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FIRST REGULAR SESSION

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CALL TO ORDER

At 3:00 p.m., the Senate President, Hon. Juan Miguel F. Zubiri, called the session to order.

PRAYER

Sen. Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada led the prayer, to wit:

Panginoon naming may likha, kami po ay taos-pusong nagpapasalamat sa araw na ito, na kami ay malakas at ligtas upang tuparin ang aming mga tungkulin sa pagsisilbi sa ating mahal na bayang Pilipinas.

Panginoon, Kayo po ang dahilan kung bakit kaming lahat ay napaglagakan ng posisyon sa Kapulungang ito. Ikaw ang nagpahintulot na kami ay maluklok sa mataas na katungkulang ito, kaya wala kaming ibang hangad kundi magampanan ang aming mandato nang buong husay at katapatan sa abot ng aming kakayanan.

Patuloy po Ninyo kaming gabayan sa tamang gawain, sa tamang pagpapasya, at sa pinakamainam na kurso ng aksyon na naaayon sa ikabubuti ng higit na nakararaming Pilipino. Patuloy po Ninyo kaming biyayaan ng kalakasan, katalinuhan at dunong, kahinahunan, at kababaang loob.

Gayundin, patuloy po Ninyo kaming bigyan ng inspirasyon at motibasyon upang maharap namin ang araw-araw na hamon sa aming mga trabaho at ganoon na rin sa aming mga personal na buhay.

Patuloy Ninyo rin pong pagtibayin ang institusyong aming kinabibilangan—ang Senado ng Pilipinas—na siyang tanggulan ng demokrasya sa ating bansa. Ipinapanalangin namin ang lahat ng mga kawani nito, maging ang aming mga tauhan, gayundin ang iba pang institusyon na umaalalay sa amin upang kaming lahat ay patuloy na makapagbigay ng nararapat at kaukulang serbisyo sa bayan.

Pag-ibayuhin po Ninyo ang aming kakayanang makapagsulong ng mga panukalang batas na tunay na mapapakinabangan ng aming mga kababayan. Gabayan po Ninyo kami sa pagsasaliksik ng katotohanan at sa pagsusulong ng hustisya sa aming mga magiging pagdinig at deliberasyon. Nawa ay agaran naming mapagkayarian at maihain ang mga kinakailangang lunas at solusyon sa mga suliraning kinahaharap at kahaharapin pa ng ating bansa.



Gayon din, Panginoon, ipinapalangin po namin ang kaligtasan, kapayapaan, at katiwasayan sa Silangang Asya at gayon din sa iba pang panig ng mundo na binabagabag ng kaguluhan. Paghariin Mo po ang kahinahunan, pagkakaisa, pagkakasundo, at diplomasya sa puso at isipan ng mga namumuno sa bawat bansa, sa ngalan ng pandaigdigang pagkakaisa at kapayapaan.

Panginoon, kami po ay taos-pusong nanalig na hindi Ninyo kami pababayaang habang ginagampanan namin ang misyon na iniatang ninyo sa aming mga balikat bilang kinatawan ng sambayanang Pilipino. Panatilihin po Ninyo ang kapatawaran, positibong pananaw, kasiglahan, at kagalakan na tangan namin sa aming mga puso sa kasalukuyan, hanggang sa pagtatapos ng Kongresong ito.

At dahil kami ay nabigyan ng pambihirang pagkakataon upang maging instrumento ng pagbabago at pag-unlad ng buhay ng bawat Pilipino, nawa'y malubos namin ang kapangyarihang ito nang walang pag-iimbot at ng may katapatan.

Ang lahat ng papuri at pasasalamat ay ibinabalik po namin sa Inyo, Panginoon naming Ama.

Amen.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

Everybody remained standing for the singing of the national anthem.

ROLL CALL

Upon direction of the Senate President, the Secretary of the Senate, Atty. Renato N. Bantug Jr., called the roll, to which the following senators responded:

Angara, S.	Legarda, L
Binay, M. L. N. S.	Padilla, R. C.
Cayetano, A. P. C. S.*	Pimentel III, A. K.
Cayetano, P. S.	Poe, G.
Dela Rosa, R. B. M.	Revilla Jr., R. B.
Ejercito, J. V. G.	Tolentino, F. T. N.
Escudero, F. J. G.	Tulfo, R. T.
Estrada, J. E.	Villanueva, J.
Gatchalian, W.	Villar, C. A.
Go, C. L. T.	Villar, M. A.
Hontiveros, R.	Zubiri, J. M. F.
Lapid, M. L. M.	

With 22 senators physically present and one senator virtually present, or a total of 23 senators present, the Chair declared the presence of a quorum.

Senator Marcos, who was COVID-19 positive, appeared online after the roll call.

APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body dispensed with the reading of the Journal of Session No. 6 (August 3, 2022) and considered it approved.

*Senators Cayetano (A) attended the session online because of exposure to COVID-19.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE PRESENCE OF GUESTS

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

- Rep. Marlyn Agabas of the 6th District of Pangasinan;
- Mayor Tyrone Agabas of Tayug, Pangasinan;
- Mayor Maria Theresa Rodriguez-Peralta of Balungao, Pangasinan;
- Vice Mayor Philip Peralta of Balungao, Pangasinan;
- The Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) 2021 Awardees, and The Outstanding Young Men Foundation and JCI Philippines officers and staff; and
- Davemark Apolinario, IBO Flyweight champion.

Senate President Zubiri welcomed the guests to the Senate.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, the session was suspended.

It was 3:09 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:15 p.m., the session was resumed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE PRESENCE OF GUESTS

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

- Gov. Datu Pax Ali Mangudadatu of the Province of Sultan Kudarat; and
- Vice Gov. Faustino “Bojie” Dy III and Rep. Faustino “Inno” Dy V of the 6th District of Isabela Province.

PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 77

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body considered Proposed Senate Resolution No. 77, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING THE RECIPIENTS OF THE
OUTSTANDING YOUNG MEN (TOYM) OF THE PHILIPPINES 2021 AWARDS FOR THEIR
SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO PHILIPPINE SOCIETY,

taking into consideration Proposed Senate Resolution No. 91.

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

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR GATCHALIAN

In sponsoring Proposed Senate Resolution No. 77, honoring The Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) awardees for 2021, Senator Gatchalian delivered the following speech:



It is my distinct honor to sponsor Proposed Senate Resolution No. 77 to honor the 2021 awardees of the Outstanding Young Men or TOYM.

As I sponsor this measure, I cannot help but feel a sense of nostalgia and deep personal pride. More than a decade ago, this Representation also received this prestigious recognition when I was still serving as the mayor of Valenzuela City. And for someone who was recognized as one of the Outstanding Young Men in 2011, the journey comes full circle as I deliver this speech honoring last year's awardees.

It is worth noting that several of this august Chamber's past and present Members received this recognition for their outstanding service rendered to our *kababayans*.

Among our colleagues who received this prestigious recognition are our Senate President Pro Tempore, Sen. Loren Legarda, for Broadcast Journalism; Sen. Risa Hontiveros for Peace Advocacy; Sen. Alan Peter S. Cayetano for Government and Public Service; Sen. Francis Joseph "Chiz" G. Escudero, for Youth Leadership; and my seatmates, Sen. Sonny Angara for Government Service and Legislation; and Sen. Joseph Victor G. Ejercito for Government and Public Service.

While this recognition is hailed as one of the most prestigious, with the reputation for selectiveness on awardees, I believe that receiving this award during these trying times carries a deeper meaning and significance.

As we all know, we continue to recover from the most disruptive event of our lifetime: the COVID-19 pandemic. While the pandemic posed unprecedented challenges and disruptions to our daily lives, it also opened up more opportunities for creativity and innovation to rebuild a more resilient, a more robust, and a more inclusive society which leaves no Filipinos behind. For me, this is the essence of the theme of the 2021 Search: Everyday Leaders Enabling Extraordinary Impact.

The 2021 TOYM awardees show us the best of what the post-pandemic Philippines could be. Their stories will reflect the Filipino spirit persevering amid the challenges we face. For many of us, the pandemic was the darkest time we faced in our lifetime. At the same time, it brought out the best of what our fellow Filipinos could be. The 2021 TOYM awardees were among those who shined the brightest to serve as beacons of hope to our country.

At this juncture, let me recognize each of the 2021 TOYM awardees. First, for the field of Social Entrepreneurship, we have a coffee entrepreneur and nutrition entrepreneurship pioneer Ariestelo Asilo who co-organized the non-governmental organization Rise Against Hunger. In 2021, he won a grant for his coffee research, which uses Internet of Things technology to benefit 400 coffee farmers in Cavite and Davao. His company, Varacco Inc., won as one of the 50 United Nation's Best Small Business: Good Food For All, a recognition given at the United Nations Foods Systems Summit 2021.

Up next for the field of Agricultural Entrepreneurship is Iloisa Romaraog-Diga. The mind behind the app Session Groceries, which connects local farmers and consumers to support local agribusiness, promote a sustainable lifestyle, and educate the local community on the benefits of eating fresh, locally grown food. Aside from connecting farmers to consumers, Session Groceries has also developed a farmer's academy, which allowed the sharing of knowledge and experiences to aid the farmers in meeting quality standards and ensure continued community support.

In the field of Education, we have Eleazar Abraham L. Orobia or "Abe." The head facilitator of Art Workshops for Indigenous People Elementary Teachers. Abe focused on artistic research during the pandemic to determine society's conduct towards art and culture in times of crisis. His installations consist of various images from physicians, nurses, and other medical personnel wherein full personal protective equipment as temporary shield in the fight against the pandemic to depictions of small farmers and fishermen, cultural communities suffering from the crisis. These are part of the exhibition, titled "Images of Our Nation" at the National Commission for Culture and the Arts gallery.

In the field of Environment Marine Conservation, we have Anna R. Oposa, co-founder of Save Philippine Seas. In 2015, Anna founded the Sea and Earth Advocates or SEA Camp in partnership with the U.S. Embassy in the Philippines. To date, the SEA Camp has trained over 200 youth leaders in the Philippines and Southeast Asia to become leaders in conservation. She also co-wrote a workbook, entitled "*An Introduction to Climate Change for Filipino Youth*." She helped operationalize the country's first shark and ray sanctuary in Cebu through empowerment and education programs.

For the field of Education and Sociology, we have Jayeel S. Cornelio, Associate Professor and the Director of the Development Studies Program at the Ateneo de Manila University. He is a recipient of two national awards for his scholarship and extensive body of work on religion and social change. He has also been the editor of "Rethinking



Filipino Millennials: Alternative Perspective of a Misunderstood Generation” in 2020 and the lead editor of the “Routledge International Handbook of Religion in Global Society” for 2021.

For the field of Science and Technology, we have Maria Yzabell Angel V. Palma, inventor of AirDisc Cooling Technologies, which is anticipated to play a pivotal role amid the climate crisis we find ourselves. Maria Yzabell Angel’s main goal is to make these technologies available to everyone.

In the field of Medicine and Cardiology, we have Dr. Jaime Alfonso M. Ahererra, whose research had been used to develop pathways for COVID-19 management at the Philippine General Hospital. He is also known for his work on ST-elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI), which is focused on timely management of heart attacks and its correlation with adverse outcomes at the Philippine General Hospital.

Another awardee in the field of Education is Lou Sabrina S. Ongkiko, a Master Teacher 1 at the Culiati Elementary School in Tandang Sora, Quezon City. She led the planning and implementation of her school’s learning continuity program for distance learning during the pandemic and helped ensure stability through the conduct of Facebook Messenger classes, strengthening learner mapping and community support.

In the field of Digital Journalism, we have Jaemark S. Tordecilla, the head of digital media for GMA News and Public Affairs. As digital media chief of one of the country’s top news organizations, he spearheaded the development of Cover Stories, an award-winning, multimedia storytelling platform, as well as the network’s Digital Video Laboratory, which has developed and launched a portfolio of original digital newscasts, documentary shows, and podcasts.

Lastly, for the field of Science and Medicine, we have Dr. Melvin J. Sanicas, an internationally-recognized Filipino COVID-19 expert for his tireless work in scientific communication, fighting misinformation and disinformation, advancing the field of vaccinology, and making significant contributions to global public health. A TED Educator, the lessons that Dr. Sanicas developed on tuberculosis, influenza, meningitis, and coronavirus have been translated into over 24 different languages and viewed by millions.

This year’s TOYM awardees, just like their predecessors, show us the best of what Filipinos can be. *Sa paggawad natin sa kanila ng parangal, binibigyan din natin ng pagkilala ang mga natatanging katangian ng mga Pilipino lalo na ang kanilang husay at tatag na nag-angat sa ating mga kababayan sa gitna ng krisis.*

For these reasons, I call on our distinguished colleagues to support the adoption of this resolution.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR VILLANUEVA

At this juncture, Senator Villanueva informed the Members that Senator Marcos had manifested her attendance via the Senate’s official Zoom platform. Senate President Zubiri acknowledged her online presence, stating that Senator Marcos had tested positive for COVID-19, thus rendering her unable to physically attend the session. He also wished her a fast recovery.

COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR ANGARA

In cosponsoring Proposed Senate Resolution No. 91, Senator Angara delivered the following speech:

I would like to associate myself with the earlier speech of our colleague from Valenzuela, Sen. Sherwin “Win” Gatchalian. But allow me also to deliver a few words of my own.

I stand to sponsor this resolution congratulating and commending yet another batch of honorees for the annual search for the country’s Most Outstanding Young Men and Women.

In sponsoring this measure, we are reminded of two things: the first is something American industrialist William Durant wrote about the Aristotelian Principle of how virtues are formed in man by doing the actions—“We are what we repeatedly do... therefore excellence is not an act, but a habit.”; the second is what our national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal, wrote in *Noli Me Tángere*: “The example could encourage others who only fear to start.”

Simula po noong 1959, pinararangalan po natin ang mga indibidwal na may kakaibang kontribusyon sa kanilang mga propesyon o mga larangan. Binibigyan natin sila ng parangal dahil karapat-dapat silang bigyan ng parangal. Ginagawa rin natin ito dahil nais natin silang makilala sa ating bansa, na sana sa kanilang ehemplo, maudyok ang kanilang mga kababayan na sumunod sa kanilang mga yapak.



It has become a tradition through the efforts of the JCI Philippines for the country to regularly search and recognize its most outstanding individuals. And that is because we believe exemplary and excellent acts deserve due praise and should not go unrecognized. We are what we repeatedly do after all. We also do this because we want to inspire those among our countrymen, especially the youth, who wish to make a contribution but do not necessarily know where or how to begin. We wish to dispel that fear and we wish to inspire.

As mentioned by Senator Gatchalian, many from this august Chamber have been chosen as TOYM honorees. I would like to add also he himself was an honoree in 2011; former Sen. Richard Gordon in 1982; our colleague, Sen. Alan Peter C. S. Cayetano was my batchmate in 2010 along with former Sen. Bam Aquino in 2010; Sen. Joseph Victor G. Ejercito; Sen. Francis Joseph "Chiz" G. Escudero; Sen. Loren Legarda, our President Pro Tempore; former Sen. Ninoy Aquino; former Sen. Emmanuel "Manny" Pacquiao; former senator and president, Joseph Estrada, former Sen. Juan Flavio, former Sen. Gringo Honasan, also former Senators Lina, Maceda, Mercado, John Osmeña, Miriam Defensor-Santiago, and former Senate President Manny Villar.

This year, through JCI Philippines, the TOYM Foundation and the Gerry Roxas Foundation, 10 individuals have been chosen and their stories deemed worthy of praise. At the risk of repeating what Senator Gatchalian have mentioned, allow me to mention them individually.

The first is Ariestelo A. Asilo, TOYM Honoree for Social Entrepreneurship. He cofounded the food and beverage company Varacco Inc., which owns the registered trademark brand Timplado. Through his work, he helped pioneer the COFFEE program or the Coffee-based Farming and Entrepreneurship Engagement, which is built on the values of responsible entrepreneurship and dignified work, particularly for our coffee farmers.

He has also helped, as mentioned, the Rise Against Hunger Coalition, the Peace Corps Scholars and Alumni Association, and he has helped secure funding for farm-to-market roads in Lobo, Batangas under the Philippine Rural Development Program.

Next is Iloisa Romaraog-Diga, our honoree for Agricultural Entrepreneurship, who founded the Session Groceries smartphone app, which provides users access to fresh and home-grown produce from the convenience of their homes. Through her efforts, not only has she provided consumers with better food choices, she has also created new income streams for upland farmers who no longer need to work with middlemen for their produce to reach customers. Currently, she is working to get more Filipino-grown produce, particularly Baguio's strawberries, to markets abroad as far as Dubai in the Middle East.

Next is our multi-awarded artist, educator, independent curator and cultural advocate Eleazar Abraham "Abe" L. Orobias, the honoree for Education and Culture. In 2018, he worked as the head facilitator of Art Workshops for Indigenous People, Elementary Teachers from different parts of the Philippines. He also created a Bas Relief Mural of the Basi Revolt in the Municipality of San Ildefonso, Ilocos Sur.

In 2017, he was one of the five artists who worked on a mural reinterpretation of the famous Bahay Nakpil Bautista. Proceeds from the sale of these murals were donated for the reconstruction and preservation of the said historical site.

The fourth TOYM honoree is Anna R. Oposa, who was recognized for her contributions to the environment and marine conservation. She is the Executive Director and Chief Mermaid of Save Philippine Seas, having been at the forefront of projects and campaigns in shark conservation, waste management, an environmental education. Her work has contributed to raising the profile of marine conservation in mainstream and social media, national and local legislation, and empowering youth and communities to take action on environmental issues. And if I am not mistaken, she is the daughter of Atty. Tony Oposa, who is also a former TOYM awardee and famous to law graduates for the seminal *Oposa vs. Factoran* case.

Next is TOYM honoree for PhD Education and Sociology is Dr. Jayeel S. Cornelio. He is currently associate professor for Development Studies Program and Associate Dean of research and creative work at the Ateneo De Manila University. He is a leading sociologist of religion in the Philippines and he is widely known for his brave and extensive research on youth, politics and religious life. He is best known for his wide ranging scholarship which covers topics, such as: Christianity and the war on drugs, fundamentalism and the struggle for gender equality, and young people in post-conflict Marawi.

For Science and Technology, the TOYM honoree is Ma. Yzabell Angel Palma. She invented a more eco-friendly form of air conditioning, which is no need for ozone-depleting refrigerants and founded Air Disc Cooling Technologies, which has since garnered interests from investors from around the world. Her work has garnered awards from topnotch international investors' competitions and was endorsed by the International Federation of Inventors' Associations as a timely response to global warming.

Our TOYM awardee for Medicine-Cardiology is Dr. Jaime Alfonso M. Aherrera, who is a multi-awarded board topnotcher, cardiologist, epidemiologist, academician and health advocate who has been using his knowledge to educate the community, specifically about the early recognition of cardiac diseases, one of the top killers of our countrymen. His research on heart diseases paved the way for the improvement in the earlier “heart attack pathways” of the UP Philippine General Hospital. His brainchild, the IM Platinum Textbook series for Internal Medicine, has now reached and helped thousands of medical students and young specialists nationwide.

The TOYM honoree for Education and the Academe is Lou Sabrina S. Ongkiko. She is a multi-awarded public school teacher of Culiati Elementary School and has been working with different partner organizations to create programs and activities that help students, teachers, parent, and the community, particularly during the pandemic. These include the COVID-19 Comics for Children, two radio programs to reach students and teachers and piloting Facebook Messenger classes with AHA! Learning Center. Teacher Sab is also an advocate for quality STEM Education and was instrumental in setting up the Center for Integrated STEM Education (CISTEM) with Unilab Foundation and the University of the Philippines College of Education.

For Digital Journalism, the TOYM honoree is Jaemark S. Tordecilla. He is currently head of Digital Media at GMA News and Public Affairs. He spearheaded the development and launch of the Cover Stories platform for GMA News Online, which has published long form multimedia stories that have garnered numerous awards. He oversees the network’s Digital Video Lab, which he conceptualized and has since launched a portfolio of online programs, including the Howie Severino Podcast, The Mangahas Interviews, Stand for Truth, and Need To Know.

And last, but not the least is our Science and Medicine TOYM honoree, Dr. Melvin J. Sanicas. He is a world-renowned Filipino physician-scientist who organized and launched in 2014 the Collaboration for TB Vaccine Discovery (CTVD), an international network of over 80 institutions dedicated to fostering collaboration in TB vaccine discovery. With his expertise in vaccinology, mobile health, health info technology, and digital communications, Dr. Sanicas is the only Filipino digital health expert for the World Health Organization (WHO), health data expert for Facebook, and digital strategy advisor of the Infectious Disease Society of America. He is also on social media, and I follow him on Twitter.

Each of this year’s honorees deserve praise because in their respective areas of expertise, they have exuded nothing less than the utmost in excellence even in their youth. Theirs are among the many reminders that there is no age requirement to achieving great things.

Hopefully, through their example, they may bring hope, especially amid the ongoing pandemic and crisis and inspire others to follow in their footsteps. And for our part in the Senate, we will continue to shine a light on young individuals such as our honorees. Not only is this august Chamber responsible for crafting legislation, it is also called upon to help uplift and inspire the spirits of our countrymen.

Congratulations to the 2021 TOYM honorees.

COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR LEGARDA

In cosponsoring the resolution, Senator Legarda congratulated the awardees both past and present who were in attendance. She mentioned that as an awardee in 1992, she had once requested that the TOYM award be renamed to “Ten Outstanding Young Men and Women.”

Following is the full text of Senator Legarda’s cosponsorship speech which she requested to be deemed inserted and read into the Journal and Record of the Senate:

I am a firm believer that being excellent is not a feat limited only to select individuals, for excellence can be attained through passion, dedication, and commitment. Having been awarded as one of the Ten Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) in 1992 for journalism, I commend the TOYM of 2021 and those who choose to face the path of excellence.

It has been a tradition of the Philippine Senate to commend and congratulate the awardees of TOYM. In 2021, these people demonstrated utmost excellence in service and leadership despite the hardships of the COVID-19 pandemic. Their actions have truly created an impact on communities and their constituents.

I would like to congratulate:

1. Ariestelo A. Asilo, the honoree for Social Entrepreneurship;
2. Iloisa Romaraog-Diga, the honoree for Agricultural Entrepreneurship;



3. Eleazar Abraham L. Orobia, the honoree for Education and Culture;
4. Anna R. Oposa, the honoree for environment, Marine Conservation;
5. Jayeel S. Cornelio, the honoree for the PhD Education and Sociology;
6. Maria Yzabell Angel V. Palma, the honoree for Science and Technology;
7. Jamie Alfonso M. Aherrera, the honoree for Medicine/Cardiology;
8. Lou Sabrina S. Ongkiko, the honoree for Education/Academe;
9. Jaemark S. Tordecilla, the honoree for Digital Journalism; and
10. Melvin J. Sanicas, the honoree for Science/Medicine.

These 10 young adults deserve to be recognized for their exemplary performance. With this, I would like to be made coauthor and cosponsor of the measures.

COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR EJERCITO

In cosponsoring Proposed Senate Resolution No. 77, Senator Ejercito delivered the following speech:

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.” This powerful statement was made by one of the acclaimed leaders of the 20th century, Mahatma Gandhi.

I rise today to cosponsor Proposed Senate Resolution Nos. 77 and 91, sponsored by my co-seatmates and co-TOYM awardees, Sen. Win Gatchalian and Sen. Sonny Angara. I would not want to lose this opportunity to extend my congratulations and commendation to the recipients of the 2021 The Outstanding Young Men for their significant and remarkable contributions in their fields and to the community.

Way back in 2007, I was in the same position as our awardees right now. I was once a recipient of TOYM for Public Service and Governance during my stint as local chief executive of San Juan City. As a public servant for almost two decades now, looking back to this time, it was indeed an honor to be part of a set of diverse honorees from around the country. I continue to cherish this award and, up to now, I will hold this close to my heart.

Today, as we acknowledge our TOYM awardees, we recognize their achievements and service to the Filipino people. These 10 exemplary Filipinos have reached new heights in serving others. Prioritizing others above yourself is extraordinary and yet these men and women did so selflessly. They are the living testimony of the statement of Gandhi of service to others. Being a TOYM awardee means that you did something extraordinary.

I will not read the names anymore as they were already read by our sponsors earlier, but they are really inspiring. I would just like to take note of one of the awardees, Ms. Anna Oposa. [She and her father are] the only father and daughter awardees, just like myself and my father, as the father and son awardees of TOYM.

As I end, I want also to congratulate my brothers and sisters in the Junior Chamber International Philippines for a job well done in meticulously selecting these brave young men and women as recipients of this award—honorees that will serve as hope and inspiration to everyone and to our younger generation.

To our TOYM awardees, continue inspiring others.

COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR REVILLA

In cosponsoring Proposed Senate Resolution No. 77, Senator Revilla delivered the following speech:

I join our colleagues, Senators Gatchalian, Legarda, Ejercito, and Angara, in commending our TOYM awardees for 2021. We congratulate The Outstanding Young Men and Women who not only excel but go above and beyond their respective fields.

We admire the immense passion and dedication these young individuals have towards their respective professions and chosen fields.

Tunay na kahanga-hanga ang kanilang kontribusyon sa ating bansa. Sila ay inspirasyon at larawan ng pag-asa para sa ating lahat. Kinikilala natin sila bilang “everyday leaders” na higit na kumikinang sa panahon ng pandemya.

They have answered beyond the call of their duties and had willingly taken the extra mile in selfless service to others. Our awardees have truly exemplified being men and women for others.

For doing what they do excellently, they have made their community and the country better.



As we congratulate all awardees, we do so with a prayer of hope that they continue to lead the change that our country needs, and that they may also create ripples of inspiration so that many more may follow their footsteps.

With the permission of the good sponsors, I respectfully manifest my intent to be made coauthor of the said resolution.

COSPONSORSHIP REMARKS OF SENATOR CAYETANO (P)

In cosponsoring Proposed Senate Resolution No. 77, Senator Cayetano (P) joined Senators Gatchalian, Angara, Legarda, Ejercito, and Revilla in congratulating the TOYM 2021 awardees. She also joined Senator Legarda in the hopes that women will also be recognized in the title of the TOYM itself.

As the chair of the Committee on Sustainable Development Goals, Innovations and Futures Thinking, she recognized the works and advocacies of the TOYM awardees that directly addressed several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as follows:

- (1) Mr. Ariestelo Asilo, awardee for Social Entrepreneurship, whose work and advocacy address SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth);
- (2) Ms. Iloisa Romaroag-Diga, for Agricultural Entrepreneurship, whose work also addresses SDG 2 and SDG 8, and SDG 9 (Industry Innovation and Infrastructure) because of her innovative platform;
- (3) Mr. Eleazar Abraham Orobia, for Education, touching SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 10 (Reducing Inequalities), because education should reduce inequalities;
- (4) Ms. Anna Oposa, including her father, whom she had worked with several times, whose works address SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 14 (Life Below Water), and who was the contact she was referring to when she suggested to Senator Padilla, during the latter's interpellation on her privilege speech the previous week, that they visit areas where marine life has been affected by pollution;
- (5) Mr. Jayeel Cornelio, for Education and Sociology, who contributed to SDG 4, SDG 10, and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities);
- (6) Ms. Maria Yzabell Angel Palma, for Science and Technology, whose contribution addresses SDG 9 as well as SDG 10;
- (7) Dr. Jaime Alfonso Aherrera, for Medicine and Cardiology, whose work and advocacies touch on SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), and intersect with SDG 10, SDG 9, and SDG 11;
- (8) Ms. Lou Sabrina Ongkiko, also for Education, addressing SDG 4, SDG 10, and SDG 11;
- (9) Mr. Jaemark Tordecilla, for Digital Journalism, whose work contributes to SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), SDG 10, and SDG 11; and
- (10) Dr. Melvin Sanicas, for Science and Medicine, contributing to SDG 3, SDG 9, SDG 10, and SDG 11.

If invited, she hoped that the TOYM awardees would find time to attend Senate hearings and inform the Body about their work. She said that the Body even invites experts from other parts of the world since hearings during the pandemic were conducted online; hence, she would also like to hear from them—experts from and recognized by the country. She urged the other members of the Chamber to take into account the young people to their hearings so that they could participate in the creation of laws.

REMARKS OF SENATOR HONTIVEROS

At this juncture, Senator Hontiveros also congratulated the new batch of the TOYM awardees, noting that each new group is always an improvement over the earlier batches.

She especially recognized Ms. Anna Oposa, who continued her family's proud tradition of environmental activism, and Mr. Jayeel Cornelio, Director of the Ateneo de Manila University's Development Studies Program. She disclosed that she intends to return to school to pursue Development Studies when she is no longer part of formal politics.



In concluding her manifestation, she again congratulated the TOYM awardees and thanked them for their service to the nation. Thereafter, she requested that she likewise be made coauthor of the resolution.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR ESTRADA

For his part, Senator Estrada stated that even though he will no longer have the opportunity to receive the TOYM award, he would still like to be made cosponsor and coauthor of the resolution honoring the new batch of awardees, and recognizing their success stories and contributions to the nation particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. He thanked them for their animate courage, creativity, passion, persistence, as well as for going the extra mile in service to others.

COAUTHORS/COSPONSORS

At this juncture, Senator Villanueva manifested that all Members present are coauthors/cosponsors of Proposed Senate Resolution No. 77.

ADOPTION OF PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 77

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, Proposed Senate Resolution No. 77, taking into consideration Proposed Senate Resolution No. 91, was adopted by the Body, subject to style.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, the session was suspended.

It was 3:56 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:11 p.m., the session was resumed.

PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 84

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body considered Proposed Senate Resolution No. 84, entitled

RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING DAVEMARK "DOBERMANN"
APOLINARIO FOR WINNING THE IBO WORLD FLYWEIGHT TITLE AT THE
INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE IN EAST LONDON, SOUTH AFRICA.

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

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR GO

In sponsoring Proposed Senate Resolution No. 84, Senator Go delivered the following speech:

It is with great pride and honor that I sponsor the Senate resolution commending and congratulating Davemark "Dobermann" Apolinario for successfully winning the International Boxing Organization (IBO) World Flyweight Title at the International Boxing Centre in East London, South Africa.

I extend my utmost praise to my fellow Mindanaoan, Dave Apolinario, for exemplifying the unrelenting Filipino spirit of competitiveness in a highly intense boxing showdown last July 30, 2022. He dominated early on in the opening round after delivering a huge left straight punch, scoring a first round stoppage against his South African



foe, Gideon Buthelezi, with an exclamation point. His remarkable win paved the way for claiming his first world title after he captured the IBO Flyweight Title and improving his unbeaten boxing record of 17 wins, 0 defeats, with 12 knockouts.

The 23-year old from Sarangani Province has proved to be an indomitable boxer, as he is now recognized as one of the most promising fighters our country has produced, and to represent the country in future international boxing competitions.

As the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Sports, *ang mga ganitong karangalan ay tunay ngang nakatataba ng puso; dahil sa kabila ng krisis na ating kinakaharap dulot ng pandemya, ang ating mga Pilipinong atleta ay namamayagpag sa mundo ng palakasan at nagbibigay ng malaking inspirasyon para sa ating bayan.*

Rest assured that this Representation will continue to push for the promotion and advancement of our long-term commitment for the betterment of our sports development programs in the country. *Ako po ay kaisa ng bawat Pilipino sa pagsuporta at pagpupugay sa ating mga atleta na nagbigay ng karangalan sa ating bansa.*

To our athletes, the glory and honor you have given to this country will be forever etched in Philippine sports history—as you have become pillars of strength and great sources of inspiration to our fellow countrymen—that continue to give us hope in the face of adversity. Each and every one of you has proven time and again your undying devotion to our country's cause.

It is for this reason that we give due distinction and recognition for the impeccable performance of Dave Apolinario, which has inspired many Filipino athletes to soar to greater heights in their respective fields of sport.

Mabuhay si Dave Apolinario. Mabuhay ang atletang Pilipino!

REMARKS OF SENATE PRESIDENT ZUBIRI

Senate President Zubiri congratulated the honoree and his *kababayan* from Sarangani on a job well done in representing the country in the international arena.

COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR VILLANUEVA

In cosponsoring Proposed Senate Resolution No. 84, Senator Villanueva delivered the following speech:

At the outset, let me congratulate our distinguished colleague, sports enthusiast, and active supporter of Philippine boxing, the gentleman from Davao, Sen. Christopher Lawrence T. Go.

Today, we are so blessed to have the current IBO Flyweight champion, Davemark “Dobermann” Apolinario, in the Senate gallery, and I believe that there are three things that we can all learn from him. I got the chance to talk to him early this afternoon.

First would be excellence. Dave is an unbeaten boxer. His recent win against Gideon Buthelezi improved his perfect record to 17-0, with 12 knockouts. *Wala po itong pagmumulan kundi ang matibay na hangaring maging magaling at mahusay sa larangang kaniyang pinili.*

Ikalawa, iyon pong persistence. We have heard the story that Dave fought with a heavy heart because his mother died just a few months ago in Sarangani Province. *At kanina*, I had the chance to talk to him. Going to South Africa, *limang beses po iyong kaniyang stopover* before reaching his final destination. And so, when he reached South Africa, *nawawala na iyong luggage niya*—it is nowhere to be found—*hanggang sa lalaban na po siya*. It is good that he has extra shorts and *iyong mga gamit na kailangan niya*. *Tinuloy pa rin po ang laban, hindi po siya sumuko, at ipinakita ang tapang at bagsik ng isang Pilipino.*

The third is consistency. We know that Dave Apolinario won gold medals at the Palarong Pambansa before becoming a professional boxer at age 18. *Talagang naging tapat sa kaniyang pangarap at araw-araw pinagtatrabahuhan ang kaniyang tagumpay.*

Saludo po tayo sa kaniya.

Davemark Apolinario, just like the People's Champ and our former colleague, Sen. Manuel Pacquiao, is excellent, persistent, and consistent: *mga katangian ng isang tunay na kampeon!*

Again, congratulations to him and may God bless him more.



REMARKS OF SENATE PRESIDENT ZUBIRI

Senate President Zubiri noted that the honoree was a product of Palarong Pambansa. In that regard, he emphasized the importance of having a grassroots program in the country that would develop athletes just like Senators Tolentino, Dela Rosa, Cayetano, and himself.

He then suggested to the Committee on Sports that it consult with the organizers of Palarong Pambansa Batang Pinoy and Philippine National Games (PNG), about the possibility of holding contact sports alongside existing team sports like basketball, football, and volleyball. He also expressed concern that the country would lose its competitive edge in sports such as boxing, karate, taekwondo, and arnis from which the country produced world champions.

COSPONSORSHIP REMARKS OF SENATOR DELA ROSA

Senator Dela Rosa also expressed support for Proposed Senate Resolution No. 84, commending and congratulating his fellow Mindanaoan Davemark “Doberman” Apolinario for winning the International Boxing Organization Flyweight title.

Following is the full text of Senator Dela Rosa’s cosponsorship remarks:

Nagsimula po ang propesyonal na boxing career ni Davemark sa edad na 18 gulang. Ginulat nya ang mundo ng boxing noong nanalo sya via first round technical knockout laban kay Prince Canonero. Simula po noon, nagtuluy-tuloy na ang kaniyang pamamayagpag bilang isang magaling na boxer katulad ng ating dating kasamahan na si Sen. Manny Pacquiao, who incidentally also hails from the same province ng Sarangani. He remains to be unbeaten. At ngayon po ay isa na siyang IBO Flyweight Title holder pagkatapos niyang talunin si Gideon Buthelezi nito lamang July 29, 2022.

As many of you probably know, boxing is a sport that is close to my heart. Not only am I a former amateur boxer, but until today I am committed to my continued training in boxing.

What makes boxing very special is the sense of self-discipline that one gains in training—*parang ROTC din iyan, kapag ikaw ay nag-ROTC, magiging disiplinado ka; kapag ikaw ay nag-boxing, magiging disiplinado ka. Kung ang isang atleta ay magpupursige sa pagiging isang boxer, makasisiguro tayo na ang atletang ito ay magiging mabuting halimbawa, hindi lamang sa boxing, kundi sa aspeto ng disiplina at pagiging selfless.* When one is disciplined, one also learns to forget one’s own appetites and cravings.

However, the Doberman has managed to take all that a notch higher. Dave Apolinario has gone beyond self-discipline, combining it with a sincere love of country. And if we are to learn anything from our athletes, it is that discipline and love of country is a powerful, deadly combination. Truly, worthy of emulation.

Congratulations, Dave, *ug unta ikaw magpadayon kang mahimong ehemplo sa pagdasig kanamong tanan!*

COSPONSORSHIP REMARKS OF SENATOR EJERCITO

Senator Ejercito said that based on the record, Davemark Apolinario is the only Filipino who is a current International Boxing Organization (IBO) title holder, and remarked that the country is not used to having just one.

He disclosed that he had some boxing experience and acknowledged that it is indeed a tough sport. He pointed out that anything can happen when one is in the boxing ring, and that a boxer can even die during a fight. Thus, he commended Davemark Apolinario for his win.

In closing, he requested that he be made a cosponsor of Proposed Senate Resolution No. 84.

COSPONSORSHIP REMARKS OF SENATOR CAYETANO (P)

At the outset, Senator Cayetano (P) joined her colleagues in cosponsoring Proposed Senate Resolution No. 84, commending and congratulating Davemark “Doberman” Apolinario for his win in the IBO World Flyweight Title. She likewise urged the boxer to continue to be a role model, especially to the youth.

She acknowledged that although she is not a staunch supporter of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC), she concurred with the belief of Senator Dela Rosa that the value of discipline that is inculcated in the program is also developed through sports. As such, she expressed hope that the committee hearing on the ROTC bill would also consider all the other means of developing discipline, such as sports.

She also said that she supported Senate President Zubiri's call for the Senate to hold a hearing on how the legislative branch can further support local athletes as well as important national competitions like Palarong Pambansa.

Senator Cayetano (P) then raised the matter on private-public partnership, noting that world boxing manager Mike Pelayo and his team, who were from the private sector, were the people instrumental in supporting Davemark Apolinario.

In conclusion, she commended Davemark Apolinario, the country's one and only IBO current title holder.

COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR REVILLA

Pursuant to the manifestation of Senator Villanueva, the following is the cosponsorship speech of Senator Revilla on Proposed Senate Resolution No. 84, which was deemed read and inserted into the *Journal and Record of the Senate*:

I manifest my intention to be a coauthor of this resolution.

Kaisa po ako ng ating mga kapwa senador na kumikilala at nagbibigay-pugay kay Davemark "Doberman" Apolinario sa kanyang pagkapanalo ng World IBO Flyweight Title.

Doberman may be our "Pacman in the making" with a 17-0 record to date. *Batang bata pa man ang ating kinikilala ngayon, talagang alam natin na malayo pa ang kanyang mararating.* He has a bright future ahead. Undeclared and resilient – he bears the true markings of a champion ready to make his mark in history. *Bawat suntok sa laban ng buhay - Davemark, taas-noo kang tumindig bilang isang Pinoy na matibay.*

Congratulations Doberman! Keep punching and winning, and continue to make our country proud!

COSPONSORS

With the permission of the sponsor and upon motion of Senator Villanueva, all members were made cosponsors of Proposed Senate Resolution No. 84.

ADOPTION OF PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 84

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, Proposed Senate Resolution No. 84 was adopted by the Body, subject to style.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, the session was suspended for a photo opportunity of the Members of the Body with Davemark Apolinario.

It was 4:29 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:40 p.m., the session was resumed with Senate President Pro Tempore Legarda presiding.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF SENATE PRESIDENT ZUBIRI

Availing himself of the privilege hour, Senate President Juan Miguel Zubiri delivered the following speech on the continuing power rate increases in the provinces since January 2022.



Following is the full text of Senate President Zubiri's privilege speech:

Last Friday, I went home to my beloved city and Province of Cagayan De Oro and Bukidnon and I was greeted with complaints from residents and several businessmen, mostly MSMEs. This is about the ever-increasing electricity and power rates in Northern Mindanao and many parts of the country. I actually have with me here a statement from the Oro Chamber on the highpower rates that they released recently.

One of their complaints, for example, in Cagayan De Oro is the electricity rates. For instance, from P10.62/kWh in January of this year, it has increased. And I have the rate increase here: February increased from P10.62/kWh to P10.77/kWh; in March, the rate went up to P11.82/kWh; in April, it was P12.65/kWh; in May, it was P13.98/kWh; in June, it was P13.98/kWh; and in July, it was P14.19/kWh. This is industrial rate. It increased from P10.60/kWh in January which is usually the average rate to about P14.00/kWh in July. So that is almost an increase of how many percent? My dear Minority Leader is a mathematics genius, much better than me. That is almost a 40 percent increase, a little less than 40 percent increase in six months.

And many other areas in the country have also increased. To give an example, in Bukidnon, a residential consumer paid P15.15/kWh in June and in July, he paid P16.56/kWh. That is a P1.41 increase or a 9.3 percent increase in just a one-month period.

To give you an idea, the residential power rates for the following electric cooperatives are also quite high. The one I mentioned earlier was Ifugao Electric Cooperative, Inc. (IFELCO), that is a private company. But these are for electric cooperatives.

And if you could look at the list [of the residential power rates for the following electric cooperatives for July 2022]: Bukidnon Second Electric Cooperative, Inc. (BUSECO) is at P16.31/kWh, this is in Bukidnon; Misamis Oriental-1 Rural Electric Service Cooperative, Inc. (MORESCO-1) in Misamis Oriental, where my dear Minority Leader and I come from as well, being from Northern Mindanao, it is P13.49/kWh; in Misamis Oriental II Rural Electric Service Cooperative, Inc. (MORESCO II), it is P16.90/kWh; in Lanao del Norte Electric Cooperative, Inc. (LANECO), it is P16.69/kWh; in Southern Leyte Electric Cooperative (SOLECO), it is P19.00/kWh; and in Leyte IV Electric Cooperative, Inc. (LEYECO IV), I believe this is in Region VIII, *iyong* LEYECO IV is P18.94/kWh. *Mayroon pang* Biliran Electric Cooperative, Inc. (BILECO) at P18.77/kWh. And the list is flashed on your screen.

At this juncture, the residential rates of electric cooperatives for July 2022 was flashed onscreen. Aside from the rates mentioned by Senate President Zubiri, the other rates presented onscreen are the following: Leyte II Electric Cooperative, Inc. (LEYECO II) at P13.0364 per kWh, Northern Samar Electric Cooperative, Inc. (NORSAMELCO) at P16.7827 per kWh, Samar I Electric Cooperative, Inc. (SAMELCO I) at P16.4825 per kWh, Samar II Electric Cooperative, Inc. (SAMELCO II) at P15.8495 per kWh, Eastern Samar Electric Cooperative, Inc. (ESAMELCO) at P15.0955 per kWh, First Bukidnon Electric Cooperative, Inc. (FIBECO) at P17.6412 per kWh, Cagayan Electric Power and Light Company, Inc. (CEPALCO) P15.4815 per kWh, and Don Orestes Romualdez Electric Cooperative, Inc. (DORELCO) at P16.9286 per kWh.

This scenario is replicated and I know Sen. JV Ejercito approached me earlier and mentioned the cause of complaint in Nueva Ecija. In San Jose, the rate increased from P9.00/kWh to P18.00/kWh. That is a 100 percent increase in electricity rates. *Grabe po*.

I, as a micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) promoter and advocate, feel that so many of these industries are now suffering because of the high electricity rates.

Admittedly, *ang sabi po nila noong kinausap namin iyong ibang* electric cooperatives – and I want to put on record *na hindi lahat ay kasalanan nila—ang* generation charge *nila ay napakataas*. And I know Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian was here to listen and we have the chairman of the Committee on Energy here, Sen. Raffy Tulfo. There is a breakdown in our bill on the amounts that will be paid. *Masyado raw mataas ang* generation charge because, *ang sabi nila, mataas daw ang presyo ng krudo sa* international market, as well as the weakening of the peso against the US dollar and other foreign currencies. And based on the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (EPIRA), this cost can be passed on to the consumers. The question is, should all the costs be passed on to the consumers? *Paano naman iyong malalaking kumpanya na napakaganda ng kanilang net profits at the end of the year?*

But there are other questions that beg for more answers.

First, were these increases in electricity rates a result of higher fuel cost and foreign exchange variants? Were they approved by the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC)? Because *parang napakahirap naman paniwalaan dahil ang alam ko, kapag mayroon tayong* adjustments *sa* electricity rates, supposedly *dumadaan iyan sa butas*



ng karayom pagdating sa ERC. Bilang isang SMSE operators sa Mindanao, wala rin kaming notice sa mga hearings, kung naganap ba ang mga hearings na ito. Dapat naman siguro magkaroon ng mga hearing ang mga consumers and stakeholders kung ganito kataas ang pag-increase ng electricity rates.

Pangalawa, assuming that these rates were approved by the ERC, who audits these generating companies to make sure that they are declaring the right rate increases? For instance, a coal power plant in Northern Mindanao—hindi ko na lamang babanggitin dahil marami po roon—is charging an incremental currency exchange rate adjustment and is passing it on to the consumers. However, the sister company operates a coal mine within the country. So hindi imported iyang coal mine na iyan; iyan ay local. So kung ang coal production ay local, how can we be assured that the coal that they are using is imported; hence, the rate increases on foreign exchange (forex) and expensive coal that is being imported from other countries and not coming from the coal mine within the country?

Third, is it not about time to have the shift as well? And I know that the Presiding Officer would like this because our Madam President Pro Tempore is a believer, like me, in renewable energy. Is it not about time that we shift to renewable energy? No expensive fuel needed. We can use water resources, hydro; our wind resources, wind turbines; and also solar energy, which is free for everyone to use.

Fourth, when will the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM) operate in Mindanao? Matagal na po natin hinihingi iyan. Wala pa yatang WESM na umaandar sa Mindanao. And once it starts to operate in Mindanao, could it, at least, cushion or lessen the impact of the electricity rate increase as the distribution utilities have alternatives to buy electricity from cheaper sources?

To give an example, we have recently passed in the two Congresses the MORE Electric and Power Corporation (MORE Power) franchise. Initially, the power rates in Iloilo were the highest in the Visayas at P14-P15 per kWh. Now, I am happy to announce that it is less than P9 per kWh — P8.75/kWh, if I am not mistaken because they rely on the WESM within Mindanao. Hinahanap po nila ang pinakamurang contracted price for that month para iyan din ang maibibigay nilang kuryente sa kanilang mga consumers in these areas—lowering their rates.

For example, if we have WESM, a hydropower plant in Northern Mindanao would be selling electricity for P6/kWh, much lower than the P10.26/kWh that is being bought from the coal-fired power plants.

I know that the Mindanao Grid is not yet connected to the Visayas and Luzon Grids, but can a Mindanao-wide set-up for WESM be instituted, for the meantime, immediately? In that way, they can choose from these low-cost generation systems. Maganda pa para sa environment, hindi po ba? Ito po ay perfect fight against climate change. We should move to that shift.

Lugmok na lugmok na po ang ating mga kababayan sa kahirapan na dulot ng COVID-19, crude oil fuel price increases, inflation sa kawalan ng trabaho, at dumaragdag pa ang electricity price increases lalo na sa rural areas. Mabuti pa nga po ang nasa service areas ng Meralco, kapag may hindi patas na rate increase or charges sa Meralco, agad-agad na nagpa-file ng petition sa korte ang iba't ibang consumer groups, sinasang-ayunan ng korte ang electricity consumers, and they put a stop and a hearing to these rate increases. Pero sa ating mga kababayan—katulad namin ni Sen. Aquilino “Koko” Pimentel III, Sen. Christopher Lawrence T. Go, Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa, iyong mga taga-probinsya rito—lahat po kami ngayon ay talagang hirap na hirap sa napakataas nating rates.

Pero ang ating mga kababayan naman ay tinatanggap na lamang ang mga ipinapataw na electricity rate and increases ng mga generating company at distribution utilities—hook, line, and sinker. Kung hindi ko nga ito napansin dahil full disclosure, I am also in industrial ice production. Alam naman natin na isa sa pinakamalaking expense ng industrial ice ay electricity. I and Senator Ejercito have the same business—we are both in industrial ice. Alam po namin na kapag walang kuryente ay bottling water na lamang tayo. Tubig na lamang ang ibibenta natin kasi wala po tayong yelo. Noong napansin ko nga itong generation rates na ito, I begged to ask the question: What about the others? Medium enterprise lang kami. Kawawa naman po iyong mga small and micro, iyong mga maliliit na negosyante. Wala po halos nagpa-file ng petition sa korte on behalf of electricity consumers in the rural areas, and that is a fact of life.

We now have a new chairperson in the ERC who happens to be a dear friend of mind—Atty. Monalisa Dimalanta—who is known to me as a fair and hardworking professional. I hope she goes and looks into this as soon as possible. I know she has a lot on her plate when she assumes office. Kaya nais po nating matanong ang ERC at iba pang mga concerned agency kung ano na ang kasagutan nila sa mga tanong natin.

I think it is also time, when my speech is referred to the committee of Sen. Raffy Tulfo, that we have a hearing and ask also our dear secretary, Sec. Popo Lotilla, who is also a professional and a good public servant as I have experienced his public service in the past and he knows the industry.

Paano ba natin maibababa ang presyo ng kuryente given these global situations that we are facing today? Kasi hindi po kaya ng ating mga kababayan ang ganitong klaseng electricity rates na kung gusto po nating magkaroon ng higher GDP growth rates, no industry will move here to us. They may move to other countries. Unfortunately, that has happened already because Vietnam, Malaysia, and other countries in the Southeast Asian corridor have cheaper rates than us. Remember that many companies are moving out of China, for whatever reason it may be, and the foreign chambers have told me about this.

Unfortunately, we are not catching the wave and other countries are catching the wave. Not to mention our *kababayans* who are suffering because of these high electricity rates, how can we help our *kababayans* alleviate the situation as a result of this unabated electricity rate increases?

It has been 21 years since we passed the EPIRA. If we need to review and amend it to respond the condition of the times, we are prepared to do so. It is now right for a review.

No less than our beloved President had asked this in his State of the Nation Address, because I know that one of the campaign promises of our President when we were in UniTeam is to bring down the cost of power rates.

Kailangan po natin maging mas makatao at patas ang presyuhan ng kuryente para mas matulungan natin makabangon ang ating mga kababayan. I hope that we, the Senate of the people, could stand hand-in-hand on this issue.

Maraming, maraming salamat po.

REMARK OF THE CHAIR

Senate President Pro Tempore Legarda thanked Senate President Zubiri for delivering a timely, relevant, and comprehensive privilege speech on electricity rates in the provinces.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR POE

At the outset, Senator Poe, chairperson of the Committee on Public Services, thanked Senate President Zubiri for bringing up the urgent issue on power rate hikes in the provinces. She stated that she found it alarming that electricity rates in Metro Manila are significantly lower than in the provinces and that the power supply in many areas in the country is also intermittent, with people experiencing poor services and many power outages.

She stated that the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) Law provides for the suspension of the excise tax hikes when the price of oil per barrel exceeds US\$80. She admitted that she was unsure if there is such a provision to the effect that could give consideration on the taxes being imposed on electricity given the increase in the world market supply. She then asked if the Senate could explore such a provision or proposal.

Senate President Zubiri thanked Senator Poe for her questions, adding that it was through her committee that the Body was able to pass a few franchise measures that brought down the electricity rates in certain areas in the country.

He also mentioned that the Meralco rate in Metro Manila went down by 27 percent per kWh for the month of August at P9.54/kWh, or almost half the rates of other provinces.

He then responded that a Value-Added Tax (VAT) is being paid by consumers, who unfortunately have to pay a higher VAT whenever there is an increase in the generation charge. For instance, he pointed out that operators of a coal-fired power plant could claim that they could not do anything but pass the cost on to the consumers as they had to raise their rates because the price of coal also increases due to the rising foreign exchange rates. He said that consumers are hit doubly hard by such increases because of the increased VAT payment.

As to the other taxes, he said that there is an excise tax on fuel, adding that some of the plants are fuel-based. Senate President Zubiri said that there was no mechanism to mitigate the situation by coming up with an exemption



on taxes. Simultaneously, he expressed concern about the fiscal space, saying that he wanted to ensure that there was money for social services.

Senator Poe said that the ERC supposedly proposed to remove the 12% VAT on generation charge but she was unsure of its veracity. She said that it was important to call for a hearing immediately to hear from the ERC and the DOF on the matter.

Asked by Senator Poe on how private companies are able to provide lower rates than cooperatives, Senate President Zubiri disclosed that he used to be a majority shareholder of power plant but he has sold off his shares to Vivant Energy Corporation prior to the administration of President Duterte. He said that most cooperative agreements are done through bilateral contracts between those intending to put up a power plant and the electric cooperative. He added that the agreement terms should then pass through the ERC via hearings, after which the latter would approve the power rates indicated. He said that the rates should not be disadvantageous to the consumers, and only then could the cooperative claim the price of whatever they are selling whether solar, wind, bunker or coal.

However, he said that there was usually a fine print in these contracts which provides that "The fuel charges can be passed on to the consumer." He recalled that the price of diesel, bunker, and coal were not expensive before, especially the coal fire power plant which used to be the cheapest source of electricity. He said that with people getting into renewable energy, coal fire power plants have become antiquated, resulting to the stoppage of coal exportation by countries like Indonesia in certain areas. He said that the situation caused a supply problem, and with it, the price of coal increased.

He wondered if it was possible to come up with a percentage. He expressed concern that if the consumers will be made to absorb the high cost of coal, electricity rates may reach P25.00 per kilowatt hour. He averred that businesses may close down at that rate as it may be difficult for a business to recoup if it utilizes a large portion of its costs to pay high electricity rates.

Senator Poe said that it has come to her attention that electric cooperatives are locked in long-term contracts with the power companies that supply their power. This, she said, is one of the reasons why they say that they could not compete with new private companies because these companies are able to negotiate at a lower generation cost or supply.

Senate President Zubiri surmised that this could be due to the current Competitive Selection Process (CSP) wherein all the other players with cheap rates could now compete for a particular contract with the distribution utility.

Asked by Senator Poe whether it was correct to say that because cooperatives are locked in long-term contracts with power companies, they are not able to supply the same rate as that which private companies have under the CSP, Senate President Zubiri replied in the affirmative.

At this point, Senator Poe said that while she believes in the sanctity of contracts, when the public good is adversely affected by them, then a review of the contracts entered into by the cooperatives and the power companies is in order. She said that this is to identify which provisions could be renegotiated so that they could provide cheaper electricity and better service. She believed that nobody should be locked into an agreement which punishes consumers by having them bear the brunt of increasing costs.

Agreeing with Senator Poe's observations, Senate President Zubiri said that the situation happened to MORE Power in Iloilo where the previous distribution utility (DU) had very expensive contracts which could not be cancelled because of the bilateral contracts entered into. He said that under the MORE Power Agreement, the company was going to give a competitive rate to the consumers.

He said that everybody switched to MORE Power because it offered a rate that was P5.00 cheaper per kilowatt hour. He noted that the previous electric company's franchise had expired and MORE Power, at the time, was applying for a new franchise.



Senate President Zubiri underscored that MORE Power did not take over a franchise area but that it took over a particular area with a lapsed or expired franchise. He said that the franchisee had reapplied for a franchise but could not convince the people of Iloilo, including former Senator Drilon, of their merits. He added that for this reason, he had his industrial ice plant moved from Iloilo to outside of the city because it was not making money with the rates of electricity charged in Iloilo City at the time.

He said that when the Body was able to grant MORE Power the new franchise in the 18th Congress, the people acquired the freedom to choose cheaper electricity. He believed that the company was able to get cheap rates because they were choosing from the very low-cost power generation companies in Visayas, thus making their rates one of the cheapest.

At this point, Senate President Zubiri acknowledged that it was from the Committee on Public Services, then chaired by Senator Poe in the 18th Congress, where the MORE Power franchise was passed. He further agreed with her that contracts between the cooperatives and the power companies which they entered into 15 to 25 years ago must be reviewed. He said that if the rates of coal and fuel would continue to rise, he hoped that the legal luminaries in the Chamber would be able to come up with an idea on how to temper the rising cost of generation facilities.

Senator Poe realized that almost every increase of prices in the world market or the dollar exchange rates is customarily passed on to the consumers by the cooperatives as well as the private companies.

Senate President Zubiri said that there are private companies and private distribution utilities (DUs) that have existing contracts of the same nature as well.

Senator Poe said that in effect, suppliers and providers have no risks because it is always the consumers that bear the brunt of rising costs. Given this, she said that there is no excuse for the cooperatives to render bad service and have faulty infrastructure because they are able to recoup their costs from the consumers anyway.

She expressed frustration that since the pandemic, even Batangas—a favorite vacation spot being close to Manila—could not be supplied with power for a 24-hour period. She lamented that the power cooperatives have not been spending their collection on improving their services or capital expense.

She said that she was glad that the Committee on Energy is headed by a strong chairperson because there are numerous special interest groups that have not been as judicious as they should have been and the consumers are suffering for it.

In closing, she said that the EPIRA, which liberalized the power sector must be reviewed in order to put safeguards in place and to prescribe a checklist of what suppliers are supposed to provide. As in the case of franchises, she said that if the franchisees are not able to provide continuous service for a number of days, they may be penalized or the franchise may be cancelled.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR PIMENTEL

At the outset, Senator Pimentel stated that he would be asking a few clarificatory questions from the Senate President because like the general public, he said that he was not very familiar with the complexities of how electric bills are charged by the power companies.

He said that he randomly asked for a billing statement from the private utility mentioned by Senate President Zubiri and the billed residential household actually confirmed that their billing increased by P2,000 in just one month.

Senate President Zubiri stated that residential rates are more expensive than industrial rates.

Senator Pimentel observed that the generation and transmission charges indicated in the billing statement are called revenues and that the generation and transmission revenues are lumped together to make up 70% of the billing; distribution revenues or charges comprise 20%; subsidies are pegged at less than 1%; government taxes



make up 9%; and universal charges around 1%. He said that the billing statement came from a random account from Cagayan de Oro City, and surmised that if there were components which could be lessened to ease the burden on consumers, then it could be on the government charges of 9%. He further noted that generation and transmission charges should be separated under the law, which was not the case in the statement he held. He reiterated that for the particular billing statement he was able to secure, the generation and transmission revenues were lumped together and accounted for 70% of the total billing.

Senate President Zubiri agreed that the transmission and generation charges must be unbundled.

Senator Pimentel wondered how one would explain to the people that despite the oversupply of generated power in Mindanao, they would still be experiencing an increase in their electric bills.

Senate President Zubiri explained that, as mentioned by Senator Poe earlier, many of the cooperatives were tied up with the contracts they had entered into with the power companies. He said that there are a lot of hydropower resources in Mindanao but he lamented that the contracts went to the bigger coal fire plants which were now suffering from the high cost of coal prices and foreign exchange rates.

He illustrated that it used to be that electrical costs were higher during the hot season but that recently, electricity rates continue to increase even during the rainy season. This, he believed, has something to do with high cost of imported coal and the foreign exchange rate.

He said that the Cagayan de Oro Chamber is pushing to have enough options to harness renewable energy to combat imported fuel and coal. He expressed hope that during the committee hearing of the Committee on Energy, the new Energy Secretary, Raphael "Popo" Lotilla would be amenable to focusing on renewable energy.

He continued to point out that electric companies can no longer contract because they are already oversubscribed. He recalled that the information was disclosed during the committee hearings in the 18th Congress which were presided by Senator Gatchalian. He said that oversubscription meant that a particular electric cooperative's subscription to a pegged amount of megawattage exceeds its market's need. He explained that if a cooperative only needs 15 megawatts but its subscription reaches 18 to 20 megawatts as indicated in their contract with the power company, then the consumers pay for 20 megawatts and its very expensive generation cost.

He said that it was important to come up with measures to correct the situation. Senator Pimentel said that the Body may propose to interview the 115 electric cooperatives in Mindanao and come up with solutions to subdivide the oversubscription with the subscribers.

On whether he would agree to review the rates, and contracted capacity against the actual demand of the electric cooperatives, Senate President Zubiri replied in the affirmative. He stated that the Body, by way of amendment to the EPIRA Law, should also give the cooperatives an opportunity to contract elsewhere. That way, he said that the cooperatives could open themselves to the WESM, or get directly from the Agus-Pulangi Hydropower Plant or other plants that could be cost efficient for them. He clarified that the contract would not be terminated; rather, an allowable price for electricity would be fixed. For instance, he said that instead of ten megawatts, only five megawatts would be delivered and get the other five from renewable energy (RE), or cheaper product of generation facilities.

He narrated that according to the general manager of electric cooperatives, they could not change the rates that were approved by the previous board of directors. Moreover, he said that the cooperatives are bound to honor their 25-year old contracts for fear that a case would be filed against them in the Office of the Ombudsman and lose their jobs if they get their power supply elsewhere.

Asked about the quality of the new contracts under the Competitive Selection Process (CSP), Senate President Zubiri stated that he would have to ask about it. Senator Pimentel expressed concern that the new contracts would be a repeat of the old contracts that the cooperatives are complaining about. He underscored that the board of directors are supposed to represent and protect the best interest of the consumers.



Agreeing with Senator Pimentel, Senate President Zubiri however stated that coal generation ten years ago was at P4.00 per kilowatt hour; while engaging in RE generation was so expensive. He noted that there seems to be no respite from the rising price of coal in the near future: 1) Indonesia has banned exporting coal; 2) the Philippines could not buy from Russia, otherwise it will be sanctioned; and 3) with the embargo imposed on Russian oil, European countries, particularly Germany, would revive coal-fired power plants. He enjoined the Members to work together to help the consumers who are paying P18.00 per kilowatt-hour in Davao and Bukidnon, which could go high by as much as P20.00. He expressed concern that many businesses, malls and manufacturing plants in the area would shut down.

Senator Pimentel noted that the electricity rate in January was at P10.62; then in July, it was P14.19. He inquired if the distribution utility secured a prior approval from the ERC for its monthly increase.

Senate President Zubiri stated that the 33.5% increase in six months was a question that he would also like the ERC to answer, because some contracts have allowable rate increases that involve foreign exchange, and fuel or coal cost adjustments.

He stated that unlike in Metro Manila where MERALCO consumers would candidly complain about their rising electricity bills, no one complains about it in the provinces. He said that it is unfortunate that consumers in the provinces take matters hook, line, and sinker.

At this point, Senator Pimentel mused at how the Oro Chamber provided proposals, and its implementation seemed that they are willing to wait, its benefits are for the long-term. He then inquired about the immediate relief that the consumers, especially in residential areas, could avail of.

He recalled that in his SONA, President Marcos mentioned the amendment of the EPIRA Law as part of his 19 priority legislative measures. Although lacking in detail, he stated that he is for amending the law in order to give relief to consumers.

Asked if a draft amendment to the EPIRA Law had been submitted, Senate President Zubiri replied in the negative. He said that the Body would have to wait for the LEDAC meeting. He suggested that Senator Tulfo, chairperson of the Committee on Energy, call for a hearing in the coming weeks so the Body could inquire from Secretary Lotilla regarding the Executive's draft on how electricity rates could be reduced.

Senator Pimentel stated that together with Senator Hontiveros, they are open to amending the EPIRA Law so long as it would be for the good of the people - long-term but should be with immediate relief that addresses the effects of inflation like power rates which the household pays for.

On another matter, he inquired if electric cooperatives are non-profit companies that should not gain from the cash flow of their subscribers since board of directors as trustees and representatives of the consumers must look after its welfare. He opined that the overall concept is not working inasmuch as the law governing electric cooperatives is another law, and not the EPIRA. Nevertheless, he stressed that whether the law needs overhauling or tweaking, the overall concept of the law should be geared towards the interest of the consumer.

Agreeing with Senator Pimentel, Senate President Zubiri admitted that the electric cooperatives have become political since membership is by way of an election. He supposed that the members were trying to recoup their expenditures from the consumers and expressed dismay that many cooperatives are run poorly, and offer their services rather terribly.

He said that as former chairperson of the Committee on Cooperatives, he witnessed how some electric cooperatives rendered poor and terrible service, thereby giving the cooperative movement a bad name. Cognizant of the late Sen. Nene Pimentel's support for the cooperative movement, he assured the Body that the failures and deficiencies of the cooperatives would be flagged.

Senator Pimentel clarified that it was actually his grandfather who started the cooperative movement in Cagayan de Oro City.



On whether electric cooperatives were covered under the Cooperative Code, Senate President Zubiri stated that initially, all those registered with the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) were strictly cooperatives; those who are not registered with the CDA were not considered as cooperatives. He recalled that he failed to win a senate seat in the 2013 elections because he fought hard for the electric cooperatives to be included in the CDA. He said that as a remedy, the House of Representatives inserted a provision that would allow electric cooperatives to be a stock cooperative under the CDA. He explained that the provision was not initially included because the government is still in control—the General Manager is chosen by the DOE through the NEA; and the Terms of Reference for the contracting of energy has to be approved by the DOE. He said that it is a pseudo-government agency under the NEA, which is not a cooperative *per se* because a real cooperative is controlled by every member. Still, he believed that the Senate should review and improve the provision to make it more efficient.

On whether electric cooperatives are governed by the Cooperative Code, Senate President Zubiri stated that the CDA has no control over them; it is NEA that solves the problems, although there are about seven electric cooperatives that are CDA-registered while the rest are under NEA.

Senator Pimentel expressed concern that the general manager is appointed by the NEA and that contracts go through DOE. He believed that the DOE is the root of the problem, and not the contracts. He added that among the legislative agenda of President Marcos, the EPIRA is one that the Senate should concentrate on. He noted that the Body was able to weed out a number of problems which he supposed are also known to Senator Gatchalian, being a former chairperson of the Committee on Energy.

Senate President Zubiri thanked Senator Pimentel and stated that he was looking forward to working with him for pure bipartisanship on the measure.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR HONTIVEROS

At the outset, Senator Hontiveros stated that the speech of Senate President Zubiri focused on the high electricity rates in Mindanao which has been going on in the past two decades. She expressed hope that substantive remedies that would bring immediate relief could be recommended by the Body.

She noted that the main thrust of the speech is to amend the EPIRA Law, which back then brought hope to the people with its promise to lower the price of electricity nationwide. She then asked if it was necessary to amend the EPIRA Law, to which Senate President Zubiri replied in the affirmative but added that Congress may also come up with another law that would focus on the electricity rates.

Senator Hontiveros stated that in the past, the EPIRA Law was perceived by many sectors as the mother of many hopes; however, as time passed, it has become the mother of many problems in terms of its implementation.

Citing Section 23 of the EPIRA Law, she stated that the provision determines how various players in the power industry must deliver the cheapest price of electricity to the consumers, and that her team's initial review of the law showed that it was very detailed in providing for rate setting for private distribution utilities and electric cooperatives. She expressed gladness that the speech talked about role of electric cooperatives in the EPIRA Law and its role in the issue at hand.

Senator Hontiveros thanked Senate President Zubiri for being the champion of the cooperatives for the past many years and stated that she is honored to serve as vice-chairperson of his committee. She said that she is counting on the assurance given by the Senate President that the Senate will continue to be fair to the electric cooperatives when reviewing EPIRA—whether to amend or repeal it—or when crafting a new energy law.

Agreeing with Senator Hontiveros, Senate President Zubiri clarified that the intention was not to dissolve electric cooperatives through privatization, but rather to help them. In fact, he revealed that it was the electric cooperatives themselves who were requesting that they be given the authority under the EPIRA to unbundle from their contract or have a formula whereby they could slow down the collection of the more expensive generation charges and put in clear and cheaper alternatives. He even lauded electric cooperatives for recognizing the power



from the people, stating that the members of the board are elected from some sort of districts within their electric distribution area. He explained that issues arise only when politics is involved, causing misunderstanding among them and stressed on the importance of strengthening the NEA to quell such issues.

However, he recalled that during the previous Congress, his committee mostly tackled issues concerning CDA and rarely heard concerns from the electric cooperatives. He stated that instead of going to the Committee on Cooperatives, electric cooperatives often go to Senator Gatchalian, who was then chairperson of the Committee on Energy. Nonetheless, he stated that his committee had always welcomed them and acknowledged their presence when they attended the committee hearings. However, he admitted that there were times when they had to call separate hearings on issues that were not under the jurisdiction of the CDA, such as in the case of electric cooperatives which are regulated by the NEA and DOE.


Senator Hontiveros stated that, aside from the NEA and DOE, the ERC should also play its role in assisting electric cooperatives, noting that at least one Supreme Court ruling found that the ERC fell short in exercising its mandate under EPIRA, particularly in the implementation of the least-cost provision—a matter that the Body should discuss during committee hearings and plenary debates.

Senator Hontiveros asked if it would be possible, when EPIRA is reviewed, to consider requiring stronger rules against cross-ownership, in addition to other issues involved in the entire process of energy generation and distribution to the consumers. Senate President Zubiri responded that, during the discussions on EPIRA when he was still a member of the House of Representatives, during the discussions on EPIRA, he was one of those who believed that there should be no cross-ownership in order to level the playing field. He believed that owning a generation facility and a distribution utility would result in higher costs. Instead, he said that the distribution utility should be free to select the cheapest rates in terms of generation charge. Senator Hontiveros opined that the Senate should look into the issue of cross-ownership because it is a major factor in determining whether the implementation of EPIRA is successful or not. She reiterated the importance of the ERC stepping up by acting as the power sector regulator over electric cooperatives and other players.

Regarding Senate President Zubiri's earlier proposal to allow the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM) to play a role in the distribution of energy throughout the country, Senator Hontiveros pointed out that there have been observations that only 10% to 14% of the energy distributed nationwide are from WESM, and that distribution utilities still sourced a bulk of the electricity they passed on to consumers from their bilateral contracts with the generation companies.

In response, Senate President Zubiri stated that there are already a number of generation facilities that could no longer enter into contracts and are forced to sell electricity at lower prices in WESM, from which consumer DUs can also purchase at low prices. He believed that the role of WESM in energy distribution from various sources, including RE generators, should be recognized. He stated that through WESM, there will be no need to obtain electricity at the P10 generation charge, especially since putting up solar power plants is currently much cheaper. To illustrate, he stated that in the past, the cost per megawatt was US\$2 million, but that it is now US\$600,000, allowing them to build a 10-megawatt facility that could only provide electricity at P3.50/kWh. He stated that the same is true for hydropower, whose feed-in tariff is only P5.60—less than half the price of coal-fired electricity.

He lamented, however, that the problem with WESM is the absence of interconnection, which limits energy distribution to certain parts of the country, such as Luzon. He stated that he has been requesting such interconnection from former Energy Secretary Cusi, who promised to provide it but failed to do so until his term expired. He hoped that the new Energy Secretary, Popo Lotilla, would be able to provide a definitive answer on WESM, as he emphasized the importance of TRANSCO interconnection in the Lanao del Norte hydropower plant, which flows from Agus to Bukidnon, so that the electricity produced could also reach other parts of the region, such as Davao. He urged the Body to give the Department of Energy a year to complete the much-needed interconnection in all parts of the country, averring that all three islands—Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao—should have been connected 10 years ago.



He agreed with Senator Pimentel that the country has an oversupply of power, but DUs cannot access it because they are bound by their contracts. As a result, rather than allowing a hydropower plant in Mindanao to sell power to Metro Manila, he expressed regret that without the TRANSCO interconnection, it would be impossible to make cheap energy available throughout the country.

Senator Hontiveros concluded her interpellation by thanking Senate President Zubiri for his answers to her questions and expressing her eagerness to discuss the matter further, particularly when the Body begins to review EPIRA to determine whether it needs to be reshaped or a new law is required to provide quality and affordable energy to all Filipino consumers, strengthen the role of electric cooperatives, and significantly increase the share of renewable energy in the country's energy mix.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR EJERCITO

Senator Ejercito expressed confidence that the Senate, under the leadership of Senate President Zubiri, will prioritize the EPIRA amendment, agreeing to EPIRA's promise to lower electricity rates and encourage competition by privatizing NAPOCOR power plants. However, he admitted that what had occurred was merely privatization while electricity rates remained high.

REMARKS OF SENATOR TULFO

Preliminarily, Senator Tulfo thanked Senate President Zubiri for his observations on the state of the country's energy industry. He then revealed that when the people learned that he was the incoming Chairperson of the Committee on Energy, he was inundated with thousands of complaints from customers of various companies from many provinces.

However, he stated that rather than the issue of lower electric rates, the majority of the complaints he receives are about brownouts. He revealed that he has been receiving complaints about brownouts since he was a broadcaster doing his public service show *Wanted sa Radyo*, and that he believes the occurrence of brownouts has been a decade-long problem for Filipino consumers. He wondered what the government agencies regulating electric companies are doing to address such a lingering problem.

He stated that brownouts have harmed consumers because their appliances have been damaged, their businesses have been disrupted, and their children are unable to study at night without light. He expressed disappointment that despite the brownouts, electric cooperatives still have the audacity to impose high electricity rates and threaten consumers with service disconnection if they fail to pay their monthly bill on time. Furthermore, he stated that some electric companies, such as ORMECO-INC in Mindoro, have even requested substantial salary increases—from P70,000 to P150,000—despite providing poor service. He believed that their lack of service in the past two years of the pandemic should not be compensated with a 200% raise in salary that they are seeking.

He lamented that the ERC, NEA, and other regulatory bodies that should be monitoring electric cooperatives are not doing their jobs and have even approved unreasonable requests from electric companies. While he agrees with Senator Hontiveros that electric cooperatives should be strengthened, he believes that before consumers are given assistance, electric cooperatives should first provide quality service. He stated that, unfortunately, a number of electric cooperatives are negligent in providing quality service, causing consumers to suffer.

He urged the Congress to be more stringent in reviewing the qualifications of electric companies, particularly when they apply for franchise renewal, to ensure that electric companies not only have the financial capacity but also the technical know-how to deliver electric power to consumers. He believed that electric cooperatives should focus more on improving service delivery, disclosing that complainants are even willing to pay high electricity rates in exchange for quality service.

He also recognized the need for lower electricity rates which he deemed very important. He believed that government agencies such as the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) and the National Electrification



Administration (NEA) should examine the contracts to determine whether the approved increases requested by the cooperatives are justified.

At this point, he emphasized the importance of timely evaluations of the performance of electric cooperatives, particularly on how they handled and continue to address the issue of power interruptions, noting their request for an P18 or P19 rate increase.

Concerning the Province of Mindoro, he stated that the electric cooperative had requested a P900 million subsidy from the national government. Noting that the millions of pesos in subsidy would be paid for by consumers, he promised that as Chairperson of the Committee on Energy, he would scrutinize the request as well as similar other appeals to ensure that the increase is truly necessary.

He informed the Body that in support of Senate President Zubiri's privilege speech, he had filed a resolution to investigate electric cooperatives that pass on their costs to their customers. He added that he would hold accountable government officials who approve such requests without conducting an inquiry into how they affect consumers. In that regard, he stated that the investigations would be scheduled as soon as possible.

REMARK OF SENATE PRESIDENT ZUBIRI

Senate President Zubiri thanked Senator Tulfo for his plan of action to lower electricity rates and provide people with efficient service by addressing power outages in the country.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR VILLANUEVA

Senator Villanueva emphasized the importance of the Body ensuring effective regulation by the ERC. He stated that the issue of high electricity rates should be addressed as soon as possible, citing the province of Nueva Ecija where rates had doubled and some rice mills had already closed due to the increasing costs of electricity.

REMARKS OF SENATE PRESIDENT ZUBIRI

At this point, Senate President Zubiri reminded the Body that a legislative franchise is not a right but a privilege granted to electric companies or cooperatives to provide a service. He also stated that because of the nature of the franchise, Congress has the prerogative to withdraw it. He opined that the Body should consider the following questions in granting the privilege: 1) Do cooperatives help the plight of their poor consumers? 2) Can the cooperatives carry out their responsibilities to the people?

On that note, he recalled, as Senator Dela Rosa would attest an electric cooperative in Davao was remiss in its duty, considering that while city rates were at P8 or P9, those outside of its service area, at a mere five-minute drive, were already being charged P14 or P15.

He also observed that areas outside of Davao, such as the Island Garden City of Samal, are struggling to make progress due to double-priced electricity rates. He mentioned that the city is only a roll-on/roll-off (RoRo) ride away from Davao City, but its rates are vastly different from the latter's lower rates. In that regard, he stated that when electric cooperatives reapply for franchise under the amendment to the EPIRA that grants the cooperatives a 15-year leeway, the representative of Congress in the area must review the cooperatives' services. Furthermore, he stated that if the franchise is found unsatisfactory, it should be awarded to another entity, such as a private corporation or company. In that regard, he emphasized the importance of electric cooperatives constantly convincing their customers that they provide good service.

In closing, he thanked Senator Tulfo for informing the Members of his plans concerning electric cooperatives.



INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR CAYETANO (P)

Senator Cayetano (P) revealed to the Body some personal messages from her close friends in Dipolog, Zamboanga Del Norte, indicating a 30 percent to 40 percent increase in the residential rates in the previous months. She also mentioned that in July 2020, the electricity rate, which was at P6.87, nearly doubled in the following two years, rising to P7.90 and P11.09 in July 2021 and July 2022, respectively. She added that the data came from small business owners, a sector she knows Senate President Zubiri supports. She also commended Senator Tulfo for bringing the issue to the Body's attention.

She then alerted the Members of the brownouts in Dipolog, as well as other provinces, where power outages last up to four hours. While she agreed that the issue of power rates is important, she stated that also considers the problem of brownouts to be equally important because it is bound to affect small business owners.

At this juncture, Senator Ejercito relinquished the Chair to Senate President Pro Tempore Legarda.

She also stated that it is the responsibility of service providers to notify customers of outages, such as water service interruptions, which Metro Manila residents continue to be critical of, and that regular four-hour brownouts should not be taken lightly. She believed, as chairperson of the Committee on Sustainable Development Goals, Innovation and Futures Thinking, that achieving Sustainable Development Goal No. 7 (SDG-7) would provide everyone with affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy. She then urged Senator Tulfo and the other senators to carefully consider the aforementioned requirements in the grant of franchise.

Reading from a typical power distribution franchise agreement, she quoted the provision on public responsibility which provides that "the grantee shall charge reasonable and just power rates for its services to all types of consumers within its franchise areas." She then expressed her belief that unjust and unreasonable power rates would result in the non-renewal of a franchise because it is a privilege rather than a right. She urged her colleagues, as well as the concerned government regulatory agencies, to scrutinize the franchises to see if the grantees deliver on what is expected of them.

She also pondered on how franchises are to be treated—including whether they will be legally binding contracts or treated as a privilege. She stated that in *Oposa et. al. v. Factoran, Jr. et al.*, the government has the responsibility and the right to review contracts and, if necessary, amend or revoke them. She also stated that as expressly defined in *ABS-CBN Corporation v. National Telecommunications Commission*, a franchise is "a special privilege to do certain things conferred by government on an individual or corporation, and which does not belong to citizens generally of common right."

She then informed the Body that under the *Oposa et. al. v. Factoran, Jr. et al.* case, a franchise is deemed an exception to the Constitution's non-impairment clause. Furthermore, she stated that the same case also ruled that property and contractual rights are not absolute. She also clarified that if there are circumstances that warrant a review, and if abuses or non-compliance with contract provisions are discovered, the contract could be dissolved. On that note, she said that the non-impairment clause must yield to the power of the State.

She also informed the Body of the Supreme Court's ruling, in *Surigao del Norte Electric Cooperative, Inc. v. Energy Regulatory Commission*, that "the State, in the exercise of police power, can regulate the rates imposed by a public utility such as SURNECO. When private property is used for a public purpose and is affected with public interest, it ceases to be *juris privati* only and becomes subject to regulation." In that regard, she stressed that Congress has the authority to regulate while also delegating that authority to the proper agency. She stated that the agency would then have the authority to impose and enforce the requirements set forth.

Senate President Zubiri commended Senator Cayetano (P) for the points she raised on the floor. He reiterated that the grant of franchise is not a right but a privilege. He then recalled that during the deliberations on the MORE Electric and Power Corporation franchise, representatives of the Panay Electric Company, Inc. (PECO) whose



franchise has expired came to see him, claiming that the company had been in the industry for 100 years. He stated that in response, he told them that because a franchise is a privilege, Congress would conduct a performance review to ensure that it meets the requirements. Despite filial ties, he stated that he remains firm in his resolve that quality service is still paramount.

Furthermore, he believed that in the end, it would be the proper service to the people, responding to the cries of their representatives at that time—the councilors, board members, congressmen, including Senator Drilon—that would make the difference. He then concluded that the problem was caused by cooperatives charging high electricity rates for inefficient service. On that note, he surmised that the challenge is figuring out how to police the cooperatives.

Senate President Zubiri believed that the Body could amend the law on electric cooperatives (ECs) without having to file a repeal of their franchise.

He said that they could ask the cooperatives during committee hearings on whether the government would need to cancel their contracts and put in a different entity to manage the distribution of electric power or let the NEA and the ERC step in and come up with an order and a better rate for the particular service area. He said that what is important is for the ECs to improve their service and bring down electricity rates for their consumers.

In order to share the President's vision for a 6.8% to 9% Gross Domestic Product (GDP) rates by the end of his term, he said that they would have to find a way to lower electricity rates and prevent the recurrence of power outages.

CLARIFICATION OF SENATOR CAYETANO (P)

At this point, Senator Cayetano (P) asked if the organizational meeting of the Committee on Energy would include a briefing since she was interested to attend the meeting. Senator Villanueva replied that there would be an organizational meeting on Wednesday, August 10, 2022 and its details would be announced later on. He also informed the Body that the energy committee would be holding a hybrid meeting as agreed upon during the caucus.

Senate President Pro Tempore Legarda pointed out that the information requested by Senator Cayetano (P) would be clarified before the adjournment of session that evening.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR GATCHALIAN

Preliminarily, Senator Gatchalian disclosed that he was surprised to learn that some of the electricity rates went as high as P16/kWh to P18/kWh since no business would really survive if it were made to pay such a high cost.

He agreed with the observation that there were many interconnected and extremely complex issues regarding the energy sector and as such, underscored the need to find ways to bring down the cost of electricity so that businesses could survive such a very difficult situation.

On the observation that one of the biggest issues on the energy sector is the existing contracts entered into by both the private utilities and electric cooperatives, Senator Gatchalian believed that the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) should be very vigilant in reviewing the rate increase applications. He reminded them that the contracts vary among electric cooperative because of the deregulated nature of the electricity industry. He explained that generation companies are in competition with one another and as such, might offer contracts with different terms and conditions. He stated that in a situation where prices are rapidly increasing, the ERC should review whether each application is in line with the Power Supply Agreement (PSA) entered into by the power utilities. He underscored the importance of looking at the fine print of the contract as it is usually the consumers that bears the brunt of the rate increases.

He also believed that Attorney Dimalanta, the incoming ERC chairperson, would need to review every single detail of the rate increase application of the utilities.



He also suggested that the new DOE secretary come up with a long-term plan to reduce the country's dependence on imported energy sources including feedstock, coal, oil, and gas. He expressed concern that with Malampaya running out of natural gas, the Philippines might end up importing 70 percent of its gas or electricity by 2024 unless a replacement is found. Additionally, he pointed out that the Philippines will feel the brunt of the increases in fuel price in reaction to situations which have a global impact on the commodity such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

As an illustration, he said that last July, the quadruple increase in the price of imported fuel from US\$60/ton to about US\$400/ton prompted many utilities to apply for rate increases because of the pass on cost of fuel. He reiterated that the long-term game plan should be to reduce the country's dependence on imported fuel and coal.

He said that he had suggested to the new ERC chairperson to study the concept of having the government representation for energy consumers. For instance, he said that the federal government in Nevada has an office under the Department of Justice called the Energy Advocate which acts as a neutral regulator that defends the consumer in any application of the utility because the consumers are fragmented; and the applicant should explain why it is increasing its rates. He disclosed that he copied the concept in his bill which has been referred to the Committee on Energy.

He expressed hope that there would be some merit in his proposal, given that it is being practiced in all of the United States. He likewise hoped that the concept would be recognized in the Chamber so that the fragmented consumers would not be left behind.

As regards the comments of Senator Hontiveros on the EPIRA, he said that she was absolutely correct on the Retail Competition Open Access (RCOA) provision of the EPIRA wherein consumers could choose their generators. He said that with such a concept, the consumers could buy renewable energy (RE) from either a hydro or solar power plant; or have a mixed bag of energy sources. However, he lamented that the RCOA only has 500-kilowatt threshold. He explained that the law actually envisions a household-level competition, such as in Singapore wherein condominium owners are able to choose their generators. He added that several retail suppliers even offer RE along with a hotel gift check as a come-on for potential clients. He said that such competition helps lower costs, which is a provision that is not being implemented in the EPIRA.

At this juncture, Senate President Zubiri commented that the scheme was actually implemented only in Metro Manila and in metro centers. He said that in other areas, like Cagayan de Oro, an ice plant which consumes a great deal of electricity could not directly source electricity from a power plant like the Sulu Electric Power & Light Corp. (SEPALCO), as the latter is yet to come up with its guidelines. He said that several MSMEs and even large businesses would benefit from the implementation of the open access provision.

Senator Gatchalian pointed out that, since competition, the lowering of electricity cost, is the true spirit of EPIRA, the new DOE secretary and the new ERC chairperson would need to work on the provision which is expected to usher competition at the household level, would lower electricity cost, improve services, and even innovate some of the services that are being offered by the retail suppliers.

Finally, Senator Gatchalian believed that it would do well for the new leadership under ERC and DOE to recognize the plenary discussions on the issue so that they could reform and implement some of the unimplemented provisions of the EPIRA.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATE PRESIDENT ZUBIRI

Senator Zubiri lauded the efforts of Senator Gatchalian in passing several legislation on the energy industry in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Congresses which brought down the electricity rates. He said that he had raised the issue on the power rates as there are new leaderships in the DOE and the ERC and as such, they ought to be made aware that the Senate is looking after the welfare of the citizenry, and supports the President's goal of bringing down electricity rates. He expressed hope that the Senate could come up with the proper legislation to help remedy the situation and give the people some relief.



He then thanked Senator Gatchalian who, he believed, would be deeply involved in the hearings together with Senator Tulfo, the new chairperson of the Committee on Energy.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR CAYETANO (P)

Senator Cayetano (P) stated that the rationalization of incentives was among the complaints of those who were against the passage of the CREATE law. However, she noted that Senate President Zubiri had earlier pointed out that access to affordable electric power is one of the factors that affect the country's attractiveness as an investment destination. She then commended Senate President Zubiri for bringing the matter to the attention of the Members.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF SENATOR VILLANUEVA

At this point, Senator Villanueva said that he had been informed by Senator Tulfo that the hearing of the Committee on Energy, scheduled for ten o'clock in the morning of Wednesday, August 10, 2022, would be an organizational meeting as well as a briefing by the DOE and its attached agencies.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR DELA ROSA

At the outset, Senator Dela Rosa manifested his desire to be associated with the concerns raised by Senate President Zubiri, particularly on the plight of the electric consumers in Mindanao. He expressed hope that the Body would immediately act on the matter as he also expressed his support to Senator Tulfo, chairperson of the Committee on Energy, and confirmed his attendance to the committee's organizational meeting and briefing by the Department of Energy and its attached agencies on Wednesday, August 10, 2022.

Asked by Senator Dela Rosa whether there was ever an instance that the NEA or ERC recommended to Congress the cancellation or nonrenewal of a franchise whose performance was subpar or abusive, Senate President Zubiri replied that he was not aware of any recommendation in the history of franchises—not during his term as legislative franchise chair, not even as a member of the Committee on Energy headed by Senator Gatchalian, nor as a member of the Committee on Public Services chaired by Senator Poe. He stated that the electric cooperatives take care of their own as they run like a mafia in the NEA.

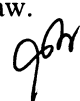
Senator Dela Rosa observed that while areas covered by Meralco have lobby groups who could easily protest the rates of electricity, Mindanao consumers are too kind that they do not complain. He lamented that certain electric cooperatives have been poorly providing electricity while charging consumers so high for the last 25 years, yet they still get renewed without the benefit of a single technical or periodic performance review. He said that NEA, being a regulatory agency insofar as electric cooperatives is concerned, and ERC for their pricing, should do their share of the workload in making the necessary reviews.

Agreeing with Senator Dela Rosa, Senate President Zubiri stated that abuses by the electric cooperatives do not only happen in Mindanao but also in other provinces in the Visayas such as Leyte and Samar. He believed that it is time for people in Mindanao and the Visayas to begin complaining about the poor service and high electricity cost in the same way that people in Metro Manila do.

Senator Dela Rosa stated that the Senate, as a collective Body, should make sure that the people no longer suffer from the high costs of electricity. He surmised that some cooperatives are hiding behind the issue of rising oil prices in order to confidently charge more, while remaining unreviewed by regulatory agencies.

Adverting to the remarks of Senator Gatchalian, and in fairness to the electric cooperatives, Senate President Zubiri stated that in the latter's contracts with the consumers, the Power Supply Agreement or PSA is dependent on the price of imported coal, which is passed on to the consumers. He stated that as the price of coal rises, so will the price of electricity per kilowatt-hour.

Reacting thereto, Senator Dela Rosa emphasized the importance of amending the EPIRA Law.



Senate President Zubiri believed that Senator Dela Rosa's heart is with the masses because he had been assigned to places where there is no electricity, no roads, and no means of livelihood while still with the PNP. He believed that insurgency thrives in the mountain areas where there is not much for people to do; that, as the saying goes, "the idle mind is the devil's playground." He then stated his support for energy sector reform, stating that the cost of electricity is already alarming, and that he would attend the Committee on Energy meeting on Wednesday.

Senator Dela Rosa concluded by stating that he and Senate President Zubiri are both from Mindanao, known as the "Land of Promise." Senate President Zubiri added that Senators Go and Pimentel are Mindanaoans as well.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR VILLANUEVA

Senator Villanueva stated that he had prepared several questions but would no longer pursue them because he would be attending the meeting of the Committee on Energy on Wednesday.

Nonetheless, he emphasized the importance of developing and strengthening the country's renewable energy sector, which he believes is underutilized due to high costs and a lack of incentives.

He recalled that when he and Senate President Zubiri were serving in the House of Representatives in the Twelfth Congress, he delivered his maiden speech about the privatization of the MWSS and how the regulatory office is located inside the concessionaires' compound. He stated that in his speech, he questioned how a regulatory body could police itself when concessionaires lavish them with trips abroad. He said that such practice is carried out by a regulating office involved in public utilities such as water, energy, and transportation. He added that a consumer who files a complaint has no chance of winning because they are up against a large company that would likely delay and drag the case out for as long as it takes.

He stated that he was speaking from experience because it had been 20 years since he had given a speech on the subject. He expressed hope that Senate President Zubiri and the rest of the Body would work together to find a solution to address the problem.

REFERRAL OF SPEECH TO COMMITTEE

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Chair referred the privilege speech of Senate President Zubiri and the interpellation and manifestation thereon to the Committee on Energy.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

It was 6:53 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 6:55 p.m., the session was resumed.

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. 301, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A NATIONAL PROGRAM TO SUPPORT AND CARE FOR THE
ABANDONED, NEGLECTED, AND VOLUNTARILY COMMITTED CHILDREN, CREATING

A SPECIAL TRUST FUND, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Cayetano (A)

To the Committees on Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development; Women, Children, Family Relations and Gender Equality; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 302, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11310 OR THE PANTAWID FAMILYANG PILIPINO PROGRAM (4PS) ACT BY INCLUDING VICTIMS OF NATURAL OR MAN-MADE DISASTERS AS ELIGIBLE BENEFICIARIES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Cayetano (A)

To the Committees on Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 303, entitled

AN ACT MANDATING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HEALTH CENTERS IN ALL BARANGAYS APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFORE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Cayetano (A)

To the Committees on Health and Demography; Local Government; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 304, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE CREATION OF SUPER HEALTH CENTERS IN EVERY CITY AND MUNICIPALITY, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Cayetano (A)

To the Committees on Health and Demography; Local Government; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 305, entitled

AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE PHILIPPINE NAVY, THE PHILIPPINE COAST GUARD, AND THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE MARITIME GROUP, BY THE PURCHASE AND ESTABLISHMENT OF FLOATING HOSPITALS UNDER THEIR JURISDICTION, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES"

Introduced by Senator Cayetano (A)

To the Committees on National Defense and Security, Peace Unification and Reconciliation; Health and Demography; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 306, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A CAMP DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES, APPROPRIATING THE SUM OF FIVE BILLION PESOS ANNUALLY FOR FIVE YEARS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES



Introduced by Senator Cayetano (A)

To the Committees on National Defense and Security, Peace, Unification and Reconciliation; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 307, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A CAMP DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE, APPROPRIATING THE SUM OF FIVE BILLION PESOS ANNUALLY FOR FIVE YEARS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Cayetano (A)

To the Committees on Public Order and Dangerous Drugs; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 308, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING SECTION 185 OF THE OMNIBUS ELECTION CODE, AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7904, BY ABOLISHING THE PRINTING OF THE VOTERS INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTION SHEET

Introduced by Senator Pimentel III

To the Committee on Electoral Reforms and People's Participation

Senate Bill No. 309, entitled

AN ACT RESTORING AND REHABILITATING THE EXISTING LINES OF THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL RAILWAYS, EXTENDING FURTHER THE SOUTHERN LINE TO MATNOG, SORSOGON AND ESTABLISHING THE RAILWAY EXTENSION LINE FROM CALAMBA CITY TO BATANGAS CITY, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 4156 ENTITLED "AN ACT CREATING THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL RAILWAYS, PRESCRIBING ITS POWERS, FUNCTIONS AND DUTIES, AND PROVIDING FOR THE NECESSARY FUNDS FOR ITS OPERATION" AS AMENDED BY R. A. NO. 6366, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Zubiri

To the Committees on Government Corporations and Public Enterprises; Public Services; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 310, entitled

AN ACT TO PROMOTE RURAL HEALTH BY PROVIDING AN ACCELERATED PROGRAM FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A POTABLE WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM IN EVERY BARANGAY IN THE COUNTRY WITHIN THREE YEARS

Introduced by Senator Zubiri

To the Committees on Local Government; Public Works; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 311, entitled

AN ACT INCREASING THE POSITIONS RESERVED FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES,



AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7277, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE
KNOWN AS THE MAGNA CARTA FOR DISABLED PERSONS

Introduced by Senator Zubiri

**To the Committees on Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development; Labor, Employment and
Human Resources Development; and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 312, entitled

AN ACT MANDATING SHIPOWNERS, SHIP CREW, AND CONCERNED GOVERNMENT
AGENCIES TO PROVIDE FOR AND ENSURE THE SAFETY OF PASSENGERS AT SEA,
PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Zubiri

To the Committee on Public Services

Senate Bill No. 313, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING COMMONWEALTH ACT NO. 473, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE
"REVISED NATURALIZATION LAW" AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Zubiri

To the Committee on Justice and Human Rights

Senate Bill No. 314, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTING REFORMS IN REAL PROPERTY VALUATION IN THE PHILIPPINES,
ESTABLISHING THE NATIONAL VALUATION AUTHORITY AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Zubiri

To the Committees on Ways and Means; Local Government; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 315, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL DEFENSE INDUSTRY
THROUGH THE STRENGTHENING AND REVITALIZING OF THE SELF RELIANT DEFENSE
POSTURE (SRDP) PROGRAM, INCENTIVIZING IN-COUNTRY ENTERPRISES, RATIONAL-
IZING DEFENSE ACQUISITION, AND CREATING THE OFFICE OF THE UNDERSECRETARY
FOR DEFENSE TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH AND INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE
DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE, AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Zubiri

**To the Committees on National Defense and Security, Peace, Unification and Reconciliation; Ways
and Means; and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 316, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL CANCER CENTER TO BE KNOWN AS THE NATIONAL
CANCER CENTER OF THE PHILIPPINES AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR



Introduced by Senator Zubiri

To the Committees on Health and Demography; Ways and Means; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 317, entitled

AN ACT REDEFINING THE COVERAGE AND EXTENDING THE MANDATORY CREDIT ALLOCATION TO MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6977, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "MAGNA CARTA FOR SMALL ENTERPRISES" AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Zubiri

To the Committees on Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship; and Economic Affairs

Senate Bill No. 318, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE TRANSITION OF THE GOVERNMENT TO E-GOVERNANCE IN THE DIGITAL AGE, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Zubiri

To the Committees on Science and Technology; Civil Service, Government Reorganization and Professional Regulation; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 319, entitled

AN ACT GIVING PREFERENCE TO DOMESTIC BIDDERS PARTICIPATING IN GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT PROJECTS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Angara

To the Committees on Finance; and Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship

Senate Bill No. 320, entitled

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

Introduced by Senator Angara

To the Committees on Health and Demography; Civil Service, Government Reorganization and Professional Regulation; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 321, entitled

AN ACT REQUIRING ALL THE NATIONAL, REGIONAL, AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS TO ESTABLISH, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN A DIALYSIS WARD OR UNIT IN THEIR RESPECTIVE HOSPITAL AND PROVIDING FREE DIALYSIS TREATMENT TO INDIGENT PATIENTS

Introduced by Senator Angara



To the Committees on Health and Demography; Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 322, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR FREE ANNUAL MEDICAL CHECK-UP FOR FILIPINOS

Introduced by Senator Angara

To the Committees on Health and Demography; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 323, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE TEACHER EDUCATION FOR ACHIEVERS PROGRAM TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF TEACHERS IN THE PHILIPPINES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Angara

To the Committees on Basic Education, Arts and Culture; Higher, Technical and Vocational Education; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 324, entitled

AN ACT UPGRADING THE MINIMUM SALARY GRADE LEVEL OF TEACHERS FROM SALARY GRADE 11 TO 19

Introduced by Senator Angara

To the Committees on Civil Service, Government Reorganization and Professional Regulation; Basic Education, Arts and Culture; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 325, entitled

AN ACT GRANTING CASH INCENTIVES TO WINNING FILMMAKERS, FILM PRODUCTION ENTITIES, LITERARY, WRITERS, ARTISTS, AND PERFORMERS IN THE CREATIVE SECTOR, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Angara

To the Committees on Public Information and Mass Media; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 326, entitled

AN ACT FURTHER EXPANDING THE INCENTIVES GRANTED TO NATIONAL ATHLETES AND COACHES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10699 OR THE "NATIONAL ATHLETES AND COACHES BENEFITS AND INCENTIVES ACT"

Introduced by Senator Angara

To the Committees on Sports; Ways and Means; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 327, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR RURAL EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR



Introduced by Senator Angara

To the Committees on Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development; Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 328, entitled

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE MAGNA CARTA FOR BARANGAYS

Introduced by Senator Angara

To the Committees on Local Government; Ways and Means; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 329, entitled

AN ACT REQUIRING ALL PUBLIC TELECOMMUNICATIONS ENTITIES AND INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS IN THE COUNTRY TO INCREASE SERVICE COVERAGE AND DELIVER A MINIMUM STANDARD FOR INTERNET CONNECTION SPEED

Introduced by Senator Poe

To the Committee on Public Services

Senate Bill No. 330, entitled

AN ACT TO ENSURE EASIER COMMUTING BY ESTABLISHING A NETWORK OF SUSTAINABLE ELEVATED WALKWAYS ALONG ALL MAJOR PUBLIC THOROUGHFARES IN HIGH DENSITY URBAN AREAS, ESTABLISHING APPROPRIATE INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Poe

To the Committees on Public Works; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 331, entitled

AN ACT TO PROMOTE THE USE OF BICYCLES AS AN ALTERNATIVE MODE OF TRANSPORTATION, ESTABLISHING APPROPRIATE INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Poe

To the Committees on Sustainable Development Goals, Innovation and Futures Thinking; Public Works; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 332, entitled

AN ACT FURTHER STRENGTHENING THE SYSTEM OF BIRTH REGISTRATION OF CHILDREN IN NEED OF SPECIAL PROTECTION (CNSP) IN THE PHILIPPINES

Introduced by Senator Poe

To the Committees on Women, Children, Family Relations and Gender Equality; and Finance



Senate Bill No. 333, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A MAGNA CARTA FOR TRICYCLE DRIVERS AND OPERATORS, INSTITUTIONALIZING MECHANISMS FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Poe

To the Committees on Public Services; Local Government; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 334, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE E-GOVERNMENT, DEFINING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Poe

To the Committees on Science and Technology; Public Information and Mass Media; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 335, entitled

AN ACT GRANTING THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES THE POWER TO SUSPEND THE SCHEDULED INCREASES IN PHILHEALTH PREMIUM CONTRIBUTION RATES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11223, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE ACT"

Introduced by Senator Poe

To the Committees on Health and Demography; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 336, entitled

AN ACT REGULATING THE USE OF BANK ACCOUNTS, E-WALLETS, AND OTHER FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS, PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Poe

To the Committees on Banks, Financial Institutions and Currencies; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 337, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING A FRAMEWORK FOR THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD

Introduced by Senator Poe

To the Committees on Justice and Human Rights; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 338, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A MAGNA CARTA FOR WORKERS, ENTERPRISES AND ORGANIZATIONS IN THE INFORMAL ECONOMY, INSTITUTIONALIZING MECHANISMS FOR IMPLEMENTATION THEREOF, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Poe



To the Committees on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development; Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 339, entitled

AN ACT INCREASING THE MONTHLY MINIMUM WAGE OF PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS TO TWENTY-EIGHT THOUSAND PESOS (P28,000.00) AND NON-TEACHING PERSONNEL TO SIXTEEN THOUSAND PESOS (P16,000.00)

Introduced by Senator Binay

To the Committees on Civil Service, Government Reorganization and Professional Regulation; Basic Education, Arts and Culture; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 340, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING SECTIONS 443, 454, AND 463 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7160, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991"

Introduced by Senator Binay

To the Committees on Local Government; and Tourism

Senate Bill No. 341, entitled

AN ACT ALLOWING WOMEN TO REVERT TO THEIR MAIDEN SURNAME, ESTABLISHING A PROCEDURE FOR REVISION AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Binay

To the Committees on Women, Children, Family Relations and Gender Equality; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 342, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING RAINWATER HARVESTING SYSTEM IN METRO MANILA AND MAJOR CITIES IN THE PHILIPPINES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Binay

To the Committees on Public Works; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 343, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTING THE MAGNA CARTA FOR CHILD DEVELOPMENT WORKERS AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Binay

To the Committees on Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development; Civil Service, Government Reorganization and Professional Regulation; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 344, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING BENEFITS AND INCENTIVES TO OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS INVESTING IN BUSINESS IN THE PHILIPPINES



Introduced by Senator Binay

To the Committees on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development; Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship; and Ways and Means

Senate Bill No. 345, entitled

AN ACT GRANTING TAX INCENTIVES TO EMPLOYERS THAT HIRE ALTERNATIVE LEARNING SYSTEM LEARNERS AND GRADUATES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Binay

To the Committees on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development; and Ways and Means

Senate Bill No. 346, entitled

AN ACT GRANTING TAX INCENTIVES TO EMPLOYERS THAT HIRE FRESH GRADUATES FROM PROVINCIAL COLLEGES, UNIVERSITIES AND TRAINING CENTER, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Binay

To the Committees on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development; and Ways and Means

Senate Bill No. 347, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR INCENTIVES TO MEMBERS OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION ENGAGED IN THE DEFENSE OF THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENT INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Introduced by Senator Binay

To the Committees on Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development; and Ways and Means

Senate Bill No. 348, entitled

AN ACT REQUIRING ALL GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE HOSPITALS, MEDICAL CENTERS, CLINIC, INFIRMARIES AND PUERICULTURE CENTERS TO GIVE FREE MEDICAL AND DENTAL ASSISTANCE TO INDIGENT CHILDREN

Introduced by Senator Binay

To the Committees on Health and Demography; Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development; and Ways and Means

Senate Bill No. 349, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE PHILIPPINE FIBER INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM BY STRENGTHENING THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY – PHILIPPINE TEXTILE RESEARCH INSTITUTE (DOST-PTRI) AND THE PHILIPPINE FIBER DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (PHILFIDA) BY CREATING THE PHILIPPINE FIBER DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL DEFINING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES



Introduced by Senator Villar (C)

To the Committees on Agriculture, Food and Agrarian Reform; Science and Technology; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 350, entitled

AN ACT PROMOTING INTEGRATED URBAN AGRICULTURE IN URBAN AREAS NATIONWIDE
TO ADDRESS FOOD SECURITY AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Villar (C)

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

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

BILLS ON FIRST READING

Senate Bill No. No. 351, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE INTEGRATED AGRICULTURE INFORMATION SYSTEM (AIS)
IN THE COUNTRY IN COOPERATION WITH CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES NATIONWIDE

Introduced by Senator Villar (C)

To the Committees on Agriculture, Food and Agrarian Reform; Local Government; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 352, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING OCTOBER SIXTEEN OF EVERY YEAR AS A SPECIAL WORKING
HOLIDAY TO BE KNOWN AS THE "NATIONAL FARMERS, FISHERFOLKS AND AGRI-
WORKERS' DAY"

Introduced by Senator Villar (C)

To the Committee on Agriculture, Food and Agrarian Reform

Senate Bill No. 353, entitled

AN ACT CRIMINALIZING THE MOVEMENT OF LIVE ANIMALS OR PLANTS THAT ARE
INFECTED OR INFESTED WITH CONTAGIOUS DISEASE OR PEST, PRESCRIBING
PENALTIES THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Villar (C)

To the Committees on Agriculture, Food and Agrarian Reform; and Justice and Human Rights

Senate Bill No. 354, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING A PARCEL OF LAND LOCATED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF PAOAY
IN THE PROVINCE OF ILOCOS NORTE, A PROTECTED AREA WITH THE CATEGORY OF
PROTECTED LANDSCAPE UNDER THE NATIONAL INTEGRATED AREA SYSTEM, TO BE
REFERRED TO AS THE PAOAY LAKE PROTECTED LANDSCAPE, PROVIDING FOR ITS
MANAGEMENT, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR



Introduced by Senator Villar (C)

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

Senate Bill No. 355, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING A PARCEL OF LAND LOCATED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF NUEVA VALENCIA IN THE PROVINCE OF GUIMARAS, A PROTECTED AREA, WITH THE CATEGORY OF NATURAL PARK UNDER THE NATIONAL INTEGRATED PROTECTED AREAS SYSTEM, TO BE REFERRED TO AS THE TAKLONG AND TANDOG GROUP OF ISLANDS NATURAL PARK, PROVIDING FOR ITS MANAGEMENT, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Villar (C)

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

Senate Bill No. 356, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING A PARCEL OF LAND LOCATED IN THE CITY OF GAPAN AND MUNICIPALITY OF GENERAL TINIO IN THE PROVINCE OF NUEVA ECIJA, A PROTECTED AREA, WITH THE CATEGORY OF NATURAL PARK UNDER THE NATIONAL INTEGRATED PROTECTED AREAS SYSTEM, TO BE REFERRED TO AS THE MINALUNGAO PROTECTED LANDSCAPE, PROVIDING FOR ITS MANAGEMENT, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Villar (C)

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

Senate Bill No. 357, entitled

AN ACT DESIGNATING THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER AS "BUY PINOY, BUILD PINOY MONTH" TO ENCOURAGE THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS TO PRIORITIZE THE PURCHASE AND UTILIZATION OF FILIPINO PRODUCTS, LABOR AND SERVICES

Introduced by Senator Villar (C)

To the Committee on Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship

Senate Bill No. 358, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES STOCK EXCHANGE

Introduced by Senator Villar (C)

To the Committees on Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship; Banks, Financial Institutions and Currencies; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 359, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A MAGNA CARTA FOR WORKERS IN THE INFORMAL ECONOMY AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

To the Committees on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development; and Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development

Senate Bill No. 360, entitled

AN ACT EXPANDING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR SENIOR CITIZENS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9994, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE EXPANDED SENIOR CITIZENS ACT OF 2010, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

To the Committees on Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development; and Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development

Senate Bill No. 361, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF REGISTRIES OF SKILLED WORKERS IN BARANGAYS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

To the Committees on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development; Local Government; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 362, entitled

AN ACT ENHANCING THE REGULATION ON EMPLOYMENT OF FOREIGN NATIONALS AND TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE ARTICLES 40, 41 AND 42 OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 442, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LABOR CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

To the Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development

Senate Bill No. 363, entitled

AN ACT STRENGTHENING TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET) IN THE PHILIPPINES BY INCORPORATING APPRENTICESHIP AND DUAL TRAINING SYSTEM, PROVIDING FOR CONTINUOUS TRAINING OF THE UNEMPLOYED, AND EXPANDING THE PROVISION OF ENTERPRISE- BASED EDUCATION AND TRAINING, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

To the Committees on Higher, Technical and Vocational Education; Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development; Ways and Means; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 364, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE LIFELONG LEARNING DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK, BROADENING THE MANDATE OF THE PHILIPPINE QUALIFICATIONS FRAME-



WORK – NATIONAL COORDINATING COUNCIL (PQF-NCC), AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10968, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE PHILIPPINE QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK ACT, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

To the Committees on Higher, Technical and Vocational Education; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 365, entitled

AN ACT INTEGRATING LABOR EDUCATION IN THE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL (SHS) CURRICULUM

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

To the Committees on Basic Education, Arts and Culture; and Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development

Senate Bill No. 366, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR AN OPT-IN MECHANISM FOR TELEPHONE AND MOBILE SUBSCRIBERS, PROTECTING SUCH SUBSCRIBERS FROM ELECTRONIC SCAMS AND THREATS THROUGH THE MISUSE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY, AND PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

To the Committees on Science and Technology; and Public Services

Senate Bill No. 367, entitled

AN ACT REQUIRING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIALYSIS CLINICS IN ALL NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND PROVINCIAL HOSPITALS AND PROVIDING FOR FREE DIALYSIS TREATMENTS TO INDIGENT PATIENTS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

To the Committees on Health and Demography; Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development; Ways and Means and Finance

Senate Bill No. 368, entitled

AN ACT STRENGTHENING ACCESS TO CREDIT OF MICRO, SMALL, AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE, REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6977, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "MAGNA CARTA FOR MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES" AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

To the Committees on Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship; and Economic Affairs



Senate Bill No. 369, entitled

AN ACT CREATING A DEPARTMENT OF OCEAN, FISHERIES AND AQUATIC RESOURCES, PROVIDING FOR ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Hontiveros

To the Committees on Agriculture, Food and Agrarian Reform; Civil Service, Government Reorganization and Professional Regulation; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 370, entitled

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

Introduced by Senator Hontiveros

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

Senate Bill No. 371, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A COMPREHENSIVE AND RESPONSIVE CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS SYSTEM, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREOF, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Hontiveros

To the Committees on Health and Demography; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 372 entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A NATIONAL POLICY IN PREVENTING ADOLESCENT PREGNANCIES, INSTITUTIONALIZING SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR ADOLESCENT PARENTS, AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Hontiveros

To the Committees on Women, Children, Family Relations and Gender Equality; Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 373, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING LOCAL COOPERATIVES DEVELOPMENT FUND, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Hontiveros

To the Committees on Cooperatives; Local Government; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 374, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTING A NATIONAL LAND USE AND MANAGEMENT POLICY, PROVIDING THE IMPLEMENTING MECHANISMS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES



Introduced by Senator Hontiveros

To the Committees on Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change; Urban Planning, Housing and Resettlement; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 375, entitled

AN ACT TO ENSURE GENDER RESPONSIVE AND INCLUSIVE PROTOCOLS AND PROGRAMMING TO ADDRESS THE GENDER-DIFFERENTIATED NEEDS OF WOMEN DURING PANDEMICS, PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERNS, EMERGENCIES AND DISASTERS

Introduced by Senator Hontiveros

To the Committees on Women, Children, Family Relations and Gender Equality; Health and Demography; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 376, entitled

AN ACT TO REGULATE THE RATIONAL EXPLORATION, DEVELOPMENT AND UTILIZATION OF MINERAL RESOURCES, AND TO ENSURE THE EQUITABLE SHARING OF BENEFITS FOR THE STATE, INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Hontiveros

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

Senate Bill No. 377, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR INTERNS' RIGHTS AND WELFARE

Introduced by Senator Hontiveros

To the Committees on Higher, Technical and Vocational Education; Ways and Means; And Finance

Senate Bill No. 378, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE SOLAR HOME SYSTEMS FINANCING FOR SOCIAL HOUSING PROGRAM, AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Hontiveros

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

Senate Bill No. 379, entitled

AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE PROMOTION AND DELIVERY OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN BASIC EDUCATION SCHOOLS THROUGH THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING PROGRAM, PRESCRIBING THE HIRING AND DEPLOYMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS, PRESCRIBING THE CREATION OF PLANTILLA POSITIONS OF GUIDANCE ASSOCIATES IN THE DEPARTMENT



OF EDUCATION, INCREASING THE SALARY GRADES OF GUIDANCE COUNSELORS,
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committees on Basic Education, Arts and Culture; Health and Demography; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 380, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING A NATIONAL ENERGY POLICY AND FRAMEWORK FOR
GOVERNMENT-INITIATED PETROLEUM EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT FURTHER
AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE THE CHARTER OF THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL OIL
COMPANY (PNOC), AS AMENDED

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committees on Energy; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 381, entitled

AN ACT FUTHER AMENDING PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 87, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS
THE OIL EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 1972, AS AMENDED

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Energy

Senate Bill No. 382, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING AND STRENGTHENING THE ARABIC LANGUAGE AND ISLAMIC
VALUES EDUCATION PROGRAM IN ALL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE BASIC EDUCATION
SCHOOLS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committees on Basic Education, Arts and Culture; Ways and Means; and Finance

Senate Bill No.383, entitled

AN ACT MANDATING THE FULL DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF ALL PUBLIC AND
PRIVATE BASIC EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR,
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committees on Basic Education, Arts and Culture; Science and Technology; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 384, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A NATIONAL ENERGY POLICY AND FRAMEWORK FOR THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ENERGY SUBSIDY PROGRAM

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committees on Energy; Public Services; and Finance



Senate Bill No. 385, entitled

AN ACT REDUCING THE RECOVERABLE SYSTEM LOSS RATE AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committees on Energy; and Public Services

Senate Bill No. 386, entitled

AN ACT REQUIRING ALL PUBLIC TELECOMMUNICATIONS ENTITIES AND INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS TO INCREASE SERVICE COVERAGE AND DELIVER A MINIMUM STANDARD FOR INTERNET CONNECTION SPEED

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Public Services

Senate Bill No. 387, entitled

AN ACT MANDATING THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION, DEVELOPMENT, TRAINING, ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF BASIC RESERVE OFFICERS TRAINING CORPS (ROTC) IN GRADE 11 AND 12 IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, FURTHER AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7077, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "CITIZEN ARMED FORCES OR ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES RESERVIST ACT," AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9163, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "NATIONAL SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAM (NSTP) ACT OF 2001" AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committees on Basic Education, Arts and Culture; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 388, entitled

AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE BARANGAY AS THE BASIC LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIT BY INCREASING ITS CAPACITY TO DELIVER SERVICES, PROVIDING SALARY GRADES, RETIREMENT BENEFITS AND OTHER ENTITLEMENTS OF CERTAIN BARANGAY OFFICIALS, INCREASING THEIR TERM OF OFFICE, AND OTHER PURPOSES, AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7160, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991, AND OTHER RELATED LAWS

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committees on Local Government; Civil Service, Government Reorganization and Professional Regulation; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 389, entitled

AN ACT RECOGNIZING TRANSPORTATION NETWORK COMPANIES AND DRIVERS, PRESCRIBING REQUIREMENTS, GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS FOR THEIR OPERATION, PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION THEREOF, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Ejercito



To the Committee on Public Services

Senate Bill No. 390, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MANDATORY CROP INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR SMALL FARMERS, PROVIDING FOR A NATIONAL GOVERNMENT SUBSIDY, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Ejercito

To the Committees on Agriculture, Food and Agrarian Reform; Government Corporations and Public Enterprises; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 391, entitled

AN ACT INCREASING THE PENALTY OF THE CRIME OF ABANDONMENT OF PERSON IN DANGER AND ABANDONMENT OF ONE'S OWN VICTIM, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE ARTICLE 275 OF ACT 3815 ENTITLED "AN ACT REVISING THE PENAL CODE AND OTHER PENAL CODE," OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "REVISED PENAL CODE" AS AMENDED

Introduced by Senator Ejercito

To the Committee on Justice and Human Rights

Senate Bill No. 392, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE SOLIDARITY FUND OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS FOR DISASTER RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

Introduced by Senator Ejercito

To the Committee on Local Government

Senate Bill No. 393, entitled

AN ACT PROMOTING SAFE ALTERNATIVE MOBILITY BY ESTABLISHING A NETWORK OF POP-UP BICYCLE LANES AND EMERGENCY PATHWAYS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Ejercito

To the Committees on Sustainable Development Goals, Innovation and Futures Thinking; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 394, entitled

AN ACT STRENGTHENING LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT BY INCREASING THE SHARE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS IN NATIONAL TAXES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 284 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7160, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991

Introduced by Senator Ejercito

To the Committees on Local Government; and Ways and Means

Senate Bill No. 395, entitled

AN ACT MANDATING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF VEGETABLE CROP GARDENS FOR INGREDIENTS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Ejercito

To the Committees on Local Government; Agriculture, Food and Agrarian Reform; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 396, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE MAGNA CARTA FOR BARANGAY HEALTH WORKERS

Introduced by Senator Ejercito

To the Committees on Health and Demography; Local Government; Ways and Means; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 397, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE e-HEALTH SYSTEM AND SERVICES IN SUPPORT OF UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Ejercito

To the Committees on Health and Demography; Science and Technology; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 398, entitled

AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE SECURITY OF TENURE OF WORKERS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE ARTICLES 106, 107, 108, 109, AND 294 OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 442 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LABOR CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES, AS AMENDED

Introduced by Senator Ejercito

To the Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development

Senate Bill No. 399, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR SCHOLARSHIP GRANTS TO PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS AND THEIR CHILDREN

Introduced by Senator Tolentino

To the Committees on Basic Education, Arts and Culture; Higher, Technical and Vocational Education; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 400, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING A NATIONAL TELEMEDICINE SYSTEM IN THE PHILIPPINES

Introduced by Senator Tolentino

To the Committees on Health and Demography; and Finance

SECOND ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS**MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Letter from the House of Representatives, informing the Senate that on 3 August 2022, the House of Representatives reconsidered the adoption and thereby adopted, as amended, House Concurrent Resolution No. 5, entitled:

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR FOR THE FIRST REGULAR SESSION OF THE NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE PHILIPPINES,

in which it requested the concurrence of the Senate.

To the Archives

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

It was 7:20 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

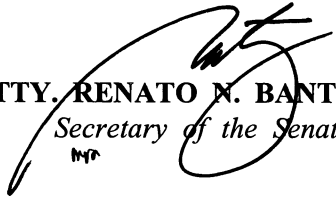
At 7:28 p.m., the session was resumed.

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Chair declared the session adjourned until three o'clock in the afternoon of the following day.

It was 7:39 p.m.

I hereby certify to the correctness of the foregoing.


ATTY. RENATO N. BANTUG JR.
Secretary of the Senate

Approved on August 10, 2022

