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House of Representatives

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Monday, December 14, 2020

No. 13

CALL TO ORDER

At 3:00 p.m., Deputy Speaker Neptali M. Gonzales II called the session to order.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, N.). The session is called to order.

Please stand for the Invocation to be led by Rep. Kristine Alexie B. Tutor from the Third District of Bohol through Zoom.

Everybody rose for the Invocation.

INVOCATION

REP. TUTOR. Let us put ourselves in the holy presence of God.

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

Almighty and loving Father, we give You thanks for gathering us together today.

As we begin our session, we ask for Your blessing and guidance in tackling important matters at hand. Give us always the desire to work and agree on what is best for our people, especially now that we are all experiencing and facing this pandemic. May our work and decision be always in accordance with Your will, just as You said: "Do not conform to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of Your mind, that by testing, you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." Give us always the courage and strength to face all odds that may come along in doing true service for our nation and our people.

Be with us Lord, for after all what we always do is for the greater glory of Your name. Amen.

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

NATIONAL ANTHEM

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, N.). Please remain standing for the singing of the Philippine National Anthem.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, N.). Majority Leader.

ROLL CALL

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, N.). The Secretary General is hereby directed to call the roll of Members.

*The Secretary General called the roll, and the result is reflected in Journal No. 13, dated December 14, 2020.**

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

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

Majority Leader.

APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

REP. AGLIPAY. Mr. Speaker, I move that

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

we approve Journal No. 12, dated December 7 and 9.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. AGLIPAY. Mr. Speaker, I move that we now proceed with the Reference of Business and request that the Secretary General be directed to read the titles of bills and resolutions on First Reading, as well as communications and committee reports.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, N.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; Secretary General is hereby directed to comply.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

The Secretary General read the following House Bills and Resolutions on First Reading, Message from the Senate, Communications and Committee Reports, and the Deputy Speaker made the corresponding references:

BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 8165, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE UNIFIED ELECTRONIC TOLL COLLECTION SYSTEM IN ALL EXPRESSWAYS, MANDATING REGISTRATION TO THE SAID SYSTEM, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Lopez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 8166, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT (RA) NO. 9173, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE PHILIPPINE NURSING ACT OF 2002, PROVIDING FOR AN ADVANCED NURSING EDUCATION PROGRAM AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Olivarez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL REGULATION

House Bill No. 8167, entitled:

“AN ACT REGULATING THE SALE OF MOTOR VEHICLES BY REQUIRING THE INSTALLATION OF RADIO FREQUENCY IDENTIFICATION TAGS AS A PRE-REQUISITE FOR THE PURCHASE OF MOTOR VEHICLES AND REGISTRATION WITH THE LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE”

By Representative Go (Ed)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 8168, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A ZERO SPECTRUM USER FEE (SUF) POLICY AND REGULATION FOR PHILIPPINE TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPANIES USING WI-FI FREQUENCIES OR SPECTRUM, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Daza, Teves (Jose) and Garbin
TO THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

House Bill No. 8169, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE PROTECTION, SECURITY, AND BENEFITS OF WHISTLEBLOWERS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFORE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Daza
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 8170, entitled:

“AN ACT STRENGTHENING AND INSTITUTING MECHANISMS FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE FILIPINO PEOPLE’S RIGHT TO A BALANCED AND HEALTHFUL ECOLOGY”

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

House Bill No. 8171, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE TO BE MANAGED BY THE FILM DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Tambunting
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INFORMATION

House Bill No. 8172, entitled:

“AN ACT IMPOSING STIFFER PENALTIES FOR OVERLOADING PASSENGERS IN PUBLIC UTILITY VEHICLES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 4136, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘LAND TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC CODE’ ”

By Representative Tambunting
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 8173, entitled:

“AN ACT EXTENDING THE EFFECTIVITY OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11494, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS BAYANIHAN TO RECOVER AS ONE ACT, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 18 THEREOF”

By Representative Villafuerte
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

House Bill No. 8174, entitled:

“AN ACT RENAMING THE DAVAO DEL NORTE POLICE PROVINCIAL OFFICE IN TAGUM CITY AS CAMP COL. CLARO L. LAURETA”

By Representative Dujali
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ORDER AND SAFETY

House Bill No. 8175, entitled:

“AN ACT RENAMING THE CARMEN-SANTO TOMAS ROAD IMMEDIATELY FRONTING THE BATTLE OF ISING MONUMENT IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF CARMEN, PROVINCE OF DAVAO DEL NORTE TO LT. COL. SATURNINO R. SILVA ROAD”

By Representative Dujali

TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 8176, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING ARTS. 266-A, 333, 334, 337, 338, 342, 343, 349, 350 AND 351 OF ACT NO. 3815, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE REVISED PENAL CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES AND REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8353 (ANTI-RAPE LAW OF 1997), AND FOR OTHER PURPOSE”

By Representative Abante
TO THE COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF LAWS

House Bill No. 8177, entitled:

“AN ACT DEFINING PARENTAL RIGHTS AND AUTHORITY OVER MINOR AND UNEMANCIPATED CHILDREN”

By Representative Abante
TO THE COMMITTEE ON POPULATION AND FAMILY RELATIONS

House Bill No. 8180, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A BAYANIHAN HOME BUILDING PROGRAM FOR LOW INCOME GROUPS THROUGH GRADUATED AMORTIZATION PAYMENT (GAP) SCHEME AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Villafuerte
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

House Bill No. 8181, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE DEPARTMENT OF CLIMATE CHANGE, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Villafuerte
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION AND THE COMMITTEE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

House Bill No. 8182, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A FISHPORT IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF PASACAO,

PROVINCE OF CAMARINES SUR
AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR”

By Representative Villafuerte
TO THE COMMITTEE ON
AQUACULTURE AND FISHERIES
RESOURCES

House Bill No. 8183, entitled:
“AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
GOVERNMENT INTERNSHIP
PROGRAM, PROVIDING FUNDS
FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION AND
FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Villafuerte
TO THE COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE
AND PROFESSIONAL REGULATION

House Bill No. 8184, entitled:
“AN ACT AMENDING CERTAIN
PORTIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO.
7942, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS
THE 'PHILIPPINE MINING ACT OF
1995' BY PROHIBITING MINING
IN WATERSHEDS, REQUIRING A
LEGISLATIVE FRANCHISE FOR
MINING OPERATIONS, AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Villafuerte
TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL
RESOURCES AND THE COMMITTEE
ON LEGISLATIVE FRANCHISES

House Bill No. 8185, entitled:
“AN ACT GRANTING DISASTER
SERVICE VOLUNTEERS PAID LEAVE
DURING PERIOD OF DISASTERS”

By Representative Villafuerte
TO THE COMMITTEE ON DISASTER
RESILIENCE

House Bill No. 8186, entitled:
“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A
SPECIALIZED NATIONAL
SCHOOL FOR THE PHYSICALLY
HANDICAPPED IN THE
MUNICIPALITY OF LIBMANAN,
PROVINCE OF CAMARINES
SUR TO BE KNOWN AS THE
CAMARINES SUR INTEGRATED

SCHOOL FOR SPECIAL CHILDREN
AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR”

By Representative Villafuerte
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC
EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 8187, entitled:
“AN ACT PRESCRIBING THE
PENALTIES FOR AN IMMEDIATE
SUPERIOR OR SENIOR OFFICIAL OF
AN AGENCY, PUBLIC OR PRIVATE,
WHO DENIES APPLICATION FOR
LEAVE OF ABSENCE BY A VICTIM—
SURVIVOR OF VIOLENCE AGAINST
WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN AS
PROVIDED UNDER SECTION 42 ON
THE IMPLEMENTING RULES AND
REGULATIONS (IRR) OF REPUBLIC
ACT NO. 9262, OTHERWISE KNOWN
AS THE ANTI-VIOLENCE AGAINST
WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN
ACT OF 2004, AMENDING FOR THE
PURPOSE THE SAID LAW”

By Representative Villafuerte
TO THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND
GENDER EQUALITY

RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 1408, entitled:
“A RESOLUTION URGING
THE DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION TO DEFER
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LTO
MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO.
2020-2225 UNTIL ALL THE INITIALLY
QUALIFIED PMVICs ARE GIVEN THE
AUTHORIZATION CERTIFICATE TO
OPERATE AND UNTIL FURTHER
STUDIES ARE PRESENTED
SUPPORTING THE NECESSITY OF
HAVING ADDITIONAL PMVICs
AND ON THE IMPACT ON EXISTING
INVESTORS”

By Representatives Romualdez
(Ferdinand), Romualdez (Yedda),
Macapagal Arroyo, Marcoleta and
Castelo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION

House Resolution No. 1410, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE MONETARY BOARD TO ISSUE REGULATIONS WAIVING THE COLLECTION FEES AND CHARGES FOR DIGITAL BANKING TRANSACTIONS AND TRANSACTIONS WITH THE ELECTRONIC PAYMENT SYSTEM OPERATORS UNTIL THE STATE OF CALAMITY DUE TO THE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19) HAS BEEN LIFTED”

By Representatives Salceda, Suansing (Estrellita) and Suansing (Horacio)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

House Resolution No. 1412, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE CONGRATULATIONS AND COMMENDATION OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO DR. PATRICK JOSEPH MABUGAT FOR SECURING THE SECOND HIGHEST RATING IN THE 2020 PHYSICIAN LICENSURE EXAMINATIONS AND TOPPING THE 2014 MEDICAL TECHNOLOGIST LICENSURE EXAMINATIONS”

By Representative Gasataya
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Resolution No. 1413, entitled:

“RESOLUTION COMMEMORATING THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE KOREAN WAR, AND RECOGNIZING ITS SIGNIFICANCE TO THE PHILIPPINES-REPUBLIC OF KOREA (ROK) ALLIANCE”

By Representatives Hofer, Ong (Ronnie), Vergara, Robes and Arenas
TO THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

House Resolution No. 1414, entitled:

“RESOLUTION EXPRESSING PROFOUND SYMPATHY AND SINCERE CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON THE DEATH OF VETERAN ACTRESS

CLARITA VILLARBA RIVERA, POPULARLY KNOWN AS MILA DEL SOL, AND HONORING HER CONTRIBUTION IN PHILIPPINE CINEMA”

By Representative Jimenez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1415, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE STATUS OF CLEAN-UP, REHABILITATION, AND COMPENSATION EFFORTS OF MARCOPPER MINING CORPORATION IN RESPONSE TO THE 1996 MINING DISASTER IN MARINDUQUE”

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

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

Message dated December 7, 2020, informing the House of Representatives that the Senate on even date passed Senate Bill No. 1927, entitled:

“AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO USE THE ANNUAL TARIFF REVENUES IN EXCESS OF P10 BILLION, UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11203 OR ‘AN ACT LIBERALIZING THE IMPORTATION, EXPORTATION AND TRADING OF RICE, LIFTING FOR THE PURPOSE THE QUANTITATIVE IMPORT RESTRICTION ON RICE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES’, FOR DIRECT CASH ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS OWNING ONE (1) HECTARE OR LESS OF RICE LAND UNTIL 2024”

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

TO THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

COMMUNICATIONS

Letter dated October 28, 2020 of Josue S. Gaverza, Jr., Assistant Secretary for Financial Management, Department of National Defense, forwarding to the House of Representatives their Report on Actual Quarterly Income Collection and Utilization for the quarter ending 30 September 2020 and the Estimated Quarterly Income Collection and Utilization for the quarter ending 31 December 2020 of the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO).

TO THE COMMITTEE ON
APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated 30 October 2020 of Benjamin E. Diokno, Governor, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, submitting to the House of Representatives their Report on the Philippine Financial System covering the first semester of 2020.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND
FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

Letter dated November 3, 2020 of Mary Marilyn DG. Lambino, Municipal Mayor, Municipality of Mangaldan, Province of Pangasinan, transmitting to the House of Representatives their Reports on Fund Utilization and Status of Program/Project Implementation for the quarter ending March, June and September 2020, on the Local Government Support Fund.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON
APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated November 6, 2020 of Weomark Ryan G. Layson, Assistant Ombudsman, Finance and Management Information Office, Office of the Ombudsman (OMB), submitting to the House of Representatives their Agency Action Plan and Status of Implementation on the Prior Years' Audit Observations and Recommendations for CY 2018 cited in the Consolidated Annual Audit Report (CAR) on the OMB for CY 2019.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON
APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated November 9, 2020 of Evelyn S. Marañon, State Auditor V, Supervising Auditor, COA Regional Satellite Audit Office - Negros Island and Siquijor Corporate Government Sector III, Water Districts and Other CGS Stand Alone Agencies, Commission on Audit, furnishing the House of Representatives with a copy of the 2018-2019 Biennial Audit Report on the Murcia Water District, Murcia, Negros Occidental.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON
APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated November 11, 2020 of Datu Lito Dahines-Monreal, Chairman, Highlanders Agriculture Cooperative (HAC), submitting to the House of Representatives "Kopya sa Report Pasasalamat kay Pangulo Rodrigo Roa Duterte sa Pagbigay Pansin sa Aming Pangangailangan sa HAC na Makapagpatayo ng Pamantasan sa mga Magsasaka (LSA) sa Pamamagitan ng Pagbibigay Katuparan sa DA - ATI Region XII Center Director Abdul I. Daya-an."

TOTHECOMMITTEEONAGRICULTURE
AND FOOD

Letter dated November 16, 2020 of Engr. Gaudencio M. Sol, Jr., General Manager, Marinduque Electric Cooperative, Inc. (MARELCO), furnishing the House of Representatives with a copy of their Typhoon Quinta Damage Report (Final).

TO THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY

Letter dated November 23, 2020 of Amparo M. Cabotaje-Tang, Presiding Justice, Sandiganbayan, furnishing the House of Representatives with a copy of their CY 2019 Agency Action Plan and Status of Implementation (AAPSI) as of November 23, 2020.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON
APPROPRIATIONS

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report of the Committee on Banks and Financial Intermediaries (Committee Report No. 637), re H.B. No. 8164, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE REVISED CHARTER OF THE PHILIPPINE VETERANS BANK, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 3518, AS AMENDED”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 6375

Sponsor: Representative Cua

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Transportation (Committee Report No. 638), re H.R. No. 1409, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF ROADWORTHY PUBLIC UTILITY VEHICLES TO ADDRESS THE TRANSPORTATION SHORTAGE AND PROVIDE THE NECESSARY SUPPORT IN THE GOVERNMENT’S EFFORT TO REVIVE THE ECONOMY, SUBJECT TO EXISTING HEALTH PROTOCOLS AND SUCH OTHER REQUIREMENTS AS MAY BE IMPOSED BY THE INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE FOR EMERGING INFECTIOUS DISEASES AND THE NATIONAL TASK FORCE AGAINST COVID-19”

recommending its adoption, together with the findings and recommendations of the Committee, pursuant to the motu proprio inquiry in aid of legislation into the public transportation policies of the government during the COVID-19 pandemic

Sponsor: Representative Sarmiento

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Veterans Affairs and Welfare (Committee Report No. 639), re H.R. No. 1411, entitled:

“RESOLUTION COMMENDING QUARTERMASTER 2ND CLASS (QM2) RAYMOND JOSEPH OLLEY FOR HIS COURAGEOUS AND HEROIC ACTS IN THE PHILIPPINES DURING WORLD WAR II AND HIS ABIDING FRIENDSHIP AND LOVE FOR THE FILIPINO PEOPLE”

recommending its adoption in substitution of House Resolution No. 1157

Sponsors: Representatives Roman and Robes

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Aquaculture and Fisheries Resources and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 640), re H.B. No. 8178, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A COASTAL AQUACULTURE CENTER TO SUPPORT AND REHABILITATE THE BUREAU OF FISHERIES AND AQUATIC RESOURCES NORTHERN MINDANAO BRACKISHWATER AQUACULTURE FISH FARM IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF LALA, PROVINCE OF LANA DEL NORTE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 4623

Sponsors: Representatives Cueva and Yap (Eric)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Natural Resources and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 641), re H.B. No. 8179, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF FORESTS AND FOREST LANDS”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bills Numbered 106, 1474, 3061 and 4891

Sponsors: Representatives Barzaga, Yap (Eric), Fortun, Yu, Babasa and Deloso-Montalla

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Higher and Technical Education, the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Ways and Means (Committee Report No. 642), re H.B. No. 8188, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE ILOCOS SUR POLYTECHNIC STATE COLLEGE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF STA. MARIA, PROVINCE

OF ILOCOS SUR, AND ALL ITS CAMPUSES IN THE PROVINCE OF ILOCOS SUR, INTO A STATE UNIVERSITY, INTEGRATING THEREWITH THE NORTH LUZON PHILIPPINES STATE COLLEGE IN THE CITY OF CANDON, PROVINCE OF ILOCOS SUR, TO BE KNOWN AS THE ILOCOS SUR PHILIPPINES POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR"

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 7352

Sponsors: Representatives Go (Mark), Yap (Eric), Salceda and Singson-Meehan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Agriculture and Food (Committee Report No. 643), re H.B. No. 7460, entitled:

"AN ACT TO DECLARE THE CITY OF DAVAO AS THE CHOCOLATE AND CACAO PRODUCTION CAPITAL OF THE PHILIPPINES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES"

recommending its approval without amendment

Sponsor: Representative Enverga
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Health and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 644), re H.B. No. 8189, entitled:

"AN ACT CONVERTING THE STO. TOMAS INFIRMARY HOSPITAL IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF STO. TOMAS, PROVINCE OF PAMPANGA, INTO AN ANNEX OF THE JOSE B. LINGAD MEMORIAL GENERAL HOSPITAL, TO BE KNOWN AS THE JOSE B. LINGAD MEMORIAL GENERAL HOSPITAL - STO. TOMAS ANNEX, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR"

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 3590

Sponsors: Representatives Tan (Angelina), Yap (Eric) and Bondoc
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Health and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 645), re H.B. No. 8190, entitled:

"AN ACT INCREASING THE BED CAPACITY OF ILOCOS SUR DISTRICT HOSPITAL-MAGSINGAL IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF MAGSINGAL, PROVINCE OF ILOCOS SUR FROM TWENTY-FIVE (25) BEDS TO ONE HUNDRED (100) BEDS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR"

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 1805

Sponsors: Representatives Tan (Angelina), Yap (Eric) and Savellano
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Health and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 646), re H.B. No. 8191, entitled:

"AN ACT INCREASING THE BED CAPACITY OF THE MANGATAREM DISTRICT HOSPITAL IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF MANGATAREM, PROVINCE OF PANGASINAN FROM TWENTY-FIVE (25) TO FIFTY (50) BEDS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR"

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 3076

Sponsors: Representatives Tan (Angelina), Yap (Eric) and Espino
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Health and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 647), re H.B. No. 8192, entitled:

"AN ACT INCREASING THE BED CAPACITY OF THE CONGRESSMAN NATALIO P. CASTILLO, SR. MEMORIAL HOSPITAL IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF LOON, PROVINCE OF BOHOL FROM TWENTY-FIVE (25) TO ONE HUNDRED (100) BEDS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR"

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 4142

Sponsors: Representatives Tan (Angelina), Yap (Eric) and Chatto
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Health and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 648), re H.B. No. 8193, entitled:

“AN ACT UPGRADING THE NOVALICHES DISTRICT HOSPITAL IN BARANGAY BARTOLOME, QUEZON CITY, INTO A LEVEL II HOSPITAL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 1405

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

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Health and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 649), re H.B. No. 8194, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE BED CAPACITY OF THE ROXAS DISTRICT HOSPITAL IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ROXAS, PROVINCE OF ORIENTAL MINDORO FROM FIFTY (50) TO ONE HUNDRED (100) BEDS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 3066

Sponsors: Representatives Tan (Angelina), Yap (Eric) and Umali (Alfonso)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Health and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 650), re H.B. No. 8195, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF CALBAYOG, PROVINCE OF SAMAR, A TERTIARY HOSPITAL TO BE KNOWN AS THE SAMAR ISLAND MEDICAL CENTER, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 1153

Sponsors: Representatives Tan (Angelina), Yap (Eric), Romualdez (Yedda) and Romualdez (Ferdinand)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Health and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 651), re H.B. No. 8196, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE BED CAPACITY OF THE SAMAR PROVINCIAL HOSPITAL IN THE CITY OF CATBALOGAN, PROVINCE OF SAMAR, FROM ONE HUNDRED (100) TO TWO HUNDRED TWENTY (220) BEDS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 5025

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

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Health and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 652), re H.B. No. 8197, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE BED CAPACITY OF THE DR. SERAPIO B. MONTAÑER, JR. MEMORIAL HOSPITAL IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF MALABANG, PROVINCE OF LANA DEL SUR, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 4330

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

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Tourism and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 653), re H.B. No. 8199, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING THE IMMEDIATE ENVIRONS OF THE PARROQUIA DE NUESTRA SEÑORA DE CANDELARIA LOCATED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF PARACALE, PROVINCE OF CAMARINES NORTE, A TOURIST DESTINATION, PROVIDING FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 2672

Sponsors: Representatives Aragonés, Yap (Eric) and Tallado

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Tourism and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 654), re H.B. No. 8200, entitled: "AN ACT DECLARING MT. KITUMMAN LOCATED IN BARANGAY TUNGNGOD IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF LAGAW, PROVINCE OF IFUGAO, AN ECOTOURISM DESTINATION, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR"

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 3362

Sponsors: Representatives Aragon, Yap (Eric) and Chungalao

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Energy and the Committee on Information and Communications Technology (Committee Report No. 655), re H.B. No. 8202, entitled: "AN ACT MANDATING THE PROPER INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE OF OVERHEAD ELECTRIC DISTRIBUTION, COMMUNICATION LINES, AND STRUCTURES BY ALL ELECTRIC DISTRIBUTION, CABLE, AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPANIES FOR PURPOSES OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND GOOD HOUSEKEEPING"

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bills Numbered 515, 646 and 4222

Sponsors: Representatives Macapagal Arroyo, Yap (Victor), Roman, Tambunting and Go (Mark)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Energy (Committee Report No. 656), re H.B. No. 8203, entitled: "AN ACT PROMOTING THE USE OF MICROGRID SYSTEMS TO ACCELERATE THE TOTAL ELECTRIFICATION OF UNSERVED AND UNDERSERVED AREAS NATIONWIDE"

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 7060

Sponsors: Representatives Macapagal Arroyo and Dagooc

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Tourism and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 657), re H.B. No. 8204, entitled: "AN ACT DECLARING BARANGAY BALUTAKAY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BANSALAN, PROVINCE OF DAVAO DEL SUR, AN ECOTOURISM SITE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR"

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 3648

Sponsors: Representatives Aragon, Yap (Eric) and Cagas

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Tourism and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 658), re H.B. No. 8205, entitled: "AN ACT DECLARING THE PROVINCE OF PALAWAN A PRIORITY CRUISE SHIP DESTINATION IN THE MIMAROPA REGION, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR"

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 4717

Sponsors: Representatives Aragon, Yap (Eric), Acosta, Abueg-Zaldivar and Alvarez (Franz)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Tourism and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 659), re H.B. No. 8206, entitled: "AN ACT DECLARING THE SANGARAN ARK CAVE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF QUEZON, PROVINCE OF PALAWAN, AN ECOTOURISM DESTINATION, PROVIDING FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR"

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 2421

Sponsors: Representatives Aragon, Yap (Eric) and Abueg-Zaldivar

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Local Government (Committee Report No. 660), re H.B. No. 8207, entitled:

"AN ACT ALLOWING THE CONVERSION OF A MUNICIPALITY

WITH EITHER A POPULATION OF AT LEAST ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND (100,000) INHABITANTS AS CERTIFIED BY THE PHILIPPINE STATISTICS AUTHORITY (PSA), OR A CONTIGUOUS TERRITORY OF AT LEAST ONE HUNDRED (100) HUNDRED SQUARE KILOMETERS, AS CERTIFIED BY THE LAND MANAGEMENT BUREAU (LMB), INTO A COMPONENT CITY, IF IT HAS A LOCALLY GENERATED AVERAGE ANNUAL INCOME OF AT LEAST TWO HUNDRED FIFTY MILLION PESOS (P250,000,000.00), AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 450 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7160, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991"

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bills Numbered 1051 and 3148
Sponsors: Representatives Villanueva (Noel), Loyola and Romulo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Tourism and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 661), re H.B. No. 8208, entitled: "AN ACT DECLARING MASUNGI GEORESERVE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BARAS, PROVINCE OF RIZAL, AN ECOTOURISM DESTINATION, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR"

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 2639
Sponsors: Representatives Aragonés, Yap (Eric) and Nograles (Juan)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Tourism and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 662), re H.B. No. 8209, entitled: "AN ACT DECLARING BARANGAY KAPATAGAN IN THE CITY OF DIGOS, PROVINCE OF DAVAO DEL SUR, AN ECOTOURISM SITE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR"

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 3918

Sponsors: Representatives Aragonés, Yap (Eric) and Cagas
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Economic Affairs, the Committee on Trade and Industry, the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Ways and Means (Committee Report No. 663), re H.B. No. 8212, entitled: "AN ACT ESTABLISHING A SPECIAL DEFENSE ECONOMIC ZONE (SpeDEZ) INSIDE THE GOVERNMENT ARSENAL DEFENSE INDUSTRIAL ESTATE LOCATED IN CAMP GEN. ANTONIO LUNA, LAMAO, MUNICIPALITY OF LIMAY, PROVINCE OF BATAAN, CREATING FOR THIS PURPOSE THE SPECIAL DEFENSE ECONOMIC ZONE AUTHORITY (SpeDEZA) AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR"

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 200
Sponsors: Representatives Haresco, Gatchalian, Yap (Eric), Salceda and Garcia (Jose Enrique)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Tourism (Committee Report No. 664), re H.B. No. 8216, entitled:

"AN ACT MANDATING OWNERS OR OPERATORS OF HOTELS AND RESORTS WITH SWIMMING POOLS AND BEACHFRONT FACILITIES TO EMPLOY THE SERVICES OF CERTIFIED LIFEGUARDS, AND PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION THEREOF"

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 5523
Sponsor: Representative Aragonés
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Transportation (Committee Report No. 665), re H.R. No. 1417, entitled:

"RESOLUTION URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF

TRANSPORTATION TO DEFER THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CASHLESS TOLL PAYMENTS THROUGH RADIO-FREQUENCY IDENTIFICATION (RFID) SYSTEM UNTIL SUCH TIME THAT THE SYSTEMS ARE READY TO BE FULLY OPERATIONAL AND ARE INTEROPERABLE”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Resolution No. 1367

Sponsors: Representatives Sarmiento and Castelo

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report of the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 666), re H.B. No. 8217, entitled:

“ AN ACT EXTENDING THE AVAILABILITY OF APPROPRIATIONS UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11494, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE 'BAYANIHAN TO RECOVER AS ONE ACT' ”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bills Numbered 7957, 7979, 8014, 8063 and 8099

Sponsors: Representatives Yap (Eric), Velasco, Romualdez (Ferdinand), Duterte, Sy-Alvarado, Tambunting, Guico, Cuaresma, Lara, Arenas, Eriguel, Barba, Savellano, Dalog, Albano, Singson-Meehan, Gato, Ortega, Celeste, Salo, Nolasco, Dy (Ian), Mangaoang, Bernos, Fariñas (Ria), Go (Mark), de Venecia, Vargas-Alfonso, Chungalao, Go (Ed), Dy (Faustino Michael), Fariñas (Rudys Caesar), Garin (Sharon), Gatchalian and Ty (Diego)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, N.). Majority Leader.

PRIVILEGE HOUR

REP. LACSON-NOEL. Mr. Speaker, today being a Monday and pursuant to our Rules, I move that we open the Privilege Hour.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. LACSON-NOEL. Mr. Speaker, I now move to recognize the Hon. David “Jay-Jay” Suarez of the Second District of Quezon to avail of the Privilege Hour.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, N.). The Honorable Suarez is hereby recognized to avail of the Privilege Hour.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. SUAREZ (D.)

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker, for giving me the privilege to speak before the House. Magandang hapon po sa ating lahat, Mr. Speaker, my respected colleagues in the Eighteenth Congress at sa lahat ng mga kababayan nating sumusubaybay sa atin sa araw na ito.

I want to take the opportunity to talk about constitutional reform, Mr. Speaker. It is an issue that we need to tackle in order to help our country build back better. It is even more critical to talk about it, now that we are facing the devastating effects of multiple calamities and disasters on top of a global pandemic. Mr. Speaker, the basic principle is that building the better normal requires a better Constitution.

I know that this is a sensitive topic to us lawmakers and to the constituencies that we represent. In fact, in the recent months, when the topic was floated, we have heard responses like, “It is not the right time. It is dead before it even starts. It is a divisive topic and it should not be discussed during the pandemic.”

Pero, Mr. Speaker, mga kasama, saying that it is not the right time does not answer the bigger question: When is the right time? Kailangan nga ba ang tamang panahon upang pag-usapan ang isyung ito? Pag natapos na ang pandemya? Sinasabi na huwag pag-usapan ang reporma ng Saligang Batas hangga’t may krisis, pero hindi po ba mas mabilis at maayos ang pagtatapos ng krisis kung maitatama natin ang kakulangan ng sistema? At hindi po ba magsisimula ang

pagsasaayos sa isang kalmado at mabusising pag-uusap nating mga Mambabatas?

I very respectfully disagree with the sentiments used to automatically shut down the discussion. There is no better time to discuss constitutional reform than now. Mga kasama, malinaw pa sa sikat ng araw na kailangan makabangon ang ekonomiya, ang Pilipino at ang ating bansa. Kailangan mabigyan ng trabaho ang milyong-milyong Pilipino, siguraduhin ang pagkain sa mesa ng bawat pamilya sa bansa, protektahan ang kalusugan ng ating mga kababayan, at palakasin ang autonomy at mandato ng mga lokal na pamahalaan to respond to the needs of our people.

Mr. Speaker, if this is an extraordinarily difficult time, then it is also high time to explore and pursue extraordinary measures and solutions. But let me be clear, Mr. Speaker, and respected colleagues. Although I feel that a chunk of the apprehension is partially due to the propaganda and the lack of understanding, I also believe that the fears of our people are legitimate.

Our responsibility as lawmakers and as Representatives of the Filipino people is to build trust and initiate a sober and people-inclusive discussion to exhaust all means to enlighten our people about this issue. Mga kababayan, they need to know, we need to convince them that this move is for the best interest of our nation. Ang trabaho natin ay ipakita na katuwang natin ang ordinaryong mamamayan sa pagbabago at wala dapat maiwan dahil ang klaro po sa ating lahat, the lack of trust does not prove the lack of the need to pursue constitutional reform. At least, let us talk about it. Naniniwala ako that all of us here are patriots and that we can all bring something beneficial to the discussion table.

Even if we do not realize this in this year, in the Eighteenth Congress, our debates, our deliberations will be a stronger foundation for the future. To me, that is more a meaningful legacy than shooting the topic dead before it even survives. Let us remember, mga kasama, nasa haligi ng ating kapulungan ang Committee ng Constitutional Amendments, currently led by one of our more brilliant lawmakers. Kung wala hong pangangailangan

ang pag-aaral at pagbabago ng Konstitusyon, hindi na siguro kinakailangan ang komitibang ito, but the Committee is there. It is important; it survives because as a young developing democracy, we need to constitute—we need to constantly reassess ourselves. We have to ensure that the supreme law of the land remains reflective and responsive to the present needs of our people.

Mr. Speaker, napakarami na hong nag-speech dito at inilatag ang mga pangangailangan ng ating bansa. Noong July lang, 1,400 mayors ang nagbigay ng suporta para sa pagrereporma ng ating Konstitusyon. Naipakita ang pangangailangan to institutionalize the Mandanas ruling to assist LGUs to ensure a greater share of the Internal Revenue Allotment to be sourced from all national taxes. Nanawagan na ho mismo ang mga local government units na kailangan nila ng mas malaking source of funding para labanan, harapin at tugunan ang pandemya na dulot ng COVID-19.

Matagal na rin hong panawagan for greater regional development. Napakaraming pag-aaral na ho mula sa mga eksperto ang nagpatunay na fiscal decentralization is the start of inclusive and equitable development. If the Local Government Code of 1991 is a mechanism to decentralize powers from the national government down to the local government units, then constitutional reform is a focal extension of that pursuit to further decentralize power.

In fact, mga kasama, nakasaad po sa batas that it is required that every five years, we need to revisit the Local Government Code. Pero tingnan ho natin ang reyalidad. In a review funded by the Asian Development Bank in 2014, it said that no major amendments have been made to our Local Government Code. Are we supposed to believe that the needs of our people have not changed since 1991, since 2014, and now that we are entering a new year, iyon pa rin po ba ang problema na hinaharap ng Pilipino? Definitely not.

Tingnan din ho natin ang standing ng ating bansa compared to our immediate neighbors in the ASEAN. Nahuhuli na po tayo sa foreign direct investments na malaking tulong sana sa pagpapalakas ng ating ekonomiya. Iyong

decline ay dahil ho mismo sa economic at constitutional restrictions ng ating Saligang Batas. According to the World Investment Report of 2020, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, our FDI declined to \$5 billion in 2019 from \$6.6 billion the previous year. That is 24 percent decline in investments, Mr. Speaker, around \$1.6 billion in losses or P77 billion. Napakalaking tulong sana ito para sa ating mga kababayan.

We have around two million Filipinos who are jobless right now. In recent news, one out of three Filipinos have experienced hunger in the recent months. The decline in FDIs from 2019 alone could have cushioned the large part of the damages brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ilang milyong manggagawa ho ang nabigyan sana ng trabaho sa halagang iyan? Nagamit sana ho ang pera na ito para mas malaking ayuda ang maibigay natin sa mga mahihirap nating mga kababayan. Nakabili sana tayo ng tablet para sa lahat ng mga estudyante, sa lahat ng mga guro na ngayon ay nahihirapan sa distance learning. Nadagdagan din po sana natin ang tulong natin para sa magsasaka, sa agrikultura, at sana naihandang natin ng mas maganda ang ating healthcare system. Ngunit dahil po dito, ang nagdusa, ang mga maliliit na negosyo. Ang nagdusa, ang sistema ng edukasyon, ang kabataan, ang mahihirap dahil hindi po makasabay sa panahon ang ating Saligang Batas.

Sa lahat ho ng bansa sa ASEAN na sinasabi nilang naging epektibo sa pagresponde ng pandemya gaya ng Vietnam, Thailand at Malaysia, magkakapareho ho ang nakikita natin: mataas ang foreign direct investments nila. Opening our economy guarantees not only more funds to be used for the people's agenda, it also ensures that foreign partners have direct and a stronger stake in the immediate recovery and economic stability of our country. This is not to say that we should not proceed with caution, Mr. Speaker. We must pursue reforms to protect our nation's interest, but this interest will not be realized if we always shut down the discussion on constitutional reform as if it were an unspeakable and absolute evil.

Our democratic institutions exist as checks and balance mechanisms. They are safeguards against potential abuses. We have our laws, we have our electorate, we have our outspoken, vibrant academic community. We have the media to call us out when we step out of line. They can all be our critics or they can all be our collaborators to fine-tune the process. Every voice builds on the democratic process, and looking at constitutional reform as our way forward to navigate the future is an equally important part of that sacred process.

We have to accept the reality, Mr. Speaker, that the COVID-19 pandemic is unprecedented and it has drastically changed all our lives. Our constitutional framework must be responsive to the challenges of the current times and on the times of the future. Building the new normal, the better normal for all our people cannot be hinged on hoping that the old system will work perfectly, given the numerous flaws that had worked to our disadvantage. We cannot ignore this anymore.

Again, I recognize the apprehension regarding the sensitive topic. Sa headline siguro sasabihin ng ilang mga reporters natin, "Pro-administration solon initiates discussion for Charter Change." Napakaraming anggulo ho pagdating sa political affiliation. I have been advised to just let these issues slide and quietly work for my district. But we have to have the difficult conversations because they are the conversations that we need to have, Mr. Speaker. This is a matter of duty and conscience. It is derived from my deep love for my district, for the people that I represent, the province that I hail from and the country that I call home that gave me the courage to ask these hard questions, to push for these difficult conversations.

Hunger and unemployment know no political color, in the same manner that sound policies, reforms can benefit everyone regardless of affiliation. Malinaw po sa akin na hindi po ito usaping pulitika kung hindi mandato at malasakit sa kapwa Pilipino. This can be our legacy as a nation: that when unity and solidarity from Congress was needed, we answered the call of the times; we rose beyond petty politics and took our people's best interests to heart.

Naniniwala ako na kaya nating gawin ito, Mr. Speaker. We can go beyond the divide of affiliations of color, work together in the name of the powerless, marginalized, and vulnerable. Early on, Mr. Speaker, the question was asked, "When is it the right time?" But I think the answer to that is simple, it is simply doing what is right. Revisiting, doing an assessment, having a discussion, leading to a debate that would lead to improving the Constitution is doing the right thing. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and my dear colleagues. Mabuhay po tayong lahat at mabuhay ang Pilipino.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, N.). Majority Leader.

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that the privilege speech of the Hon. Jay-Jay Suarez be referred to the Committee on Rules for appropriate action.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the Privilege Hour.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, N.) Any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the same is approved

RECOMMITMENT OF H.B. NO. 8217 TO THE CTTEE. ON APPROPRIATIONS

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move to recommit House Bill No. 8217, under Committee Report No. 666, to the Committee on Appropriations.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

REP. LACSON-NOEL. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Florida "Rida" P. Robes of the Lone District of San Jose del Monte to avail of the Privilege Hour.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, N.) The Honorable Robes is hereby recognized to avail of the Privilege Hour.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ROBES

REP. ROBES. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A good day to everyone.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to speak to you today on a highly-anticipated issue by each and everyone, not just here in our country but the rest of the world.

We have been hearing several good news on vaccine development from some of the pharmaceutical companies leading in the race towards producing the vaccine against COVID-19, the vaccine that will hopefully put an end to this pandemic that has brought the whole world much sufferings. Finally, there is light at the end of the tunnel. One such light is what we have been waiting for the past 10 months or so — the administration of a vaccine for COVID-19 to a 90-year-old patient in the National Health Service of the United Kingdom by no less than a Filipina nurse, May Parsons, who has been working in the UK for more than 20 years. I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to the United Kingdom for taking the lead in the global fight against this pandemic!

The monumental feat has been recognized by no less than the UK Ambassador to the Philippines Daniel Pruce who said in a tweet that May Parsons represents "one of the many thousands of Filipino healthcare workers making such an enormous contribution to the NHS." May Parsons is one of the nearly 30,000 Filipinos working in the UK's National Health Service. It shows the critical and important contribution our healthcare workers, both here

and abroad, have been making in fighting the pandemic on the front line. It is important to note also that another Filipino nurse, Minnie Klepacz, was awarded the British Empire Medal, recognizing her services in nursing during COVID-19 in the Queen's Birthday Honours this year.

Here in the Philippines, we can only hope and pray that we can soon begin the administration of vaccines against COVID-19 so we can all go back to normalcy and work towards regaining what we have lost in the months of the pandemic. Tayong lahat ay umaasa na mayroon na din tayong bakuna laban sa COVID-19, na tayo ay makakakuha na rin ng mga vaccine na mabisa at abot-kaya upang tayo ay maprotektahan sa sakit na ito na nagpapahirap sa ating lahat. Lahat tayo ay umaasa at nagdarasal na maibalik natin ang dati nating buhay bago ang pandemyang ito. But the procurement of vaccine will not be a walk in the park for countries like the Philippines. Kalakip sa vaccine development ay ang vaccine procurement and distribution na isa na namang hamon na kailangan matugunan ng ating pamahalaan at ibang leader ng ating bansa. Hindi ito magiging madali para sa atin.

The coming months are going to be crucial for vaccine development and the eventual procurement by countries around the world. The demand is high but the supply is limited. Equally critical is the decision on the distribution of the vaccines: how many may be distributed and who gets priority. The question is, who gets them first?

As the Chairperson of the Committee on People's Participation, I have taken it upon myself to talk to the different embassies to apprise us on the recent development of the vaccines being developed in the countries and help facilitate the dialogue between their government and ours to enable us to get access to vaccines should they be proven effective and safe. Mahalaga po ang terminong "efficacy." Sa ganitong paraan ay umaasa tayo na sa ating maliit na paraan ay makatulong tayo upang mapabilis natin ang pagkakaroon ng vaccine para sa ating mga kababayan.

During one of our meetings with Russian Ambassador to the Philippines, Igor

Anatolyevich Khovaev, I found out that the Russian government is actively pursuing a bicameral agreement on the supply of their vaccine Sputnik V to our country. They are likewise pushing for the Philippines to become a production hub of their vaccine once its safety and efficacy are proven by Philippine health officials. I personally think that this effort should be seriously studied and pursued because this will not only ensure that we will have a steady supply of vaccine in our country, it will also enhance the knowledge and expertise of our own scientists in vaccine production. Nagpahayag ang ating mga kaibigang Ruso ng kanilang kagustuhan na ibahagi ang kanilang mga kakayahan sa vaccine production sa ating mga Filipino scientists upang mabigyan din sila ng karagdagang kaalaman at kakayahan na mag-develop ng vaccine hindi lamang para sa COVID-19 kundi sa iba't iba pang sakit. For me, this is a good opportunity for the Philippines because the Russian government has so far been the only country in the world that has offered not only to supply us with their vaccine but also the production thereof. This means that they are committed to a long-term, robust strategic partnership with the Republic of the Philippines. They come to forge a beneficial partnership not only on COVID-19 but for all Filipino generations to come.

I have also been invited by the British Embassy, to discuss the recent developments on the COVID-19 vaccine rollout in their country by Pfizer and as well as the vaccine being developed in their country or the vaccine being developed by AstraZeneca and Oxford University. Just like the Russian Embassy, the British Embassy has expressed their government's willingness to forge bilateral agreements with our country on the procurement of their vaccines.

In relation to the Pfizer vaccines being administered to patients in the United Kingdom, I was also told that the United Kingdom has already received the first shipment of vaccines comprising of 800,000 doses to be administered to NHS frontline workers and people over the age of 80.

I was likewise informed that the biggest challenge with the Pfizer vaccine is its storage requirement as it needs to be kept at -70 degrees Celsius. According to the British Embassy, it is imperative for them, and for any country for that matter, to also consider procuring from their vaccine sources. They said that they are currently considering applications for approval from the AstraZeneca and Moderna vaccine candidates. Based on their studies, the vaccine being produced by AstraZeneca and Oxford University offers the cheapest vaccine, just \$5 or P250 per dose as it is being produced on a not-for-profit basis for the duration of the pandemic. The company is committed to the principles of fair and equitable access to vaccines around the world. The storage requirement of the AstraZeneca vaccine is also less challenging than Pfizer's vaccine because it may be kept stable at normal refrigerated temperature of two to eight degrees Celsius, which means that it can be easily transported and distributed even in a warm country like the Philippines.

I also learned from my meeting with the British Embassy that Phase 3 results of the AstraZeneca candidate vaccine showed results of 70.4-percent effectiveness following a trial of 24,000 volunteers. The World Health Organization requires at least a 50-percent vaccine effectiveness for it to be recommended for use. The vaccine produced a strong immune response in all adults. No participants in the trial experienced severe COVID symptoms or required hospitalization – very good news. AstraZeneca's data is now being assessed by the UK's Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). The company has a capacity to produce 3 billion doses globally by the end of 2021.

I am happy to note that according to a report released just a few days ago, the first full peer-reviewed results of the Phase 3 trials of the COVID-19 vaccine developed by AstraZeneca and Oxford University show that it is safe and up to 90-percent effective in preventing infection, supporting regulatory submission for emergency use. That is definitely, again, good news. I understand that last month, AstraZeneca already signed a tripartite agreement with the Philippine

government and our private sector for the purchase of 2.6 million doses when its safety and efficacy are established, and more once it obtains approval from our own Food and Drug Administration. This will help around 1.5 million Filipinos as half of the 2.6 million will be donated to the government while the other half will be used by the private sector to vaccinate their employees.

This is a laudable endeavor which should be replicated in other parts and sectors of our society. The national government cannot do it alone. Our local government units cannot do it alone. Our private sector cannot do it alone. We need everyone to contribute to this worthy and life-changing endeavor. All hands should be on deck. In the meantime, we should ensure an equitable and inclusive approach towards vaccine distribution. Despite the many efforts to produce an effective and safe vaccine, we all know that it would take years to vaccinate the whole world from COVID-19. *Kaya dapat natin siguraduhin na magiging patas at pantay-pantay ang pagbakuna ng ating mga kababayan.*

Isang napakahalagang hakbang ang ginagawang tripartite agreement ng ating private sector sa AstraZeneca upang mapabakunahan ang 1.5 milyong Pilipino laban sa COVID-19. One of the international efforts being carried out to ensure an equitable distribution system all over the world is the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access or COVAX Facility, which is managed jointly by the WHO, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations or CEPI, and the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations. COVAX facility is a global sharing mechanism for pooled procurement and equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines once they are licensed and approved. The COVAX facility pools together the world's philanthropists, international non-government organizations, and other groups to be able to talk to manufacturers to produce vaccines based on the need of a country, regardless of their economic standing. It aims to be able to vaccinate the most vulnerable 20 percent of the population of every country that participates by the end of 2021. To this end, it aims to deliver two billion doses of safe, effective vaccines that had passed regulatory approval and/or WHO prequalification.

Fortunately, the Philippines is eligible. Fortunately, the Philippines is again eligible under the COVAX system because it is a low middle-income country that has signified its intention to be part of the system. Our participation in the COVAX is expected to provide vaccination for 3 to 20 percent of the population or 3.2 million to 24 million Filipinos. Although kulang po, hinihiling pa rin po natin itong madagdagan. As the country needs to pay US\$1.60 to US\$2.00 per dose to be able to take part in it, the President has already approved the use of P2.5 billion allotted for the purchase of the vaccines for the Philippines to have access to the COVAX facility. The COVID-19 Inter-Agency Task Force has already identified 12 vulnerable groups that will be given priority in the vaccine based on the guidelines issued by the World Health Organization Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization, which is called the "SAGE." They are all the frontline health workers from the public and private sectors, indigent senior citizens, remaining senior citizens, our indigent population and uniformed personnel. Other priorities are teachers and school workers from public and private institutions; government workers; essential workers in agriculture, food industry, transportation and tourism; socio-demographic groups at significantly higher risk; people deprived of liberty; people with disabilities; Filipinos living in high-density areas; overseas Filipino workers, other remaining workforce; and students.

But for me, we should not aim for just 20 percent of our population. We should aim for a 100-percent vaccination coverage for all Filipinos. Dapat ang lahat ng 100 milyong Pilipino ay dapat mabakunahan laban sa COVID-19. Ngunit alam nating lahat ang limitasyon ng ating resources. Hindi gaya ng ibang mayayamang bansa, tayo ay hirap sa pagpopondo sa pagbili ng vaccine para sa COVID-19. Kung kaya lahat ng sektor sa ating lipunan ay dapat magsama-sama upang mabigyan ng vaccine ang lahat ng Pilipino. We need to ensure that we have sufficient refrigerated storage facilities also. We need to pool our cold-chain resources and invest in new equipment to make sure the vaccines are properly stored.

Equally important is for our DOST, DOH, FDA and all other agencies to facilitate and fast track vaccine approval once their efficacy and safety have already been established by reputable and more advanced regulatory agencies like the US FDA, the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency of the UK and the European Medicines Agency. Hindi dapat patagalin ng ating government regulators ang pag-aaprubang sa isang vaccine na napatunayan nang mabisa at ligtas at pinahintulutan na ng ibang ahensiya sa ibang bansa upang gamitin. The evaluation should still be thorough but it should be decisive, focused and not go through the normal process of approval, which usually lasts for at least six months.

I understand that President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, on the first week of December, signed an order granting the FDA the power to issue Emergency Use Application (EUA) to drug and vaccine makers which will allow the emergency use of COVID-19 vaccines and treatments. This means that a vaccine can be approved for use within one month instead of undergoing the usual six-month review. Actually, it is only for 21 days. If that one-month period can be further shortened with the same thoroughness and decisiveness, the better for all Filipinos.

Let me quote to you what Bill Gates wrote on vaccine development:

During a pandemic, vaccines and antivirals cannot simply be sold to the highest bidder. They should be available and affordable for people who are at the heart of the outbreak and in greatest need. Not only is such distribution the right thing to do, it is also the right strategy for short-circuiting transmission and preventing future pandemics.

In the Philippines, we need to design inclusive distribution and delivery mechanisms to ensure that the weak and the vulnerable get the shots first, to be immediately followed by the rest of the population. No Filipino should be left behind in the fight against COVID-19. Napatunayan naman natin ito sa laban ng ating Pangulong Rodrigo Roa Duterte, katulong ang ating IATF family. Let us work together to ensure that the vaccines are made available to

everyone who needs it. “Sana all” ang tagline ng lahat sa COVID-19 vaccine!

There is now light at the end of the tunnel and we should make sure that every Filipino gets to the light so we can begin to rebuild our lives. I will personally make sure to do everything possible to help in this effort, in my own little ways, to give vaccine to every Filipino.

We will rise as one heart, the heart of every Filipino!

Thank you and mabuhay tayong lahat! A Merry Christmas and a better, more prosperous, peaceful new year to all us! Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, N.). Majority Leader.

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that privilege speech of the Honorable Robes from the City of San Jose del Monte be referred to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Rep. Mark Go of the Lone District of Baguio City for his privilege speech.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. GO (M.).

REP. GO (M.). Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Majority Leader, to my esteemed colleagues here in the House of Representatives, as well as those who have graced us with their virtual presence today via Zoom, a pleasant and fruitful afternoon, and I hope you continue to stay safe and well. Friends and colleagues, I stand on a matter of personal and collective privilege.

It must be said that nation-building is a duty, one that is incumbent upon all of us

citizens of this country. As much as it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a nation of different sectors working together to uplift the state of our country and teach our country's children to lead us towards a bright, prosperous and sustainable future.

Along with the rest of the world, the Philippines strives to embark on the path to recovery after being beleaguered with the COVID-19 pandemic and its devastating impact not only on life and public health but also on our economy and livelihood. The pandemic created a serious obstacle to our goal of economic rehabilitation and tainted our image as a rising tiger among emerging economies as we have become known in the past few years.

The Asian Development Bank named the Philippines as the worst economic performer in Southeast Asia this year in the wake of slow investments and household consumption, with our annual GDP projected to drop by a sharp 8.5 percent. Stacked against these odds, it would seem that our goal to uplift millions of Filipinos from poverty and elevate the standard of living has become bleaker. Yet, it is especially during these times of difficulty that we, our nation's public servants and our constituents' duly elected representatives, are tasked to look out for their welfare and ensure that we are focused on fostering productivity and creating employment opportunities.

The Philippines' unemployment rate as of October 2020 is at 8.7 percent. According to figures from the labor force survey by the Philippine Statistics Authority, this is equivalent to over 3.8 million people without jobs. A mere two months ago, the rate was almost double than that of last year when the country closed 2019 with the record low of 4.5 percent, the lowest rate we had in a period of 25 years. And we are simply looking at the unemployment rate, which only measures the number of persons actively looking for work as a percentage of our national labor force; it does not take into account those who have unwillingly dropped out of the workforce.

Meanwhile, the labor force participation rate in October this year was estimated at 58.7 percent, the second lowest rate since April, at 55.7 percent. Meaning to say, we are losing

members of the workforce, not only because of the dwindling career opportunities from the layoffs and downsizing by the private sector this year but because of our inability to truly optimize the skills, talents, and training of our working class. With the coming of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the advent of automation taking over jobs, ensuring gainful employment begins by making sure that our workforce is equipped to meet the demands of these jobs.

I have always believed that education is the equalizer that affords young Filipinos from underprivileged backgrounds to rise beyond their circumstances and become productive citizens who will contribute to nation-building. While the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act was a landmark law and a monumental first step towards this vision, there is much work left to be done in guaranteeing that our graduates are well-equipped for the labor force after graduation. The number of graduates looking to join the labor force is not the problem. In fact, hundreds of thousands of students graduate from college every year and join the recruitment pool for our workforce.

In Academic Year 2018 and 2019, there were 796,576 college graduates, many of them dispersed among the country's five most popular disciplines: Business Administration and related courses, with 233,194 graduates; Education, Science and Teacher Training, with 169,837 graduates; Engineering and Technical Education, with 87,083 graduates; IT-related disciplines, with 81,477 graduates; and Natural Sciences, with 46,645 graduates. And yet, despite generous troops of hopefuls who aspired to join these various industries, these figures simply do not translate to recruitment.

According to PSA data, 23.9 percent of these unemployed are college graduates, proving that possessing a college degree is not a simple fix for landing a job. Furthermore, the number of graduates in the programs I mentioned previously do not correspond to the employment rate in their respective fields. Despite having hundreds of thousands of graduates that could join these certain industries, only 2.6 percent are employed in finance and insurance, 7.6 percent in

administrative and support service, 6.4 percent in education, 2 percent in information and communication, and 1.3 percent in professional, scientific and technical activities.

The services sector remains the biggest employer in the country, providing livelihood to 57.2 percent of our working population, with over 22.7 million people employed. That said, 50 percent of service workers remain to be underemployed, that is to say, our workers' skills and education are not being fully utilized to their full function and potential. PSA data shows that over 5.7 million people are underemployed, forced to take on low-skill, low-paying or less-than-full-time jobs that do their qualifications a disservice. These figures only underscore the reality that although education is valued as a qualification for hiring in many service sectors, one's attainment does not directly translate to skills and competencies needed for a job. Take for example the BPO industry. Despite our reputation as the call center capital of the world and the industry's undeniable contribution to the country's economy, we can improve our hiring rate to meet further demand, especially for roles that need higher skills and competencies.

According to the 2017 assessment by the Contact Center Association of the Philippines, employability in the industry is between a mere 8 to 10 percent, and only 10-in-a-hundred applicants get hired for a BPO job. The IT & Business Process Association of the Philippines identified in the 2015 Global Competitiveness Assessment Test that, across 3,000 agents and 20,000 students, our country's talent merely falls in the 49th to 60th percentile when it comes to basic skills and service orientation, such as learning abilities, perceptual speed and accuracy, computer literacy, communication empathy, responsiveness and, of course, English proficiency.

Our ASEAN neighbors that once looked up to us for our English proficiency, looked upon our English proficiency as a key advantage, are now edging out the Philippines, particularly Malaysia and Singapore. Moreover, other ASEAN countries that had exhibited lackluster rankings in English proficiency have established a national English road map,

further exhibiting that the ability to speak, read, write and comprehend English is one that they have taken seriously as a competitive workforce advantage.

Moreover, the manufacturing sector also constitutes a large part in employment, providing livelihood to 41.5 percent or over three million Filipinos. However, these three million jobs are in danger of being phased out due to the automation process, according to a joint report by the Employers Confederation of the Philippines and the International Labor Organization in 2016. Other high-risk sectors identified include construction, tourism, and the IT-BPM industry. This is truly a sore point for our labor force, especially in these industries as they struggle to meet employer demand with their qualifications; yet, the automation of these jobs in the next few years would already render them as obsolete. The semi-conductor and electronics industries in the Philippines, the biggest economic-growth driver in the country, accounted for 61.1 percent of the country's total exports and employs over three million direct and indirect workers. However, even the electronics manufacturing industry sees constant threats to business from other countries that can offer lower wages and cheaper electricity cost. To solidify a competitive edge, especially considering the rapidly evolving nature of technology, the industry needs graduates with up-to-date and relevant competencies that can be utilized for more high-level needs/demands.

In a study by the Philippine Institute of Development Studies, they attributed the difficulties in producing the appropriate manpower and skills to four factors: first, a lack in direct one-to-one correspondence between courses and jobs; second, our inability to measure employment indicators such as our labor force current skills set, the reasons behind their unsuccessful applications and present industry demands; third, rapidly evolving technology renders many of our graduates' knowledge as obsolete; and fourth is a production lag due to a lack of upskilling and further training among our workers.

These observations only highlight the need to fortify and deepen ties between these

industries and the academe. Many times, the industry and the academe engaged in dialogue on industry demands in how the curriculum can be improved to reflect those only for said demands to become obsolete by the time students graduate. As industries change and evolve at a breakneck pace, educational institutions must understand the needs of these industries at an intuitive level for the curriculum to adapt in an efficient and dynamic manner to address industry needs even as they develop. We can hope that open and continuous communication from a fruitful partnership will lead to up-to-date curricula, development of standards and industry practices once students graduate, further productivity results, more on-the-job training programs, mentoring programs and other initiatives that benefit both industry and the academe. That said, this is not an undertaking between higher educational institutions and the private sector alone. In order to truly understand the gaps in our educational system vis-à-vis the job market and continue to create employment opportunities, a comprehensive collaboration is needed among three sectors – the academe, the private sector and the government.

In the midst of these constant difficulties that besiege our labor force, it is incumbent upon us to ponder and to outline the policy measures we can adopt to address these specific concerns. Stronger, more professional and open linkages between the academe and industry can help zero-in on the supply and demand for labor based on certain skills and anticipate the future demands of these industries in the future. This undertaking will be made stronger with the help of the appropriate government agencies. There is a need to study and determine which sectors are already saturated with the appropriate college graduates, which industries require more graduates and skilled workforce, which degree programs are more needed in the domestic market, and which ones find a demand overseas. We also have to determine the most prevalent skills sets and the industries with which we have comparative advantage, and develop the appropriate programs to capitalize on these. We will also need to further study how we

can help our educational system address the needs of industries through short-term and long-term solutions. We will incorporate these policy measures into a bill creating a tripartite council composed of representatives from the government, the academe and industry sector that will formulate and implement policies and relevant programs specific to job-skills mismatch. Creating a multi-sectoral council will allow educational institutions a better understanding of the labor market based on evolving industry demands and policies can be formed and shaped to address these gaps.

The economic ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the coming of the Fourth Industrial Revolution have sought to magnify our age-old problems of poverty and inequality. In the age of changing times and disruption, however, it is also time to revisit these issues through a fresh perspective. As we endeavor to create meaningful and dignified jobs for our fellow Filipinos, it is important for us to keep up with the times and respond to the modern-day demands of the industries while realizing the strengths of the Filipino workforce and ensuring that each Filipino has a job attuned to their abilities. Again, marami pong salamat at magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, N.). Majority Leader.

REP. LACSON-NOEL. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the Hon. Mark Go to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, N.). Any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the same is approved.

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 6149 ON THIRD READING

REP. LACSON-NOEL. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 6149 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 6149, entitled: "AN ACT DECLARING THE PROVINCE OF CATANDUANES AS THE ABACA CAPITAL 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. 13, dated December 14, 2020.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, N.). With 217 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 6149 is hereby approved on Third Reading.

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7771 ON THIRD READING

REP. LACSON-NOEL. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 7771 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7771, entitled: "AN ACT REAPPORTIONING THE PROVINCE OF AGUSAN DEL NORTE INTO THE LONE LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OF THE CITY OF BUTUAN AND THE LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OF THE PROVINCE OF AGUSAN DEL NORTE."

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. 13, dated December 14, 2020.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, N.). With 220 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 7771 is hereby approved on Third Reading.

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7956
ON THIRD READING

REP. LACSON-NOEL. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 7956 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, N.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) There being none, the same is approved. The Secretary General is hereby directed to please comply.

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. 7956, entitled: "AN ACT REDUCING WASTAGE BY DONATING AND RECYCLING EXCESS EDIBLE FOOD."

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. 13, dated December 14, 2020.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, N.). With 221 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 7956 is hereby approved on Third Reading.

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 6656
ON THIRD READING

REP. LACSON-NOEL. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 6656 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 6656, entitled: "AN ACT EXTENDING THE AVAILABILITY OF THE 2020 APPROPRIATIONS TO DECEMBER 31, 2021, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 60 OF THE GENERAL PROVISIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11465 OR THE GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT OF FISCAL YEAR 2020."

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. 13, dated December 14, 2020.*

REP. BROSAS. Mr. Speaker, my vote is "No" and I would like to explain my vote later. Thank you.

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

RESULT OF THE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, N.). With 221 affirmative votes, six negative votes and no abstention, House Bill No. 6656 is hereby approved on Third and final Reading.

The Honorable Brosas is hereby recognized for her three-minutes explanation of her vote.

EXPLANATION OF VOTES

REP. BROSAS EXPLAINS HER VOTE

REP. BROSAS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, while there is a need to continue the programs that cater to the urgent needs of Filipinos amid this raging pandemic, economic recession and the aftermath of typhoons, we cannot tolerate inefficiency and incompetence in the utilization of public funds.

May deklarasyon ng state of public health emergency. Pinahaba ang declaration ng state of calamity. May Bayanihan 1 at 2 na nagbigay ng kapangyarihan sa Pangulo na mag-generate ng savings para kagyat sanang mapondohan ang mga programang tutugon sa ayuda at serbisyong panlipunan sa mamamayan. Pero sa kabila ng lahat ng ito, matatapos ang taon na bilyon-bilyon pa rin ang nakatenggang pondo ng bayan sa iba't ibang ahensiya at hindi pa rin pinapakinabangan ng mamamayan. Sa DSWD nga lang, P83 billion pa ang hindi nagagastos na pondo.

Kung maaalala natin, laging iginigiit ng DBM ang cash-based budgeting, kung saan isang taon lang ang validity ng appropriations. Pero bakit tila nakasanayan nang dugtungan ang validity ng general appropriations, lalo na't humaharap tayo sa pandemya, krisis at epekto ng kalamidad? Incompetence at inefficiency ba ang problema o sinasadyang magsubi ng bilyon-bilyon para todo buhos ang pondo sa susunod na taon, na bisperas ng eleksyon 2022.

To extend the validity of the 2020 Budget is to concede that the national government has been utterly remiss in exercising its power for the swift delivery of programs and services in the time of a severe pandemic, crisis, and calamity. If we really need to extend the

financing for the current programs, then we should approve a special or supplemental appropriations bill instead of extending the validity of the 2020 Budget. For these reasons, we vote "No" on House Bill No. 6656.

Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, N.). From Zoom, the Honorable Gaité from BAYAN MUNA is hereby given three minutes to explain his vote.

REP. GAITE EXPLAINS HIS VOTE

REP. GAITE. Salamat po, Mr. Speaker, at salamat po sa lahat ng kasamahan natin sa Kongreso at lahat ng sumusubaybay sa hapong ito.

Mr. Speaker, "No" po ang boto ng Kinatawang ito sa House Bill No. 6656 o ang panukalang i-extend ang bisa ng General Appropriations Act, Fiscal Year 2020, hanggang Disyembre 31, 2021 at amyendahan ang Section 60 ng nasabing batas.

Nais linawin ng Kinatawang ito na labis na mas mahalaga para sa amin kung saan napupunta ang pera ng taong-bayan kaysa sa kung cash-based ba o obligation-based ba ang budgeting system ng bansa. Para sa Kinatawang ito, mas mahalaga ang tanong na, saan may pagkukulang, saan may pangangailangan ng taong bayan at saan dapat ang pokus ng pambansang budget para sa ikabubuti ng mamamayan. Totoong maraming naantalang mga proyekto dahil sa COVID-related restrictions, ngunit naniniwala kaming hindi ito sapat na dahilan upang i-extend muli ang validity ng Annual Appropriations Fund.

Kung maalala natin, a similar law was passed last year also to extend the validity of the 2019 General Appropriations Act up to the end of this Year 2020. Ang excuse noon, delayed ang passage ng budget, ngayon naman COVID-19 pandemic. Ano naman kaya next year? We cannot continuously make excuses for not utilizing duly appropriated funds as approved and ratified by both Houses of Congress. Mawawalan ng bisa ang prinsipyo kung bakit sinusulong ng fiscal managers ng kasalukuyang administration ang cash-based budgeting in the very first place.

Mr. Speaker, imbes na itulak ang mas episyente, mabilis at maayos na utilization of funds, ang pag-extend ng budget appropriations ay magbigay-daan na lamang sa mas mabagal na disbursement sa gagawing mas bulnerable sa korapsyon ang pondo ng bayan. Again, we fear that the timing of the release of funds may be used or exploited by those who wish to top up their campaign kitties come the 2022 Elections.

If this Bill is enacted into law, the government can essentially continue spending the balance of the P4.1-trillion budget in 2020 hanggang sa panukalang extension sa December 31, 2021. Tatlong buwan lamang ito bago ang opisyal na simula ng campaign season para sa 2022 presidential elections. Hindi ito dapat mangyari lalo na sa gitna ng pandemya at malalang economic recession.

Mr. Speaker, humingi ng ambulansyang emergency ang gobyerno and yet ang ginamit ay pison na mabagal kung kaya't hindi nai-release ang mga pondo. Kaya, Mr. Speaker, "No" ang boto ng Kinatawang ito sa House Bill No. 6656 or the Act Extending the General Appropriations Act 2020 to December 31, 2021.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, N.). Majority Leader.

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 8136 ON THIRD READING

REP. LACSON-NOEL. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 8136 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

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

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 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. 13, dated December 14, 2020.*

REP. BROSAS. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, N.). Honorable Brosas.

REP. BROSAS. Yes. Mr. Speaker, my vote is "No" and I would like to explain my vote later.

RESULT OF THE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, N.). With 221 affirmative votes, six negative votes and no abstention, House Bill No. 8136 is hereby approved on Third and final Reading.

The Honorable Brosas from GABRIELA is hereby recognized for her three-minute explanation of vote.

EXPLANATION OF VOTES

REP. BROSAS EXPLAINS HER VOTE

REP. BROSAS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this Representation firmly votes "No" on House Bill No. 8136 or the Coconut Farmers and Industry Trust Fund Act. We in the Gabriela Women's Party and in the Makabayan bloc have been pushing for the direct distribution of the multi-billion peso Coconut Levy Fund to farmers since time immemorial.

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

Mr. Speaker, the Coco Levy Fund came from the sweat, blood and tears of our coconut farmers. For more than a decade, the Marcos regime imposed tax on small coconut farmers. This was supposed to fund necessary support activities of the coconut farmers and the coconut industry, but none of them benefited from these. Instead, the collected funds from them led to the acquisition of the United Coconut Planters Bank, San Miguel Corporation and coconut oil mills. Hanggang ngayon ay hindi pa naibabalik ang perang ito na kinuha ng diktatura ng rehimeng Marcos sa ating mga magniniyog. Ito ay nangangahulugan ng mahigit apat na dekada ng kawalan ng hustisya sa paghihirap ng mga magniniyog.

Mr. Speaker, House Bill No. 8136 lacks genuine representation of coconut farmers. Nililimitahan ng panukalang batas na magkaroon lamang ng tatlong representasyon ang mga magsasaka sa Philippine Coconut Authority na siyang bubuo ng Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Plan. Nakasaad sa planong ito na ang pagbibigay ng pondo ay sa loob ng 99 years. Magkaka-apo na sa talampakan ang mga orihinal na benepisyaryong magniniyog at kamamatayan na nila, 'di pa rin buong-buo na maibibigay ang Coco Levy Funds. Wala ring representasyon ang mga magsasaka sa bubuuing Coconut Farmers and Industry Trust Fund na siyang may direktang pangangasiwa sa pondo. Sa ganitong kalagayan, aalisan ng boses at kontrol ang mga magsasaka sa perang sila ang naghirap. Bibigyan din ng batas na ito ang pagsasapribatisa ng non-cash Coconut Levy Assets at maaaring muling mapasakamay ng mga malalaking negosyo sa agrikultura ang mga asset na binili gamit ang coco levy fund. Ito ay magbubunga ng panibagong pagkakait ng pondo mula sa mga magniniyog.

This Representation strongly believes that we need a law that will genuinely return the coco levy funds to the hands of our farmers. Ngunit ang panukalang batas bilang 8136 ay hindi tutugon sa matagal ng hinihintay ng mga magniniyog. Bagkus, magiging daan ito para sa pandarambong at pagsasapribatisa ng pondo at mauulit lamang ang nangyari sa panahon ng panunungkulan ng administrasyong Marcos.

Mr. Speaker, coconut is considered as the third most dominant crop, next to rice and corn. With the onslaught of the public health crisis due to the pandemic and the severe effects of several typhoons, our coconut farmers are now considered the poorest people in the agriculture sector. The daily wage of coconut farmers cannot even sustain their families' daily cost of living. In addition, the recovery of coconut plantations which were hit by consecutive typhoons will take three to four years, thus making the coconut farmers earn nothing.

Mr. Speaker, sadlak sa kalagayan ngayon ang ating mga magniniyog. Ngayon nila kinakailangan ng tulong mula sa gobyerno. Ngunit ang kailangan nila ay isang batas na magbibigay hustisya sa krimeng ginawa ng diktadurang Marcos. Ang kinakailangan nila ay isang batas na magbibigay sa kanila ng boses at direktang kontrol sa perang sila ang naghirap.

Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, N.). From Zoom, the BAYAN MUNA Representative, Ka Femia Cullamat, is hereby recognized for her three-minute explanation of vote.

REP. CULLAMAT EXPLAINS HER VOTE

REP. CULLAMAT. Salamat, Mr. Speaker.

Kailangang bigyang-diin na ang Coco Levy Fund ay pera na piniga mula sa ating mga magniniyog at ipinagkait sa kanila sa loob ng mahigit na apat na dekada. Kung kaya't bilang isang panukala para sa hustisyang panlipunan, dapat ay ibalik ang pondo sa kamay ng mga magniniyog. Malaki ang ipinagkaiba ng panukalang Coco Levy Bill sa inihain ng Representasyong ito. Wala sa kontrol ng mga magniniyog ang coco levy fund. Lubhang limitado ang representasyon ng mga magniniyog sa grupong magtatakda at magpapatupad ng plano at paggamit sa nasabing pondo. Tatlo lang sa buong PCA Board ang mula sa hanay ng mga magniniyog. Hindi rin natitiyak ang tunay na representasyon ng maliliit na mga magniniyog. Sa halip na direktang ibalik ang

pondo sa mga magniniyog, sasailalim ito ng pribatisasyon at ilagag ang isang trust fund na nasa kontrol ng isang Trust Fund Management Committee kung saan walang representasyon ang mga magniniyog. Sa ganitong pormulasyon ng panukala, tila ang gobyerno pa at malalaking stakeholder ang makinabang sa coconut industry at higit na makikinabang sa pondo at hindi ang mga maliliit na magniniyog.

Naniniwala ang Kinatawang ito na upang magbigay-daan para sa tunay na hustisyang panlipunan para sa magniniyog, dapat ay ibigay ang kontrol ng pondo sa mga magniniyog at direktang ibalik sa kanila ang bilyon-bilyong pera ng Coco Levy Fund. Kaya “No” ang boto ng Representasyong ito sa House Bill No. 8136, Mr. Speaker. Maraming salamat.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, N.). From the Zoom again, the honorable BAYAN MUNA Representative Gaité is hereby recognized for his three minutes explanation of vote.

REP. GAITE EXPLAINS HIS VOTE

REP. GAITE. Salamat, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker at mga Kagalang-galang na kapwa ko Mambabatas, “No” ang boto ng Representasyong ito sa House Bill No. 8136 or 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.

Naniniwala ang Representasyong ito na ang House Bill No. 8136 ay hindi magreresulta sa pagbabalik ng Coco Levy Fund sa mga magniniyog na ilang dekada ng nag-aantay at nanawagan para dito. Hindi ito tumutugon sa panawagan ng mga magniniyog na ibigay sa kanila ang kontrol at pagdedesisyon para sa Coco Levy Fund. Bagkus, ibinigay ang kapangyarihan sa Department of Finance at iba pang ahensiya. Sa ialim din ng ilang

probisyon nakapag-aalala na masasamantala ito ng ilang opisyal at malalaking negosyo para sa kanilang kapakinabangan at maaaring tumungo sa panibagong pribatisasyon ng Coco Levy Fund. Lubhang napakatagal na ang ilang dekadang paghihintay at panawagan ng mga magniniyog para maibalik at mapakinabangan nila ang Coco Levy Fund. Mahihintay na naman ba sila ng panibagong isang siglo para dito? Kaya naman po, Mr. Speaker, ang Kinatawang ito ay bumoboto ng “No” para sa panukalang batas na ito. Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gonzales, N.). The session is suspended.

It was 5:10 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:12 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.). The Speaker will now administer the oath of Deputy Speakership to the Congressman from Manila, Cong. Benny Abante, to be witnessed by his family.

Rep. Bienvenido M. Abante Jr., together with members of 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. Please raise your right hand and repeat after me.

I, BIENVENIDO MIRANDO ABANTE JR., of 2330 Revellin St., Sta. Ana, Manila, having been elected as Deputy Speaker, 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 5:14 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:16 p.m., the session was resumed with Deputy Speaker Weslie T. Gatchalian presiding.

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

REP. AGLIPAY. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Majority, I move to nominate and elect Representative Strike B. Revilla as Deputy Speaker. Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the — I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

Congratulations.

REP. AGLIPAY. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Majority, I move to nominate and elect Representative Presley Cheng De Jesus as Chairperson of the Committee on Cooperatives Development vice Representative Sabiniano S. Canama.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

Congratulations.

REP. AGLIPAY. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Majority, I move to nominate and elect Representative Sabiniano S. Canama as Chairperson of the Special Committee on the East ASEAN Growth Area vice Representative Rogelio “Ruel” D. Pacquiao.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

Congratulations, Congressman Sabiniano.

ELECTION OF REP. BENITEZ TO THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

REP. AGLIPAY. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Majority, I move to nominate and elect Francisco “Kiko” B. Benitez as Chairperson of the Committee on Housing and Urban Development, vice Rep. Strike B. Revilla.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

Congratulations, Congressman Benitez.

DESIGNATION OF MEMBERS TO THE CONF. CTTEE. ON H.B. NO. 4157 AND S.B. NO. 1357

REP. AGLIPAY. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Majority, I move to nominate and elect the following as members of the Conference Committee on the disagreeing provisions of House Bill No. 4157 or the Corporate Income Tax and Incentives Rationalization Act and Senate Bill No. 1357 or the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises Act:

For the Majority, I move to nominate and elect Deputy Speaker Kristine Singson-Meehan, Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda, Rep. John Reynald M. Tiangco, Rep. Sharon S. Garin, Rep. Jose Enrique “Joet” S. Garcia III and Rep. Xavier Jesus D. Romualdo; and for the Minority: Rep. Stella Luz A. Quimbo.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) Hearing none, the motion is carried.

DESIGNATION OF MEMBERS TO THE
CONF. CTTEE. ON H.B. NO. 7904
AND S.B. NO. 1945

REP. AGLIPAY. Mr. Speaker, I move that we designate the following Members to the Conference Committee on the disagreeing provisions of House Bill No. 7904 and Senate Bill No. 1945, strengthening the Anti-Money Laundering Act: as members, Rep. Junie E. Cua and Rep. Virgilio S. Lacson; and and for the Minority, Rep. Stella Luz A. Quimbo.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) Hearing none, the motion nominating Cong. Junie Cua, Cong. Virgilio Lacson, and Cong. Stella Quimbo to be part of the Bicom conference, as conferees to the Bicom conference on House Bill No. 7904, strengthening the Anti-Money Laundering Act, is hereby approved.

Majority Leader.

REP. AGLIPAY. Mr. Speaker, I move to terminate the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Privilege Hour is terminated.

Majority Leader.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7749

Continuation

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

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

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). The Secretary General is directed to read the title of House Bill No. 7749.

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. Gatchalian). Majority Leader.

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary status of House Bill No. 7749 is that it is in the period of sponsorship and debate.

Mr. Speaker, I move that the Chairperson of the Committee on Banks and Financial Intermediaries, Representative Cua, be recognized.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). The Chairman of the Committee on Banks and Financial Intermediaries, Cong. Junie Cua, is hereby recognized via Zoom.

REP. CUA. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Majority Leader.

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Rep. Ferdinand Gaité of the BAYAN MUNA Party-List for his interpellation.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Representative Gaité is recognized.

Please proceed.

REP. GAITE. Salamat po. Salamat po, Mr. Speaker. Naririnig po ako?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Go ahead, Sir.

REP. GAITE. Salamat, Mr. Speaker. Naririnig po ako?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Yes, please proceed.

REP. GAITE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Salamat po sa pagkakataong ito.

Mr. Sponsor, Cong. Junie Cua, pahihintulutan ninyo ba akong magkaroon ng ilang queries regarding the proposed House Bill No. 7749, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Sponsor, Cong. Junie Cua, naririnig n'yo po ako?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). The Chairman of the Committee on Banks and Financial Intermediaries, you have the floor, Congressman Cua.

Nawala. Yes, I think we lost Chairman Cua. Let us give him a few moments.

REP. GAITE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

It was 5:23 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:24 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

Chairman Cua, you have the floor.

REP. CUA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sorry for the technical problem.

Maraming salamat. Malaking karangalan po na sumagot sa mga katanungan ng ating butihing Kinatawan.

REP. GAITE. Salamat po, Congressman and Chair Junie Cua.

Una po, mayroon lang po akong gustong maintindihan at naging usapin, naging quandary ito in last week's interpellations. First po, ano ho ba iyong version na nakasalang po ngayon na ini-interpellate? Malaki hong departure iyong naunang version na inilabas as a committee report at ngayon ay apparently,

there is another version. We have been trying to look for this copy and it is not available on our website, on the House of Representatives' website. So, ano ho ba iyong version na ating unang tinatalakay, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Congressman Cua.

REP. CUA. Iyon pong original Committee Report at iyon po ang Committee Report No. 524. Iyan po ang House Bill No. 7749, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. GAITE. Well, iyong binabanggit, Mr. Speaker, iba po iyong naka-upload sa ating HRep website kung kaya't ang una nating nag-interpellate na si Cong. France Castro ay nabanggit niya na apparently, there are two versions that are currently being presented and malayo nga po iyong nauna doon sa ngayon.

May we know, Mr. Speaker, ito ho ba ay dumaan doon sa process ng—has this been approved by the Committee on Rules? Because apparently, we do not have a copy of the—well, we do have a hard copy but apparently, we have been inquiring with the Committee on Rules and ang banggit nila, wala pa iyong resubstituted bill. Tama ba ako, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. CUA. Well, iyong substitute bill, officially, supposed to be, ay hindi pa iyan ang subject ng ating interpellation. According to our process, iyon pong substitution ng bill will come later, during the period of amendment. Now, ang alam ko, ang alam ko po ay nai-distribute naman po ito sa ating mga Miyembro at kung ating titingnan, kung ating ikukumpara doon sa mga substituted version, hindi rin naman malaki ang pagkakaiba. Mayroon lang siyang mga provisions na dahil sa ito ay napag-usapan na doon sa Bayanihan 2 ay hindi na siya relevant dito sa bill na ating pinag-uusapan ngayon.

REP. GAITE. So, bago po ako tumuloy, Mr. Speaker, point of inquiry: Ito ho ba ay mayroon na pong o dumaan at pinasa na ho ba ito ng Committee on Rules? Dahil po iyon po

iyong katanungan namin kung ito ay dumaaan sa proseso, na iyong original na substitute bill ay nabago muli. Pero ang pagkaintindi namin ay nandito, ang ini-interpellate na natin ay iyong December 2 na version, kaya nga po medyo nalito si Cong. France Castro dahil nga po ah – and I do not think that it is similar ah, malaki ang departure. First and foremost is the required appropriations na malayung-malayo doon sa original na amount. Ikalawa, iyong mga agencies that will be involved have also been changed, among others.

So, point of inquiry, Mr. Chair, Mr. Speaker, ano ho ba ang status noong bill? Kasi po we have been inquiring with the Committee on Rules and accordingly, hindi pa nga raw ito naaprubahan. Iyon po ang gustong ma-verify ng Kinatawang ito, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor.

REP. CUA. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, to clarify matters, I will explain to the Gentleman the history of this bill. Ito pong bill na ito ay aking nai-file noong May 24 at ito po ay na-refer sa Defeat COVID Committee. Ito pong, ito pong bill na ito ay na-approve ng aming Committee noong May 29, 2020. Iyon iyong nagkaroon ng draft committee report. It was submitted noong May 31 sa Defeat COVID Committee. Iyong Defeat COVID Committee approved it last July 27, 2020. Unfortunately, dahil gusto nating maapura itong approval nitong bill na ito, iminungkahi at that time ng leadership na i-incorporate ito sa Bayanihan 2. That iyon namang Bayanihan 2 na-approve noong August 10. So, iyong after noong approval noong August 10, ang GUIDE ay dumaaan sa Bicam at sa Bicam naman, ito ay napagkasunduan noong August 20. Doon sa Bicam, hindi lahat ng portion noong GUIDE Bill, as submitted by the committee and approved by our committee and in the DCC Committee, ay naipasok. Nabawasan iyong appropriation at iyong provision for the creation of a special holding company. At that time it was called “ARISE,” ano, hindi po iyan tinanggap ng Senado at ang sabi, kinakailangan po tayong magkaroon ng hiwalay na batas. Ito ngayon iyong ating pinag-uusapan ngayon. So, noong nangyari iyon, ang naiwan na lang doon sa GUIDE Bill ay iyong mga proviso na hindi na-incorporate

doon sa Bayanihan, iyon ang naiwan doon at noong bumalik, noong bumalik ay ipinadaan natin sa Appropriations Committee.

Doon sa Appropriations Committee, nagkaroon po ng pagbabago sapagkat part of the appropriation ay, part lang ng proposed original appropriation of P50 billion, consisting of P35 billion para sa LANDBANK and DBP, P30 billion – P15 billion para sa – ah, no, P35 billion para sa – P30 billion para sa LANDBANK at P15 billion para sa DBP, at P5 billion sa PGC. But unfortunately, ang na-approve lamang sa ano, ang na-approve lamang sa Bayanihan ay hindi iyong buo, kulang ng P10 billion. Kaya dito natin inilalagay sa bagong o dito sa ating bill na ipinapasok ngayon na dumaaan sa Appropriations Committee. So, ganoon po ang nangyari. At iyong GUIDE ay ipinadaan muli sa DCC. At noong September 24, siya po ay naaprubahan doon. Eventually, ipina-approve sa Rules Committee at na-approve siya noong October 6. Ganyan po ang nangyari. Kaya medyo naging magulo dahil nga po na iyong bill, originally, was a stand-alone one. But dahil gusto nating maapura, ipinasok doon sa Bayanihan 2, hindi naman na-incorporate lahat noong pangangailangan, especially iyong special holding company, kaya ito ngayon ang ating ginagawa. I hope na, I hope na naipaliwanag ko nang maayos, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, because we have inquired with the Committee on Rules Secretariat and iyan po nga iyong hindi rin namin masyadong malinawan kung bakit apparently, iyong version na tinatalakay po natin ngayon ay accordingly, ay hindi pa o has not passed muster.

So, Mr. Speaker, sigé, I will set that aside for the meantime and I will go to the meat of my interpellation, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor.

REP. CUA. And then, Mr. Speaker, before you proceed, gusto ko lang liwanagin na iyan po ang naging suggestion ng Rules Committee. It is the Rules Committee that decided na huwag nang ibalik sa Defeat COVID Committee, sapagkat lalong magtatagal. So, tatal naayos naman na, kaya in-approve na nila sa Rules Committee. So, anyway, thank

you, Mr. Speaker. Let us proceed to the meat of the interpellation.

REP. GAITE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Ang alam ko, ilang ulit ko ng narinig iyong sagot ninyo, but I still have to ask this question, Mr. Sponsor, with your forbearance. Nais ko lamang po ma-educate dito sa House Bill No. 7749. Narinig ko na iyong sagot ninyo rito, pero gusto ko lang ma-validate. Ang una kong tanong—at i-apologize kung o nag-a-apologize ako ngayon pa lamang—is House Bill No. 7749 a bailout program or not, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor? Yes or no lang iyan.

REP. CUA. Gaya po ng aking naisagot kay France, ang sagot ko po doon ay hindi po bailout.

REP. GAITE. Okay. So, no, no po ang sagot ninyo...

REP. CUA. No.

REP. GAITE. ...Mr. Speaker?

REP. CUA. Hindi po. Yes, no.

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

Second question, does House Bill No. 7749 aim to create a special holdings company that will provide money for companies that are failing because of the pandemic, particularly iyong tinatawag nating strategically important companies? Tama po ba iyan, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. CUA. Tama po iyan, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. Tama po iyan.

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

Does House Bill No. 7749 aim to provide capital infusion to the Development Bank of the Philippines and Land Bank of the Philippines, both of which are government entities, government financial institutions, through the form of loans or cash infusions, among other measures? Tama po ba iyon, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. CUA. Let me clarify, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. Ito pong Bill na ito ay nag-i-infuse ng capital sa LANDBANK at sa DBP, at they are empowered under the law, under this bill, to create a joint venture with the private sector, kung mayroong mag-i-interes, to put up a special holding company. So, itong special holding company, ang capital po nito ay manggagaling sa LANDBANK at DBP, at contribution ng private sector, including multilateral lending institutions.

REP. GAITE. Salamat po sa clarification, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

Nabanggit ninyo noong nakaraang hearing na iyong House Bill No. 7749 ay hindi bailout nga kundi it is a measure that will help rehabilitate companies who are experiencing temporary insolvency situations.

Gusto ko lang ibalik sa inyo iyong definition ng bailout. Ayon sa Investopedia:

A bailout is when a business, an individual or a government provides money and/or resources (also known as a capital injection or infusion) to a failing company. X x x Businesses and governments may receive a bailout which may take the form of a loan, the purchasing of bonds, stocks or cash infusions.

Ayon sa definition na ito, at ayon sa mga naging sagot ninyo po, kagalang-galang na Sponsor, lumalabas na isang bailout po iyong House Bill No. 7749, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, hindi po ba?

REP. CUA. Well, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, ang akin kasing pag-unawa sa bailout ay iyong kompanya na sasagipin ay maaaring hindi na mare-rehabilitate. So, iyon po ang kaibahan. There is really serious insolvency na maaaring hindi lamang dulot ng pandemya, na ito ay dulot ng masamang management o talagang ang negosyo ay pabagsak na. Hindi siya po ganoon. Ang atin pong sasagipin dito ay iyong mga makapagpapakita na sila ay, bago nagkaroon ng temporary insolvency, they were running okay, well-managed, at naapektuhan lang ang negosyo dahil dito sa pandemya. Iyon po ang aming pananaw na pagkakaiba ng bailout at saka rehabilitation, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. GAITE. Pasensiya na po, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, hindi ko makita iyong malaking pagkakaiba. Dahil ang bailout po, tulad ng nabanggit ninyo, iyong nagkakaroon ng temporary insolvency, whatever reason that is. The reason that was used now is the pandemic, it is still a form of bailout and I think that was the same concept or same provisions noong panahon po ng global financial crisis noong 2008. Kung maalala ninyo po, ano po iyong mga term na ginamit? "Too big to fail," meaning iyong malalaking kompanya na kailangang isalba, lalo na iyong mga bangko, eventually iyong manufacturing, iyong sa US, iyong auto manufacturing ay na-bailout dahil nga doon sa binanggit na mga dahilan—too big to fail, marami daw trabahong mawawalan, may malaking negative impact sa ekonomiya, among others. So, in terms of iyong pag-define, hindi ko makita iyong pagkakaiba, pasensiya na po, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor.

Ngayon, let me ask the good Sponsor if he can—I will read the definition of SICs, as stipulated in Chapter 3, Section 9, letter (b), to quote:

SICs are investee companies that are nationally significant, or those with high economic returns or high employment potential, and which are engaged in any form of the following: Strategically important industries or sectors such as but not 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 in the rules and regulations issued to implement this Act: Provided, that an SIC must be able to demonstrate upstream and downstream linkages to other firms and/or industries, substantial employment to the community, and exhibit high degrees of process efficiency, cost efficiency, product quality and environment soundness. Provided, further, That an SIC can show proof of temporary solvency problems due to the pandemic, financial soundness prior to the pandemic and credible and sound financial rehabilitation plan.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, batay sa definition po na ito ng SICs, it would seem that only big corporations, not MSMEs, will fall under this category—high employability, demonstrate downstream and upstream linkages, high efficiency, cost efficiency, product quality and environmental soundness. I am not saying that iyong MSMEs natin ay kayang gawin ang lahat ng requirements na iyan, mayroon rin naman silang high employability. Pero statistics will show that 99.5 percent ng mga impresa sa bansa ay MSME, 89 percent dito sa bilang ay micro enterprises, 10 percent ay small enterprises, at 0.5, less than 1 percent, ang medium enterprises. Based on these numbers, sa usapin na lang ng employability, hindi papasa ang kalakhan ng MSMEs natin. Paano pa ang cost efficiency, product quality at iba pa? Add that to the fact that hindi binabangit ng Panukalang Batas na ang special holding company o SHC ay binuo to rehabilitate MSMEs. Iisa lang po ang ibig sabihin ng House Bill 7749—bailout ito specifically for large enterprises which only comprise 0.5 percent of the total business enterprises in the Philippines. Ano po ang tingin ng ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor sa obserbasyon na ito, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. CUA. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, kung inyo pong mapapansin, gusto ko pong ipaalala sa ating kagalang-galang na Interpellator na ang batas pong ito ay maaari po nating sabihing mayroon siyang dalawang parte: Ang isang parte po ay iyong tungkol sa empowerment ng GFIs para tulungan iyong mga MSMEs, at iyon pong mga MSMEs ay mayroon doon sa ating definition of terms ay maliwanag, doon sa empowerment ng LANDBANK at DBP ay sinasabi kung anuano ang mga klase ng mga kumpanya na maaaring makinabang doon sa programa para sa MSMEs. So, maliwanag na maliwanag po na itong batas na ito ay hindi lamang para sa mga malalaki. Mayroong portion po rito na dedicated very clearly to MSMEs by way of expanding the loan assistance program that they are now undertaking, as well as expanding the rediscounting program that they are also doing today.

Subalit mayroon ding pangalawa pong parte, iyan po ay doon sa mga strategically important companies. Ito po, maaari po, maaari po na ito ay iyong mga malalaki na mahalaga rin para sa ekonomiya natin, halimbawa, mga transportation, hindi iyan — transportation like shipping lines, like airlines. Malalaki po iyan, hindi po MSME iyan. But iba po siyempre ang magiging needs ng mga strategically important companies. That is why iba po ang ating scheme doon. It is by way of capital infusion and by way of execution of long-term funding, long-term loans sapagkat kailangan po nito ay hindi working capital. Ang kailangan po nito ay medyo mahabang financing, either by way of capitalization, augmentation or by way of direct loans in the form of bonds, for example, or a multi-year loan. So, iyan po iyon. So, hindi po maaaring sabihin natin na ito ay clearly para lang sa malalaki at hindi natin sinasali ang maliliit.

Now, gusto ko pong balikan iyong aking pananaw sa pagkakaiba ng bailout at ng GUIDE. We have to make a distinction because in the case of a bailout, usually, the one who is bailing it out will have to take a controlling position para niya talaga ma-bailout ano. That is not our intention; that is the least of our intentions kasi hindi po natin kagustuhan na makialam pa doon sa management. Ang ating pong position dito ay magbigay lamang ng kakulangang kapital, infusion of capital, para nang sa ganoon ay makautang pa sila sa ibang private bank, and that way expanding or allowing them to expand their source of leverage. So, iyon po ang kaibahan noon. Bukod sa sinabi ko na na iyong bailout ay, kung baga, kahit nakikita mong hindi na siya sustainable, papasukin mo pa rin siya. Hindi po ganoon ang intensyon natin kasi ang intensyon lang po natin is rehabilitation. We do not have the wherewithal to do that. It is too much for our GFIs to really handle properly so ang GFIs lang po natin ay para sa confidence-building, para pumasok din iyong mga private banks at tumulong, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. GAITE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, doon sa nabanggit n'yo pong paliwanag hinggil sa kung sino ba

talaga ang makikinabang, whether the MSMEs or the big corporations.

Iyon nga po iyong malaking katanungan, na dahil inilagay natin siya sa parehong Panukalang Batas, iyong strategically important companies, na kung ano pa iyong pamantayan na ginagamit, ay whether the good Sponsor will say na ito ay hindi na maaaring ma-rehabilitate, na marami tayong — ako, maraming pino-pose na questions lalo na sa usapin ngayon ng pandemya, na in the next few months or years, totoong maraming kumpanya na dati pre-pandemic ay maganda ang takbo ng negosyo ay iba na, 'no, iba na ang rules after this pandemic. We have named so many, like those in tourism and others. At nabanggit n'yo po, example nga po iyong transportation, iyong airlines. So, ganoon po ba? Sa shipping, magku-qualify po ba, ang example ang 2GO, iyong malaking shipping company ni Dennis Uy, kung maipakita that they are financially insolvent as of now because of the lack of demand? Would they qualify for this benefit, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. CUA. Mr. Speaker, segun sa language ng ating Panukalang Batas, and I refer to Section — iyong inyo pong binasa kanina, iyong Section 3, oh no, Section 9, iyong sa SIC, for as long as it can be shown that they were properly managed prior to the pandemic, they were doing well at they had high employment effect, they had high economic return, they had upstream and downstream linkages, they have shown efficiency in operation at naapektuhan lamang sila dahil sa pandemya, sila po ay magku-qualify. Hindi naman tayo po mamimili noong kung sinong may-ari niyan, kundi titingnan po natin in a very objective and rational way kung sila ba ay papasa rito sa criteria na isine-set ng ating Panukalang Batas.

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

Atiyan nga po iyong concern ng Kinatawang ito, iyong parameters na gagamitin natin kung sino iyong magku-qualify o hindi. At alam naman natin sa matagal na panahon, iyon ating MSMEs nga ay — I do not have the statistics,

but hindi marami ang gumagamit noong banking system for loans and other credit facilities. At kadalasan, ang mas binibigyan ng access o may mas malawak na karanasan ay iyong mga malalaking korporasyon tulad ng nabanggit ko na, sa transportation industry, sa iba't-ibang nabanggit sa ilalim ng Section 9, Chapter 3 ng naturang Panukalang Batas. At nababahala po kami na, again, tulad ng nangyari before, ma-i-itsapwera muli ang ating maliliit na micro, small and medium enterprises.

Ilang tanong na lang po, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker. Una po, doon sa nabanggit po dito sa Section 16, iyong exemption ng small holding—ng SHC, ng special holding company, iyong blanket exemption from the Philippine Competition Act, which we believe is worrisome dahil nga po maaari itong magresulta sa hindi patas na playing field. Isang blanket exemption sa PCA will mean tinatangal natin iyong mekanismo na ang PCC, Philippine Competition Commission, ay may motu proprio powers para magkaroon ng compulsory notification sa acquisition ng special holding company. Kung gayon ang tanong ko, kailangan pa ba ito ma-exempt from the PCC regulation when in fact, first, there is a compulsory notification and it is a simple gesture meant to inform the PCC of such mergers and acquisitions; and second, ang motu proprio powers ng PCC are not actually a hindrance to perform legally allowed mergers and acquisitions? So, what is the rationale behind this exemption, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

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

Napakaganda pong tanong iyan. In fact, iyan po ay napag-usapan na rin noong nag-interpellate ang Kagalang-galang na Stella Quimbo, but maganda rin na mabalikan natin sapagkat napakahalaga na maipaliwanag natin sa ating kapwa Mambabatas kung ano ba ang intensyon, bakit natin ine-exempt dito sa PCA. But bago po ako tumuloy doon, gusto ko lang pong ulitin muli na itong batas na, itong Panukalang Batas na ito or GUIDE, sa title pa lamang, maliwanag po na ito po ay empowerment ng GFIs—LANDBANK,

DBP—at ine-empower natin sila, hindi lamang po para tumulong sa malalaki, hindi lamang sa mga investee companies na tutulungan noong special holding company kundi maliwanag sa Chapter I at Chapter II ng Bill na ito ang gagawin ng LANDBANK at DBP para sa kapakanan ng MSMEs. In fact, napakaliwanag po na sinasabi rito na ie-expand nila iyong kanilang mga programa para matulungan iyong mga maliliit; at in fact, baka mas malaki pa ang mailaan na pondo para rito sa mga MSMEs.

Now, tutuloy naman po ako ngayon doon sa katanungan na ano ba ang rationale bakit natin ine-exempt sa PCA. Ang dapat po natin na isipin, na tayo po ay nagre-react sa isang crisis situation. We are trying to help our businesses cope up with a pandemic, with a situation that requires expediency. Kailangan po mabilis ang aksyon nito. Halimbawa po natin, mayroon pong naghihingalo na shipping company, naghihingalo na siya, kailangan niya ng capital infusion, eh kinakailangan kung nag-decide tayo na tulungan, kailangan ma-injectionan natin kaagad. Ngayon, kung itong pag-iinject natin ay magkokonsulta pa tayo sa maraming doktor, baka patay na po iyong kabayo, aanhin natin iyong damo? So, iyon po ang pinakamahalagang dahilan kung bakit natin ipinapanukala na sana sa loob ng tatlong taon, sa loob ng tatlong taon ay maiwasan po natin iyong mahabang red tape kasi hindi po natin mare-rehabilitate kung hindi tayo kikilos nang mabilis.

Pangalawa po, karamihan, ang—wala po kaming nakikita na potential na maapektuhan ang free competition kasi po ang atin pong ini-exempt lamang ay iyong acquisition, 'no, na hindi magiging controlling iyong pag-invest or iyong pag-invest ng special holding company. If you remember, doon sa PCA, ang mahalaga sa kanila ay iyong merger and acquisition. Ang ibig pong sabihin ng merger, pinagsama mo iyong dalawang player sa industry. E kung dadalawa lang iyong player, e magiging monopoly na iyon. At kung tatatlo naman, dating may kompetisyon, magiging lopsided ang competition. That is a merger. The other one is acquisition, and if you look at the definition of acquisition in the law, it says

an acquisition that results in a controlling interest, so control po ang mahalaga doon. But ang ating sinasabi dito, wala po tayong intensyon na gawin iyon sapagkat meron tayong safety mechanism na inilagay sa Bill na hindi po puwedeng masyadong malaki ang exposure. Ang pinakamalaking exposure lamang po diyan, base sa brainstorming, sa paggawa ng IRR, sa ginagawang IRR, na hindi lalampas ng P2 billion. E ang, ang threshold, ang threshold sa batas ay P2.4 billion for a transaction and P6 billion for a person. So, hindi po natin malalampasan iyong threshold na iyon. So in other words, expediency. Pangalawa, iyong ating mga safety mechanism will not allow control and it will be something that will only be a matter of allowing them to rehabilitate. So, thank you, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. GAITE. Salamat po doon sa pag-clarify noong role ng PCC, lalo na sa usapin ng mergers and acquisitions, pero hindi ho ba may similar provisions sa ating Bayanihan 2, sa Section 4 (eee) ng naturang batas na already exempts all mergers and acquisitions with a transaction value below P50 billion from the PCC's compulsory notification and motu proprio powers? Hindi ho ba redundant ito? Hindi ho ba moot and academic na para isama pa ulit sa panukalang batas na ito, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. CUA. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, ang pagkakaalam ko po kasi, iyong Bayanihan 2 will soon expire. Maaari po ito na ma-extend, ma-extend pa, but I am certain it will not be extended for long. So, ang kailangan po natin ay reasonable time; we need three years. Base sa pag-aaral ng mga ating dalubhasa na ekonomista ay kinakailangan po natin hindi isang taon, hindi dalawang taon, kailangan natin at least tatlong taon man lang para ma-rehabilitate ang isang kumpanya na naapektuhan ng pandemya na ito. So, we need a little bit of space and time para maging effective iyong ating program. So, iyan po ang major consideration kung bakit natin iniwas sa posible na – malamang, hindi lang possible, malamang na magkaroon ng red tape doon sa proseso.

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

Again, naniniwala ang Kinatawang ito na iyong provisions – iyong kapangyarihan ng PCC ay, tulad ng nabanggit ninyo, ay para nga ma-prevent ang monopolies at mga hindi wastong pamamaraan ng pangangalakal o iyong mga trade practices para nga magkaroon daw ng tinatawag na “kompetisyon.” Pero tulad ng naging karanasan noong bailout noong 2008 sa global financial crisis sa US, nakita natin kung paano iyong mergers ng mga malalaking bangko nag-consolidate at sila na ngayon iyong mas makapangyarihan. Dahil sa halip na magkaroon ng kompetisyon, nagkaroon ng consolidation ng mga malalaking bangko at iyong mga dating akala natin matatag ay nalusaw na rin. So iyong intent niya, ayaw natin ulit maulit at hindi iyan siguro iyong nais natin sa panukalang batas na ito.

Panghuli na lang po, Mr. Speaker, sa usapin ng prohibition against injunction. Ano ho ba ang dahilan bakit mayroon po tayong prohibition na no other court other than the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court shall issue any TRO, preliminary injunction, mandatory injunction, et cetera? Kailangan pa bang talian natin iyong isang coequal branch ng government, ang Hudikatura, to exercise its powers, na kailangan na para rin maprotektahan ang mga mamamayan sa mga transaksyon resulting from the operations of the SHC na dapat within the legal bounds of the law, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. CUA. Well, Mr. Speaker, kagaya po noong aking paliwanag, ang mahalaga kasi natin dito ay iyong expedient action. So, expediency pa rin po ang consideration noon. Kasi maaari po na para ma-delay, para lang mahadlangan, halimbawa, iyong programa, we cannot anticipate and forecast all reasons for it, but it can surely happen. So, ang purpose po lang natin is para makakilos tayo nang mabilis tatal maigsi lang naman po iyong panahon na ating inilagay sa Panukalang Batas na mae-exempt, tatlong taon lang po naman. So, iyon po ang dahilan dito.

Ngayon, balikan ko po iyong tungkol sa competition. After three years, kung makikita

ng Philippine Competition Commission na dahil sa rehabilitation program na ito, somehow, which I do not believe—which I believe is unlikely to happen kasi ang intervention ay hindi naman will result to control. Most probably, it will not happen. But even assuming it happens, even assuming it happens, after three years, na-rehabilitate na iyong kumpanya, kailangan nating buwagin, puwede naman uling pumasok ang PCC at i-exert iyong kanilang power para manumbalik ang kompetisyon. So, mas mabuti na na ma-rehabilitate natin iyong kumpanya kasi kung hindi natin ma-rehabilitate iyong kumpanya na nangangailangan ng saklolo dahil sinasabi lang natin e baka ito ay magkaroon ng monopolya, e baka lalong magkaroon ng monopolya kasi hindi natin tutulungan iyong kalaban. Kung dadalawa lang sila, isa na lang ang maiwan, e 'di monopolya na iyon. So, iyon po ang ibig nating sabihin.

So, kinakailangan po na unawain natin ito, na ito ay scheme lamang para sagipin sa loob ng maigsing panahon, na after noong panahon na iyan, puwede namang pumasok na ang Philippine Competition Commission at iayos. By then na mayroon na tayong, mayroon na tayong malalakas na nasagip, na puwede naman na maging competitor sa market, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. GAITE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, sa clarification ninyo. Pero tanong ko lang po, mayroon ho ba na tayong datos na in terms of performance ng PCC diyan sa usapin ng pag-breakup ng monopolies? Mayroon na ho ba tayong very concrete examples that can be provided by our good Sponsor? Dahil sinabi n'yo nga po na maaaring pansamantala, during the next three years ay iyong kaniyang kapangyarihan ay hindi fully ma-implement but after the third year, ma-iimplement na, pero how effective has the PCC been in addressing such concerns, considering na alam pa rin naman natin that there are many existing monopolies na sa communications, sa transportation at iba pa? So, ang ikinakaba, again, ng Kinatawang ito, manipis na nga ang kapangyarihan ng PCC, luluwagan pa natin for the next three years. And umaasa ang ating good Sponsor

na hindi mangyayari ito pero we have reason to believe na maaari ngang maging kasabwat ang DBP, LANDBANK na bunga ng kanilang intercession o sa kanilang intervention ay, again, tulad ng nabanggit, mapaburan iyong malalaking negosyo o korporasyon sa halip na iyong original concept which, I think, was to help our MSMEs.

So, iyan iyong fear ng Kinatawang ito. Iyong binanggit ninyo kanina baka, ang sabi ninyo, aanhin pa ang damo 'pag patay na ang kabayo. Pero ako, ang fear ko naman, nakalabas na iyong kabayo, doon pa lang natin isasara iyong pintuan. Baka lalong mamonopolyo ang malaki o ang mahahalagang industriya na sana ay mayroong kompetisyon, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor.

REP. CUA. Well, nauunawaan ko po ang pangamba ng ating butihing Kinatawan, my esteemed colleague, subalit iyon pong efficiency and effectiveness ng implementation ng Commission, the way I see it, it would be a different issue altogether. So, hindi naman po nangangahulugan na kung ineffective iyong Commission ay isasawalang-bahala na lang natin din po iyong ating pangangailangan at ang expediency. Kasi kung siya ay ineffective at hindi naman natin iko-consider iyong exigency, ay maaapektuhan din iyong programa ng ating rehabilitation.

So, but going back to the issue of the efficiency of the Commission, well, we probably need to review the law. Kung ang batas ay medyo ineffective, baka kailangan nating amyendahan o pangalawa, if there is a problem of regulatory capture, that is another matter. So, iyon pong regulatory capture would be a different issue altogether mula dito sa ating pangangailangan na being able to act with expediency, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

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

At magkahalintulad po tayo ng paninindigan na sa panahon ngayon, tama po, iyong expediency ay kailangan dahil mayroon talagang emergency situation. At alam natin na iyong ating ekonomiya, ang laki nang ibinagsak mula noong start noong pandemya mapa-hanggang ngayon, nasa double-digit

negative growth pa rin tayo sa kasalukuyan. Habang iyong ibang bansa, nagsikap nang 'di hamak na mas malaki na assistance sa ating mga micro and small enterprises, tayo ay relatibong napakaliit at wala pang katiyakan na ang MSMEs ang makikinabang dito.

Malaki na ho iyong ipinagbago ng original na Bill, well, una, iyong halaga na from P55 billion, I understand, o P50 billion, has now been reduced to P10 billion. Tapos, hindi na nga po focus iyong MSMEs, instead nag-focus na doon sa pagtatatag ng special holding corporation o SHC na that will, hopefully, according to the proposal, will now assist the MSMEs and the strategically important companies. Ngayon, ang question, who will actually be more favored? Hopefully, sana, ang posisyon po namin, iyong MSMEs, which employ the biggest but unfortunately – pinakamarami sila kaya't normally, kahit sa mga bangko ay hindi masyado binibigyan ng atensyon o focus, at sa halip, sa malalaking kumpanya ito. Walang specified na amount para ibibigay sa pautang sa ating MSMEs kaya nakikita namin na ito ay posibleng hindi pakinabangan nila at sa halip ay makinabang dito sa Panukalang Batas ay iyong mga malalaking kumpanya, malalaking mga negosyante na naghahangad ng tulong o bailout mula sa gobyerno. So, iyon lang po, Mr. Speaker. Iyon lang po, Mr. Sponsor. Maraming salamat po.

REP. CUA. Thank you very much also, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, sa mga magagandang tanong ng ating kaibigan. But gusto ko lang pong i-reassure ang ating kaibigan na napakaliwanag po ng intensyon ng panukalang batas na ito na matulungan hindi lamang po ang malalaki kundi ang mga maliliit na rin po. At hindi po natin nilagyan ng specific na halaga para sa isang sektor para sa malaki o sa MSME sapagka't iyan po ay judgment call, depende po sa magiging pangangailangan ng MSMEs at mga strategically important companies. Kung ang mangyari po ay mas malaki ang demand na manggagaling sa MSMEs, mas may flexibilidad ang GFIs natin na doon ibuhos iyong pera. But ang mahalaga na makita natin, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, is that, sa Chapter

1, Chapter 2, napakaliwanag na binibigyan natin ng diin ang tulong sa mga MSMEs at maliwanag din po sa chapter ng tax incentives and fee privileges na iyong mga transaksyon ng mga MSMEs sa kanilang pag-utang ay mayroong tax incentive. Although ganoon din po iyong strategically important companies, so pare-pareho po na magkakaroon ng incentive.

So, binibigyan lang natin ng flexibilidad ang GFIs at empowerment, at gusto ko pong linawin muli na ang original plan po ng ating Panukalang Batas is maglaan ng P50 billion, ano, P50 billion, at P30 billion will be for LANDBANK, P15 billion for the DBP, and P5 billion for the Philippine Guarantee Corporation. Unfortunately, ang nangyari nga, gaya ng aking napaliwanag, noong in-incorporate iyong GUIDE doon sa Bayanihan 2, ang na-approve lamang na capitalization ng GFIs natin ay nagkulang ng P10B, kaya ito pong P10B na ito, ito po iyong hinahabol natin dito sa Bill na ito. So, kumbaga po, itong GUIDE Bill at saka iyong parte ng Bayanihan 2, iyan po ang kabuuan ng programa para sa empowered na GFIs, na magpautang sa MSMEs at sa mga strategically important companies. So, maraming, maraming salamat po sa inyong interpellation. Isa pong karangalan na magpaliwanag sa ating kaibigan.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Thank you to the Chairman of Banks and Financial Intermediaries, and likewise, thank you to the Representative of the BAYAN MUNA Party-List.

Majority Floor Leader.

REP. LACSON-NOEL. Mr. Speaker, I move to recognize the Hon. Sarah Jane Elago of the Party-List KABATAAN for her interpellation. I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). We recognized the Lady from the KABATAAN Party-List. Please go ahead on Zoom.

REP. ELAGO. Yes. Maraming salamat, Ginoong Speaker.

Magandang gabi sa lahat.

Ginoong Sponsor, maaari po ba akong

humingi ng ilang paglilinaw mula sa Representasyon na ito ng mga kabataan?

REP. CUA. Isa pong karangalan na magpaliwanag sa ating butihing Kinatawan from KABATAAN.

REP. ELAGO. Maraming salamat, Ginoong Sponsor.

Binanggit niyo ho na nais bigyan din ng GUIDE ng flexibility ang GFIs upang magbigay ng necessary access sa credit at financial assistance sa mga MSMEs at mga strategically important companies. Ngunit sa batas po ba, sa Panukalang Batas na ito, wala pong nakalagay, 'no. Bagama't sangayon na rin sa inyong naibahagi na Chapter 2, nakabanggit naman po dito, nakalahad ang pagkabilang ng MSMEs at ng mga SICs, ngunit wala pong katiyakan, walang nasasaad na mga probisyon hinggil po sa preferential guarantee, 'no, para po mabigyan talaga ng prayoridad iyong mga nangangailangan na MSMEs sa laki ng kanilang ambag sa ating ekonomiya.

REP. CUA. Well, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, sa akin pong pagsusuri nitong Panukalang Batas na po na ito ay maliwanag po naman sa Chapter 2 and 3 iyong mga ibinibigay nating mandato sa LANDBANK at DBP na tumulong doon sa mga MSMEs sa pamamagitan ng pagpapautang o pagre-discount ng mga promissory notes or loans na dumaaan sa mga bangko, na dumaaan sa Small Business Corporation o dumaaan sa DA program called "ACPC." So, maliwanag naman po diyan na binibigyan natin ng halaga ang maliliit. At gaya po ng aking nabanggit, kung ang demand po na manggagaling sa sektor na iyan ay mas malaki, mas malaki kaysa doon sa pangangailangan noong mga strategically important companies, ganoon po ang mangyayari doon.

REP. ELAGO. Maraming salamat ho at nais natin na magkaroon pa doon sa period of amendments ng mga pagbabago at mga pagpapaunlad upang talagang tiyakin na nasasagot natin ang panawagan ng mga MSMEs sa pinaka-kinakailangan na

assistance, lalong-lalo na sila po ang talagang apektado, malaki ang epekto sa kawalan ng trabaho, suporta para doon sa mga pamilya ng mga displaced workers ang kalagayan ngayon ng mga MSMEs sa iba't ibang sektor. Ngayon, Ginoong Speaker, nais ko lang pong magtanong tungkol doon sa Section 9, letter (b). Dito po binigyan ng kahulugan o iyong mga sakop na mga industriya ng SICs, 'no. Isa po sa nabanggit dito ang edukasyon. May we know, Mr. Speaker, how the GUIDE Bill will be implemented in the context of the education system?

REP. CUA. Well, nabanggit po rito sa enumeration ng definition ng SIC ang sektor ng edukasyon. Ang tanong po natin is in what way, in what way na matutulungan ang mga educational institution? So, depende po iyan kung ano iyong application na gagawin noong educational institution. Kung, halimbawa po, may isang university, dahil sa epekto ng pandemya ay nangangailangan ng infusion ng capital dahil sa ilang buwang lugi, iyong kanila pong naipong retained earnings ay naubos na, walang kapital. So, maaari silang makipag-usap sa special holding company para sila ay ma-infuse-an ng kapital. At kung hindi naman po sila nangangailangan ng kapital, kundi iyong temporary working capital lamang, puwede rin po iyon, ano, o kung ang kailangan nila ay medyo long term na pagpapa-utang sa kanila, puwede po silang makipag-arrange ng loan. Puwede ring convertible into common stock para hindi sila nag-aalala na pagdating ng araw hindi nila mabayaran, puwede rin pong ganoon. In other words, marami pong variation na puwedeng gawin between the special holding company and the investee company.

REP. ELAGO. Maraming salamat, Ginoong Speaker.

Ito po ay dinala natin sa atensyon ng Ginoong Sponsor dahil nababahala din ang Representasyon na ito na baka doon sa kurso ng pagbawi ng mga nawalang revenues ng ating educational institutions ay bawiin naman ito mula doon mismo sa pangungulekta ng tuition and other school fees ng mga estudyante na siya pong pangunahin

talaga na pinagkukunan ng pondo, lalong-lalo na ng private educational institutions. Bukod po dito, Ginoong Speaker, nakita natin kung gaano talagang kinakailangan na bantayan kung paano sa mga industriya na nagbibigay, na nagpo-provide ng mga serbisyo para sa ating mga kababayan tulad ng tubig, health care, ng education at iba pa sa mga nakabanggit dito, ang mangunguna ay iyong interes na ng publiko para mapalawig ang access doon sa serbisyo at hindi para lamang doon sa pagbawi ng kita ng negosyo. Naiintindihan po natin na talagang—lalo na sa context ng GUIDE, ang ating nais tulungan ay MSMEs at tiyakin iyong trabaho, na ma-preserve iyong mga jobs na nao-offer sa mga impresa na ito ngunit kailangan din natin na balansehin na kung paano ba rin babawiin iyong mga nawala na kita ng mga negosyong ito.

Nais ko lang din, Ginoong Speaker, magtanong tungkol naman sa appropriations. Ipinaliwanag din po kanina ng ating Ginoong Sponsor iyong tungkol sa kung bakit P10 bilyon na lamang iyong nakalagay po dito. Nais ko pong magtanong, meron na po bang certification mula sa National Treasury ang P10 bilyon na ito?

REP. CUA. Meron po. Meron tayong certification na ginawa ng National Treasurer.

REP. ELAGO. Ginoong Speaker, maaari po ba tayong manghingi ng kopya?

REP. CUA. Opo, puwede po. Nakikinig po ang National Treasurer siguro ngayon. Sana aksyonan niya kaagad iyang inyo pong concern.

REP. ELAGO. Ang certification po ay nasa House of Representatives na, Ginoong Speaker, tama po ba?

REP. CUA. Ang alam ko po ay humingi ako noon ng certification and most probably, they have sent it. But because of the lockdown, sometimes ay nagkakawalaan ng papel. So, we will double-check kung nasa House or kung hindi makita, hihingi tayo po uli ng isang kopya.

REP. ELAGO. Ginoong Speaker, maaari po ba nating malaman kung kailan po tayo nag-request ng certification na ito at kung maaari na po nating ipa-double-check din ngayon kung meron ng certification? Dahil, Ginoong Speaker, alam natin kung gaano po ito kinakailangan upang tayo po ay sumunod doon sa mga requirements ng ating Saligang Batas hinggil sa mga appropriations na kinakailangan doon sa pangangailangan ng mamamayan.

REP. CUA. Opo. Nakakasiguro po ako kasi noong atin pong binabalangkas itong batas na ito ay kasama po natin ang National Treasurer, at I recall very well na I specifically mentioned na kinakailangan mayroon tayong Certification of Availability of Funds. So, but anyway, we will ask our Secretariat to check now. So—so, ...

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, can we now confirm with the Secretariat if indeed there is already a certification on the availability of the funds for House Bill No. 7749?

REP. CUA. Okay. So, I am not sure, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, if the Secretariat can properly respond now but I can assure, I can assure the Lady that during our discussions on this Bill, the National Treasurer testified about the availability of funds.

REP. ELAGO. That would be my last query, Mr. Speaker. I hope to get an update from the Sponsor, the distinguished Sponsor, the soonest on this because kung wala po tayong certification, ito po ay labag sa batas. At nais din nating malaman, makita at masigurado na andiyan, na hindi lang available iyong funds kundi ang lahat po ng ating susupportahan na mga measures, mga hakbang para sa economic recovery, ang tunay na makikinabang ay ang mga nananawagan na mga MSMEs na kinakailangan ng dagliang suporta sa panahon ngayon na tayo ay nasa krisis. Ito ay dapat mabilis na maipaabot sa kanila at hindi maging pondo o pang-kapital pangtulong para sa mga pili lamang na mga kumpanya na pinapaburan. Kaya po, Ginoong Speaker, babantayan po ng Representasyon na ito, muli, unang-una ang paglabas ng

tala ng certification ng National Treasury at pangalawa, ang hinggil po doon sa mga paglilinaaw ng tungkol sa guarantee para sa suporta sa MSMEs. Maraming salamat po at magandang gabi.

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

Gusto ko pong idagdag na aking naalala na itong Bill na ating tinatalakay ngayon ay dahil mayroong appropriation provision, ito po ay dumaaan sa Committee on Appropriations. At during the deliberations by the Committee on Appropriations, I recall that the same question was raised and the same testimony was made by the treasurer, National Treasurer, regarding the availability of funds. It is most likely that they have forwarded the certification to the Committee on Appropriations, most probably. And I have it here now, I can read the certification to you, Ma'am? This is how it reads: "This is to certify that the actual interest on advance to government-owned and -controlled corporations received by the national government based on the records of the Bureau of Treasury for the period 1 January to 31 July amounted to Eleven Billion, One Hundred Twenty-One Million, One Hundred Twenty Four Thousand, (P11,121,124,000)" et cetera, against the full year program of P115 billion.

So, klaro po, klaro po na as of that date, mayroon po tayong mahigit sa P10 billion. So, this is the certification that was submitted on September 7, 2020. And if you do not mind, if we can get your number, we can send this through Viber to you, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ELAGO. Yes, Mr. Speaker, that would be all.

Thank you and good evening.

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

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION
OF H.B. NO. 7749

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

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian).
Are there any objections? (Silence) Hearing none, the ...

REP. CUA. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian).
... motion is carried and we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 7749.

DESIGNATION OF REP. VERGARA TO THE
CONF. CTTEE. ON H.B. NO. 4157
AND S.B. NO. 357

REP. LACSON-NOEL. Mr. Speaker, I move to nominate and elect as member of the Conference Committee on the disagreeing provisions of House Bill No. 4157, or the Corporate Income Tax and Incentives Rationalization Act (CITIRA), and Senate Bill No. 1357 or the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises Act (CREATE) the Hon. Rosanna "Ria" V. Vergara for the Majority.

This is in addition to the nominations and elections earlier, Mr. Speaker.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian).
Are there any objections? (Silence) Hearing none, the motion is approved.

Majority Floor Leader.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 8140
ON SECOND READING

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, under the Calendar of Business for the Day, I move that we consider House Bill No. 8140, under Committee Report No. 628. For this purpose, please direct the Secretary General to read the title of House Bill No. 8140.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

It was 6:37 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 6:38 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

Majority Floor Leader.

May we direct the Secretary General to read the title of House Bill No. 8140.*

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 8140, entitled: "AN ACT PROVIDING ENHANCED PROTECTION, SECURITY, AND BENEFITS FOR MEDIA WORKERS."

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

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Chairperson of the Committee on Labor and Employment, Rep. Eric Pineda of the 1PACMAN Party-List, be recognized for his sponsorship.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian).
The Chairman of the Labor and Employment Committee is hereby recognized.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF REP. PINEDA

REP. PINEDA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We all recognize that media workers have a significant and indispensable role in providing news about current affairs and other significant information to the public. This group of workers update us on the latest information about what is happening around us through broadcasting and written news. Media workers are dedicated people who sometimes risk their lives, especially if they work in scenes of disasters or other hazardous conditions. Because of these, there is a clamor for a law that will protect and promote the welfare of media workers. It is long overdue because it has been almost three decades since our media workers first expressed the need to have a law that will ensure their safety and protect their well-being.

Mr. Speaker, may I now submit for plenary consideration House Bill No. 8140,

entitled: "AN ACT PROVIDING ENHANCED PROTECTION, SECURITY, AND BENEFITS FOR MEDIA WORKERS," authored by Rep. Rowena Niña Taduran.

Among the salient points of this Bill are:

1. It covers all media workers and entities in the private sector;

2. It assures security of tenure to media workers after the probationary period of six months of continuous work;

3. It reiterates the grant of benefits as provided for in PD 442, as amended, otherwise known as the Labor Code of the Philippines;

4. It affords additional insurance coverage to media workers aside from the social welfare benefits already enjoyed under the programs of the Social Security System, the Home Mutual Development Fund, or Pag-IBIG, and the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation;

5. It creates a Media Tripartite Council that will serve as a link among stakeholders, provide the platform where media workers and employers can agree upon mutual beneficial policies that will promote the interests of the media and serve as an avenue to express their aspirations, discuss their programs or conflicts;

6. It mandates the Department of Labor and Employment as the agency in charge of monitoring compliance with the provisions of this Act; and,

7. Lastly, it penalizes erring media entities and workers who violated the provisions of this Act.

Mr. Speaker and distinguished colleagues, the Committee on Labor and Employment, through House Bill No. 8140, seeks to provide protection, security and benefits to media workers. The immediate approval of this proposed measure is therefore earnestly sought.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian).
Thank you, Chairman Pineda.
Majority Leader.

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Hon. Ferdinand Gaité

* 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."

of the BAYAN MUNA Party-List for his manifestation.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). The Gentleman from the BAYAN MUNA Party-List is hereby recognized. You may have the floor.

MANIFESTATION OF REP. GAITE

REP. GAITE. Salamat po, Mr. Speaker.

Sa ating kagalang-galang na Chairman ng Committee on Labor, Congressman Eric Pineda, at sa mga kasamahan natin sa Committee on Labor, kasama si Congresswoman Niña Taduran na main author ng Panukalang Batas na House Bill No. 8140 at sa lahat ng ating mga kasamahan sa Kongreso at nanunuod ngayon, isang magandang gabi.

Nakikiisa ang Kinatawang ito sa Panukalang Batas na magbibigay ng karagdagang proteksyon, seguridad at mga benepisyong sa ating manggagawa sa media. Alam naman natin ang kalagayan ng ating media workers, na marami sa kanila ay ang usapin sa sahod, trabaho at karapatan ay hindi na naglalayo sa kalagayan ng ordinaryo nating manggagawa: mababa ang pasahod, maliit ang mga benepisyong, walang kasiguruhan sa trabaho at ang mga karapatan nila ay hindi buo kahit na sila ay tinuturing na manggagawa.

Kaya, Mr. Chair, ang Kinatawang ito ay nagpapasalamat sa pagkakataon na maging bahagi ng talakayang ito. Kami po ay natutuwa na dininig ang ilan sa aming mga punto na ni-raise during the Committee meetings at nagpapasalamat kami na iyong mga tinig mismo ng ating mga media workers ay narinig sa prosesong ito, na habang ang isang bahagi ay ginagarantiya natin ang press freedom at hindi natin nilalagyan ng mga posisyong mailalagay o masasakluban sila ng ibang entidad, na masa-sacrifice ang kanilang karapatan sa pamamahayag ay ito ay effectively na hindi na ito naisama bilang isang sagka sa pagkakaroon ng isang batas na totoong pakikinabangan nila.

Kaya maraming salamat sa pagkakataon na ito. Nagpapaabot din ng pasasalamat ang National Union of Journalists of the

Philippines at iba pang mga organisasyon sa Panukalang Batas na ito. So, kami po ay kaisa ninyo sa pag-apruba ng naturang batas. Salamat po.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Maraming Salamat sa Kinatawan po ng BAYAN MUNA Party-List.

Majority Leader.

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, there being no Member who wishes to interpellate the Sponsor, I move that we terminate the period of sponsorship and debate on House Bill No. 8140.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Are there any objections? (*Silence*) Hearing none, the motion is carried.

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

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Are there any objections? (*Silence*) Hearing none, the motion is carried.

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, there being no committee amendment, I move that we now proceed to consider the individual amendments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Are there any objections? (*Silence*) Hearing none, we open the period of individual amendments.

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

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Are there any objections? (*Silence*) Hearing none, the motion is approved.

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on House Bill No. 8140 on Second Reading.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). There is a motion to approve House Bill No. 8140 on Second Reading. All those in favor, please say *Aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 8140
ON SECOND READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). All those against, please say *Nay*. (*Silence*) The *ayes* have it; House Bill No. 8140 is hereby approved on Second Reading.

Majority Leader.

OMNIBUS CONSIDERATION AND
APPROVAL OF LOCAL BILLS
ON SECOND READING

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move for the omnibus consideration and approval of the following House bills on Second Reading:

1. House Bill No. 8111 as contained in Committee Report No. 618;
2. House Bill No. 8118 as contained in Committee Report No. 619;
3. House Bill No. 8130 as contained in Committee Report No. 620;
4. House Bill No. 6664 as contained in Committee Report No. 621;
5. House Bill No. 8131 as contained in Committee Report No. 622;
6. House Bill No. 8132 as contained in Committee Report No. 623;
7. House Bill No. 8133 as contained in Committee Report No. 624;
8. House Bill No. 8139 as contained in Committee Report No. 627;
9. House Bill No. 8146 as contained in Committee Report No. 630;
10. House Bill No. 8147 as contained in Committee Report No. 631; and
11. House Bill No. 8148 as contained in Committee Report No. 632.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian).

There is an omnibus motion to approve the bills enumerated. All those in favor, please say *Aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). All those against, say *Nay*. (*Silence*) The *ayes* have it; the omnibus of – the aforementioned bills are hereby approved on Second Reading.

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

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Are there any objections? (*Silence*) Hearing none, the motion is approved.

Majority Leader.

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Hon. Arlene Brosas of the GABRIELA Party-List for her manifestation.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). The Lady from the GABRIELA Party-List is recognized.

MANIFESTATION OF REP. BROSAS

REP. BROSAS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is a manifestation to urge this Body to support the call for the immediate release of Amanda Echanis and her baby, Randall Emmanuel, on humanitarian grounds.

Mr. Speaker, my dear colleagues, just this December 2, at 3:30 in the morning, joint forces of the 77th Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army, the Philippine National Police (PNP), and the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG), illegally arrested Amanda Socorro Lacaba Echanis and her 22-day-old baby, Randall Emmanuel, in Barangay Carupian, Baggao, Cagayan. This is in lieu of only a few months ago when state forces murdered her father Randall “Ka Randy” Echanis, National Chairperson of ANAKPAWIS Party-List and peace consultant during the 2016 peace talks, na hanggang

ngayo'y hindi pa rin nareresolba ang kaso. Ayon sa mga pulis, hinuli nila si Amanda dahil sa illegal possession of firearms, ammunition at explosive device. Pinaratangan din siya ng NTF-ELCAC bilang isang Finance Officer ng CPP-NPA-NDF, ngunit lahat ng ito ay wala ni katiting na ebidensya at basehan. Sa katunayan, aminado kahit mismong si PNP Chief Debold Sinas na sa mga report nila, walang nagte-testify.

Sa kabilang dako, sinalakay ng higit 100 kapulisan ang bahay ng isang bagong panganak na ina at limang oras na ni-raid ang bahay nina Amanda at baby Randall ng walang napapakitang warrant of arrest o search warrant. Paghahalughog ng bahay na ni dokumento walang dala, Mr. Speaker. Sino nga ba ang tunay na kriminal dito?

Katulad nga ng sinabi ni Amanda sa kaniyang interrogators, "Wala po akong baby armalite, baby lang. At wala po akong pampasabog, pasabog lang na balita. Surprise, it is a boy. Wala eh, ganoon lang." Because how can a nursing mother, just days in, recovering from childbirth, carry an M-16 assault rifle, two long magazines, and lay live bullets and two hand grenades around the crib of her baby? Napakalaking kalokohan, kabastusan at kababuyan ito sa isang inang nagpapasuso pa at gusto lamang ng maayos na buhay at kinabukasan para sa kaniyang sanggol. Tila ay naging modus na ang pagtatanim ng armas at ebidensya ng kapulisan. Kung sana'y pagtatanim ng palay katuwang ang magsasakang tinutulungan ni Amanda ang pinagkakaabalahan nila.

Amanda is a 32-year-old organizer for the Cagayan Provincial Chapter of AMIHAN- the National Federation of Peasant Women. She was involved in helping farmers and peasant women on their campaigns for land rights, lowering of land rent, accessing benefits from the tobacco excise tax, gender equality, right to organize and right to access social services such as relief aid during natural calamities. Prior to her arrest, she was also involved in the "Kampanya Kontra Gutom," as collective action against hunger and poverty amid the pandemic and the militarist measures imposed by this administration. Aktibo rin siyang lumahok at nagsulong ng kampanya

laban sa RA 11203 o ang Rice Liberalization Law na naging doble pa ang dagok sa mga nagdaang bagyo.

Amanda is also an artist and a playwright. She used to be the Executive Director of the Urban Poor Resource Center of the Philippines and project coordinator of Sine Maralita, a film festival about the Philippine urban poor. Bilang isang artista na graduate ng Philippine High School for the Arts at dating estudyante ng UP College of Arts and Letters, pinaunlad ni Amanda ang kaniyang sining ng direktang pakikipamuhay sa piling ng mga maralita. Nakalikha si Amanda ng iba't ibang akda na sumasalamain sa tunay na kalagayan ng mahihirap at isa na rito ang dulang "Nanay Mameng" kung saan tampok ang laban ng maralitang taga-lungsod sa komunidad ng San Roque sa Quezon City na biktima ng kaliwa't kanang demolisyon.

Writer, artist, organizer of cultural workers, urban poor communities and of farmers and indigenous peoples—lahat na 'ata ng pupuwedeng gawin at gampanan para makatulong sa bayan ginawa na ni Amanda. Sa kaniyang murang edad, hindi lang siya naging ina ni Baby Randall, kundi pati ng sambayanan na walang pag-aalinlangan niyang pinagsilbihan. Papaanong naging terorista siya? Ang tunay na terorista sa buhay ng mamamayan ay ang administrasyong Duterte na patuloy na naghihiwalay sa asawa, sa kabiyak, ang patuloy na sumisira ng buhay at nag-uulila sa ina sa anak.

To this very moment, Amanda and Baby Randall remain in detention at the office of the CIDG in Camp Adduru, the same camp the Marcos regime had kept her father imprisoned in. Napakalaki ng pagpapahalaga ng mga Pilipino sa pamilya, pero estado mismo ang sumasagka dito. Si Baby Randall Emmanuel ay walang kamuwang-muwang na biktima ng karahasan ito. Kung sa iba't ibang kaso ng mga pulitiko at opisyal nagagamit natin ang salitang "compassion" at "humanity," bakit hindi sa isang ina at kaniyang sanggol? Mga kapwa ko Mambabatas, hindi na dapat natin hayaan na maulit pa muli ang pagkamatay ng sanggol na inihwalay sa kaniyang inang sinampahan ng gawa-gawang kaso.

Kamakailan lang, tumayo rin ang Kinatawag ito dito sa plenaryo upang iparating ang kalagayan ng isang political prisoner na nawalay sa kaniyang sanggol, pinagkaitan ng panahong makalinga ang kaniyang sanggol, at pati ang burol at libing ay na-hijack ng mga PNP. Huwag na nating hayaang mangyari itong muli. Hindi katanggap-tanggap sa kahit na anong mundo ang magkaroon ng isa pang kaso kagaya ng kay Reina Mae Nasino at kay Baby River.

Naghain ang Kinatawag ito ng House Resolution 1407 o RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE ILLEGAL ARREST AND DETENTION OF AMANDA ECHANIS AND HER ONE-MONTH-OLD BABY IN CAGAYAN PROVINCE, pero hindi pa ito dinidinig ng Komite.

Ngayong magpa-Pasko, sa espiritu ng pagdiwang sa pagsilang ng sanggol na si Jesus, nawa'y magkaroon din tayo ng puso para sa bagong silang na sanggol na si Baby Randall Emmanuel at kaniyang inang si Amanda. Gabriela Women's Party appeals to this Congress to support the call for their immediate and unconditional release on humanitarian and just grounds. It pains this Representation to see that this has become the norm and that there is a need for reiteration that prison is no place for a mother and her baby.

Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Maraming salamat sa Kinatawag ng GABRIELA Party-List.

Majority Leader.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

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

It was 6:58 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 8:28 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we proceed with the Additional Reference of Business, Message from the President, and for this purpose, direct the Secretary General to read the message from the President.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). May we ask the Secretary General to read the Additional Reference of Business.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

The Secretary General read the following Message from the President and Committee Report, and the Deputy Speaker made the corresponding references:

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

MALACAÑAN PALACE
Manila

December 14, 2020

SPEAKER LORD ALLAN JAY Q. VELASCO
Speaker of the House
House of Representatives
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

Mr. Speaker:

Pursuant to the provisions of Article VI, Section 26 (2) of the 1987 Constitution, I hereby certify to the necessity of the immediate enactment of:

House Bill No. 6656, entitled:

"AN ACT EXTENDING THE AVAILABILITY OF THE 2020 APPROPRIATIONS TO DECEMBER 31, 2021, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 60 OF THE GENERAL PROVISIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11465, THE GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT OF FISCAL YEAR 2020," and

House Bill No. 8063, entitled:

"AN ACT EXTENDING THE EFFECTIVITY OF REPUBLIC ACT

NO. 11494 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS
THE BAYANIHAN TO RECOVER AS
ONE ACT,"

to ensure the continuous implementation of various government programs, projects, and activities for addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and attaining economic recovery.

Best regards.

Very truly yours,

(Sgd.) President Rodrigo Roa Duterte

Copy furnished:

Sen. Vicente C. Sotto III
Senate President
The Philippine Senate
Pasay City

Sec. Adelino B. Sitoy
Head
Presidential Legislative Liaison Office
2F New Executive Building
Malacañang, Manila
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian).
Majority Leader.
Please, proceed, Secretary General.

COMMITTEE REPORT

Report of the Committee on Appropriations
(Committee Report No. 683), re H.B. No.
8063, entitled:

"AN ACT EXTENDING THE
EFFECTIVITY OF REPUBLIC ACT
NO. 11494, OTHERWISE KNOWN
AS BAYANIHAN TO RECOVER AS
ONE ACT"

recommending its approval with
amendments

Sponsors: Representatives Yap (Eric),
Velasco, Romualdez (Ferdinand) and
Duterte

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian).
Majority Leader.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. BOLILIA. I move that we suspend
the session for a few minutes.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

It was 8:31 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 8:32 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 8063
ON SECOND READING

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that
we recognize the Hon. "Jay-Jay" Suarez from
the Second District of Quezon to sponsor
House Bill No. 8063.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian).
We now recognize the good Gentleman from
the Second District of Quezon.
You may have the floor.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF
REP. SUAREZ (D.)

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Thank you very much,
Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honor and privilege
to sponsor House Bill No. 8063, AN ACT
EXTENDING THE EFFECTIVITY OF
REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11494, OTHERWISE
KNOWN AS THE BAYANIHAN TO
RECOVER AS ONE ACT.

As we all know, Mr. Speaker, earlier today,
we received a letter stating the urgency of
this from the Chief Executive himself, none
other than the President. So, acting on this,
Mr. Speaker, the Committee Report has been
prepared by the Committee on Appropriations

and it is in my humble capacity to sponsor the said measure.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Thank you, Congressman Jay-Jay Suarez. Majority Leader.

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, please recognize the Hon. France Castro of the ACT TEACHERS Party-List for her interpellation. I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). We recognize the Representative from the ACT TEACHERS Party-List. You have the floor, Ma'am.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker.

Ang atin po bang Sponsor ay pahihintulutan ang Kinatawag ito na makapagtanong ng ilang mga paglilinaw kaugnay doon sa extension noong House Bill – RA 11494?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Our Sponsor.

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Yes, Mr. Speaker, to the best of my capabilities, I will try to answer the queries of our good colleague from the ACT TEACHERS, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Go ahead, Congresswoman Castro.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker.

So, iyong una pong tanong ay itong batas na RA 11494, ito po ba ay na-certify ng ating Pangulo na urgent noon atin po itong aprubahan?

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Mr. Speaker, yes, and I do have a copy of the letter and if I may be allowed to read it, Mr. Speaker, addressed to our Speaker, Lord Allan Velasco:

Pursuant to the provisions of Article VI, Section 26(2) of the 1987 Constitution, I hereby certify to the necessity of the immediate enactment of:

House Bill No. 6656, entitled:

“AN ACT EXTENDING THE AVAILABILITY OF THE 2020 APPROPRIATIONS TO DECEMBER 31, 2021, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 60 OF THE GENERAL PROVISIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11465, THE GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT OF FISCAL YEAR 2020; and

House Bill No. 8063, entitled:

“AN ACT EXTENDING THE EFFECTIVITY OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11494 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE BAYANIHAN TO RECOVER AS ONE ACT,” to ensure the continuous implementation of various government programs, projects and activities for addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and attaining economic recovery.

As signed by our President, Rodrigo Roa Duterte.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker, Ginoong Sponsor.

Naintindihan ko po iyong sulat ng ating Pangulo noong December 14, 2020, iyong pagiging urgent nitong extension ng validity at availability ng pondo dito sa Bayanihan 2 o iyong tinatawag nating “BARO.”

So, natatandaan ko po bago natin ito inaprubahan, apat na buwan na ang nakararaan ay cinertify din ito ng ating Pangulo para mapabilis ang pag-aano nito sa Kongreso, pagpapa-approve nito sa Kongreso. At dahil certified as urgent ito, ang ibig sabihin nito, pati iyong emergency powers na pinaloob natin dito sa batas na ito ay kailangan ay dapat ay mapatupad kaagad.

Iyong una kong tanong, Mr. Speaker, so ito pong extension na ito ay hanggang June 30, 2021. Tama po ba?

REP. SUAREZ (D.). That is correct, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay. So, pangalawang tanong po ay mayroon na po bang ano – ilan na po ba iyong report? Kasi ang Bayanihan 2, alam ko po ay every month ire-report ito, magkakaroon ng report sa Kongreso at titingnan ito ng Oversight Committee ng both Houses para malaman na

kung paano nagamit at paano ipinatutupad ito dahil alam naman natin na emergency ito at kailangang-kailangan, halimbawa, ng ating mga kababayan iyong SAP, halimbawa, iyong mga ayuda na kinakailangan ng ating mga mamamayan. Ilan na po ba iyong report na ipinadala sa atin or nai-report kaugnay noong pagpapatupad po ng RA No. 11494?

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to thank also our dear colleague for the observations.

Earlier today, during our Committee on Appropriations meeting and also over the weekend when we had the same meeting, this was the specific issue that we were talking about—how is the fund being utilized?

Presently, we requested from the DBM to give us a report on how the different agencies and departments are implementing this fund. The Committee on Appropriations has continuously followed up with the DBM and the DBM has assured us that in the soonest possible time, once these reports are complete, it would be collated, it would be submitted to the Committee and be forwarded to the Members of Congress, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). So, ibig sabihin po nito, Mr. Speaker, Ginoong Sponsor, hindi pa po nagko-convene ang Oversight Committee ng Kongreso na composed of apat mula sa ating Kapulungan at apat po mula sa Senado para tanggapin ang report sa pagpapaimplementa o pagpapatupad nitong batas na ito, Mr. Speaker, Ginoong Sponsor?

REP. SUAREZ (D.). That is correct, Mr. Speaker. Actually, we will enforce the oversight function of Congress over the implementation of the said funds. But what is also true to us, Mr. Speaker, is that the funds need to be continuously used given the fact that the problems brought about by the pandemic have not ended. Unfortunately, it continues to forge on and, therefore, this is the whole essence of requesting the extension of the expiration of the said funds until the following year, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Salamat, Ginoong Sponsor. So, ibig sabihin po sa oras na ito, habang tayo po ay nagkakaroon ng debate kaugnay nitong Panukalang Batas na extension ay wala pa po tayong data kaugnay noong magkano po iyong nagastos at magkano na iyong natira mula doon sa P140 billion na appropriation galing sa 2020 Budget and P25 billion as standby fund. Wala pa po tayong report noon?

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

If I will be allowed, I will provide our dear colleague with the reports on hand from the Committee on Appropriations so that she can be given the details of what we have so far. And if I am not mistaken, Mr. Speaker, previously, there are also other committees. The Committees on Public Accounts and Good Government have also done their hearings regarding the implementation of the funds to address the COVID pandemic. If our good colleague would also allow the good Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, I will also request from the said Committees a report so that we can furnish her office with it, so that she can get a better idea of how the funds have been implemented by the different agencies, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay. So, maliwanag po ano, na hindi pa natin masasabi as of now kung magkano po iyong nagamit at natira pa at tayo po ba—okay...

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Yes. If I may, Mr. Speaker, sa kasalukuyan, ayon po sa datos na isinumite sa Komitiba, nasa P105 billion na po ang na-release ng DBM para sa iba't ibang ahensiya at departamento na may kinalaman sa pagtugon sa mga problema dulot ng COVID-19.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Thank you very much, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker. Doon sa data na P105 billion ang na-release ng DBM, mula po doon sa pananaliksik doon sa iba't ibang mga pinagkuhanan po natin, interesado po ang Kinatawang ito, Mr. Speaker, Ginoong Sponsor, doon sa agarang pagtulong, ayuda sa ating mga kababayan dahil malinaw po

dito sa appropriation ng R.A. No. 11494, iyong mga ayuda na dapat nating ibigay sa ating mga mamamayan, lalong-lalo na po ano iyong talagang naapektuhan po ng pagkawala ng trabaho, naapektuhan po ng tinanggal sa trabaho at saka iyong siyempre po, iyong ni-report sa atin na hindi or kulang na nabigyan ng ayuda doon sa Bayanihan 1. Partikular po, Ginoong Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, doon po sa SAP. As of October 29, iyong DSWD po ay nakatanggap ng P6 billion under Bayanihan 2 – P5 bilyon para sa SAP through AICS, and P1 billion for Livelihood Assistance Grants. So, nakita po natin sa report, ano, as of October 29, they are still identifying, listing at under process pa lang po. Ito po ba ay mabe-verify ng ating Sponsor, Ginoong Speaker?

REP. SUAREZ (D.). If I may request, Mr. Speaker, from our good colleague a copy of the data that she has just enumerated so that I can ask the Committee on Appropriations to find out if these are, indeed, true to form and substance, given that there are specific details and amounts that I cannot confirm at this moment, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay, Ginoong Speaker, Ginoong Sponsor, inaasahan po ng Kinatawang ito iyong listahan kasi as of October 29, sabi po sa atin ng DSWD, naglilista pa lang sila, under process pa lang. Puwede po bang malaman din, ano, maipabigay sa Kinatawang ito kung mayroon na po iyong listahan, lalong-lalo na po iyong mga inilista nila na makatanggap ng Livelihood Assistance Grants at saka iyong Social Amelioration Program po para sa ating mga iba pang mga kababayan, lalong-lalo na po iyong mga senior citizen at saka iyong mga PWD. Puwede po bang mai-provide iyong listahan na iyon kung mayroon na po ang DSWD later?

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I truly share the sentiments of Cong. France Castro regarding transparency, accountability and how the funds have been used. But unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, similar to what I stated earlier, we have asked the

DBM to submit to us a report of how the funds have been implemented and at the moment, they are completing this; at the moment, they are collating this. Due to the busy schedule and a skeleton force being in operation in the different agencies and departments today, we are looking, hopefully, around February or March next year to get a clearer picture of how these funds were actually used by the different agencies and departments.

So, I ask for the indulgence of our good colleague, Congresswoman Castro, regarding this matter.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Salamat po, Ginoong Sponsor. Mr. Speaker, ito pong SAP para sa ating labor sector, sabi po doon sa DOLE noong nagtanong po tayo, enumeration ng DOLE issuance on CAMP guidelines under Bayanihan 2, iyong TUPAD, iyong AKAP, at saka iyong OFW na included sa mga Balik-Manggagawa Program, Ito po, Mr. Speaker, Ginoong Sponsor, one-time financial support lang po ito na P5,000 sa affected workers and displaced workers in the tourism sector and education sector. So, meron na po ba tayong data dito?

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Yes. I can speak for my experience regarding this matter, Mr. Speaker, she, our good colleague, specifically mentioned programs being implemented by DOLE. I was the same sponsor who defended the budget of DOLE and firsthand, nakita ko po iyong actual implementation nung AKAP, noong one-time assistance for OFWs. Also, I saw DOLE further extend their assistance to livelihood components for OFWs. Marami din pong mga OFWs natin hindi nakaalam na meron po palang scholarship program for OFW dependents and, due to the funds available and due to the efforts being done by the DOLE, a lot of OFW dependents are now seeking the scholarship grants being provided to them.

There is also another program mentioned and being implemented by DOLE wherein OFWs can receive grants starting at P150,000 up to one million pesos kung nais po nilang magtayo ng kanilang negosyo at hanapbuhay at ito po ay patuloy pong ginagawa ng DOLE.

At once na na-collate po namin ang lahat po ng mga pangalan –at dahil napakarami po nito, hindi pa po natin nasasama po dito iyong patuloy na mga kababayan natin na nakikinabang sa emergency employment programs, sa TUPAD program and we are talking of, you know, in the hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries. So, if the good colleague would give us sufficient time, we will supply her with all the data that she so requires, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Salamat po, ano.

Isa po sa interes ko dito iyong tungkol po sa mga teachers, lalong-lalo na po sa mga private school. Mayroon pong P300 million na allotted para doon sa ayuda para sa kanila. So, meron na rin po bang na-submit ang DOLE, DepEd, at CHED kaugnay noong utilization po nito? Kasi binabanggit po ng ilang mga teachers natin na hanggang ngayon po ay hindi pa rin sila nakakatanggap ng ayuda.

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yes, there are. Our dear colleague is correct in identifying those programs. In fact, similar to what I mentioned earlier, this is the very principle why Congress shares the sentiment of our Chief Executive in extending the lifespan up to June 30, 2021, so that we can enable agencies and departments to fully implement the programs covered under the said law and these are, of course, to respond and to immediately give recovery relief assistance to our kababayans, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). So, inaasahan din po, Mr. Speaker, Ginoong Sponsor, iyong report doon sa ayuda doon sa ating education sector.

Sa transportation industry naman, Mr. Speaker, alam natin ngayon na hanggang ngayon po, iyong ating mga ilang mga jeepney drivers na naapektuhan noong tigil-pasada ay hindi pa rin po nakakapagpasada at iyong mga provincial na mga buses ay talagang hanggang ngayon, 10 buwan na po, ay hindi rin po nakakapagpasada. So, mayroon po tayong in-allocate na budget, P1.161 billion, and a total target of 178,244. Kapag dinivide po natin ito, more or less P6,500 each sa

beneficiaries. So, mayroon po ba tayong report din nito galing sa DOTr?

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Yes, absolutely, Mr. Speaker, once this data is complete, we will furnish our good colleague a copy of the report. Similar to what we have stressed earlier, Mr. Speaker, the funds have been provided to the agencies and departments already. Currently, the departments and agencies are implementing the programs. Currently, the departments and agencies are implementing the projects to properly address the effects of COVID-19. And once the data is complete, we will furnish our dear colleague with a copy of this – for education, for DSWD, for DOLE and for transportation, as she mentioned, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Thank you, Mr. Sponsor.

Mr. Speaker, ito pong kaugnay din sa OFWs natin at saka iyong mga foreign nationals, kabilang din po dito na dapat mabigyan din po sila ng kinakailangang serbisyo, lalong-lalo na iyong sa sinasabing Balik Probinsya Program natin. As of October 10, mayroon po tayong naka-report na 301,559 individuals registered as LSIs. So, maaari din po bang makuha ang update nito at ilan na po ba iyong ating mga LSI na napauwi po doon sa kanilang probinsya at natulungan po nitong programa natin sa mga OFWs at mga LSI?

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Sa kasalukuyan po ay masaya po ang ating mga nakinabang sa Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa Program at ngayon kapiling nila ang kanilang mga pamilya. Gayon din po ang nararamdaman ng ating mga OFWs that are with their families. What is important now is that we have to ensure that they further benefit from the funds that are available to them so that they can have a better life in their provinces and in the towns that they came from and at the same time ensure that, you know, assistance is further provided to them.

Ito po iyong layunin, Mr. Speaker, ng iminumungkahi po namin na pahabain po ang expiration or ang tenure of life, effectivity date ng Bayanihan to Recover as One Act so that

we can further implement the programs up to the following year of 2021. And similarly, Mr. Speaker, we will provide our good colleague with copies of the reports once the agencies and the departments have completed the implementation of these programs.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Salamat po.

On, other forms of assistance and partnership with the local government units, ayon po sa nakita kong report, iyong Land Bank of the Philippines ay nakatanggap ng P1 billion from the DBM to subsidize the payment of interests on new and existing loans of LGUs. And as of October 27, of the loan applications of LGUs, P51.70 billion have been approved, of which P322.47 million have been released. Okay, and then 43,038 barangay health response teams have been organized nationwide.

So, ang tanong ko po dito, Mr. Speaker, mayroon na rin po ba tayong report mula doon sa ating mga LGUs kaugnay dito sa mga binanggit nating mga ayuda para sa kanila?

REP. SUAREZ (D.). We will request, Mr. Speaker, from the Department of Finance and the DILG a report regarding this. From what I know firsthand, a lot of local government units are availing of this loan package provided to them. Given the unprecedented efforts required to address the pandemic, talagang naghahanap po sila ng pondo dahil iyong IRA alone ay hindi na po kakayanin ito, not to mention those local government units were hit by the numerous typhoons and calamities that ravaged the country just very recently.

So, the question really here is the availability of funds and it seems like their IRA is not enough and a lot of them are actually availing of loan packages provided to them by LANDBANK, by the DBP. Yes, Mr. Speaker, similar to the request of our good colleague, we will ask the DILG and ask the Department of Finance which of these LGUs have availed of these packages that she mentioned.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay. Ang susunod naman po, Mr. Speaker, ay iyong mga tanong ko po kaugnay noong enhancement of healthcare system capacity to control and eliminate COVID-19. Unang-una po, iyong

detection of cases, kamakailan po nag-express si President Duterte noong pangangailangan noong testing, 'di ba, napakahalaga po ang testing para sa ating pagsugpo ng COVID-19. Mayroon na po ba tayong report mula sa DOH or mula sa FDA kaugnay po ng, Mr. Speaker, doon po, doon sa mga action plan, Phase 3 planning noong proposal para sa mga testing technologies available po geographically isolated – available to geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas? Mayroong 3.8 million individuals who have been tested with an average testing rate of 39,700 individuals per day. Pero kung tutuusin po, halos 65 percent lang po ito doon sa tina-target. So, mayroon po bang report ang DOH kaugnay po nito, iyong mga testing centers, test kits, at saka iyong iba pa po, including iyong mga temporary treatment and management facilities, iyong contact tracing measures at saka iyong human resource for health?

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Again, Mr. Speaker, we will submit to our dear colleague the report. We are one with her in wanting to exercise the oversight function of Congress to ensure that we practice accountability and transparency in the implementation of these assistance programs. But currently, the programs are being implemented. Currently, these projects are on the ground. Currently, a lot of them have yet to be implemented. So, once these are all complete, Mr. Speaker, we will supply and provide our dear colleague with the data that she requires.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). So, iyong huling tanong ko po tungkol dito sa health, iyong atin pong mga health workers ay patuloy din po iyong paghingi nila noong hazard pay at hanggang ngayon po ay mayorya noong ating mga health workers po ay hindi pa nakaka-receive noong kanilang mga hazard pay. Mayroon na po bang development kaugnay nito?

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again, I commend our dear colleague for her show of genuine care for the plight of our health workers. Truly, sila po ang nasa frontlines ng paglaban sa

COVID at totoo po na dapat matanggap po nila iyong kanilang hazard pay. Kaisa n'yo po ang Representasyong ito para siguraduhin na matatanggap po nila ito.

Base po sa inireport po sa akin ng Committee on Appropriations, ito pong pondo pong ito ay nasa mga ospital na at ready na po itong ipamahagi sa ating mga frontliners at mga healthcare workers, those who are deemed so necessary to receive their hazard pay, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Mayroon na po bang report sa timeline kung kailan maibibigay? Hindi po ba masyado nang matagal iyong hinintay ng ating mga health workers? Puwede ba maipatupad ito bago matapos ang taon kaya?

REP. SUAREZ (D.). I cannot speak—Mr. Speaker, again, I cannot speak on behalf of the hospitals and our health institutions as to the implementation of or when they will provide the hazard pay. But what we can do, Mr. Speaker, is send notice to them, send them the position of the House regarding this matter, that we are one with Congresswoman Castro in fighting for the hazard pay for our healthcare workers, especially those in the frontline services against the COVID-19 pandemic.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay. Ang huling tanong ko na lang po, Mr. Speaker, napansin ko po doon sa mga report on donations, as of October 31, of the total of 315 local and foreign donations to DOH, a total of 216 transactions or 68.57 have already been completed, with 73 foreign donations and 26 local donations; a total of 1,722,048 RT-PCR test kits were received from 13 donors while others donated medical products such as 7,754,616 surgical masks; 925,440 N95 masks; 504 ventilators; and 1,358,519 PPEs. Ito po iyong report natin sa donations, pero wala po akong nakita dito na report ng procurement ng DOH kaugnay nitong mga sinasabi nating mga equipment. Mayroon po bang report on procurements? Kasi ang nakikita ko lang po dito ay donations. Wala po bang binili o wala po bang mga procurements ang ating DOH kaugnay noong mga pangangailangang medikal?

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Mr. Speaker, can I request for a one-minute suspension so that I can compare notes with our dear colleague.

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

It was 9:03 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 9:04 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). The session is resumed.
You may continue.

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I have spoken to our dear colleague and, indeed, it was quite glaring, the figure that she mentioned. This specifically concerns donations made to the Department of Health. And the figure and the report that our dear colleague is looking for is, how have these donations been implemented and if there is a procurement report from the Department of Health.

Mr. Speaker, sa kasalukuyan po, under process at ginagawa at ginagamit po ang mga donasyon na tinatanggap ng ating pamahalaan, especially ang Departamento ng Kalusugan, pagdating sa panlaban sa pandemya ng COVID-19. And once we have a report from the DOH, which we have requested from them based on the request of our colleague, Cong. France Castro, we will supply this to her, Mr. Speaker. We will be transparent about it and even the donor countries should also know how the Department of Health used these funds to the best advantage of the Filipino people, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay. Maraming salamat, Mr. Sponsor.

Mr. Speaker, nakita natin ano, doon sa mga binanggit po natin, minahalaga natin na banggitin iyong mga report, lalong-lalo na po sa mga ayuda sa ating mga manggagawa, sa

ating mga professionals, dahil sila po iyong mga napag-iwanan, ano, noong Bayanihan 1.

At nakita natin, Mr. Speaker, na hanggang ngayon, ano, wala pa talagang final report. Bagama't apat na buwan na po itong ini-implement, itong R.A. No. 11494, ay hindi pa po nagkakaroon ng final report para makita natin. Para po sa Kinatawang ito, Mr. Speaker, nakikita natin dito iyong incompetence, 'no, noong ating mga ahensiya na nagpapatupad dahil tayo po sa Kongreso, binibigyan natin ng lahat ng resources at pondo para makatulong po kagyat sa ating mga mamamayan sa panahon po ng pandemya, pero hanggang ngayon po, 'no, hindi pa natin nakikita talaga iyong 100 percent na talagang tulong. So, nakikita po ng Kinatawang ito na sa pag-extend nitong availability at pagpapatupad nitong R.A. No. 11494 ay nakikita natin dito iyong kapabayaang ng iba't ibang ahensiya, lalong-lalo na po doon sa pagpapatupad noong ayuda, iyong mga kinakailangan ng health ano, 'no, mga kinakailangan ng health sector natin at iba pa.

Sa Kinatawang ito, Mr. Speaker, sa palagay natin, kung hindi rin lamang mapapatupad ito ay bakit pa natin ito ie-extend at magbigay na lang sana tayo ng supplemental budget para doon sa mga ahensiya na makapagpapatupad nang mabilis para sa kagyat na pangangailangan ng ating mga mamamayan.

Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker.

Maraming salamat, Ginoong Sponsor.

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Thank you very much, Cong. France Castro.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Maraming salamat po.

Majority Leader.

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Ferdinand Gaité of the BAYAN MUNA Party-List for his manifestation.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). The Gentleman from the Party-List BAYAN MUNA is recognized via Zoom. Please, go ahead, Sir.

MANIFESTATION OF REP. GAITE

REP. GAITE. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Noong dini-deliberate po natin ang naunang Panukalang Batas, ang Republic Act No. 11494, ay nakita na nga ang mga kakulangan kahit noong naunang Bayanihan 1. Kung kaya't nitong Bayanihan 2, itong Bayanihan to Recover as One Act, nakita na nga natin na kulang, maliit iyong halaga, at ang mga mekanismo para ipatupad ito ay hindi sumasapat.

Nakita na nga natin ang mga mahahalagang usapin, iyong urgency of providing assistance to our frontliners, our OFWs, our laborers at iba pa, nakita na nga natin. Kung kaya't naniniwala ang Kinatawang ito na by merely extending or an extension of the BARO, Bayanihan to Recover as One Act, will still not be sufficient, 'no. Makikita pa rin natin iyong kakulangan dahil mismo, nabanggit na nag-release na ang DBM and yet, we cannot see how efficient or how effective ang mga agencies na ito para maipamahagi ito ng direkta sa ating mga naghihikahos na mamamayan. Hindi na kailangan tayo tumingin ng malayo. Makikita natin iyong ating mga public utility jeepney drivers and operators na sa halip na bumiyaye at pumasada ay nanlilimos sa kalsada. At ito ay isang napaka-telling na sitwasyon, na hindi naabutan sila ng ayuda, kahit itong sinasabing one-time na ayuda. Ang masakit pa nga niyan, ultimo iyong ating mga workers na meron pang trabaho kahit paano ay hindi rin covered, hindi provided for dahil, accordingly, sila ay may sources ng income. Kaya't hindi katakataka na iyong ating mga manggagawa, mga mamamayan ay hikahos pa rin sa panahon ngayon. Habang rumaragasa ang krisis pang-ekonomiya bunga ng health problem ng COVID-19 ay nakikita pa rin natin iyong maraming maling pagpapasakatuparan.

Ang militaristang solusyon na—while other countries have somewhat tamed the extent ng infection—may mga bansa, karatig-bansa tayo sa ASEAN nations na single digit na lamang o zero ang kanilang rate ng infection—tayo ay sumipa na naman, ano. Natuwa nga ako na umaabot na lamang ng less than 1000 about a week ago, pero ngayon tumaas na naman to 1,400 pataas, which is not

a good indication of how we are handling or mishandling the pandemic response.

Kaya po naniniwala ang Kinatawag ito na even with extending the Bayanihan 2 ay hindi pa rin maaaring matugunan ang mga mahigpit na panawagan sa usapin ng mass testing, sa usapin ng tracing, sa usapin ng pagpapagamot sa mga infected na mga COVID-19 patients, lalo't lalo na iyong mga ayuda na inaasahan sana ng mga mamamayan ngunit hindi nakakarating. At tama iyong binanggit, importante iyong urgency and nakita na nga natin iyong kahalagahan nito. Pero apparently, hindi nakikitang urgent ng mga opisina ng gobyerno para ipamahagi ang naaantalang ayuda para sa kanila.

So, iyon lang po, Mr. Chair.
Salamat po, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I do acknowledge and respect the observations of our dear colleague representing BAYAN MUNA. Indeed, no one has been spared from the effects of COVID-19, the pandemic itself. Indeed, there is a shortage of resources pagdating sa mga assistance na dapat ibigay. The system has to be improved and these are all part of the fine-tuning process the government is doing to further enhance our capabilities to ensure that assistance is directly provided to those who need them the most. So, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the comments shared by our dear colleague from BAYAN MUNA, Congressman Gaite. They are duly noted and they are duly considered.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian).
Maraming salamat sa Kinatawan ng BAYAN MUNA Party-List.

Majority Leader.

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Arlene Brosas of the GABRIELA Party-List for her manifestation.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian).
The Representative of the GABRIELA Party-List is hereby recognized.

REP. BROSAS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, supposedly, magma-manifest ako, Mr. Speaker, but then siguro, magtatanong na lang ako ng ilang mga questions lang. For example, iyong Bayanihan 2, Mr. Speaker, may I ask the good Sponsor about—konting questions lamang po, very specific questions po, kung saan napunta iyong aid and relief measures ng Bayanihan 2? For example, sa P5 billion for SAP, kamusta po ang P5 billion for SAP, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. SUAREZ (D.). I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, I did not get the question of our dear colleague from GABRIELA.

REP. BROSAS. Yes.

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Ma'am, can you repeat the question again?

REP. BROSAS. Mr. Speaker, I am asking about iyong mga nilabas na pondo sa ilalim ng Bayanihan to Recover As One or Bayanihan 2. Kasi po nilabas iyan dahil may pangangailangan sa krisis at pandemya, right, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor? So, iyong specific po noon, iyong tinatanong ko sa inyo, may apportioned funds po kasi doon. Bago po tayo magpapasa ng extension, supposedly, mayroon tayong report kung saan napunta iyong mga pondo na ito. So, I am asking po the very specific fund ng SAP, kung naibigay iyong P5 billion na Social Amelioration Program batay sa report ng DSWD?

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Again, the position of the Sponsor is, this is the very nature why we are seeking the extension of the validity of the funds. Marami po sa mga programs are ongoing, marami po sa mga programs ay kasalukuyang ipinatutupad, ang mga ahensiya at mga departamento na inatasan para gawin po ito ay kasalukuyang ginagawa po ang kanilang mga mandato para matugunan ang epekto ng pandemya dulot ng COVID-19 and the work does not end, unfortunately, at the end of the fiscal year. The work has to continue on until 2021 and this is the very reason why we are

seeking the extension of the validity of the said Bayanihan fund, so that we can further extend this to the following year and benefit more Filipinos, more of our constituents, more of our workers, and more of our kababayans who need the assistance, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BROSAS. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, general po iyong sinasabi ninyo eh. Ang tanong ko po very specific, iyong status po ng P5 billion ng Social Amelioration Program, iyong status ng P1 billion for Livelihood Assistance Grants, iyong status ng P2 billion for CAMP or COVID Adjustment Measure Programs, iyong P4 billion for TUPAD. Ano na po iyong mga status nito, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor? And I understand, mayroon sa Bayanihan 2 funds na P140 billion na para po ito sa businesses. Tama po ba? Ano na po ang status ng programang mga pang-ayuda at iyong bahagi ng P140 billion na malaki in the guise of the credit facilities? Ano na pong nangyari doon, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Yes, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much, Congresswoman.

We tried to explain and stress this matter early on. When it comes to the details and specifics of funds allocated to specific departments, these have all been given to them, provided to them by the Department of Budget and Management. As to how they are implementing it, as to who are the beneficiaries of these said programs, as to where did the funds go to—the regions, the towns, the municipalities, the provinces, the sectors—Mr. Speaker, I will assure you that once the said programs have been completed, and we are looking at maybe February, March, this was more or less the deadline provided to us, we can provide our good colleague a report on how these funds were implemented. But as of now, Mr. Speaker, if you will ask me or ask us to supply you with a report on how these funds have been used, as of now, Mr. Speaker, the answer is simple: Currently, the departments have been notified of our request. Currently, the agencies have been notified of our request, they are collating the data. They have promised us that at the soonest possible time, they will provide us with a copy of the

report, and once these are available to us, Mr. Speaker, I will provide the same to the Members of Congress so that we can properly exercise our oversight function and our responsible check and balance mechanisms para malaman kung na-implement po ba ng tama ang mga pondong ito.

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

Again, very vague po iyong sagot ninyo and very general dahil hindi natin malaman kung ano talaga iyong status noong funds, di ba, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor. And, apparently, wala po kayo maisagot sa akin dahil—actually, ang tanong pa nga dito e bakit hindi naibigay ng mga respective agencies or they failed to release on the given time frame iyong mga pondo na ito, samantalang sinasabi nga natin iyong mga ayuda na ito ay, noong ipinasa ang Bayanihan 2, sinabi ay dahil sa pangangailangan at pagmamadali dahil may pandemya, may krisis.

So Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, salamat po sa inyong sagot kahit hindi po nasagot very particularly and very specifically ang mga tanong ko. Ang pinaka-question ko po kasi dito, bakit tayo nagpapasa ng extension ng Bayanihan 2 nang hindi natin nalalaman iyong status nito? And nasasabi sa atin, ang mga reasons kung bakit hindi naibigay sa time na dapat ay naibigay sa mga beneficiaries at mga nangangailangan iyong pondo na ito. Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker. Maraming salamat, Mr. Sponsor.

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Thank you very much, Congresswoman, and I again seek your indulgence regarding this matter.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Maraming salamat sa Kinatawan ng GABRIELA Party-List.

Majority Leader.

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

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Maraming salamat din sa ating napakasipag na author. Are there any objections? (*Silence*) Hearing none, the motion is carried.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Are there any objections? (*Silence*) Hearing none, the motion is carried.

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the honorable Vice Chair of the Committee on Appropriations, Hon. "Jay-Jay" Suarez, for the committee amendments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Mr. Sponsor, you have the floor.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Committee on Appropriations to which was referred House Bill No. 8063, introduced by none other than our Speaker, Lord Allan Jay Q. Velasco, Majority Floor Leader Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez, Congressman Paolo Z. Duterte and Chairman Eric Go Yap, entitled: AN ACT EXTENDING THE EFFECTIVITY OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11494, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS BAYANIHAN TO RECOVER AS ONE ACT has considered the same and recommends its approval with the following amendments, Mr. Speaker:

On page 1, Section 1, delete the entire Section 1, and in lieu thereof substitute the following:

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF THE AVAILABILITY OF APPROPRIATIONS. - THE AVAILABILITY OF THE APPROPRIATIONS UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11494, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "BAYANIHAN TO RECOVER AS ONE ACT," IS EXTENDED UNTIL JUNE 30, 2021: PROVIDED, THAT THE AVAILABILITY OF APPROPRIATIONS IN REPUBLIC ACT 11465 OR THE GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT (GAA) OF 2020 THAT WERE REPROGRAMMED,

REALLOCATED OR REALIGNED FROM DECLARED SAVINGS AND UTILIZED FOR PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS FOR COVID-19 INTERVENTIONS, INCLUDING THE AUTOMATIC APPROPRIATIONS OF NEW PROGRAMS, PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES PURSUANT TO SECTION 4 (RR) OF THE BAYANIHAN TO RECOVER AS ONE ACT, ARE ALSO EXTENDED FOR THE SAME PERIOD: PROVIDED, FURTHER, THAT THE USE OF SUCH APPROPRIATIONS SHALL CONTINUE TO BE GOVERNED BY THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 4 OF THE BAYANIHAN TO RECOVER AS ONE ACT: PROVIDED, FINALLY, THAT THE AUTHORITY TO REPROGRAM, REALLOCATE, AND REALIGN FROM SAVINGS OF OTHER ITEMS IN THE FISCAL YEAR 2020 GAA IN THE EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT, GRANTED UNDER SECTION 4 [RR] OF THE BAYANIHAN TO RECOVER AS ONE ACT, CAN BE EXERCISED ONLY UNTIL DECEMBER 19, 2020.

On page 1, Sec...

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Majority Leader.

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move for the approval of the committee amendments proposed by the Vice Chair of the Committee on Appropriations.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) Hearing none, the said committee amendment is hereby approved.

Majority Leader.

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, may we now proceed to consider the individual ...

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Mr. Speaker, a further amendment is proposed by the Committee for:

SEC. 2. EXTENSION FOR OBLIGATIONS AND DISBURSEMENT OF ALLOTMENT. - THE ALLOTMENTS ISSUED FOR FUND RELEASES THAT ARE COVERED BY APPROPRIATIONS SPECIFIED IN SECTION 1 OF THIS ACT, SHALL BE VALID FOR

OBLIGATION AND DISBURSEMENT UNTIL JUNE 30, 2021: PROVIDED, THAT THE ALLOTMENTS ISSUED FOR THE FUND RELEASES WHICH ARE COVERED BY THE APPROPRIATIONS WITH FUND SOURCES OTHER THAN THE GAA OF 2020 AS ENUMERATED IN SECTION 11 OF THE BAYANIHAN TO RECOVER AS ONE ACT, SHALL BE VALID FOR THE OBLIGATION AND DISBURSEMENT UNTIL JUNE 30, 2021.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian).
Majority Leader.

REP. SUAREZ (D.). I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian).
Majority Leader.

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve the amendment as manifested by the Vice Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

Majority Leader.

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Mr. Speaker, I propose another amendment for:

SEC. 3. VALIDITY OF ALLOTMENT. - THE VALIDITY OF ADVICES OF ALLOTMENT ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT (DBM) FOR FUND RELEASES CHARGED AGAINST SECTION 11 OF THE BAYANIHAN TO RECOVER AS ONE ACT SHALL AUTOMATICALLY BE EXTENDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 2 OF THIS ACT.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian).
Majority Leader.

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve the amendments on Section 3 of House Bill No. 8063.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian).
Is there any objection? (*Silence*) Hearing none, the said committee amendment is hereby approved.

Majority Leader.

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Mr. Speaker, I propose the amendment for:

SEC. 4., and it reads: APPLICABILITY TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS AND GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS. - THE FUND RELEASES TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS AND THE GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, AND THE UTILIZATION THEREOF FOR PROGRAMS, PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES ENUMERATED IN SECTION 10 OF THE BAYANIHAN TO RECOVER AS ONE ACT ARE EXTENDED UNTIL JUNE 30, 2021.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian).
Majority Leader.

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve the amendment, the Committee amendment on Section 4 of House Bill No. 8063.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian).
Is there any objection? (*Silence*) Hearing none, the said amendment on Section 4 is hereby approved.

Majority Leader.

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Mr. Speaker, furthermore, insert the following sections in:

SEC. 5. ALLOTMENT RELEASES FROM THE STANDBY FUND. - RELEASE OF ALLOTMENT COVERED BY THE STANDBY FUND AS PROVIDED IN SECTION 10 OF THE BAYANIHAN TO RECOVER AS ONE ACT SHALL BE EXTENDED UP TO JUNE 30, 2021, SUBJECT TO THE FULFILLMENT OF THE CONDITIONS STIPULATED UNDER THE SAME SECTION OF THE BAYANIHAN TO RECOVER AS ONE ACT: PROVIDED, THAT THE SAID ALLOTMENTS SHALL BE AVAILABLE FOR OBLIGATIONS UNTIL JUNE 30, 2021.

SEC. 6. Mr. Speaker, EXTENSION OF THE AVAILABILITY OF THE UNRELEASED APPROPRIATIONS. - shall - sorry, I correct myself, ALL UNRELEASED APPROPRIATIONS AUTHORIZED UNDER THE BAYANIHAN TO RECOVER AS ONE ACT SHALL BE AVAILABLE FOR RELEASE, OBLIGATIONS AND DISBURSEMENT UNTIL JUNE 30, 2021.

SECT. 7. IMPLEMENTING RULES AND REGULATIONS. - IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE EFFECTIVITY OF THIS ACT, THE DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT SHALL, IN CONSULTATION WITH IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES CONCERNED, FORMULATE THE NECESSARY RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS ACT.

SEC. 8., Mr. Speaker, REPEALING CLAUSE. - ANY PROVISION OF THE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11494, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "BAYANIHAN TO RECOVER AS ONE ACT" AND ANY OTHER LAW, DECREE, EXECUTIVE ORDER, OR RULES AND REGULATIONS CONTRARY TO OR INCONSISTENT WITH THIS ACT ARE HEREBY REPEALED OR MODIFIED ACCORDINGLY.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian).
Majority Leader.

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve the Committee amendment enumerated by the honorable Vice Chair of the Committee on Appropriations.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian).
Is there any objection? (*Silence*) Hearing none, the said committee amendment is hereby approved.

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Mr. Speaker, renumber Section 2 as Section 9, delete the entire sentence and in lieu thereof insert the following:

EFFECTIVITY. - THIS ACT SHALL TAKE EFFECT FIFTEEN (15) DAYS AFTER ITS PUBLICATION IN THE OFFICIAL GAZETTE OR IN A NEWSPAPER OF GENERAL CIRCULATION.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian).
Majority Leader.

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve the committee amendment manifested by our Vice Chair of the Committee on Appropriations.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian).
Is there any objection? (*Silence*) Hearing none, the said committee amendment is hereby approved.

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Mr. Speaker, and to amend the title to read as follows:

AN ACT EXTENDING THE AVAILABILITY OF APPROPRIATIONS UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11494, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "BAYANIHAN TO RECOVER AS ONE ACT."

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian).
Majority Leader.

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve the committee amendment on the title of House Bill No. 8063.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian).
Is there any objection? (*Silence*) Hearing none, the said committee amendment is hereby approved.

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move to approve the list of coauthors of House Bill No. 8063 to be submitted by the Committee on Rules.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, there being no other committee amendment, I move that we now proceed to consider the individual amendments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) Hearing none, the period of individual amendments is hereby opened.

Majority Leader.

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, there being no Member who wishes to introduce individual amendments, I move that we terminate the period of amendments.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) Hearing none, the motion is carried.

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Second Reading on House Bill No. 8063, as amended.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). There is a motion to adopt – to approve House Bill No. 8063. All those in favor, please say *Aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 8063, AS AMENDED, ON SECOND READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Those who are against, please say *Nay*. (*Silence*) The *ayes* have it; House Bill No. 8063, as amended, is approved on Second Reading.

Congratulations, Mr. Sponsor.

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, it is an honor to play a vital role in the passage of the extension of the said Act.

Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Majority Leader.

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 8063 ON THIRD READING

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, considering the message from the President certifying that – pursuant to the provision of Article VI, Section 26 of the 1987 Constitution certifying the necessity of immediate passage, enactment of House Bill No. 8063, I move that we consider on Third Reading House Bill No. 8063 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the Bill and, thereafter, call the roll of Members for nominal voting.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) Hearing none, the Secretary General will read the title of the Bill and, thereafter, call the roll for nominal voting. Secretary General.

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members pursuant to Section 26(2), Article VI of the Constitution.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 8063, entitled: "AN ACT EXTENDING THE AVAILABILITY OF APPROPRIATIONS UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11494, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE 'BAYANIHAN TO RECOVER AS ONE ACT'."

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. 13, dated December 14, 2020.*

REP. BROSAS. Mr. Speaker, my vote is "No," and I would like to explain my vote later.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Mr. Speaker, my vote is "No."

RESULT OF THE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). With 179 Members voting in the affirmative, six against and no abstention, the Chair

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

declares House Bill No. 8063, as amended, as approved on Third Reading.

Congratulations, Mr. Sponsor.

The Honorable Brosas, you may proceed.

REP. BROSAS EXPLAINS HER VOTE

REP. BROSAS. Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, mahirap unawain kung bakit hindi pa rin nakumpleto ang paglalabas ng pondo sa ilalim ng Bayanihan to Recover as One Act o Bayanihan 2 kahit pa litaw na litaw ang mga kagyat na pangangailangan bunsod ng krisis at pandemya. In fact, only a small portion of the total funds to be assembled under Bayanihan 2 would go to aid and relief measures:

P5 bilyon para sa Social Amelioration Program, SAP;

P1 billion for Livelihood Assistance Grants;

P2 billion for CAMP or COVID Adjustment Measures Program; at

P4 billion for TUPAD.

These are miniscule amounts which respective agencies have yet again failed to release within the timeframe given, hence, this proposed extension. Bakit hindi sikapin na ilabas na ang mga pondong ito bago mag-Pasko sa halip na gamitin na namang dahilan ang kapalpakan ng mga ahensiya para itakda ang bagong deadline sa June 30, 2021? Why do we keep on adjusting the fund releases to the incompetency and insensitivity of the Duterte administration? The real score behind this extension is the prolonged availability of funds to bail out big businesses under the guise of credit facilities. Ito ang bumubuo sa malaking bahagi ng P140 billion Bayanihan 2 funds at hindi ang mga programang pang-ayuda. For these reasons, we, in Gabriela Women's Party vote "No" on the proposed extension of availability of funds under Bayanihan 2. Salamat, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Maraming salamat sa Kinatawan po ng GABRIELA Party-List.

Majority Leader. Majority Leader.

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that the approved House Bill No. 8063 be immediately transmitted to the Senate.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) Hearing none, the motion is carried.

RECONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7871 ON SECOND READING

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move to reconsider the approval on Second Reading of House Bill No. 7871, entitled: "AN ACT DECLARING THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES FOR THE VETERANS OF WORLD WAR II (BTVWWII) A PUBLIC OFFICE AND THE FUNDS ENTRUSTED TO IT AS PUBLIC FUNDS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 3518, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS 'AN ACT CREATING THE PHILIPPINE VETERANS BANK AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES'."

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) Hearing none, the motion to reconsider House Bill No. 7871 is hereby approved.

Majority Leader.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. BOLILIA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the session until 3:00 p.m. tomorrow, December 15.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Gatchalian). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) Hearing none, the motion to suspend the session until 3:00 p.m. on December 15 is hereby approved. (*Applause*)

It was 9:49 p.m.

