



SENATE

S. Jt. Res. No. 6

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR ZUBIRI

JOINT RESOLUTION DECLARING JANUARY 17 OF
EVERY YEAR AS JAMES LEONARD TAGLE
GORDON DAY, A SPECIAL NON-WORKING
HOLIDAY IN THE CITY OF OLONGAPO AND THE
SUBIC BAY FREEPORT ZONE IN RECOGNITION
OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS, CONTRIBUTIONS AND
HEROISM OF JAMES LEONARD TAGLE GORDON

WHEREAS, the Philippine Congress has, on several occasions, recognized the achievements of outstanding Filipinos for their valuable service to the government and for serving as exemplary models for the people;

WHEREAS, James Leonard Tagle Gordon, a.k.a. James L. Gordon, was born an American on January 17, 1917 of an American father, John Jacob Gordon, and a Filipina mother, Veronica Tagle. Having an American father, Gordon had the choice of residing in the United States and electing to be an American citizen like his four brothers, but he chose to stay in the Philippines as a Filipino Citizen, and was raised by his mother, the daughter of Jose Tagle, hero of the Battle of Imus in the Philippine Revolution, with strong Filipino values;

WHEREAS, Jose Tagle of Cavite is recognized for his pivotal role in leading a raiding team of militiamen against Civil Guards and friars during the Battle of Imus, and then against a strong Spanish force in Bacoor, Cavite. He was victorious in both instances and won the high regard and respect of President Emilio Aguinaldo. In recognition of his leadership, Aguinaldo appointed Jose Tagle Municipal Mayor of Imus;

WHEREAS, James L. Gordon established himself as an entrepreneur and businessman during the time that Olongapo was a reservation under American control. As an entrepreneur with civic-mindedness, and consistent with his belief in social action and civic work, he was one of the organizers of the Olongapo Civic Action Group that worked on general improvements in the city. He was among those who founded the Olongapo Rotary Club, Olongapo Knights of Columbus, and the Olongapo Businessmen's Association. Further, as a family-oriented man, James L. Gordon and his wife, Amelia Juico Gordon, established an institution that would take care of orphans and abandoned children of Filipino-American parents. Together with their friends, he established the Olongapo Boys Town and Girls Home in 1969;

WHEREAS, as a patriot with an undying commitment to fight for the right of every Filipino to live a dignified life, James L. Gordon led the move to make Olongapo free from U. S. rule. Unable to accept the military regulations that limited the movements of people in Olongapo, he exposed the abuses and harassment suffered by Olongapo residents under U. S. military rule. He was part of the Philippine panel that negotiated with and compelled the U. S. Authorities to relinquish Olongapo to the Philippine Government. Olongapo was turned over to the Philippine Government on December 7, 1959, the same day President Carlos P. Garcia signed the Executive Order making it a Municipality of Zambales;

WHEREAS, imbued with a strong advocacy for a transparent and accountable government, James L. Gordon resigned from the post of Deputy Governor when he saw how Olongapo was marginalized – the government hospital was reduced in category and its equipment was carted off to Zambales. He fought against rampant illegal logging, cigarette smuggling and proliferation of land disputes. He opposed anomalous transactions of newly appointed officials when they tried to lease out the electrical utility for only P5,000.00 a month. He led inquiries when heavy equipment like bulldozers which had been acquired from the U. S. Navy could not be accounted for;

WHEREAS, James L. Gordon answered the call of the people of Olongapo to run for Municipal Mayor, during its first election four years after Olongapo's turnover to the Philippine Government, and won on December 30, 1963;

WHEREAS, as chief executive, James L. Gordon led Olongapo during one of its most trying times. He lobbied in Congress for the passage of a bill to convert the municipality into a city. Amidst strong opposition from the provincial government, but to the triumphant rejoicing of the people of Olongapo, Republic Act No. 4645, the Charter of the City of Olongapo, was signed by President Ferdinand Marcos on June 1, 1966, and was then inaugurated on September 1 of the same year;

WHEREAS, James L. Gordon served for only three years as Mayor but his life was dedicated to quelling crime, specifically illegal logging, and smuggling of firearms, cigarettes and contraband from the military base. He is especially remembered for his fight to block the unconscionable attempt to transfer the public utilities of Olongapo inherited from the Americans for a paltry amount, and for removing a murdering police chief, as part of his crusade against corrupt members of the Philippine Constabulary;

WHEREAS, as an untiring fighter of graft and corruption, he fought well-entrenched politicians against widespread corruption. He won the case, albeit posthumously, returning the electrical system to the Olongapo Government. He exposed the anomalies that bedeviled the new municipal government. Understandably, his crusade earned for him enemies who tried all forms of harassment, including threats of suspension, hand grenade attacks and planned ambushes;

WHEREAS, for removing a murdering police chief and because of his crusade against corrupt members of the Philippine Constabulary, three cowardly assassination attempts were made against his life. On July 4, 1965, the head of the Bahala Na Gang in Olongapo threw a hand grenade at him while he was responding to a fire. On August 4, 1966, several prisoners from the Subic town jail were allowed to escape and lit fires in several establishments in Olongapo in order to lure him out of his residence. They lobbed 3 hand grenades at him and several American firemen were injured during the attempt, which Gordon survived. On November 1, 1966, while the family of Gordon was in the cemetery, their home in Quezon City was mysteriously razed. His family prevented him from subsequently going to the said home as intelligence sources revealed that an ambush was being planned along the zigzag road in Olongapo;

WHEREAS, on February 20, 1967, while addressing the needs of a constituent on the first floor of City Hall, he was gunned down and killed by an escaped inmate of the National Penitentiary bringing inconsolable loss to the people of Olongapo;

WHEREAS, for his invaluable service to uplift the lives of the people of Olongapo through his exemplary leadership providing hope and inspiration to future generations, Mayor James Leonard Tagle Gordon deserves

to be commemorated on his birth centenary on January 17, 2017: Now, therefore, be it

- 1 *Resolved, by the Senate and the House of*
- 2 *Representatives,* To declare January 17 of every year as
- 3 James Leonard Tagle Gordon Day, a special non-working
- 4 holiday in the City of Olongapo and the Subic Bay Freeport
- 5 Zone, in recognition of the achievements, contributions and
- 6 heroism of James Leonard Tagle Gordon.

Adopted,