

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES Senate Pasay City

Journal

SESSION NO. 25 Tuesday, September 27, 2022

NINETEENTH CONGRESS FIRST REGULAR SESSION

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CALL TO ORDER

At 5:25 p.m., the Senate President, Hon. Juan Miguel "Migz" F. Zubiri, called the session to order.

PRAYER

Senate President Zubiri led the prayer, to wit:

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

Dear Lord, over the past few days, our country has suffered the howling winds and torrential rains of Super Typhoon Karding, drowning entire communities in floods, destroying homes and livelihoods, and taking the lives of many of our people.

In the wake of Typhoon Karding's path and wrath, we pray that You keep our people in the warmth and safety of Your endless compassion.

We pray for shelter and protection for those who have been displaced.

We pray for good health and painless recovery for those who have been injured or struck with disease.

We pray for the timely rescue of those who are still lost, and we pray for the strength and wellbeing of our rescuers.

We pray for comfort for those who have been bereaved. And we pray as well for the repose of the souls of our dearly departed, especially the five selfless rescuers from Bulacan, namely, Narciso Calayag, Jerson Resurreccion, Marby Bartolome, George Agustin, and Troy Justine Agustin—shining exemplars of courage and compassion of the Filipino people. We honor them and we pray for their sweet rest.

All these we ask in Jesus' Name, we pray.

Amen.

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

With 21 senators present, the Chair declared the presence of a quorum.

Senator Gatchalian arrived after the roll call.

Senator Marcos was on official business in the United States of America from September 22 to 28, 2022 to meet with officials of the Philippine Embassy in Washington, D.C., as well as with members of the Filipino community in nearby cities, as stated in the September 20, 2022 letter of Senate President Zubiri to Department of Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique A. Manalo.

Senator Escudero was absent.

APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body dispensed with the reading of the *Journals* of Session No. 23 (September 20, 2022) and Session No. 24 (September 21, 2022) and considered them approved.

BIRTHDAY GREETING

At this juncture, Senator Villanueva and Senate President Zubiri both greeted Senator Revilla on the occasion of his birth anniversary on Sunday, September 25, 2022.

REMARKS OF THE CHAIR

Senate President Zubiri apologized to the Members for the delay in starting the Senate plenary session that afternoon due to an overtime plenary session of the Commission on Appointments in the same Hall. He stated that the leadership would try to avoid such a situation on the next session day in order to accommodate all of the remaining items in the agenda.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE PRESENCE OF GUESTS

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

- Mayor Jaydeefar Lajid of Al-Barka, Basilan;
- Mayor Betty Pimentel of Tago, Surigao del Sur;

- · Board Member Amil Hussein Macapendeg of Maguindanao Province;
- Labor leader Marlon Quesada;
- Mayor Roselyn Asok of Maria, Siquijor;
- Mayor Miguel Decena of Enrile, Cagayan;
- Lani Velasco, President of Philippine Swimming Incorporated, together with national team coach Sherwin Santiago;
- Representatives from the local government of Cayapa, Nueva Vizcaya, led by Mayor Elizabeth Balasya and Jose "Tam-an" Tomas, former vice-governor of Nueva Vizcaya;
- Vice Mayor Jun Saclag of Lubuagan, Kalinga;
- Vice Mayor Rosalita Nuñez of General Santos City;
- · Second District Representative Cheeno Almario of Davao Oriental; and
- Secretary Amenah "Mina" Pangandaman of the Department of Budget and Management.

Senate President Zubiri welcomed the guests to the Senate.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR TOLENTINO

Senator Tolentino informed the Body that Olympic medalist Kayla Sanchez, a new member of the Philippine Swimming Team who had won a gold and a silver medal in swimming for Canada in last year's Tokyo Olympics, was also present in the Session Hall that day. He stated that Ms. Sanchez would be representing the Philippines in the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris and expressed hope that she would win the gold medal in the competition.

Senate President Zubiri welcomed Kayla Sanchez to the Senate.

SUSPENSION OF SESSSION

Upon motion of Senator Cayetano (P), the session was suspended.

It was 5:32 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSSION

At 5:33 p.m., the session was resumed.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR CAYETANO (P)

At the outset, Senator Cayetano (P) stated that in response to Senator Hontiveros' earlier request for the Senate to investigate the death of Jovelyn Andres, a migrant worker in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), and to provide aid to the latter's family, she and Senator Villanueva had committed to looking into the matter immediately.

She stated that she was told by Jovelyn's relatives that the family only found out about the OFW's death through a Facebook post on March 27, 2022, and that they went to the DFA Consular Office in General Santos two days later to confirm the social media post. She stated that the relatives were given two options: 1) have Jovelyn's body returned to the Philippines within two days if no autopsy is performed; or 2) have the procedure performed in Saudi Arabia but would have to wait six months for the body to be returned to them. Nonetheless, she stated that the family chose to have Jovelyn's body autopsied in Saudi Arabia.



She revealed, however, that the family never received an autopsy report and, as a result, decided to have Jovelyn's remains returned to the Philippines on September 18, 2022. On that day, she stated that the family sought the assistance of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), which covered the cost of the repatriation and provided P125,000 as insurance payment.

Deciding to intervene, she stated that she had called the Sarangani Provincial Police to conduct an autopsy but was told that the province's lone medico legal was on study leave. She stated that it was Police Major Norman Castro, officer-in-charge of Sarangani's Provincial Forensic Unit Regional Field Unit-12 (RFU-12), who was able to arrange for the autopsy and provide the necessary assistance.

On behalf of the Senate, she thanked Malapatan Mayor Salway Sumbo of Sarangani Province for providing the vehicle and fuel for the forensic pathologist, as well as Police Major Norman Castro, Police Major Sergeant Richard Tindaan, Police Staff Sergeant Abdul Ampac, Police Corporal Jay Candilon, Patrol Jonna Llido, Patrol Ramil Gomez, and Police Liutenant Colonel Maria Anna Liza Dela Cruz, the medico legal officer of Regional Forensic Unit of Region XI. She also thanked Senator Hontiveros for bringing the issue to Senate's attention, saying she was grateful to contribute in her small way. She also surmised that some of the case information had already been shared by other concerned government offices after the case was brought to the attention of Department of Migrant Workers Secretary Susan Ople.

APPROVAL OF SENATE BILL NO. 1310 ON THIRD READING

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body considered, on Third Reading, Senate Bill No. 1310, printed copies of which were electronically distributed to the senators on September 22, 2022.

Pursuant to Section 67, Rule XXIII of the *Rules of the Senate*, upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, Secretary Bantug read only the title of the bill, to wit:

AN ACT MANDATING THE REGISTRATION OF SUBSCRIBER IDENTITY MODULE (SIM) FOR ELECTRONIC DEVICES, REGULATING FOR THIS PURPOSE ITS REGISTRATION AND USE.

Secretary Bantug call the roll for nominal voting.

RESULT OF THE VOTING

The result of the voting was as follows:

In favor

Angara	Padilla
Binay	Pimentel
Cayetano (A)	Poe
Dela Rosa	Revilla
Ejercito	Tolentino
Estrada	Tulfo
Go	Villanueva
Hontiveros	Villar (C)
Lapid	Villar (M)
Legarda	Zubiri

Against

None

Abstention

None

With 20 senators voting in favor, none against, and no abstention, the Chair declared Senate Bill No. 1310 approved on Third Reading.

SENATE CONFEREES

Upon nomination of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the following were designated to constitute the Senate panel in the Bicameral Conference Committee on the disagreeing provisions of Senate Bill No. 1310 and House Bill No. 14 (Subscriber Identity Module Registration Act): Senator Poe as chairperson, and Senators Binay, Ejercito, Gatchalian, and Pimentel as members.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR POE

Expressing her gratitude for the Body's support for the proposed measure, Senator Poe delivered the following statement:

Please allow me to say a few words of gratitude to everyone who has help passed this bill through its second journey here in our Halls.

This is the first bill passed by the 19th Congress, and so I thank you for your cooperation.

First on my list of people to thank is, of course, the Senate President, whose unfaltering commitment to a safer and more secure communication system has helped pave the way for the swift passage of this bill.

I also would like to thank the coauthors of the measures: Senator Gatchalian, Dela Rosa, Estrada, Villanueva, Binay, Ejercito, Revilla, Marcos, and Sen. Cynthia Villar, whose bills, resolutions, and privilege speech have formed the very foundations of this bill.

I also would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to the Minority Leader, Senator Pimentel, and Sen. Pia Cayetano, whose keen insights and purposeful amendments have helped shape the bill for the better.

And, of course, to the other senators who manifested support by coauthoring this measure; and for the senators who trusted this bill enough and the leadership of this Representation that they actually did not even interpellate anymore, namely, Senator Legarda, who told me to acknowledge those that did not interpellate.

I would also like to thank our counterparts from the House of Representatives who have been waiting here since three o'clock in the afternoon —Rep. Toby Tiangco and Rep. Rex Garchalian, and the others. Thank you for their patience.

Finally, *mayroon na tayong magagawa* aside from just ignoring, deleting, or blocking the numbers with fraudulent or spam messages. We now have in our hands the means to unmask criminals who have been hiding for so long under the protection of anonymity and to bring them to justice.

Mayroon na pong puwedeng gawin para maikulong sila o magbayad ng malaking multa.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE PRESENCE OF GUESTS

At this juncture, Senate President Zubiri acknowledged the presence in the gallery of the House conferees of the Bicameral Conference Committee led by Representatives Toby Tiangco, Rex Gatchalian, and Cheeno Almario.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR GATCHALIAN

Senator Gatchalian, apologized for his late arrival, explaining that he had been on an important conference call with Korean nationals and thus missed the Third Reading vote on Senate Bill No. 1310. He stated that he would have voted in support of the bill. He then requested that his expression of support on Senate Bill No. 1310 be inserted into the *Journal* and *Record of the Senate*.

Senate President Zubiri noted Senator Gatchalian's request, acknowledging the latter's support for the proposed measure.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR GATCHALIAN

Pursuant to the manifestation of Senator Gatchalian, following is his remarks in support of Senate Bill No. 1310:

As an author and cosponsor of this bill, I am expressing my support for the passage of the Subscriber Identity Module (SIM) Registration Act championed by our respected and very capable Public Services Committee Chairperson Senator Grace Poe.

Presently, criminals are exploiting our current system because SIM registration is not required. With the rise of online and digital transactions, criminals take advantage of mobile phone and internet users in the country through smishing and phishing activities.

Despite the existence of the inter-agency group and the National Privacy Commission's initiatives to investigate the proliferation of spam and phishing messages, the issue remains an ongoing concern for many users, according to the latest data.

In June this year, PLDT Inc. claimed to have blocked more than 23 million text messages in four days for attempting to get consumers' personal data. Meanwhile, Globe Telecom said it blocked over 138 million spam and scam text messages over a six-month period from January to June this year.

These criminals have taken advantage of anonymity by not requiring SIM registration. Ngayon na marami sa ating mga kababayan ang nahihikayat na magsagawa ng mga online transaction dahil na rin sa kaginhawaan na dulot nito, mas napapanahon na pagtibayin pa natin ang mga polisiya hinggil sa mga isyung katulad nito.

Just imagine if our fellow kababayans would use their mobile phones for their daily transactions without being worried about their privacy and security. Tiyak na napakagandang isipin na wala nang Pilipino ang makatatanggap ng mga mapanlinlang na text messages na nagsasabing naka-jackpot sila sa mga raffle games, aprubadong cash loans, at samo't saring pangkabuhayan packages—na talaga namang mapapa- "sana all" ka na lang.

Nonetheless, reaching our goal to eradicate SIM-related crimes would not be possible without our collective efforts. After all, it is the responsibility of the government, public telecommunications entities or PTEs, and the public to reduce the likelihood that these crimes will be committed.

With this bill, we enable our law enforcement officers to step up their efforts to combat mobile phone, internet, and other electronic device-assisted crimes. This measure will also encourage PTEs and authorized sellers to improve cybersecurity standards in the registration and accessing of SIMs to prevent illegal SIM swapping and SIM cloning.

As for our *kababayans*, by requiring users to register their SIMs, we can ensure that SIMs are being used responsibly. With this measure, our citizens will be more cautious about sharing their personal information and phone numbers, thus promoting accountability.

Panahon na upang mabigyang pansin ang pagsasabatas ng SIM Registration Act. Dahil kung hindi ngayon, hanggang kailan pa tayo magbubulag-bulagan laban sa mga krimeng kaugnay sa paggamit ng ating mga SIM?

APPROVAL OF SENATE BILL NO. 1306 ON THIRD READING

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body considered, on Third Reading, Senate Bill No. 1306, printed copies of which were electronically distributed to the senators on September 21, 2022.

Pursuant to Section 67, Rule XXIII of the *Rules of the Senate*, upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, Secretary Bantug read only the title of the bill, to wit:

AN ACT POSTPONING THE DECEMBER 2022 BARANGAY AND SANGGUNIANG KABATAAN ELECTIONS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9164, AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9340, REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10632, REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10656, REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10923, REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10952, AND REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11462, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Secretary Bantug call the roll for nominal voting.

RESULT OF THE VOTING

The result of the voting was as follows:

In favor

Angara	Padilla
Binay	Revilla
Dela Rosa	Tolentino
Ejercito	Tulfo
Estrada	Villanueva
Gatchalian	Villar (C)
Go	Villar (M)
Lapid	Zubiri
Legarda	
Against	
Hontiveros	Pimentel
Abstention	
None	

With 17 senators voting in favor, two against, and no abstention, the Chair declared Senate Bill No. 1306 approved on Third Reading.

EXPLANATION OF VOTE OF SENATOR PIMENTEL

In explaining his negative vote on the measure, Senator Pimentel delivered the following speech:

I vote "no" to the postponement of the Barangay and SK elections to December 2023. Republic Act No. 11462 has scheduled the elections on December 5, 2022. There is no compelling reason

not to implement the mandate of the law which we passed in December of 2019. If we proceed with the elections, the incumbent barangay and SK officials would be able to serve a total of four and a half years. Not bad considering that under existing policy, the term of office of these officials is three years. Did the COVID-19 pandemic deprived these officials with time to serve their constituents? COVID-19 did not deprive them of time. In fact, it gave them prime time as former President Duterte made our barangay officials the first responders in extending the assistance to be given to the population at large.

This election would have been a very good opportunity to conduct a referendum on the performance of the incumbent especially in relation to their handling of the pandemic response. We should never tire of elections as regular, periodic, fair, free, honest and accurate elections are necessary parts of an inclusive and functioning democracy. May gastos talaga ang eleksyon. Magastos talaga ang demokrasya. But this should be a price that we, Filipinos, should be willing to pay.

Ironically, the argument on expenses goes this way. The Commission on Elections (COMELEC) says that postponing the elections would cost us to spend more. *Mas magastos pa ang pag*-postpone *ng eleksyon na ito*, that there is "unfinished business" with the barangay and the SK is not a sufficiently good reason to postpone the election. Governance is a continuing experiment and thus, a continuing review of the barangay and the SK systems can be made concurrent with proceeding in the election of the barangay and SK officials. No less than the Local Government Code itself calls for its own periodic review and yet the elections of the officials mentioned therein are not as it should not be and could not have been affected by any "business", finished or unfinished.

Moreover, although we can choose to be young at heart forever, we cannot forever be young in age since life in the SK is necessarily limited by age. By postponing the SK elections and allowing the incumbents to serve for a total of five-and-a-half years, we are consequently depriving an entire generation of potentially-capable Filipino youth the chance to lead their sector through the SK system in the name of "unfinished business." This is contrary to the state policy enshrined in our 1987 Constitution regarding equal access to opportunities for public service.

Although the barangay is the basic local government unit, it also serves as a "forum" for the people. We should be reminded that the barangay officials are supposed to be non-partisan. As Sen. Franklin M. Drilon once said, "Let us maintain the non-partisan nature of the barangays, barangays must shun politics at all costs." *Kaya nga bawal ang* CONA *sa* barangay elections. Barangay officials are community leaders where they are electing community leaders. Let not their election be divisive. Let their election be "crystallizing." Let us keep the barangay elections non-partisan and not heated elections. So, let us hold the elections as already scheduled under existing law, and may the best community leader win.

I am, therefore, in agreement with the oppositors to the postponement of this year's barangay and SK elections, such as the COMELEC itself as well as election associations and watchdogs, namely, LENTE, PPCRV, NAMFREL, IDEALS, and CenPEG.

To quote CenPEG, "Credible elections in a working democratic system are the only regular and predictable mechanisms for making our public officials accountable for their actions. Unless extraordinary crises prevent elections, these practices must abide by the law to ensure that our public officials command the legitimacy and mandate needed to make them accountable to our voters."

I, therefore, vote to continue with our already scheduled barangay and SK elections this December 2022, and call on all the citizens of the Republic of the Philippines to be involved in this important and sacred electoral activity, ensure that genuine public servants are elected, and thus, begin the national transformation of our country to one which our children and grandchildren will be proud to call their home.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR HONTIVEROS

Senator Hontiveros manifested that she will submit her explanation for her negative vote in writing, but that she fully supports the spirit of the "No" vote as expressed by Senator Pimentel.

EXPLANATION OF VOTE OF SENATOR HONTIVEROS

Pursuant to Senator Hontiveros' earlier manifestation, hereunder is her explanation of vote on Senate Bill No. 1306:

I register my NO vote to Committee Report No. 4 on Senate Bill No. 1306 for the following reasons which I already previously manifested:

To date, Congress has already enacted several laws postponing the Barangay and SK Elections and, in effect, overextended the terms of barangay officials.

My office received the position paper from our barangay youth leaders, signed by more than a hundred members of the Model SK Network, citing the postponement as a form of a setback to democracy.

Like our young leaders in the barangay, I firmly believe that elections are essential in strengthening our democracy, especially at the grassroots.

By holding elections, our young leaders asserted, which I also agreed in principle, we guarantee the right to vote, create opportunities to hold barangay leaders accountable, and incentivize leaders' performance for good barangay governance.

There is really no compelling reason why we have to postpone the elections as the COMELEC itself has indicated that they are ready to hold such elections as scheduled in December of this year.

APPROVAL OF SENATE BILL NO. 1290 ON THIRD READING

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body considered, on Third Reading, Senate Bill No. 1290, copies of which were distributed electronically to the senators on September 21, 2022.

Pursuant to Section 67, Rule XIII of the *Rules of the Senate*, upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, Secretary Bantug read only the title of the bill, to wit:

AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING ACTIVE TRANSPORT BY ESTABLISHING A SAFE PATHWAYS NETWORK OF BICYCLE LANES, WALKWAYS AND SLOW STREETS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Secretary Bantug called the roll for nominal voting.

RESULT OF THE VOTING

The result of the voting was as follows:

In favor

Angara	Padilla
Binay	Pimentel
Cayetano (P)	Poe
Dela Rosa	Revilla
Ejercito	Tolentino
Estrada	Tulfo
Gatchalian	Villanueva
Go	Villar (C)
Hontiveros	Villar (M)
Lapid	Zubiri
Legarda	

Against None

Abstention

None

With 21 senators voting in favor, none against, and no abstention, the Chair declared Senate Bill No. 1290 approved on Third Reading.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR CAYETANO (P)

Senator Cayetano (P) thanked the Body for supporting the measure and hoped that it will become a law very soon upon approval of the House of Representatives.

At this juncture, she showed on screen a short video presentation with pictures or caricatures of Senate President Zubiri, as well as Senators Ejercito, Dela Rosa, Revilla, Go, Angara and Legarda riding bicycles.

She stated that for the others senators who wish to have their pictures taken for the video, there is bicycle inside the Session Hall where they can do so.

INQUIRY OF SENATOR PIMENTEL

Senator Pimentel informed the Body that he had been invited to attend a bicameral conference committee meeting at the same time as the plenary session was taking place, stating that it is impossible for him to be physically present in two places at the same time.

Noting that there are precedents when a bicameral conference committee hearing is being held at the same time as the plenary session, such as the budget bicameral conference meeting, Senate President Zubiri pointed out that a bicameral conference committee meeting is not mentioned in the *Rules*, being a third Chamber (including the House of Representatives), and is distinct from committee hearings.

Pursuant to the *Rules of the Senate*, he added that the conduct of committee hearings is disallowed, despite the Chamber's long-standing practice of holding bicameral conference committee meetings simultaneous with plenary sessions to expedite the deliberation of major pieces of legislation.

For his part, Senator Pimentel remarked that the reason for the prohibition on holding committee hearings at the same time as the plenary session was the same: to fulfill the senator's duty to be present during the plenary session and to maintain the quorum.

Senate President Zubiri believed that there is no need to be technical about the issue and that holding bicameral conference committee hearing while the plenary session is ongoing is not a violation of the *Rules*. He stated that because there is only one session day left before Congress goes on recess, it is important that the bicameral conference committee report be ratified the next day.

Adverting to Rule XIV, Section 40 of the *Rules of the Senate*, that "The Senate shall meet in session at three o'clock in the afternoon on weekdays, except when the Senate decides otherwise. When the session is ongoing, no committee meeting or hearing under Rule XI shall be held," Senator Villanueva surmised that the bicameral conference committee meeting is not covered; in fact, it is a long-standing practice in the Chamber to allow bicameral conference committee meetings even during sessions. Senator Pimentel remarked that the situation may not be covered by the Rules' letter, but by its spirit. Noting the need to maintain a quorum of 24 Members throughout the session and the prohibition on holding committee hearings while session is ongoing, he asserted that the rule should apply to bicameral conference committee meetings. Should he attend the meeting, he stated that he would no longer be able to participate in the items listed in the Agenda, such as the committee report on the fiasco behind Sugar Order No. 4.

In suggesting that Senator Pimentel designate Senator Hontiveros as member of the bicameral conference committee, Senate President Zubiri stated that aside from the long-established practice to hold a bicameral conference committee meeting while the plenary session is ongoing, it has also been the Chamber's practice, particularly during the budget season, that only the vice chairpersons of the subcommittees attend the plenary sessions. He added that the practice is likewise done for tax measures in line with the principle of expediency and urgency.

Senator Pimentel requested that the practice be discontinued because there are only a few senators composing the Minority bloc in the Nineteenth Congress. Senate President Zubiri responded that the practice could be applied on a case-by-case basis, and it could become the rule rather than the exception, as in that day's situation, in which the Body seeks to pass and ratify a measure before Congress goes on recess. He assured the committee chairpersons that he would request fewer bicameral conference committee meetings during session hours.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Pimentel, the session was suspended.

It was 6:03 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 6:04 p.m., the session was resumed.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF SENATOR TULFO

Availing himself of the privilege hour, Senator Tulfo reported to the Body the case of Jovelyn Tang Andres, a Filipina OFW who allegedly committed suicide abroad.

Following is the full text of Senator Tulfo's privilege speech:

Last Wednesday, a heartbreaking report reaches here in the Senate of yet another OFW coming home lifeless. Thanks for the privilege speech of Sen. Pia Cayetano regarding the discrimination faced by our OFWs in wearing full gear PPEs, and Senator Risa Hontiveros' compassion for the abuse committed against our women OFWs, our attention was called to the case of Jovelyn Tang Andres, a case that I believe is not isolated, but is being experienced by other OFWs.

Masakit po sa loob ko na nangyari ulit ito. Bagaman at hindi pa ako senador nang magsimula ang problema ni Jovelyn, sana po ay natulungan ko siya agad. Lumapit po siya sa akin noon sa inaakala niya na ang kausap niya po ay ang aking tanggapan pero napag-alaman ko na lumapit po pala siya sa isang ka-miyembro ng aking pamilya at pinapunta po siya sa action center na iyon. Unfortunately, hindi po siya nakapunta dahil po siguro sa kakulangan sa pera.

Nang malaman ko ang kuwento ni Jovelyn, pagkatapos na pagkatapos po sa Plenaryo, hindi na po ako nag-aksaya ng panahon at agad kong sinimulan ang pag-iimbistiga. Una ko pong tinawagan ang kamag-anak ni Jovelyn sa General Santos. Kinabukasan, sa scheduled Technical Working Group ng Committee on Migrant Workers pinagpatuloy ko po ang pagiimbistiga sa kaso ni Jovelyn. Noong araw ding iyon, lumipad patungong General Santos ang isang crew ng Raffy Tulfo in Action (RTIA) para makausap ang pamilya ni Jovelyn at personal na magpaabot ng tulong para sa mga naiwan ni Jovelyn at para makapag-imbistiga na rin. Dito trinabaho ng RTIA crew ang pagpapa-autopsy sa labi ni Jovelyn.

Meanwhile, back here in Manila, because we have a weekly TWG with DMW and OWWA, I was able to get information from them regarding the matter and ask for their help to address the concerns of Jovelyn's family and investigate who is liable for what happened. And because of the trust that our OFWs have on us, some OFWs who were companions of Jovelyn in Saudi came out and told us what they know about what really happened to Jovelyn.

Ngayon, base po sa mga nakalap naming impormasyon mula sa OWWA, DMW, pamilya ni Jovelyn, at mga kasamahan niyang OFW, ito po ang totoong kuwento. Jovelyn Tang Andres is a 32-year-old resident of Sarangani and a member of the Blaan indigenous people's group and a mother of three. She was recruited as a domestic helper by a certain Ema Fernandez, who directly recruits for Manabe Ali Class Recruitment Agency, the Saudi Arabia recruitment agency. Ema coursed the papers of Jovelyn to a local recruitment agency, which is Gulf Synergy Employment, who processed her documentation, including her medical exam sometime in September 2021. This means, she submitted her requirements and had a fit-to-work certificate months before she was deployed.

On November 27, 2021, she was deployed to Sakakah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. At this point, when she got to Saudi, we gathered various versions of what happened to Jovelyn.

Version No. 1: Pagdating ni Jovelyn sa Saudi, nalaman ng employer niya na buntis siya kaya pinabalik siya sa Manabe Agency at doon siya ay pilit na pinainom ng pampalaglag na naging dahilan ng kaniyang pagkamatay.

Version No. 2: Ang nakarating sa asawa ni Jovelyn at OWWA, sa side naman ng OWWA at ng pamilya ni Jovelyn, ang unang kwento na nakarating sa kanila ay hindi kinaya ni Jovelyn ang trabaho sa bahay ng amo niya kaya ito ay nagpa-pull out at nagpabalik sa agency.

Pagdating sa accommodation, nakaramdam daw ng sakit sa likod at tiyan si Jovelyn, nagsabi siya sa kaniyang asawa na gusto na niyang umuwi, pero bandang Marso, nalaman na lang nila na namatay na si Jovelyn. Ayon sa OWWA, ang report sa kanila ng Manabe ay nagpakamatay daw si Jovelyn.

Version No. 3: Sa aming mga pag-iimbestiga, may mga nakausap kaming mga kasabay ni Jovelyn papuntang Saudi at mga OFW na kasama niya sa accommodation ng Manabe. Ayon sa pakikipag-usap ko sa kanila sa video conference, bago raw lumipad papuntang Saudi ay hindi raw nakapag-pregnancy test si Jovelyn. Pagdating sa Saudi, hindi rin agad in-apply ng residence permit o Iqama si Jovelyn ng kaniyang amo. Na-delay po ito ng mga isang buwan. Noong magapply na ng Iqama si Jovelyn at pinag-medical exam siya, nadiskubre ng amo na siya ay buntis kaya pinabalik siya ng amo sa Manabe Agency.

Pagdating sa accommodation ng Manabe, nagpahiwatig si Jovelyn na gusto niyang umuwi para manganak na lang sa Pilipinas pero hindi siya pinayagan dahil may dalawa pang taong kontrata siya. Malulugi raw ang agency.

Napansin ng mga kasamahan ni Jovelyn na special treatment si Jovelyn pagdating sa accommodation. Doon siya natutulog sa kwarto ng secretary ng Manabe at iba raw ang pinapakain sa kaniya at pinapainom. Napag-alaman nila mula rin doon sa Pinay na napagutusan ng Manabe na pinalalagyan ng pampalaglag ang pagkain at inumin ni Jovelyn. Kinalaunan, nag-bleeding na nga si Jovelyn. Naikwento ito ng kasamahan ni Jovelyn na nagaalaga sa kaniya ng siya ay nag-bleeding.

Gusto na raw talagang umuwi ni Jovelyn ayon sa asawa niya pero hindi niya masabi ang tungkol sa pagbubuntis niya at ang pagkalaglag ng bata, at ang mga pang-aabuso ng Manabe dahil ang mga tawag nila ay monitored ng secretary ng Manabe at may CCTV pa.

Si Jovelyn ay minsan nang pinagpa-part time sa bahay ng may-ari ng Manabe, doon nagtangka raw siyang magpakamatay pero nahuli ng nanay ni Bassam, may-ari ng agency, at siya ay sinampal sa galit.

On March 25, 2022, Jovelyn was found dead inside the bathroom of Manabe's accommodation. The local police, the forensic expert, and the public prosecutor immediately inspected the site and

found Jovelyn hanging with a cloth to the base of the heater inside the bathroom with no signs of injuries or any indication of violence or resistance. They ruled that the cause of death is suicide. Her remains arrived in the Philippines only on September 17, 2022.

What has been done for Jovelyn and her family? We immediately acted on the request of the family for autopsy. By September 23, Friday, the autopsy was conducted. According to the autopsy report, the cause of death was asphyxia by ligature; and with the report of the police of Saudi that she was found hanging inside the CR with no signs of injury or any indication of violence or resistance, it seems that suicide is the cause of death.

I have also consulted with the psychologist regarding the situation of Jovelyn, and based on the story I gave her, it is highly probable she committed suicide, according to Dr. Camille Garcia, a renowned psychologist. Everything that happened to her contributed to her depression.

Of course, knowing how Jovelyn died is not enough. We have to stand our ground for our Filipino OFWs when their rights are violated abroad. Jovelyn suffered abortion without her consent. If that happened here in the Philippines, Manabe would have been liable for intentional abortion without the consent of the woman.

In Saudi Arabia, induced abortion is generally illegal. A person that performs an illegal abortion is subject to the payment of blood money to the relatives of the aborted fetus. At the embryo stage, an abortion is not allowed unless an approved medical committee decides the continuation of a pregnancy endangers the women's safety and could possibly link to their death. In Jovelyn's case, there was no such danger. We are now coordinating with the DMW's Migrant Workers Office for the filing of this case against Manabe and its owner. And, while the filing of the case may take some time, we also made sure that the family's needs are addressed, No. 1, OWWA has already provided death and burial benefits, livelihood assistance, and scholarship from elementary to college for one child. Mayor Sumbo of Malapatan also promised scholarship for the other children of Jovelyn. And, of course, to sustain them as a family, I offered Jovelyn's family to develop a livelihood as a source of income to replace what Jovelyn would have provided for her family had she been alive, and I also promised the family a house and lot. And, let me make this clear, *pera ko po iyon. Wala pong pera mula sa gobyerno ang lahat ng ibinigay kong tulong kay* Jovelyn, house and lot *at pangkabuhayan sa kaniyang pamilya*. For the second time, *pera ko po iyon, sarili kong pera, walang pera na nanggaling sa gobyerno*.

Issues concerned are discovered. Why do I get out of my way to do all these myself? I know, *trabaho naman ng iba ito*. But it is only when you personally handled things and you get your hands dirty that you find out what is wrong. In the last four days that we have been working on this case, we discovered several problems that must be addressed. First, a lot of female OFWs reach their work pregnant while there is a pregnancy test conducted during the preemployment medical examination. Such is not enough because that is done months before the actual deployment, sexual contact could have happened before deployment.

Some agencies in practice conduct pregnancy tests before their flight, but that is not a mandatory policy. We also discovered that Manabe had a former Filipina secretary who came back here in the Philippines to recruit for them. The Filipina directly recruits in the province and then refers them to a licensed recruitment agency. We have to investigate the regulation for these illegal recruiters hiding behind or using licensed recruitment agencies. Gulf Synergy was also remiss in monitoring their deployed workers and the submission reports to DMW. How come they were not informed of the pregnancy of Jovelyn and her request to be repatriated? How come their mobile phones are being controlled by the foreign agency? The work of the recruitment agency should not end at the point of deployment.

Just to inform the Body, a recruitment violation case was already filed against Gulf Synergy. Its license is now suspended. With regards to Manabe, the only real and immediate action that we can do is to have their accreditation cancelled and have them permanently delisted. At the moment, an administrative case for disciplinary action against the employer was filed against Manabe and a full investigation is also being conducted to determine their liability for failing to monitor, report, and to timely repatriate Jovelyn.

Another problem that we discover is the inability for OFWs to call, and if allowed to call at all, they are being monitored. How can we protect them if we do not even know that they are in trouble? We have to come up with a solution so that they will not be cut off from any source of help.

And, finally, the foreign agencies blocked the repatriation of our OFWs. Manabe detains the OFWs and tell them that they have to do part-time work to pay for their ticket going home. We have a law in place with regard to repatriation. Our OFWs should have the option to terminate their employment. Now, if the repatriation is due to their own fault, of course, they have to answer for the cost but they should always have the option to return home.

Before I end my speech, let me emphasize the policy laid down in our Constitution: "The protection of life, liberty and property are essential for the enjoyment by all the people of the blessings of democracy." Jovelyn came home lifeless. She was deprived of her liberty in Saudi and she was made to work without getting paid.

If we do not do anything about this, our OFWs will spit on our Constitution. I will be passing bills to address these concerns. I implore upon my dear colleagues to help me prioritize these bills and put an end to OFWs coming home lifeless.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR VILLANUEVA

Senator Villanueva expressed his gratitude and commendation to Senator Tulfo for his tenacity and dedication for personally and literally going out of his way to investigate the matter. He said that it is important for the Members of the Senate, as policymakers, to learn how the institution can improve the system and the laws that are passed. He stated that the Members are given the opportunity to perform an oversight function in order to determine whether the laws passed are still relevant, functional, efficient, and effective. He again thanked Senator Tulfo for going out of his way to assist their fellow Filipinos.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR HONTIVEROS

Senator Hontiveros thanked Senator Tulfo and Senator Cayetano (P) for extending immediate assistance to the family of Jovelyn Tang Andres. She stated that, despite the various versions that have emerged, it is clear is that deeper issues are haunting OFWs who work as domestic workers, entertainers, or in precarious jobs abroad. She lamented that Jovelyn Tang Andres' case of forced abortion was not the first, noting that the pattern disproportionately affected women OFWs. She expressed concern about reports she had received about other pregnant OFWs in some Saudi agencies who might face the same fate as Jovelyn.

She hoped that the issue would also shed light on the gender-specific needs of female OFWs. She expressed hope that the Senate would act decisively on the issues raised by Senators Tulfo and Cayetano (P) in order to avoid seeing more cases like Jovelyn's.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR VILLANUEVA

Senator Villanueva stated that he would like to know whether the Saudi Recruitment Agency's claim, based on the KSA forensic report, that suicide was the cause of Jovelyn's death was true. He also asked how the government could psychologically prepare Filipinos who would be working abroad, as it is always a major issue faced by OFWs whenever they leave the country.

Senator Tulfo responded that OFWs are required to attend OWWA's Pre-Departure Orientation Seminar (PDOS) which orients them about their destination country's culture, practice, and work standards, as well as how to deal with homesickness while abroad. He lamented that if the agency had informed OWWA that Jovelyn was pregnant, her life could have been saved; however, the agency decided to finish Jovelyn's two-year contract to recover their expenses by providing accommodation and some pampering to coax her to take abortion pills until she had a miscarriage. He also revealed that the agency sold Jovelyn three times while she was suffering from postpartum depression, weakness, and homesickness, and that she was even prevented from speaking to her husband and children, prompting her to take her own life. For these reasons, he suggested that the DMW require female OFWs to take pregnancy tests one day before departure and upon arrival in their country of destination.

In lamenting at how Jovelyn was sold like a commodity notwithstanding her desire to return home, Senator Villanueva reflected on the difference between the Pre-Employment Orientation Seminar (PEOS) conducted by POEA and the PDOS offered by OWWA, and stated that he would participate in the committee hearings at the proper time.

When asked if the newly established Migrant Workers Office (MWO) was informed of Jovelyn's case, Senator Tulfo stated that only the Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) existed at the time and was unaware that Jovelyn was in distress, having been monitored every time she called her relatives and husband, to whom all she could say was that she wanted to come home and be with her children.

Asked if Jovelyn's relatives were unable to notify the appropriate government agencies, Senator Tulfo stated that her family sent a Facebook message to one of his relatives who, in turn, advised them to seek advice from Raffy Tulfo In Action Center; however, Jovelyn was unable to go due ot lack of funds. He revealed that Jovelyn's father was interviewed on PTV-4's morning news show "Rise and Shine Pilipinas" on May 16, but the government agencies have yet to act on the matter.

Senator Villanueva expressed dismay at the indifference of public servants to the plight of the country's modern-day heroes, such as migrant workers, and hoped that the Committee on Migrant Workers chaired by Senator Tulfo would be able to define shared accountability of government agencies and recruitment agencies, and well as improve the system and policies affecting migrant workers.

He revealed that based on POEA data, there were 198 illegal recruitment cases from 2019 to 2022, as well as 90 suspended and cancelled Philippine recruitment agencies (PRAs) as of August 31, 2022, but that the number appeared to be extremely low. Thereupon, he thanked Senator Tulfo for his privilege speech, which he hoped would galvanize all stakeholders in protecting migrant workers from abuse or exploitation.

At this juncture, Senate President Zubiri relinquished the Chair to Senator Tolentino.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR CAYETANO (P)

Senator Cayetano (P) stated that Senator Tulfo's privilege speech addresses a number of Sustainable Development Goals, one of which is Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8), which promotes the protection of people seeking decent jobs both locally and abroad at all times. She emphasized that while Gender Equality (SDG 5) varies by country, a minimum standard must be met to ensure that migrant workers are safe in a variety of ways, not just physically, mentally, or emotionally.

While one of the reasons for working abroad is to end poverty (SDG 1), she stated that there must also be Reduced Inequality (SDG 10) not only in terms of gender but also in terms of circumstances. She emphasized that because Middle Eastern countries are signatories to international conventions, migrant workers' rights must be respected.

She also mentioned the Sustainable Development Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) as something that promotes the protection of migrant workers from any form of abuse because they already face hardships being away from their families; thus, returning home wounded or dead would be too much. She believed that a collaboration between the Executive and Legislative departments is necessary to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals because it is a congressional initiative to bring issue to light and fill the gaps.

She thanked Senator Tulfo for bringing the details of what happened to Jovelyn for their study, with the hope of reforming practices. She further remarked that if laws are not being followed, she can make appropriate committee reports to the agencies involved, and can help craft necessary legislation to address the people's needs.

Senator Tulfo cited emphasized the need for equal treatment among OFWs who are not treated well in their country of work and are neglected by the Philippine government, citing American activist lawyer Bryan Stevenson's statement that "the opposite of poverty is not wealth; the opposite of poverty is justice," and pledged to bring change as much as he could as chairperson of the Committee on Migrant Workers.

REFERRAL OF SPEECH TO COMMITTEE

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Chair referred the privilege speech of Senator Tulfo and the interpellations and manifestation thereon to the Committee on Migrant Workers.

SENATE CONFEREES

Upon nomination by Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Chair designated the following to constitute the Senate panel in the Bicameral Conference Committee on the disagreeing provisions of Senate Bill No. 1306 and House Bill No. 4673 (*Postponing the December 2022 Barangay and SK Elections*): Senator Ejercito as chairperson, and Senators Gatchalian, Binay, Escudero, and Hontiveros as members.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, the session was suspended.

It was 6:43 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 7:47 p.m., the session was resumed with Senate President Zubiri presiding.

PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 233

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body considered Proposed Senate Resolution No. 233, entitled

RESOLUTION HONORING THE EXEMPLARY HEROISM OF THE FIVE (5) MEMBERS OF THE BULACAN PROVINCIAL DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT OFFICE (PDRRMO) WHO SACRIFICED THEIR LIVES TO SAVE THE VICTIMS OF SUPER TYPHOON KARDING ON SEPTEMBER 25, 2022,

taking into consideration Proposed Senate Resolution Nos. 234, 235, 238, 239, 240, and 241.

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

Thereupon, the Chair recognized Senator Revilla for the sponsorship.

SPONSPORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR REVILLA

In sponsoring Proposed Senate Resolution No. 233, honoring the exemplary heroism of the five members of the Bulacan Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office, Senator Revilla delivered the following speech:

It is my honor to sponsor Proposed Senate Resolution No. 233 to recognize the exemplary heroism of the five members of the Bulacan Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office who made the ultimate sacrifice in exchange for the many lives they were saving during the onslaught of Super Typhoon Karding (with the international name Noru) on September 25, 2022.

As I sponsor this measure, I cannot help but feel a deep sense of loss for the tragic demise of George Agustin, Narciso Calayag Jr., Troy Justin Agustin, Jerson Resurreccion, and Marby Bartolome. Sila po ang lima sa ating mga rescuers na nagbuwis ng kanilang buhay upang iligtas ang ating mga kababayan habang sila ay nagsagawa ng rescue mission sa Barangay Camias, San Miguel, Bulacan.

Kung tayo nga po na mga nanonood lamang sa ating mga telebisyon ay lubhang nabagabag, naaba, at naluha sa kalunos-lunos na sinapit ng ating mga kababayan, kabilang na ang ating mga rescuers na walang takot na sinuong ang panganib na dala ni "Karding," paano na kaya kung tayo mismo ang naroon sa mata ng delubyong iyon? Nadudurog po ang aking puso hindi lamang para sa limang bayaning ito at sa iba pang mga nasawi nating kababayan, kung hindi sa lahat ng nasalanta na buong tapang na bumabangon ngayon mula sa pananalasang ito.

My first privilege speech in this august Hall in 2004 was about the spirit of *bayanihan* and the heroism of our *kababayans* in Real, Quezon where I was stranded for almost a week. Together, we endeavored to give aid to those affected and condoled with those who have lost family and loved ones.

Today, we all share this deep sorrow and pain with the families and loved ones of our rescuers while exalting their sacrifice with the highest sense of great pride and profound gratitude. *Habang ito ay isang malaking trahedya, ito rin ay huwaran ng kabayanihan*.

Ipinamalas po nila sa buong mundo ang bukod-tanging katapangan ng mga Pilipino na walang inuurungan, na itinataya ang kanilang buhay para sa kapakanan ng iba. Ito ang magsisilbing inspirasyon para sa ating lahat.

As a legislator, one of my priority measures is to strengthen the institutional capability of our local government units (LGUs) in times of emergency situations and rescue operations, and to champion the welfare of our valiant frontliners. I filed Senate Bill No. 686 that seeks to assign a permanent disaster risk officer with corresponding benefits and allowances in each LGU to complement the mandate of Republic Act No. 10121, or the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction Act of 2010. Through this measure, we can expect that our LGUs will be more proactive, dynamic, and efficient, given the institutionalized mechanism that this bill aims to achieve.

Tayo po ay sumasaludo sa lahat ng emergency responders at rescue team sa buong bansa, higit ngayon sa limang miyembrong ito ng Bulacan Rescue Teams, at mananatili sa alaala ng bawat Pilipino ang kanilang kabayanihan.

Sa ating limang bayaning ito, kami po ay sumasaludo.

At this juncture, Senate President Zubiri relinquished the Chair to Senator Villanueva.

COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATE PRESIDENT ZUBIRI

In cosponsoring Proposed Senate Resolution No. 233, Senate President Zubiri delivered the following speech:

It is my honor to sponsor this resolution recognizing the heroism and bravery of George Agustin, Troy Justin Agustin, Marby Bartolome, Narciso Calayag Jr., and Jerson Resurreccion—

all members of the Bulacan Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office—who died on duty amid Super Typhoon Karding.

They were in the middle of rescue operations in San Miguel, Bulacan last Sunday when flash floods ravished their boat and fatally swept them away.

All five of them were seasoned disaster respondents, having been in rescue operations, not only in their home province but all across the country, helping save lives in these provinces. Whenever needed, they responded. No matter the risk, they were there.

Theirs is an inherently dangerous job. It is a job that requires one to accept, from the get-go, that every mission may be the last one. And still, our rescuers willingly go on this path, putting their own lives in the line, in order to bring our people to safety.

Our "Bulacan Five" died a hero's death. Today, we salute their fiercest courage and celebrate their boundless compassion.

To the families and friends that they have left behind, I hope you find some comfort in the knowledge that your loved ones led noble lives, and will be remembered with utmost gratefulness by those they have saved.

Alam ninyo, bilang isang Red Cross volunteer myself, together with former Senator Gordon, Senator Gatchalian, Senator Villar, and other senators here, we put in the heart of our volunteer service our first responders and first-line responders. They are the heart and soul of the Red Cross. Kaya kung may nasasaktan o namamatay sa aming volunteer force ay malungkot at masakit po sa amin iyon. Kaya I commiserate with the Bulacan Provincial Government. Napanood ko po sila sa news kagabi at umiiyak sila dahil nawalan sila ng limang napakahalagang miyembro ng kanilang pamilya ng Probinsya ng Bulacan.

Saludo po kami sa inyong lima. Maraming, maraming salamat po, George, Troy, Marby, Narciso, and Jerson. Mga tunay kayong bayani.

And as we honor the lives of our Bulacan Five, we also salute and honor the sacrifices of all our rescue respondents who repeatedly risk their lives and limb in the service of our people.

Maraming, maraming salamat po sa inyong lahat. Saludo po kami sa inyo.

At this juncture, Senator Villanueva relinquished the Chair to Senate President Zubiri.

COSPONSORSHIP OF SENATOR VILLANUEVA

As cosponsor of Proposed Senate Resolution No. 233, Senator Villanueva delivered the following speech:

Please allow me to give a short sponsorship speech on this resolution that this Representation filed. *Bago po ako magsimula*, I would like to start by showing everyone this very short video clip. It is just a one-minute video clip.

(A video clip was played on the screen)

As an archipelago located along the typhoon belt in the Pacific, it is normal for the Philippines to experience an average of 20 typhoons per year. But what is unusual is the catastrophic impact it left each and every year.

In the Province of Bulacan, my native province, despite being sheltered by the Sierra Madre Mountain Ranges, provincial-wide flooding is still experienced tremendously.

Just this Sunday evening, less than a year after the onslaught of Super Typhoon Ulysses, another super typhoon named Karding struck my home province, Bulacan. As I inspected the damages yesterday, I found myself hardly believing that 46 out of 49 barangays in San Miguel, Bulacan alone are submerged in water. The affected residents are gasping for help to survive the day.

My heart was shattered even more by the devastating news brought to my attention telling me that five rescuers went above and beyond the call of duty to save the lives of others at the cost of their own. Today, we commend and honor their extraordinary heroism. The five rescuers from Bulacan PDRRMO who died in the line of duty are: George E. Agustin, 45 years old, of Ina "O" Este, Calumpit, Bulacan; Troy Justin Agustin, 30 years old, of Santa Rita, Guiguinto, Bulacan; Marby A. Bartolome, 36 years old, of Bulihan, City of Malolos; Jerson Resureccion—he is the team leader—32 years old, of Barangay Catmon, Santa Maria, Bulacan; and Narciso Calayag Jr. of Malolos City.

Nakapag-Facebook live pa po si George Agustin noong Linggo ng hapon habang papunta ang kaniyang team doon sa bayan ng San Miguel para saklolohan ang ating mga kababayang lubog sa baha at naghihintay ng kanilang tulong. Ang sabi po ni George: "Hintayin ninyo kami, San Miguel."

Hayaan ninyong ipakita ko ang video na ito.

(Another video was played on the screen)

"Hintayin ninyo kami, San Miguel." Iyan po ang binanggit ni George, pero huling misyon na pala nila iyon. Ang mga Bulakeñong tagapagligtas ay hindi na muling makababalik sa kanilang mga pamilya. Alas kuwatro ng madaling araw ng Lunes natagpuan ang kanilang mga labi sa iba't-ibang lugar sa Sitio Banga, Barangay Camias, San Miguel, Bulacan.

Kahapon, tayo ay nabigyan ng pagkakataong personal na magtungo sa bayan ng San Miguel at nagpaabot tayo ng personal na tulong dala ang pangalan ng ating institusyon—ang minamahal nating Senado. Humingi tayo ng situational report mula kay Mayor Eric Tiongson. Naikuwento rin niya sa atin kung paano nagbuwis ng buhay ang ating mga rescuers sa gitna ng flash flood sa San Miguel.

Mga beterano sa pagsasagawa ng rescue operations at sanay sa tubig baha ang ating mga rescuers. Sa kasamaang palad, habang inihahanda nila ang kanilang mga lifeboat, isang flash flood ang rumagasa patungo sa kanilang lokasyon at nagpaguho ito ng isang pader na dahilan ng malakas na pagdaloy ng tubig baha at humigop sa kanila, dahilan kung bakit sila naanod, ito pong mga rescuers natin.

We express profound condolences and deepest sympathies to the bereaved families and to all our *kababayans in* Bulacan, especially the provincial government of Bulacan where our fallen heroes served with incredible bravery and self-sacrifice.

Ipinapaabot din ng ating gobernador, Gov. Daniel Fernando, na kausap natin kahapon hanggang kanina, ang kaniyang pasasalamat sa liderato ng Senado sa pangunguna ng ating Senate President, Sen. Juan Miguel "Migz" F. Zubiri, at ating mga kasamahan. Naikuwento ko po sa kaniya kahapon ng umaga, doon sa ating chatroom pa lamang, ang dami-daming mga senador. Kayo po Senate President, Sen. Juan Miguel "Migz" F. Zubiri, kayo iyong unang-una na nagpahatid ng pakikiramay at pagsuporta sa ating mga namatayan.

Bilang Bulakeño, nagpupugay tayo sa kabayanihan ng ating limang tagapagligtas. Kabilang na ang kanilang mga pangalan sa kasaysayan ng kabayanihan ng dugong Bulakeño.

Subalit pagkakataon din po ito upang muli nating mapagtuunan ng pansin ang sapat na training ng ating mga rescuers, upgrading ng mga rescue equipment at ang paggamit ng technology for disaster relief and recovery management *tulad* ng weather station system, drone, satellite phone, at iba pang communication at surveillance equipment.

Muli, nakikidalamhati po tayo sa kanilang mga pamilya, kasama ng sambayanang Pilipino. Rest in peace, Bulacan Five Heroes!

COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR PADILLA

In cosponsoring Proposed Senate Resolution No. 233, Senator Padilla delivered the following speech:

Ako po ay tumitindig sa Bulwagang ito na may nagdurugong puso bunsod ng trahedyang sinapit ng ating mga volunteer rescuers mula po sa Bulacan Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office noong linggo sa kasagsagan ng paghagupit ng bagyong Karding: George Agustin, Troy Justin Agustin, Marby Batolome, Narciso Calayag, Jr., at Jerson Resurreccion. Ito ang mga pangalan at mukha ng mga bayaning hindi inalintana ang bantang panganib, sukdulang malagay sa kapahamakan ang kanilang buhay matugunan lamang ang misyong iligtas ang kanilang mga kababayan sa Sitio Galas, Barangay Camias, San Miguel, Bulacan.

Inna lillahi wa-inna ilayhi rajioon. Surely, we belong to God, and to Him we shall return.

Walang bahid ng alinlangan—walang sakripisyo ang hihigit pa sa pagbubuwis ng sariling buhay sa ngalan ng paglilingkod sa kapwa at sa bayan.

Kasama mang tinangay ng malakas na ulan at hangin ang napakarami pang mga pangarap ng ating mga fallen rescuers para sa kanilang mga sarili at pamilya, kailanman ay hindi matatabunan ang kabayanihang kanilang ipinamalas bilang lingkod-bayan.

Sa kabila ng sinapit ng ating mga bayaning taga-ligtas, ang kanilang kadakilaan at kagitingan ay habangbuhay na mauukit sa ating kasaysayan. Kung kaya naman, kaisa ang inyong lingkod sa Senado at ng buong sambayanan na nagluluksa man ay nagbibigay ng pinakamataas na pagkilala at pagpupugay para sa ating mga bayani.

Sa puntong ito, hindi ko po maiwasang maalaala ang bahagi ng tula ng Ama ng Rebolusyon, si Gat Andres Bonifacio, na pinamagatang "Pag-ibig sa Tinubuang Lupa." Hayaan po ninyong ihandog ko ang taludtod na ito bilang pagpupugay sa ating mga gatdula: Gat Narciso, Gat Jerson, Gat Marby, Gat George, at Gat Troy.

> "Ipaghandog-handog ang buong pag-ibig, At hanggang may dugo'y ubusang itigis Kung sa pagtatanggol, buhay ay mapatid Ito'y kapalaran at tunay na langit."

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR VILLANUEVA

Senator Villanueva manifested that Senators Lapid and Estrada would be submitting their cosponsorship speeches on the measure for insertion into the *Record of the Senate*.

COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR LAPID

Pursuant to Senator Villanueva's manifestation, following is the cosponsorship speech of Senator Lapid on Proposed Senate Resolution No. 233, which was deemed read and inserted into the *Journal* and *Record of the Senate*:

Tayo ay mag-alay ng isang minutong katahimikan para sa mga biktima ng Bagyong Karding na nagdaan nitong linggo.

Nitong nakaraang Lunes, sa kasagsagan ng pananalasa ng Bagyong Karding sa iba't ibang panig ng Luzon, limang kasapi ng Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council (PDRRMC) ng Lalawigan ng Bulacan ang matapang na tumulak sa kalaliman ng gabi upang tumugon sa panawagan ng mga residente na lumubog ang mga kabahayan sa mataas na baha.

Dahil sa napakalakas na pag-ulang hatid ng bagyo, maraming lugar sa Lalawigan ng Bulacan ang nalubog sa napakataas na baha, at kabilang dito ang Sitio Galas, Barangay Kamias sa Munisipalidad ng San Miguel, kung saan ang malaking bahagi ng bayan ay nalubog sa lagpas-taong baha na may lalim na anim hanggang pitong talampakan.

Sa gitna ng dilim at rumaragasang tubig, hindi kinaya ng kanilang sasakyan ang tumawid sa gitna ng baha. Sila ay lumipat sa isang rescue boat, ngunit may hindi inaasahang pangyayari ang naganap—nabuwag ang pader kung saan sila ay dumaraan. Sila ay tinangay ng alon, na naging sanhi ng kanilang pagkalunod at tuluyang pagpanaw habang nasa gitna ng kanilang pagtupad sa tungkulin.

Bigyan po natin ng pinakamataas na pagpupugay at pagkilala sina Jerson Resurreccion, George Agustin, Troy Justin Agustin, Narciso Calayag Jr., at Marby Bartolome ng Bulacan Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council na nag-alay ng kanilang buhay sa ngalan ng paglilingkod sa bayan at pagtupad sa kanilang sinumpaang tungkulin; na tumulong sa mga nangangailangang mga kababayan, sa gitna ng mga unos at mga kalamidad. Ang kanilang pinakitang giting, katapangan, malasakit, at kabayanihan ay kumakatawan sa kanilang marubdob na pagmamahal sa bayan; na huwaran ng mga mamamayan, lalo na silang mga nasa larangan ng disaster risk reduction and management. Ang kanilang walang pagiimbot na paglilingkod sa bayan at kabayanihan ay nararapat lamang kilalanin at bigyan ng pinakamataas na pagpupugay.

Pagpupugay para sa mga bayaning rescuers ng Lalawigan ng Bulacan! Pagpupugay sa lahat ng mga kawani at volunteers ng mga local disaster risk reduction and management councils! Ang inyong mga sakripisyo at alaala ay hindi kailanman malilimutan.

COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR ESTRADA

Pursuant to Senator Villanueva's manifestation, following is the cosponsorship speech of Senator Estrada on Proposed Senate Resolution No. 233, which was deemed read and inserted into the *Journal* and *Record of the Senate*:

Oftentimes we remember typhoons and other natural disasters because of the magnitude of damage they have created, in terms of the amount of properties destroyed, and the number of lives lost.

Super Typhoon Karding, with the international name "Noru," which has left a trail of destruction in the Greater Luzon Province, will be most remembered in the rescue and emergency response community—for it had claimed the lives of five rescue officers from the Province of Bulacan, in the line of duty.

This now puts to light the unsung bravery, courage, and heroism of our local disaster risk reduction and management officers.

While most of us, civilians, are in the safety and comforts of our homes during typhoons, disasters, and calamities, there are these contingents of LGU employees, who, together with our policemen and our soldiers, are at the forefront of rescue operations—at the very center of the action.

Hindi po madali ang buhay ng isang rescue officer. Sa panahon ng unos, lindol, bagyo, disgrasya, at iba pang emergencies ay kailangan nilang iwan ang kanilang mga pamilya upang tumugon sa tawag ng tungkulin—sa pagliligtas ng buhay ng iba.

Hindi naman po kalakihan ang suweldo ng ating mga rescue officers na ito. At hindi ko rin po sigurado kung sapat ang kanilang hazard pay at kung sila ay may dagdag na accident at life insurance, liban sa GSIS coverage na meron ang mga kawani ng gobyerno. Pero sa kabila nito, ay patuloy silang nagta-trabaho mapa-panahon man ng natural disasters o simpleng banggaan sa kalsada.

Nakalulungkot lamang po na sa dinami-dami ng rescue operations na naisagawa nina Rescue Officers George Agustin, Troy Justin Agustin, Marby Bartolome, Narciso Calayag Jr. at Jerson Resurreccion ay ngayon lamang lubos na napansin at nabigyan ng malawakang pagkilala ang kanilang trabaho.

At nakalulungkot rin nga pong maisip na noong sila naman ang nangailangan na ma-rescue ay wala pong responde ang nakarating sa kanila.

Ngunit sa isang banda na rin ay nagkaroon ng kabuluhan ang kanilang kabayanihan dahil ngayon ay nabibigyan ng atensyon at parangal ang kadakilaan ng ating mga disaster responders.

Kaya naman, ako po ay nakikiisa sa pagpapaabot ng pagkilala at parangal para sa ipinamalas na kagitingan ng ating mga bayaning sina George Agustin, Troy Justin Agustin, Marby Bartolome, Narciso Calayag Jr., at Jerson Resurreccion, ng Bulacan Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office.

Kalakip rin nito ang aking pagkilala sa katapangan at kagitingan ng lahat ng ating mga bayaning disaster and emergency rescuers sa buong bansa, na patuloy na rumeresponde sa tawag ng tulong sa kabila ng panganib sa kanilang buhay. Bilang Chairman ng Senate Committee on National Defense and Security, kung saan ay nakapaloob ang aspeto ng national disaster risk reduction and management, ay pag-aaralan po ng aking komite kung paano makatutulong upang higit na pag-ibayuhin ang interes, kapasidad, at kalagayan ng ating mga disaster responders upang higit silang makatugon sa tumitinding hamon ng kanilang tungkulin.

As Alexander Dumas once said, "What makes you a man is what you do when that storm comes." And these five rescuers, along with all our other disaster and emergency responders, have always chosen to heed the call of their rescue mission—to be of help to others and to save people's lives at the risk of their own, not only during storms but during all other disasters, calamities, and emergencies as well.

Muli, ang akin pong taos-pusong pakikiramay sa pamilya ng ating mga bayaning responders, at ang aking malugod na pagkilala sa kadakilaan na kanilang ipinamalas.

Nawa'y magsilbi itong inspirasyon na sa gitna ng peligro at panganib ay likas na pumapaimbabaw ang kabayanihan ng dugong Pilipino.

To this end, I would like to be made coauthor and cosponsor of Proposed Senate Resolution No. 233, taking into consideration Proposed Senate Resolutions No. 238 and 240.

COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR DELA ROSA

In cosponsoring Proposed Senate Resolution No. 233, Senator Dela Rosa delivered the following speech:

It is my profound honor to stand as cosponsor of Proposed Senate Resolution Nos. 233, 238, 239, and 240, honoring the life of service of Bulacan Rescue Team members, namely, George E. Agustin, Troy Justin P. Agustin, Marby A. Bartolome, Jerson L. Resurreccion, and Narciso Calayag Jr., expressing the profound sympathy and sincere condolences of the Senate on their unfortunate passing.

Today, I am sure that the sponsorship and cosponsorship speeches of my colleagues will not be remiss in relating to this Body the story of Typhoon Karding. Every painful detail will, perhaps, be shared with all of us: how, in a matter of 24 hours, it managed to intensify into a severe tropical storm; how, in the following morning, it reached the Super Typhoon category.

And indeed, with the damage that Karding has done to both life and property—no one could deny its strength; no one could deny its power.

And yet, neither could we ever deny the strength and power of the Filipino. While Karding was busy destroying whatever blocked its way, Filipinos all over the affected areas were busy too—helping each other; responding to those who might need rescue. Through it all, the Filipino spirit of selflessness also intensified rapidly: from mere individuals, to households and families, to communities and the entire country.

This is exactly why the example of George Agustin, Troy Justin Agustin, Marby Bartolome, Jerson Resurreccion, and Narciso Calayag Jr. is worth admiring and emulating. Sa panahong may malakas na bagyo, pinili ng limang ito na harapin ang nasabing bagyo dala ang lakas ng kanilang loob at tibay ng kanilang pagmamahal sa kapwa.

Sa labanang ito, iniisip marahil ng iba na si Karding ang nagwagi. I dare say, however, that while Karding may have won the battle, it was these five members of the Bulacan Rescue Team, the provincial PDRRMC, who won the war. Dahil ang sino mang lumalaban sa ngalan ng kanilang kapwa ay hinding hindi matatalo.

I take this chance to express my condolences and sympathies toward the bereaved families of these noble men. At the same time, we know that condolences and sympathies are hardly enough.

The Bulacan Rescue Team must be flooded with high praises. As fellow Filipinos, we must face, with a stubborn refusal, the tendency to forget them. We refuse to let their memories be washed away from our minds and hearts. The memory of who they were and, of this noble, final act, must live on. Imbis na si Karding lamang ang ating maalala, nawa'y mas maalala natin ang kabayanihan nina George, Troy, Marby, Jerson, at Narciso Jr.

COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR GO

In cosponsoring Proposed Senate Resolution No. 233, Senator Go also delivered the following speech:

It is an honor to cosponsor the resolution honoring the heroism of the five rescuers who braved Super Typhoon Karding, and died in an effort to bring aid to affected families in San Miguel, Bulacan. I join the entire nation in expressing condolences to their families and colleagues.

Nakalulungkot po na buhay ang naging kabayaran ng kanilang pagtupad sa tungkulin at pagnanais na makasagip ng buhay ng kanilang kapwa-tao. Sila ay tunay na mga bayani.

Buong puso ang aking pagdadalamhati at pakikiramay sa mga naiwang pamilya at mahal nila sa buhay. Bagama't hindi matutumbasan ng anumang halaga ang buhay na nawala, lagi pong bukas ang aking opisina upang maghatid ng kinakailangang tulong sa naiwang pamilya ng ating mga nasawing rescuers.

Kasalukuyan ko rin pong pinag-aaralan ang posibleng pagpa-file ng panukalang batas na magbibigay ng mga kaukulang benepisyo at security of tenure para sa mga matagal nang empleyado ng gobyerno. All government personnel should be entitled to hazard pay, particularly those in truly hazardous jobs.

Marami sa mga job order ang matagal nang empleyado ng gobyerno; kung minsan, umaabot nang higit na sa limang taon, wala pa rin silang security of tenure at walang benepisyo na tulad ng isang regular na empleyado ng gobyerno. Unfair naman ito sa kanila. Minsan, parehas lamang sila ng ginagawa ng isang regular government employee pero sila ay walang benepisyo dahil job order lang sila.

I have also earlier refiled my Disaster Resilience Bill that seeks to create the Department of Disaster Resilience. Among others, the bill also provides for the hazard pay for all personnel of the said department and local disaster resilience offices. Former Pres. Rodrigo R. Duterte had done an initial step before, when he ordered the payment of COVID-19 hazard pay for all government personnel, including casual employees. I see no reason why we cannot do the same for those involved in disaster response.

Sariling buhay po nila ang kanilang itinaya sa ngalan ng serbisyo. This is the least we could do for all our heroic public servants.

Again, I express my deepest sympathies to the families of our heroes, and I wish to be made coauthor of this resolution.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR GATCHALIAN

Senator Gatchalian expressed his condolences with the families of the Bulacan Rescue Team members—Jerson Resurreccion, George Agustin, Troy Justin Agustin, Narciso Calayag, Jr., and Marby Bartolome—while thanking them for their service to the nation.

He revealed that majority of local government unit (LGU) rescue teams use their own equipment and train on their own. He informed the Body that during his consultation rounds with various LGUs, he discovered that majority of rescue team members are locally recruited and are doing their best to carry out their responsibilities.

He then urged the Body to consider providing appropriate benefits, training, and equipment to rescue team members. Furthermore, he stated that unlike other responders such as nurses, doctors, police officers, and firefighters, the majority of LGU rescue team members are not holders of plantilla positions and are either on casual appointment or job order status. He also requested that the Body consider formalizing rescue teams by looking into ways for members to be given permanent positions as rescuers in their respective units.

At this point, he expressed his desire to be made cosponsor of the proposed Senate resolution. He then manifested that he would be submitting his cosponsorship speech on the measure for insertion into the *Record of the Senate*.

COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR GATCHALIAN

At the instance of Senator Gatchalian, hereunder is his cosponsorship speech on Proposed Senate Resolution No. 233, which was deemed read and inserted into the *Journal* and *Record of the Senate:*

Kaisa ako sa paghahain ng resolusyon kaugnay sa pagkilala sa kabayanihan na ipinamalas ng mga kasamahan natin sa Bulacan Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office na nagbuwis ng buhay sa pagtugon sa tawag ng tungkulin sa gitna ng paghagupit ng bagyong Karding.

George Agustin, Troy Justin Agustin, Marby Bartolome, Jerson Resurreccion, at Narciso Calayag Jr—ito ang mga pangalang kailanma ay tatatak sa puso at isip nating lahat, lalong-lalo na sa mga Bulakenyo.

Sila ay tunay na nagpakita ng katapangan at kagitingan upang mailigtas ang buhay ng ating mga kababayan. Bago pa man ito mangyari, sila ay nagsilbi nang mga beteranong rescuer na tumulong sa iba pang lokal na pamahalaan sa buong bansa sa mga nagdaang kalamidad at sakuna.

Ang trahedyang ito ay sumasalamin sa realidad na kinakaharap ng ating mga rescue teams —ang realidad na maraming kakulangan sa larangan nila ang nararapat na bigyang-pansin.

Nakakalungkot mang isipin ngunit base sa mga nasaksihan ko noong ako ay nag-ikot sa iba't ibang lokal na pamahalaan, karamihan sa mga rescue teams natin ay namulat na sa sistema na kung saan sariling pagsisikap ang ginagawa nila upang matugunan ang mga pangangailangan nila sa serbisyo katulad na lamang sa aspeto ng kagamitan at pagsasanay.

Bukod pa rito, marami sa ating mga rescue teams ay mga locally recruited. Normally, they are being created by LGUs out of necessity. Marami sa kanila ay casual employees at nabibigyan lamang ng job order.

Sa kasalukuyan, wala pang konkretong batas ang nagpapatibay at nagbibigay-halaga sa tungkulin nila bilang tagapagligtas ng sambayanang Pilipino. Kaya naman sa puntong ito, nais kong tanungin ang mga kapwa ko mambabatas — hahayaan ba nating muli tayong makarinig ng naratibo hinggil sa pagkakasawi ng mga kasamahan nating rescuers?

Panahon na upang gawing regular sa kanilang trabaho, bigyan ng tamang benepisyo, pagsasanay, at kagamitan ang ating mga rescue teams sa lahat ng LGUs. Kilalanin natin ang kanilang makabuluhang papel sa ating lipunan, lalong-lalo na sa mga panahong nararanasan natin ang hagupit ng kalamidad at sakuna.

Nawa ay ang naganap na trahedya ay magsilbing panggising sa atin upang mas mabigyan ng malawak na diskusyon sa kung anong mga polisiya na dapat nating mabigyang-diin upang mas mapagtibay ang kapakanan ng mga kasamahan natin sa rescue teams.

Para kay George, Troy Justin, Marby, Jerson, at Narciso, ang kadakilaang ipinakita ninyo ay patuloy na magsisilbing inspirasyon sa ating mga kababayan. Lubos akong nagpapasalamat sa paglilingkod na ipinakita ninyo.

Sa ating mga rescue teams, bilang mga manggagawa na handang tumugon sa tawag ng tungkulin at bilang mga bayaning handang ialay ang sariling buhay para sa ating mga kababayan, saludo po ako sa inyo.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR VILLANUEVA

Senator Villanuva expressed regret that four of the five rescuers who died were casually employed or on job order status, namely, Troy Justin Agustin, a casual employee for five years; Narciso Calayag Jr., a volunteer for two years; Marby Bartolome, on job order status; and Jerson Resurreccion, also a casual employee for five years. He added that, of the five members, only George Agustin had been a regular employee for the previous five years, but his service extended far beyond those years.

At this point, he informed the Body that he had already refiled his bill, which aims to regularize employees who had served for a significant number of years in government. He recalled that when he was still in the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), there were employees who had already worked 10 or 15 years but were still on casual employment, despite the fact that there are 170,000 unfilled positions in government at the time. He also stated that there are more than 600,000 casual and job order employees in government service at around the same time.

COAUTHORS

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, all Members were made coauthors of Proposed Senate Resolution No. 233.

ADOPTION OF PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 233

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, Proposed Senate Resolution No. 233, taking into consideration Proposed Senate Resolution Nos. 234, 235, 238, 239, 240, and 241, was adopted by the Body, subject to style.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR VILLANUEVA

Senator Villanueva thanked the Body on behalf of the people of Bulacan, saying he could feel his colleagues' passion and support for the rescuers in his province. In response, Senate President Zubiri stated that passing the resolution was an honor for the Senate, agreeing with Senator Padilla that rescuers, not just in Bulacan but across the country, deserve such recognition from the Senate because they risk their lives during disasters and calamities.

PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 230

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body considered Proposed Senate Resolution No. 230, entitled

RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND CONGRATULATING JESUS IS LORD CHURCH FOR CELEBRATING ITS 44TH FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY ON OCTOBER 29, 2022.

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

The Chair recognized Senator Angara for the sponsorship.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR ANGARA

In sponsoring Proposed Senate Resolution No. 230, Senator Angara delivered the following speech:

Masaya po tayong tumatayo ngayon para i-sponsor ang Proposed Senate Resolution 230, para kilalanin at batiin ang Jesus is Lord Church sa okasyon ng ika-44 na anibersaryo nito sa darating na Oktubre 29, 2022.

Muli naming hinain ang resolusyon na ito bilang aming patuloy na pagpupugay at paghayag ng paghanga para sa kongregasyon ng JIL, sa president-founder nito na si CIBAC Party List Representative Brother Eddie Villanueva, at sa ating napakagaling at napakasipag na Majority Leader at seatmate na si Sen. Joel Villanueva.

Maaalala na sa mga nakaraang taon, kahit nasa kalagitnaan ng pandemya, ipinagpatuloy po ng JIL ang kanyang misyon para palaganapin sa bawat dako ng mundo ang mapagpalaya't mapag-arugang mensahe ng Panginoon. Natigil man nang sandali ang mga face-to-face na gawain, hindi naitigil ang pag-eebanghelyo ng JIL. Ginamit ang mga zoom room, Facebook like, at ibang makabagong teknolohiya at paraan sa komunikasyon para magkaroon ng mga Bible discussions, mga worship at healing services.

Walang humpay rin na nag-abot ang JIL ng tulong at kalinga sa mga nangangailangan nito sa pamamagitan ng iba't ibang service at assistance programs nito. Talagang nagpapatuloy ang JIL sa harapan ng anumang sakuna at kalamidad. Isinasabuhay nila ang nakasaad sa Chapter 6:9 ng Galatians: "Kaya't 'wag tayong mapagod sa paggawa ng mabuti sapagkat pagdating ng takdang panahon, tayo ay aani kung hindi tayo susuko."

Sa bawat galaw ng JIL, taglay po ang mga core values ng simbahan—passionate love for God; love and compassion for others; integrity, faithfulness; and excellence. Ang mga values na ito ang nagsilbing pundasyon para magkaisa at magkadaupang-palad ang mga miyembro ng JIL at para lalong lumaki ang kanilang kongregasyon. Para nga sa maraming kababayan natin na OFW, ang JIL ay ang nagiging tulay o koneksiyon nila sa mga kapwa Pilipino nila.

Nakita namin ito, nila Senate President Zubiri, Senator Gatchalian, Senator Ejercito and, of course, Senator Villanueva, a few years ago when we visited their congregation in Hong Kong. Kaya hindi rin po nakapagtataka na kahit na nagka-pandemya, lalo pa ngang lumalaki ang JIL at dumami ang kanilang chapters o cell groups sa iba't ibang bahagi ng mundo. Matatagpuan na raw ang JIL sa mahigit 70 bansa at teritoryo.

All of these were made possible through the initiative, the talent, the commitment, the intelligence, the eloquence, and the compassion of former Deputy Speaker Representative Brother Eddie Villanueva and of the other leaders and figure heads of JIL, including our very own seatmate, Majority Leader Joel Villanueva. Because of their inspiration and conviction, JIL has become a beacon of God's triumphant hope for all of its members across the world.

It was in 1978 that Brother Eddie, along with 15 other classmates from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP), laid the foundations for what would have all been grown into the JIL. At that time, their main objective was just to establish a humble congregation where they were free to exercise their faith and live out their ministry. Today, because of the inspiring words and actions of Brother Eddie and of Senator Villanueva, millions maintained their membership in the JIL movement.

Incidentally, Brother Eddie will be celebrating his 76^{th} birthday this October 6. So, as we sponsor this measure, we would also like to extend to him our sincerest and advance happy birthday greetings.

The theme for JIL's 44th anniversary is "Arise and Build," taking inspiration from Nehemiah 2:17, "Then, I said to them, 'You see the trouble we are in, Jerusalem lies in ruins and its gates have burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem and we will no longer be in disgrace." We need no new reminder that our people have been suffering for the past two to three years, most recently with the onslaught of Super Typhoon Karding. But now that the dark clouds have momentarily parted, JIL reminds us that there is never a better time than now to spread hope and to be the hope, to take action and rebuild what has been devastated and ruined.

Kaya po, bunga ng aming patuloy na paghanga sa JIL dahil walang tigil silang nagsisilbing gabay, suporta, sandigan, at inspirasyon para sa libo-libong pamilyang Pilipino, hinihikayat namin ang marangal na Bulwagan na ito na ipasa ang ating resolusyon sa okasyon ng kanilang ika-apat napu't apat na anibersaryo.

Mabuhay po ang Jesus Is Lord Movement!

COSPONSORSHIP SPEECHES

In cosponsoring Proposed Senate Resolution No. 230, the following senators delivered the following speeches:

By Senate President Zubiri

It is my pleasure to cosponsor Proposed Senate Resolution No. 230, congratulating Jesus Is Lord Church on its 44th founding anniversary. Timing *po pala noong nagkita kami ng tatay ni* Senator Villanueva *sa isang* restaurant *noong isang gabi*, and he looks so alive, and he treated his head of his congregation for Taiwan that night.

For over four decades, Jesus Is Lord Movement has not only provided spiritual community and guidance with its ever-growing membership, it has also extended its vision of kindness and compassion outward, reaching out and helping underserved communities regardless of their faith. And we just saw this yesterday after Typhoon Karding. *Nakita po natin na napakaraming simbahan sa* Central Luzon sa JIL, *lalong-lalo na sa* Bulacan, *ay lumabas at tumulong sa pagbigay po ng mga* relief goods *sa ating mga kababayan doon*.

For all this, of course, we thank and salute, no other than Bro. Eddie Villanueva, whose inspiration and able leadership has enable the church to grow from its humble beginnings in Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) to its current status as a global Christian community with followers across 70 countries and territories.

At tama po ang sinabi ni Senator Angara, I believe it was in the Seventeenth Congress when we visited the congregation in Hong Kong, kasama po ang ating Presiding Officer at that time, and nakita natin kung gaano ka-inspiring ang kanilang mga fellowship meetings and prayer groups. It is no wonder that so many of our kababayans are with the JIL community.

As JIL marks its 44th year, I anticipate its continued growth as a church and also as our partner in nation-building.

Mabuhay po ang Jesus Is Lord Movement, and I pray to God that they will celebrate another 44 years of continued growth and compassion and, of course, continuous love for its congregation and our partner in nation-building.

So, mabuhay po ang JIL. Once again, happy 44th birthday po sa inyong lahat.

By Senator Gatchalian

Today, I join this Chamber in recognizing and congratulating Jesus Is Lord Church in celebrating its 44th founding anniversary. We have witnessed the glorious mission of JIL in bringing Filipinos closer to the principles and teachings of God.

Founded by Bro. Eddie Villanueva, one of the most respected Christian leaders in the country, JIL has spread across the globe, starting in the Philippines with the hope that its members will serve as God's channel to people of all cultures and backgrounds.

The phenomenal expansion of JIL is a direct product of the commitment and open-mindedness of its leaders who have taken the ministry's vision. Brother Eddie understands that integrity and fidelity in every aspect of life are the natural outgrowth of a successful ministry.

Regardless of the great expansion of his ministry, he always demonstrates genuine humility and servanthood. And one thing to acknowledge as well, he always gives God the credit for the success of the church. He embodies a man whose life is a testimony of serving God with fervor and faithfulness, who can serve as a role model, a guide, and a spiritual father.

Our faith had been tested during the darkest times of the COVID-19 pandemic, but we, Filipinos, have proven that we can overcome any hurdles through the manifestation of our deeplyrooted faith even in the midst of challenges. In fact, JIL has been one of the most active churches in the Philippines throughout the global health crisis, and its members have been instrumental in keeping the faith of our brothers and sisters.

Standing with its principles and values, no virus, pandemic nor lockdown could prevent JIL pastors from praising and seeking the voice of God.

Today, many more people have been impacted by Brother Eddie's ministry through various platform. He is living his goal to spread the gospel to every Filipino no matter where they may be in the world and to people of all nations.

To better serve Filipinos living abroad, JIL has established local chapters in Europe, the United States, Canada, the Middle East, Northern Africa, and neighboring Asian countries. For many more years to come, JIL will continue to uphold its vision to evangelize Filipinos.

Now I call on our distinguished colleagues to support the passage of this resolution recognizing and congratulating Jesus Is Lord as the church celebrates its 44th founding anniversary.

COSPONSORSHIP SPEECHES

(Continuation)

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the following cosponsorship speeches of Senators Legarda and Revilla were deemed read and inserted into the *Journal* and *Record of the Senate*:

By Senator Legarda

I join my distinguished colleagues, most especially our dear Majority Leader, in extending our heartfelt congratulations to the Jesus Is Lord (JIL) Church on their 44th Founding Anniversary, which they will celebrate this coming October 29, 2022.

Every year celebrated is a continuing testament to their unyielding faith in God as well as the steadfast leadership of Congresman Bro. Eddie C. Villanueva.

Since its founding, the JIL Church has been constantly and relentlessly fulfilling its God-given mission of bringing people closer to Jesus Christ and bringing positive change to our country through the holistic upliftment of our countrymen with their advocacies and outreach programs.

It is because of their inspiring actions that I wish the JIL more years of unwavering service to our Lord, our country, and our people as they continue to be an instrumental catalyst of integrity, faithfulness, excellence, love, and compassion for others, and most importantly, passionate love for God in not just Philippine society but also all over the world.

I pray that the JIL remains to be a source of inspiration and strength, especially in these trying times as they bring more people to the loving and transforming mercies of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

In light of the foregoing, this Representation requests that the Senate adopts Proposed Senate Resolution No. 230, congratulating the Jesus is Lord Church, its leaders, and members on their 44th Founding Anniversary as well as make me a cosponsor of the same.

By Senator Revilla

I rise today to join my colleagues in congratulating the Jesus is Lord Church on its 44th founding anniversary. The JIL Church has always been one of the nation's shepherds in tending the flock towards spiritual fulfillment.

This year, it echoes Nehemiah 2:17 in its theme: "Arise and Build."

We join you in prayer to build a future full of hope and faith, to rise from the ruins left behind by the pandemic and natural disasters. May this celebration usher in more inspiration to serve and be a blessing to others.

Sa paggunita natin sa taong ito ng anibersaryo ng isa sa pinakamalaki at pinakamatatag na simbahan at pananampalataya sa ating bansa, nagpupugay din tayo sa ilang dekada ng tauspuso at tapat ng pagpapastol sa milyong-milyong miyembro ng Jesus is Lord Church sa buong mundo.

May this celebration ignite even more the fire of faith in its members' hearts to become good and faithful servants of God. *Dahil gaya nga ng sinabi ni* Bro. Ed Villanueva, "the greatest and noblest achievement of a man/woman here on earth is to know his/her Creator personally and truthfully, to love him wholeheartedly and passionately, and to serve Him faithfully with integrity and excellence, until he/she stands before Him on judgment day."

Muli, happy anniversary!

By Senator Go

I rise to support the resolution recognizing and congratulating the Jesus Is Lord church for celebrating its 44th founding anniversary this coming October 29, 2022. That is 44 years of good shepherding; 44 years of contributing to nation-building.

From an original 15 founding students who decided to establish this church in 1978, the Jesus Is Lord has made its presence known and continues to do the good work for the Lord, winning souls, and in the process helping generations of Filipinos become better citizens of this God-fearing country. After all, no less than the preamble of our 1987 Constitution recognizes that we, the sovereign Filipino people, imploring the aid of the Almighty God in order to build a just and humane society.

Again, my warmest congratulations to the Jesus Is Lord Church, and, of course, to Congressman Brother Eddie Villanueva and to the Majority Leader, Sen. Joel Villanueva, and I hope that I may be recorded as coauthor of this resolution.

By Senator Tolentino

I rise to associate myself with the sponsors of Senate Resolution No. 230, "Resolution Recognizing and Congratulating Jesus Is Lord Church for Celebrating its 44th Founding Anniversary on October 29, 2022."

Our country is blessed. Our country is blessed because we have a beacon of hope in the person of Brother Eddie Villanueva. Our country is blessed because we have the JIL in our country not just in our shores, but in other shores spreading the word of God as an act of evangelization.

I am likewise, on a personal note, blessed because I have met Brother Eddie, the father of our esteemed colleague here. I like him because he is a man of character and with the vision.

As I read the mission of JIL, and I quote: "To bring all peoples to the kingdom of the living God, regardless of race, status, belief, and religious affiliations through the saving, healing, delivering, and transforming power of our Lord Jesus Christ."

I recall my first trip to Israel. I was in a place near Galilee and Galilee has been known in the Bible as Cana. In Galilee, Cana was the first recorded miracle of Jesus Christ wherein he turned water into wine.

And looking at the mission of the Jesus Is Lord Church, I see the words "transforming power" and the make the exact phrase "the transforming power of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Indeed, 44 years has led the JIL to be part of not just the transformative power of the Lord Jesus Christ into the likes of its members— of its future members—not just in the Philippines, but in other countries, but the transforming power that affects our homes, our lives, and our country.

With this, I reiterate the first sentence of my sponsorship speech, we are blessed because of the JIL.

Congratulations to the JIL on their 44th Anniversary.

By Senator Dela Rosa

A great leader once shared: "We learn the more important lessons in life through our experiences. We learn that wickedness never was happiness and that our mistakes can become stepping stone to greater life and glory."

The Jesus Is Lord Church is consistent in teaching us the same lesson, not just because of their mission to bring all people together regardless of who they are and who they used to be but also because of the growth we have witnessed from them over the years, in love, compassion, integrity, faithfulness, and excellence.

Noong mga panahon na ang buhay ko ay nanganganib sa aking pagganap ng aking tungkulin bilang isang pulis at maging noong ako ay nadapuan ng COVID-19, wala akong ibang naging takbuhan kung hindi ang Diyos. It is no question that I believe that all goodness comes from God and I am still alive as a witness to His goodness. I believe it is by the same token that the Jesus is Lord is standing today, as a proud and living witness to God's goodness.

In line with this, I support the adoption of this Proposed Senate Resolution No. 230, recognizing and congratulating the Jesus Is Lord Church for celebrating its 44th founding anniversary.

We stand with you and your noble mission of serving others, modeled in Christ's example.

By Senator Hontiveros

At the instance of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the following cosponsorship remarks of Senator Hontiveros was deemed read and inserted into the *Journal* and *Record of the Senate:*

I wish to cosponsor the resolution honoring the Jesus Is Lord Church on its 44th founding anniversary. My colleagues have said it all, but I also want to say that JIL has also been a safe space and second home for many of our *kababayans* abroad. Siya ay naging kanlungan ng ating mga OFWs, silong sa gitna ng madaming sigalot ng buhay.

My felicitations to Brother Eddie and the good majority leader. May you continue to be blessed and be a blessing to our countrymen and women.

By Senator Cayetano (P)

At the instance of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the following cosponsorship speech of Senator Cayetano (P) was deemed read and inserted into the *Journal* and *Record of the Senate:*

I rise to cosponsor Proposed Senate Resolution No. 230, Recognizing and Congratulating Jesus is Lord (JIL) Church for Celebrating its 44th Founding Anniversary.

The humble beginnings of JIL started in 1978, through a small Bible Study group of classmates from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines.¹ This group initially laid down the foundations of JIL and carved out its main objective, which was to establish a humble congregation where they may freely practice their faith. Since then, it has been able to touch numerous lives and provide spiritual guidance to its community, through teachings that are centered in love, compassion, and faithfulness to our Lord.

JIL has been true to its mission "to bring all peoples, regardless of race, status, belief and religious affiliations, to the Kingdom of the Living GOD in obedience to the Great Commission of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, thus experiencing all the blessings of the Kingdom"². JIL consistently provides support and assistance to Filipinos. For over four decades, it has extended its mission by reaching out to communities, bringing people together and closer to the teachings of Christ, and giving unconditional assistance and care to those who are in need, while instilling values of humility, passion, and hope.

Through the exceptional leadership of Bro. Eddie Villanueva, who is also the representative of CIBAC Partylist, JIL continues to play a vital role in providing spiritual and moral guidance in the community, especially during these trying times.

On behalf of the entire Senate, I extend my thanks to the JIL family for your continued commitment to spread hope and love to our people through God's words.

COAUTHORS

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, all Members were made coauthors of Proposed Senate Resolution No. 230.

ADOPTION OF PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 230

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, Proposed Senate Resolution No. 230 was adopted by the Body.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR VILLANUEVA

Senator Villanueva, on behalf of the Jesus Is Lord Church, thanked the Members for acknowledging and recognizing the efforts of the JIL.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

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

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Letter from the House of Representatives, informing the Senate that on 19 September 2022, the House of Representatives passed the following House bills, in which it requested the concurrence of the Senate:

House Bill No. 14, entitled

AN ACT REQUIRING THE REGISTRATION OF SUBSCRIBER IDENTITY MODULE CARDS

To the Committee on Rules

House Bill No. 1456, entitled

AN ACT CHANGING THE NAME OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY OF SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES INTO THE UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY OF THE PHILIPPINES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10919

To the Committee on Higher, Technical and Vocational Education

and House Bill No. 4635, entitled

AN ACT EXTENDING THE TERM OF OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE ADIONG MEMORIAL STATE COLLEGE FROM THREE (3) YEARS TO FOUR (4) YEARS IN ACCORDANCE WITH REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8292, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "HIGHER EDUCATION MODERNIZATION ACT OF 1997," AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8651, AS AMENDED, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

To the Committee on Higher, Technical and Vocational Education

Letter from the House of Representatives, informing the Senate that on 20 September 2022, the House of Representatives passed House Bill No. 4673, entitled

AN ACT POSTPONING THE DECEMBER 2022 BARANGAY AND SANGGUNIANG KABATAAN ELECTIONS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9164, AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9340, REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10632, REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10656, REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10923, REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10952 AND REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11462, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR,

in which it requested the concurrence of the Senate.

To the Committee on Rules

Letter from the House of Representatives, informing the Senate that on 14 September 2022, the House of Representatives adopted Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 3 as an amendment to House Concurrent Resolution No. 2, entitled

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

To the Archives

Letter from the House of Representatives, informing the Senate that on 25 July 2022, the House of Representatives adopted House Resolution No. 74, entitled

RESOLUTION INFORMING THE SENATE THAT THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES HAS BEEN ORGANIZED AND HAS ENTERED UPON THE EXERCISE OF ITS FUNCTIONS.

To the Archives

BILLS ON FIRST READING

Senate Bill No. 1333, entitled

AN ACT PROMOTING INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTIVITY GROWTH, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6971, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "PRODUCTIVITY INCENTIVES OF 1990"

Introduced by Senator Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 1334, entitled

AN ACT STRENGTHENING AND REVITALIZING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SALT INDUSTRY IN THE PHILIPPINES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8550, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "THE PHILIPPINE FISHERIES CODE OF 1998," AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Villar (C)

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

Senate Bill No. 1335, entitled

AN ACT GRANTING PHILIPPINE CITIZENSHIP TO CAMERON OLIVER

Introduced by Senator Dela Rosa

To the Committee on Rules

Senate Bill No. 1336, entitled

AN ACT GRANTING PHILIPPINE CITIZENSHIP TO JUSTIN BROWNLEE

Introduced by Senator Dela Rosa

To the Committee on Rules

Senate Bill No. 1337, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING SECTION 309 OF THE NATIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE CODE, AS AMENDED, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Ways and Means

RESOLUTIONS

Senate Joint Resolution No. 1

JOINT RESOLUTION EXTENDING THE LIFE OF THE CONGRESSIONAL OVER-SIGHT COMMITTEE ON DANGEROUS DRUGS, CONSTITUTED PURSUANT TO SECTION 95 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9165, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "COMPREHENSIVE DANGEROUS DRUGS ACT OF 2002," TO ANOTHER TEN (10) YEARS FROM JULY 4, 2022 TO JULY 4, 2032

Introduced by Senator Dela Rosa

To the Committee on Public Order and Dangerous Drugs

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 228, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, TO LOOK INTO THE SEEMING LACK OF AN ORDERLY SYSTEM BY THE PARAÑAQUE INTEGRATED TERMINAL EXCHANGE (PITX) ADMINISTRATION THAT HAS RESULTED IN ALLOWING PUBLIC UTILITY VEHICLES, SUPPOSEDLY STATIONED WITHIN THE CONFINES OF THE PITX COMPLEX, TO INSTEAD USE AS THEIR WAITING AND PARKING AREAS CERTAIN ROADS OUTSIDE THE PITX COMPLEX, THEREBY CAUSING INCONVENIENCE TO THE PUBLIC WHO ARE SUPPOSEDLY ENJOYING THE USE OF THE SAID ROADS

Introduced by Senator Villar (C)

To the Committee on Public Services

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 229, entitled

RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE OF THE NEED TO EVALUATE THE EXISTENCE OF PHILIPPINE OFFSHORE GAMING OPERATORS (POGOS) IN THE COUNTRY IN LIGHT OF THE SOCIAL COSTS THAT OUTWEIGH THE REPORTED ECONOMIC GAINS FROM ITS OPERATIONS

Introduced by Senator Poe

To the Committee on Rules

MEMBERSHIP IN THE SENATE ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, Senator Cayetano (P) was elected member of the Senate Electoral Tribunal.

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 Wednesday, September 28, 2022.

It was 8:51 p.m.

I hereby certify to the correctness of the foregoing.

Atty. RENATO N/BAI TUG Jr. Secretary o **t**he enate

Approved on September 28, 2022