



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
Senate
Pasay City

Journal

SESSION NO. 16
Monday, September 5, 2022

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
FIRST REGULAR SESSION

Prepared by the
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Senate of the Philippines

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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. Robinhood C. Padilla led the prayer, to wit:

A'oodhu billahi min ash-shaytaan-ir-rajeem. Bismillahi rahmani raheem.

Ang atin pong panalangin sapagkat tayo po ay magkakapatid na lahat—Muslim, Kristiyano, Hudyo, Lumad—ay aanyayahan ko po kayo na panoorin po ninyo ang video.

Inshallah.

*Sa ngalan ng nag-iisang Diyos, ang mapagpala at mahabagin;
Sa nag-iisang Diyos lamang ang pagpupuri
Ang Panginoon ng mga nilikha at mga daigdig
Ang mapagpala at mahabagin;
Ang tanging Hukom at Hari ng paghuhukom;
Ikaw lamang po ang sinasamba namin
at sa iyo lamang po kami hihingi ng tulong;
Ipatnubay ninyo po sa amin ang Tuwid na Landas;
Ang landas ng iyong mga pinagpala;
Hindi ng mga isinumpa o mga nangaligaw ng landas.
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.
Cayetano, A. P. C. S	Padilla, R. C.
Cayetano, P. S.	Pimentel III, A. K.
Dela Rosa, R. B. M.	Poe, G.
Ejercito, J. V. G.	Revilla Jr., R. B.
Escudero, F. J. G.	Tolentino, F. T. N.
Estrada, J. E.	Tulfo, R. T.
Gatchalian, W.	Villanueva, J.
Go, C. L. T.	Villar, C. A.
Hontiveros, R.	Villar, M. A.
Lapid, M. L. M.	Zubiri, J. M. F.

With 22 senators present, the Chair declared the presence of a quorum.

Senator Binay was absent.

Senator Marcos was on official business in Tokyo, Japan from September 1-5, 2022 as invited by One Network Ltd. on their event tagged as 'A Dialogue with Manang Imee.' with the theme "The Preservation of our Filipino Culture as a Response to this Modern Time Influences."

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. 15 (August 31, 2022) and considered it approved.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE PRESENCE OF GUESTS

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

- Atty. Nesauro Firme, Judicial and Bar Council regular member;
- Mayor Antonio Joseph Inton, and Atty. Joycel R. Panlilio, Municipal Administrator of Hermosa, Bataan;
- Vice Mayor Richie Jason David of Limay, Bataan;
- Delegates from the 2022 World Police and Fire Games led by Maj. Carolina Abelarde Capuyan, of the taekwondo team; Gen. Alden Delvo of the basketball team; Col. Joel De Mesa of the badminton team; Gen. Jason Ortizo of athletics; Michael Pelaez of the darts team; and Ms. Carol Joyce Panganiban of table tennis.

Senate President Zubiri welcomed the guests to the Senate.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, the session was suspended.

It was 3:07 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:13 p.m., the session was resumed.

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

On behalf of the Senate, the Senate President greeted Senator Grace Poe on the occasion of her birthday on September 3, 2022.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR CAYETANO (A)

Senator Cayetano informed the Body that he had filed Proposed Senate Resolution No. 157, titled "Resolution Expressing the Sense of the Senate to Strongly Urge the University of the Philippines to Administer the University of the Philippines College Admission Test (UPCAT) Starting Academic Year 2023-2024," in order to make the admission process more holistic.

He informed the Body that U.P. announced during the weekend that it will not be holding the UPCAT for the coming school year. He disclosed that prior to the suspension of UPCAT, the Philippine Science High School System, which has 12 schools, had a passing rate of 97% to 99% of all UPCAT takers, but that it dropped to only 60.55% during the UPCAT suspension. He stated that U.P. claims that they have a system in place for the admission process.

He pointed out that some LGUs with specialized schools do not give high grades to their students; thus, if admission to U.P. will be solely based on the grades reflected on report cards, many deserving students will be denied admission, and the university will not be able to attract the best students.

He stated that he takes the UPCAT suspension personally because it kills the dreams of those who are about to begin their first year in college. He stated that he would rather that they take the exam and work for their admission to U.P.

On a related matter, he recalled that during the Aquino administration, Congress passed the Iskolar ng Bayan Law, which allows top high school graduates from remote places in the country to be admitted in state universities without having to take an entrance exam. He lamented, however, that U.P. did not implement the law because, according to them, they have their own system to make sure that they get the best of students. He believed that it was time for U.P. to reinstate the UPCAT because it has been two years since its suspension.

He then urged Senator Escudero, chairperson of the Committee on Higher, Technical and Vocational Education, who will hold a hearing on Wednesday, to take up the issue in his committee. He also sought the support of the Body regarding the matter.

He stated that he would not complain if U.P. could guarantee admission to the best students even if the UPCAT was not required. He pointed out that it receives 23.41% of the budget of all state universities, which is more than one-fourth of the budget of all state universities. With the budget, he reminded U.P. that with more funds come more power and responsibility.

He reiterated that with increased funding, it is unacceptable for the university to yet again postpone the UPCAT, which is used to screen students for admission. He then apologized to the Body, stating that he did not intend to take up the time of those who would be delivering privilege speeches and that he only wanted to bring such an urgent matter to the Body's attention.

REMARKS OF THE CHAIR

Senate President Zubiri stated that he likewise prefers that students take the UPCAT, as many U.P. scholars had done in the past, as he believed that taking the test to screen incoming students is more objective than the new screening system the U.P. has begun using in the midst of the pandemic.

He disclosed that he had also received complaints from students who were at the top of their classes but were denied admission to the university, while those who were not were surprisingly admitted. Fearing that U.P. would be accused of employing patronage system in their applicant screening, he reiterated that it is best that students go through an examination in order for the university to get the top applicants, particularly for quota courses, by basing not only on their grades but also on their performance in the said examination.

While not an alumnus of U.P., Senator Villanueva stated that he shared the Senate President Zubiri's sentiments, adding that he had attended the Committee on Science and Technology hearing earlier that afternoon.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR CAYETANO (P)

At this juncture, Senator Cayetano (P) stated that she, like her brother, Senator Cayetano (A), was a staunch defender of the U.P. budget against anyone who wants to cut it. She expressed concern, however, that U.P. could not yet conduct an examination as part of their admission requirement, despite everything going back to normal.

She stated that as chairperson of the Committee on Sustainable Development Goals, Innovation and Futures Thinking, she supports distance learning and open education. Citing a book written prior to the pandemic about an African young girl who completed her education through online education, she believed that online education is the way to go in the future, which, in fact, became an opportunity to still make learning possible even after the pandemic hit.

Noting the late Sen. Edgardo Angara's earlier efforts on distance learning and open education, she stated that it is not a problem whether U.P. continues to offer online and hybrid classes as long as students are required to take an examination before entering the university.

Concerning the Philippine Science High School, whose students used to have a 97% to 99 % passing rate in U.P. admissions that recently dropped to 60% after the university implemented a new system for screening applicants, she expressed concern for the future of those students who were impacted by the system change.

At this point, Senate President Zubiri stated that, with Senator (A) Cayetano's permission, he would like to be made a coauthor of the resolution once it is formalized. Senator Villanueva also expressed his desire to be made a coauthor of the resolution.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

The Secretary of the Senate read the following Senate bills which the Chair referred to the committees hereunder indicated:

BILLS ON FIRST READING

Senate Bill No. 951, entitled

AN ACT EXPANDING THE POWERS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS TO PROVIDE LOCAL MASS PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS, AMENDING

FOR THIS PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7160, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991," AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committees on Local Government; and Public Services

Senate Bill No. 952, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING THE MONTH OF JUNE OF EVERY YEAR AS THE "NATIONAL FRONTLINERS MONTH" IN THE ENTIRE COUNTRY AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committees on Health and Demography; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 953, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A MORE RESPONSIVE AND COMPREHENSIVE REGULATION FOR THE PRACTICE OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 2382, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "MEDICAL ACT OF 1959" AND OTHER LAWS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

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

Senate Bill No. 954, entitled

AN ACT INTEGRATING BASIC ROAD SAFETY AND COMPREHENSIVE DRIVER'S EDUCATION IN THE CURRICULUM OF THE ENHANCED BASIC EDUCATION (K TO 12) PROGRAM

Introduced by Senator Poe

To the Committees on Basic Education; Ways and Means; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 955, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE GERIATRIC CENTER-RESEARCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTE, DEFINING ITS OBJECTIVES, POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Poe

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

Senate Bill No. 956, entitled

AN ACT PENALIZING THE ILLICIT ENRICHMENT OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES FOR ACQUISITION OF PROPERTIES THROUGH UNLAWFUL MEANS

Introduced by Senator Poe

To the Committees on Justice and Human Rights; and Civil Service, Government Reorganization and Professional Regulation

Senate Bill No. 957, entitled

AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE DRUG REHABILITATION PROGRAMS OF THE GOVERNMENT, AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9165 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "COMPREHENSIVE DANGEROUS DRUGS ACT OF 2002," AS AMENDED, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREOF, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Poe

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

Senate Bill No. 958, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE PROVISION OF CROP INSURANCE FOR THE FISHERIES LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY SECTORS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 1 OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 1467, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "REVISED CHARTER OF THE PHILIPPINE CROP INSURANCE CORPORATION ACT OF 1995"

Introduced by Senator Poe

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

Senate Bill No. 959, entitled

AN ACT PENALIZING THE DISSEMINATION OF FALSE INFORMATION AS TO THE PRESENCE OF BOMBS, EXPLOSIVES AND OTHER INCENDIARY DEVICES IN HIGH DENSITY OR SENSITIVE PLACES AND PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Poe

To the Committee on Public Order and Dangerous Drugs

Senate Bill No. 960, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE 'ABOT ALAM' PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Poe

To the Committees on Basic Education; Youth; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 961, entitled

AN ACT PROMOTING CORPORATIVE FARMING AND PROVIDING INCENTIVES FOR ITS EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION

Introduced by Senator Poe

To the Committees on Agriculture, Food and Agrarian Reform; and Ways and Means

Senate Bill No. 962, entitled

AN ACT CREATING A PHILIPPINE POLLUTANT RELEASE AND TRANSFER
REGISTRY

Introduced by Senator Poe

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

Senate Bill No. 963, entitled

AN ACT TO PROVIDE FREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE TO ALL INDIGENT FILIPINOS,
AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE CHAPTER 5, TITLE III, BOOK IV OF
EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 292, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "*ADMINIS-
TRATIVE CODE OF 1987*," APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Poe

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

Senate Bill No. 964, entitled

AN ACT PRESCRIBING SCHOOL BUS SAFETY STANDARDS AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Poe

To the Committees on Public Services; and Basic Education

Senate Bill No. 965, entitled

AN ACT ENHANCING THE CAPABILITIES, MANDATE, AND ORGANIZATIONAL
STRUCTURE OF THE MOVIE AND TELEVISION REVIEW AND CLASSIFICA-
TION BOARD (MTRCB), AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE PRESIDENTIAL
DECREE 1986

Introduced by Senator Poe

**To the Committees on Public Information and Mass Media; Ways and Means; and
Finance**

Senate Bill No. 966, entitled

AN ACT FOR THE PROTECTION, CONSERVATION AND REHABILITATION OF
WATERSHEDS SUPPORTING THE NATIONAL IRRIGATION SYSTEM (NIS)
TO ENSURE CONTINUOUS SUPPLY OF WATER FOR AGRICULTURAL

PRODUCTION AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN FOOD AND PROVIDING FUNDS
FOR THE PURPOSE

Introduced by Senator Poe

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

Senate Bill No. 967, entitled

AN ACT DEVELOPING THE PILI INDUSTRY, CREATING FOR THE PURPOSE
THE PILI SUBSIDY FUNDS AND PILI RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
CENTER, AND DECLARING THE PROVINCE OF SORSOGON AS THE PILI
CAPITAL OF THE PHILIPPINES

Introduced by Senator Poe

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

Senate Bill No. 968, entitled

AN ACT TO ENCOURAGE MORE FILIPINO LAWYERS TO SERVE THE PEOPLE
AND JOIN THE PUBLIC ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, ESTABLISHING FOR THE
PURPOSE THE 'ABOGADO PARA SA BAYAN' RETURN SERVICE
PROGRAM, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Poe

To the Committees on Justice and Human Rights; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 969, entitled

AN ACT TO FURTHER ASSIST FILIPINO MIGRANT WORKERS, AMENDING
FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 10 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8042, AS AMENDED

Introduced by Senator Poe

To the Committee on Migrant Workers

Senate Bill No. 970, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING SECTION 95 (B) OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 856 OR
THE CODE ON SANITATION OF THE PHILIPPINES

Introduced by Senator Poe

To the Committees on Health and Demography; Justice and Human Rights; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 971, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING SECTION 5, PARAGRAPH 3 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9225,

OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "CITIZENSHIP RETENTION AND RE-ACQUISITION ACT OF 2003"

Introduced by Senator Poe

To the Committee on Justice and Human Rights

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

Senate Bill No. 972, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY FOR LIVESTOCK-RELATED DISEASE IN EVERY PROVINCE WHERE THE LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY IS A MAJOR ECONOMIC ACTIVITY, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Lapid

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

Senate Bill No. 973, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A MORATORIUM ON RENTAL PAYMENT AND EVICTION DURING DISASTERS AND OTHER EMERGENCIES

Introduced by Senator Lapid

To the Committees on Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship; and Urban Planning, Housing and Resettlement

Senate Bill No. 974, entitled

AN ACT PROMOTING THE DIGITALIZATION OF FRONTLINE SERVICES OF ALL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Lapid

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

Senate Bill No. 975, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A MORATORIUM ON STUDENT LOAN PAYMENT DURING DISASTERS AND OTHER EMERGENCIES

Introduced by Senator Lapid

To the Committee on Higher, Technical and Vocational Education

Senate Bill No. 976, entitled

AN ACT APPROPRIATING THE AMOUNT OF FIVE BILLION PESOS FOR THE

RELIEF, RECONSTRUCTION, AND REHABILITATION OF CITIES,
MUNICIPALITIES AND PROVINCES AFFECTED BY THE RECENT 7-
MAGNITUDE EARTHQUAKE IN ABRA, AND CREATING THE NAMNAMA
FUND UNDER THE NATIONAL DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND
MANAGEMENT FUND (CALAMITY FUND)

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

To the Committee on Rules

Senate Bill No. 977, entitled

AN ACT PROTECTING INDIVIDUALS ENGAGED IN FOOD, GROCERY, AND
PHARMACY DELIVERY SERVICES

Introduced by Senator Pimentel III

To the Committee on Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship

Senate Bill No. 978, entitled

AN ACT PROHIBITING THE ISSUANCE OF PRE-APPROVED CREDIT CARDS
WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE CONSUMER AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Pimentel III

To the Committee on Banks, Financial Institutions and Currencies

Senate Bill No. 979, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE GERIATRIC MEDICAL CENTER,
OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "SENIOR CITIZENS' HOSPITAL," AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Pimentel III

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

Senate Bill No. 980, entitled

AN ACT TO ENHANCE THE CAPACITY AND STREAMLINE ORGANIZATIONAL
ROLE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE AND ITS BUREAUS,
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Dela Rosa

**To the Committees on National Defense and Security, Peace, Unification and Recon-
ciliation; Civil Service, Government Reorganization and Professional Regulation; and
Finance**

Senate Bill No. 981, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE VIROLOGY SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
INSTITUTE OF THE PHILIPPINES AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

To the Committees on Science and Technology; Ways and Means; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 982, entitled

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

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

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

Senate Bill No. 983, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11223, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE ACT, TO PROVIDE FOR FREE ANNUAL MEDICAL CHECK UP FOR FILIPINOS

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

To the Committee on Health and Demography

Senate Bill No. 984, entitled

AN ACT STRENGTHENING DOMESTIC HEALTHCARE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES, PROVIDING FOR A FILIPINO PRODUCTS FIRST POLICY DURING PANDEMIC AND OTHER PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

To the Committees on Health and Demography; Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship; Ways and Means; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 985, entitled

AN ACT PROTECTING THE REMITTANCES OR MONEY TRANSFERS OF OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS (OFWs) BY REQUIRING THE DISCLOSURE OF FINANCE CHARGES AND OTHER FEES IN CONNECTION WITH MONEY TRANSFER, COMPELLING STRICT ADHERENCE TO THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THEIR TRANSFER, PENALIZING VIOLATIONS THEREOF, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

To the Committees on Banks, Financial Institutions and Currencies; and Migrant Workers

Senate Bill No. 986, entitled

AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE UTILIZATION OF INFORMATION AND

COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) IN ALL PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS AND HIGH SCHOOLS, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

To the Committees on Science and Technology; Basic Education; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 987, entitled

AN ACT REQUIRING THE PHILIPPINE INSTITUTE OF VOLCANOLOGY AND SEISMOLOGY (PHIVOLCS) AND THE PHILIPPINE ATMOSPHERIC, GEOPHYSICAL AND ASTRONOMICAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (PAGASA) TO ESTABLISH THE NATURAL CALAMITIES' HAZARD MITIGATION PROGRAM

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

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

Senate Bill No. 988, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF FOREST AND FOREST LANDS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

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

Senate Bill No. 989, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL ENERGY POLICY AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR FACILITIES UTILIZING WASTE-TO-ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

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

Senate Bill No. 990, entitled

AN ACT MANDATING THE ESTABLISHMENT, MANAGEMENT, MAINTENANCE, AND REGULATION OF A RAINWATER HARVESTING FACILITY IN ALL NEW INSTITUTIONAL, COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL, AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN METRO MANILA

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

To the Committee on Public Works

Senate Bill No. 991, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR SCHOLARSHIP TO CHILDREN AND DEPENDENTS OF FARMERS AND FISHERFOLKS, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

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

Senate Bill No. 992, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING JANUARY TWENTY-TWO (22) OF EVERY YEAR AS A SPECIAL WORKING HOLIDAY TO BE KNOWN AS NATIONAL FARMERS' DAY

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

To the Committee on Agriculture, Food and Agrarian Reform

Senate Bill No. 993 entitled

AN ACT INCREASING THE BED CAPACITY OF THE SOUTHERN TAGALOG REGIONAL HOSPITAL IN THE CITY OF BACOR, PROVINCE OF CAVITE, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11233, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

To the Committee on Rules

Senate Bill No. 994, entitled

AN ACT AUTHORIZING WIRETAPPING IN CASES INVOLVING VIOLATIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9165, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "COMPREHENSIVE DANGEROUS DRUGS ACT OF 2002," AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 3 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 4200, ENTITLED "AN ACT TO PROHIBIT AND PENALIZE WIRETAPPING AND OTHER RELATED VIOLATIONS OF THE PRIVACY OF COMMUNICATION, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES"

Introduced by Senator Angara

To the Committee on Public Order and Dangerous Drugs

Senate Bill No. 995, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING ARTICLES 29, 97, 99, 171, AND 174, AND CREATING A NEW ARTICLE 99-A UNDER ACT NO. 3815, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "THE REVISED PENAL CODE"

Introduced by Senator Angara

To the Committees on Justice and Human Rights; and Constitutional Amendments and Revision of Codes

Senate Bill No. 996, entitled

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

Introduced by Senator Angara

To the Committees on Justice and Human Rights; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 997, entitled

AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE WITNESS PROTECTION, SECURITY AND BENEFIT PROGRAM, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6981, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "WITNESS PROTECTION, SECURITY AND BENEFIT ACT"

Introduced by Senator Angara

To the Committees on Justice and Human Rights; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 998, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE AGRICULTURE INFORMATION SYSTEM IN ALL CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES

Introduced by Senator Angara

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

Senate Bill No. 999, entitled

AN ACT PROMOTING THE SCIENTIFIC PROPAGATION, PROCESSING, UTILIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF PHILIPPINE NATIVE ANIMALS, HEREBY CREATING THE PHILIPPINE NATIVE ANIMAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Introduced by Senator Angara

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

Senate Bill No. 1000, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING SECTIONS 3 AND 7 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9512, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AND EDUCATION ACT OF 2008," AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES"

Introduced by Senator Angara

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



ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

BILLS ON FIRST READING

Senate Bill No. 1001, entitled

AN ACT INCREASING THE BED CAPACITY OF THE PHILIPPINE GENERAL HOSPITAL FROM ONE THOUSAND AND FIVE HUNDRED BEDS (1,500) TO TWO THOUSAND AND TWO HUNDRED BEDS (2,200) AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Angara

To the Committees on Health and Demography; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1002, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTING POLICIES FOR THE PROTECTION AND WELFARE OF CAREGIVERS IN THE PRACTICE OF THEIR PROFESSION

Introduced by Senator Angara

To the Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development

Senate Bill No. 1003, entitled

AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY OF THE PHILIPPINES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT 9497, OTHERWISE KNOWN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY ACT OF 2008

Introduced by Senator Angara

To the Committee on Public Services

Senate Bill No. 1004, entitled

AN ACT ALLOWING AND REGULATING THE USE OF MOTORCYCLES AS PUBLIC UTILITY VEHICLES, AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 4136, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LAND TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC CODE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Angara

To the Committee on Public Services

Senate Bill No. 1005, entitled

AN ACT PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE AND ALTERNATIVE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION AND OTHER MOBILITY OPTIONS TO IMPROVE AIR QUALITY, INCREASE EFFICIENCY, REDUCE CONGESTION, AND CONTRIBUTE TO POSITIVE HEALTH IMPACTS IN OUR SOCIETY

Introduced by Senator Angara

To the Committees on Sustainable Development Goals, Innovation and Futures Thinking; Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1006, entitled

AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE TO INFORMATION ON MATTERS OF PUBLIC CONCERN AND STATE POLICIES OF FULL PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF ALL ITS TRANSACTIONS INVOLVING THE PUBLIC INTEREST AND HONESTY IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Angara

To the Committees on Public Information and Mass Media; Civil Service, Government Reorganization and Professional Regulation; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1007, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6847, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE PHILIPPINE SPORTS COMMISSION ACT

Introduced by Senator Angara

To the Committees on Sports; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1008, entitled

AN ACT MANDATING HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND TECHNICAL -VOCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS TO ENSURE THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY FROM INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL THREATS, THEREBY CREATING A SAFETY AND SECURITY COMMITTEE FOR THIS PURPOSE

Introduced by Senator Angara

To the Committees on Higher, Technical and Vocational Education; and Public Order and Dangerous Drugs

Senate Bill No. 1009, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A COMPREHENSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE MODERNIZATION, CONNECTIVITY AND INNOVATION PROGRAM FOR PUBLIC ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Angara

To the Committees on Basic Education; Ways and Means; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1010, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR LIFETIME VALIDITY OF PERSON WITH DISABILITY IDENTIFICATION CARDS FOR THOSE WITH PERMANENT DISABILITY OR

ELDERLY, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7277, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "MAGNA CARTA FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITY," AS AMENDED

Introduced by Senator Angara

To the Committee on Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development

Senate Bill No. 1011, entitled

AN ACT TO ENHANCE INTER-LGU COOPERATION BY AMENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS IN BOOK I OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7160, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991"

Introduced by Senator Angara

To the Committee on Local Government

Senate Bill No. 1012, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING THE CHINESE NEW YEAR'S DAY A SPECIAL NONWORKING HOLIDAY IN THE PHILIPPINES

Introduced by Senator Angara

To the Committee on Constitutional Amendments and Revision Of Codes

Senate Bill No. 1013, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE BULACAN AIRPORT CITY SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE AND FREEPORT, PROVINCE OF BULACAN AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Marcos

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

Senate Bill No. 1014, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR PROTECTION OF THE REMITTANCES OF OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS

Introduced by Senator Villar (C)

To the Committees on Banks, Financial Institutions and Currencies; and Migrant Workers

Senate Bill No. 1015, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING ARTICLE 365 OF ACT NO. 3815, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE REVISED PENAL CODE, AS AMENDED

Introduced by Senator Pimentel III



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

Senate Bill No. 1016, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING SECTION 9 OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE (P.D.) NO. 968,
OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE PROBATION LAW OF 1976, AS AMENDED

Introduced by Senator Pimentel III

To the Committee on Justice and Human Rights

Senate Bill No. 1017, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTING THE MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS, APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Estrada

To the Committees on Health and Demography; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1018, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTING REFORMS IN REAL PROPERTY VALUATION AND
ASSESSMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES, REORGANIZING THE BUREAU OF
LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 1019, entitled

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

Introduced by Senator Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 1020, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE CASH BUDGETING SYSTEM, AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Estrada

To the Committee on Finance

Senate Bill No. 1021, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR WATER
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND CREATING THE DEPARTMENT OF WATER

921

RESOURCES AND THE WATER REGULATORY COMMISSION, DEFINING THEIR MANDATES, POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 1022, entitled

AN ACT STRENGTHENING PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 1023, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9184, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT REFORM ACT, WITHDRAWING FROM ITS APPLICATION ALL REFERENCES TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS

Introduced by Senator Estrada

To the Committees on Finance; and Local Government

Senate Bill No. 1024, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7160, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Estrada

To the Committee on Local Government

Senate Bill No. 1025, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN ON-SITE, IN-CITY OR NEAR-CITY OR OFF-CITY GOVERNMENT RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM FOR INFORMAL SETTLER FAMILIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH A PEOPLE'S PLAN AND MANDATING THE IMPLEMENTING LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIT, JOINTLY WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, IN CASES OF NEAR-CITY OR OFF-CITY RESETTLEMENT, TO PROVIDE OTHER BASIC SERVICES AND LIVELIHOOD COMPONENTS IN FAVOR OF THE RECIPIENT LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIT, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7279, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING ACT OF 1992"

Introduced by Senator Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 1026, entitled

AN ACT ENSURING EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES TO MEMBERS OF INDIGENOUS CULTURAL COMMUNITIES AND PREFERENCE IN CERTAIN CASES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Estrada

To the Committees on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development; and Cultural Communities and Muslim Affairs

Senate Bill No. 1027, entitled

AN ACT INCREASING THE PERSONNEL ECONOMIC RELIEF ALLOWANCE GRANTED TO GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES TO FOUR THOUSAND PESOS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 1028, entitled

AN ACT UPHOLDING THE RIGHT OF ACQUISITION BY QUALIFIED BENEFICIARIES OF GOVERNMENT-OWNED LANDS THEY ACTUALLY OCCUPY, AMENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NUMBER SEVEN THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED SEVENTY-NINE (R.A. 7279), OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING ACT OF 1992, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Estrada

To the Committee on Urban Planning, Housing and Resettlement

Senate Bill No. 1029, entitled

AN ACT REQUIRING LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS TO EARMARK PORTION OF THEIR NATIONAL TAX ALLOTMENTS FOR FREE MEDICINES TO INDIGENT PATIENTS IN THEIR LOCALITIES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Estrada

To the Committees On Local Government; Health And Demography; And Ways And Means

Senate Bill No. 1030, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE EAR, NOSE AND THROAT (ENT) CENTER AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 1031, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A CENTER FOR AUTISM AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 1032, entitled

AN ACT PROMOTING THE PRODUCTION OF OUTSTANDING AND WORLD-CLASS FILIPINO MOTION PICTURES, PROVIDING INCENTIVES TO FILMMAKERS AND ACTORS CLAIMING HONORS IN INTERNATIONAL FILM COMPETITIONS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 1033, entitled

AN ACT CREATING THE NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE OF THE PHILIPPINES AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 1034, entitled

AN ACT CREATING AND ESTABLISHING THE INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 1035, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF THE FUTURE IN TECHNOLOGY AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 1036, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A NEW PASSPORT LAW, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8239, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "PHILIPPINE PASSPORT ACT OF 1996"

Introduced by Senator Estrada

To the Committee on Foreign Relations

Senate Bill No. 1037, entitled

AN ACT EXEMPTING INCENTIVES, REWARDS, BONUSES AND OTHER FORMS OF EMOLUMENTS RECEIVED BY NATIONAL ATHLETES AND COACHES FROM TAXES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10699, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "NATIONAL ATHLETES AND COACHES BENEFITS AND INCENTIVES ACT"

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

To the Committees on Sports; and Ways and Means

Senate Bill No. 1038, entitled

AN ACT EXPANDING THE NUMBER OF QUALIFIED BENEFICIARIES OF THE MAGNA CARTA FOR MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES BY ADJUSTING THE ASSET THRESHOLD FOR EACH ENTERPRISE CATEGORY, FURTHER AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 3 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6977, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE MAGNA CARTA FOR MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

Introduced by Senator Escudero

To the Committee on Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship

Senate Bill No. 1039, entitled

AN ACT STRENGTHENING PHILIPPINE PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE CAPABILITY, ESTABLISHING FOR THE PURPOSE A PHILIPPINE CENTER FOR DISEASE PREVENTION AND CONTROL, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Escudero

To the Committees on Health and Demography; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1040, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE PARTICIPATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS (CSOs) IN THE PREPARATION AND AUTHORIZATION PROCESS OF THE ANNUAL NATIONAL BUDGET, PROVIDING EFFECTIVE MECHANISMS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

To the Committees on Electoral Reforms and People's Participation; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1041, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE POVERTY REDUCTION THROUGH SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP (PRESENT) PROGRAM AND PROMOTING SOCIAL ENTERPRISES, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

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

Senate Bill No. 1042, entitled

AN ACT MANDATING THE STOCKPILING OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

To the Committees on Health and Demography; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1043 entitled

AN ACT PROTECTING THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE TO FREEDOM OF RELIGION IN THE PHILIPPINES GUARANTEED UNDER SECTION 5, ARTICLE III OF THE 1987 CONSTITUTION AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

To the Committees on Justice and Human Rights; and Cultural Communities and Muslim Affairs

Senate Bill No. 1044, entitled

AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BAMBOO INDUSTRY IN THE PHILIPPINES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

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

Senate Bill No. 1045, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE GRANT OF TEACHING SUPPLIES ALLOWANCE FOR PUBLIC BASIC EDUCATION TEACHERS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

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

Senate Bill No. 1046, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR SIMPLIFIED REGISTRATION, FILING OF RETURNS AND PAYMENT OF INCOME AND PERCENTAGE TAXES AND PROVIDING TAX RELIEF FOR MICRO-ENTERPRISES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTIONS 74, 128 AND 236 OF THE NATIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE CODE, AS AMENDED

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

To the Committee on Ways and Means

Senate Bill No. 1047, entitled

AN ACT MANDATING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NURSING HOMES FOR THE ABANDONED, NEGLECTED, UNATTACHED OR HOMELESS SENIOR CITIZENS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7432, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "AN ACT TO MAXIMIZE THE CONTRIBUTION OF SENIOR CITIZENS TO NATION BUILDING, GRANT BENEFITS AND SPECIAL PRIVILEGES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES," AS AMENDED, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

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

Senate Bill No. 1048, entitled

AN ACT ENSURING SAFE DRINKING WATER, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 856, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE CODE ON SANITATION OF THE PHILIPPINES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

To the Committees on Health and Demography; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1049, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9266, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "ARCHITECTURE ACT OF 2004," AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Civil Service, Government Reorganization and Professional Regulation

Senate Bill No. 1050, entitled

AN ACT CREATING THE "COUNCIL FOR THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT," APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

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

CHANGE OF COMMITTEE REFERRAL

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body approved to transfer the referral of House Concurrent Resolution No. 2 from the Committee on Rules to the Committee on Finance.

PROPOSED SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 3

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body considered, on Second Reading, Proposed Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 3, entitled

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE 2022-2028 MEDIUM-TERM FISCAL FRAMEWORK OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT,

taking into consideration House Concurrent Resolution No. 2.

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

The Chair recognized Senator Angara for the sponsorship.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR ANGARA

In sponsoring Proposed Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 3, Senator Angara delivered the following speech:

I rise today to sponsor Proposed Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 3 supporting the Medium-Term Fiscal Framework, or MTFF, which has been laid out for the country by our economic managers until 2028.

This resolution was jointly filed by no less than our Senate President, Sen. Juan Miguel F. Zubiri, Senate President Pro Tempore, Sen. Loren Legarda, and our Majority Leader, Sen. Joel Villanueva. And it is more or less identical to the resolutions coauthored by House Speaker Martin Romualdez, House Majority Leader Manuel Jose "Mannix" Dalipe, House Minority Leader Marcelino C. Libanan, and the Senior Vice Chairperson of the Committee on Appropriations in the House, Rep. Stella Quimbo, and Cong. Joey Salceda, which was adopted by the House of Representatives last August 1, 2022.

Pagkatapos ng halos dalawa't kalahating taon na napailalim tayo sa pandemya, paunti-unti nang bumabangon at umaarangkada muli ang ating ekonomiya.

After experiencing a protracted downturn throughout 2020, we bounced back in 2021 and registered positive GDP growth of 5.7 percent. Then by the first half of 2022, where we registered 7.8 percent GDP growth, we emerged as the fastest growing economy among the ASEAN-5, expanding faster than Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Thailand.

Clearly, our macroeconomic fundamentals remained strong, even in the face of the biggest humanitarian crisis in our history.

Gayon pa man, marami pa rin tayong pagsubok na kinakaharap na kailangan natin maigpawan para tuluyan tayong makabangon muli. Halimbawa, patuloy na mataas ang presyo ng mga bilihan. Dahil sa armadong labanan sa Russia at Ukraine, naapektuhan pa rin ang



presyo ng langis at gasoline na silang nagpapataas din sa gastusin para sa transportasyon, kalakalan, kuryente, at pagkain. Hindi pa rin po bumabalik sa dati ang pagtakbo ng mga supply chain sa buong mundo, kaya maraming negosyo ang hindi pa rin nakababalik sa dating ayos. Ang resulta—marami pa rin pong Pilipino ang nahihirapang itaguyod at alagaan ang kanilang sarili at ang kanilang mga mahal sa buhay.

Hindi po madali ang mga pagsubok na ito. At hindi malulutas ang mga problema kung magkanya-kanya po tayo. Kailangan po natin magkaisa. At para mas madali tayong makapagsanib-pwersa, mahalagang may plano o balangkas na gagabay sa galaw natin.

This is where the Medium-Term Fiscal Framework or MTFF will contribute significantly, as it outlines the broad policy direction that the government wants the country to take.

The framework's primary objective is to stabilize our fiscal house in the short-term, without hampering our efforts at jumpstarting our economic recovery and sustaining our growth in the medium-term. In that sense, the MTFF can stand as our first glimpse into the broad policy strokes that our administration wants to take, that will be encapsulated and discussed more in detail in the *Philippine Development Plan 2022 - 2028*, which is scheduled to be published at the end of this year.

In a briefing over the weekend, the Department of Finance explained that the MTFF shall serve as the country's blueprint, specifically for 1) reducing our fiscal deficit; 2) promoting the country's fiscal sustainability; and 3) enabling robust economic growth as we embark on our recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic.

The MTFF first sets the macroeconomic growth targets that this administration—the Marcos administration—wishes to achieve in the next five or so years, namely:

- 6.5 to 7.5 percent GDP growth in 2022 and 6.5 to 8 percent annual GDP growth from 2023 to 2028;
- a reduction of poverty rate to a 9 percent poverty rate by 2028;
- a reduction of the national government deficit to stand at 3 percent of our national government deficit by 2028;
- a reduction of the debt-to-GDP ratio to less than 60 percent by 2025; and
- to achieve upper middle income country status for the Philippines, with each Filipino earning at least US\$ 4,256 or the equivalent per year.

In the near-term, the MTFF sets the following eight-point socioeconomic agenda for protecting the purchasing power of Filipinos, and mitigating the socioeconomic scarring effects of the pandemic on families and consumers: 1) ensure food security; 2) reduce transport and logistics costs; 3) reduce energy costs to families; 4) tackle health concerns; 5) strengthen social protection, which includes efforts to improve the 4Ps Program, and expedite the implementation of the National ID System; 6) reopening the face-to-face classes in a safe and timely manner; 7) make the bureaucracy more efficient through digitalization; and 8) pursue sound fiscal management through taxation reforms and better revenue allocation.

The MTFF also involves a longer planning horizon, and sets a medium-term socioeconomic agenda focused on generating more jobs while ensuring that the jobs created have better pay, are of better quality, and are greener and more sustainable.

To achieve this, the Executive shall endeavor to: 1) promote the Philippines as an investment destination; 2) improve our infrastructure through a more holistic Build, Build, Build Program which shall be enhanced by the reopening of public-private partnerships (PPPs); 3) ensuring energy security, especially when several have already projected that our reserves are quickly becoming inadequate to power our economy; 4) enhancing the employability of our people through better quality education and training opportunities; 5) expanding and improving digital infrastructure; 6) encouraging R&D and innovation; 7) adopting a "green" and "blue" mindset to managing our economy; and, 8) establishing livable and sustainable communities.

To be clear, the details on how the government intends to pursue these agenda items need to be fleshed out. We hope to get a better picture of the general plan once the *Philippine*

Development Plan 2022 - 2028 is published by the end of the year. We still have to have our feet firmly planted on the ground even if we have our heads high up in the clouds in our planning, especially in the face of tight government revenues and an economy that is still trying to recover. This is where the MTFF shall help us, by setting the fiscal limits and bounds from which we can think about the future of our country.

We believe there is no argument on the need for the government to be fiscally responsible as it works to jumpstart our economic recovery. Hence, under the MTFF, while the government pursues its socioeconomic agenda, it shall also exercise fiscal discipline. On the one hand, this means working to improve revenue efforts through better tax administration, and other much-needed reforms in the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs.

In this regard, several priority legislative measures were identified under the MTFF, including: a) VAT on digital service providers; b) strengthening of tax administration for social media influencers; and c) excise taxes for single-use plastics. On top of these, the government also wishes for Congress to pursue the remaining tax reform packages of the previous administration, which are the Real Property Valuation and Assessment Reform Act, and the Passive Income and Financial Intermediary Taxation Act or PIFITA.

Simultaneous to improving revenue efforts, government shall also pursue reforms in its expenditures and resource mobilization policies. *Kung may pagbabago sa pagkolekta ng mga buwis, kailangan din po ng reporma sa paggastos ng pondo ng bayan. Kaya ayon sa MTFF, magtatrabaho ang gobyerno para gawing mas modernisado at digitalized ang mga patakaran at proseso hinggil sa paggugol at paggastos ng pondo ng bayan.*

Pakay rin po ng gobyerno na ipasa ang isang Military and Uniformed Personnel Pension Reform Act, at iba pang mga panukalang reporma hinggil sa rightsizing; public-private partnerships (PPPs) at integrated at extensive private sector participation in infrastructure; localized investment and growth programs; at maraming pang iba.

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

The MTFF is arguably the first of its kind. Never in my experience as a public servant of 18 years has a sitting administration laid out a fiscal framework early in its term to guide the decisions of lawmakers and civil servants.

The MTFF aims to be the anchor for the annual spending and financing plan of the national government and for Congress when preparing the annual budget. By having the parameters set early on, we believe that our debates and interpellations on the annual budgets would be streamlined and better harmonized. And this will afford us a lot more time and energy to dig deeper into the details of what our government will do to help the economy and our people get back on its feet.

For this to work however, the Senate needs to play its part—which makes it critical that we adopt this resolution. *Alalahanin sana nating lahat na sa pag-suporta po sa MTFF, naka-angkla ang pagbangon at pag-unlad ng ating sambayanan.*

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR HONTIVEROS

Senator Hontiveros asked at the outset whether Finance Secretary Diokno would also present the Medium-Term Fiscal Framework (MTFF) to the Senate leadership, as he had done to the House leadership. Senator Angara responded in the negative, stating that they could always bring out their concerns during the Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC) presentation scheduled on Monday, September 12, 2022, if the Body has not voted on the resolution by that time, and they could flesh out the MTFF during their budget debates.

Senator Hontiveros questioned why the resolution was being considered when the DBCC always presented them with the medium-term fiscal and economic projects, which would then form part of Senator Angara's budget document. Senator Angara responded that the goal is to have

more legislators achieve a greater buy-in. He stated that because the MTFF lacks a self-executory mechanism, it would be carried out by a bill that they would pass, which would be subject to debate. She then stated her openness to debates on the resolution, citing the legislative agenda that outlines the fiscal framework.

When asked how the resolution would be used by the Executive department, specifically with its own deficit targets, Senator Angara responded that it would serve as a power document to show that the administration is serious about addressing the country's economic problems, such as the rising debt, the rising deficit, and funding for the Filipinos' important needs. He stated said that it would demonstrate the Executive and Legislative's unity in pushing government's plans for the betterment of its citizens.

Senator Hontiveros stated that the MTFF resolution was premature as it pre-empts the annual budget debates.

On whether they would be permitted to request changes to the DBCC's revenue assumption during the budget deliberations, particularly given that the revenue generation plan embedded in the proposed budget was very vague to achieve the revenue targets of the MTFF, Senator Angara replied that nobody is restraining them from asking for changes. He added that even the economic managers acknowledged that the situation might change in the coming years.

Senator Hontiveros admitted that she has been trying to understand the intent of the concurrent resolution, given that fiscal frameworks in other countries are governed by fiscal management councils, such as independent monetary boards, which are given discretion in terms of interest rate and inflation management, and which is usually done by Congress during the budget deliberations.

When asked if the resolution or the MTFF itself would be the first step in removing fiscal policy discretion beyond the reach of both the Legislative and Executive departments, Senator Angara replied in the affirmative, stating that it was even mentioned specifically in their titles. He stated that any tax measures filed for it would then be debated upon by the committee chaired by Senator Gatchalian. In response to Senator Hontiveros' earlier statement on other countries' fiscal frameworks, Senator Angara stated that India and Australia had implemented medium-term fiscal frameworks that had been approved by their legislatures.

Senator Hontiveros asked if such a resolution or fiscal framework, which is brought up with each new administration, as well as the advocacy of a few strategists to adopt a long-term planning timeline, are necessary, especially with the ongoing Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) and Philippine Development Plan. She emphasized that the annual budget debates accomplish some of the resolution's objectives, so the MTFF might already be in surplus.

She also believed that contracting out of fiscal policy and putting it out of reach of elected decision makers would be logical for other countries, such as India and Australia, that want to signal fiscal incentive discipline to creditors and credit rating agencies. She did, however, believe that more intensive in-depth discussions about the MTFF were necessary if they were to analyze it through the resolution.

Given that the resolution is not self-executory and is still subject to their discretion, particularly during budget deliberations, she stated that it might not even bind the Body's official action due to the lack of organizational layer that would enforce the resolution's contents. She stated that according to their discussion, nothing, not even a concurrent resolution like Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 3, would prevent the Executive or Congress from incorporating the entirely new fiscal numbers into the GAA. She maintained that even if the Senate or the House passes a resolution supporting the MTFF, the final word would still be in the GAA.



Senator Angara emphasized that the resolution mentioned AmBisyon 2040, a plan developed by NEDA during the administration of President Benigno Aquino, that they have not abandoned because there was still a need for longer-term planning across administrations.

Despite the fact that the resolution is not self-executory, he believed it is necessary to pass it because it is similar to the other resolutions that express their beliefs and opinions, which are valuable because what they say matters because they are the people's delegates.

REMARKS OF THE CHAIR

Senate President Zubiri compared it to a mission/vision statement of a barangay, where it does not necessarily mean that they would carry out all of them, but it is something that they want to achieve. He agreed with Senator Angara that it is absolutely a common plan since Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 3 is the sense of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR VILLANUEVA

Senator Villanueva believed that as government heads, such as he who had been Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) Secretary, Senator Dela Rosa as former PNP chief, and Sen. Mark Villar as former DPWH Secretary, it is important to have a framework to clearly determine the direction of the new administration, particularly when it comes to budgeting.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 3

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Chair suspended consideration of the resolution.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF SENATOR ESTRADA

Rising on a question of personal and collective privilege, Senator Estrada delivered the following privilege speech:

History has shown how crisis brought about innovation during the global health pandemic and amid several months of lockdowns; we saw how Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) evolved under a new normal that requires a contactless society. Our dining out experiences had been replaced by delivery services. Health care services are done remotely or via telemedicine, same with meetings which became synonymous with video conferencing while financial transactions are not primarily cashless.

Hindi rin naman nagpahuli ang mga masasamang loob dahil sumabay sila sa pagiging enterprising ng ating mga naghihikahos na mga kababayan, at ang pagiging malikhain nila ang nagbunsod sa text scams o spam messages na patuloy na nakapambibiktima hanggang sa ngayon.

The spam and scam text messages on fake online job offers, cash deals, and promotions soared to new heights since late last year. *Nakababahala na mabasa na nakalagay na ang pangalan mo sa ipinadalang spam text, kagaya ng natanggap ng isa sa aking staff na nagpahiwatig na alam ng mga nasa likod nito ang pagkakakilanlan mo base sa iyong gamit na mobile number. At kahit araw-araw ang pag-delete at pag-block sa mga numerong ito, ay mistulang kabute silang dumarami.*

Several weeks after the May 9, 2022 national and local elections, a different kind of scam text messages bombarded a number of us lawmakers. At first glance, for us public servants, it would appear to be a typical text message from local officials seeking assistance. But the frequency of receiving this type of message—some weekly, worse, daily—raised a red flag. Their calls for financial assistance were already bordering on extortion.

Napag-alaman ko na kayo mismo ay pinuntirya ng mga indibidwal na nagpakilala bilang Siquijor Governor Jake Vincent Villa, at Board Member Abner Lumongo. At sa isang entrapment operation ay nadakip ang mga mapalinlang na mga indibidwal.

I cannot help but notice the apparent similarity in this scheme employed against me by someone who posed as Batanes Vice Governor Ignacio “Nanoy” Villa and a certain Bicol board member named Carlo Magno.

Sa mga mensaheng ipinadala ng diumano ay Vice Governor Nanoy Villa noong July 7, 9, at 11, nangangalap siya ng pondo para matustusan ang isang “spiritual formation” at “team building” ng mga kawani ng kanilang Sanguniang Panlalawigan.

Kalakip pa nito ang pakiusap ng pagbibigay ng video greetings ng inyong lingkod para aniya ay sa mga kalahok na aabot sa dalawang daan. At bilang patunay, ipinadala pa niya ang isang video message mula kay PBA Party-List Rep. Margarita Ignacia “Migs” Nograles na aniya ay katuwang sa kanilang isasagawang aktibidad.

Before this incident, I received similar text messages last June 29 and August 3 from someone who claimed to be the lone district representative of Catanduanes, Congressman Leo Rodriguez.

Sa kabutihang palad, nag-courtesy call sa aking tanggapan ang tunay na si Congressman Rodriguez noong Agosto 9 ng taong ito, at dito namin kapwa napagtanto na may ibang tao pala na nagpapanggap bilang siya, hindi lamang sa akin, kundi pati na rin sa kaniyang mga kasamahan sa Mababang Kapulungan.

May dalawa pang kahalintulad na insidente—at isa ay nagmula sa isang diumano ay IBP Southern Leyte Chapter President Jovanni Plateros na nanghihingi ng tulong sa ngalan ng mga mag-aaral ng Kinachawa Elementary School ng munisipalidad ng San Ricardo, Southern Leyte.

Samantalang ang isang nagngangalang Carlo Magno na diumano ay Bicol Board Member ay dumulog rin sa akin para sa isang personal na pinansiyal na pangangailangan.

Nakiusap ito na ipadala ang tulong sa isang verified GCash account. Mayroon din isa nagngangalang “Matba,” isang Mayor sa Tawi-Tawi na lagi po akong itine-text. Ganoon din ang nag-text kay Sen. Robinhood Padilla, na nanghihingi rin ng pondo para sa isang affair nila the next day. Pilit akong tinatanong kong puwede ko ba siyang tulongan at ihulog ko raw ang aking tulong sa GCash.

Even before you went public about the modus operandi of those targeting politicians, I have already sought the assistance of the National Bureau of Investigation and the Anti-Cybercrime Group of the Philippine National Police last August 15 to look into this matter, and take appropriate action to prevent the perpetrators from victimizing more people.

Nakalulungkot isipin na ang gamit ko na mobile number para sa aking mga opisyal na gawain ay napasakamay na pala ng mga manloloko, at ang higit na nakababahala ay ang posibilidad na nagpasalin-salin na sa kung kani-kaninong Poncio Pilato ang isang dapat sana ay pribadong impormasyon.

Based on the news report, many of us senators have been subjected to such a scheme. The spate of incidents is enough to cause alarm among authorities and concerned agencies on the apparent violations of data privacy and the seeming string of fraud and misrepresentations.

Last June 20, Bloomberg reported that PLDT blocked more than 23 million malicious text messages in just three days, while the other giant mobile and telecommunications and broadband provider Globe Telecom was also reported to have blocked over 138 million spam and scam text messages from January to June this year.

Hindi natatapos ang problema sa pagba-block ng mga numero na gamit ng mga kawatan dahil patuloy lamang sila sa kanilang gawain hangga’t may nagagamit silang mga pre-paid o unregistered na mga numero. The anonymity they are enjoying is their shield from their accountability in their abusive practices.

At para sa mga scammers na ito na ang modus operandi ay ang magpanggap bilang gobernador, alkalde, congressman, at iba pa, mukhang hindi na sila nababahala sa maaring maging kaparusahan na kanilang kakaharapin sa ilalim ng ating batas.

Maaaring ang pagmamalabis at panlilinlang na ito ng ilan nating kababayan ay hindi pa sakop ng mga umiiral na batas, o maaaring may kakulangan pa sa mga polisiya at regulasyon na mayroon tayo ngayon. Pero hindi ito balakid sa pagbalangkas ng mga hakbang para punan ang mga kakulangang ito.

That is why, together with some of my colleagues, I have filed Senate Bill No. 802, entitled "An Act to Eradicate Mobile Phone Aided Terrorism and Criminal Activities Mandating for this Purpose Ownership Registration of all SIM Cards for Cellular Phones." As early as 2005, several senators have been pushing for the legislation of the SIM Card Registration Act.

Layunin natin na mabigyan ng pangalan at katauhan ang mga nasa likod ng panloloko at pagsasamantalang ito na kombinyente nilang naisasagawa dahil hindi nakarehistro ang kanilang numero at hindi rin sila madaling makikilala at matatanto. Napakadali para sa kanila ang gumamit lamang uli ng panibagong numerong hindi nakarehistro upang makapang-target ng mga bagong biktima.

The Philippines, being still the undisputed text capital in the world, must take this SIM registration proposed measure into serious consideration as a means to stop, or at least reduce, the proliferation of these scamming and fraudulent acts.

Marahil ay panahon na rin na paigtingin pa natin ang ating mga umiiral na polisiya nang sa ganoon ay matigil na ang mga spam text messages at mapanagot ang mga taong nasa likod nito. Ganoon pa man ay marapat na ang ating publiko ay maging alerto, maingat, at mapagbantay sa mga panlilinlang na ito.

It is our primary responsibility to look after ourselves so we do not fall prey to these fraudulent schemes.

Nakalulungkot isipin na sa panahon na nagpapatuloy ang pandemya, ang pagiging malikhaing nating mga Pilipino ay ginagamit sa pananamantala ng kapwa ng mga indibidwal na ito, imbes na pagsumikapan ang pagbangon at pag-angat sa sarili sa paraang maipagmamalaki nila.

Huwag po nating hayaang umiral at magpatuloy ito, not under our watch.

REMARKS OF SENATE PRESIDENT ZUBIRI

At this juncture, Senate President Zubiri thanked Senator Estrada for bringing an important issue to light. He recalled holding a press conference to warn the public about such anomalies; unfortunately, the media did not cover the story.

He also recalled that some senators, including Senators Villanueva, Binay, Pangilinan, Padilla, and Gatchalian, had fallen victim to similar scams. He stated that Senator Tolentino and former Senate President Vicente Sotto both received bogus phone calls from someone posing as the governor of Guimaras, and that the perpetrators had been apprehended.

He noted the scammers' *modus operandi* of requesting officials for a video greeting for a specific event and then using such videos to trick people into thinking that the event was legitimate, allowing them to collect donation money from them.

He urged his colleagues to once again pass the SIM Card Registration Bill, as they had in the 18th Congress, despite the President's veto. He also called out the telecommunications companies for allowing such these incidents to occur.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR VILLANUEVA

To demonstrate and emphasize the scope of the scams' proliferation, Senator Villanueva said that he had just received a text message from mobile number +639695955343, saying "*Nakakabaliw na kita ang handog namin sa inyo, 90%, lahat ay pwede kumita. Sumali na agad para maging ahente.*"

Senate President Zubiri also read a text message he had just received from mobile number 09602014483, saying "Okada online casino, *pinaka-trusted platform sa Pilipinas.*"

Citing the danger of Filipinos falling for the scams because they are desperate for work and income, Senator Villanueva stated that he had filed Senate Bill No. 366, or the Anti-Spam Act, that seeks to automatically opt-out all subscribers from commercial and promotional advertisements.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR POE

Senator Poe thanked Senator Estrada for bringing up the important issue of criminal activity conducted via text messaging. She then reminded the Body that the SIM Card Registration Bill was passed during the 18th Congress but vetoed by the President. She stated that she will be calling for a committee hearing on the issue on Thursday.

She stated that over the weekend, she received two text messages and phone calls of the same nature as the one discussed. She said that the first incident involved a WhatsApp call from someone claiming to be a certain Philippine Ambassador and asking for monetary assistance. She stated that she asked the caller to meet with her staff and a representative from the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) to confirm his or her identity and to discuss the situation. She said that as a result of her instructions, the messages from the aforementioned caller abruptly ceased.

She likewise described another incident in which someone called her, using a Senate official's phone number, who claimed that a mayor of a certain province wanted to speak with her. Mindful of her previous experience, Senator Poe stated that she asked the caller's identity, prompting the caller to disconnect the call.

Senator Poe stated that she was looking forward to the committee hearing and expressed hope that the SIM Card Registration Bill would be passed by the Chamber before the scheduled congressional break.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATE PRESIDENT ZUBIRI

Senate President Zubiri raised a related issue involving the GCash mobile application. He stated that Globe Telecom President Ernest Cu had requested his assistance in enacting penalties for individuals and organizations who provide false information in order to create a GCash account and use it for criminal purposes.

He stated that criminal syndicates would use individuals' GCash accounts for a fee, unaware that they are being used for illegal trade activities. He stated that the syndicates would simply pay the GCash account owner a percentage of the illegal trade's proceeds.

He noted that, unlike banking institutions, the GCash application can be easily used in criminal activities because there are a few paper trails to identify who deposits, withdraws, or transmits currency through the platform.

In response to Senate President Zubiri's call for the conduct of committee hearings to look into the matter, Senator Poe suggested that the matter be heard jointly by the Committee on Banks, Financial Institutions and Currencies, and the Committee on Public Services. She emphasized, however, that until the SIM Card Registration Bill is passed into law, the criminal activities and transactions will persist.

Senator Estrada interjected at this point, asking how unscrupulous individuals obtain the identities and personal mobile numbers of people, including senators and high-ranking public



officials. Senate President Zubiri noted that the callers know who they are calling and not just some random number, thereby demonstrating a clear violation of data privacy. He also stated that even Supreme Court Justice Mario Victor Leonen had stated that they, too, were being contacted by scammers.

Senator Villanueva revealed that there had been reports that the information was gathered from contact tracing forms submitted to establishments during the pandemic.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR DELA ROSA

Senator Dela Rosa gave the following manifestation in support of Senator Estrada's speech on putting an end to the rampant text scams:

For the information of the Body, I have filed Proposed Senate Resolution No. 69 on July 27, 2022 calling to investigate, in aid of legislation, the alarming rising number of text scams. This is in connection with one of my priority legislations for this Congress, Senate Bill No. 429, or the SIM Card Registration Act, which I filed on July 12, 2022.

Nakalulungkot na kaakibat ng mas maunlad na teknolohiya ay ang pananamantala rito ng ilang masasamang loob. These deplorable criminals are taking advantage of the anonymous prepaid SIM cards to perpetrate evil crimes including taking the lives of innocent individuals.

Last Congress, during my cosponsorship speech of the SIM Card Registration Bill, I mentioned instances of bombings triggered by prepaid SIM cards. To reiterate, on 27 January 2019, security footage of a bombing shows one of the bombers holding a mobile phone that was used to trigger bomb blasts that targeted two churches in the South.

On 04 September 2016, a blast in Davao City used a mobile phone to trigger an improvised explosive device detonation; and on 26 January 2011, five people were killed in Manila when a mortar ammunition triggered by a cellphone was detonated in a bus.

Aside from the use of unregistered prepaid SIM card in furtherance of their terroristic threats in our community, the criminals are using it to take the hard-earned money of our people. *Kahit noong kasagsagan ng pandemya, hindi tumigil ang mga kawatan. Ang nakatatakot pa rito ay wala tayong kaalam-alam kung sino itong mga text scammer na ito. Nakababahalang tila nakuha nila ang mga pangalan ng mga nagmamay-ari ng mobile number ng kanilang tine-text.*

Although the SIM Card Registration Bill was vetoed last Congress due to constitutional infirmities, the Executive department recognized the need to have "a more effective and strengthened legislative measure to address the increasing incidence of cybercrimes and information and communications technology-related offenses in this era of borderless interconnectivity and digitization."

Walang pinipiling oras o araw ang mga pasimuno ng kalokohang ito. Hindi nila alintana ang pandemya at wala silang pakialam kung mayaman o naghihikahos ang kanilang mabibiktima. Wala silang pinipili; walang pakialam; at higit sa lahat ay wala silang takot. Kung kaya, hinihikayat ko ang ating mga kasamahan sa Senado na bigyang pansin muli ang walang habas at walang patumanggang pambubudol sa ating mga kababayan.

Mayroon nang isandaan limampu't pitong (157) countries ang nagsabatas ng pagmamamandato sa pagrehistro ng SIM card ayon sa datos ng Privacy International. Sa pangunguna ng ating mahusay na tagapangulo ng Committee on Public Services na si Senator Poe, naniniwala ako na bago matapos ang taon na ito ay mabibilang na ang ating bansa sa nasabing datos.

Protektahan po natin ang ating mga kababayan sa loob at labas ng cyberworld.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR ESTRADA

Senator Estrada stated that according to Senator Poe, 112 of the world's more than 190 countries have enacted a Sim Card Registration Law, and that the Philippines should follow suit. He said that Senator Poe had already stated her intention to hold a committee hearing on the matter.



INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR REVILLA

Senator Revilla thanked Senator Estrada for his speech on rampant text scams. He informed the Body that he had written NTC Commissioner Cordova to act on the matter and to explain how the public's data privacy had been violated. He stated that, while he has yet to receive a response from the NTC, the matter must be addressed immediately because the public has fallen prey to perpetrators who exploit technology for personal gain.

Asked by Senator Revilla how scammers are able to obtain the names and personal information of the public, Senator Estrada replied that he has no idea how unscrupulous people obtain the numbers of senators, congressmen, and the general public.

Senator Revilla stated that scammers would call their victims at random, catching them off guard. He stated that over the weekend, the NTC had ordered telecommunication companies to send out a text blast warning the public about the scammers' unscrupulous activities. He observed that the NTC was passing the responsibility to telcos, despite that fact that it is their mandate to promote consumer welfare and protection.

Senator Estrada stated that the NTC should conduct a thorough investigation into the matter or nothing will happen. He informed the Body that he had sought the assistance of the CIDG because scammers had already victimized a lot of people, including senators. He emphasized the need for the NTC to collaborate with the PNP, NBI, and other relevant agencies.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR TULFO

Senator Tulfo expressed his support for the passage of the SIM Card Registration Bill. He stated that text scams had been going on for more than 15 years, when he was still working for radio station DZXL, and that it even came to the point that he asked his staff if they were involved in such activity.

Asked by Senator Estrada if he had been scammed before, Senator Tulfo replied in the negative, stating that he was smarter than the scammers. He stated that whenever he would receive such text message, he would ignore and delete it.

He described how, on occasion, his program would call on government officials such as governors, congressmen, or generals for an on-air interview, and how, after interviewing a governor, the latter received a call an hour later from a person posing as a staff of the show. He stated that the governor, who was placed on the hot seat and cited during the show, entertained the poser, who then asked for a call and text load in return. He also recalled another incident in which a congressman who was being interviewed called him and inquired whether he received the P5,000 load that had been sent per "his" request. He said that he was quick to inform the personalities, even to the point of insulting them, that they had been duped because he had a postpaid phone. He stated that if people do not allow themselves to be scammed, there will be no scammers. He stated that he agrees with the NTC that the best way to handle such messages is to ignore and delete them.

He clarified that he was not concerned about the texts' content, but about the fact that scammers can obtain their prey's number, full name, and other personal information. He stated that scammers have leveled up because they used to send text messages at random, but in recent months, they have started sending messages every day and can even identify the recipient's name. He then inquired as to why text scams have become so prevalent, and what steps could be done to prevent scammers from farming out the public's pertinent information.

In response to further questions, Senator Estrada stated one of the main reasons why people are scammed is poverty. He did, however, reveal that he had a personal encounter with a scammer shortly after the elections when he assumed that he was talking to a board member from the Bicol Region. He stated that his mistake was not being able to verify the poser.

Senator Tulfo stated that in his case, he asked those who fell victim to scams using his name why they did not call his personal number to verify, and they responded that they were embarrassed to do so because they assumed he was busy.

He also narrated the case of a 50-year-old bus conductor who came to his studio some years ago to report that he had been duped by his 20-year-old girlfriend, who sent him a picture of herself being kidnapped by her ex-boyfriend and claimed that her captors were demanding ransom. He stated that the bus conductor sold his watch, motorcycle, and other property to save the woman, who he later discovered was part of the scam.

He stated that he could not imagine how a general, congressman, or a governor being scammed, and if it could happen to them, it could happen to ordinary people even more. He stated that as public officials, they should set a good example by disseminating such information to keep other people from being duped like them.

Asked by Senator Tulfo what the Body could do while the Sim Card Registration Bill is still to be considered, Senator Estrada suggested that senators hold a dialogue with telcos about what action should be taken to combat the growing number of text scams.

Senator Tulfo proposed, similar to the NDRRMC text blast, that the telcos send out information messages to all their subscribers on a regular basis, informing them of the rise in text scams.

Senator Tulfo said that telcos could officially send warnings to its subscribers on the rampant fraud schemes being sent through text messages. In reply, Senator Estrada suggested to the Body to invite and question telco owners in a committee hearing through Senator Poe, the chairperson of the Committee on Public Services.

Aside from the text scam issues, Senator Tulfo also raised problems on having weak network signals. He disclosed that in the 40-minute duration of his travel from his house to the Senate, he only manages to successfully take calls for 10 minutes while experiencing 30-minutes' worth of erratic signals and dropped calls. He then suggested that the Body should also make telcos accountable for the bad service while imposing charges for every dropped call.

While postpaid subscribers like him might not be bothered by the dropped calls, he said that prepaid users bear the brunt of the charges. He added that it does not sit well with subscribers already being scammed by fraudsters that they seemed to be doubly scammed by telcos because of the dropped call charges from faulty signals. While subscribers could choose to avoid being scammed by ignoring and deleting text messages, he said that they could not easily avoid dropped call charges from faulty signals. Senate President Zubiri agreed, saying that dropped calls are actually his pet peeve as he has been experiencing it in particular dead spots in Metro Manila on his way to and from the Senate and in the provinces. He said that he and other residents of Mindanao have long been wanting of a better telecommunication service due to lack of signal in many remote areas, which could be dangerous in times of disasters and emergencies. He also urged telcos to be accountable in providing additional cell towers in different parts of the country because they keep on earning money from their consumers' monthly subscriptions.

In aspiring for better telecommunication services, he said that the 18th Congress had passed into law Republic Act No. 11659, or the Public Service Act, in order to allow more competitive and

efficient foreign telcos, such as NTT DoCoMo Inc., SingTel Mobile, and other telcos with higher Long-Term Evolution (LTE) from Cambodia, into the country. He lamented that other Asian countries have faster mobile internet than the Philippines. In Mindanao, he said even the military and police are dependent on the telcos' signal and mobile phones due to the lack of radio equipment, such that erratic signals put them at a disadvantage whenever there is a need to call for reinforcements. He added that it would be difficult for the country to reach a nine percent growth rate with the current status of telecommunication services in the country that could not even provide a reliable signal for remote learning of students and online access of their learning modules.

Commenting to and relating himself with the drop calls being experienced by Senator Tulfo, Senator Villanueva informed the Body that even a postpaid mobile service subscriber pays for every dropped call, which is evidently reflected in the bill. Senate President Zubiri remarked that such charges on dropped calls appear to be another scam on the consumers.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR CAYETANO (P)

In her recent trip from the Republic of Korea, Senator Cayetano (P) said that she learned from Philippine Ambassador Maria Theresa "Tess" B. Dizon-De Vega that South Korea's citizens, tourists, and temporary residents are required to register their names, personal information, and SIM card information with telecommunication companies prior to card activation. She said that such system also restricts SIM card users from changing numbers without permission.

She opined that the Philippines might not yet be ready to implement the same system due to right to privacy and data privacy concerns, the same reasons that delayed the implementation of the National ID System.

Given the ongoing rampant text message scams, she stated that the government must strike a balance to protect the people's right to privacy as well as to protect the privacy of mobile phone users who are frequently targeted by random messages in order to defraud unsuspecting people. She said that while some could detect and defend themselves from fraudsters, the elderlies are vulnerable victims to such fraudulent attacks.

She also mentioned the concern raised by Supreme Court Justice Marvic Leonen that victims are no longer receiving generic messages but personalized ones, which directly address the recipients by their real names. She guaranteed, however, that the source of her contact number is not the telco because the mobile phone that received the scam message was not registered under her name but her staff's name. She then surmised that the scammer must have bought such information from another source, such as banks and credit card companies, that probably got her name from the payment of bills.

In the future review of the proposed SIM Card Registration Act, she then asked the Body to consider putting a provision that would regulate the change of mobile phone numbers by requiring users to register their names and personal information with the telecommunication companies before using the new SIM card.

She also encouraged the government to link the distribution of financial assistance and benefits to the mobile numbers of recipients to discourage SIM card users from frequently changing their contact numbers in order to lessen scamming.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR GATCHALIAN

Senator Gatchalian noted that receiving one or two spam messages was actually a normal occurrence in pre-pandemic times. He observed, however, that he has already been receiving five to ten spam messages a day after the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. He said that the increase



in spam messages could be attributed to the required signing of health declaration and contact tracing forms prior to entering establishments such as malls, hospitals, and offices where people would have to provide their names, contact numbers, and emails. He then wondered if the National Privacy Commission (NPC) has regulations on such data gathering.

He stated that the Philippines, in fact, has one of the strictest data privacy laws in the world and has a sole commission that is focused on data security. However, he admitted that he is unsure if the NPC indeed released some form of standards, checks, or supervision over the data gathering process that has been done in public and private facilities since the onset of the pandemic. He then wondered if there have been specific guidelines as to what the establishments should do and how to store the contact numbers provided. He said that he was told that personal data gathered from the contact tracing forms are being distributed or posted in the “dark web” and are bought by scammers and unscrupulous individuals.

Senator Cayetano (P) interjected at this point, stating that she has signed hundreds of contact tracing forms but was never called by the mall to inform her that she was ever a contact of a mall-goer who was detected positive for the COVID-19 virus. She surmised that establishments merely collected data from people without even the intention of giving any feedback. During the 2022 national budget hearings, she recalled that she had asked the national government to put a stop to requiring the signing of contact tracing forms. Soon after that, she observed that text messages from scammers have increased significantly. She admitted, however, that there were local government units that did utilize the contact tracing forms and implemented its purpose.

On whether he is aware if the NPC supervised, provided guidelines, and secured the data given by the general public upon entering malls and other facilities, Senator Estrada replied that the NPC’s function, according to Section 7 of Republic Act No. 10173, or the Data Privacy Act of 2012, is “to administer and implement the provisions of this Act, and to monitor and ensure compliance of the country with international standards set for data protection.” He added that among NPC’s functions—stated in Section 7(b)—is to “receive complaints, institute investigations, facilitate or enable settlement of complaints” and—as stated in Section 7(i)—is to “recommend to the Department of Justice (DOJ) the prosecution and imposition of penalties xxx.”

Senator Gatchalian surmised that it is within the powers of the NPC to monitor and to supervise any data collection. Relative thereto, he said that he also filed a resolution to investigate the data collection and to invite the NPC to shed light on the issue. He recalled that during the flurry of data collection through health declaration forms and contact tracing forms at the height of the pandemic, Valenzuela City had also launched its own contact tracing procedure. He said that he had called then NPC Commissioner and Chairman Raymund Liboro to inquire about the procedure of data collection, noting that many other facilities, aside from LGUs, had also been collecting data. Since he and the former chairman had not arrived at a conclusion on the matter, he suggested to again invite the NPC for the investigation.

Senator Gatchalian suggested that the National Privacy Commission be invited because its task is to protect the data of the Filipinos. He stated that he joins Senator Dela Rosa and Senator Estrada in their pursuit to stop the proliferation of spam messages with the intention of protecting the data being collected from the citizens.

Senator Estrada said that the National Privacy Commission already came out with a circular with regard to personal data. He quoted the said circular for the *Record*, to wit: “Disposal or destruction. The personal data shall be disposed in a secure manner after the required retention period discussed above. Paper records must be shredded properly while storage media of the digital devices must be electronically wiped, including backup data to ensure that stored personal data are beyond recovery. A data disposal policy shall be implemented accordingly.”



Senator Gatchalian said that in spite of the circular, it appeared that corporations know that data and information is the new gold and it may be sold anywhere. He said that he wanted the circular to be followed as he reiterated his request for the Committee on Public Services to invite the National Privacy Commission to the public hearing.

Senator Estrada expressed his support to the call of Senator Gatchalian to invite the National Privacy Commission to the public hearing of the Senate Committee on Public Services.

Following up on the statements made earlier by Senator Gatchalian, Senator Villanueva recalled that in December 2010, 10 agencies, including the National Privacy Commission, NTC, and the Cybercrime Investigation and Coordinating Center (CICC) got together to address the issues on privacy violations. He hoped that the Body could be able to get updates on the problem of smishing, spam, and other data privacy breach during the public hearing.

He said that he has received some inquiries from the comments on the live streaming as to what should the people do, to whom shall they go and report should they receive spam messages, and the like.

At this point, he invited the public to report to the authorities should they receive spam messages and similar messages. In this connection, he announced the telephone numbers of the PNP Cybercrime Division, the National Bureau of Investigation Cybercrime Unit and the National Telecommunications Commission, to wit:

PNP Cybercrime Division – 87230401 local 7491

NBI Cybercrime Division – 82526228

National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) – 89204464, 8921325, and 89267722.

Senator Villanueva said that in the U.S., the Federal Trade Commission allows the reporting of phishing text messages by messaging a four-digit number, which is 7726 in the U.S. He suggested that the telcos could come up with a similar mechanism for victims of spam messages. He expressed hope that there could be an end to the spam messages being received by the telco subscribers.

REFERRAL OF SPEECH TO COMMITTEE

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Chair referred the privilege speech of Senator Estrada and the interpellations thereon primarily to the Committee on Public Services, and secondarily to the Committee on Banks, Financial Institutions and Currencies.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF SENATOR PADILLA

Availing himself of the privilege hour, Senator Padilla delivered the following speech on the West Philippine Sea Joint Exploration:

A'oodhu billahi min ash-shaytaan-ir-rajeem. Bismillah er Rahman er Rahim alham dulillahi rabbil alamin. Bismillahi wassalatu wassalamu 'Ala rasulillahi. Ashhadu Alla Ilaha Illallah, ashhadu anna muhammadarrasulullah.

Mga pinagpipitagang miyembro ng Lupon na ito, isa pong magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat. Assalaam - Alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.

Ang inyong lingkod ay tumitindig ngayong hapon sa bisa ng kolektibo at personal na pribilehiyo upang talakayin ang isang paksa, hindi lamang malapit sa sikmura ngunit lalo't higit ay direktang tumatama sa sikmura ng mga Pilipino.



Mga minamahal na kaibigan, kababayan, magiging isang napakalaking kabulaanan kung mayroong sino mang magsasabi na hindi niya nararamdaman sa kahit anong paraan ang hagupit na hatid ng patuloy na pagtaas ng presyo ng petrolyo sa pandaigdigang merkado. Ito ay bunsod ng tumataas na pangangailangan, kakulangan sa suplay ng petrolyo, at ang nasa tuktok na dahilan ay ang kasalukuyang geopolitikal na tensiyon sa pagitan ng Russia at Ukraine. Kaalinsabay ng suliraning ito ay pagbagal ng pag-unlad ng ekonomiya na siya namang nagtutulak ng pagtaas ng presyo ng pagkain, tubig, transportasyon, kuryente, gamot, at mga pangunahing pangangailangan sa pang-araw-araw na pamumuhay. Sa madaling salita, parang switch na isang gatilyo mo lamang ay hahatak pataas sa presyo ng lahat ng bagay; parang switch na isang gatilyo mo lamang, lahat ay aaray.

Ayon sa datos noong August 30, 2022, kung ikokompara ang presyo ng petrolyo noong nakaraang taon, 2021, sa presyo sa kasalukuyan o iyong tinatawag na year-to-date prices, mayroong net increase na: P19 kada litro ng gasolina; P37.80 sa bawat litro ng diesel; at P30.20 kada litro ng kerosene. Nakakikilabot po ito.

Pati po sa mga matatawag nating mga progresibong bansa katulad po ng first world countries, sila po ay nakararanas na rin ng pagtaas ng presyo ng iba't ibang bilihin, ganoon din po ng kanilang petrolyo. Para po sa may mga komportableng pamumuhay, maliit na bagay ang pagtaas na ito. Pero sa katulad ni Tatay Erning na isang jeepney driver, namamasada sa kahabaan ng Taft Avenue sa Maynila, inaagaw nito ang natitira niyang pag-asa. Ang kaniyang P300 na kita noon sa buong araw na biyahe, ngayon ay hindi pa umabot sa P100. Paano nga naman nito pupunan ang mga sismura ng kaniyang asawa at mga anak na sa kaniya lamang umaasa? Paano niya babayaran ang lumobo niyang utang nang mawalan siya ng kita noong naka-lockdown tayo dahil sa pandemya? Ano ang kinabukasan ng limang anak niya na mas pinili na lamang tumigil muna sa pag-aaral sapagkat kailangang unahin ang pagtugon sa mga sismurang kumakalam?

Narito rin po ang kuwento ng driver na si Kenneth Cuevas mula sa Bacoor, Cavite. Panoorin po natin ito.

[Video Presentation]

Mga kapuwa ko senador, ilan lamang ang kuwento ni Tatay Erning at Kenneth sa libo-libong kuwento ng mga kababayan nating umaalma na ngunit walang magawa kundi igapang ang araw-araw. Batid ko na hindi kayang ipikit ng Senado ang kaniyang mga mata sa mga kababayan nating palubog na nang palubog sa kahirapan. Hindi kailanman tatakpan ng Senado ang kaniyang tainga sa nakabibinging daing ng ating mga kababayan.

Maaaring ako ay masasabing baguhan bilang miyembro ng Lupong ito. Ngunit katulad po ninyong lahat, ang pagmamalasakit po at pag-ibig sa ating mga kababayan ay hindi bago sa aking puso. Naaalala ko pa po noong unang talakayin ito ng ating Ginoong Pangulo, pinag-usapan na po ang taas ng kuryente na sinundan naman po ni Senator Tulfo, na sinundan din po ni Senator Villanueva, at sinundan din po ni Senator Revilla, hanggang sinundan pa ng lahat ng mga senador ang pagpapahirap at pagtaas ng pagsingil sa kuryente. Ipagpaumahan po ninyo, pero katulad po ninyo, hindi ko magawang magsawalang-kibo kung batid ko sa aking isipan na mayroon tayong natatanging-yaman na maaaring maging tugon sa ating masalimuot na kalagayan.

Mga kaibigan, ang tinutukoy ko ay ang napakayamang reserba ng langis at gas sa pinagtatalunang bahagi ng West Philippine Sea na ayon sa U.S. Energy Information Administration ay may mula 0.8 hanggang 5.4 bilyon na bariles ng langis at 7.6 hanggang 55.1 trillion cubic feet ng natural gas. Sinasabi ng mga pag-aaral na malaking bahagi ng reserbang ito ay matatagpuan sa Recto Reef Bank na may napakalaking potensiyal upang maging kapalit ng Malampaya natural gas fields sa sandaling maubos ang suplay nito sa 2027.

Alam naman natin na noon pa man ay isa na ang ating bansa sa mga net importers ng enerhiya. Base sa ulat ng Kagawaran Ng Enerhiya, umakyat pa ng 87.9% o 11.15 bilyon ang net oil imports ng ating bansa noong 2021 kumpara sa ating inangkat noong 2020 na may kabuuang 5.93 bilyon. Katumbas ito ng 22.2 milyong litro ng langis na in-import noong 2021 kumpara sa ating inangkat noong 2020 na 15.13 milyong litro. Malinaw na mayroon tayong lumalaking pangangailangan sa enerhiya. Sa kasamaang-palad pa, tayo po ay nangungulelat

at naghahabol palagi, nakikipagsapalaran sa merkadong pandaigdig sa petrolyo dahil wala po tayong sapat na produksiyon.

Mula noong 1970s pa tayo naghahanap ng sarili nating langis sa ating bakuran, ngunit hanggang ngayon, tatlo pa lamang ang pansarili nating proyektong petrolyo na umabot sa komersiyo, ang Malampaya Gas Project, ang Galoc Oil Field na pawang sa katubigan ng Palawan, at ang Alegria Oil Field na nasa Cebu.

Matagal na tayong iniwan ng ating mga kapitbahay na bansa tulad ng Indonesia, Malaysia at Vietnam na mga exporter pa nga ng petrolyo sa kabila ng katotohanang na magkakatapat ang ating geological setting lalo na sa karagatan. Isipin na lamang natin gaano kalaki ang mababawas sa ating inaangkat kung magkakaroon tayo ng sariling pagkukunan ng langis at natural gas. Wala pong duda, hitik at nag-uumapaw ang ating likas na yaman sa Dagat Kanluran. Ang mga salitang ito ay hindi mga hilaw na salitang nagmumula sa isang estranghero, nagpanganggap gamit ang mababaw na pagtingin sa tunay na kalagayan ng ating teritoryo sa Dagat Kanlurang Pilipinas. Hindi po tulad ng iba, nakita po mismo ng aking mga mata, personal pong pinuntahan ng inyong lingkod ang isla ng Kalayaan na itinampok sa isang dokumentaryong pinamagatang "Isang Linggong Pag-ibig." Isang linggo po tayong naglayag, nag-ikot, nanirahan sa mga kapuluan ng Pag-asa Island noong nakaraang buwan ng Mayo noong nakaraang taon.

Sa tulong ng Philippine Navy at Philippine Coast Guard na nakatalaga sa Naval Station Emilio Liwanag, nakapagbigay po tayo ng tulong sa ating mga kababayang naninirahan sa isla. Nagkaroon din po tayo ng pagkakataong makapag-patrolya sa karagatang sakop ng Isla Pag-asa.

Habang kami po ay naglalayag, nakatagpo kami ng malalaking Chinese vessels at isang Vietnamese vessel sa mga lugar na nakapalibot sa Reed Bank na nasa loob pa rin ng territorial waters at exclusive economic zone ng Pilipinas. Hindi lamang po ito traditional fishing vessels—naglalakihang industrial vessels po ang mga ito.

Sariwang-sariwa pa sa ating alaala ang kalagayan sa dakong iyon ng ating bansa. Aktuwal at personal ang aking naranasan. Nakadaong kami sa ibat-ibang pulo ng Pag-asa, bumabad sa init ng araw, at sumuong sa katubigan. Higit sa lahat, lumubog tayo sa araw-araw na pamumuhay ng ating mga tanod-baybayin. Malinaw ang ating natutunan at mas naging mas masidhi ang damdaming makabayan.

"Isang linggong pag-ibig,"—ngunit hindi dito natatapos ang aking pagtatangi sa West Philippine Sea. Hindi po natapos dito.

Isa po ang ating napagtanto: gaano man kahaba at karubdob ang debatehan sa Senado, gaano man kasigasig ang ating mga tanod-baybayin sa Pag-asa Island, gaano man kahaba ang hanay ng barko ng Tsina, hindi natin mapagkukunwari—walang kongkretong hakbangin para malinang at mapakinabangan ang nag-uumapaw na yaman ng bansa sa West Philippine Sea.

Minsan na po nating nabuksan ang malalim na usapin na ito noong Nobyembre 2018. Sa ilalim ng pamumuno ng dating Pang. Rodrigo Roa Duterte, pumasok tayo sa isang Memorandum of Understanding para sa pakikipagtulungan sa pagpapaunlad ng langis at gas sa West Philippine Sea kasama ang Republika ng China. Nilagdaan ito ng dating Kalihim Panlabas na si Teodoro Locsin Jr. at ng Pangdayuhang Ministro ng Tsina na si G. Wang Yi.

Gayon man, matapos ang tatlong taong negosasyon at talastasan, tinapos ang usapan dahil sa nakikitang posibleng isyu sa Konstitusyon.

Masalimuot ang usapin sa West Philippine Sea. Ngunit hindi maaaring magsawalang-kibo at pikit-mata ang gobyerno lalo na kung para sa pakinabangan ng Pilipinas.

Tulad ng aksyon ng ibang mga bansa, ang kooperasyon o joint development ay sinimulan sa mga usaping legal at katanggap-tanggap para sa mga estado.

Narito ang Japan-Korea 1974 agreement para sa joint development ng mga lugar na nasa continental shelf. Ang Bahrain-Saudi Arabia 1958 agreement naman ay ukol sa joint development sa lupain na itinuturing na sakop ng Saudi Arabian Continental Shelf.

Sa ibang legal na kasunduan para sa joint development, tinitiyak ng mga estado ang geographical areas kung saan lilinangin ang mapagkukunang yaman. Kasama na rito ang

kasuduan ng Norway at United Kingdom noong 1976 sa Frigg Field Gas Reservoir kung saan tukoy ang lugar ng joint development base sa usaping geographical at geological. Kung hindi naman geographical areas ang basehan, maaaring pag-usapan ang joint development batay sa anyo o uri ng land deposits na tutukuyin ng mga nagkakasundong bansa, tulad ng 1960 agreement ng Austria at Czechoslovakia ukol sa common land deposits ng natural gas at langis.

Bagamat ang mga bansang ito ay may alitan sa kanilang sobereniya, nagkaroon sila ng pagkakaunawaan. Hindi naging hadlang ang alitan at kanilang Saligang Batas upang pakinabangan ang kanilang yamang gas at langis.

Simple lamang ang ating punto base na rin sa kasaysayan at mga pag-aaral. Ang joint development ay isang paraan at pagkakaunawaan kung saan maaaring maiwasan ng mga bansa ang isyu ng sobereniya sa pamamagitan ng magkasamang paggalugad at pagpapaunlad ng likas na yaman sa isang napagkasunduang lugar.

Sa mga joint development agreement, madalas na lumilitaw ang mga elemento ng lawak ng lugar, uri ng kontrata, mga kaayusan sa pananalapi, ang proseso ng pagpili ng mga konsensiyonares o mga operator, ang haba ng kasunduan, at ang kalikasan, at gampanin ng joint management body.

Marami ring bansa ang nakapaghanap at ngayon ay nakikinabang sa mga partnership, sa mga kapitbahay nilang bansa gaya ng Malaysia at Thailand, o kaya ay sa mga pribadong kompanya pangpetrolyo tulad ng Vietnam, Malaysia, at Indonesia.

Kung nagawa ng mga bansang ito na magsigasig sa pag-aaral at pairalin ang bukas na isip at diplomasya, bakit hindi natin muling bigyang pansin at konsiderasyon ang usaping ito?

Gaano man kaganda o kabuti ang ating mga batas, tali ang kamay ng Kongreso para iangat ang buhay ng ating mga kababayan. Ang ibig ko pong tukuyin, kahit ano man ang pagsisikap nating paunlarin ang ekonomiya sa pamamagitan ng batas, wala tayong mararating kung hindi natin gagamutin ang kung tawagin nga ni Dr. Gerardo Sicat ay “orihinal na kasalanan” o “original sins”—ang mapanupil at mahigpit na restriksiyon ng Konstitusyonsa usapin ng ekonomiya.

Hindi na natin maikakailang isa po ito sa mga dahilan kung bakit tayo ay naiiwanan na ng ating mga kalapit na bansa: dahil sa kakulangan ng pondo o investment. Mayroon tayong mga batas na pinangunahan na ng Presidential Decree No. 87 noong pang 1972 at maraming beses nang inamyendahan upang makaakit tayo ng mga oil companies sa pribadong sektor.

Nandiyan din po ang bahagi ng 1987 Constitution, partikular sa Artikulo 12, Seksyon 2 na siyang nagpatibay pa sa ilang aspeto ng PD 87 upang palawakin ang kakayahan ng gobyerno na maisulong ang mga industriya lalo na ang industriyang pang-petrolyo.

Tatawagin ko po ang pansin natin sa isang bahagi nitong nasabing seksiyon na nagsasaad:

“The exploration, development, and utilization of natural resources shall be under the full control and supervision of the State. The State may directly undertake such activities, or it may enter into coproduction, joint venture, or production sharing agreements with Filipino citizens, or corporations, or associations, at least 60% of whose capital is owned by such citizens.”

Nais ko po sanang tayo ay tumutok sa sinabi ng Konstitusyon na maaaring pumasok ang estado sa paghanap, pagpaunlad, at paggamit ng likas na yaman ng Pilipinas. Natural lamang na ang Pilipinas ay dapat na mayroong ganap na kontrol at superbisyon. Ngunit, nararapat din nating pag-isipan kung paano isasagawa ang paghanap, pagpaunlad, at paggamit kung mayroon tayong kakulangan sa pondo.

Ayon sa karanasan ng ibat-ibang panig sa mundo, sa bawat sampung well, iyong binutas ni mosquito, nilamok na ibinarena sa lupa, isa lamang ang maaaring tumama sa petrolyo. At sa bawat sampung tama ng petrolyo, isa lamang ang magiging sapat ang laki para mahigop at magamit ng hindi malulugi ang nakadiskubre. Daan-daang milyong dolyar po ang usapan sa bawat well. Malinaw na napakahirap po para sa ating bansa na solohin ang gastos sa petroleum exploration.

Sa katunayan po, sa pagbubukas ng ika-19 na Kongreso, isa ang Resolusyon Blg. 9 na humihikayat kay Pang. Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. upang buhayin ang ating bilateral na usapan sa pagitan ng ating bansa at People’s Republic of China patungkol sa kooperasyon pagdating sa oil and gas development sa Dagat Kanluran ng Pilipinas.

Batid natin ang naging bukas na pahayag ni former Chinese Ambassador Liu Jianchao—patawarin po nila ako kung mali ang pagkakasabi—kay Presidente Bongbong Marcos na sana ay muling mabigyan ng pagkakataon ang diskusyon sa joint exploration sa pagitan ng ating mga bansa. At ayon sa ating Press Secretary Trixie Cruz-Angeles, pag-aaralan ito ng Executive.

Ang ganang akin po ay isang mapagkumbabang panawagan na maging bukas po tayo sa abot ng ating makakaya sa mga pamamaraang nakikita natin na maaaring makatulong upang ibsan ang nararamdamang sakit ng ating bayan lalo ang naghihikahos ng ating mga kababayan.

Gaano man kahirap o kakomplikado, tayo naman po ay tumutugon sa tawag upang bisitahin ang balangkas ng ating Saligang Batas kung naaayon pa ito sa mga hamong dala ng ating modernong panahon. Sa katunayan, noong nakaraang Biyernes, kasama po ang ating Minority Leader, Senator Pimentel, ay ginanap po namin ang ikatlong pagdinig sa usapin upang usisain, pag-aralan, at talakayin ang mga panukala sa rebisyon ng ating Saligang Batas.

Ngunit habang umuusad pa lamang ang ating diskusyon, hindi naman po siguro kalabisan na hilingin sa sangay ng Executive na siyang tapagpatupad ng mga umiiral na batas at sa Presidente, bilang arkitekto ng ugnayang panlabas, ang karampatang aksiyon sa paksang ito.

Para sa akin, hindi lamang dapat pag-aralan kundi simulan na ang pakikipag-usap sa kabilang panig patungkol sa joint exploration. Tiwala po ako sa ating mahal na Pangulo, Bongbong Marcos, na hindi niya pababayaang ang soberenya at ang ating Saligang Batas.

Sa kasalukuyan, wala pa pong kasunduan ukol sa joint exploration. Sakaling uusad ito, hayaan po nating mag-usap nang walang panghuhusga muna ukol sa usaping soberenya at Konstitusyon. Sapagkat sa puntong ito, ako ay naniniwala na hindi makatutulong ang agarang pagharang sa usapin ng joint development. Nakatiwangwang lamang po ang ating yamang gas at langis.

Habang patuloy ang debate at bangayan dito sa Maynila, ang West Philippine Sea po ay pinaglulugaran ng mga naglalakihang industrial na barko ng Tsina. Ang iba po ay nagkukubling mga fishing vessels. Huwag naman po sanang mangyari na bago pa man tayo makarating sa isang kasunduan ay wala na po tayong mabubungkal dahil naubos na ang ating inaasahang likas yaman.

Noong September 2 lamang po, nasa balita ang nalalapit na pagkaubos ng isdang tuna sa West Philippine Sea. Ang sabi po ng mga eksperto, five to 10 to 15 years, awanen; wala na. Ganiyan. Hanggang ilang taon o dekada pa tayo maghihintay?

Habang sinasambit ang talumpating ito ay nabalik sa aking kaisipan ang aking natutunan sa aking isang linggong paglalakbay sa Isla ng Pag-asa: walang imposible sa pursigido. Ang ating tagumpay ay nakasalalay sa kung hanggang saan ang itataya natin upang maabot ang ating mga mithiin.

Bilang pagtatapos ay hayaan po ninyo akong muling ulitin ang panawagan na mabigyang-pansin ang Resolusyon Blg. 9 na humihikayat kay Pang. Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. upang buhayin ang ating bilateral na usapan sa pagitan ng ating bansa at People’s Republic of China patungkol sa kooperasyon pagdating sa oil and gas development sa Dagat Kanluran ng Pilipinas.

Kung hindi pa po natin ito sisimulan ay saan pa? Kung hindi ngayon, kailan pa tayo aaksiyon?

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR REVILLA

Senator Revilla delivered the following remarks in support of Senator Padilla’s privilege speech:



Nagpapasalamat po tayo sa butihing senador mula sa Bicol sa pabibigay-diin sa nasabing isyu.

Ngayong unti-unti na tayong bumabangon mula sa hagupit ng pandemya, pataas ng presyo ng mga pagunahing bilihan, pagbaba ng halaga ng piso, at mga hindi maiiwasang kalamidad na sumasalanta sa ating bansa, kailangan nating gawin ang lahat upang matugunan ang mahigpit na pangangailangan ng ating mga kababayan.

The West Philippine Sea is a potential gold mine for us. This area is teeming with so much natural resources. *Sa pagkahitik nga nito sa likas na yaman, ang mga dayuhan ay patuloy na nahahalina, kung kaya nga pinag-aagawan ang teritoryong ito.* Fortunately for us Filipinos, our right over this area has been internationally recognized. *Atin ang West Philippine Sea!*

Unfortunately, we are also cognizant of the fact that we lack the resources to fully utilize the potential of this area.

Kailangan natin ang tulong mula sa ibang mga bansa. As a member of the community of nations, cooperation and coordination is highly encouraged.

That is why I support this call of the good senator from Bicol, Senator Robinhood, for the joint exploration of the West Philippine Sea. And I would like to take this opportunity to amplify our stand that we recognize and uphold the importance of peaceful coexistence and cooperation among nations, but never at the expense of our sovereign rights.

Ang West Philippine Sea ay para sa mga Pilipino. Pagtulung-tulungan nating pangalagaan at paunlarin ito.

REMARKS OF THE CHAIR

Senate President Zubiri stated that aside from the West Philippine Sea, there are other areas in the country that could have oil and gas reserves, such as the Sulu Sea in BARMM, which he believes is a place also close to Senator Padilla's heart.

Senate President Zubiri stated that many areas within the provinces of Tawi-Tawi and Sulu, particularly an expanse in Lugus, have large oil and gas deposits, and that an Australian scientific mission could confirm his claim. Furthermore, he stated that if the speech is referred to the appropriate committee, senators should inquire from department secretaries about the actions taken, as the areas, in close proximity to Malaysia, are devoid of conflict.

He stated that he would like to know why exploration activities in the area have yet to begin. In that regard, he surmised the reason had something to do with the franchises issued to a few, select individuals in service areas that correspond to designated geographical locations. He believed that it was high time for the Department of Energy (DOE) review the service contracts and, if necessary, cancel them and award them to deserving companies that will thoroughly explore the areas.

He expressed confidence that if identified energy fields in the country are properly and thoroughly explored, Senator Padilla's dream—that jeepney drivers would be able to take home a substantial amount of money—would become a reality. Concerning the service contracts, he proposed that he and Senator Pimentel review the situation, as despite reports of service contracts being previously granted a few years ago, exploration activities have yet to begin.

He expressed hope that the new leadership in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) would make it easier for franchise holders to deal with local authorities in the area. In that regard, he suggested that the government focus on previously untapped energy sources in the region, which, in turn, would generate revenue for the BARMM and benefit its constituents.

Senator Padilla responded by expressing concern that oil smugglers in the area might be receiving protection from unscrupulous individuals in the locality. Senate President Zubiri responded in the

affirmative, stating that the statement may ring true because a loss of profit may be on the horizon if the government intervenes for the good of the country. Senator Padilla concurred, stating that exploration activities have already begun in the BARMM, and expressed his desire that the franchise grantees report to Congress on the status of their activities so that the public is duly informed.

Senate President Zubiri suggested that the Liguasan Marsh be explored. Senator Padilla stated that activities have already begun in the 72,000-hectare prospective petroleum area. In response, Senate President Zubiri stated that the government should do its part to tap the region's unused energy resources.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR HONTIVEROS

Senator Hontiveros informed the Body that she would be raising a few points on matters that caught her attention with regard to Senator Padilla's speech, and that she would be making additional inquiries once the matter is tackled in the committee level.

She believed that the better approach to the issue would be to pursue joint development activities in the West Philippine Sea once the sovereignty issue with China is finally resolved or, alternatively, explore partnerships with other countries that recognize the Philippines' sovereignty.

Senator Padilla responded by stating that the Philippines' victory in the Hague Tribunal only became an issue because China refused to recognize the decision. He stated that China's stand on the arbitral ruling was based on the fact that they had refused to participate in the case since it began. He added that, while the ruling bolstered the Philippines' claim, the reality on the ground was a different matter.

He then recalled the time he visited the areas in the West Philippine Sea, where the country only had six ships to its name—the ship he was on, one from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), two from the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) and two from the Philippine Navy. He stated that China, on the other hand, had around 300 ships under its command, of which he estimated only a few were true fishing vessels. He added that after consulting with experts, it was discovered that the ships in question were, indeed, submarine launchers.

In that regard, he opined that it would take a long time once the issue of sovereignty is factored in. He pointed out that some countries form joint ventures to explore natural resources in the region, ignoring sovereignty issues entirely. He urged the Body to consider his proposal so that the country would not be left out of the joint exploration activities in the region.

Senator Hontiveros expressed concern that joint development activities may have already begun, and that the country may be losing its rightful share of natural resources as a result. She did, however, believe that the other countries that are looking past the issue in order to conduct joint exploration activities with China did not enjoy a historic victory in the Hague Tribunal, as Philippines did. She also speculated that the other countries still have long-standing conflicts that have yet to be resolved in court.

Senator Hontiveros agreed with Senator Padilla's observation about the six Philippine vessels versus the 300-strong Chinese ships in the West Philippine Sea. She agreed that fishing and civilian vessels that China may have mentioned were indeed of a different nature, as reports by the Philippine Navy to the Senate have confirmed swarming activities, overpowering the country's presence in the area. Furthermore, she believed that the Chinese White Hull vessels, which were thought to be civilian in nature, were actually Grey Hull ships—associated with its navy or coast guards, and thus military in nature—giving cover to Chinese commercial vessels that may have already begun drilling operations.

Senator Hontiveros reiterated her proposal that the government simply pursue joint development activities with countries aware of the Philippines' victory in the Hague Tribunal, as well as other domestic investors.

Regarding the strict constitutional provisions relative to national economy and patrimony referred to as the "original sin" in Senator Padilla's speech, she inquired if he was aware of previous studies by foreign chambers of commerce in the Philippines that cited hurdles to foreign direct investments (FDIs) and joint ventures beneficial to both parties could be due to the investment climate, which could also be influenced by the following: 1) equal application of law; 2) a predictable policy environment; 3) and the price of electricity, among others.

Senator Padilla stated that forming a joint venture with China could avoid the possibility of conflict. In reference to the swarming incident, he revealed that, while death had crossed his mind and those of his fellow members to the Philippine contingent that erected the country's flag in embattled islands in the West Philippine Sea, they paid no attention to the thought because claiming ownership was paramount. He stated that upon giving the matter further consideration, he realized that war is not the solution to the problem. He stated that the government learn from the conflict in Ukraine and Russia, as well as the growing tension between Taiwan and China. He also noted that once a third party enters the picture, conflict almost always ensues.

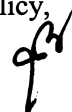
He did, however, emphasize that while peace is the desirable path, the Filipino people will always stand up when their rights are trampled upon, as stated in the country's anthem, the *Lupang Hinirang*. He believed, though, that the current situation was different, and that China was open to the possibility of joint exploration. He believed that a meeting with China would pave the way for further discussions about the West Philippine Sea.

Concerning the Constitution, he informed the Body that he had already discussed its economic provisions with Senator Pimentel, Professor Solita Monsod, and National Security Adviser Clarita Carlos. He also stated that he was aware of the reasons why FDIs do not materialize—high electricity prices, a lack of tax incentives, and so on—and that the reasons pile up. He then lamented the fact that the economic provision had failed to stimulate the economy for 34 years. He did, however, clarify that he was not questioning the studies previously mentioned by Senator Hontiveros, which mentioned high electricity prices as one of the barriers to FDIs. He added that he agreed with Professor Monsod's points, but emphasized the importance of addressing the 34-year old provision.

Senator Padilla stated that the Constitution of the Philippines has been not only amended but changed throughout its history, beginning with the Malolos Constitution, then the 1935 Constitution, the 1973 Constitution, and finally the 1987 Constitution, indicating that revising the Constitution is not a new phenomenon in the country. He emphasized that the 1987 Constitution is already 34 years old and it is high time to revisit some of its provisions.

Senator Hontiveros noted that while China is open to bilateral talks, they must also be willing to face the country in good faith and recognize the country's legal victory on its claim to the WPS under The Hague ruling. She stated that they should stop harassing Filipino fishermen operating within the Philippines' traditional fishing grounds; stop digging the Philippine seabed for materials to build artificial islands for them to occupy and militarize; and stop interfering with and benefitting from the Philippines' exclusive economic zone. She stated that they have also been destroying the country's "*bahura*," or coral reefs, with which they were being charged for the damages they had caused to the WPS, and that they should pay for it.

She stated that, like Senator Padilla, she did not want a war because the country cannot afford to engage China. She stated that she believed in an interdependent or independent foreign policy,



and that she does not want the country to be returned to captivity, or Filipinos to be bullied in their own country.

With the current dispute of between Taiwan, China, and the U.S., she stated that she wanted the Philippines to be part of the efforts to alleviate the tension between the countries in order to avoid open military conflict in the country caused by them.

Adverting to the term “*bahura*” mentioned earlier by Senator Hontiveros, Senator Padilla clarified that it usually sinks during high tide and is exposed during low tide.

On China’s construction of military bases on the coral reefs in the West Philippines Sea, Senator Padilla said that it has been proclaimed by UNCLOS as illegal. He lamented, however, that it is the local government units that supply the Chinese with soil materials.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR TULFO

Senator Tulfo lauded Senator Padilla for his desire to find a solution rising oil prices, which is precisely his advocacy as chairman of the Committee on Energy. He agreed with the senator on the importance of finding a solution to the problem. He then inquired about the proposal to conduct joint oil and gas exploration in the WPS between China and the Philippines.

Senator Padilla responded that the discussion would not be about the Philippines’ sovereignty over the disputed island, but rather on how the two countries would go about on sharing the oil resources discovered. Senator Tulfo agreed with Senator Padilla that the initial agreement was for both countries to share 50%-50%, but Foreign Secretary Enrique Manalo recently revealed that China wanted to push for a 51-49% sharing.

At this juncture, Senate President Zubiri relinquished the Chair to Senate President Pro Tempore Legarda

Senator Tulfo asked if there was a guarantee that China could be trusted to stand by the 50%-50% sharing agreement, noting that there had been discussions on the sovereignty of the country and the need to revise some provisions of the Constitution in order to resume the country’s oil and gas exploration talks with China. He pointed out that China has never shown good faith in dealing with the Philippines, citing their continued harassment of Filipino fishermen and the construction of artificial islands in the WPS as examples.

Senator Padilla stated that he had actually seen the presence of Chinese fishing vessels as opposed to the country’s small fishing vessels and suggested that one solution to defend the fishermen is to modernize their equipment. Senator Tulfo agreed, but added that despite modernization, China still claims ownership of the West Philippine Sea, which Filipino fishermen are exploring.

Senator Padilla stated that during his visit to the West Philippine Sea, the Philippine Navy, which was patrolling the area, kept the Chinese Coast Guard at bay. He stated that the Chinese never respected the Philippines’ claim to the WPS, so during his visit, he erected a Philippine flag and stated that no matter what happens, the Philippines would not back down against the Chinese. Senator Tulfo agreed with Senator Padilla that the Philippines should fight for the victory of its claim against China under The Hague ruling.

Senator Padilla stated that China’s proposal for a joint oil exploration could be the “the light at the end of the tunnel.” He stated that there must be a way to finally get along with China after engaging in trade with them for many years. However, he stated that even President Bongbong Marcos had clearly stated in his State of the Nation Address that he would not abandon even one



square inch of Philippine territory, particularly the West Philippine Sea. He stated that it is what the Armed Forces of the Philippines have been doing and that they will defend the territory no matter what happens.

He noted that several European countries are in a crisis as a result of Russia's reduced supply of gas, so they have begun to reopen nuclear power plants which had long been closed. He stated that the situation may pave the way for the resumption of talks between the Philippines and China for joint oil and gas exploration in the WPS.

Senator Tulfo inquired as to what really the country's real energy problem is. He stated that he was perplexed as to why oil and gas prices continued to rise when the country's major source of oil is not Russia, and the Philippines has a long-term contract agreement with Middle Eastern countries, the source of the Philippines' gas supply. He stated that one of the factors could be the rise in the value of the dollar in the global market and the cost of transportation. He also inquired whether it is proportionate to price increases. On the other hand, he stated that the suppliers' oil reserves are sufficient for at least a month. He questioned why oil and gas prices rose just a week after the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. He believed that the oil price increases should be resolved immediately, emphasizing that the country's gas supply was severely impacted despite the fact that Russia and Ukraine were not even its suppliers. He lamented that the conflict between the two crises caused an immediate increase in oil prices.

He also mentioned that certain places in the Philippines have lower oil prices than others, such as Batangas, which has lower oil prices than Laguna, or the National Capital Region. He stressed the need for the government to focus on the problem, which could include oil smuggling.

He also informed the Body that during one of his committee hearings, it was revealed that fuel marking was done by the Société Générale de Surveillance (SGS) Philippines. He asked if it would be effective in preventing smuggling, despite the fact that there were still a few cases of fuel-smuggling barges. He stated that the Bureau of Customs reported that there were still a few cases of fuel smuggling at the high seas, and he wondered what the Philippine Coast Guard and the PNP Maritime Group had done about it. He proposed that such cases of oil smuggling be prioritized over oil exploration, which typically takes longer to complete due to the need to revise the Constitution.

Senator Tulfo stated that Senator Padilla's desire to solve the problem of high oil prices is shared by everyone.

Senator Padilla clarified that the whole point of his privilege speech was to address the country's need to find its own local source of oil in order to protect itself and its citizens from being victims of fluctuating international oil prices due to unstable factors in supply and demand.

He pointed out that in times of instability, as was during the wars in Iraq and Kuwait, businessmen tend to take advantage of the situation and proceed to raise oil prices despite the Philippines' trade agreements with other nations and organizations like the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

He noted, however, that during the terrorist attacks of the organization called ISIS, oil prices went down because of the illegal trade of oil that proliferated in the turmoil. He pointed out that after the terrorists were subdued, oil prices eventually began to increase again, especially when the Russia-Ukraine conflict began.

At this point, Senator Padilla underscored the prevalence of smuggling in the country — not only of rice grains and sugar — but of oil as well, and the need for stricter laws against them. Anent this, he averred that in order for the country to have its own source of oil, there is nothing wrong with considering China's joint development offer.

On the matter of constitutional amendments, he said that he finds nothing wrong in revisiting and reviewing the 34-year old basic law of the land in order to substantially address the changes with the times. He said that economic experts blame the legislators for the lack of attention on such crucial matter.

Senator Tulfo suggested that the country must develop alternative renewable energy sources in order to address the possibilities of power shortages in the country. He pointed out that the Malampaya Gas Field can only provide resources until 2026. He noted that the country's energy mix consisted of natural gas, oil, and coal, all three of which are vulnerable to shortages in the local and international markets, especially during times of instability.

Citing the example of Indonesia being the country's main source of coal, he inquired what would happen to the country's energy situation if Indonesia suddenly finds itself in a problematic situation.

In order to address such vulnerability, he pushed for the development of renewable energy as the country has such resources, adding that it could be the answer to the problem of rising oil and fuel prices.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR CAYETANO (P)

Senator Cayetano (P) congratulated Senator Padilla on his speech which covered a number of crucial and important topics such as the country's self-sufficiency in harnessing energy resources, the conditions faced by Filipino fisherfolk, and the presence of China's ships in disputed waters. In order to facilitate a smooth flow of questions, she asked which among the issues Senator Padilla considered as the most important.

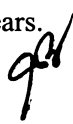
In response, Senator Padilla said that China's openness to a joint development with the Philippines in the disputed areas was his main priority. He stated that the Philippines had, time and again, raised the issue of the presence of China in disputed waters, leading to the United States of America mediating at one point which resulted in the Philippines' backing down and easing up on the matter.

He said that thereafter, the decision of The Hague Tribunal came out, rejecting China's maritime claims as having no basis on international law, which paved the way for the country's stronger claim over the disputed area and its natural resources. However, he said, China became more aggressive at that point and built military bases in man-made islands.

Senator Padilla pointed out that it was during former President Rodrigo R. Duterte's term that China opened talks about a possible joint development agreement over the disputed areas. He said that the talks did not prosper because of certain prohibitive provisions of the Philippine Constitution.

He disclosed that China once again gave the offer to President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr., which, he said, should be explored in order to develop and preserve the area's resources. He emphasized the need to open lines of communication with China, but clarified that it was not in any way a suggestion to surrender Filipino sovereignty.

When asked by Sen. Cayetano (P) for countries that had set aside the issue of sovereignty in favor of entering into joint development agreements with each other, Senator Padilla mentioned that Japan and Korea entered into an agreement in 1974 over the Continental Shelf. Senator Cayetano (P) emphasized the fact that the two countries had a history of deep animosity, but managed to come to terms over disputed areas, and both had benefitted from it through the years.



Senator Cayetano (P) asked whether the agreement was still in force. Senator Padilla replied that he was not certain. Senator Cayetano (P) suggested that they ask the appointed ambassadors to the two countries — Amb. Mylene G. Albano and Amb. Maria Theresa de Vega — for the answers during the Commission on Appointments hearings.

Adding to his response, Senator Padilla mentioned that Bahrain and Saudi Arabia have entered into a joint development agreement in 1958 despite tensions in the Middle East.

Senator Cayetano (P) recalled that former President Duterte had always mentioned that China is not an enemy and that the Philippines could work together with China. It was unfortunate, she said, that some people interpreted his statements as giving up the country's sovereignty to China.

Asked why the joint development agreement did not push through, Senator Padilla said that China protested the 60-40 rule of the Philippine Constitution which says that although the Philippines could enter into agreements of joint development, 60% of the resources would still be owned by it.

He said that China's rejection was based on their claim over the area, which they believe is not within the jurisdiction of Philippine laws, an argument which was countered by the Philippines, citing The Hague Tribunal's decision. He, however, added that China had once again given an offer to the current government and expressed hope that new terms would be agreed upon beyond the issues of sovereignty.

At this point, Senator Cayetano (P) said that, as illustrated by the previously-mentioned agreements entered into by Japan and Korea, and Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, it was possible for the Philippines to enter into an agreement with China as well despite the issue of sovereignty. She added that time was of the essence in order for the country to fully reap the benefits of a joint development agreement in the disputed areas, while the resources are still there.

She stated that she would want to know from Senator Padilla which among the issues raised in the speech would be considered a priority as the same would determine in which committees the speech would be referred to. She enumerated the possible committees, such as the Committee on Energy, Committee on Foreign Relations, the Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change, or the Committee on Constitutional Amendments and Revision of Codes.

Senator Cayetano (P) stated that because the speech touched on several issues, it was important to identify its main point so that it can be referred to the appropriate committee. She also suggested that a special committee be formed to hear it because the Philippines has not benefitted from the arbitral ruling after President Duterte's six-year term.

Senator Padilla stated that while the Philippines' action on the South China Sea has stalled, China has reaped the benefits of its marine life. He stated that the video in his speech was about the Chinese's glaring exploits, which he had personally witnessed with his own eyes, as they continue to send many sea vessels in the area, some appearing to be industrial in size, carrying submersible boats and heavy cables, which experts say are not for fishing or tourism purposes.

Senator Cayetano (P) stated that Senator Padilla's personal observations are very vital, and requested that she be invited the next time he visits the area. She underscored the important points raised regarding the exploitation of marine life and possible oil exploration by a foreign country, both of which are clearly within the jurisdiction of the Philippines. She wondered if a special committee could be formed or if several committees could hold a joint hearing to discuss the speech's complexities and overlapping issues.

She noted that, although China refuses to recognize the arbitral ruling, they are open to a bilateral agreement with the Philippines.

Responding to the query of Senator Cayetano (P), Senator Padilla explained that China is not a party to the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and, thus, does not recognize the binding effect of the ruling. He revealed that the Chinese government first wanted to discuss the South China Sea issue during the presidency of Ferdinand Marcos Sr., after he deployed troops to Pag-asa Island, confident that the country's territory would be under dispute at some point in time.

With the country's current situation, he believed that it is about time to use its own oil and gas reserves and consider a joint venture with China. He emphasized that having bilateral talks does not imply relinquishing the country's sovereignty. He pointed out that the Hague ruling clearly sealed the Philippine's claim to the South China Sea. He lamented, however, that despite the ruling, the Philippines remains to be tolerant despite the glaring exploitation of marine life in the area.

When asked if other countries have expressed interest in a joint venture to explore the country's resources in the South China Sea, he stated that countries like Thailand, Taiwan, Brunei, Malaysia, and Vietnam have staked their claim in the area. However, he stated that only China had demonstrated a clear solution to the issue, and that having another country could result in a chaotic multilateral agreement. He added that allowing the United States to enter could raise tensions further because it is also a super power.

Despite the vastness of the South China Sea, Senator Cayetano (P) observed that Senator Padilla was interested in a bilateral agreement. She asked if it was possible to form joint ventures in certain areas of the sea.

Senator Padilla responded that it was not possible, especially since China has positioned itself near the area where the oil and gas exploration take place. He surmised that having another partner could cause the country more problems, adding that some countries have attempted to enter the area under the guise of freedom of navigation, which has occasionally sparked tension. He stressed that the country is committed to finding peaceful solutions to its internal and external problems, and that any tension in the region should not begin with the Philippines. Furthermore, he emphasized the importance of having a bilateral agreement that clearly defines the outcome of the exploration.

Senator Cayetano believed that such explorations would necessitate a significant investment on the part of the Philippines. She supposed that having multiple agreements would provide more opportunities and would allow a comparison of the benefits that each agreement would bring into the country. She stated that her top priority as chairperson of the Committee on Sustainable Development Goals, Innovation and Futures Thinking is zero poverty, and that if what is happening in the South China Sea has an economic impact to the fishermen in the area, something should be done.

She then thanked and congratulated Senator Padilla for delivering the privilege speech.

REFERRAL OF SPEECH TO COMMITTEE

Upon motion of Senator Ejercito, there being no objection, the Chair referred the privilege speech of Senator Padilla and the interpellations and manifestations thereon to the Committee on Foreign Relations and to the Committee on Energy.

MANIFESTATION OF THE CHAIR

Senate President Pro Tempore Legarda thanked Senator Cayetano (P) for her interpellations, and Senator Padilla for his interesting privilege speech. She stated that she would have posed questions, but because she was the presiding officer, she would simply congratulate and engage him in a spirited discussion on the subject privately.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR CAYETANO (P)

Senator Cayetano (P) stated that her initial question was where the speech would be referred to. She proposed referring the matter to the Committee on Rules since it touched on various topics, such as natural resources, environment, and energy, among others.

At this junction, Senate President Pro Tempore Legarda relinquished the Chair to Senator President Zubiri.

CHANGE OF REFERRAL OF SPEECH TO COMMITTEE

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Chair referred the privilege speech of Senator Padilla, and the interpellations and manifestations thereon, from the Committee on Foreign Relations and Committee on Energy to the Committee on Rules.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

It was 7:16 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 7:19 p.m., the session was resumed.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR LEGARDA

Upon resumption, Senator Legarda delivered the following manifestation:

Over the past week, we have heard from various sectors who share our common goal of bringing true and lasting peace to our country. In line with this goal, I would like to state in very clear terms that I denounce, condemn all forms of violence and terrorism, and call for an end to armed conflict. I am in favor of peace talks that are built upon a genuine desire to come to an agreement which are within our democratic framework and in accordance with all our laws.

For over half a century, armed conflict has hindered our nation's development. I know that we all share the same dream to build a more prosperous nation, to give a more comfortable life for all Filipinos. As an advocate for peace for many decades, I believe the best way to achieve this is by building mutual understanding through good faith discussions, through which we can find that we have more than unites us than what sets us apart.

I would also like, at this juncture, to commend the women and the men of the Armed Forces of the Philippines for their service to our nation. For years, as a reserved officer of the Philippine Air Force, I have worked to support the AFP through legislation and appropriations. I will remain your ally in the Senate.

Amid the strong positions on this issue, I would like to call upon our countrymen to pursue our common goal of bringing true and lasting peace to our country through exclusively non-violent means premised on a genuine commitment to cease hostilities. Let us join together and give peace another chance.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR PADILLA

Senator Padilla thanked Senator Legarda for shedding light on the issues that drew attention not only in social media and mainstream media, but also in the Chamber. He believed that the Body was sympathetic to the situation. He stated that Senator Legarda provided an excellent explanation



because she clarified that she has never sided with the terrorists and that she fully supports the Armed Forces of the Philippines in their fight to eliminate terrorists.

He added that it was a beautiful explanation and very much in line with President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s message of unity.

ADDITIONAL MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Upon nomination by Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, Senators Tolentino and Escudero were elected as additional members of the Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change.

CHANGE OF REFERRAL

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Chair changed the referral of Senate Bill No. 377 (Interns' Rights and Welfare Act) from the Committee on Higher, Technical and Vocational Education, to the Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources as primary committee, while retaining the respective secondary and tertiary committee referrals in the Committee on Ways and Means, and Finance.

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Chair changed the referral of Senate Bill No. 10 (Overseas Filipino Workers Remittance Protection Act of 2022) from the Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resource Development to the Committee on Migrant Workers as secondary committee, while retaining its primary referral in the Committee on Banks, Financial Institutions and Currencies.

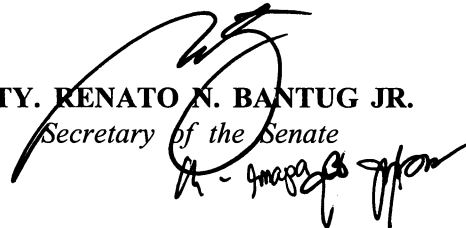
ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

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 7:26 p.m.

I hereby certify to the correctness of the foregoing.

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



Approved on September 7, 2022