli ay Agosto.

If we do not pass the measure, nakatali po ang kamay ng DepEd na kailangang magbukas nang August 24. Eh wala pa namang vaccine, delikado ang mga bata, magwo-worry ang mga magulang. Ang mga guro rin, hindi naman kaya ma-testing ang lahat-lahat sa kanila. So, kailangang may flexibility po ang DepEd Secretary sa pagdesisyon po kung kailan magbukas. Kaya lang nga, dahil sa present R.A.—what is that number, you would know better, what is the present Republic Act that mandates the...

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Opening of the classes...

REP. LEGARDA. Yes. R.A. 69?

REP. CASTRO (F.L). Seven-seven...

REP. LEGARDA. Yeah. Okay, you know the number better.

REP. CASTRO (F.L). Yes.

REP. LEGARDA. Anyway, so we foresaw that. Ito po ay kasama dito para bigyan po ng leeway, o inamend iyong batas na iyon para puwede pong buksan ng DepEd ang classes in another time, if that is R.A. 7797. So, that is number one. It addresses that issue in the present R.A., which mandates the opening of classes, at the latest, in August. If this is passed, and please help me pass this, importante bago tayo mag-adjourn, ang DepEd makakapagdesisyon kung Agosto ba, Enero ba next year, o kailan nga ba?

Pangalawa po:

All public and private educational institutions including private and public universities and colleges shall formulate, develop and adopt a flexible learning approach which is designed to meet the students' needs, the capabilities of faculty members, and conditions on the ground without prejudice to the adoption of measures for online learning.

Kasi naman, iba iyong dating panahon natin. Magkaedad ba tayo? Hindi ako sure, mas bata kayo sa akin.

REP. CASTRO (F.L). Malapit na.

REP. LEGARDA. Iba na ngayon with the digital age, kaya kailangan talaga flexible, hindi puro face-to-face na dikit-dikit. So, we provided for that in number 2.

Pangatlo po:

The DepEd shall develop, implement and promote a flexible learning program for K-12 students x x x taking into consideration the capability of the school and its teachers in delivering such program, and the accessibility of learning materials, either physical or electronic to the students. The flexible learning program shall be geared towards limiting physical contact among the school population and minimizing the impact on the potential for learning and instruction between students and teachers: Provided, That students shall not be penalized for their inability to access and participate in electronic or digital means of learning due to the limitations in connectivity or unavailability of equipment.

The bill further reads:

Provided, further that television and radio [and perhaps even cable], done in partnership between DepEd, National Council for Children Television, Early Childhood Community Development Center, higher education institutions and pertinent cooperatives and organizations and with the assistance licensed TV and radio broadcast stations shall serve as alternative platforms for learning."

I will read further:

The CHED shall monitor the implementation of flexible learning programs for all HEIs, SUCs, LUCs. HEIs shall continue to exercise academic freedom and levels of autonomy in the governance of their own academic affairs: Provided, That students shall not be penalized for their inability to access or participate in electronic or digital means of learning due to limitations in connectivity or the unavailability of equipment.

5. The National Government shall allocate funding for the research, training of faculty, curriculum development, monitoring and evaluating, benchmarking, and the development of systems for learning continuity during times of crisis, such as the occurrence of a pandemic. Such funding will be made available by the National Government, from the existing budgetary allocation of K-12 and other similar programs, and made available to higher education institutions, including those organized as stock corporations, local research institutes, academic organizations, LGUs, school boards, and individual researchers through an application process to be prescribed by the DepEd and the CHED: Provided, That for the benefit of learners who have hearing impairment, the full participation of deaf linguistic organizations and deaf cooperatives shall be required in the development of learning materials.

So, you have seen so far how sensitive this Bill is, even to the differently abled, hanggang po sa mga deaf and linguistic organizations. Nakita po ninyo na, at talagang tatlong pahina po iyong nabasa ko na, we stressed the flexibility of online learning. If I may:

6. Subject to consultation with the DepEd, CHED and the TESDA, all face-to-face classes and group school activities, including sports, athletics, cultural, and academic meets x x x shall remain suspended unless otherwise officially declared permissible by competent authorities without prejudice to the academic freedom and levels of autonomy enjoyed by HEIs in the management and conduct of their academic affairs;

7. Digital learnings shall be promoted with the National Government in coordination with telco companies and Internet service providers;

8. Public and private educational institution x x x shall prioritize the establishment of online platforms for the Continuing Professional Development or the CPD and the Mandatory Continuing Legal Education Programs.

Ang dami po. So, you see, Cong. France Castro, how we gave the education sector so much importance, and we gave it sensitivity for continuous learning not just the learners, but for our teachers as well. We gave flexibility. They can use, not just online or digital platforms, but puwede ring cable, puwedeng TV, puwedeng radio. Bakit po natin naisip ito? Dahil sa ating distrito sa probinsiya ng Antique, kami po ay walang telebisyon doon. Wala namang TV network. Kami po ay mayroon lang doon dalawang cable stations, iilang radio stations pero ang reach naman ay hindi naman iyong 18 LGUs ng buong probinsiya. Kaya, itinanong ko kay USec Sevilla ng DepEd, “Paano na kami magbubukas nang Agosto? Ayaw ng mga magulang. Takot ang mga magulang. Paano ang mga bata?” Sabi, “Hindi. Puwede namang flexible online learning.” Sabi ko, “Paano mag-o-online? Wala kaming Internet. Iyong iba nga ni walang cell site.” “Ah, puwede naman sa radio.” So, puwede pong, ayaw kong gamitin iyong word na “hybrid,” iyong iba-iba pong plataporma. Iyong mga malapit at maglalakad lang papunta sa eskuwela, puwede. Iyong mga iba, sa radio. Iyong iba, sa cable. Iyong iba, hard copy, puwede pang dalhin sa bahay. So, ganoon po, iba-iba po ang mga plataporma for learning in the different LGUs.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay. So, inaasahan po natin, G. Sponsor, na hindi natin maiiwasan later on, hindi po ba, iyong face-to-face classes. So, mae-ensure po ba natin iyong 15 to 20 na class size para mame-maintain natin iyong social distancing? Kasi napakahalaga niyan para po, una, sa kalidad ng edukasyon. Iyong 15 to 20 ay talagang tamang-tama iyan para sa kalidad ng edukasyon natin later on. So, mae-ensure po ba ng batas na ito na later on ay mailalagay ito?

Pangalawa po ay iyong concern po natin, Mme. Sponsor, tungkol doon sa ating mga teachers. Halimbawa po, sa mga teachers natin, sabi nila dito, isa sa mga

patakaran ng DepEd ay iyong tungkol sa pagta-transfer daw po ng mga teachers from one place to another. Kasi mayroon kasing ganoon, Mme. Sponsor, na kapag nag-transfer si teacher at ganito ang kanyang position, hindi niya rin makukuha iyong kanyang item kasi ang nangyayari po ay si teacher, back to Teacher 1 or Teacher 2 or Teacher 3. Parang may ganoon pong mga probisyon. Mayroon po bang ganoong probisyon diyan sa inyo?

REP. LEGARDA. I am not familiar with that. I am sorry, I am not familiar with that provision that the teachers—can you explain that again? Hindi po nila makukuha ang kanilang ...

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). In relation to iyong habitat po ng mga teachers, may mga teachers po tayo, halimbawa, na gustong mag-transfer, like may teacher po tayo sa Manila, gustong mag-transfer diyan sa Antique. Ang posisyon niya ay Master Teacher, pero kapag pumunta sa inyo po ay magiging Teacher 1. Paano natin mae-encourage, halimbawa, ang teacher?

REP. LEGARDA. Wala po.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Wala siyang ganoon?

REP. LEGARDA. Yes.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). So, dapat, siguro posapagagawa ng IRR ay maisama na ng Department of Education, just to put lang on record, na isa iyon sa concerns din ng ating mga teachers sa better normal, Mme. Sponsor.

REP. LEGARDA. Yes, I assure you it is not contained in this Bill, Cong. Castro, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay. Gusto ko lang pong mai-put on record na sana po ay kapag nag-transfer si teacher ay madadala niya iyong kanyang item pagdating doon sa probinsya na pupuntahan niya. So, iyon po, gusto ko lang pong i-record.

REP. LEGARDA. Iyon naman po ang dapat.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.) Kasi isa po ito sa mga problema ng ating mga teachers sa pagta-transfer. Isa pa pong concern, Mme. Sponsor, sana po para po doon po sa ating private school teachers po, sana po hindi ma-discriminate, ma-penalize in any way o mapagastos nang sobra for lack of iyong mga shuttles or testings, et cetera. Kasi po nire-require din na magkaroon ng testing sa mga private schools. Sana magamit din itong batas na ito na mabigyan din sila ng ganoong benefit.

REP. LEGARDA. Yes, you are referring to private school teachers?

REP. CASTRO (F.L.) Yes, oo, iyong mga private school teachers natin, para po sa kaalaman din po ng ating butihing Sponsor, hanggang ngayon po, Mme. Sponsor, iyong ating mga private school teachers, karamihan po sa kanila ay “no work, no pay” sa ngayon. Dahil nga po sa August pa ang pasok o sa September pa or whatever na date pa iyong pasok, hanggang ngayon po ay “no work, no pay” pa sila. So, mayroon po bang provision dito sa ating batas na kaugnay noon?

REP. LEGARDA. About the payment of the teachers?

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Yes. Oo, iyong kanilang pay. So, ano po bang provision dito?

REP. LEGARDA. This focuses on the health and the environmental standards but it does not contain provisions on the salaries of teachers who have not been paid because, there are no new appropriations here; this is just changing the way of living. So, let me see, on page 27, but I am certain, hindi po nakalagay iyong ganyan; it does not state the salaries of the teachers in private schools during the time of pandemic, about their payments.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay. Next po, Mme. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, as regards the health and sanitation in our public schools and private schools, we know na talagang bago pa po magpandemya, talagang wala na po o kulang ang water supply sa ating mga eskuwelahan. Kahit na po toilet ay talagang kulang din sa ating mga eskuwelahan. May provision po ba dito sa ating batas kaugnay po noong sa mga water supply...

REP. LEGARDA. Yes.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). ...at saka iyon po, yes, may provision for clinics po ba? Kasi kailangan, mahalagang-mahalaga po na dapat ay may mga clinic sa ating mga eskuwelahan. Sabi naman natin, “Prevention is better than cure,” kaya dapat mayroon po tayong mga clinic, provided with health workers sa ating mga schools, lalong-lalo na iyong mga large schools, at iyong cluster of smaller schools, malagyan sana ng health workers. Ito iyong puwedeng puntahan ng ating mga bata, mga teachers na nagkakasakit o mga may symptoms. Mayroon po bang provision sa ating mga eskuwelahan ng mga ganoong infrastructure, Mme. Sponsor?

REP. LEGARDA. Mayroon itong mga provisions po on the availability of water, in fact, the compliance with already existing laws like the Clean Water Act and those on sewerage and septage, and all of those. But with regard to specific provisions of putting sources of water in schools, I think, I support that very much, but that can be included in the IRR.

Let me just see here, on Page 33, it says, if I may read into the record:

Considering that water is a basic need in containing the transmission of COVID-19 and similar diseases, the local water districts shall ensure the availability of sufficient water supply in their areas of coverage. In the case of private water utilities, such service providers shall review and recommend the appropriate extension of concession agreements necessary to ensure sufficient water supply in their service areas as well as to fast track the sewerage systems as required under Republic Act No. 9275, or the Clean Water Act. Such service providers shall also be required to submit their new master plans to reflect a speedier full sewerage, septage and/or wastewater treatment coverage of the metropolis.

So, mayroon po tayong full provision on the availability of water.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay. Mabalik po tayo, Mme. Sponsor, doon sa wearing of masks. So, are we requiring our students to wear a mask po sa buong duration po noong kanilang pag-stay, halimbawa, sa school? Si teacher, ganoon din po ba? Kasi, mayroong pong mga comments, mga sinasabi nila na si teacher, halimbawa, magtuturo siya nang ilang oras. Ang hirap hong makahinga dahil doon sa mga mask. Ano po ba iyong provision? Kasi nakakatakot po dito iyong penalty po, iyong may P1,000 kapag nahuling hindi naka-mask. Puwede pong, any time, kahit po ba bata ay huhulihin kung hindi po siya naka-wear ng mask?

REP. LEGARDA. The law or the proposed measure has general provisions on mask-wearing and on physical distancing. Pero po sa IRR, iyong mga detalye na po na iyan, let us say, insofar as the teachers are concerned, it will be the DepEd that will help us write the IRR on how we can be more flexible and understanding while still maintaining the health standards needed by this. Mahirap naman na nagtanggap ng mask ang teacher kasi mainit ang panahon, huhulihin. You know, we have to be reasonable while, at the same time, protect the health of our people.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Yes.

REP. LEGARDA. So, as we all know, a law has general provisions. That is the reason why the devil is in the details, as they always say. The IRR is so important, ...

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Yes.

REP. LEGARDA. ... that is why we will also establish an Oversight Committee of both Houses of Congress to see how the law will be implemented later on.

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

Nabanggit ko lang po iyan, Mme. Sponsor, kasi katulad nga ng sinabi ninyo, the law should be reasonable and compassionate. Well, na-experience na po natin iyan sa pagpapatupad noong quarantine, iyong Bayanihan to Heal As One Act. Marami doon sa mga inaresto, marami sa mga kinasuhan ay may pangangailangan sa food, sa medicine at saka iyong mga essentials po pero binigyan ng ticket, iyon ang kinasuhan. So, iyon po, sana magkaroon ng malinaw na probisyon iyan pagdating doon sa IRR.

Iyong last na po, Mme. ...

REP. LEGARDA. I agree with you, Cong. Castro, that when we are protecting the health and safety of our people, while we should be strict, we should be compassionate.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Yes. Last na po, Mme. Sponsor, about the management of spaces.

So nakita ko, may napansin po ako ditong “New Normal Permit,” letter (a). Hindi ko po nakuha iyong bagong substitute Bill pero nakalagay pa po ba dito iyong “New Normal Permit”? So, what do you mean by that?

If I may read po the provision, it says that “public gatherings as well as the flow of people in the government-managed public spaces”—so nandito po iyong public markets, parks, plazas, covered courts, et cetera—“shall be highly regulated and subjected to guidelines onset upon by the issuance of a new normal permit by the local government.”

Ano po ang ibig sabihin natin ng “New Normal Permit”? So ibig pong sabihin, kung pupunta po ang mga tao sa mga park, mayroon pa po bang permit? Iyon po ba ang ibig sabihin nito, Mme. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. LEGARDA. You are referring to “Management of Spaces”?

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Yes, opo, iyon po iyong term dito.

REP. LEGARDA. Opo. It says:

Public gatherings are prohibited subject to the exceptions as may be provided under the implementing rules and regulations of this Act;

LGUs shall regulate public gatherings as well as the flow of people in government-managed public spaces, subject to the guidelines set in the IRR of this Act and, if necessary, issue a Better Normal Permit to provide the limitations on such public gatherings in order to prevent disease transmission.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay. Ang tanong ko po, opo, so ano po ito, gagawa po ba ng permit, hihingi ng permit? Kasi, hindi po ba magiging—may problema po tayo doon sa pag-exercise naman ng karapatan ng mga tao po doon sa mga park? Halimbawa po, later on, kapag halimbawa ginagamit po iyong park sa mga mass gathering, paano po makakaapekto doon sa karapatan naman po ng tao?

REP. LEGARDA. Because the virus is still here, we realize that we cannot have big mass gatherings yet, ‘di ba ho makakahawa? And so, kailangan ma-regulate po natin ang number of people kung ano po ang mapapagkasunduan doon sa IRR at sa LGU, kaya nga it is a responsibility of the local governments to monitor and to regulate these gatherings of people in government spaces. Dahil kung hahayaan lang natin after lockdown, which is in a few weeks, by next week, mag-mass gathering na po ang mga tao sa lahat ng public spaces, there clearly would be a spike in diseases. And so, this is not forever, it is temporary and this is like one of the provisions where a review and based on the sunset provision na hindi naman ito forever na ganoon, habang nandiyan lang po iyong virus. Syempre po, kapag may vaccine na, hindi naman dapat i-regulate iyong mga mass gatherings po, ito po ay panandalian lamang, habang nandiyan pa po iyong ating virus.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay. So, I hope po itong batas na ito kung maipasá po ay hindi po siya mag-i-impede doon sa mga basic rights ng ating mga mamamayan, right to movement. And, alam naman po natin iyong mga basic rights na iyon na lalo na dapat na hindi mabalewala.

So, iyon lang po, Mme. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much po and goodnight.

REP. LEGARDA. I really appreciate your intervention, Cong. Castro, and I will reiterate that I am one with you in upholding the human rights of every Filipino in the implementation and enactment of the Better Normal Act. While we protect the utmost health and safety, and environmental standards that are enshrined in this Bill, we must have compassion and consideration in the implementation of this law and at no instance will any human right be violated in using this law as a reason for the violation of such human right. So, I am one with you in that.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Thank you very much, Mme. Sponsor.

REP. LEGARDA. Salamat po, salamat po, Cong. Castro.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION
OF H.B. NO. 6864

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, with the indulgence of our Sponsor and our colleagues, it is already ten in the evening. We need to wrap up our interpellation. However, I may only suspend the consideration of this Bill and we can continue the interpellations on this Bill next week.

With the kind indulgence of our Sponsor, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 6864.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The consideration of House Bill No. 6864 is hereby suspended.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). 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 Reports which were referred to the appropriate Committees hereunder indicated:

COMMITTEE REPORT

Report of the Committee on Local Government (Committee Report No. 336), re H.B. No. 6866, entitled: "AN ACT DIVIDING BARANGAY MUZON IN THE CITY OF SAN JOSE DEL MONTE, PROVINCE OF BULACAN INTO FOUR (4) SEPARATE AND INDEPENDENT BARANGAYS TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGAY MUZON PROPER, BARANGAY MUZON EAST, BARANGAY MUZON WEST AND BARANGAY MUZON SOUTH"

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bills Numbered 2379 and 3546

Sponsors: Representatives Villanueva and Robes
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Local Government (Committee Report No. 337), re H.B. No. 6867, entitled: "AN ACT REAPPORTIONING THE PROVINCE OF BULACAN INTO SIX (6) LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS"

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 5866

Sponsors: Representatives Villanueva, Silverio and Sy-Alvarado

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Local Government (Committee Report No. 338), re H.B. No. 3881, entitled: "AN ACT DECLARING JUNE 18 OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL NONWORKING HOLIDAY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF STA. MARIA, PROVINCE OF DAVAO OCCIDENTAL, IN COMMEMORATION OF ITS FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY"

recommending its approval without amendment

Sponsors: Representatives Villanueva and Bautista-Bandigan

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Government Enterprises and Privatization (Committee Report No. 339), re H.B. No. 6869, entitled:

"AN ACT CREATING THE EASTERN VISAYAS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (EVDA), DEFINING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR"

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 1155

Sponsors: Representatives Romualdez (Yedda) and Romualdez (Ferdinand)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

OMNIBUS CONSIDERATION OF HOUSE BILLS
ON SECOND READING

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider local bills contained in the Calendar of Business for Thursday and Friday. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to our rules, allow me to put forth an omnibus motion for the consideration on Second Reading of the following measures:

House Bill No. 6842 under Committee Report No. 320;

House Bill No. 6844 under Committee Report No. 322;

House Bill No. 6845 under Committee Report No. 323;

House Bill No. 6846 under Committee Report No. 324

House Bill No. 6849 under Committee Report No. 325;

House Bill No. 6850 under Committee Report No. 326;

House Bill No. 6852 under Committee Report No. 327;

House Bill No. 6853 under Committee Report No. 328;

House Bill No. 6854 under Committee Report No. 329;

House Bill No. 6855 under Committee Report No. 330;

House Bill No. 6858 under Committee Report No. 331;

House Bill No. 6866 under Committee Report No. 336;

House Bill No. 3881 under Committee Report No. 338; and

House Bill No. 6898 under Committee Report No. 339.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of sponsorship and debate, and consider the respective Explanatory Notes of the bills as the sponsorship thereon.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, there being no Member who wishes to interpellate on or speak against the said local bills, I move that we terminate the period of sponsorship and debate.

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

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

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

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

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve House Bills Nos. 6842, 6844, 6845, 6846, 6849, 6850, 6852, 6853, 6854, 6855, 6858, 6866, 3881 and 6898 on Second Reading.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

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

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

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

FEW MEMBERS. *Nay*.

OMNIBUS APPROVAL OF LOCAL BILLS ON SECOND READING

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

House Bills Nos. 6842, 6844, 6845, 6846, 6849, 6850, 6852, 6853, 6854, 6855, 6858, 6866, 3881 and 6898 are approved on Second Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn the session until three o'clock in the afternoon of Monday, June 1, 2020.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Savellano). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the session is adjourned until Monday, June 1, 2020, at three o'clock in the afternoon.

It was 10:07 p.m.