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No. 12

CALL TO ORDER

At 3:00 p.m., Rep. Juan Miguel Macapagal Arroyo called the session to order.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Macapagal Arroyo). The session is hereby called to order.

Majority Leader.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, may we request our colleague from Party-List APEC, Rep. Sergio Dagooc, to deliver the Invocation.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Macapagal Arroyo). Honorable Dagooc, please proceed with your prayer.

Everybody rose for the Invocation.

INVOCATION

REP. DAGOOC. *In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

O Most Holy God, creator of heaven and earth, we thank You with all our hearts for granting us a restful sleep last night and for bringing us to the beginning of this new day in our lives, the seventh of December 2020, in this afternoon, of the Second Regular Session of the Eighteenth Congress.

Let Your holy blessing, guidance and protection be with us all, not only the Members of the House of Representatives, but all our countrymen, especially our House leaders led by Speaker Lord Allan Q. Velasco.

Lord, help us so that our lives shall not be in vain. Grant that we will do our duties and responsibilities well as Representatives of your people to achieve benefits not only for ourselves but also for others. Give us Your wisdom through the Holy Spirit so that we can come up with

legislations that are truly necessary and relevant to ease the burden of our countrymen, so that we can work together in peace and harmony.

Help us, O Lord, to realize that true patriotism lies in working through a Christian way. Help all of us in the renewal of our faith, in Your words and teachings, as what has been done by our heroes and ancestors.

Bless the Eighteenth Congress and our fatherland. Grant us, O Lord, the courage and humility to accept and admit that true leaders need to inspire the people, not because of who they are, but because of their practices in Your teachings of righteousness and moral conduct.

This we ask through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Macapagal Arroyo). Thank you, Congressman Dagooc.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Macapagal Arroyo). Please remain standing for the singing of the National Anthem.

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

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Macapagal Arroyo). Majority Leader.

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

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Macapagal Arroyo). Are there any objections? (*Silence*) Hearing none; the motion is approved.

The Chair directs the Secretary General to read the titles of bills and resolutions on First Reading for referral to the appropriate committees.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

The Secretary General read the titles of the following House Bills and Resolutions on First Reading, Messages from the Senate, Communications and Committee Reports, and the Presiding Officer made the corresponding references:

BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 8104, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A FREE COVID-19 VACCINATION PROGRAM AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Tambunting
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 8105, entitled:

“AN ACT PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND LIVELIHOOD IN 4Ps, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11310, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ‘AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE PANTAWID PAMILYANG PILIPINO PROGRAM (4Ps)’ ”

By Representative Tambunting
TO THE COMMITTEE ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION

House Bill No. 8106, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING PROGRAMS FOR INCARCERATED PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN”

By Representative Tambunting
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 8107, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTING THE MEDICAL RESERVE HEROES

CORPS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Olivarez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 8108, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING THE EMPLOYMENT OF QUALIFIED LIFEGUARDS IN ALL AQUATIC FACILITIES AND BEACH RESORTS, AND PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION THEREOF”

By Representative Barba
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 8109, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING THE PROVINCE OF ILOCOS NORTE AS THE GARLIC CAPITAL OF THE PHILIPPINES”

By Representative Barba
TO THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

House Bill No. 8110, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING MARCH 15 OF EVERY YEAR AS NATIONAL FRONTLINERS’ DAY”

By Representative Quimbo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 8112, entitled:

“AN ACT PENALIZING ANY PERSON FROM COMMITTING RECKLESS ENDANGERMENT AGAINST ANOTHER PERSON’S LIFE, SAFETY AND PROPERTY”

By Representatives Bustos, De Jesus and Romero
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 8113, entitled:

“AN ACT STRENGTHENING NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE TO PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES”

By Representatives Bustos, De Jesus and Romero
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 8114, entitled:

“AN ACT STRENGTHENING PROFESSIONALISM AND CONTINUITY OF POLICIES AND MODERNIZATION INITIATIVES OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES BY PRESCRIBING FIXED TERMS FOR THE CHIEF-OF-STAFF/CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS AND OTHER KEY OFFICERS THEREOF, INCREASING THE MANDATORY AGE OF RETIREMENT OF GENERAL/FLAG OFFICERS, PROVIDING FOR A MORE EFFECTIVE ATTRITION SYSTEM, REPEALING SECTIONS 5, 10, 11 AND 12 OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 1638, AS AMENDED, AND SECTIONS 3 AND 4 OF REPUBLIC ACT 8186, AS AMENDED, AMENDING SECTION 1 OF REPUBLIC ACT 9188 AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Pimentel
TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY

House Bill No. 8115, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING THE USE OF BUILDING MATERIALS WITH RECYCLED CONTENT IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND OTHER PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS”

By Representative Dy (Faustino)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 8116, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING SECTION 13 ARTICLE XVI OF REPUBLIC ACT 11054, ENTITLED ‘AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE ORGANIC LAW FOR THE BANGSAMORO AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT 6734, ENTITLED “AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE ORGANIC LAW OF THE AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO” AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT 9054, ENTITLED

“AN ACT TO STRENGTHEN AND EXPAND THE ORGANIC ACT FOR THE AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO”, AND FIXING FOR THIS PURPOSE THE FIRST REGULAR ELECTION FOR THE BANGSAMORO GOVERNMENT”

By Representative Legarda
TO THE COMMITTEE ON SUFFRAGE AND ELECTORAL REFORMS

House Bill No. 8117, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING SECTION 13 ARTICLE XVI OF REPUBLIC ACT 11054, ENTITLED ‘AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE ORGANIC LAW FOR THE BANGSAMORO AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT 6734, ENTITLED “AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE ORGANIC LAW OF THE AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO” AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT 9054, ENTITLED “AN ACT TO STRENGTHEN AND EXPAND THE ORGANIC ACT FOR THE AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO”, AND FIXING FOR THIS PURPOSE THE FIRST REGULAR ELECTION FOR THE BANGSAMORO GOVERNMENT”

By Representative Mangudadatu
TO THE COMMITTEE ON SUFFRAGE AND ELECTORAL REFORMS

House Bill No. 8119, entitled:

“AN ACT NAMING THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY FROM BARANGAY SAN JUAN BAUTISTA IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF GOA PASSING THROUGH BARANGAY BINALAY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF TINAMBAC AND ENDING AT BARANGAY POBLACION IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SIRUMA, ALL IN THE PROVINCE OF CAMARINES SUR AS SPEAKER ARNULFO ‘NOLI’ FUENTE BELLA HIGHWAY”

By Representative Bordado
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 8120, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A SATELLITE MULTI-SPECIES MARINE HATCHERY IN BARANGAY BALONGAY, MUNICIPALITY OF CALABANGA, PROVINCE OF CAMARINES SUR, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Bordado

TO THE COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE AND FISHERIES RESOURCES

House Bill No. 8121, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9646 ENTITLED ‘AN ACT REGULATING THE PRACTICE OF REAL ESTATE SERVICE IN THE PHILIPPINES, CREATING FOR THE PURPOSE A PROFESSIONAL REGULATORY BOARD OF REAL ESTATE SERVICE, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES’ ”

By Representative Rodriguez

TO THE COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL REGULATION

House Bill No. 8122, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR STANDARDS FOR THE PRACTICE OF REHABILITATION MEDICINE AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Rodriguez

TO THE COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL REGULATION

House Bill No. 8123, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE COLLEGE OF MEDICINE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY OF SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES (USTP) CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY CAMPUS, PROVIDING FOR ITS GOVERNANCE, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Rodriguez

TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 8124, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE EXTENSION CAMPUS OF THE CAGAYAN STATE UNIVERSITY (CSU) LOCATED IN IRAGA, MUNICIPALITY OF SOLANA, PROVINCE OF CAGAYAN INTO A REGULAR CAMPUS OF THE CSU, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 1 OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 1436 SERIES OF 1978, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Lara

TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 8125, entitled:

“AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF OUR NATIONAL CULTURAL HERITAGE, THROUGH AN ENHANCED CULTURAL POLICY, HERITAGE EDUCATION, AND CULTURAL MAPPING PROGRAM, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10066 OR THE NATIONAL CULTURAL HERITAGE ACT OF 2009”

By Representative Tambunting

TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 8126, entitled:

“AN ACT ENHANCING THE RESILIENCY AND ADAPTABILITY OF FARMERS TO ADVERSE WEATHER AND CLIMATE EVENTS BY INSTITUTIONALIZING THE USE OF CROP CLIMATE CALENDARS, EQUIPPING FARMERS FOR CLIMATE-SENSITIVE DECISION-MAKING, AND PROVIDING ACCESS TO LOCALIZED WEATHER AND CLIMATE INFORMATION”

By Representative Tambunting

TO THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

House Bill No. 8127, entitled:

“AN ACT REPEALING ARTICLE 247 OF THE REVISED PENAL CODE”

By Representative Tambunting
TO THE COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF LAWS

House Bill No. 8128, entitled:

“AN ACT TO PROTECT FILIPINOS FROM THE HARMFUL EFFECTS OF TRANS-FATTY ACIDS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Tambunting
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 8129, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING THE MUNICIPALITY OF SAN JUAN IN THE PROVINCE OF BATANGAS AS AN ECOTOURISM ZONE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Bolilia
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 1391, entitled:

“RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES TO SUBMIT ITS FIRST NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTION (NDC) TO THE SECRETARIAT OF THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC) ON OR BEFORE 31 DECEMBER 2020”

By Representative Chatto
TO THE COMMITTEE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

House Resolution No. 1392, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE

IMPLEMENTATION OF EXISTING LAWS PERTAINING TO THE FILING OF THE STATEMENT OF ASSETS, LIABILITIES AND NET WORTH (SALN) BY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES TO ENSURE THE STRICT AND EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF SAID EXISTING LAWS AND REGULATIONS”

By Representatives Defensor (Michael) and Marcoleta

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1393, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND INDUSTRY, COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES, COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD, AND OTHER APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, TO CONDUCT A JOINT INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTED CASES OF INVESTMENT SCAMS RELATED TO AGRIBUSINESS IN THE COUNTRY”

By Representative Cabatbat
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1394, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION IN AID OF LEGISLATION OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY’S (TESDA) LOW BUDGET UTILIZATION AND SLOW IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS PROGRAMS”

By Representatives Campos, Marcoleta, Revilla, Singson-Meehan, Baronda, Palma, Aumentado, Romualdo, Nieto, Geron, Limkaichong, Paduano, Quimbo and Zarate

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1395, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES, THROUGH THE DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TO TAKE FURTHER STEPS TO RECOVER FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, AND PRESERVE THE ‘DOCTRINA CRISTIANA 1593’ ”

By Representative Nieto
TO THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

House Resolution No. 1396, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOOD GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE QUESTIONABLE RECEIPT OF PRIVATE FUNDING BY THE FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION (FDA) AND OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS IN EXCHANGE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF SPECIFIC AND PRE-DEFINED POLICIES DIRECTED AGAINST A LEGITIMATE INDUSTRY UNDER PHILIPPINE LAWS AND IN COMPLETE DISREGARD OF THE RIGHTS AND WELFARE OF CONSUMERS”

By Representatives Savellano and Suansing (Estrellita)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

MESSAGES FROM THE SENATE

Message dated December 1, 2020, informing the House of Representatives that the Senate on November 25, 2020 passed with amendments House Bill No. 7727, entitled:

“AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE OPERATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES FROM JANUARY ONE TO DECEMBER

THIRTY-ONE, TWO THOUSAND AND TWENTY-ONE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

In view of the disagreeing votes on the said House Bill, the Senate designated Senators Sonny Angara, Pia S. Cayetano, Cynthia A. Villar, Panfilo M. Lacson, Joel Villanueva, Win Gatchalian, Richard J. Gordon, Christopher Lawrence T. Go, Imee R. Marcos, Risa Hontiveros, Grace Poe and Francis “Kiko” N. Pangilinan and assigned as alternates Senators Emmanuel “Manny” D. Pacquiao, Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa, Maria Lourdes Nancy S. Binay and Ramon Bong Revilla, Jr. as its conferees to the Bicameral Conference Committee.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Message dated December 1, 2020, informing the House of Representatives that on November 26, 2020, the Senate designated Senators Pia S. Cayetano, Ralph G. Recto and Franklin M. Drilon as conferees to the Bicameral Conference Committee on the disagreeing provisions of Senate Bill No. 1357, entitled:

“AN ACT REFORMING THE CORPORATE INCOME TAX AND INCENTIVES SYSTEM, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTIONS 20, 22, 25, 27, 28, 29, 34, 40, 109, 116 AND 290 OF THE NATIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1997, AS AMENDED, AND CREATING THEREIN NEW TITLE XIII, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”;

and House Bill No. 4157, entitled: “AN ACT AMENDING SECTIONS 4, 5, 20, 22, 27, 28, 34, 40, 50, 73, 112, 117, 204, 222, 237, 237-A, 255, 256, 257, 258, 261, 263, 264, 266, 275, 290, 291, 292 AND ADDING NEW SECTIONS 6-A, 282-A, 293, 294, 294-A, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, AND 316, ALL UNDER THE NATIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1997, AS AMENDED, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.”

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

COMMUNICATIONS

Letter dated August 19, 2020 of Nuni A. Cantillo, State Auditor IV, Audit Team Leader, Audit Team R5-04, State Universities and Colleges and Other Stand Alone Agencies, Commission on Audit, furnishing the House of Representatives with a soft copy of the CY 2019 Annual Audit Report on the Bicol State College of Applied Sciences and Technology, Naga City, Camarines Sur.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated 6 November 2020 of Erlon C. Agustin, Municipal Mayor, Municipality of Camiling, Province of Tarlac, notifying the House of Representatives that the said Municipality has complied with the posting and reporting requirements of the Reports on Fund Utilization and Status of Program/Project/Activity Implementation for the months of April to August 2020 of the Bayanihan Grant to Cities and Municipalities in the Local Chief Executive's Facebook page and in three (3) conspicuous public places in their locality.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated 10 November 2020 of Honorable Christopher V.P. de Venecia, Representative, 4th District, Province of Pangasinan, forwarding an updated summary tally of beneficiaries of the Cash for Work Program under RA 11494, or the Bayanihan to Recover as One Act as of November 10, 2020.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated 26 November 2020 of Janice G. Ayson-Zales, Deputy Director, Office of the General Counsel and Legal Services, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, transmitting to the House of Representatives a duly certified electronic copy of Memorandum No. M-2020-084 dated 23 November 2020.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

Reports on Fund Utilization and Status of Program/Project/Activity Implementation for the months of September and October 2020 of the Bayanihan Grant to Cities and Municipalities, attested by Melchor P. Petracorta, Municipal Mayor, Municipality of Limasawa, Province of Leyte.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated November 20, 2020 of Dale B. Corvera, Provincial Governor, Province of Agusan del Norte, forwarding to the House of Representatives a copy of the Report on Fund Utilization and Status of Program/Project/Activity Implementation for the month of October 2020 of the Bayanihan Grant to Provinces.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report of the Committee on Natural Resources (Committee Report No. 619), re H.B. No. 8118, entitled:

“AN ACT RECLASSIFYING AS AGRICULTURAL LAND A PARCEL OF LAND OF THE PUBLIC DOMAIN LOCATED IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF DINALUPIHAN AND HERMOSA, PROVINCE OF BATAAN, OPEN TO DISPOSITION FOR AGRICULTURAL, COMMERCIAL, RESIDENTIAL, INDUSTRIAL AND OTHER PURPOSES”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 140

Sponsors: Representatives Barzaga and Roman

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Transportation and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 620), re H.B. No. 8130, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE (LTO) EXTENSION OFFICE IN THE CITY OF PASSI, PROVINCE OF ILOILO, INTO A REGULAR LTO DISTRICT OFFICE

AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR"

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 5766

Sponsors: Representatives Sarmiento and Yap (Eric)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Transportation and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 621), re H.B. No. 6664, entitled:

"AN ACT CREATING A REGULAR LTO DISTRICT OFFICE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF IBAJAY, PROVINCE OF AKLAN, TO BE KNOWN AS THE 'WESTERN AKLAN LTOCENTER', AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR"

recommending its approval with amendments

Sponsors: Representatives Sarmiento and Yap (Eric)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Higher and Technical Education and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 622), re H.B. No. 8131, entitled:

"AN ACT RECOGNIZING THE CABIAO CAMPUS OF THE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES (PUP) LOCATED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF CABIAO, PROVINCE OF NUEVA ECIJA, AS A REGULAR CAMPUS OF THE PUP SYSTEM, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR"

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 6572

Sponsors: Representatives Go (Mark), Yap (Eric) and Natividad-Nagaño

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Basic Education and Culture and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 623), re H.B. No. 8132, entitled:

"AN ACT CONVERTING THE SISIGON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN BARANGAY SISIGON,

MUNICIPALITY OF MATNOG, PROVINCE OF SORSOGON INTO AN INTEGRATED SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS SISIGON INTEGRATED SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR"

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 5626

Sponsors: Representatives Romulo and Yap (Eric)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Basic Education and Culture and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 624), re H.B. No. 8133, entitled:

"AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE EDADES AND BERNAL CULTURAL CENTER AND MUSEUM IN DAGUPAN CITY, PROVINCE OF PANGASINAN, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR"

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 2863

Sponsors: Representatives Romulo, Yap (Eric) and de Venecia

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Agriculture and Food and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 625), re H.B. No. 8136, entitled:

"AN ACT DECLARING THE COCONUT LEVY ASSETS AS A TRUST FUND, PROVIDING FOR ITS MANAGEMENT AND UTILIZATION, AUTHORIZING THE PRIVATIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OFFICE TO DISPOSE THE COCONUT LEVY ASSETS FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE COCONUT FARMERS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COCONUT INDUSTRY"

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bills Numbered 10, 166, 854, 1242, 1417, 2434, 2522, 2549, 2552, 2610, 2657, 3192, 3223, 3299, 4346, 4880 and 7910

Sponsors: Representatives Enverga, Yap (Eric), Cayetano (Alan Peter) and Garin (Sharon)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Labor and Employment (Committee Report No. 626), re H.B. No. 2378, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING THE CITY OF SAN JOSE DEL MONTE IN THE PROVINCE OF BULACAN AS HUMAN RESOURCE CAPITAL”

recommending its approval without amendment

Sponsors: Representatives Pineda and Robes

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Tourism and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 627), re H.B. No. 8139, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING THE PASSIG ISLET LOCATED IN BARANGAY BATO, MUNICIPALITY OF STA. CRUZ, PROVINCE OF DAVAO DEL SUR, AN ECOTOURISM SITE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 3917

Sponsors: Representatives Aragonés, Yap (Eric) and Cagas

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Labor and Employment (Committee Report No. 628), re H.B. No. 8140, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING ENHANCED PROTECTION, SECURITY, AND BENEFITS FOR MEDIA WORKERS”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 2476

Sponsors: Representatives Pineda, Mendoza and Taduran

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Energy (Committee Report No. 629), re H.B. No. 8145, entitled:

“AN ACT EXTENDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LIFELINE RATE, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 73 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9136, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ELECTRIC POWER INDUSTRY REFORM ACT OF 2001”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bills Numbered 7059, 7341, 8030 and 8054

Sponsors: Representatives Macapagal Arroyo, Dagooc, Gatchalian, Villafuerte and Tambunting

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Tourism and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 630), re H.B. No. 8146, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING THE PROVINCE OF LANA O DEL NORTE A TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AREA (TDA), CREATING THE LANA O DEL NORTE TOURISM COUNCIL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 2284

Sponsors: Representatives Aragonés, Yap (Eric), Dimaporo (Khalid) and Dimaporo (Abdullah)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Public Works and Highways (Committee Report No. 631), re H.B. No. 8147, entitled:

“AN ACT RENAMING THE BOGO-CURVA-MEDELLIN-DAANBANTAYAN-MAYA ROAD, STRETCHING FROM BARANGAY DON PEDRO RODRIGUEZ IN THE CITY OF BOGO, TRAVERSING THROUGH BARANGAYS DAYHAGON, DON VIRGILIO GONZALES, CANHABAGAT, TINDOG, CURVA, CAPUTATAN SUR, CAPUTATAN NORTE, POBLACION, DAANLUNGSOD, ANTIPOLLO, MAHAWAK AND KAWIT IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF MEDELLIN, BARANGAYS BAKHAWAN, PAYPAY, BITOON, POBLACION, AGUHO, TAPILON UP TO MAYA IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF DAANBANTAYAN, ALL IN THE PROVINCE OF CEBU AS JUAN MACARAEG HIGHWAY”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 3399

Sponsors: Representatives Madrona and Salimbanon

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Public Works and Highways (Committee Report No. 632), re H.B. No. 8148, entitled:

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

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 6260

Sponsors: Representatives Madrona and Ty (Diego)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Macapagal Arroyo). Majority Leader.

ROLL CALL

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we call the roll of Members.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Macapagal Arroyo). Roll call of Members.

The Secretary General called the roll, and the result is reflected in Journal No. 12, dated December 7, 2020.*

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. Mr. Speaker, the roll call shows that 300 Members responded to the call.

At this juncture, Representative Macapagal Arroyo relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Conrado M. Estrella III.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). With 300 Members responding to the call, the Chair declares the presence of a quorum.

Majority Floor Leader.

PRIVILEGE HOUR

REP. TADURAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to open the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) There being none, the Privilege Hour is now open.

Majority Floor Leader.

REP. TADURAN. Mr. Speaker, the first to deliver his speech is the Hon. David “Jay-Jay” Suarez from the Second District of Quezon.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The distinguished Gentleman from the Second District of Quezon is hereby recognized.

Proceed, please.

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The Majority Floor Leader.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. ROMUALDO. I move that we suspend for a minute.

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

It was 3:20 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:21 p.m., the session was resumed with Speaker Lord Allan Jay Q. Velasco presiding.

THE SPEAKER. The session is resumed. In celebration of the Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I would like to ask our House Members to please stand up as I read a short prayer which is the Act of Consecration of the Philippines to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Everybody rose for the short prayer led by Speaker Lord Allan Jay Q. Velasco.

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

ACT OF CONSECRATION
OF THE PHILIPPINES TO THE
IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

THE SPEAKER. *In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of the True God, our Merciful Mother, we Thy children come today in an act of filial homage of faith, love and trust, to solemnly consecrate our nation, the Philippines, to Thy Immaculate Heart. Take it from our fragile hands into Thy own; defend it and guard it as Thy own property; make our Lord Jesus reign, conquer and rule in it. Outside of Him, there is no salvation.

We, Thy people, feel a terrible storm raging around us, threatening to disperse and destroy the faithful flock of those who bless Thee because Thou art the Mother of our Lord Jesus. Afflicted, we stretch out our suppliant hands towards Thy Divine Son as we cry out: Save us, O Lord, for we perish!

Intercede for the Philippines, Our Lady, in this grave hour when evil winds blow, bringing cries of death against the civilization founded on His teachings, deceiving minds, perverting hearts, and lighting fires of hatred and revolution in the world. Help of Christians, pray for us!

Intercede for the Philippines, Our Lady, in this troubled hour when the unclean waves of an open immorality which has even lost the notion of sin, exalt the rehabilitation of the flesh in the face of the very Cross of Thy Divine Son, threatening to choke in this world the lily of virtue nourished by the Eucharistic Blood of Jesus Christ. Virgin most powerful, pray for us!

Intercede for the Philippines, Our Lady, in this hour of passions and doubts when even the good run the risk of being lost. Unite all the Filipino people around Thy Divine Son, in the love of the Church and also in the cultivation of virtue, in respect for order and fraternal charity. Queen of Peace, pray for us!

Remember finally, Heavenly Patroness of the Philippines, our nation, Pueblo Amante de Maria, whose people love Thee and whose people are beloved to Thee.

We run to Thee, O Mother of Mercy, Virgen de Guadalupe, save and protect the Philippines in the folds of Thy Mantle, in the Crossing of Thy arms. Press us to the Divine Baby in Thy Holy Womb,

and bring the Philippines to our Merciful Lord, Jesus Christ, King of Mercy, in Whom it will be preserved in Truth, Life, and Peace! Amen.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, please pray for us! O' Celestial Queen and Mother, obtain for us the graces we need!

O' Mother of the Church, we entrust to Thee our Pope, Bishops and Priests who are most precious to Thee!

Amen.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

THE SPEAKER. The session is suspended.

It was 3:24 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:24 p.m., the session was resumed with Deputy Speaker Conrado M. Estrella III presiding.

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

Majority Floor Leader.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, since Representative Suarez is not yet online to deliver his privilege speech, I move instead that we recognize the Gentleman from Party-List BAYAN MUNA, Rep. Ferdinand Gaité, to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The distinguished Gentleman from BAYAN MUNA Party-List is hereby recognized.

Please proceed.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. GAITE

REP. GAITE. Salamat po, Mr. Speaker, at sa lahat ng mga kasamahan natin sa Kongreso sa araw na ito at nagpapasalamat ako sa pagkakataon na makapag-deliver ng privilege speech sa linggong ito.

Mr. Speaker, mga kapwa ko mga Mambabatas, isang magandang araw sa inyong lahat. Ang Kinatawang ito ay nagsasalita upang ipanawagan ang kahilingan ng ating mga kapwa kawani at manggagawa sa loob ng pamahalaan, partikular ang mga

kawaning kontraktwal sa loob ng pamahalaan. Mr. Speaker, ngayong taon, kumakaharap tayo ng sunod-sunod na mga suliranin at krisis. Nariyan ang pagputok ng bulkang Taal noong Enero, pagkalat ng COVID-19 pandemic nitong Pebrero at magkakasunod na malalakas na bagyo nitong mga nakaraang buwan. Dulot ng mga ito, labis na naghirap ang marami nating kababayan, kasama na rito ang ating mga kasamahang empleyado sa gobyerno. Hindi lingid sa ating kaalaman na napakalaki ng papel ng mga empleyado sa gobyerno na naghahatid ng serbisyo ng pamahalaan para sa ating mga kababayan. Hindi dadaloy ang anumang transaksyon ng gobyerno kung wala ang ating mga kasamahang pampublikong empleyado. Kaya nga kahit sa gitna ng pandemya ay tuloy-tuloy na nagtatrabaho ang mga ito at ang iba na nga ay tinamaan pa ng sakit na COVID-19. Sa kabila ng panganib dulot ng pandemya, walang kapagurang nagtatrabaho pa rin ang mga empleyado ng gobyerno upang matugunan ang pangangailangang serbisyo ng ating mga kababayan. Kabilang sa mga empleyadong ito ang 653,086 na nasa ilalim ng tinatawag na job orders o JO at contract of service o COS mula sa iba't ibang ahensiya ng pamahalaan.

Mr. Speaker, sa kabila ng serbisyo at sakripisyo ng ating mga kasamang empleyado sa gobyerno, nagawa pa ngang i-red tag ang mga ito ng mga opisyal ng pamahalaan at nanguna pa nga itong NTF-ELCAC o iyong National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict at ang NICA, National Intelligence Coordinating Agency. Halimbawa, as we speak, may ginagawa ngayong NICA sa mga empleyadong kasapi ng Social Welfare Employees' Association of the Philippines sa DSWD o Department of Social Welfare and Development na pinaparatangang legal front daw sila ng CPP-NPA-NDF. Ang SWEAP-DSWD po ay matagal nang miyembro ng COURAGE o iyong Confederation for Unity Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees na dati pa po ay nagsilbing taga-pangulo.

Mr. Speaker, mga kapwa ko Mambabatas, hindi red-tagging o panggigipit ang dapat sanang ginagawa ng pamahalaan sa mga

empleyado ng gobyerno at sa halip, dapat nga suklian ng gobyerno ang kasigasigan at kadakilaan ng ating mga empleyado sa pamamagitan ng pagbibigay ng maayos na benepisyo, tamang suweldo at trabahong regular. Ito ang panawagan ng mga ating JO at COS sa pamahalaan. Marapat din sana na kagyat na maibigay ang halagang P5,000 na gratuity pay para sa mga JO at COS sa pagpasok ngayon ng Disyembre. Kung tutuusin, maliit na halaga lamang ito kung ikukumpara sa kanilang sakripisyo at serbisyo na inilaan, lalo't higit ngayong panahon ng pandemya.

Kaunti lang pong background, noong 2017 ay nagbigay ng gratuity pay ang Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte noong 2017 sa pamamagitan ng Administrative Order No. 2 at ang natanggap na P2,000 ay kakarampot lamang, and I would like to digress some more, sapagkat iyong hinihingi nga nila'y napakaliit pa. Alam n'yo po, itong hawak kong kamatis, Mr. Speaker, ako po'y namamalengke, P10 po ang piraso ng kamatis na ito, iisang maliit na kamatis. Alam ninyo po iyong halaga nitong siling itong hawak ko? Limampiso itong isang kakarampot na piraso or about P600 per kilo.

Iyong hinihingi po ng ating mga kawani ay napakaliit sa tumataas na presyo ng bilihin na ayon mismo daw sa Philippine Statistics Authority, umaabot ng 3.3 percent ang inflation rate for just this month of November, which is a large increase compared down to year-to-year inflation of the previous year na nasa 2 percent lamang, at malinaw na tumataas ang mga presyo ng mga bilihin.

Sa ganitong kalagayan, Mr. Speaker, at mga kapwa ko Mambabatas, nananawagan ang Kinatawang ito, sa Kapulungang ito na suportahan natin ang isinusulong na kagyat na pagbibigay ng P5,000 gratuity pay para sa ating JO at COS ngayong Disyembre. Kasabay nito, panawagan din na itigil na ang nagaganap na red-tagging sa hanay ng mga Makabayan bloc at iba pang mga mamamayan na ang layunin lang ay ipagtanggol at ipaglaban ang batayang karapatan ng mga mamamayan. Kaisa ng mga empleyado ng gobyerno, maraming, maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella).
The Majority Floor Leader.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that the speech of Representative Gaite be referred to the Committee on Rules.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) There being none, the speech of the Gentleman from BAYAN MUNA is hereby referred to the Committee on Rules.

Majority Floor Leader.

REP. TADURAN. Mr. Speaker, we would like to acknowledge the presence of the members of the Congressional Spouses Foundation, Incorporated, headed by Paula Bondoc, the wife of Hon. Juan Pablo “Rimpy” Bondoc of the Fourth District of Pampanga; Margie Duavit, wife of Hon. Michael John Duavit of the First District of Rizal; Atty. Cristine Collantes, daughter of Hon. Ma. Theresa Collantes of the Third District of Batangas; Nash Garbin, wife of Hon. Alfredo Garbin of AKO BICOL Party-List; Nerissa Valeriano, wife of Hon. Rolando Valeriano of the Second District of Manila; Katherine Martinez, wife of Hon. Eric Martinez of the Second District of Valenzuela; Mayor Ching Bernos, wife of Hon. Joseph Sto. Nino Bernos of the Lone District of Abra; Tiffany Gatchalian, wife of Hon. Wes Gatchalian of the First District of Valenzuela; Sarah Gabrielle Singson-Meehan, daughter of Hon. Kristine Singson-Meehan of the Second District of Ilocos Sur; Ginger Aglipay, wife of Hon. Michael Edgar Aglipay of DIWA Party-List; Councilor Laarni Roque, wife of Hon. Rogelio Roque of the Fourth District of Bukidnon; Ms. Joy Enverga, wife of Hon. Mark Enverga of the First District of Quezon; Sarah Balindong, wife of Hon. Yasser Alonto Balindong of the Second District of Lanao del Sur; Carissa Evangelista, sister of Hon. Christopher De Venecia of the Fourth District of Pangasinan; and Aliah Dimaporo, sister of Hon. Khalid Dimaporo of the First District of Lanao del Norte.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella).
To the Congressional Members and the

officers of the Congressional Spouses Foundation, Incorporated, headed by the wife of our Majority Floor Leader Rimpy Bondoc, Ms. Paula Bondoc, and the rest of the officers of the CSFI, welcome to the House of Representatives. We acknowledge that while we are in Congress, you are the man. Congratulations and welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

The Majority Floor Leader.

REP. TADURAN. Mr. Speaker, may we recognize Hon. Sarah Jane Elago of KABATAAN Party-List for her privilege speech.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The honorable Lady from the KABATAAN Party-List is hereby recognized.

Please proceed.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ELAGO

REP. ELAGO. Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker.

I rise on a matter of personal and collective privilege to manifest the solidarity of this Youth Representation with the rest of the world in their people’s struggles worldwide in observance of Human Rights Day every year, on December 10, the day on which the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.

Mr. Speaker, let me begin by sharing the key findings of the global survey on youth in COVID-19 which focused on four areas of impacts on young people, namely: employment, education, training, mental well-being, rights and voices.

Mr. Speaker, based on a study of the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth, this report explores young people’s actions with regard to social activism and crisis response behaviors as well as their perceptions and experience of policy measures. The analysis is based on 12,605 responses received from people aged 18 to 34 years old. The sample comprises primarily young workers with tertiary level education and students.

And these are the key findings:

First, the aspirations and the realization of rights are an integral part of a young person's mental well-being and play an important role in determining a successful transition into decent work. Thirty-eight percent of young people, globally, are uncertain of this, and 16 percent are fearful about their future career prospects. Young people, similarly to many vulnerable groups, have often had difficulty accessing their rights. The pandemic and its associated safety measures have exacerbated the vulnerabilities of young people in accessing their human rights. One in three young people had noticed a significant impact on their right to participate in public affairs. More than one in four young people, that is about 27 percent, stated that the pandemic, the COVID-19 pandemic, has significantly impacted their right to freedom of religion or belief. Also, merely one in four young people reported a significant impact on their right to information. A greater impact on these rights, Mr. Speaker, is associated with lower mental-being. Meanwhile, on social activism and youth behaviors, over one in four young people reported a high-degree of engagement in voluntarism and making donations towards the COVID-19 response, with only small gender differences observable.

And all these, according to the International Labor Organization, find that the impact of the pandemic on young people is systematic, deep and disproportionate. It has been particularly hard on young women, younger youth, and youth in lower-income countries. Young people are concerned about the future and their place within it.

Mr. Speaker, I present this before our fellow lawmakers to highlight the need for solidarity as well as national concerted efforts to address these global challenges that require global solutions. Napakarami pong mga binubuksan na mga espasyo ng mga debate, diskusyon, mga talakayan ngayon tungkol sa remote education, sa blended distance learning, sa seguridad ng trabaho, pagkakaroon ng disentang sahod, at gayon din sa mga prospects ng employment at graduate education. Kaya nga naman, napakahalaga sa bawat kabataan at mga kababayan natin ang

makapagsalita tungkol sa mga issues at mga concerns na kinakailangan para tayong mga policymakers, mga lawmakers, legislators, mga public servants ay mabibigyan ng gabay tungkol sa mga susunod na hakbang na ating gagawin hinggil sa pagtitiyak ng pagpapalakas ng sistema ng kalusugan, ng paglilikha ng mas maraming opportunities sa trabaho at sa kabuhayan at gayundin sa iba't ibang mga pagkakataon upang mapaunlad, hindi lang ang sarili, kundi ang buong community, ang buong pamilya.

But, Mr. Speaker, the vilification and the criminalization of youth's dissent and activism through red and terrorist tagging have been the biggest obstacles to the full enjoyment of these fundamental rights and freedoms by young Filipinos today. This is not new under authoritarian and repressive regimes but what we experience at present has been far more insidious because of viral spread of false quotations that incite harm and threatens our basic rights.

Mr. Speaker, the recent Facebook takedown reveals that the violation of its policy on coordinated and inauthentic behavior is linked to certain agencies in the government. Ito rin po ay subject na ng ilan sa mga resolusyon na mayroon tayo ngayon dito sa House of Representatives at kinakailangan nang magbukas tayo ng mga dayalogo, ng mga pagdinig upang mapag-usapan ang pagkalat ng disinformation at maprotektahan ang mga nagiging biktima nito.

Mr. Speaker, not only does red-tagging attempt to intimidate and discredit presentation of youth issues and concerns by sweeping accusations that we are being controlled or brainwashed. It also undermines the capacity of the youth to critically and independently choose and decide for themselves. If they can do that to me, Mr. Speaker, a Member of the House of Representatives, then they will not hesitate to act with impunity against any young person, youth and students who are only exercising their rights to speak up, speak out on various societal issues and exercise their right to advance positive development in their communities and in our society at large.

So, our call, Mr. Speaker, is enough of this discriminatory and dangerous practice that limits our potential. Stop the crackdown on the

exercise of rights. We must defend the right of the young people to act for a change and the KABATAAN Party-List, Mr. Speaker, we are just to stand up for not only our own rights but the rights of others, our fellow Filipino people.

Let us defend and uphold the rights that protect us all and pave the path to a better future. Ito rin po ang batayan kung bakit tayo ay naninindigan na kinakailangan na ang nasa puso ng paggawa ng ating mga batas upang ito ay maging patas, pakikikingan natin ang iba't ibang mga sektor. Pakikikingan natin at gagamitin natin nang mainam iyong diversity na mayroon tayo pagdating sa mga views, sa opinions, sa mga insights, sa mga recommendations, upang mapagyaman ang ating mga ipinapasa at mga ipinapanukala na mga batas at iba't iba pang mga hakbang dito sa Kongreso.

Kaya, Ginoong Speaker, sa darating na December 10, sa Human Rights Day, ang KABATAAN ay mangunguna na tumindig para sa karapatang-pantao, para ipagtanggol ang kalayaang pang-akademiko, at idagdag ang kaniyang boses para sa panawagan ng marami pa nating kababayan para sa kalusugan, sa trabaho, sa kabuhayan, aksyong pangklima at ang kinakailangan na mabuting pamamahala at pagtatanggol ng soberanya ng ating bansa.

Maraming salamat at mabuhay ang mga human rights defenders. Greetings of support and solidarity on Human Rights Day.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Maraming salamat din po sa inyo, distinguished Lady from KABATAAN Party-List.

The Majority Floor Leader.

REP. CASTELO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There being no other Member who wishes to interpellate the Honorable Elago, I move that we refer her privilege speech to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) There being none, the motion is approved.

REP. CASTELO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we close the period of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) There being none, the motion is approved.

Majority Floor Leader.

REP. CRISOLOGO. Mr. Speaker, I move for the consideration on Third Reading of House Bill No. 852. For this purpose, may I request that the Secretary General be directed to read the title of the Bill and, thereafter, call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

Please proceed.

REP. CRISOLOGO. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the motion, Mr. Speaker.

I withdraw my motion to ...

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The motion is withdrawn.

The session is suspended.

It was 3:46 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:48 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

Majority Floor Leader.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7950

Continuation

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration on Second Reading of House Bill No. 7950, as contained in Committee Report No. 571, and that the Secretary General be directed to read the title of the measure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Is there any objection to the motion? *(Silence)* There being none, the Secretary General will please proceed.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7950, entitled: "AN ACT CREATING A SYSTEM OF PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS THROUGH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PEOPLE'S COUNCIL IN EVERY LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIT, PRESCRIBING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS AND PROVIDING FOR ITS PARTICIPATION IN THE LOCAL SANGGUNIAN AND LOCAL BOARDS, COUNCILS, COMMITTEES, TASK FORCES OR SIMILAR WORK GROUPS."

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The Majority Floor Leader.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary status is that we are in the period of sponsorship and debate, with the Chairperson of the Committee on People's Participation, Rep. Rida Robes, sponsoring the measure. However, there being no Member of the House who wishes to interpellate our Sponsor, I now move that we terminate the period of sponsorship and debate.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Is there any objection? *(Silence)* There being none, the motion is approved. Majority Floor Leader.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Is there any objection? *(Silence)* There being none, the motion is approved. Majority Floor Leader.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Is there any objection to the motion? *(Silence)*

There being none, the motion is hereby approved.

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7950 ON SECOND READING

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I now move that we approve on Second Reading House Bill No. 7950.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Is there any objection to the motion? *(Silence)* There being none, those who are in favor, say *Aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Those who are against, say *Nay*. *(Silence)* The *ayes* have it. Majority Floor Leader.

REP. ROBES. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The session is suspended. *It was 3:50 p.m.*

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The session is resumed. The Majority Floor Leader.

OMNIBUS CONSIDERATION OF LOCAL BILLS ON SECOND READING

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. CASTELO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we

consider bills under the Calendar of Business.

Pursuant to our rules, allow me to put forth an omnibus motion for the consideration of the following:

1. House Bill No. 8040, under Committee Report No. 602;
2. House Bill No. 8041, under Committee Report No. 603;
3. House Bill No. 8077, under Committee Report No. 610;
4. House Bill No. 5680, under Committee Report No. 611;
5. House Bill No. 8081, under Committee Report No. 613; and
6. House Bill No. 8082, under Committee Report No. 614.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Is there any objection to the motion? (*Silence*) There being none, the motion is hereby approved.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Those who are in favor, say *Aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Those who are against, say *Nay*. (*Silence*) The *ayes* have it.

Majority Floor Leader.

REP. CASTELO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider the respective Explanatory Notes as the sponsorship speeches on the said measures.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The motion is hereby approved.

REP. CASTELO. There being no Member who wishes to interpellate on the said local bills, Mr. Speaker, I move that we terminate the period of sponsorship and debate.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Is there any objection to the motion? (*Silence*) There being none, the motion is approved.

Majority Floor Leader.

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

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The Chair hears no objection; the motion is hereby approved.

The Majority Floor Leader.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The Chair hears no objection; the motion is hereby approved.

Majority Floor Leader.

OMNIBUS APPROVAL OF LOCAL BILLS ON SECOND READING

REP. CASTELO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Second Reading on the following House bills: House Bill No. 8040, House Bill No. 8041, House Bill No. 8077, House Bill No. 5680, House Bill No. 8081, and House Bill No. 8082.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Is there any objection? (*Silence*)

Those who are in favor, say *Aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Those who are against, say *Nay*. (*Silence*) The *ayes* have it; the following bills that were read are hereby approved on Second Reading.

Majority Floor Leader.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7749 *Continuation*

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. CRISOLOGO. Mr. Speaker, I move

that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 7749, as contained in Committee Report No. 524. The parliamentary status is that we are in the period of sponsorship and debate, and may I request that the Secretary General be directed to read the title of the Bill.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Is there any objection to the motion? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none, the Secretary General is hereby directed to please proceed.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL, House Bill No. 7749, entitled: "AN ACT PROVIDING FOR GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS UNIFIED INITIATIVES TO DISTRESSED ENTERPRISES FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY (GUIDE)."

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The Majority Floor Leader.

REP. CRISOLOGO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Sponsor, Rep. Junie Cua.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The distinguished Sponsor is hereby recognized.

REP. CRISOLOGO. To interpellate the honorable Representative Cua, may we also recognize our colleague, Rep. Stella Quimbo from Marikina City.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The honorable Lady from Marikina is hereby recognized for her interpellation.

Please proceed.

REP. QUIMBO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Gentleman from Quirino yield to some clarificatory questions?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Will the distinguished Sponsor, please respond.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

It was 3:56 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:56 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

REP. CUA. Thank you for unmuting me.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Yes.

Will the distinguished Sponsor yield to some questions?

REP. CUA. Willingly and with pleasure, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The Lady from Marikina will please proceed.

REP. QUIMBO. Mr. Speaker, one of the primary objectives of the Bill is the creation of a special holding company for purposes of ensuring that certain companies, those that are strategically important companies, remain solvent especially during and after the pandemic.

In other words, the special holding company is a bailout company owned by the government and this special holding company is a joint venture between the Land Bank of the Philippines and the Development Bank of the Philippines. So, Mr. Speaker, good Sponsor, is this a faithful representation of the GUIDE Bill?

REP. CUA. Well, with no offense meant, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, while in essence, the objective is properly described, I would like also to clarify that this is not intended to bail out, because bailing out would have a much wider negative implication. A bail out would mean we are bailing out something that maybe very, very difficult to rehabilitate. So, in essence, that is my comment to the Lady who has described the objective very succinctly, Mr. Speaker.

REP. QUIMBO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I note that clarification. I would like to ask, Mr. Speaker, what is the mechanism for

identifying strategically important industries? The Bill would indicate that this would include but not be limited to agriculture, construction, education, food industry, health care, infrastructure, low cost and socialized housing, manufacturing, power and energy, product distributor/retailer, services, tourism and hospitality, transportation and logistics, water and sanitation, and other industries to be identified. So, I would like to know what particular sectors are we contemplating as being priority sectors?

So, perhaps, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to note that while agriculture, health care and food industry are nationally significant especially during the pandemic, these sectors are unlikely to have companies facing insolvency problems because these were considered as essential sectors and, therefore, during the lockdown, they were allowed to operate and, therefore, not adversely affected by COVID. In fact, agriculture is the only sector that grew in the last two quarters.

So iyon po, Mr. Speaker, iyan lang ang katanungan ko, paano ina-identify ang tinatawag na strategically important sectors?

REP. CUA. Well, the term “strategically important companies” is well-defined in the Bill. If I may refer to the Lady who has the chance also to read the substitute Bill, it clarifies the meaning of a “strategically important company” which, of course, as she has aptly enumerated, would include those companies. But I think, in essence, these are companies that have high economic returns or high employment potentials and these would also include companies that would have substantial employment significance in the community and have demonstrated upstream and downstream linkages, and exhibited a high degree of process efficiency, cost efficiency, product quality, and environmental soundness. And also, we must take note that these are companies that are experiencing temporary insolvency problems resulting from the pandemic and had been viable and well-managed prior to pandemic, and would have shown a viable rehabilitation plan, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. QUIMBO. Mr. Speaker, salamat po sa pag-define po ng ibig sabihin ng “strategically important industries,” na maliwanag naman po dito sa panukalang batas. Pero ang tanong ko po ay sa dami po ng distressed firms and sectors ngayong pandemya, and I believe that the word “distressed” is the operative word here for purposes of the Bill, e ano po ang ipa-prioritize natin? Sa dami po ng non-essential sectors na nahirapan po during the lockdown, napakarami po na naging cash-strapped because of the lockdown, so maraming distressed. So, can you name one or two sectors which you think you need to prioritize dito po sa GUIDE Bill.

REP. CUA. Well, I would suppose that transportation would be important because transportation really has strong upward and downward linkages. I think industries related to tourism would also be very important. Again, the employment significance of tourism cannot be overemphasized, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. QUIMBO. So, I suppose, Mr. Speaker, dahil nabanggit ninyo po ang transportation and tourism ay malamang po kasama po dito ang airlines, dito po sa listahan ng priority distressed firms.

REP. CUA. If there is an application and the applicant would be able to comply with the criteria set down in the Bill and in the implementing rules and regulations, I would find no reason why they cannot be considered, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. QUIMBO. Mr. Speaker, the mandate of the special holding company is to invest in failing but strategic companies, and eventually dispose of the stockholdings to the private sector. In other words, in the interim, is it correct to say, Mr. Speaker, that the special holding company is tasked to turn around these companies which are currently in the red; in short, make them profitable and at the same time attract further investments from the private sector including from multilateral agencies as well as lending institutions? Tama po ba iyon, Mr. Speaker?

REP. CUA. Tama po iyon. I completely agree with the appreciation of the Lady. It is the intention of the Bill to really put up the mechanism as an interim measure because we are trying to save companies which have proven to be very viable prior to the pandemic but is experiencing insolvency problems because of the pandemic. So, that essentially is the concept and I think the Lady hit the nail on its head.

REP. QUIMBO. Mr. Speaker, considering that ito pong listahan ng strategically important industries that are potentially having distressed firms is a long one, I would like to know, Mr. Speaker, whether the LANDBANK and the DBP would have the technical know-how in managing firms that are operating in various sectors.

Ako po, Mr. Speaker, dati po akong Commissioner sa Philippine Competition Commission and I realized that one source of difficulty for a regulator whose mandate covers all economic sectors is that no one person in the technical staff, no matter how competent in her field, can be expected to have specialized knowledge in many sectors. So, ano kaya po ang magiging approach ng LANDBANK and DBP dito po sa pag-manage ng distressed firms from a wide array of sectors?

REP. CUA. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, in response to the Lady, I would like to put in context the strategy that we are trying to put up. The intention of the special holding company is not one of management, but it is one of an evaluation of the companies that would have a strategic impact on the economy and is not safe if not supported. So, it is really evaluation; it is really an assessment of whether a company that has been identified to be strategic for the economy or for the country would be worthy of support. So, in essence, I believe that the LANDBANK and the DBP, they being lending institutions that have been there for quite some time, for decades and have proven track records of viability, resiliency, and profitability, would be able to do this for us.

We must understand that the DBP, for example, is a development bank. It receives

varied proposals coming from many, many industries and I would imagine that they would have this expertise. In like manner, the LANDBANK, although its corporate name is LANDBANK, LANDBANK has been in existence as a universal bank for quite some time and has been involved in some developmental projects as well. So, I think in so far as evaluation of viability of investment is concerned, either by way of equity or by way of loan or procurement of bonds, they would be very competent, Mr. Speaker, Madam interpellator.

REP. QUIMBO. So, Mr. Speaker, I suppose that the strategy is just to temporarily hold on to these companies, try to turn them around as soon as possible with the hope that some additional investments would be attracted by the SHC. Tama po ba iyon? And, however, ...

REP. CUA. Thank you. Yes, I fully agree with that fair description of the objectives of the Bill. That is really a mechanism to help and support during this crisis situation, companies that are really suffering from temporary insolvency but had been proven to be viable, and properly, and well-managed. So, ganoon lang po iyon. So, Madam Speaker, tama po iyong sinabi ninyo.

REP. QUIMBO. But Mr. Speaker, however, considering that in general and this is not only specific to the Philippine government but governments all over the world are said to be not as efficient in managing private sector companies. Kaya nga po iyan ang nagiging criticism against State-owned enterprises. In other words, once the government manages a business, wala naman pong built-in incentives for government to do well in any business. Kaya nga po iyan ang dahilan kung bakit nagkakaroon ng moves to privatize State-owned enterprises. Kaya ang tanong ko, Mr. Speaker, hindi kaya mahihirapan ang special holding company sa paghikayat ng dagdag na investments mula sa private sector? So, ang worry ko lang, Mr. Speaker, baka naman just because the government is involved in one business ay baka po that, in itself, will already cause private sector companies to be

not attracted to these new holdings of a special holding company.

REP. CUA. Well, I would like to point out to the Lady that while the special holding company would be in the nature of a government-owned and -controlled corporation or a GOCC, what really counts is whether the investing company or the company to which government capital will be placed—would be managed well or not because the purpose of the special holding company is not really to manage. The purpose of the special holding company is only to provide or to infuse much-needed capital to the ailing company because of the pandemic. So, ang tanong, ito bang special holding company dahil ito ay GOCC, kadalasan ba ay palpak? Parang ganoon ang ating sinasabi. Pero ang sinasabi natin is during this period of crisis, I am certain that it would be very difficult for the private sector on its own to really put up one or if they would like, then we will encourage that in fact, but we are putting this in place as a mechanism to generate confidence. Hopefully, if the private sector will put up their own holding company and provide the much-needed capital infusion to the investee companies, that will be most welcome. But this one, we are expected as the government to do something about it. And I guess the best way to do it is to tap the expertise of GFIs that have proven track records, invite the private sector to join them. I am certain that even if this is going to be government-controlled, if there is profit potential, the private sector will most probably come in, especially so if these are multinational lending companies like the ADB, the IMF, with certain social responsibility as well, not purely for profit. So, that I think is the concept of all of these things, Mr. Speaker, Madam Gentlelady.

REP. QUIMBO. Mr. Speaker, the point that I had wanted to make is that baka nga po iyong mismong presensiya na lang ng gobyerno sa isang business ang siya pong magiging dahilan kung bakit hindi mag-i-invest ang isang private sector company. Kung maaalala po natin, 'di ba, iyong in the case of MWSS before it got privatized, the non-revenue water

or losses reached more than 60 percent and that is way above the standard for efficiently managing the water system which is only 10 to 20 percent. And soon after na-privatize po ang MWSS, na-turn around kaagad po from losses of about P1.4 billion, at pagdating ng after five years ay naging profitable na po ang MWSS at about P662 million annual income.

So, iyon po 'no, iyon iyong aking worry. So, since hindi masyado magaling ang gobyerno sa pagpapatakbo ng mga negosyo, baka ang presensiya nila mismo ang siyang magiging dahilan kung bakit hindi mag-invest and private sector companies. And alam naman po natin, because the Bill provides for an appropriation of only P10 billion to implement Chapters 1, 2 and 3 of the Act, and Chapter 3 is precisely itong creation of special holding company, ay kulang na kulang talaga iyong P10 billion.

So, kanina po nabanggit n'yo, Mr. Speaker, that airlines or distressed airlines would be a possible target investee companies but based on publicly available report sa aking rough computations, we will need at least P50 billion to help distressed airlines. So, hindi talaga kasya iyong P10 billion na ina-appropriate ng Bill na ito. So, in other words, we are relying heavily on equity participation by the private sector. Kaya nga lang, iyon na nga, ang tanong ko, hindi kaya kung ang gobyerno ang lead investor ay baka naman hindi mahihikayat ang private sector to further invest in a bailed-out firm or a supported firm, if you do not want to use the word "bailed-out," Mr. Speaker.

REP. CUA. Anyway, Mr. Speaker, if I may respond, I think the thrust of the Gentlelady is that because of the track record of the government, the private sector may not want to join. Now, of course, that is speculative, it remains to be seen. But even if the private sector does not want to come in, the government can go on their own. We are just providing a mechanism, an authority and empowerment to LANDBANK and the DBP that in the event that the private sector has appetite because they see the potential profit in it, then we have put in place a mechanism. So, as I said earlier, if the private sector sees

the opportunity even without government participation, they will put this up and when they put that up, that's well and good for government.

So, what we are trying to do here is to serve as a catalyst because we want to develop some kind of confidence, okay. So, the second concern is napakaliit naman iyong P10 billion. Now, I would like to remind the Gentlelady that earlier on in the Bayanihan, we have included in the Bayanihan Bill a provision for I think about P40 billion to include Philippine Guarantee Corporation, altogether working as a team, infusing capital to LANDBANK and the DBP. And this P10 billion would be an augmentation, and this augmentation can be focused also on the additional mandate of this special holding company through LANDBANK and the DBP. So, I would like to point out as well that the government is not really thinking of something very gargantuan because the government really cannot do that.

What it intends to do is really to just set up the mechanism, probably identify a number of really critical strategically important companies to help. So, it is not really expected that the government alone, by infusing this much of a capital, will really be sufficient. The government may come in to provide a lead, some kind of a confidence-building mechanism so that the other private lending institution may come in as well, together with the government. So, maybe we should look at it in that light, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, because it is impossible, I think, for the government to do all of these things by itself.

REP. QUIMBO. Mr. Speaker, I do agree that distressed firms in strategically important industries must be supported. I also agree that LANDBANK and the Development Bank of the Philippines are probably suitable platforms for helping distressed firms. But I am wondering, Mr. Speaker, why the mechanism for helping distressed firms is only by way of equity participation. So, ang tanong ko po, Mr. Speaker, is whether the good Sponsor has considered that perhaps, the main role of LANDBANK and the DBP should be, well, not as an investor but rather as a senior creditor of the failing firm. Both banks, LANDBANK

and the DBP can be the main source of loans. They shall lead the rehabilitation by way of loans, then allow the banks, for example, to re-discount these loans with the BSP. And if the special holding company acts as a senior creditor, they obviously will have some say in how these failing firms are being managed moving forward.

It would seem to me that the Bill contemplates only equity participation by the special holding company when in fact for practical purposes, perhaps the special holding company could participate as senior creditors. Is this something that the good Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, would consider?

At this juncture, Deputy Speaker Estrella relinquished the Chair to Rep. Xavier Jesus D. Romualdo.

REP. CUA. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, if I am not mistaken, the special holding company is not limited to capital infusion alone. In fact, I think the special holding company is empowered to buy convertible bonds to issue convertible loans. So, I think this is included in their menu of tools—financial tools. But I could not agree more with what you said, Mr. Speaker, Madam Gentlelady that the special holding company should not limit itself to capital infusion alone. And I would like to clarify that what you say, what you are saying or suggesting is exactly what we have in mind in this particular Bill, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

At this juncture, Representative Romualdo relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Conrado M. Estrella III.

REP. QUIMBO. Mr. Speaker, the mention of the execution of convertible loans or purchase of convertible bonds only refers to tax exemptions, Mr. Speaker. My understanding of the Bill and I would like a confirmation from the Speaker, the main and the only mechanism to support distressed firms is only equity participation. That is my understanding of the Bill. So perhaps, the good Sponsor can review the Bill and clarify this matter.

REP. CUA. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, let me go over my copy of the Bill.

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The Majority Floor Leader.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION
OF H.B. NO. 7749

REP. MACAPAGAL-ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, while the distinguished Sponsor is going over his fact sheet, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 7749.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Majority Floor Leader.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7886
ON SECOND READING

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 7886 and ask the Secretary General to read the title of the said measure.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Is there any objection to the motion? (*Silence*) There being none, the Secretary General may proceed.*

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. House Bill No. 7886.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7886, entitled: "AN ACT IMPOSING STIFFER PENALTIES FOR THE OFFENSES OF STEALING OR VANDALIZING OF GOVERNMENT ROAD AND TRAFFIC SIGNS, WARNING

DEVICES, ACCESSORIES AND OTHER FACILITIES."

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The Majority Floor Leader.

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the distinguished Deputy Majority Leader from Camiguin, the Honorable Romualdo, to sponsor the said measure.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The Gentleman, distinguished Sponsor from the province of Camiguin, is hereby recognized.

REP. ROMUALDO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, may I respectfully request that the Explanatory Note of the measure be adopted as our sponsorship speech.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The Majority Floor Leader.

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

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Is there any objection to the motion? (*Silence*) There being none, the motion is hereby approved.

Majority Floor Leader.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Is there any objection to the motion? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is hereby 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. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of amendments.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Any objection to the motion? (*Silence*) There being none, the motion is hereby approved.

Majority Floor Leader.

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, there being no one who wishes to interject any individual amendments and that there being no Committee amendments, I move that we close the period of amendments.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Is there any objection to the motion? (*Silence*) There being none, the motion is hereby approved.

Majority Floor Leader.

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7886 ON SECOND READING

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve House Bill No. 7886 on Second Reading.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Is there any objection to the motion? (*Silence*) There being none, those who are in favor, say *Aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Those who are against, say *Nay*. (*Silence*) The *ayes* have it, House Bill ...

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. ... 7-8-8-6.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). House Bill No. 7886 is hereby approved on Second Reading.

The Majority Floor Leader.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7951 ON SECOND READING

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 7951 and request the Secretary General to read the title of the said measure.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Is there any objection to the motion? (*Silence*). The Secretary General will please proceed. *

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7951, entitled: "AN ACT PROVIDING FOR PROTECTION OF THE REMITTANCES OF OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS."

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The Majority Floor Leader.

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the honorable Deputy Majority Leader XJ Romualdo from the province of Camiguin to sponsor the said measure.

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

REP. ROMUALDO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I again respectfully request that the Explanatory Note of the measure be adopted as our sponsorship speech.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) There being none, the motion of the distinguished Sponsor is hereby approved.

Majority Floor Leader.

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

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

Majority Floor Leader.

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

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

Majority Floor Leader.

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of Committee amendments.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

Majority Floor Leader.

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, there being no Committee amendment, I move that we close the period of Committee amendments.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

Majority Floor Leader.

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of individual amendments.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

Majority Floor Leader.

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, there being no Member of the

House who wishes to interject any individual amendment, I move that we close the period of individual amendments.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

Majority Floor Leader.

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7951 ON SECOND READING

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Second Reading on House Bill No. 7951.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Is there any objection to the motion? The Chair hears none; those who are in favor, say *Aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Those who are against, say *Nay*. (*Silence*) The *ayes* have it; House Bill No. 7951 is hereby approved on Second Reading.

The Majority Floor Leader.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

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

It was 4:32 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:32 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

Majority Floor Leader.

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 852
ON THIRD READING

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider for approval on Third Reading House Bill No. 852 and that the Secretary General be directed to read the title of the measure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Is there any objection to the motion? (*Silence*) There being none, the Secretary General is hereby directed to read the title of the Bill and call the roll for nominal voting. Please proceed.

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on December 3, 2020, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 852, entitled: "AN ACT REGULATING THE PRACTICE OF EMPLOYERS IN POSTING NOTICES OF TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT OF FORMER EMPLOYEES IN NEWSPAPERS, SOCIAL MEDIA AND OTHER PUBLIC INFORMATION VENUES."

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 12, dated December 7, 2020.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). With 193 Members voting in the affirmative, none in the negative, and no abstention, House Bill No. 852 is hereby approved on Third and final Reading.

Majority Floor Leader.

REP. CRISOLOGO. Mr. Speaker, I move for the consideration on Third Reading of House Bill—I withdraw my motion, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Majority Floor Leader.

EXPLANATION OF VOTES

THE SECRETARY GENERAL, reading: Explanation of vote for House Bill No. 852. Honorable Gaité.

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

REP. GAITE EXPLAINS HIS VOTE

REP. GAITE. Salamat po, Mr. Speaker. Bumoto po ng "Oo" ang Kinatawang ito sa House Bill No. 852 bagama't may mga ilan akong reserbasyon.

Una, bagama't nire-regulate ang pagpapalimbag ng notice of termination ng mga employers, naglagay pa rin ng mga pagkakataon na pahintulutan ito tulad ng violations supposedly on: one, serious dishonesty; two, grave misconduct; three, falsification of documents; and four, conviction of a crime involving moral turpitude. Pangalawa, mababa rin ang penalty na P10,000 to P50,000 and we believe, Mr. Speaker, na hindi ito masyadong effective na deterrent kung kaya't sana po ang mga loopholes na ito, kasama iyong penalty, ay magawan ng paraan para hindi pa rin maabuso ang ganitong nagaganap sa ating mga manggagawa. Salamat, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Thank you. Maraming salamat po, distinguished Gentleman from BAYAN MUNA Party-List.

The Majority Floor Leader.

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7660
ON THIRD READING

REP. CRISOLOGO. Mr. Speaker, again, I move for the consideration on Third Reading of House Bill No. 7660. For this purpose, may I request that the Secretary General be directed to read the title of the Bill and, thereafter, call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Is there any objection to the motion? (*Silence*) There being none, the Secretary General is hereby directed to read the number and the title of the Bill.

Please proceed with the calling of the roll for nominal voting.

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on December 3, 2020, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7660, entitled: "AN ACT DECLARING THE MUNICIPALITY OF SAN JOSE IN THE PROVINCE OF BATANGAS, AS THE 'EGG BASKET OF THE PHILIPPINES'."

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 12, dated December 7, 2020.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). With 196 Members voting in the affirmative, zero in the negative, and zero abstention, House Bill No. 7660 is hereby approved on Third and final Reading.

The Majority Floor Leader.

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 8080 ON THIRD READING

REP. CRISOLOGO. Mr. Speaker, I move for the consideration on Third Reading of House Bill No. 8080, and I request that the Secretary General be directed to read the title of the Bill and, thereafter, call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Secretary General is hereby directed to please read the number and the title of the

Bill and then proceed with the calling of the roll for nominal voting.

Please proceed.

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on December 3, 2020, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 8080, entitled: "AN ACT INSTITUTING SERVICES FOR LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES IN SUPPORT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION, ESTABLISHING INCLUSIVE LEARNING RESOURCE CENTERS IN ALL SCHOOL DISTRICTS, PROVIDING FOR STANDARDS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR."

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 12, dated December 7, 2020.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). With 197 Members voting in the affirmative, zero in the negative, and zero abstention, House Bill No. 8080 is hereby approved on Third and final Reading.

The Majority Floor Leader.

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7835 ON THIRD READING

REP. CRISOLOGO. Mr. Speaker, I move for the consideration on Third Reading of House Bill No. 7835, and for this purpose, may I request that the Secretary General be directed to read the title of the Bill and, thereafter, call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the Secretary General is hereby directed to read the number and the title of the Bill and proceed with the calling of the roll for nominal voting.

Proceed.

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on December 3, 2020, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7835, entitled: "AN ACT REQUIRING FOR THE FULL DISCLOSURE OF LOBBYING ACTIVITIES IN THE GOVERNMENT SECTOR, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 1827, ENTITLED 'AN ACT TO REGULATE LOBBYING IN THE CONGRESS OF THE PHILIPPINES AND IN THE COMMISSION ON APPOINTMENTS' AND PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREFOR."

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 12, dated December 7, 2020.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). With 193 Members voting in the affirmative, six in the negative, and zero abstention, House Bill No. 7835 is hereby approved on Third and final Reading.

The Majority Floor Leader.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Secretary General be directed to immediately transmit to the Senate the bills that we approved this afternoon on Third Reading.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Any objection to the motion? (*Silence*) There being none, the Secretary General is hereby directed to do so.

Majority Floor Leader.

APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

REP. CRISOLOGO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve Journal No. 11, dated December 1 and 2, 2020.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. CRISOLOGO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we take up the Additional Reference of Business, and direct the Secretary General to read the title of House resolutions and House bills.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the Secretary General is hereby directed to read the Additional Reference of Business.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

The Secretary General read the following House Resolutions on First Reading, and the Deputy Speaker made the corresponding references:

RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 1397, entitled:

"RESOLUTION URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO IMMEDIATELY PROVIDE FUNDS AND RELEASE THE HAZARD PAY AND SPECIAL RISK ALLOWANCE TO ALL HEALTH WORKERS"

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

House Resolution No. 1398, entitled:

"A RESOLUTION CONDEMNING THE PROLIFERATION OF TARGETED MISINFORMATION AND RED TAGGING"

By Representative Tambunting
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1399, entitled:

"RESOLUTION URGING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, THROUGH THE

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS, TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE ILLEGAL ARREST OF PEASANT ORGANIZER AMANDA ECHANIS IN BAGGAO, CAGAYAN"

By Representatives Cullamat, Zarate, Gaité, Brosas, Castro (France) and Elago

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1400, entitled:

"RESOLUTION URGING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, THROUGH THE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS, TO INVESTIGATE, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, THE ILLEGAL SEARCH AND HARASSMENT AGAINST PEASANT LEADER ISABELO 'BUTING' ADVIENTO IN BRGY. CARUPIAN, BAGGAO, CAGAYAN PROVINCE"

By Representatives Cullamat, Zarate, Gaité, Brosas, Castro (France) and Elago

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1401, entitled:

"A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING PROFOUND SYMPATHIES AND SINCEREST CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON THE DEMISE OF JEVILYN C. CULLAMAT, DAUGHTER OF HONORABLE EUFEMIA 'KA FEMIA' C. CULLAMAT, REPRESENTATIVE OF BAYAN MUNA PARTYLIST IN THE 18TH CONGRESS"

By Representative Tambunting
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1402, entitled:

"RESOLUTION URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT (DSWD) TO FAST-TRACK THE RELEASE OF AVAILABLE FUNDS TO HELP FAMILIES IN TYPHOON-STRIKEN AREAS, PARTICULARLY THE FUNDS INTENDED FOR THE ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS

IN CRISIS SITUATIONS (AICS) PROGRAM IN THE FORM OF TEN THOUSAND PESOS EMERGENCY CASH AID TO TYPHOON VICTIMS"

By Representatives Brosas, Zarate, Cullamat, Gaité, Castro (France) and Elago

TO THE COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SERVICES

House Resolution No. 1403, entitled:

"A RESOLUTION COMMEMORATING THE 500TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PHILIPPINE PART IN THE FIRST CIRCUMNAVIGATION OF THE WORLD ON THE ISLAND OF HOMONHON ON MARCH 17, 1521"

By Representative Abunda
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Resolution No. 1404, entitled:

"RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES URGING THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT TO RATIFY INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION (ILO) CONVENTION NO. 190 ON ENDING VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT AT WORK"

By Representatives Brosas, Zarate, Cullamat, Gaité, Castro (France) and Elago

TO THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

House Resolution No. 1405, entitled:

"RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE CONTRIBUTIONS AND EFFORTS OF HIS EXCELLENCY HAN DONG-MAN AS AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA TO THE PHILIPPINES IN FOSTERING PHILIPPINES-KOREA BILATERAL RELATIONS"

By Representatives Velasco, Romualdez (Ferdinand), Paduano, Arenas, Hofer, Yu, Vergara and Robes

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella).
The Majority Floor Leader.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7814
ON SECOND READING

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider on Second Reading House Bill No. 7814, as contained in Committee Report 550, and that the Secretary General be directed to read the title of the measure.

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

The Secretary General will please proceed.*

THE SECRETARY GENERAL.
House Bill No. 7814, entitled: "AN ACT STRENGTHENING DRUG PREVENTION AND CONTROL, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9165, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE 'COMPREHENSIVE DANGEROUS DRUGS ACT OF 2002'."

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella).
Majority Floor Leader.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of sponsorship and debate, and to sponsor the measure, I move that we recognize our distinguished colleague, the Chairperson of the Committee on Dangerous Drugs, Rep. Robert Ace Barbers.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella).
The distinguished Archer and Gentleman Sponsor is hereby recognized.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH
OF REP. BARBERS

REP. BARBERS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Animo, distinguished colleagues.

The proposal before us today has passed the scrutiny of this House during the last

Congress. However, the Senate failed to tackle the same for lack of material time. Distinguished colleagues, not only is the time material here but is also valuable and is of the essence, so to speak.

This Bill seeks to amend the 18-year-old law that governs illegal drugs. From its infancy in 2002, it has now matured. It is time to give it more teeth to fight the menace that has consumed society, destroyed families, threatened our government, and almost transformed our country into a narco-state. As it stands now, Republic Act No. 9165, while enabling our law enforcement agencies to fight illegal drugs, needs further improvement in order for the cases filed against drug personalities stick and prosper until they reach their natural inevitable conclusion of conviction. While many apprehensions were done and so many cases were filed, a lot of them got dismissed during the preliminary investigation in the fiscal level or had resulted in acquittal in the court. Why so? It is because some provisions of the law can easily be circumvented.

Mr. Speaker, allow me to cite the following salient provisions of House Bill No. 7814:

(1) Providing for legal presumption on who is considered as the importer, financier, and protector or coddler of illegal drugs;

(2) Penalizing negligent lessors of properties used as clandestine laboratories if they fail to submit the required documents to avoid their properties from being used for illegal drug purpose;

(3) Extending criminal liability to the partner, president, director, manager, trustee, estate administrator, or officer of the corporation or partnership who owns and assents to or tolerates the use of a property as a den, dive or resort to violate the provisions of R.A. No. 9165;

(4) Ensuring that our Filipino professional and non-professional athletes are drug-free, by providing for a mandatory drug testing for the athletes twice a year;

(5) Decreasing the validity of drug test certificates issued by accredited drug testing centers to three (3) months from the original one-year period to ensure its reliability; and

* 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."

(6) Increasing the composition of the Dangerous Drugs Board from seventeen (17) to twenty (20) members.

Thus, Mr. Speaker, you will see that the proposed amendments here turn the tables and give the State the power and the upper hand to prosecute better and bring offenders to justice. Foremost, among the proposed amendments are the legal presumptions that deal with the so-called Protectors, Coddlers and Financiers of illegal drugs who are the real drug lords. They are the real enemies of the State in the fight against illegal drugs. Unfortunately, the State is not winning this fight because the enemies are conveniently hiding behind the weakness of Republic Act No. 9165. This is evident from the fact that no high-level protector, coddler or financier has ever been convicted in our country. Presently, the State is bound to show direct proof of protecting, coddling and/or financing that is extremely difficult if not impossible to obtain—a playing field heavily tilted in favor of the enemies of the State. But if the State is simply required to show proof that would only lead or tend to prove a direct act of protecting, coddling and/or financing, as provided in its proposed measure, Mr. Speaker, the State will no longer be bound to tediously search, dig and uncover from scratch even the most minute evidence against these enemies of the State before a case can be filed in court. This will certainly level the playing field: the protection of the right of the accused on the one hand, and the right of the State to protect its citizens against the scourge of illegal drugs on the other. With the legal presumptions, they can be hailed to court right away with only a handful of circumstantial evidence that they, of course, can rebut. These legal presumptions will equip the State that makes several steps ahead of the enemies and will put them on the defensive. This situation is a whole new different ballgame in this fight against illegal drugs.

Further, to address the perennial abuse by some crook law enforcers, the proposed measure provides for a legal presumption of “planting of evidence”

or “planting evidence” if the rules of procedure or engagement of the arrest or their arrest, search and seizure have been violated. Finally, we now have another legal presumption to stop the cases from outright dismissal. Sitting on the cases alone will now give rise to the presumption of “bungling,” directed at the prosecution service of our justice system. This proposed provision has passed the scrutiny of the Department of Justice, just like all the other legal presumptions proposed in this House Bill.

The numerous TWGs conducted by the Committee proved that these amendments do not violate the Constitution. They merely give the State better tools to ensure the success of our implementation of an otherwise weaker law. The agencies like the PDEA, the DDB, the NBI, the PNP, the Bureau of Customs, the Department of Finance, the DILG, and the Department of Justice have given their assent on this Bill since the last Congress, and reiterated their support and approval of the same in this present Congress.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, this Representation asks that we support the passage of this Bill now in this Congress and give our government a better fighting chance in this continuing war against illegal drugs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Thank you, distinguished Sponsor and Chairperson of the Committee on Dangerous Drugs. Animo to you also.

The Majority Floor Leader.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7814

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 7814.

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

The Majority Floor Leader.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 8136
ON SECOND READING

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I now move that we consider on Second Reading House Bill No. 8136, as contained in Committee Report No. 625, and that the Secretary General be directed to read the title of the measure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Is there any objection to the motion? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the Secretary General, please proceed.*

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 8136, entitled: "AN ACT DECLARING THE COCONUT LEVY ASSETS AS A TRUST FUND, PROVIDING FOR ITS MANAGEMENT AND UTILIZATION, AUTHORIZING THE PRIVATIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OFFICE TO DISPOSE THE COCONUT LEVY ASSETS FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE COCONUT FARMERS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COCONUT INDUSTRY."

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The Majority Floor Leader.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of sponsorship and debate, and to sponsor the measure, I move that we recognize our distinguished colleague, the Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture and Food, Rep. Mark Enverga.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The distinguished Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture and Food, the Gentleman from Quezon province, is hereby recognized. Please proceed.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH
OF REP. ENVERGA

REP. ENVERGA. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Majority Leader. I

have the privilege to sponsor the Bill, entitled: AN ACT DECLARING THE COCONUT LEVY ASSETS AS A TRUST FUND, PROVIDING FOR ITS MANAGEMENT AND UTILIZATION, AUTHORIZING THE PRIVATIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OFFICE TO DISPOSE THE COCONUT LEVY ASSETS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

To the honorable Speaker, and the honorable Members of the House of Representatives, good afternoon. I pray that we are all safe and I hope that we will be able to soon surpass this chapter in our lives that has shaken not just our country but the world as well. Despite it all, life goes on and our people are expecting a lot from us, now more than ever.

Mr. Speaker, the substitute Bill now for consideration seeks to consolidate all assets and benefits emanating from the coconut levy and creating a Trust Fund therefrom for the ultimate benefit of coconut farmers and farm workers as embodied in the Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Plan, found in Section 4 of the Bill.

The utilization of the Trust Fund created under this Act or any portion thereof, shall be in accordance with the Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Plan which shall be prepared by the Philippine Coconut Authority or PCA, in consultation with all stakeholders concerned and shall be approved by the President and the plan, Mr. Speaker, shall be subject to mandatory annual review.

The Plan shall set the directions and policies for the development and rehabilitation of the coconut industry within 99 years guided by the following objectives: to increase incomes of coconut farmers; to alleviate poverty and promote social equity; and to rehabilitate and modernize the coconut industry towards farm productivity.

The Bill provides for the annual utilization of the Trust Fund under the following allocations:

1. shared facilities program, ten percent (10%);
2. farm improvement through diversification and/or intercropping such as

* 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."

projects on livestock, dairy, poultry, coffee, and cacao production, ten percent (10%);

3. development of hybrid coconut seed farms and nurseries to encourage self-sufficiency, ten percent (10%);

4. empowerment of coconut farmer organizations and their cooperatives, ten percent (10%);

5. scholarship program, ten percent (10%);

6. health and medical program, ten percent (10%);

7. credit provision through the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) and the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP), ten percent (10%);

8. infrastructure development, ten percent (10%);

9. training of farmers in farm schools through the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), ten percent (10%); and

10. planting and replanting, ten percent (10%).

The Bill, Mr. Speaker, also aims to reconstitute the Philippine Coconut Authority to ensure the participation of coconut farmers in the crafting and implementation of the Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Plan. The PCA Board shall now be composed of the following:

1. the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA) as Chairperson;

2. the Secretary of the Department of Finance as Vice Chairperson;

3. the Secretary of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM);

4. the Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST);

5. the Secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI);

6. three representatives from the coconut farmers sector, one each from Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao; and finally

7. one (1) representative from the coconut industry sector.

The PCA shall serve as the Secretariat to the Board.

This Bill is long overdue, Mr. Speaker, our coconut farmers are in dire need of help; yet, the money could not be touched as there has to be a law passed by Congress before it could be used for the purpose for which it was intended.

The coconut levy funds are special funds allocated for specific purpose and can never be used for purposes other than for the benefit of the coconut farmers and for the development of the coconut industry. Hence, the money now with the Bureau of the Treasury is now earning interest as it could not be invested or used. Congress must first provide a law for the disbursements of the funds, in line with its constitutional authority. The absence of a legislative authority in the disbursement of public funds would render the funds idle and no income can be derived from it.

Mr. Speaker, my dear colleagues, I hope and pray that our dream for a developed, strengthened, and modernized coconut industry would soon become a reality.

Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Thank you very much distinguished Sponsor. The Majority Floor Leader.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 8136

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 8136.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the consideration of this Bill on Second Reading is hereby suspended.

The Majority Floor Leader.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

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

It was 5:21 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:39 p.m., the session was resumed with Deputy Speaker Michael L. Romero, Ph.D., presiding.

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

ELECTION OF DEPUTY SPEAKERS

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, on the part of the Majority, I move for the nomination and election of the following Members as Deputy Speakers:

Rep. Arnolfo "Arnie" A. Teves Jr.;
Rep. Juan Pablo "Rimpy" P. Bondoc;
Rep. Eric M. Martinez;
Rep. Bernadette "BH" Herrera-Dy;
Rep. Kristine Singson-Meehan;
Rep. Divina Grace C. Yu;
Rep. Rogelio "Ruel" D. Pacquiao;
Rep. Weslie T. Gatchalian; and

Rep. Bienvenido M. Abante Jr. vice Rep. Johnny Ty Pimentel and Rep. Aurelio "Dong" D. Gonzales Jr.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Romero). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) Hearing none, the election of the following Deputy Speakers is hereby approved by the Chair: Rep. Arnolfo "Arnie" A. Teves Jr. (*Applause*), Rep. Juan Pablo "Rimpy" P. Bondoc (*Applause*), Rep. Eric M. Martinez (*Applause*), Rep. Bernadette "BH" Herrera-Dy, Rep. Kristine Singson-Meehan, (*Applause*) Rep. Divina Grace C. Yu, Rep. Rogelio "Ruel" D. Pacquiao, Rep. Weslie T. Gatchalian, and Rep. Bienvenido M. Abante Jr.

Congratulations! (*Applause*)
Majority Leader.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, to allow our Members to congratulate our newly elected Deputy Speakers, I move that we suspend the session for a few minutes.

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

It was 5:41 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:44 p.m., the session was resumed with Speaker Lord Allan Jay Q. Velasco, presiding.

THE SPEAKER. The session is resumed.

REP. ROMUALDEZ (F.M.). The Speaker will now administer the oath of office to the new Deputy Speaker Arnolfo "Arnie" A. Teves Jr.

At this juncture, Rep. Arnolfo "Arnie" A. Teves Jr. ascended the rostrum and took his oath of office as Deputy Speaker before the Hon. Lord Allan Jay Q. Velasco.

OATH-TAKING

THE SPEAKER. Please raise your right hand and repeat after me.

I, ARNOLFO "ARNIE" A. TEVES JR., of Sitio Tinastasan, Malabugas, Bayawan City, Negros Oriental, having been elected as Deputy Speaker of the Eighteenth Congress, hereby solemnly swear that I will well and faithfully discharge to the best of my ability the duties of my present position and of all others I may hereafter hold under the Republic of the Philippines; that I will support and defend the Constitution of the Philippines; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the laws, legal orders and decrees, promulgated by the duly constituted authorities of the Republic of the Philippines; and that I impose this obligation upon myself voluntarily, without mental reservation or purpose of evasion.

So help me God.

THE SPEAKER. Congratulations! (*Applause*)

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

THE SPEAKER. The session is suspended so that we can congratulate the newly appointed Deputy Speaker Arnolfo A. Teves Jr.

It was 5:46 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

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

THE SPEAKER. The session is resumed.
Majority Leader.

REP. ROMUALDEZ (F.M.). The Speaker will now administer the oath of office to Deputy Speaker Juan Pablo “Rimpy” Bondoc of Pampanga, to be witnessed by his lovely wife, Paula Locsin from Ormoc City, Mr. Speaker.

OATH-TAKING

THE SPEAKER. Please raise your right hand and repeat after me.

I, JUAN PABLO BONDOC, of San Gabriel, Macabebe, Pampanga, having been elected as Deputy Speaker of the Eighteenth Congress, hereby solemnly swear that I will well and faithfully discharge to the best of my ability the duties of my present position and of all others I may hereafter hold under the Republic of the Philippines; that I will support and defend the Constitution of the Philippines; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the laws, legal orders and decrees promulgated by the duly constituted authorities of the Republic of the Philippines; and that I impose this obligation upon myself voluntarily, without mental reservation or purpose of evasion.

So help me God.

Congratulations! *(Applause)*

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

THE SPEAKER. The session is suspended.

It was 5:50 pm.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:51 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE SPEAKER. The session is resumed.

REP. ROMUALDEZ (F.M.). The Speaker will now administer the oath of office to Congressman, now Deputy Speaker, Weslie

Gatchalian of Valenzuela City, to be witnessed by his lovely wife, Tiffany, and sister-in-law, Laraina.

THE SPEAKER. Please raise your right hand and repeat after me.

At this juncture, Rep. Weslie T. Gatchalian, together with his family, ascended the rostrum and took his oath of office as Deputy Speaker before Speaker Lord Allan Jay Q. Velasco.

OATH-TAKING

THE SPEAKER. For your oath, please repeat after me and raise your hand.

I, WESLIE T. GATCHALIAN of 60 Santiago St., Barangay Canumay West, Valenzuela City, having been elected as Deputy Speaker of the Eighteenth Congress, hereby solemnly swear that I will well and faithfully discharge to the best of my ability the duties of my present position and of all others I may hereafter hold under the Republic of the Philippines; that I will support and defend the Constitution of the Philippines; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the laws, legal orders, and decrees promulgated by the duly constituted authorities of the Republic of the Philippines; and that I impose this obligation upon myself voluntarily, without mental reservation or purpose of evasion.

So help me God.

Congratulations!

REP. GATCHALIAN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. *(Applause)*

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

THE SPEAKER. The session is suspended.

It was 5:54 pm.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:55 p.m., the session was resumed with Deputy Speaker Michael L. Romero, Ph.D., presiding.

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

ELECTION OF REP. ARBISON
AS MEMBER OF THE
COMMISSION ON APPOINTMENTS

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, on the part of the Majority, I move for the nomination and election of Representative Munir M. Arbison as member of the House Contingent to the Commission on Appointments vice Representative Benjamin C. Agarao Jr.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Romero).
Is there any objection? (*Silence*) Hearing none, the Chair approves the appointment of Rep. Munir M. Arbison as the House Contingent to the Commission on Appointments vice Rep. Benjamin C. Agarao Jr.
Majority Leader.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS
TO VARIOUS COMMITTEES

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, on the part of the Majority, I move for the nomination and election of the following Members to various Committees:

The Majority Leader, Rep. Xavier Jesus D. Romualdo, read the names of the House Members elected to the various Committees, per Journal No. 12, dated December 7, 2020.

COMMITTEE ON
TRADE AND INDUSTRY

As Chairperson:
Rep. John Reynald M. Tiangco vice Rep. Weslie T. Gatchalian

COMMITTEE ON
INTER-PARLIAMENTARY
RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY

As Chairperson:
Rep. Sandra Y. Eriguel, M.D., vice Rep. Divina Grace Yu

COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SERVICES

As Chairperson:
Rep. Alfred Vargas vice Rep. Sandra Y. Eriguel, M.D.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE
ON STRATEGIC INTELLIGENCE

As Chairperson:
Rep. Johnny Ty Pimentel vice Rep. Fredenil H. Castro

SPECIAL COMMITTEE
ON BASES CONVERSION

As Chairperson:
Rep. Aurelio "Dong" D. Gonzales Jr. vice Rep. Francis Gerald Aguinaldo Abaya

COMMITTEE ON RULES

As Deputy Majority Leader
Rep. Tyrone D. Agabas vice Rep. Bernadette "BH" Herrera-Dy

As Assistant Majority Leader
Rep. Amihilda J. Sangcopan vice Rep. Kristine Singson-Meehan

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Romero).
Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair approves the election of the aforementioned House Members to various Committees.
Majority Leader.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session for a few minutes.
Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the motion to suspend and I move that we recognize Deputy Minority Leader, Rep. Kit Belmonte.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Romero).
The Chair recognizes Deputy Minority Leader Kit Belmonte.

ELECTION OF REP. GUYA
TO THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE
ON STRATEGIC INTELLIGENCE

REP. BELMONTE. Thank you very much,

Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon.

On behalf of the Minority, I move that we nominate Rep. Godofredo N. Guya to the Special Committee on Strategic Intelligence.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Romero). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) Hearing none, the Chair approves the nomination of Rep. Godofredo N. Guya as Minority Representative member to the Special Committee on Strategic Intelligence.

Majority Leader.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

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

It was 6:00 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 6:03 p.m., the session was resumed with Speaker Lord Allan Jay Q. Velasco presiding.

THE SPEAKER. The session is resumed.
Majority Leader.

REP. ROMUALDEZ (F.M.). The Speaker shall now administer the oath of the new Deputy Speaker Eric Martinez, accompanied by his lovely wife.

At this juncture, Rep. Eric M. Martinez, with his wife, ascended the rostrum and took his oath of office as Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives before Speaker Lord Allan Jay Q. Velasco.

OATH-TAKING

THE SPEAKER. So please raise your right hand and repeat after me your oath of office.

I, ERIC M. MARTINEZ, of Barangay Mapulang Lupa, Valenzuela City, having been elected as Deputy Speaker of the Eighteenth Congress, hereby solemnly swear that I will

well and faithfully discharge to the best of my ability the duties of my present position and of all others I may hereafter hold under the Republic of the Philippines; that I will support and defend the Constitution of the Philippines; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the laws, legal orders and decrees promulgated by the duly constituted authorities of the Republic of the Philippines; and that I impose this obligation upon myself voluntarily, without mental reservation or purpose of evasion.

So help me God.

THE SPEAKER. Congratulations!
(*Applause*)

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

THE SPEAKER. The session is suspended.

It was 6:05 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 6:09 p.m., the session was resumed with Deputy Speaker Conrado M. Estrella III presiding.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The session is resumed.
The Majority Floor Leader.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7749 *Continuation*

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 7749, as contained in Committee Report No. 524, and that the Secretary General be directed to read the title of the Bill.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is hereby approved. The distinguished Sponsor, the Gentleman from Quirino will please proceed.

REP. QUIMBO. Mr. Speaker.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella).
Yes. The Secretary General will please proceed.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7749, entitled: "AN ACT PROVIDING FOR GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS UNIFIED INITIATIVES TO DISTRESSED ENTERPRISES FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY (GUIDE)."

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella).
The Majority Floor Leader.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary status is that we are still in the period of sponsorship and debate, and to continue the interpellations, I move that we recognize Rep. Junie Cua, the Chairman of the Committee on Banks and Intermediaries, to sponsor the measure, and to interpellate, I move that we recognize Deputy Minority Leader Stella Quimbo.

REP. CUA. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella).
Yes, the distinguished Sponsor is hereby recognized.

REP. CUA. Mr. Speaker, when we suspended the interpellation, I was supposed to respond to a point raised by the Gentlelady about the empowerment of the special holding company because the impression is that the special holding company is only empowered to infuse equity capital to investee companies. So, let me provide this clarification to the Gentlelady.

I would like to refer her to Section 10 of the substitute Bill or to Section 12 (c) of the original committee report. In both versions, one would notice that the creation of the special holding company carries with it the authority not only to invest or infuse equity capital in the investing company, but also to execute convertible loans or purchase convertible bonds or to execute convertible loans and also such other securities as may be issued by the investee corporations. So for

clarification, it includes two more authority, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. QUIMBO. So, Mr. Speaker, just to clarify, what the good Sponsor is saying is that, in addition to equity participation, the special holding company is authorized to give out loans to distressed firms?

REP. CUA. That is correct. That is why you are correct in pointing out that in the section giving them the exemption privilege, mayroon silang tax privilege with respect to those transactions.

REP. QUIMBO. But, Mr. Speaker, the good Sponsor mentioned Section 10 of the substitute Bill which has four paragraphs— (a), (b), (c), and (d), but which has none of these four paragraphs would have reference to the granting of loans. The only mention of loans here is with respect to convertible loans, which as we know are loans that will be converted into equity at some time in the future. In other words, Mr. Speaker, precisely, the title of Section 10 is Powers of the Investment Vehicle.

So, ang interpretation ko po ay limitado lang po sa equity participation, at least as to how it is drafted today po, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CUA. Well, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, while it is true that eventually they may become equity capital, it would be at the option actually of the special holding company. The special holding company may opt to continue to remain to keep the infusion into the investee capital in the form of loan and not necessarily convert it to equity. So in that sense, the Bill allows extension of loans.

REP. QUIMBO. Well, Mr. Speaker, kaya ko naman po itinatanong paulit-ulit ang posibilidad ng granting of loans by the special holding company to the distressed firm is because I would like to ask the good Sponsor whether he has contemplated on the worst scenario where the special holding company is unable to turn around the failing firm, unable to therefore attract more investments from the private sector and is, therefore, perpetually left with the stranded asset.

So, naisip na po ba natin kung mayroon po bang safeguards against this worst scenario, Mr. Speaker? Kasi po, maganda naman sana kung ang SHC ay special creditor sa halip na investor, in which case in the worst scenario, then our special holding company can unload NPLs or Non-Performing Loans to, say, a special purpose vehicle which eventually can be created dahil nga po kapapasa lang po ng FIST Bill. Thanks, of course, to the efforts of our good Sponsor.

REP. CUA. Well, thank you, I see the point of the Gentlelady. That is why I think the way it is worded now makes it a lot more flexible on the part of the special holding company because it can chip it as a loan and therefore, when eventually there is a failure that may happen, of course, that is speculative, in any business deal, there is always a probability of failure but there is also a probability of success. Now, it is really a gamble so to speak and if that should fail and the special holding company deems it wise not to convert it, then it can take advantage of the possibility of selling that particular non-performing loans to a special purpose vehicle, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. QUIMBO. Mr. Speaker, will the good Sponsor be open to the possibility of amending the Bill to incorporate more specific language and clearer language so that the special holding company can perform as a special creditor or in addition to being an investor in distressed firms? And if so, Mr. Speaker, I would propose amendments at the proper time.

REP. CUA. Mr. Speaker, it would be most welcome that a suggestion be presented and I think for as long as it will enhance and improve the Bill and be able to achieve the objective of this scheme, I will be more than willing to accept.

REP. QUIMBO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to move on to my next concern, which is I would like to ask, Mr. Speaker, if banking may be included as a strategically important industry? Kaya ko po ito itinatanong,

Mr. Speaker, I am thinking of a scenario wherein a rural bank which wishes to be bailed out, can the special holding company step in and acquire this? So, itinatanong ko po ito dahil ang special holding company, which is a joint venture consisting of banks themselves, hindi kaya magkakaroon ng anti-competitive effects ang acquisition, halimbawa, ng isang rural bank? There could be a situation, perhaps a small provincial market, where the only two banks would be the Land Bank of the Philippines and, say, a rural bank and that rural bank, for example, at a certain point becomes distressed or becomes a failing firm. Can LANDBANK actually acquire this distressed firm? So in this situation, very simple hypothetical case, ang mangyayari po after the acquisition is that a monopoly would be created. So ang tanong ko po, uulitin ko, will this special holding company be allowed to acquire a distressed bank, Mr. Speaker?

REP. CUA. Well, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, if we try to evaluate the scenario being envisioned by the Gentlelady, it has to pass, I think, the criteria set in the Bill with respect to the strategically important company. Would it be qualified to be listed among an array of industries that is listed in the Bill? Secondly, would it pass, for example, a test that prior to the COVID pandemic, it was sound, financially sound, it was well-managed? I think that would be a consideration and they have a problem only – they have only a temporary insolvency situation that can be easily rehabilitated. So, would they have, for example, an employment impact? Would it have a high-economic return? I think these are the points that will have to be applied with respect to this rural bank. So, I think I would consider it that way, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. QUIMBO. Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, the good Sponsor can consider carving out from the list of possible distressed firms/banks and, perhaps, leave the bailing out of banks to the BSP. Is that something that the good Sponsor will consider, Mr. Speaker?

REP. CUA. Well, I think that is possible. I guess the BSP would be in a better position

really to evaluate, it being the regulatory body that really monitors and evaluates the performance of a bank.

REP. QUIMBO. Thank you for that clarification.

I would like to move on to a different point, Mr. Speaker. Section 9 (f) of the Bill provides for safeguards to protect the government's investment. So, I would like to ask, Mr. Speaker, the good Sponsor whether there are safeguards as well for both LANDBANK and DBP? In other words, would the assets of LANDBANK and DBP be insulated from the activities of the special holding company, Mr. Speaker?

REP. CUA. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, because in the Bill is enshrined the principle that the value of the investment of LANDBANK and DBP; or the special holding company should never be diluted and the mechanism should be put in place to ensure that their values are protected.

REP. QUIMBO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to move to Section 16, which is the exemption from certain provisions or all provisions of the Philippine Competition Act. So, by Section 16, transactions by the special holding company shall be exempt from the Philippine Competition Act for a period of three years from its incorporation and there is a proviso where these exemptions shall only apply to the acquisition of assets of an investee company by the special holding company.

So, my first question, Mr. Speaker, is I would like to be clarified, does this exemption refer only to assets? So, under the Philippine Competition Act, there is a clear distinction between the acquisition of shares and the acquisition of assets. So, gusto ko lang pong malaman, Mr. Speaker, kung iyong exemption ba na ito ay tumutukoy lamang sa assets and not to shares?

REP. CUA. Well, I would interpret it as pertaining to equity, not physical assets but assets by way of investment. So, accounts receivable would be an asset, equity investment would be an asset. So, that could be the context of the definition of the word "asset".

REP. QUIMBO. So, Mr. Speaker, I just want to let the good Sponsor know that under the rules of procedure of the Philippine Competition Commission, klarong-klaro po na 'pag sinabing acquisition of assets, iba po iyan sa acquisition of shares--of forums. At dahil ang nakabanggit po sa panukalang batas ay acquisition of assets, baka kailangan pong amyendahan, ano, if what you really want to exempt is the acquisition of shares. But having said that, I would like to reiterate that it is very important for the PCC to actually continue to have the power to review any acquisition by the special holding company of whether shares or assets of an investee company.

So, let me just maybe give you an example. Let us suppose the special holding company acquires an airline company. And of course, as you had mentioned earlier, Mr. Sponsor, you said that the idea was not really for the government to hold on to the shares permanently but rather to attract private investors. So, paano po kung ang private entity na ang nagsabi, nag-express ng willingness to invest in this airline company is a shipping company? Hindi po ba iyong acquisition na iyon, the acquisition of a shipping company of the shares of an airline company, that could result in a considerable loss in competition which ultimately will affect airline fares as well as shipping fares?

So, iyong situation na dine-describe ko po, Mr. Speaker, is a situation where since the shipping company now owns the airline company, mawawalan na po ng competitive constraint in terms of setting airline fares. In other words, iyong shipping company at ang airline company would now be owned by a single ultimate parent entity which will now control the pricing for both sectors. So, kung бага po, this will really result in ultimately higher fares in both the airline sector as well as shipping. Malaking problema po ito kasi kung papakinggan po natin ang ating exporters, ang hinaing talaga nila is the reason why their competitive advantage in the global market is eroded is the very high shipping rates.

So, since in this hypothetical scenario: the airline company is now owned by the shipping company, mawawalan na ng alternatives ang mga exporters. Kung puwede nilang,

halimbawa, instead of shipping goods, they will now just use a cargo plane, ngayon po, kung iisa na lang po ang nagko-control ng presyo ng both airline and shipping companies ay magkakaproblema po tayo dito nga po sa pagtaas ng presyo. So, ultimately, Mr. Speaker, I really think that it is dangerous for us to exempt acquisitions of the special holding company from the powers of the PCC to review mergers and acquisitions.

REP. CUA. Well, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, I see the point of the Gentelady and I guess under normal circumstances, that really would be very important. But please note, please take note of the language of the Bill. The Bill says, “shall be exempt from the provisions” – further, transaction by the special holding company xxx shall be exempt from the provisions of the Philippine Competition Act for a period of three years from its incorporation, provided that, this exemption shall apply only to the acquisition of assets of an investee company by the special holding company pursuant to its power.

So, what is envisioned here really is the acquisition of the asset of the investing company and the acquisition will not in any way affect competition. So, ang investment ng special holding company in the investee company would be very limited. It is not something that will take control of the company. It is only a minor share so that it can provide, so to speak, a temporary shot on the arm, hopefully, that can boost confidence or probably help them a little bit, but it is not expected to take control of that company. So, I see no danger insofar as affecting the competitive situation in the industry.

And secondly, we must also try to remember that this is only a temporary privilege over a period of three years because if we do not provide this kind of an exemption, then it may happen that the time we need, because time is of the essence in rehabilitating or, so to speak, reviving the patient, eh bago lumabas doon sa Philippine Competition Commission ay baka patay na iyong kabayo. So, iyon ang concern natin lang dito, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. So, it is really a combination of expediency as well as the fact that we don't envision really

to take a substantial portion of the control of the company, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. QUIMBO. Mr. Speaker, that is precisely why I asked the good Sponsor to clarify whether the exemption refers to the acquisition of assets or shares and since the good Sponsor initially said that this really pertains to shares, which is why I went on to explain my point. But now that it would seem like the good Sponsor has confirmed that, indeed, it was the acquisition of assets that the Bill is referring to, I would like to also remind the good Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, that under the Philippine Competition Act, there is such a thing as control of assets, for purposes of control.

So, mayroon din pong isang potential na anti-competitive outcome kapag nag-a-acquire ng assets and the reason for that is to control the company. So, let me give you an example. Again, if you were – if a certain – if the government, sorry, if the shipping company acquires all the airplanes of an airline company, that can be considered as tantamount to controlling the airline company. Kasi siyempre po, ang pinaka-basis naman po ng negosyo ng isang airline company ay ang kaniyang assets, in this case, the aircraft. So, kung iyong shipping company ang siyang may-ari ng aircraft ng isang airline company, tiyak po na mayroon po siyang effective control over the company. So, napakaklaro po ito under the Competition Law, napakaklaro po nito sa rules of procedure ng Philippine Competition Commission. Kaya po, ang sa tingin ko po, if I may offer a suggestion, Mr. Speaker, baka puwede na lang pong gamitin na approach ng ating special holding company is the same approach that the PCC offered noon pong nagkaroon tayo ng third player sa telcos. So, ang nangyari po diyan, in effect, in-exempt po ang acquisition ng – ang third player from certain rules of PCC. Pero ang nangyari po, nagkaroon po ng MOA with the DICT, in which case, the PCC was able to weigh in on their competition concerns before the transaction was completed. In which case, hindi na kinailangan ng prior approval from the PCC.

So, this is an approach that perhaps the special holding company can take with the PCC. They can, in other words, enter into a

Memorandum of Agreement and have prior approvals this way rather than do it the conventional way as contemplated under the Philippine Competition Act. In which case, kung ganyan pong approach ang kukunin natin para sa special holding company, hindi na po kailangang magkaroon ng blanket exemption for the special holding company dito po sa R.A. No. 10667.

REP. CUA. Well, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, of course, any suggestion that will improve the Bill is certainly welcome. But just to allay the fear of the Gentlelady, I think the policies laid down in the Bill clearly intends to make the participation or the support of the special holding company to an investee company is not really something that is going to be very substantial. And that being the case, that being the case, the fear that it might create a scenario of affecting competition and lead to unfair pricing scenario is kind of remote to happen. So, if you will take a look at the Bill, there are safety valves that we put in place. For example, there is a limit to the investment that the special holding company can infuse in an investee company. So, there is a limit to the capital infusion that the special holding company can put into the investee company. So, I guess, this kind of a safeguard is unlikely to result in a scenario that could really affect competition, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. QUIMBO. Mr. Speaker, I just like to point out that possibilities for anti-competitive behavior are endless. So, iyong inaakala nating hindi puwedeng mangyari sa ngayon, e pagdating po sa pagnenegosyo, oras na tinanggal po natin ang mga balakid ay hindi tayo magiging sigurado that firms will not cross the line and engage in anti-competitive behavior. So, iyan lang po ang punto ng aking pagtatanong tungkol dito sa exemption ng PCC. Sana po since hindi pa naman po tapos ang period of sponsorship and debate at wala pa naman pong period of amendments ay sana naman po baka puwede pang pag-isipan ng ating Sponsor ang concern na ito at baka magpalit pa ang kaniyang kaisipan tungkol dito.

And for my last point, Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend our Sponsor for

including MSMEs dito po sa suporta para sa distressed enterprises at ito po ay nasa Section 7 ng panukalang batas. I would like to ask the good Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, ano po ba ang ibig sabihin ng “expanding the loan program for qualified MSMEs”? When we say expansion, ano po ba ang ibig sabihin nito? Does this mean, subsidized interest rates? Does this mean longer terms? Does this mean expedited approvals, fewer requirements? Can the good Sponsor explain what “expansion of loan programs” would refer to?

REP. CUA. Well, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, the concern of the Gentlelady as to what is envisioned in the term “expansion,” I guess it would encompass increasing the portfolio, the amount of the portfolio to be allocated for the MSMEs requirement. It may also include as many industries as possible which are not covered yet in their portfolio today. It may include a combination of everything that you’ve said. Maybe a longer term, a longer period, a longer loan period, a more affordable interest rate, a relaxed regime of security, for example. So, there could be a combination of many of the cases you have mentioned. But certainly, it means increasing the volume so that more can be accommodated, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. QUIMBO. Mr. Speaker, napakagandang balita po iyan, ‘pag sinabing expansion and that could mean many things. The point is, of course, the more MSMEs that we can help, of course, the better. But, Mr. Speaker, considering that 77 percent of Filipinos continue to be unbanked, ang tanong ko po is, how do we expect that this provision can actually help MSMEs? Base na rin po sa datos mula sa BSP, the take-up rate for loans by MSMEs is so small. Sa isang ADB study, halos four percent lang po ng micro and small firms – actually, it took out loans from banks in order to tide them over during the lockdown. So – and this is considering that, or because of a proactive BSP, and because of the regulatory relief provided by the BSP, dumami na ng P1.9 trillion ang funds sa ating financial system or banking system. But despite that, napakakaunti pa rin ng umuutang. So, ano

po ang ating guarantee na by having Chapter 2 in this Bill, Section 7, which expands loan programs, ano ang guarantee natin na talagang makakatulong ito sa ating MSMEs considering na napakarami sa kanila ang unbanked, napakarami po ang informal?

So, hindi kaya po mas importante ang mga programa that seeks to regularize our informal MSMEs or hindi kaya mag-introduce ng credit mediation service para po magkaroon ng access to the formal financial institutions ang ating informal MSMEs?

REP. CUA. Well, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, the Gentlady has provided some of the answers but I may also want to add that this Bill will provide not only wherewithal, but I would like to believe the responsibility as well and the obligation of the GFIs, the LANDBANK and DBP, including the Philippine Guarantee Corporation to really think out of the box and find a way of reaching out.

The LANDBANK and the DBP have a network of branches and with the mandate that we are giving them and the obligation incorporated in this Bill that they should perform, I think would also provide a pressure for them to really go out of their way and promote the service of LANDBANK and the DBP, especially in the countryside where many of these MSMEs are also located. So, coupled with the regulatory relief as well as proactive steps undertaken by the BSP by allowing banks to use loans for MSMEs as compliance with the legal reserve requirement, so data have shown that with this kind of policy, new loans as well as restructured loans really have gone up in response to this policy of the BSP. So, I guess all of these will eventually put some pressure upon the GFIs to really go out of their way and look for customers, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. QUIMBO. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I hope that the good Sponsor is open to the possibility of introducing a language that will precisely direct both LANDBANK and the Development Bank of the Philippines to introduce programs that seek to improve financial inclusion na talagang kailangan na kailangan ng ating MSMEs.

And finally po, I would just like to be clarified on why we have a Section 8 which is on LANDBANK rediscounting and other programs. Hindi po ba mayroon na pong existing programs ang ating BSP for this purpose? So, ang tanong ko lang, Mr. Speaker, is baka naman po itong Section 8 ay redundant o hindi na kailangan because nga, precisely of the existing programs of the BSP.

REP. CUA. Well, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, if there is such a program already, maybe this would be a reiteration of that need and I guess that this will clarify in the event that under the present program, not all of them are covered. I see no harm in putting this here.

REP. QUIMBO. Mr. Speaker, that was my last question. I would like to thank the good Sponsor for patiently answering all my questions, and I will propose amendments at the proper time, Mr. Speaker. Maraming salamat po.

REP. CUA. Thank you so much, my dear colleague. I really appreciate the questions that were raised. They are really valid and very intelligent questions. And certainly, that will help in the improvement and enhancement of the Bill.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Thank you, distinguished Lady from Marikina. The Majority Floor Leader.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7749

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 7749.

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

CONSIDERATION OF H. RES. NO. 1405

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we now consider House Resolution No.

1405 and that the Secretary General be directed to read the title of the said Resolution.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the Secretary General is hereby directed to proceed. *

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Resolution No. 1405, entitled: "RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE CONTRIBUTIONS AND EFFORTS OF HIS EXCELLENCY HAN DONG-MAN AS AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA TO THE PHILIPPINES IN FOSTERING PHILIPPINES-KOREA BILATERAL RELATIONS."

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The Majority Floor Leader.

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we include as additional coauthors of House Resolution No. 1405: Rep. Juan Miguel Macapagal Arroyo, Rep. Xavier Jesus D. Romualdo, Rep. Anthony Peter "Onyx" D. Crisologo, Rep. Rowena Niña O. Taduran and Rep. Precious Hipolito Castelo.

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

ADOPTION OF H. RES. NO. 1405

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we adopt House Resolution No. 1405.

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

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

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

It was 6:52 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 6:58 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The session is resumed.
The Majority Floor Leader.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. ROMUALDO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session until Wednesday, December 9, 2020, at three o'clock in the afternoon.

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

The session is hereby suspended until three o'clock in the afternoon of December 9, Wednesday.

It was 6:59 p.m.

* Copies of the resolution 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."