



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
Senate
Pasay City

Journal

SESSION NO. 29
Tuesday, October 1, 2019

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
FIRST REGULAR SESSION

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CALL TO ORDER

At 4:00 p.m., the Senate President, Hon. Vicente C. Sotto III, called the session to order.

PRAYER

Sen. Franklin M. Drilon led the prayer, to wit:

Almighty Father, we give thanks for all the blessings You have showered upon us. We give all glory and honor to You.

May You continue to bless us with wisdom and fortitude as we fulfill our duties in today's proceedings. Guide us that we may do what is right and just according to Your will.

Lord, we humbly ask Your forgiveness for our shortcomings and weakness of heart. Lead us to a path that only chooses Your holy will so each step will lead us closer to You.

Grant that we may become Your living instruments of peace, justice, and compassion. We trust that through Your unfailing love and divine guidance, we can accomplish anything.

All these we ask in Your Holy Name, Amen.

ROLL CALL

Upon direction of the Senate President, the Secretary of the Senate, Atty. Myra Marie D. Villarica, called the roll, to which the following senators responded:

Angara, S.	Pacquiao, E. M. D.
Binay, M. L. N. S.	Pangilinan, F. N.
Cayetano, P. S.	Pimentel III, A. K.
Dela Rosa, R. B. M.	Poe, G.
Drilon, F. M.	Recto, R. G.
Gatchalian, W.	Revilla Jr., R. B.
Go, C. L. T.	Sotto III, V. C.
Gordon, R. J.	Tolentino, F. T. N.
Hontiveros, R.	Villanueva, J.
Lacson, P. M.	Villar, C. A.
Lapid, M. L. M.	Zubiri, J. M. F.
Marcos, I. R.	

With 23 senators present, the Chair declared the presence of a quorum.

Senator De Lima was unable to attend the session as she was under detention.

APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body dispensed with the reading of the Journal of Session No. 28 (September 30, 2019) and considered it approved.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE PRESENCE OF GUESTS

At this juncture, Senator Zubiri acknowledged the presence in the gallery of the following guests:

- Delegates of the 12th Australian Political Exchange Council, headed by Trevor Evans MP of the Parliament of Australia, and Mr. Jon Krause of the Queensland Parliament of Australia;
- Mayor Ben-Sayeed M. Muksan and Councilor Herjan Sahial Hasinon of Siasi, Sulu Province;
- Vice Mayor Symond O. Caguiat of the Municipality of Santa Josefa, Agusan del Sur;
- Vice Mayor Francis Eric E. Recinto and the Sangguniang Bayan members of the Municipality of Lambayong, Sultan Kudarat; and
- Alliance of Concerned Teachers, the Manila Public School Teachers Association, and the Quezon City Public School Teachers Association.

Senate President Sotto welcomed the guests to the Senate.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

The Secretary of the Senate read the following matters and the Chair made the corresponding referrals:

BILLS ON FIRST READING

Senate Bill No. 1078, entitled

AN ACT ACCELERATING THE COUNTRY'S TOTAL ELECTRIFICATION OF HOUSEHOLDS, PROVIDING FOR A RELIABLE AND EFFICIENT SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEM TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS, ALLOCATING FOR THE PURPOSE THE PROCEEDS FROM THE NET NATIONAL GOVERNMENT SHARE FROM THE MALAMPAYA NATURAL GAS PROJECT AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Recto

To the Committees on Energy; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1079, entitled

AN ACT FURTHER FACILITATING THE ACQUISITION OF UNTITLED LANDS FOR PUBLIC USE, AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE SECTIONS 5 AND 6 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10752, ENTITLED "AN ACT FACILITATING THE ACQUISITION OF RIGHT-OF-WAY SITE OR LOCATION FOR NATIONAL GOVERNMENT INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS"

Introduced by Senator Recto

To the Committees on Public Works; and Justice and Human Rights

Senate Bill No. 1080, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS (PPP), CREATING THE PPP CENTER, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Recto

To the Committees on Public Works; Ways and Means; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1081, entitled

AN ACT PRESCRIBING A JUST AND HUMANE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE RESETTLEMENT OF UNDER-PRIVILEGED AND HOMELESS CITIZENS, PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION THEREOF, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Hontiveros

To the Committees on Urban Planning, Housing and Resettlement; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1082, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE NATIONAL COASTAL GREENBELT ACTION PLAN, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSE

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Introduced by Senator Binay

To the Committees on Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change; and Finance

RESOLUTIONS

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 151, entitled

RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE FULL SUPPORT OF THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES IN THE OBSERVANCE OF THE NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES MONTH

Introduced by Senator Binay

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 152, entitled

RESOLUTION URGING THE EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT TO AUTHORIZE AND IMPLEMENT EMERGENCY MEASURES AND ADDITIONAL SAFETY NETS TO AMELIORATE THE ECONOMIC SHOCK OF FILIPINO RICE FARMERS IN LIGHT OF THE SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION OF PALAY PRICES

Introduced by Senator Hontiveros

To the Committees on Agriculture, Food and Agrarian Reform; Economic Affairs; and Finance

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 153, entitled

A RESOLUTION URGING THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON AGRARIAN REFORM AND SOCIAL JUSTICE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE DISMAL RATE OF LAND DISTRIBUTION BY THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM (DAR) RESULTING IN LOST INCOME FOR FARMER-BENEFICIARIES AND WASTAGE OF GOVERNMENT FUNDS

Introduced by Senator Hontiveros

To the Committees on Agriculture, Food and Agrarian Reform; Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development; and Finance

COMMUNICATIONS

Letters from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, transmitting to the Senate copies of the following certified and authenticated BSP issuances, in compliance with Section 15 (a) of Republic Act No. 7653 (The New Central Bank Act):

Circular Letter Nos. CL-2019-066 and 67, dated 12 and 17 September 2019; and

Circular No. 1050 dated 18 September 2019.

To the Committee on Banks, Financial Institutions and Currencies

Letters from the Office of the President of the Philippines, transmitting to the Senate two (2) original copies of the following Republic Acts which were signed by President Rodrigo Roa Duterte:

Republic Act No. 11442, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING FEBRUARY 3 OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL WORKING HOLIDAY IN THE CITY OF BIÑAN, PROVINCE OF LAGUNA, TO BE KNOWN AS "BIÑAN LIBERATION DAY";

Republic Act No. 11443, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING JANUARY 23 OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL WORKING HOLIDAY IN THE PROVINCE OF BULACAN IN COMMEMORATION OF THE INAUGURATION OF THE PHILIPPINE REPUBLIC;

Republic Act No. 11444, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING JULY 4 OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL WORKING HOLIDAY IN THE ENTIRE PROVINCE OF BOHOL, TO BE KNOWN AS "FRANCISCO DAGOHOY DAY" IN HONOR OF FRANCISCO DAGOHOY, A NATIVE OF BOHOL AND LEADER

proposed

OF THE LONGEST PHILIPPINE REVOLT ON RECORD THAT LASTED FOR EIGHTY-FIVE (85) YEARS DURING THE SPANISH ERA;

Republic Act No. 11445, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9090, OR AN ACT DECLARING FEBRUARY FIRST OF EVERY YEAR AS "JOSE MARIA C. PANGANIBAN DAY" AND A SPECIAL WORKING PUBLIC HOLIDAY IN THE PROVINCE OF CAMARINES NORTE;

Republic Act No. 11446, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING DECEMBER 27 OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL WORKING HOLIDAY IN THE CITY OF BAYBAY, PROVINCE OF LEYTE, IN CELEBRATION OF ITS "BINAY-BAYON FESTIVAL";

Republic Act No. 11447, entitled

AN ACT RENEWING FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO AUDIO-VISUAL COMMUNICATORS, INC. UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8124. ENTITLED "AN ACT GRANTING THE AUDIOVISUAL COMMUNICATORS, INC., A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCASTING STATIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES";

Republic Act No. 11448, entitled

AN ACT EXPANDING ACCESS TO EDUCATIONAL SERVICES THROUGH THE ESTABLISHMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF TRANSNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

Republic Act No. 11449, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR ADDITIONAL PROHIBITIONS TO AND INCREASING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS

OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8484, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "ACCESS DEVICES REGULATION ACT OF 1998";

Republic Act No. 11450, entitled

AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY IN THE CITY OF DASMARINAS, PROVINCE OF CAVITE TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGAY VICTORIA REYES;

Republic Act No. 11458, entitled

AN ACT EXPANDING THE COVERAGE OF EXEMPTIONS FROM REVEALING THE SOURCE OF PUBLISHED NEWS OR INFORMATION OBTAINED IN CONFIDENCE BY INCLUDING JOURNALISTS FROM BROADCAST, AND NEWS AGENCIES AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 1 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 53, AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 1477;

Republic Act No. 11459, entitled

AN ACT CREATING THE POSITIONS FOR JUDGES-AT-LARGE, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE BATAS PAMBANSA BILANG 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980," AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

To the Archives

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Committee Report No. 9, prepared and submitted jointly by the Committees on National Defense and Security, Peace, Unification and Reconciliation; and Finance, on Senate Bill No. 1083, with Senators Sotto III, Lacson, and Marcos as authors thereof, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9372, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "AN ACT TO SECURE THE STATE AND PROTECT OUR PEOPLE FROM TERRORISM,"

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recommending its approval in substitution of Senate Bill Nos. 6, 21, and 630.

Sponsor: Senator Lacson

To the Calendar for Ordinary Business

Committee Report No. 10, submitted jointly by the Committees on Public Order and Dangerous Drugs; and National Defense and Security, Peace, Unification and Reconciliation, on Proposed Senate Resolution No. 38, introduced by Senator Dela Rosa, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ORDER AND DANGEROUS DRUGS AND NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENSE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON MISSING MINORS WHO ARE ALLEGEDLY RECRUITED BY LEFTIST GROUPS AS THEIR MEMBERS AND FIGHTERS TO THE DETRIMENT OF THE WELFARE OF SAID MINORS WITH THE END IN VIEW OF RECOMMENDING MEASURES THAT WILL ENSURE PEACE AND PROMOTE THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN,

recommending the adoption of the recommendations and their immediate implementation.

Sponsor: Senator Dela Rosa

To the Calendar for Ordinary Business

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSSINESS

**MESSAGE FROM THE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Letter from the House of Representatives, informing the Senate that on 20 September 2019, the House of Representatives passed House Bill No. 4228, entitled

AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE OPERATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES FROM JANUARY ONE TO DECEMBER THIRTY-ONE, TWO

THOUSAND AND TWENTY, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES,

in which it requested the concurrence of the Senate.

To the Committee on Finance

BILLS ON FIRST READING

Senate Bill No. 1084, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE TAX REGIME OF ONE CORPORATIONS, AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE SECTION 22(B) OF THE NATIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1997, AS AMENDED

Introduced by Senator Recto

To the Committee on Ways and Means

Senate Bill No. 1085, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING FEBRUARY 10 OF EVERY YEAR AS THE "NATIONAL ANTIHAZING DAY" IN COMMEMORATION OF ALL THE VICTIMS OF HAZING IN THE PHILIPPINES

Introduced by Senator Zubiri

To the Committee on Higher, Technical and Vocational Education

RESOLUTIONS

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 154, entitled

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ALL REGULAR STANDING COMMITTEES, OVERSIGHT COMMITTEES AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES OF THE SENATE TO CONDUCT HEARINGS, MEETINGS AND CONSULTATIONS DURING EVERY RECESS OF THE SENATE TO HAVE CONTINUITY IN THE PROCESS OF PASSING PENDING PROPOSED LEGISLATION AND TO CONDUCT INVESTIGATIONS ON ISSUES OF NATIONAL INTERESTS TO AID IN CRAFTING RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Introduced by Senator Zubiri

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 155, entitled

RESOLUTION CELEBRATING WORLD TEACHERS' DAY ON 5 OCTOBER 2019 AND HONORING AND COMMENDING ALL TEACHERS FOR THEIR HARD WORK AND INVALUABLE CONTRIBUTION TO NURTURING THE MINDS OF FILIPINOS OF ALL GENERATIONS

Introduced by Senator Zubiri

To the Committee on Rules

COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee Report No. 11, prepared and submitted jointly by the Committees on Agriculture, Food and Agrarian Reform; Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development; and Finance, on Senate Joint Resolution No. 8, with Senators Marcos, Villar, Zubiri, Pangilinan, De Lima and Angara as authors thereof, entitled

JOINT RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT (DSWD), DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT (DILG), DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE (DND), DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (DOTr), DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES (DENR), AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS, IN COORDINATION WITH THE NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY (NFA) AND THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (DA), TO DIRECTLY PURCHASE PALAY FROM THE LOCAL FARMERS FOR THE RICE SUBSIDY PROGRAM,

recommending its approval in substitution of Senate Joint Resolution Nos. 4 and 5, taking into consideration Proposed Senate Resolution No. 150.

Sponsor: Senator Villar

To the Calendar for Ordinary Business

PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 142

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body considered Proposed Senate Resolution No. 142, entitled

RESOLUTION HONORING AND COMMENDING THE FILIPINO TEACHERS FOR THEIR HARD WORK AND COMMITMENT TO SHAPING THE LEARNERS OF ALL GENERATIONS,

taking into consideration Proposed Senate Resolution Nos. 149 and 155.

With the permission of the Body, only the title of the resolution was read without prejudice to the insertion of its text into the Record of the Senate.

**SPONSORSHIP SPEECH
OF SENATOR REVILLA**

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the sponsorship speech of Senator Revilla on Proposed Senate Resolution No. 142 was considered read into the Journal and Record of the Senate.

The following is the full text of Senator Revilla's sponsorship speech:

It has been repeatedly and consistently emphasized that teaching as a profession and as a vocation is an admirable feat. As products of our teachers' dedication and commitment to sharing their knowledge and skills, we will repeatedly and consistently appreciate all their efforts and love as our second parents.

As we celebrate the National Teachers' Month from September 5 to October 5, and the National Teachers' Day on October 5, let us not miss the opportunity to express our special gratitude to them who honed us into what we are today.

Bilang mga mag-aaral, kasama natin sila araw-araw sa loob ng sampung buwan sa isang taon. Madalas hindi natin napapansin ang kanilang sakripisyo, hindi lamang patungkol sa ating mga aralin kundi pati sa ating pangkalahatang kapakanan. Ang katangi-



tanging pagdiriwang na ito ang pagkakataon nating ipadama ang ating respeto, paghanga, pasasalamat at pagmamahal sa ating mga guro.

As the chairman of the Committee on Civil Service, Government Reorganization and Professional Regulation, I have heard the pleas of the public school teachers for higher pay. This has been their appeal for years now. But while there are still matters to be resolved, they remain steadfast in their profession and unceasingly nurture our children's minds and hearts.

On this special occasion, I urge my colleagues to support the adoption of Proposed Senate Resolution No. 142, "Honoring and Commending the Filipino Teachers for their Hard Work and Commitment to Shaping the Learners of all Generations."

Happy Teachers' Month and Happy Teachers' Day sa lahat ng ating minamahal na mga guro!

COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR GATCHALIAN

Senator Zubiri manifested that Senator Gatchalian would submit his cosponsorship speech on the measure for insertion into the Journal and Record of the Senate.

Following is the full text of Senator Gatchalian's cosponsorship speech:

The great Albert Einstein once said, "It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge."

Indeed, teaching is arguably the noblest of professions. Aside from our parents, it is our teachers who molded us into who we are today. Our teachers have taught us to become inquiring, disciplined, and critical minds, and none of us has gained recognition or prestige without in some ways acknowledging the teacher or teachers who helped mold or influence our work. What and where I am today – all that I have achieved – I have done so because of the education I was fortunate enough to receive.

Every October, we honor all our teachers who teach, not because it is their job to do so, but because they value and love their profession. And I am proud to say that Filipino teachers are some of the best teachers in the world.

Kamakailan nga lamang ay naging karanigan kong maging pinuno ng mga hurado

para sa 2019 Metrobank Outstanding Filipinos. At doon ay narinig ko nang direktso ang mga kwento ng mga ulirang guro natin. Sa katunayan ay nahirapan nga po kami nang husto na mamili ng mga tatanggap ng parangal dahil talaga namang magagaling at mahuhusay ang lahat ng mga nominadong guro.

Among those we chose as Outstanding Teachers is Western Visayas' Paragon of Inclusive Education, Dr. Dorothy S. Tarol. She began to progressively lose her hearing at the age of 35. Dr. Tarol did not give up on herself, or her profession but instead applied the "principles-based resilience" that she lives by and shifted her career to help people who had the same condition she had. She eventually became a champion for special education.

Then there is Dr. Cristina Cristobal, a history teacher at the main campus of the Philippine Science High School. Her out-of-the-box thinking led her to create a new approach to teaching history, where students are provided opportunities to analyze documents, review data, and construct historical narratives firsthand instead of being forced to memorize facts and figures from textbooks.

Isa rin po sa pinagpipitagang mga awardee ang Propesor ng Kasaysayan na si Dr. Ricardo Jose ng UP Diliman, na tanyag sa kanyang kaalaman sa Pilipinas noong panahon ng World War II. Sikat ang kanyang klase sa mga estudyante dahil sa mga pambihirang historical artifacts na kanyang pinapakita sa kanyang mga lecture. At dalawang beses na rin siyang naparangalan bilang Natatanging Guro ng UP College of Social Sciences and Philosophy Student Council.

Ang pang-apat at panghuli sa mga gurong pinarangalan ng Metrobank ngayong taon ay si Dr. Eva Marie Cutiongco-De La Paz ng UP College of Medicine na siyang nangunguna naman sa larangan ng clinical genetics at genomic medicine dito sa ating bansa. She helped establish a Clinical Genetics Fellowship Program — the first and only one of its kind of teaching and training in the subspecialty of Genetics in the country. Before this program, Dr. Cutiongco-De La Paz was only one of two geneticists serving the entire Filipino population. Thanks to her dedication to medical education, there are now 16 geneticists serving 106 million Filipinos.

These are just some of the outstanding Filipino teachers we have. Thousands more who

not

are just as dedicated and exceptional are out there, unnamed, but deserving of our praise just the same.

Admittedly, teaching, especially here in the Philippines, is sometimes no walk in the park. But I am heartened, because despite the challenges our teachers face every day, their passion to impart knowledge and wisdom to our youth has never wavered.

Of course, we in government want to honor our teachers not only by recognizing their successes and achievements, but also by giving them the support they need for them to be able to realize their potential. And I would like to end my speech by stating that pending in both Houses of Congress are bills that would make significant impact in improving the overall quality of life of our teachers, including proposed measures to increase their salaries and raise and institutionalize their teaching supplies allowances. I urge our colleagues here in the Senate and our peers in the Lower House to pass these measures at the soonest possible time.

COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR VILLANUEVA

Senator Villanueva stated that being a product of two public school teachers—Brother Eddie and Sister Dory—it was an honor for him to cosponsor Proposed Senate Resolution Nos. 142 and 149 honoring and commending Filipino teachers for their hard work and commitment to shaping the learners of all generations.

Following is the full text of Senator Villanueva's cosponsorship speech:

Teaching is a very noble profession. It is not surprising to know that we have more than a million Filipino teachers in this country.

Earlier, during the committee hearing on Higher Education and Technical and Vocational Education (TVET), we found out that more than 600,000 college students are enrolled in teacher-education institutions. This number represents 20 percent of the 3.2 million students in our colleges and universities.

Napakaraming mga kabataang Pilipino na gustong maging guro. Patunay ito na maraming kabataan ang handang mag-alay ng sarili para sa bayan. Maraming education students na akong nakaasap at palagi ko silang tina-tanong, "Bakit at anong dahilan kung paano kayo naudyukan na maging isang guro?" Ang

palagi nilang tugon, "Para sa bata sa susunod na henerasyon at para sa ating bayan."

Until now, the entry salary of a public school teacher is no more than P20,754 a month. Just last week, I met Ma'am Aileen Valera, a teacher from Sauyo National High School in Tandang Sora, Quezon City. I am not very sure if Sauyo National High School is located in one of the poorest areas of Quezon City. In fact, most of Ma'am Valera's students live in squatter areas within the vicinity of the school. *Ang sabi po niya sa akin*, and speaking on behalf of junior and senior public school teachers: "Joel, we do a million things. *Ang aming bakasyon ay ginugugol sa paggawa ng lesson plans, research or attending seminars.* We face 200 or more students a day. Our six hours in school is work intensive. With each hour of face-to-face encounter with our classes, more than one and a half hours would be spent in preparation. Our moral responsibility extends to the parents of our students since we often advise, correct or coax them towards their children's welfare. We mediate in family problems. Problems we encounter in the public school system do make us incredulous."

When I heard Ma'am Valera's story, I understand all the more the plight of our teachers, especially in the public schools.

Today, we honor and commend our teachers' contribution to nation-building but our "thank you" is not enough. We have the moral obligation to make our teachers' lives a little bit easier, secure and stable. In this regard, we filed Senate Bill No. 715, lowering the optional retirement age of our public school teachers from 60 to 55. We also filed Senate Bill No. 152, giving them additional benefit such as grocery, transportation and medical allowance. *Ito ay dagdag na tulong para sa napakalaking gampanin at sakripisyo ng ating mga minamahal na guro.* Let us continue to invest in our teachers who mold the future generations of our people.

Muli, Happy National Teachers' Month at matagumpay at mabuhay ang gurong Pilipino!

MANIFESTATION OF SENATE PRESIDENT SOTTO

At this juncture, Senate President Sotto called the attention of the Chair of the Committee on Basic Education, Arts and Culture, to the bill that he filed exempting public school teachers from the payment of income taxes. He hoped that it may be scheduled for hearing by the Committee.

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COSPONSORSHIP REMARKS OF SENATOR ZUBIRI

Preliminarily, Senator Zubiri showed the pin he was wearing on his coat that said, "Salary Increase Now!" as he called the attention of the Chair of the Senate Committee on Finance to the bill that he filed increasing the salaries of public school teachers.

Following is the full text of Senator Zubiri's cosponsorship speech:

This October 5, the National Teachers' Month will be coming to a close. But although this month of appreciation will end, the work of a teacher never will. Consider the demands on a teacher: for hours on end, they have to access immense reserves of energy in order to engage huge groups of students, and then they are obliged to devote most of their free time to crafting lesson plans, checking papers, preparing for parent-teacher reports, attending seminars, and supervising students' extracurricular activities, among others. Not to mention, teachers have to constantly see to the upkeeping of their own education, to remain ahead of the curve and ensure that their curricula and their teaching methods are up-to-date in this increasingly technological world.

Apart from all of that, teachers have to expend great amounts of emotional labor in order to fulfill the unwritten duty of being second parents to tens, even hundreds of students on a daily basis. They have to be sensitive to the individual needs of their students, while keeping the group's learning pace moving. They may even have to help their students with problems that stem from turbulent home lives and bleed into their academic performance.

This National Teachers' Month is a recognition of all that work, inside and outside the classroom. But a month is hardly enough recognition, given how the teaching profession demands full devotion. One does not just work as a teacher—one is a teacher, day in and day out.

As such, before this month of appreciation comes to an end, I would like to reaffirm our commitment to our teachers and promise that we will work hard to institutionalize the pay increase of our basic education teachers this 18th Congress. In this way, even long after the National Teachers' Month is over, we can continue to thank our teachers by giving them the compensation that they rightfully deserve.

Maraming salamat, at mabuhay ang ating mga guro!

COSPONSORS/COAUTHORS

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, all Members were made cosponsors/coauthors of Proposed Senate Resolution No. 142.

ADOPTION OF PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 142

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body adopted Proposed Senate Resolution No. 142, taking into consideration Proposed Senate Resolution Nos. 149 and 155, subject to style.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, the session was suspended.

It was 4:24 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:24 p.m., the session was resumed.

SPECIAL ORDER

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body approved the transfer of Committee Report No. 11 on Senate Joint Resolution No. 8 from the Calendar for Ordinary Business to the Calendar for Special Orders.

COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 11 ON SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 8

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body considered, on Second Reading, Senate Joint Resolution No. 8 (Committee Report No. 11), entitled

JOINT RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WEL-
FARE AND DEVELOPMENT (DSWD),
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT (DILG),
DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL
DEFENSE (DND), DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION (DOTr), DEPART-

MENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES (DENR), AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS, IN COORDINATION WITH THE NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY (NFA) AND THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (DA), TO DIRECTLY PURCHASE PALAY FROM THE LOCAL FARMERS FOR THE RICE SUBSIDY PROGRAM.

Pursuant to Section 67, Rule XXIII of the Rules of the Senate, with the permission of the Body, upon motion of Senator Zubiri, only the title of the bill was read without prejudice to the insertion of its full text into the Record of the Senate.

Thereupon, the Chair recognized Senator Villar, sponsor of the measure.

SPONSORSHIP REMARKS OF SENATOR VILLAR

Senator Villar, chair of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Food, urged the Body to approve the Joint Resolution directing the Department of Social Welfare and Development and other departments of the government, as well as the local government units, in coordination with the National Food Authority and the Department of Agriculture, to directly purchase palay from the local farmers for their rice subsidy program.

She said that the Rice Tariffication Law which liberalized the importation of rice in the country, has resulted in some dislocation among local farmers, and the proposed resolution seeks to help the local farmers adjust to the rice tariffication model, by asking the government departments, especially the DSWD and the LGUs, to purchase rice directly from the local farmers so that they would have a ready market available for their produce since the harvest season in the country starts in October.

She expressed hope that the resolution would be approved in time for the harvest season.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, the session was suspended.

It was 4:28 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:29 p.m., the session was resumed.

SPONSORSHIP REMARKS OF SENATOR MARCOS

Senator Marcos premised her sponsorship remarks with a quotation from Francisco Balagtas, the great Filipino Laureate, to wit: "*Kung minsan ang kabiguan ang nagtutulak sa isang tao upang magsikap at magkamit ng tagumpay.*" She expressed hope that the losses incurred by the local farmers would not bring them to ruin, but rather drive each one to persevere until they finally become successful. She said that the proposal was but a small way to help the Filipino rice farmers who are in need of assistance.

COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR GO

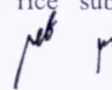
Senator Go delivered his cosponsorship speech, as follows:

Sa pagdinig kaninang umaga ng Committee on Agriculture, Food and Agrarian Reform, kasama ang Committee on Finance, binalangkas ang isang joint resolution na naglalayong gamitin ang rice subsidy ng 4Ps beneficiaries sa pagbili ng palay mula sa ating mga local farmers. Magtutulongan ang DWSD at ang Department of Agriculture sa paggamit ng pondong ito na nagkakahalaga ng P600 per month bawat beneficiary.

Sa ngayon, marami pa ring mga magsasaka ang naghihirap at below minimum wage ang kinikita dahil sa pagdagsa ng murang bigas mula sa ibang bansa. Reports state that 200,000 farmers have stopped working on food production and 4,000 rice mills have ceased operations. Kaya sinusuportahan ko ang joint resolution. Ito ay agarang tugon sa pangangailangan ng ating mga magsasaka.

Nilapitan po ako nina Sen. Imee Marcos at Sen. Cynthia Villar upang magsilbing tulay patungo kay President Rodrigo Duterte. Hangad nilang ma-certify as urgent ng Pangulo ang joint resolution na ito. Hinihiling ko rin po ang aksyong ito sa ating Pangulo, at nangako siyang gagawin niya ito kapag naisumite na sa kaniya ang committee report.

Maalala ko po, noong 2016, pinagpatuloy niya itong 4Ps Program na ito at dinagdagan niya po ng cash bilang rice subsidy. So,



ngayon, bilang tulong po sa ating mga farmers, imbes na cash ang ibibigay sa 4Ps beneficiaries, gagawin na pong in a form of rice. So, doble po ito. Makakatulong sa ating farmers at the same time sa mga 4Ps beneficiaries.

Makakaasa ang mga magsasaka na lagi akong magiging kaakibat nila. If the principal author will allow me, I would like to be a cosponsor of the joint resolution.

COSPONSORSHIP REMARKS OF SENATOR ZUBIRI

Senator Zubiri recalled that during the past hearings involving the DSWD, DA and DAR, he questioned the rationale behind giving cash to the beneficiaries of the Conditional Cash Transfer program considering that it was being used to satisfy vices and spent for unproductive activities instead of being used for more important things. He expressed support for the initiative since government would be providing food and helping farmers at the same time.

He also believed that the Food for School Program, which was passed into law in the 17th Congress but has not been implemented, would have been be very beneficial to the local farmers because under the law, all their produce should be purchased by the schools in their own communities for their school feeding program. He said that it was not only an anti-poverty measure but also a way to fight malnutrition because elementary school children, especially those from Grades I to V, are at a most critical period in their lives and need to be well-nourished to be physically and mentally healthy.

Senator Zubiri hoped that the DSWD, DA and DBM would come up with a formula on how the recipients could receive their rice from the licensed NFA rice dealers, similar to how the cash subsidy was being distributed to the 4Ps beneficiaries.

He expressed hope that the measure would gain support from the Chamber as it would help solve the problem of poverty besetting the Filipino farmers due to lack of market for their produce.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR DRILON

Preliminarily, Senator Drilon read the “Resolved” clause of the joint resolution, to wit:

RESOLVED BY THE SENATE, THE HOUSE

OF REPRESENTATIVES, VOTING SEPARATELY, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, To direct the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of National Defense (DND), Department of Transportation (DOTr), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and the Local Government Units (LGUs), in coordination with the National Food Authority (NFA) and the Department of Agriculture (DA), to directly purchase *palay* from the local farmers for the Rice Subsidy Program

He also noted that one of the WHEREAS clauses cited the balance of P6.97 billion which remained undisbursed under the Rice Subsidy Program.

Asked what the joint resolution sought to achieve, Senator Villar said that in lieu of giving cash to the CCT beneficiaries, the resolution mandates the DSWD, for the remainder of the year, to use the cash-for-rice subsidy (P600.00 for 20 kilos of rice) to buy rice from the NFA; the DSWD would also provide the NFA with the list of the CCT beneficiaries who would be collecting their rice subsidy from the NFA warehouse or from NFA rice retailers in their locality. She said that instead of the P600 cash subsidy, the DSWD would give the beneficiaries the equivalent 20 kilos of rice at P30 per kilo.

Asked by Senator Drilon why the beneficiaries would receive rice instead of cash, Senator Villar explained that local farmers have been complaining that they do not have enough market for their rice ever since the enactment of the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL) which liberalized the importation of rice to the Philippines. She said that the law was in compliance with the country’s agreement with the WTO that after 22 years, the country has to liberalize the importation of rice and to stop its quantitative restrictions on rice imports.

To the observation that the local farmers are also themselves beneficiaries of the 4Ps program, Senator Villar replied that some of them could be 4Ps beneficiaries, especially the poor ones like the coconut farmers. She believed that the DSWD would have a list and would only give rice to qualified beneficiaries.

Senator Drilon opined that if the farmers were part of the program, they might as well receive cash instead of rice so that the government would not have to go to the process of buying and distributing rice.

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Senator Villar stated that the actual budget of the DSWD for 2019 is P31 billion, of which only P6 billion remained and which could be spent in the three months left. She believed that it would be a better practice to give food and not cash as both the CCT beneficiaries and the farmers would gain – food is given to nourish beneficiaries, while farmers have a market for their produce.

Senator Drilon noted that the resolutive statement of the measure directs not only DSWD but also the DILG, DND, DOTr, DENR and the LGUs to purchase rice from local farmers even when the agencies mentioned do not have a budget for it.

Senator Villar disagreed, pointing out that these agencies have a budget for 20 kilos of rice a month as part of their compensation package for their employees; while local government units buy rice for their detention facilities, hospitals, feeding programs, calamity assistance and food-for-work program. She added that the DSWD has a definite budget for the 4Ps program.

Senator Drilon clarified that he was not objecting to the concept, as he thought that the original intent was only for the DSWD's 4Ps program. However, he expressed concern that without consultation, the entire rice program of the different agencies could be affected. Senator Villar stated that during the hearing earlier that day, the agencies expressed their support for the program as they too would want to help the farmers.

But Senator Drilon believed that help must be extended in the most efficient manner, as he raised the issue on the ability of the NFA to distribute the rice rather than distribute the cash itself since the DSWD has long been engaged in the 4Ps program, distributing cash with the assistance of other agencies and even pawnshops in the different localities. He suggested enrolling the farmers in a special program and to come out with a special list as basis in the distribution of cash directly to them.

Senator Villar explained that the rice subsidy instead of cash would only be temporary to help the farmers adjust to the Rice Tariffication Law. She predicted that after two years, the Rice Competitive Enhancement Fund would help the local farmers become competitive.

Senator Drilon stated that there was no disagreement on the need to subsidize the farmers and assist

them to become competitive. What he was driving at, he clarified, was that the more efficient way of assisting the local farmers is to give them cash directly as long as they are farmer beneficiaries so listed in a special list from whom the palay would have supposedly been purchased. In reply, Senator Villar opined that Senator Drilon's proposal could be adopted in 2020 because by that time there would be more in excess of P10 billion that would be realized from the Rice Tariffication Law. She admitted that personally, she never liked the idea of giving money, as she would rather give people an opportunity to have a permanent livelihood and to become better citizens.

As to the rice equivalent of P600, Senator Villar stated that it is 20 kilos of rice each month at P30 per kilo or a total of 60 kilos until the end of the year. She clarified that the program would be implemented only in seven regions where there is an excess of rice, namely, Regions I, II, III, IV-B, VI, IX and Region XII. She said that if the program proved successful, a specific budget for the purpose could be included in the 2020 GAA for its continuity. She clarified that the program would run for three months only in the regions that she earlier mentioned. She said that the program would be reviewed in January 2020.

Senator Drilon said that he would no longer interpose any objection on the understanding that the program would only for three months. However, he notified the Body that he would raise again his concerns when they deliberate on the proposed national budget for 2020, particularly on the logistical expense which would reduce the benefits because for every P100 of the 4Ps program budget, P10 would go to overhead logistical expense.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR RECTO

At the outset, Senator Recto asked if the purpose of the proposed measure is to buy rice from the local farmers for the rice subsidy program using the budget allocated to several departments of government. Senator Villar replied in the affirmative, adding that they have already spent about two-thirds of their budget, or about P3 billion already. Senator Recto noted that based on earlier interpellations, the biggest allocation came from the DSWD amounting to P6 billion, while the total budget for its rice subsidy given in the form of cash is P31 billion a year and that the administrative cost to implement the program was P3 billion.

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Asked how many beneficiaries were there in the program administered by the DSWD, Senator Villar replied that there were 4.4 million families.

Asked if the total monthly amount in conditional cash transfer (CCT) that each beneficiary gets is P3,000, Senator Villar replied that the monthly cash assistance for education is P1,500 while the rice subsidy is P600. She affirmed that the rice subsidy is only 20% of the total CCT.

Senator Recto then asked whether the 4.4 million beneficiaries knew that 20% would be deducted from their total CCT for the remainder of the year as a result of the rice subsidy program envisioned in the resolution. He pointed out that the CCT has always been given in cash, and that a big portion of the P3,000 monthly cash assistance is spent for food, including rice, and other household needs.

Likewise, Senator Recto noted that the cash assistance is usually given a quarter late, and he feared that the rice subsidy could be much delayed too. Senator Villar gave assurance that she would monitor the NFA to ensure the program's success.

As to the rationale for the inclusion of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the Department of National Defense (DND) in the rice subsidy program, Senator Villar replied that the DILG has rice subsidy for the uniformed personnel of the Bureau of Fire Protection, Bureau of Jail Management and Penology and the Philippine National Police with a budget of P1.7 billion for 2019; while the DND has the major commands — the Philippine Army, Philippine Air Force, Philippine Navy — and the General Headquarters.

Asked if the 200,000 PNP personnel would be given 20 kilos of rice per month, Senator Villar replied that the rice could be given once only because the budget is for 2019 only.

Senator Recto stated that the DBM would not release the allocation simultaneously at the start of the year because their allocations depend on the collections of the BIR and the Bureau of Customs. He pointed out that the budget is merely an authority to spend, which does not mean that cash is readily available. Senator Villar replied that since it would be for the last three months of the year, the DBM would give the departments' respective remaining budgets which are part of Personal Services (PS),

even if it is for the purchase of rice. She added that the program would help the local farmers adjust to the effects of the Rice Tariffication Law.

Senator Recto then suggested releasing the P10 billion RCEF from the Unprogrammed Funds of the 2019 budget and distributing it to the farmers in cash. Senator Villar clarified that the program would only be for the last three months of the year.

Asked on the number of personnel in the Department of Transportation (DOTr), Senator Villar replied that the data was not yet available.

As regards the Local Government Units (LGUs) included in the listing, Senator Villar said that there are presently already 30 provincial governors who agreed to buy rice from the rice farmers, and that the Landbank has given them a credit window of 2% per month to finance their purchase of local rice.

Asked if all the departments in the list would be buying rice from the NFA, Senator Villar replied that only the local government units would buy rice directly because they know the landscape. However, Senator Recto said that based on the title of the resolution, there was no distinction as far as the LGUs are concerned. Senator Villar said that the DSWD would specifically buy rice from the NFA. She said that a distinction could be made later to give more freedom to the other departments, except the DSWD.

Senator Recto noted that as envisioned in the resolution, the DBM would release the money to the departments involved, which would then enter into a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the NFA. Senator Villar believed that each department could do it by themselves since they know the local landscape, except the DSWD which should enter into an agreement with the NFA.

As regards the status of the NFA's stocks of rice and how much would be utilized, Senator Villar replied that the NFA's total stock at present is 426,000 metric tons, of which 50% or 213,000 metric tons, are imported, and the other half, or 213,000 metric, is local produce. She said that P6 billion would be needed so that when divided by P30 per kilo, there would be 200,000 kilos available which is relatively small but which could still help the local farmers.

Senator Recto suggested sourcing the P10 billion from the Unprogrammed Funds which, for the current

year, may amount to roughly a hundred billion, which would be increased to P200 billion next year.

But Senator Villar believed that they could talk about the Unprogrammed Funds in the deliberation of next year's budget because she was told that if the government could not achieve its revenue target for the year, it could not release the unprogrammed funds. Senator Recto said that it all depends on the revenue source since unprogrammed funds are spent in so many ways every year. He maintained that utilizing P10 billion from the Unprogrammed Funds would be much faster and that passing the resolution would not mean that funds would be readily available for the purchase of rice from the farmers. He added that buying the rice from the NFA would not be an assurance that it would use the stocks bought from the local farmers since it also has imported rice in stock.

Senator Recto further noted that seven regions that were mentioned earlier to be given the priority were not reflected in the resolution. Senator Villar replied that she chose the regions as priority areas because they have excess rice. Specifically, she cited the priority areas in the seven regions, as follows: Pangasinan, Cagayan Valley, Isabela, Nueva Ecija, Tarlac, Mindoro Occidental, Negros Occidental, Iloilo, North Cotabato, South Cotabato and Bukidnon.

Senator Recto reiterated that the areas enumerated were not reflected in the resolution. Senator Villar explained that it was because she was in a hurry to submit the resolution to the President so that he could certify it as she feared that if the resolution is not passed the next day, then the harvest season would be over. Senator Recto said that he would work with Senator Villar on the resolution and would introduce amendments if necessary. He stated that if they want the rice subsidy program to be implemented in the priority areas, then it should be written in the resolution. He said that at the appropriate time he would suggest amendments to keep the cost down; otherwise, it would be best to just give the money to the farmers. He added that the amendment would give a reasonable chance of making the program work by pilot testing it in regions. As to the feasibility of including the PNP and AFP in the distribution, he suggested pilot testing it with the Department of Social Welfare and Development. Senator Villar said that the PNP and the AFP would be included if they want to. Senator Recto said that he just would not like to mandate them to do so.

Asked by Senator Villar whether the local government units could be included since they are already practicing the system, Senator Recto said that it was fine with him as long as the LGUs are not forced to do so.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, the session was suspended.

It was 5:24 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:35 p.m., the session was resumed with Senate President Pro Tempore Recto presiding.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 8

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body suspended consideration of the joint resolution.

SECOND ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

The Secretary of the Senate read the following committee report which the Chair assigned to the Calendar for Ordinary Business:

Committee Report No. 12, prepared and submitted jointly by the Committees on Basic Education, Arts and Culture; Sports; Ways and Means; and Finance, on Senate Bill No. 1086, with Senators Angara, Go, Cayetano, and Gatchalian as authors thereof, entitled

AN ACT CREATING AND ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE HIGH SCHOOL FOR SPORTS AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR,

recommending its approval in substitution of Senate Bill Nos. 330, 397, 506 and 732.

Sponsor: Senator Gatchalian

SPECIAL ORDER

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body approved the transfer of Committee Report No. 12 on Senate Bill No. 1086

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from the Calendar for Ordinary Business to the Calendar for Special Orders.

COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 12 ON SENATE BILL NO. 1086

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body considered, on Second Reading, Senate Bill No. 1086 (Committee Report No. 12), entitled

AN ACT CREATING AND ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE HIGH SCHOOL FOR SPORTS AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR.

Pursuant to Section 67, Rule XXIII of the Rules of the Senate, with the permission of the Body, upon motion of Senator Zubiri, only the title of the bill was read without prejudice to the insertion of its full text into the Record of the Senate.

The Chair recognized Senator Gatchalian for the sponsorship.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR GATCHALIAN

Senator Gatchalian, on behalf of the Committee on Basic Education, Arts and Culture, submitted for plenary consideration Senate Bill No. 1086, entitled "An Act Creating And Establishing the Philippine High School for Sports and Providing Funds Therefor," under Committee Report No. 12.

The full text of Senator Gatchalian's sponsorship speech follows:

The most universally understood language is not English, French, or Chinese — it is sport. Sport is the international *lingua franca* of competition, cooperation, and mutual respect. It is a timeless source of national pride and accomplishment. For the youth, it is a potent shaper of character. For everyone, it is a powerful vehicle for improving health and well-being.

Filipinos love sport. At community basketball courts in barangays across the country, we can find young men and women playing a casual game or going all-out in a community tournament as they pursue their hoops dreams. At empty lots and grassy fields, we can find young ones kicking around a soccer ball.

And whenever our world champion colleague, *Pambansang Kamao* Sen. Manny Pacquiao, has a fight, Metro Manila practically becomes a ghost town as everyone crowds in front of their TV screens to watch him take down his opponents. In fact, I think one of the best ways to solve the traffic crisis in Metro Manila would be to schedule a Manny Pacquiao fight every weekday.

Despite our collective love for sports, sometimes we can feel like sports does not love us back. Despite the valiant efforts of our Gilas Pilipinas squad, the Philippines finished in last place at the recently concluded 2019 FIBA World Cup.

Since the Philippines began participating in the Summer Olympic Games in 1924, our athletes have only won 10 medals, and not a single gold medal. Of the 13 Philippine athletes to participate in the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, the impressive silver-medal finish of Hidilyn Diaz in women's weightlifting was our country's lone spot in the podium in any event.

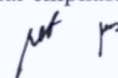
So, who or what is to blame for the lacklustre performance of our athletes on the national stage? Certainly, not the athletes themselves. Our athletes deserve nothing but the highest respect and admiration of the Filipino people for representing our country with pride and honor.

The problem, however, is that our athletes deserve more than just respect and admiration from the government. They deserve the same type of financial, infrastructural, and policy support from the government that other countries bestow upon their athletes.

Unfortunately, the Philippines has often failed to do this. While many foreign governments spend tens of billions of pesos in support of their athletes, so far, only a measly P207 million has been allocated to the Philippine Sports Commission in the proposed 2020 budget. This is just one example of how we have come up short in giving our athletes the support they deserve.

In this context, I am very proud to sponsor Senate Bill No. 1086, otherwise known as the Philippine High School for Sports Act of 2019, because it signifies that change is coming to the realm of Philippine sports.

This measure, principally authored by Sen. Christopher Lawrence T. Go, Sen. Sonny Angara, Sen. Pia S. Cayetano, and, most recently, Sen. Joel Villanueva and yours truly, of course, seeks to train and develop future generations of world champion Philippine athletes. It will establish a dedicated national high school offering a secondary course with special emphasis on



developing athletic skills of the students through subjects pertaining to physical education and sports development.

Ultimately, the end in view of this legislation is to unleash the potential of young Filipinos who have shown early potential of excelling in sports for a sports-related career.

The Philippine High School for Sports (PHSS) is envisioned to be a world-class educational and athletics facility to be constructed by the Bases Conversion and Development Authority at the New Clark City in Capas, Tarlac. PHSS will be under the supervision of the Department of Education which has already expressed its unequivocal support for the establishment of the school.

As such, the Board of Trustees of the PHSS will be chaired by the Secretary of Education. The chairperson of the Philippine Sports Commission will serve as vice-chair and the following as members of the board: the director of the PHSS; one representative each from the House of Representatives and the Senate; the president of the Philippine Olympic Committee; and three representatives from the different POC-accredited national sports associations to be nominated by their respective sports associations and appointed by the chairperson of the board.

Meanwhile, an executive council consisting of the PHSS director, the assistant director, the heads of department of PHSS, and such other ranking faculty members or officials of PHSS, as may be determined by the board, shall be constituted to screen and select the students subject for admission, select students who shall be recipients of scholarships, stipends, and other allowances, and develop the school curriculum and rules of discipline of the institution.

To supplement the general funding of the school undertaken by the government through the General Appropriations Act, the bill also establishes the Sports High School Fund. All income and monetary donations derived by PHSS shall be retained by the school and said fund shall be expended as authorized by the board exclusively to fund the maintenance and programs of PHSS.

All in all, I firmly believe that the establishment of the Philippine High School for Sports is a crucial first step towards achieving Philippine excellence in international athletics and providing our athletes with the support that they deserve as our representatives on the international stage.

Noting, for the record, that the passage of this bill was one of the legislative priorities out-

lined by President Rodrigo R. Duterte in his 2019 State of the Nation Address, I respectfully join Senators Go, Angara, Cayetano and Villanueva in advocating for the swift approval of this measure by this esteemed Chamber.

COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR GO

As cosponsor of Senate Bill No. 1086, otherwise known as the Philippine High School For Sports Act of 2019, Senator Go expressed his support to the initiative of providing an avenue for the gifted young athletes in the country to gain quality education and, at the same time, to enjoy a level of training that would be at par with the best in the world.

Following is the full text of his cosponsorship speech:

As Committee Chairman on Sports, I rise to express my full and unwavering support for Senate Bill No. 1086 under Committee Report No. 12, creating the Philippine High School for Sports. Since the beginning, I have been very vocal and public about my advocacy of passing this legislative measure, through my filing of Senate Bill No. 397 last July.

Even before I became fortunate enough to be part of this honorable Chamber, sports has always had a place very close to my heart. Time and again, I have publicly supported various programs and initiatives for the advancement of Philippine sports; from my all out support as part of the delegation for the *Gilas Pilipinas*, to finding ways to supplement the training of our very own Hidilyn Diaz, I proudly display my support for Philippine sports.

The Constitution itself provides that the State shall give priority to education, science, and technology, arts, culture and sports to foster patriotism and nationalism, accelerate social progress and promote total human liberation and development.

The Constitution explicitly provides that the State shall promote physical education and encourage sports programs league competitions, and amateur sports, including training for international competitions to foster self-discipline, teamwork, and excellence for the development of a healthy and alert citizenry.

Clearly, the significance of sports and education was not lost on the framers of our Constitution. This is the reason that I firmly believe that it is high time that we vigorously

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pushed for the passage of this measure which, to others, is 30 years too late. I believe that with the Filipino people's passion, dedication, and inherent love for sports, we will be able to catch up with the rest of the world in terms of sports development.

Through the PHSS, we will be able to provide full and partial scholarships to our youth who have shown potential in excelling in the field of sports. Through the specialized curriculum developed by the Department of Education, we will be able to provide quality education in core subjects such as Math and Science, while simultaneously placing equal emphasis in developing athletic skills through subjects on physical education and sports development.

It is a reality for some of our gifted young athletes to experience difficulty in accessing quality education. Through scholarship grants, we will be able to provide an avenue for them to gain quality education, while developing their skills and talents in sports through world-class training.

Moreover, with the creation of PHSS in very close proximity to world-class facilities, our student-athletes can enjoy a level of training which is at par with the best in the world. This type of training and education can catapult our student-athletes to illustrious careers in sports, whether as athletes, coaches, managers, or any other sports-related profession.

This advocacy of mine is also shared by President Duterte, and, in fact, such is the passion of his support for this measure that this bill was included in the 2019 State of the Nation Address. In pushing for the passage of this measure, I have closely coordinated with the agencies such as the Philippine Sports Commission, the Department of Education, the Department of Budget and Management, and, of course, the Bases Conversion and Development Authority, to ensure that this bill, if passed, shall allow us to hit the ground running. They all share the same enthusiasm we do in pursuing this dream. The framework is there, and the foundation is laid; all that we must do is to give this bill a chance to come into fruition.

At the end of the day, I honestly and humbly believe that this is an endeavor which we can all be proud to have been part of. I urge my colleagues in this august Body to come together in support of this measure for the benefit of our youth and for the benefit of Philippine sports.

I would like to thank the Honorable Sponsor and Chairman of the Committee on

Basic Education, Arts and Culture, Sen. Sherwin T. Gatchalian, for showing equal passion and dedication for the development of Philippine sports and our youth.

I fervently urge my colleagues in this Honorable Chamber to support this measure *alang-alang po sa ating kabataan at para na rin po sa ating pagbabalik sa tuktok ng mundo ng palakasan.*

COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR CAYETANO

Senator Cayetano also expressed her support for the measure, envisioning that a sports school in the country would not only give students access to vocational sports but also would allow them to have other professions through an academic track.

Following is her cosponsorship speech:

This is a happy day for me because I drafted and filed this bill nine years ago. I was so much younger then and ran so much faster. But so did the presiding officer.

It is no secret that I am a believer in sports and I believe that sports can change lives. I am proud to be a member of a Senate where majority of the members includes sports in their lives.

Needless to say, Sen. Manny D. Pacquiao is considered one of the greatest professional boxers of all time.

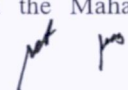
The Senate President who was part of the Philippine National Team in bowling garnered gold several times and currently is a golf enthusiast who still continues to win tournaments.

Our Majority Leader, Sen. Juan Miguel Zubiri, a martial arts national champion and 1989 world champion. I saw the video and I wish we could play it, but, please interpellate me later on so I can play that world championship—the winning moves. I think, a few kilos lighter.

And then, we have our “never-say-die” basketball players—Sen. Joel Villanueva, a UST Growling Tiger UAAP Champion, 1994, 1995 and Philippine National Team.

And then, Sen. Sonny M. Angara who is part of the Senate Defenders. That is the official name of our basketball team.

Sen. “Bong” T. Go, who brings serious professionalism to the games that he plays with the likes of my brother. He was part of the roster of the Muntinlupa Cagers in the Maharlika



Basketball League, a pro-league started by Sen. Manny D. Pacquiao.

Sen. Kiko Pangilinan, my batchmate in UP. We were both UP Volleyball Maroons. And he was also a track-and-field runner.

Next is, Sen. Ralph G. Recto. I approached him to ask for a picture. That is not actually his main sport but that is his current sport. Am I correct?

But his sport as a young athlete included soccer, swimming and taekwondo.

So, again, please interpellate me so that I can put the appropriate pictures of Senator Recto while I am defending this bill.

And then our main sponsor, Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian, I actually failed to get the full description but the picture speaks for itself.

And yours truly, a UP Maroon and national team player for volleyball as well.

Anyway, now that I have put you all to a better mood, the sad reality we face is that many of our young athletes who show talent are usually forced to choose between an education and sports. That window where they can shine as an athlete is not open for a long time. They must take advantage of that moment in time and if they miss it, that moment is gone. Because of that, some choose to give up schooling, while others give up their sports. Those who gave up schooling take a huge risk. Betting on sports alone for your future is a shot in the dark. Not anyone gets to be a Manny Pacquiao. After their moment in the limelight, without an education, they have little to fall back on.

I would like to share another story which is the story of many athletes today. One of my lawyers, Joei Gana-Teves, made it to the Philippine volleyball youth team but her teachers did not believe in sports and considered her absent every time she attended practices and threatened to fail her when she had to leave for one week to compete in the Asian Youth Games. She then made the choice to go to the games and was very much impressed but at the same time saddened that other countries like Singapore and Malaysia, had a national sports high school where they are able to study and do the sport they love at the same time.

This need not happen.

In countries that take sports seriously, they start at a young age. Those who show talent are given the chance to train with the best coaches and with equally talented and driven athletes.

They are able to do that because they have sports centers all over the country and they have national sports schools, high schools and universities.

I had the privilege of visiting some of these sports high schools in Germany and Spain. Their young athletes are able to focus on their sports and study at the same time.

Fast forward, and obviously, Sen. Bong Go and I have the same source of photos. We both have visited New Clark City. This was, I think, very early in 2018 when they did some ground-breaking or this is the initial stages of the construction.

Fast forward, not even two years later, this is the New Clark City today. This aerial photo was actually taken by Gretchen Ho. I borrowed that from her.

If we look at the main circle, that is the stadium, and the track in the middle is the main track. But we will wonder why there is another track on the upper right side. That is the practice track, the warm-up track. That is required to have that Class I certification. And if we look at the next picture I am about to show, this is the picture of the actual track and stadium.

The one on the right is an actual requirement also to get that Class I certification. It is an 80-meter indoor track where they warm up just before their event is called. So, we have those two warm-up tracks in addition to the main track. That is air-conditioned by the way. I happened to visit a few weeks ago and those are national track athletes that I was running with.

This is the swimming pool. Take note, that is an eight-lane, 50-meter pool, but that is just the warm-up pool. The main pool is 10 lanes and has a bigger capacity, and then on the right side is the diving pool. So, together this is also a world-class certified aqua center, the only one in the country.

These are the dormitories, the same photo that Senator Go showed us. We actually have the national triathlon team and the national track and field team living in these quarters now. And pretty soon, this will be the home of the Southeast Asian Games athletes who will come here to participate in December.

New Clark City is the sustainable city that will house our athletes for the SEA Games, and this is also where this sports school will be built. It is envisioned that the students will have access to vocational sports and academic track so that each of them can still fulfill their own dream.

Senate Bill No. 506, which I filed, is considered in this committee report. However, my version specifically has a provision that says that the track will not be limited to sports because there are athletes who dream to be more than athletes. They can be an athlete and they can have other professions as well.

Just because I am only familiar with the UP graduates, I used them as an example.

UP has produced, among others, two *summa cum laude* graduates: one with a BS in Math *summa cum laude*, and another one with a BS in Sports Science who went on and is currently in her third year of medicine school in PGH-UP Manila. They did this while being in the varsity of UP. The BS Math major was a judo player and the other one was a volleyball player.

Assuming that there was a high school for sports when they were younger, it would have been really sad if we limited them to a sports program because clearly, they have the ability and the desire to do something else as well and that is why, we are also pushing for programs beyond sports to be offered in senior high here.

I call on this Body's support. Dear colleagues, let us help make this individual dreams come true and, at the same time, build a nation of winners.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR ZUBIRI

Senator Zubiri stated that Senators Angara and Villanueva would deliver their cosponsorship speeches on Senate Bill No. 1086 on the next session day.

COAUTHOR AND COSPONSOR

Upon his request, Senator Zubiri was made coauthor and cosponsor of Senate Bill No. 1086.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF SENATE BILL NO. 1086

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body suspended consideration of the bill.

COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 7 ON SENATE BILL NO. 1076 (Continuation)

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body resumed consideration, on Second Reading, of Senate Bill No. 1076 (Committee Report No. 7), entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING MALASAKIT CENTERS IN ALL DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (DOH) HOSPITALS IN THE COUNTRY AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR.

Senator Zubiri stated that the parliamentary status was still the period of interpellations.

Thereupon, the Chair recognized Senator Go, sponsor of the measure, and Senator Drilon for his interpellation.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR DRILON

At the outset, Senator Drilon narrated that when he went to his home province of Iloilo over the weekend, at the airport terminal he saw a Malasakit Center which he supposed was not the one being contemplated under Senate Bill No. 1076 since the Malasakit Center which it proposes to establish would be situated in DOH hospitals.

Senator Go clarified that the Malasakit Center referred to by Senator Drilon is not related to the bill; it is just a DOTC initiative to assist the passengers in terminals.

Asked if there are other Malasakit Centers initiated by other government agencies, Senator Go said that there could be other Malasakit Centers established in various areas and that apparently, the word "*malasakit*" was always being preferred in government programs as it denotes the Filipino trait of being helpful and concerned about others.

Asked if the establishment of Malasakit Centers in places other than DOH hospitals was not covered by the bill, Senator Go admitted that he was not fully aware of other Malasakit Centers or regulatory centers that were established upon the initiative of other government agencies.

Asked how many Malasakit Centers are presently operating in DOH hospitals, Senator Go stated that there are presently 18 DOH-run Malasakit Centers and 24 LGU-run Malasakit Centers which are in provincial hospitals and city hospitals.

Asked if the bill would only cover the Malasakit Centers in DOH-managed hospitals, Senator Go replied in the affirmative, citing three such centers — the Vicente Sotto Memorial Medical Center in Cebu,

Eastern Visayas Regional Medical Center in Tacloban, and Western Visayas Medical Center in Iloilo.

Senator Go explained that the bill would initially prioritize the 72 DOH-run hospitals, after which the LGU-run hospitals would follow based on the criteria that would be set up for them. He said that the 72 DOH-run hospitals would have guaranteed funds for the maintenance and operating expenses, and personnel complement of Malasakit Centers, including staff training, performance assessment and monitoring. He said that while many hospitals have been operating Malasakit Centers without notice, such as Isabela which suddenly established a Malasakit Center not sanctioned by the Office of the President, such establishment should be avoided since it might not be compliant with the requirements of a Malasakit Center, particularly in having personnel from the DOH, DSWD, PhilHealth and PCSO therein.

As to why Malasakit Centers were first established in DOH hospitals, Senator Go said that during a meeting with DOH, DSWD, PhilHealth, and PCSO, it was determined that it would be more feasible to initially establish Malasakit Centers in DOH hospitals due to funding and personnel constraints; nevertheless, once a new set of criteria is created, the LGU-run hospitals and other public hospitals may have their own Malasakit Centers.

Asked if the hospitals could not use the name "Malasakit Center" if they do not follow the standards, Senator Go said that the reason for institutionalizing the Malasakit Centers is to reflect order through the designation of proper personnel who would assist the patients. He believed that the DOH-run hospitals could readily manage the Malasakit Centers because they already have a public assistance unit which would be complemented by DOH, PCSO, PhilHealth, and DSWD representatives who would be in their respective areas assisting and expediting the needs of the patients. He also added that no money would be lodged in Malasakit Centers.

At this point, Senator Drilon reiterated that he was not opposing the bill but that he merely wanted to examine its details before it becomes a law.

Asked if the 54 Malasakit Centers are intended to be established aside from the 18 Malasakit Centers operating within DOH hospitals, Senator Go replied in the affirmative. He stated that the 72 Malasakit Centers would be the beneficiary of the Universal

Health Care Law. To illustrate, he said that with a hospital bill amounting to P300,000, only P45,000 would be augmented by the Universal Health Care; through the Malasakit Center, the patient would be granted financial assistance from the DSWD, DOH, and PCSO aside from additional funds lodged by the LGUs in every Malasakit Center which could mean zero balance in the patient's hospital bill. He affirmed that the Malasakit Center is some sort of a one-stop shop for citizens who need medical assistance.

As regards the process of availing of the services of Malasakit Centers, Senator Drilon said that at present, there is also a Public Assistance Center (PAC) in the Senate which was established when he was Senate President. He said that a constituent of a senator, who needs medical assistance, goes to the PAC and would be given a referral letter addressed to the medical institution where the constituent could avail of services.

Asked how the process in Malasakit Center differs from the Senate PAC, Senator Go explained the process, to wit: (1) the medical social worker accepts requests for assistance from patient; (2) the patient fills out the standard and unified form and provides the requirements; (3) these patient would be interviewed and assessed by the medical social worker; (4) the medical social worker facilitates the assistance request to different agencies; (5) the request is approved by the participating agency; (6) the guarantee letter or assistance is released; and (7) the approved amount is forwarded to the billing section of the hospital by the medical social worker so that the patient need not leave the hospital. He added that the DOH, DSWD, and PCSO shall issue guidelines for the proper implementation of medical and financial assistance, which shall include availment procedures, order of charging of payments, recording and reporting, and monitoring and evaluation.

As he underscored that the most efficient and streamlined delivery of assistance to all beneficiaries shall be the primary consideration in the formulation of guidelines, Senator Go said that he plans to establish a Malasakit Center in the Senate PAC which would grant assistance to Filipino patients without discrimination, as long as they are qualified.

Senator Drilon adverted to Section 5 of the bill, to wit: "There shall be established a Malasakit Program Office in the DOH by augmenting, reclassifying and strengthening the existing Public Assistance Unit

(PAU) of the DOH. The Malasakit Program Office shall oversee the operations of the Malasakit Centers.” He then asked if all DOH hospitals have Public Assistance Units. In reply, Senator Go stated that since the Public Assistance Unit that manages a billion-peso Medical Assistance Program has only three plantilla positions, it is just appropriate for it to be converted into an office that would oversee the operation of Malasakit Centers in all 72 DOH-retained hospitals even if it necessitates additional personnel complement. He said that, in fact, the DBM has submitted a position paper indicating their support for the creation of the Malasakit Program Office. He affirmed that the Public Assistance Unit of the DOH would become Malasakit Centers with augmented personnel. Senator Drilon remarked that while there would be some budgetary implications, the amount would not be as much since the office involves few personnel.

Senator Drilon disclosed that he has in his possession the position paper of the PCSO dated September 6, 2019 and he cited a portion thereof, to wit: “Maybe the Malasakit Center bill should provide a clause rationalizing PCSO’s taxes and non-health related mandatory contributions so that we can provide funds for Malasakit, *kung kinakailangan*.” He surmised that PCSO was under the impression that the Malasakit Center would need funds to be drawn from them, and they were proposing that Congress restructure and rationalize taxes in order to have more funds for the Malasakit Center operations. Senator Go pointed out that even though the UHC Act mandates that 40% of the charity fund of the PCSO, net of the documentary stamp tax and the mandatory contributions, would go to the PhilHealth, the PCSO would still have 8% of the fund available for charity programs, adding that the PCSO has committed to continuously provide medical assistance. He emphasized the need to rationalize the contributions of PCSO to various programs and agencies, and he disclosed that General Manager Garma had committed one personnel per Malasakit Center who would have the discretion of giving assistance to the patients depending in the availability of funds. He reiterated that no money would be handled by the Malasakit Centers because the agencies which will have their own table and representative, would determine and assess the assistance to be extended to the patients.

To Senator Drilon’s observation that the measure would not change the present system that is already

in place in the PCSO insofar as the medical assistance is concerned, notwithstanding the creation of the Malasakit Centers, Senator Go clarified that the Malasakit Centers aim to efficiently and conveniently provide all the services needed by those seeking medical assistance in one accessible location, thus saving them time and money.

Asked whether the current PCSO budget for medical assistance to indigents would not change, Senator Go replied in the affirmative, adding that the financial assistance extended by the agency would depend on the availability of funds. Thus, Senator Drilon stated that there is no basis for the PCSO to express concern over its ability to fund the needs of the patients who would approach the agency through the Malasakit Centers.

As regards the number of employees deployed in existing Malasakit Centers, Senator Go stated that there are three DOH employees of each of the 18 Malasakit Centers in DOH-run hospitals. However, he underscored the need to institutionalize the Malasakit Center, since some of the facilities, including those in LGU-run hospitals, do not have a regular number of personnel.

Asked on the typical personnel composition of a Malasakit Center, Senator Go replied that there would be three from DOH, one representative each from the PhilHealth and the PCSO, and two from DSWD.

Senator Drilon stated that under Section 8 (*Personnel Complement*), “the Medical Director, Chief of Hospital, or Medical Center Chief may appoint and assign such other personnel necessary for the effective operation of the Malasakit Centers.” He surmised that the complement would be limited by the staffing pattern that would be issued by the DBM. Senator Go affirmed, adding that there must be a set of criteria designed for LGU hospitals since some are capable of hiring personnel and building a center while others cannot. For instance, he said that Valenzuela City not only established its own Malasakit Center but also provided for the personnel, as well as additional funds which would be used after the assistance from all four government agencies, DOH, PhilHealth, PCSO and DSWD, had been exhausted. That way, he said that the patient would go home with a zero balance in his hospital bill. Likewise, he said that he envisions the Senate PAC to provide the same kind of system.

To the observation that there was nothing in the bill that would limit the availability of medical assistance only to those referred by the Malasakit Center, Senator Go affirmed, explaining that there is no exclusive status of the Malasakit Center insofar as referral and assistance to the indigents are concerned. He said that anyone can make a referral, and that there would be personnel to assist and interview indigent and financially incapacitated patients.

Asked if indigent patients could go directly to the PCSO for assistance without having to go through the Malasakit Center, Senator Go replied in the affirmative, but he emphasized that the purpose of the Malasakit Center is to provide a one-stop-shop so that the patients need not go far to look for assistance.

Citing Section 9 (*Medical and Financial Assistance*), Senator Drilon stated that Malasakit Centers will have access to the various funding agencies, although that access would not be exclusive to it as patients can go directly to the PCSO and DSWD. At the appropriate time, he said that he would propose an amendment to ensure that the concept is maintained—that agencies which give assistance would not always have to refer everyone to the Malasakit Centers.

Referring to Section 9(c), Senator Drilon asked if the financial assistance by the PCSO is limited only to indigents and financially incapacitated patients. Senator Go explained that as defined in the bill, indigent patients are those with no visible means of income, while financially incapacitated patients are those who are not classified as indigent but demonstrate clear inability to pay or spend for a necessary expenditure for one's medical treatment, such as patients with catastrophic illness, or any illness which is life- or limb-threatening, or requires prolonged hospitalization, extremely expensive therapies, or other special but essential care that would deplete one's financial resources as assessed and certified by the medical social worker.

On whether the PCSO medical assistance program would also be limited to indigent and financially incapacitated patients, Senator Go said that Filipinos can directly avail of PCSO assistance which is not limited to medical or hospitalization, as it could be in the form of transportation assistance, tuition, livelihood, etc. He reiterated that Malasakit Centers would only facilitate requests for medical assistance.

Asked on the magnitude of the medical assistance programs of the entire bureaucracy or the total government resources that can be accessed by the Malasakit Centers to assist the indigents, Senator Go reiterated that Malasakit Centers would only house the agencies which would provide medical assistance. He said that funding for such assistance would depend on the programs and budget of DOH, PhilHealth, PCSO and DSWD.

Senator Drilon asked on the total budget allotted to the four agencies which could be accessed by the Malasakit Centers, noting that there was no intention to create another bureaucracy or another assistance program as the Malasakit Center is designed to be a one-stop-shop and referral system where the benefits are lodged in the four agencies. Senator Go gave the assurance that Malasakit Centers would not have access to the funds of the four agencies. He said that it is the patient who would have access to the budget that Congress would approve.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, the session was suspended.

It was 6:40 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 6:40 p.m., the session was resumed.

Upon resumption, Senator Drilon requested Senator Go to look into the budget and provide him a ballpark figure of how much the total budget for medical assistance that the four agencies have and which could be accessed by the clients of the Malasakit Centers.

In closing, Senator Drilon said that he does not have any more questions but that he might propose some amendments at the proper time.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR HONTIVEROS

Preliminarily, Senator Hontiveros expressed her support for interventions that seek to reduce the out-of-pocket health expenditures of all Filipinos, especially the poor, as she acknowledged how much of a barrier it has become in accessing quality healthcare services. She said that she also supports measures promoting public health and public education among

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Filipinos that would empower people to make healthier choices, the reason why she pushed and worked hard for and supported the passage of Republic Act No. 11223, or the Universal Healthcare (UHC) Law in the 17th Congress. She said that the measure being proposed by Senator Go was commendable as it supports the objectives of the UHC. However, she asked to be clarified on some things and to make some suggestions to further enhance the bill's social protection and public health goals.

On the matter of the PCSO, Senator Hontiveros said that one of the main features of the UHC law was the pooling of funds from multiple government sources. She recalled that during the deliberations on the UHC law in 2018, the DOH and health financing experts were adamant that harmonizing the fund sources and funneling them through PhilHealth was the way forward in terms of financing UHC. She recalled that one of the fund sources that was identified was the 40% of the charity fund, net of documentary stamp tax payments and the mandatory contributions of the PCSO as provided for in Republic Act No. 1169, as amended, which is around P3 billion annually.

Senator Recto clarified that for the PCSO, the mandatory contribution is P3 billion, while for Pagcor it is about P13.5 billion.

As regards the PCSO's mandate under Section 9(c) of the bill to provide medical and financial assistance to indigents, Senator Honteviros asked whether the PCSO would still have enough funds to cover medical assistance. In reply, Senator Go said that under the UHC law, 40% of the charity fund of the PCSO, net of documentary stamp tax and mandatory contributions, would go to PhilHealth for the UHC. He gave the assurance that the Malasakit Centers would not reduce the PCSO contributions to the UHC since there would still be 8% of the charity fund available for the PCSO's charity programs.

At this point, Senator Go emphasized the need to rationalize the contributions of the PCSO to various programs and agencies.

Asked whether the 8% from PCSO, if rationalized, would still be enough to cover medicines, Senator Go said that he got a commitment from General Manager Garma that the 8% would be based on PCSO's collection. Thus, he said that the availability of funds would be dependent upon the agency's revenues for a particular month. He said that the Malasakit Center

system espouses pooling of funds to attain zero balance billing because even the funds under the UHC law would not be enough to cover the costs or expenses of a patient.

Senator Recto said that the additional resources that the PCSO could provide is 60% of its remaining fund, or about P5 billion.

Asked by Senator Hontiveros whether the Malasakit Center bill would in any way amend or supersede Section 37 of RA 11233 or reallocate what has already been appropriated under the UHC law to fund the provision of medical assistance in the Malasakit Centers, Senator Go replied in the negative. He clarified that the bill would not amend any provision in the UHC law but would instead complement it.

Asked how much it would cost to set up the Malasakit Center in all the hospitals in terms of PS, MOOE and capital outlay, Senator Go said that the establishment and operation of the Malasakit Centers would be undertaken by the DOH. He recalled Secretary Duque as saying that it would be piggybacking with the current system in place in PhilHealth centers and DOH hospitals, and that any need for additional personnel in the DSWD would be supported and provided by the DBM. He said that the projected PS requirement would be about P15 million for the DOH, with no additional costs for MOOE.

Senator Hontiveros noted that the proposed Malasakit Centers, apart from being one-stop shops for medical and financial assistance, would also be responsible for a host of other concerns, including providing patient navigation and referral to health care provider networks, providing information on membership coverages and the packages of the National Health Insurance Program, and documentation, processing, and utilization of data from patient experience to shape institutional changes in the hospital, plus provision of capacity building and performance evaluation to ensure good client interaction. She then asked whether Senator Go would be amenable to add health promotion and health education activities among the responsibilities of the Malasakit Centers. She said that the Malasakit Center could be a hub for health promotion and health education activities in the hospitals and could be used to educate the patients and other persons in the hospitals about vaccination, smoking cessation, healthy diet and others. She recalled that in the past two years, she had proposed to include a special provision in the GAA which says

that 5% of the retained income for DOH hospitals could be used for health promotion and health education.

Senator Go said that he would entertain an amendment at the proper time. He said that under the bill, the DOH shall establish a Malasakit program that would promote client engagement and empowerment and that Malasakit Centers would provide patient navigation and referral to health care provider networks. He said that patient navigation refers to directing and assisting an individual to obtain health care services and overcome barriers for timely, cost-effective and appropriate medical care.

Adverting to Section 14, page 8, lines 28 to 31 on Appropriations which talks about Section 288-A of the NIRC, Senator Hontiveros asked about the specific tax referred to by the provision and how much was the estimate for collection, particularly on the incremental revenues from documentary stamp taxes. Senator Go said that the medical assistance would be sourced from the amount earmarked under Section 288-A of the National Internal Revenue Code, as amended, for medical assistance which shall be appropriated under the DOH, specifically for medical assistance to indigent patients, a portion of which shall be allotted for DOH hospitals. He said that there were still no projections on how much would be collected from excise tax pursuant to Section 288-A of the NIRC.

Given that a Malasakit Center goes beyond the provision of medical and financial assistance, to one that promotes, encourages and strengthens health promotion and education and enhances responsiveness of the hospitals, Senator Hontiveros asked if Senator Go would be amenable to including the word “*Kalusugan*” in the name Malasakit Centers. Senator Go said that he would be open to discussing the matter further at the proper time. However, he said that having just one identifying word such as *Masagana* in *Masagana 99* or *Malasakit*, in the case of Malasakit Center, makes it easier to remember.

INQUIRY OF THE CHAIR

Asked by Senate President Pro Tempore Recto whether the period of interpellations would be closed, Senator Zubiri clarified that the termination of the period of interpellations shall be without prejudice to Members asking clarificatory questions during the period of amendments.

TERMINATION OF THE PERIOD OF INTERPELLATIONS

There being no further interpellation, upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body closed the period of interpellations without prejudice to Members asking questions during the period of amendments.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF SENATE BILL NO. 1076

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body suspended consideration of the bill.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

With the permission of the Body, the session was suspended.

It was 6:59 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 7:04 p.m., the session was resumed.

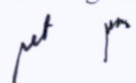
NEXT DAY'S AGENDA

Senator Zubiri informed the Body that the next day's agenda would be as follows: continuing interpellations on Senate Bill No. 1055 (Separate Facility for Prisoners Convicted of Heinous Crimes); Senate Bill No. 1074 (Excise Tax on Tobacco and Alcohol Products); and Senate Bill No. 1077 (National Transportation Safety Board); and sponsorship of several committee reports.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR RECTO

Senate President Pro Tempore Recto stated that he saw a picture of Senator Zubiri with Secretary Carlito Galvez of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP), Chairman Nur Misuari of the MNLF, Chief Minister Ahod “Al Haj Murad” Ebrahim of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, and Chairman Muslimin Sema of an MNLF faction, together for the first time in three decades. He then congratulated Senator Zubiri for the momentous event.

Senator Zubiri stated that it was a proud and historic moment indeed that the three Bangsamoro



leaders were in one venue. He said that the three individuals would not be meeting each other at any point in time, but because of lasting peace for the country, the three leaders had come together after over 30 years.

Senator Zubiri disclosed that Secretary Galvez has made him part of the anniversary of the OPAPP, and that in his message, he mentioned that Mindanao was moving forward. He said that when he read out the names of the leaders, the only person missing was Joma Sison. He expressed hope that one day, all the leaders would be present and lasting peace would reign in the country.

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Chair declared the session adjourned

until three o'clock in the afternoon of the following day.

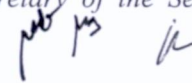
It was 7:04 p.m.

I hereby certify to the correctness of the foregoing.



ATTY. MYRA MARIE D. VILLARICA

Secretary of the Senate



Approved on November 4, 2019