



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES  
**Senate**  
Pasay City

# Journal

**SESSION NO. 36**  
Wednesday, December 7, 2022

**NINETEENTH CONGRESS**  
**FIRST REGULAR SESSION**

Prepared by the  
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Senate of the Philippines

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**SESSION NO. 36**  
Wednesday, December 7, 2022

**CALL TO ORDER**

At 5:24 p.m., the Senate President, Hon. Juan Miguel “Migz” F. Zubiri, called the session to order.

**PRAYER**

Sen. Risa Hontiveros led the prayer, to wit:

*O Panginoon, ngayong araw ay kaarawan ng aking late husband na si Frank, at ngayon din po ay anibersaryo ng Pearl Harbor. Kaya't kasabay ng mga panalangin namin para sa kapayapaan sa aming rehiyon at sa buong mundo, isa rin pong dalangin para sa ating beloved dead—ang panalangin ni Marianne Williamson:*

Dear God,

Please take the souls and spirits of these dear departed ones into the sweetest corner of Your mind, the most tender place in Your heart, that they and we might be comforted.

For now they have gone, and we pray, dear God, for the strength to remember they have not gone far.

For they are with You and shall remain so forever.

They remain within us, for we are all in You together.

The cord that binds us one to the other cannot be cut, surely not by death.

For You, dear God, have brought us together, and we remain in eternal connection.

There is no power greater than You.

Death is not Your master, nor ours.

These things we believe and ask our hearts to register.

We surrender to You our grief.

We surrender to You our pain.

Please take care of Your servants, our dear ones who have passed.

And please, dear Lord, take care of us, take care of our country and region, and take care of the world.

Amen.

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

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

Senator Lapid arrived after the roll call.

Senator Escudero was on official business as indicated in the letter from the senator's office dated December 7, 2022.

Senator Tulfo was absent for the reason stated in the letter of his deputy chief of staff dated December 7, 2022.

## APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body dispensed with the reading of the Journal of Session No. 35 (December 6, 2022) and considered it approved.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE PRESENCE OF GUESTS

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

- Ms. May Richell A. Cestina-Parsons, the Filipino nurse who first-ever administered the COVID-19 vaccine;
- Ms. Kylie Verzosa, beauty queen and actress;
- The Philippine delegation to the 6th Eastern Asia Youth Chess Championships led by their coach, Grandmaster Jayson Gonzales, and Bince Rafael Operiano;
- Ms. Sydney Sy Tancontian, the Asian Sambo Championships gold medalist and FISU University World Cup Combat Sports silver medalist, together with President Paolo Tancontian and Head Coach Ace Larida; and
- The Sangguniang Bayan of Carmona, headed by Vice Mayor Cesar Ines Jr.

Senate President Zubiri welcomed the guests to the Senate.

He thanked Ms. Cestina-Parsons for representing not only England but also the Philippines in the historic event as the Filipina nurse who was the first in the world to administer the COVID-19

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vaccine. He also thanked Ms. Versoza, who earlier joined the senators and the Senate employees in evacuating the building and staying at the Senate grounds due to an earthquake. He congratulated the athletes on their medals and the pride they had brought to the country.

#### **REMARK OF SENATOR PIMENTEL**

Senator Pimentel recalled competing in a UAAP chess game against Grandmaster Jayson Gonzales back in college.

#### **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 28 November 2022, the House of Representatives passed the following House bills, in which it requested the concurrence of the Senate:

House Bill No. 4477, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING GREATER RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FROM PRIVATE EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10361, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "*BATAS KASAMBAHAY*"

**To the Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development**

House Bill No. 4479, entitled

AN ACT EXPANDING THE PROHIBITED ACTS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN ON ACCOUNT OF SEX, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 442, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "THE LABOR CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES"

**To the Committees on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development; and Women, Children, Family Relations and Gender Equality**

House Bill No. 4513, entitled

AN ACT PROHIBITING GAME-FIXING AND PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF

**To the Committees on Sports; and Games and Amusement**

House Bill No. 6069, entitled

AN ACT PROMOTING PHILIPPINE INDIGENOUS AND TRADITIONAL WRITING SYSTEMS AND PROVIDING FOR THEIR PROTECTION, PRESERVATION, AND CONSERVATION

**To the Committee on Culture and the Arts**

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House Bill No. 5830, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING JANUARY 22 OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL NON-WORKING HOLIDAY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF GUIGUINTO, PROVINCE OF BULACAN, IN CELEBRATION OF THE *HALAMANAN* FESTIVAL

**To the Committee on Local Government**

House Bill No. 6013, entitled

AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY IN THE CITY OF SAN FERNANDO, PROVINCE OF PAMPANGA, TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGAY PULUNG BULU

**To the Committees on Local Government; and Electoral Reforms and People's Participation**

House Bill No. 6128, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF FLORIDABLANCA, PROVINCE OF PAMPANGA, A CAMPUS OF THE PAMPANGA STATE AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY, TO BE KNOWN AS THE "PAMPANGA STATE AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY-FLORIDABLANCA CAMPUS," AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

and House Bill No. 6129, entitled

AN ACT CONVERTING THE SATELLITE CAMPUSES OF THE BUKIDNON STATE UNIVERSITY LOCATED IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF TALAKAG, BAUNGON, LIBONA, MALITBOG, IMPASUG-ONG, CABANGLASAN, SAN FERNANDO, QUEZON, KITAOTAO, DAMULOG, KADINGILAN, AND KALILANGAN IN THE PROVINCE OF BUKIDNON INTO REGULAR CAMPUSES OF THE BUKIDNON STATE UNIVERSITY, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

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

Letter from the House of Representatives, informing the Senate that on 5 December 2022, the House of Representatives passed the following House bills, in which it requested the concurrence of the Senate:

House Bill No. 6452, entitled

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

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

House Bill No. 6014, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING THE PALANI BEACH LOCATED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BALUD, PROVINCE OF MASBATE, AN ECOTOURISM DESTINATION

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

House Bill No. 6015, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING THE IMMEDIATE ENVIRONS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION PARISH CHURCH LOCATED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF NAMPICUAN, PROVINCE OF NUEVA ECIJA, AS TOURISM DESTINATION

**To the Committees on Tourism; and Finance**

House Bill No. 6016, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING THE MUNICIPALITY OF JOVELLAR, PROVINCE OF ALBAY, AN ECOTOURISM ZONE

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

House Bill No. 6017, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING MOUNT KITUMMAN LOCATED IN BARANGAY TUNGNGOD, MUNICIPALITY OF LAGAWA, PROVINCE OF IFUGAO, AN ECOTOURISM DESTINATION

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

House Bill No. 6072, entitled

AN ACT IDENTIFYING TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AREAS IN THE PROVINCE OF ISABELA, MANDATING SUPPORT FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT, AND CREATING THE ISABELA TOURISM COUNCIL

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

House Bill No. 6155, entitled

AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ESPERANZA, PROVINCE OF SULTAN KUDARAT, TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGAY LEGODON

**To the Committees on Local Government; and Electoral Reforms and People's Participation**

and House Bill No. 6295, entitled

AN ACT GRANTING A FRANCHISE TO THE LEYTE II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC. (LEYECO II) TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, ESTABLISH, OPERATE, OWN, MANAGE AND MAINTAIN DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS FOR THE CONVEYANCE OF ELECTRIC POWER TO THE END-USERS IN THE CITY OF TACLOBAN AND MUNICIPALITIES OF BABATNGON AND PALO, PROVINCE OF LEYTE.

**To the Committee on Public Services**

Letter from the House of Representatives, informing the Senate that on 5 December 2022, the House of Representatives ratified the Conference Committee Report on the disagreeing votes on House Bill No. 4488, entitled

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

**To the Archives**

**BILL ON FIRST READING**

Senate Bill No. 1603, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11709, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "AN ACT STRENGTHENING PROFESSIONALISM AND PROMOTING THE CONTINUITY OF POLICIES AND MODERNIZATION INITIATIVES IN THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES, BY PRESCRIBING FIXED TERMS FOR KEY OFFICERS THEREOF, INCREASING THE MANDATORY RETIREMENT AGE OF GENERALS/FLAG OFFICERS, PROVIDING FOR A MORE EFFECTIVE ATTRITION SYSTEM, AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR," AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Zubiri

**To the Committees on National Defense and Security, Peace, Unification and Reconciliation; and Government Corporations and Public Enterprises**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Committee Report No. 14, prepared and submitted jointly by the Committees on Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship; Local Government; and Finance, on Senate Bill No. 1594, with Senators Legarda, Revilla, Jr., Estrada, Go, Gatchalian, and Villar (M) as authors thereof, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE ONE TOWN, ONE PRODUCT (OTOP) PHILIPPINES PROGRAM, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES,

recommending its approval in substitution of Senate Bill Nos. 247, 260, 286, 424, 946 and 1246.

Sponsor: Senator Villar (M)

**To the Calendar for Ordinary Business**

Committee Report No. 15, prepared and submitted jointly by the Committees on Women, Children, Family Relations and Gender Equality; and Finance, on Senate Bill No. 1600, with Senators Hontiveros, Legarda, Villar (M), and Angara as authors thereof, entitled

AN ACT PROHIBITING DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY OR EXPRESSION, OR SEX CHARACTERISTICS (SOGIESC) AND PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREFOR,

recommending its approval in substitution of Senate Bill Nos. 139, 245 and 442.

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Sponsor: Senator Hontiveros

**To the Calendar for Ordinary Business**

Committee Report No. 16, prepared and submitted jointly by the Committees on Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development; and Finance, on Senate Bill No. 1602, with Senators Lapid, Dela Rosa, Revilla Jr., Hontiveros and Marcos as authors thereof, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE DISABILITY SUPPORT FUND FOR THE EMPOWERMENT, FULL PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN SOCIETY AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR,

recommending its approval in substitution of Senate Bill Nos. 31, 501, and 592.

Sponsor: Senator Marcos

**To the Calendar for Ordinary Business**

**SUSPENSION OF SESSION**

With the permission of the Bpdy, the Session was suspended.

*It was 5:38 p.m.*

**RESUMPTION OF SESSION**

At 5:38 p.m., the session was resumed.

**PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 320**

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body considered Proposed Senate Resolution No. 320, entitled

RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND COMMENDING MAY RICHELL A. CESTINA-PARSONS FOR RECEIVING THE PRESTIGIOUS GEORGE CROSS AWARD FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM GOVERNMENT,

taking into consideration Proposed Senate Resolution No. 347.

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 *Journal* and *Record of the Senate*.

Thereupon, the Chair recognized Senator Marcos for her sponsorship.

**SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR MARCOS**

In sponsoring Proposed Senate Resolution No. 320, Senator Marcos delivered the following speech:

I am deeply proud and privileged today to sponsor Proposed Senate Resolution No. 320, filed by this Representation last November 23, 2022, to recognize and commend May Richell A. Cestina-Parsons for receiving the prestigious George Cross award, on behalf of the National Health Service, from Her Majesty, the late Queen Elizabeth II, and His Royal Highness, then-Prince Charles.

The award was given for her courage, compassion, dedication, and bravery in the face of grave and mortal danger. She administered the very first dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to then-90-year-old Margaret Keenan, making her the first person, not only in the United Kingdom but in the whole world, to administer a COVID-19 vaccine to a patient outside of a mere clinical trial.

The George Cross award is known to be the highest civilian award bestowed by Britain, originally instituted in 1940 as a reward for wartime bravery. Hence, it is yet another historical highlight in the extraordinary history of Filipino nursing. And May today stands proudly in the Ilocana tradition of her mother, Zenaida, and Philippine nursing's founder from 1922, Anastacia Giron-Tupas.

May Richell A. Cestina-Parsons was born and raised in Pasay. She graduated from Jose Abad Santos High School and finished her nursing degree at the University of Santo Tomas (UST). Thereafter, she received her Professional Regulation Commission license at the precocious age of 19.

She worked at the UST hospital from 2000 to 2003 before migrating to the U.K. in October 2003. Since then, she has been a nurse at the Warwickshire National Health Service Trust for 19 years and is now a matron for respiratory services at the University Hospital of Coventry and Warwickshire Trust.

Thus, it is with great pride and honor that we welcome her today in the Senate for her extraordinary bravery and heroism, in a time of great global danger. She has truly made the Philippines and all Filipinos proud.

## COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR POE

In cosponsoring Proposed Senate Resolution No. 320, Senator Poe delivered the following speech:

There is no denying that the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the inadequacies and perpetual issues of the Philippine health sector. But in the same breadth, the pandemic also emphasized the important role of Filipino healthcare workers, especially nurses as frontliners in caring for the wellbeing of communities, not only in the Philippines but around the world. In fact, Filipino nurses have helped mitigate a worldwide shortage of 5.9 million nurses during the pandemic.

*Kapag ikaw ay nagbibiyaha, mayroon kang nakikitang mga foreigners at kakausapin. Mayroon sila palaging sasabihin, "Oh, we know this friend who is a nurse, a Filipina, and she is great." And that is always what we hear consistently.*

But even before this health crisis, Filipino nurses have long been recognized globally for their unwavering brand of service. *Kilala ang mga Pinoy nurses sa likas nilang kakayahan, kasipagan, at malasakit sa kapwa.* That is why they are the most sought-after healthcare workers in the world.

But the importance of Filipino nurses in the fight against COVID-19 has been reaffirmed by the monumental feat of Nurse May Parsons, a Filipina nurse based in the United Kingdom who made history as the first person in the world to deliver the first clinically-approved COVID-19 vaccine. Nurse May's COVID-19 jab at the University Hospital in Coventry, England on December 8, 2020 monumentally marked the deployment of the COVID-19 vaccines globally.

We already know that she has earned the George Cross Award from the late Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Charles, the highest civilian award.

*Hindi pa rito nagtatapos ang mga parangal na natanggap ni Nurse May.* Recently, she completed her Master of Science in Global Health Management at Coventry University and was bestowed with the Endeavor Award which is given to students who demonstrated skills and attributes that go "above and beyond" throughout the course of their studies.

As a quick background, Nurse May is a nursing graduate of the University of Sto. Tomas— we also heard that last week. But, as I seek the adoption of Proposed Senate Resolution No. 347,

I also seek more than just a commendation and recognition from the government. *Hindi lang dapat bragging rights ang ambag ng gobyerno dito.*

Our nurse can only do these heroic sacrifices to the extent that they are taken care of. *May pandemic man o wala, patuloy na pumupunta sa ibang bansa ang ating mga nurse para magtrabaho*, because here in our country, they continue to endure low salaries, poor working conditions, and delays in their allowances, just to name a few. We need to resuscitate our nursing profession.

If there is anything that this pandemic has proven, it is that our healthcare workers are the backbone of the health of the nation. If the government continues to disregard their needs and rights and devalue their work, the horrors of the pandemic where the health system collapsed right before our very eyes will ensue regardless of whether there is a pandemic nor not.

We should give back not just in terms of recognition but in terms of actual benefits to make the nursing practice a genuine livable career for the practitioners. Upgrading the minimum salary of nurses is the least that we can do for the sacrifice they gave in nursing us all back to health.

*May mga kuwento pa na para magkaroon ng experience, ang mga nursing students pa ang nagbabayad sa mga ospital para magkaroon lang sila ng training. Kalokohan po iyan, at dapat hindi natin payagan.* We are actually taking advantage of them if we do that.

It is my pride and honor to seek the Body's approval in adopting Proposed Senate Resolution No. 347 to commend and recognize Nurse May Parsons for reaffirming the pivotal role of Filipino nurses, onshore and offshore, in this global fight against COVID-19.

#### **COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR VILLANUEVA**

In cosponsoring Proposed Senate Resolution Nos. 320 and 347, Senator Villanueva likewise delivered the following speech:

It is my honor to cosponsor the measure and give commendation to a Filipina nurse who made history by administering the first ever COVID-19 vaccine outside of trials in the United Kingdom.

Last Monday we just recognized and commended, through your initiative, the University of Sto. Tomas School of Medicine. And today, we hail the heroics of my fellow Thomasian alumna, May Richell Cestina-Parsons, who received the George Cross Award, the highest award given by the British Government in recognition of the actions of civilians and military personnel not in the face of the enemy.

Ms. Parsons showed the world what Filipino healthcare workers are made of in the face of adversity. *Hindi po siya nagdalawang-isip na magsilbi sa mga pasyente kahit na malaki ang posibilidad na mahawa po siya ng nakamamatay na sakit na COVID. Ganito po ang sitwasyon ng ating mga overseas Filipino healthcare workers sa iba't ibang sulok ng mundo. Matapang nilang hinaharap ang bawat pagsubok, wala mang kasiguruhan ang epekto nito sa kanilang kalusugan. Kaya naman po, noong nakaraang Kongreso, isinulong natin dito sa Senado ang mga benepisyo para sa ating mga frontliners katulad ng special risk allowance and active hazard duty pay. Bukod pa rito, ipinasa rin natin ang Department of Migrant Workers Act para iisang bahay na lamang ang pupuntahan ng ating mga OFWs at mas mapapadali na ang pagbibigay ng tulong sa kanila.*

*Muli, saludo po kami sa inyo, Ma'am May, at sa lahat ng mga manggagawang patuloy na humaharap sa hamon ng pandemya.*

#### **COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR GO**

At the instance of Senator Go and upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body approved the insertion of the following cosponsorship speech of Senator Go on Proposed Senate Resolution Nos. 320 and 347 into the *Journal and Record of the Senate*.



It is an honor to cosponsor the resolution recognizing and commending Filipino Nurse May Richell A. Cestina-Parsons for receiving the prestigious George Cross Award from the United Kingdom government.

For more than two years, Filipino healthcare workers, doctors, nurses, and allied medical professionals served on the frontlines against the COVID-19 pandemic not just here in the Philippines but all over the world. They have sacrificed so much and achieved hard-earned victories over this unprecedented deadly disease.

One of them is our *kababayan*, a dedicated Filipino-British nurse, May Parsons, who not only dedicated her life every day to help the fight against COVID-19 but is also acknowledged to be the first person to administer the first clinically-approved COVID-19 vaccine. She has received the George Cross medal on behalf of the National Health Service (NHS) in the U.K. from the late Queen Elizabeth II and from the new monarch, King Charles III.

As the chairperson of the Committee on Health and Demography, I would like to express my profound respect to May Cestina-Parsons for her undying commitment to saving lives and making a difference in the world through medical service. Your valiant contribution and dedication in service of others is truly worth recognizing. *Hindi masusuklian ang iyong sakripisyo at pagseserbisyo sa kapwa.*

*Dagdag sa parangal*, we must also do our best to address the concerns of our migrant workers, especially medical frontliners, as well as their families here. That is why we pushed for the establishment of the Department of Migrant Workers, and the OFW Hospital, and pushed for other initiatives for our OFWs. Let us assure them that while they are working hard abroad for the future of their children and bringing pride to their beloved country, we are also doing our part to take care of their families here at home.

Again, congratulations Nurse May. *Tunay na ang mga Pilipino ay may dugo para magserbisyo sa kapwa tao saan mang sulok ng mundo. Saludo kami sa iyo, Nurse May.*

#### **COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR REVILLA**

At the instance of Senator Revilla and upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body approved the insertion of the following cosponsorship speech of Senator Revilla on Proposed Senate Resolution Nos. 320 and 347 into the *Journal and Record of the Senate*.

Allow me to associate myself with the statements made by my colleagues on this remarkable Filipina, May Richell A. Cestina-Parsons, who brought pride and honor to our country with her receipt of the prestigious George Cross Award.

Some heroes wear capes, but in this pandemic that shook the entire world, the heroes who rose to the occasion are our dear healthcare workers who continued saving lives even at great risk to themselves—*ang mga healthcare workers na magiting na ginagampanan ang kanilang sinumpaang tungkulin sa kabila ng panganib at banta sa kanilang sariling buhay.*

As the pandemic unfolded, so too did the stories of heroism that would soon form part of history—*ang mga kwento ng kabayanihan na hindi natin pagsasawaang pasalamat, salduhan, at hugutan ng inspirasyon.*

May Parsons' historic contribution in our battle against COVID-19 will be forever etched not only in history books but in the minds of all of us who are now shielded with the protection afforded by the vaccine. *Nakaukit na nga sa kasaysayan ang kontribusyon ni May Parsons sa laban natin sa COVID-19.* When she became the first person in the world to administer the first clinically-approved COVID-19 vaccination in England, she also became the face and story which mirrored hope.

When we look at you, May, we realize that there is always hope, even amid the worst of storms.

We thank you for your contributions to the health sector and the world. You serve as an inspiration not only to the nursing profession, but to a generation of people who were once forced inside their homes by a virus once thought to be undefeatable. *Simbolo ka hindi lamang ng husay at tibay kundi ng pag-asa.*

*Ang aming pagpupugay at saludo sa iyo!*

*A*

**COAUTHORS**

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, all senators were made coauthors of the resolution.

**ADOPTION OF PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 320**

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, Proposed Senate Resolution No. 320, taking into consideration Proposed Senate Resolution No. 347, was adopted by the Body, subject to style.

**PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 272**

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body considered Proposed Senate Resolution No. 272, entitled

**RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING FILIPINA BEAUTY  
QUEEN AND ACTRESS KYLIE VERZOSA FOR WINNING BEST ACTRESS  
AT THE 2022 DISTINCTIVE INTERNATIONAL ARAB FESTIVALS HELD IN  
DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES,**

taking into consideration Proposed Senate Resolution No. 314.

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 *Journal and Record of the Senate*.

Thereupon, the Chair recognized Senator Revilla for the sponsorship.

**SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR REVILLA**

In sponsoring Proposed Senate Resolution No. 272, Senator Revilla delivered the following speech:

It is my privilege to rise and sponsor Proposed Senate Resolution No. 272. We congratulate the Filipina who exemplifies both beauty and talent, recently recognized on the world stage.

She has brought honor and pride to the country through her art in a movie chronicling the plight of Filipinas who are searching for greener pastures in foreign countries, earning for her the best actress award at the 2022 Distinctive International Arab Festivals in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

*Ang natatanging pagganap ni Ms. Kylie Verzosa sa pelikulang "The Housemaid" ay nagkamit ng karangalan hindi lamang para sa kaniyang sarili kundi sa ating bansa. Ngunit higit pa sa pagkilala at parangal na naiuwi niya sa ating bayan sa kaniyang pagwawagi ay ang pagkakataong masilip ang daigdig ng ating mga kababayan sa mga dayuhang bansa at ang kanilang mga pinagdaraan. Ito ang handog ng sining sa ating mundo. At bilang aktor gaya ng iba pang mga kasamahan natin dito, gaya ni Senator Lapid, Senator Estrada, Senator Padilla, at Senator Poe na dugong artista—ito rin ang dahilan kung bakit minamahal at niyayakap namin ang industriya because we get to tell the stories that need to be told. Sa pamamagitan ng pagsasabuhay ng mga kuwento sa pelikula, naihahatid natin ang mga mensaheng madalas ay naisasantabi lamang.*

As we applaud and take our hats off to the victory of best actress Kylie Verzosa, may we also draw inspiration from her win to keep supporting the film and TV industry of our country. *Nawa ay muli nating pagyabungin at pagningningin ang industriya ng sining.*

### **COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR LAPID**

At the instance of Senator Lapid and upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body approved the insertion of the following cosponsorship speech of Senator Lapid on Proposed Senate Resolution Nos. 272 and 314 into the *Journal and Record of the Senate*.

*Isa pong natatanging karangalan ang tumayo sa harap ninyo, mga kasamahan ko dito sa Senado, upang kilalanin at ipagmalaki ang kahanga-hangang talento at galing ni Kylie Fausto Verzosa na nagkamit ng Best Actress Award sa 2022 Distinctive International Arab Festival Awards (DIAFA) na ginanap noong November 4, 2022 sa Dubai, United Arab Emirates.*

*Kung ating maaalala, hindi ito ang unang pagkakataon na ibinida ni Kylie ang kanyang husay, kakayahan, at maging ang sining at kulturang Pilipino sa buong mundo. Noong 2016, siya ay kinoronahan bilang Miss International, isa sa mga prestihiyoso at tanyag na international pageants.*

*Sa parangal na kanyang naabot sa DIAFA, itinanghal ni Kylie ang world-class at nakamamanghang galing sa pag-arte at sining pampelikula ng mga Filipino artists. Nararapat lamang na ipagbunyi at bigyang-pugay ng Senado ang tagumpay na ito.*

### **COSPONSORSHIP REMARKS OF SENATOR PADILLA**

Senator Padilla expressed his appreciation to Ms. Kylie Versoza who, like himself, was from Baguio City and whose recent accomplishment was a source of national and regional pride. He reiterated his previous statement that no one can compare to the beauty of Filipinas, and that Filipino actors are as good, if not better, than any other performers in the world.

### **COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR VILLANUEVA**

In cosponsoring Proposed Senate Resolution No. 272, Senator Villanueva delivered the following speech:

Our Filipino actors and actresses are slowly gaining recognition in the international film scene. A testament to this is the recent win of Filipina beauty queen and actress Kylie Verzosa as best actress at the 2022 Distinctive International Arab Festival in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. *Hindi ko po alam kung mayroon ng naging beauty queen na naging best actress pa.* I think she is the first one and we are very happy to have her today in this august Chamber. And in her excellent performance for the movie *The House Maid*, Kylie was able to show her wide range of emotions. She deserves commendations for continuing to show the world the passion of Filipino artists in the film industry.

So, again, our sincerest congratulations on your win, Ma'am Kylie Verzosa.

### **MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR HONTIVEROS**

Senator Hontiveros lauded and expressed her appreciation to Ms. Kylie Versoza who was an advocate of the Mental Health Bill which became the Mental Health Law.

### **COAUTHORS**

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, all senators were made coauthors of the resolution.

### **ADOPTION OF PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 272**

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, Proposed Senate Resolution No. 272, taking into consideration Proposed Senate Resolution No. 314, was adopted by the Body, subject to style.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE PRESENCE OF GUEST**

At this juncture, Senator Villanueva acknowledged the presence of Dr. Carl Balita in the gallery.

Senate President Zubiri welcomed Dr. Balita to the Senate.

**PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 304**

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body considered Proposed Senate Resolution No. 304, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING THE ENTIRE PHILIPPINE DELEGATION ON THEIR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE IN THE 2022 EASTERN ASIA YOUTH CHESS CHAMPIONSHIPS IN BANGKOK, THAILAND,

taking into consideration Proposed Senate Resolution Nos. 306 and 308.

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 *Journal and Record of the Senate*.

Thereupon, the Chair recognized Senator Lapid for the sponsorship.

**SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR LAPID**

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body approved the insertion of the following sponsorship speech of Senator Lapid on Proposed Senate Resolution No. 304 into the *Journal and Record of the Senate*:

*Isa pong karangalan ang tumayo sa harap ninyo, mga kababayan ko, upang kilalanin ang angking galing ng mga atleta na miyembro ng delegasyon ng ating bansa sa 2022 Eastern Asia Youth Chess Championships na ginanap sa Bangkok, Thailand noong November 4-23, 2022.*

*Kahanga-hanga ang kanilang naging paglahok sa nasabing kumpetisyon kung saan nakahakot ang Team Philippines ng 32 gold medals, 27 silver medals, and 21 bronze medals at nagwagi pa bilang "overall champion."*

*Nararapat lamang po na kilalanin natin ang mga atletang ito:*

- Elle Castronuevo – Imus, Cavite
- Mary Janelle Tan – Cagayan de Oro City
- Deandra Castronuevo – Imus, Cavite
- Gilasea Ann Hilario – Bulacan
- Nika Juris Nicolas – Pasig City
- Cyreine Jean Borce – Zamboanga City
- Jemaicah Yap Mendoza – Romblon
- Ashzley Aya Nicole Paquinol – Cagayan de Oro City
- Richily Evans Cuizon – Cagayan de Oro City
- Daren Dela Cruz – Dasmariñas, Cavite
- Ruelle Canino – Cagayan de Oro City
- Ryien Bahita – Negros Oriental
- Kaye Lalaine Regidor – Santa Rosa, Laguna
- Arleah Cassandra Sapuan – Negros Oriental
- April Joy Claros – Angeles City, Pampanga
- Nathalie Liscano – North Cotabato

- Franchesca Largo – Santa Rosa, Laguna
- Lexie Grace Hernandez – Pampanga
- Angella Joelle San Luis – Zamboanga City
- Caleb Royce Garcia – Quezon City
- Jury Joaquin Ferrer – Tuguegarao City
- Seigneur Juancho Ferrer – Tuguegarao City
- Seth David Suico – Dipolog City, Zamboanga Del Norte
- Shan Lester Jamerlan – Pavia, Iloilo
- John Curt Valencia – Dasmaringas
- Bince Rafael Operiano – Oas, Albay
- Davin Sean Romualdez – Pasig City
- Oshrie Jhames Reyes – Pampanga
- Al-Basher Buto – Rizal
- Sebastian Marbas – Cagayan de Oro City
- John Cyrus Borce – Zamboanga City
- Christian Gian Karlo Arca – Dasmaringas, Cavite
- Ivan Travis Cu – San Juan City
- Michael Jan Stephen Inigo – Bayawan City, Negros Oriental
- Cedric Kahlel Abris – Mandaluyong City
- Wayne Ruiz – Santa Rosa, Laguna
- Mark Gabriel Usman – Santa Rosa, Laguna
- Janmyl Dilan Tisado – General Trias City, Cavite
- Robick Vohn K. Villa – Zamboanga City
- Christian Peter Aristorenas - Cavite

*Ang mga tagumpay at medalyang kanilang nauwi ay patunay na hinding-hindi magpapahuli ang lahing Pilipino sa larangan ng chess at kayang-kaya nating makipagsabayan sa iba pang mga bansa sa Asya. Isang malaking inspirasyon ang mga naabot ng mga batang chess players na ating pinaparangalan ngayon at makakaasa tayong magiging mapanagumpay at ginintuan ang mga susunod na henerasyon.*

*Inaanyayahan ko ang mga kasamahan ko rito sa Senado – tayo’y magbigay pugay sa mga miyembro ng Team Philippines na lumahok sa 2022 Eastern Asia Youth Chess Championships.*

*Maraming salamat at mabuhay po kayo!*

## **COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR REVILLA**

At the instance of Senator Revilla and upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body approved the insertion of the following cosponsorship speech of Senator Revilla on Proposed Senate Resolution No. 304 into the *Journal and Record of the Senate*.

It is my honor to associate myself with the gentleman from the great province of Pampanga and join him in commending and congratulating our country’s delegation for their stellar performance in the 2022 Eastern Asia Youth Chess Championships held in Bangkok, Thailand.

*Walang duda, saan mo man dalhin ang Pilipino, laging makikilala ang husay nito! Napatunayan na natin na kaya nating makipagsabayan sa iba’t ibang larangan – sa boxing, sa weightlifting, sa gymnastics, sa pole vaulting, sa football, maging sa basketball. Ngayon ay mas lalo pa natin nakita na ang mga Filipino chess players ay hindi lang world-class contenders kundi world-class champions!*

Our very own delegation of 40 chess prodigies has bagged a total of 32 golds, 27 silvers, and 22 bronzes, besting 11 other countries that participated in the competition.



All of us should be proud of the honor they have brought to our country. *Sila ang mga susunod na Filipino chess grandmasters katulad nina Eugene Torre, Wesley So, Rogelio Antonio at iba pa.*

*Ang kanilang tagumpay ay inspirasyon sa kabataan – na hindi hadlang ang murang edad sa pagbibigay ng karangalan sa bayan. We have to keep rallying behind our youth, nurturing them to continue honing their skills and talent.*

*Muli, mainit ko kayong binabati sa inyong kahanga-hangang pagkapanalo! Lagi akong titindig para sa inyo! Mabuhay kayo, mabuhay ang manlalarong Pilipino!*

## COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR ESTRADA

At the instance of Senator Estrada and upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body approved the insertion of the following cosponsorship speech of Senator Estrada on Proposed Senate Resolution No. 304 into the *Journal and Record of the Senate*.

I am honored to cosponsor proposed Proposed Senate Resolution Nos. 304, 306, and 308, entitled “Resolution Congratulating and Commending the entire Philippine Delegation on their Outstanding Performance in the 2022 Eastern Asia Youth Chess Championships in Bangkok, Thailand.”

It is very pleasing to know that our Philippine youth delegation composed of 40 chess wonders from all over the Philippines has garnered 32 gold medals, 27 silver medals, 21 bronze medals, totaling 80 medals in the individual and team categories of the regional titles in the recently concluded 6th Eastern Asia Youth Chess Championships. The event was hosted by the Thailand Chess Association under the auspices of the Asian Chess Federation and under the guidance of the International Chess Federation and was held from November 4-12 2022.

Our 40 young *Pinoy* chess wonders pushed the Philippine team toward emerging as the overall champion, and they have bested 141 other chess prodigies from China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, South Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, Taiwan, and Vietnam.

This victory and impressive medal haul of our chess champions has brought honor, joy and pride to the country and rightfully deserves commendation from the Philippine Senate.

Chess is a game that cuts across socio-economic classes. It is gender-friendly and is one of the simplest, cheapest and most peaceful sports. *Simple at madali itong matutunan. Basta may kalaban ka at may chess board, kahit walang timer, at kahit saan, basta may upuan at mesa ay pwede na itong laruin.*

As it turns out, chess is the Filipinos’ most popular non-physical sport, where 15.6 percent in the country cited that chess is the game they play most frequently. This is according to an SWS survey published on May 30, 2021 in the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*.

*At totoo naman po na marami po sa atin ang marunong maglaro ng chess at nakakatuwang malaman that there is a breed of younger Filipinos all throughout the nation who is pursuing chess as a hobby and interest, and obviously is excelling in this sport.*

*Noong panahon natin na wala pang internet, marami tayong oras para maglaro ng chess. Pero itong ating mga kabataang chess geniuses na ito, imbes na magbuno ng oras sa Mobile Legends, Call of Duty, Roblox, Garena, at iba pa, ay mas pinipiling magbuno ng oras sa paglalaro at pagdadalubhasa sa paglalaro ng chess.*

These junior chess champions and grandmasters-in-the-making stand as good role models for their fellow young Filipinos to encourage them to take up sports, which foster self-discipline, teamwork, and excellence.

Chess also teaches one to be patient, to develop resilient thinking skills, to be a good strategist, to be a problem-solver, to be creative, to think the way one’s opponent thinks, and to think ahead. *Ito po ang mga thinking skills na dapat ay ma-develop ng ating mga kabataan.*

According to Simon Williams, “The beauty of chess is it can be whatever you want it to be. It transcends language, age, race, religion, politics, gender, and socio-economic background. Whatever your circumstances, anyone can enjoy a good fight to the death over the chess board.”

Again, our felicitations to our *Pinoy* chess wonders at *hangad ko na hindi matapos ang kanilang pang-che-checkmate sa mga kalaban sa chess, kundi pati na rin sa mga hamon ng buhay.*

### **COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR GO**

In sponsoring Proposed Senate Resolution No. 304, Senator Go likewise delivered the following speech:

I stand here to cosponsor the resolution congratulating the Philippine delegation for their outstanding performance at the 2022 Eastern Asia Youth Chess Championships held in Bangkok, Thailand. Our team was declared overall champion of the tournament by amassing a total of 32 gold medals, 27 silver medals, and 21 bronze medals. The Philippine team also won the title of Best Chess Federation, beating out Mongolia and Vietnam.

Participating in a competition of this caliber is no easy feat, and the fact that they were able to rise to the challenge and perform at such a high level is truly impressive. As a team, they have also shown the true spirit of sportsmanship and brought honor to our country.

Each of the athletes has demonstrated exceptional talent and potential, and I have no doubt that they will continue to thrive and excel in the world of chess. *Ang babata pa po nila, ang gagaling na po.* I am sure *na matatalino itong mga batang ito sa paglaki.* I am sure that the experience of competing at the championships will be valuable to the members of the delegation and will help them to grow as players and as individuals. I also hope that their success will inspire others in the Philippines to take up the game of chess and strive for excellence. *Sana marami pang sumunod sa yapak ninyo. Bigyan natin ng oportunidad ang iba pang mga kabataan na may potensiyal sa ganitong larangan nang sa gayon ay mailayo rin natin sila sa masasamang bisyo.*

For our part, we have included in the 2023 budget bill significant increases in the Philippine Sports Commission’s budget for assistance to our athletes and support to our grassroots sports development program.

We thank the chairperson of the Committee on Finance, Sen. Sonny Angara, and, of course, the leadership of the Senate President, Sen. Juan Miguel F. Zubiri, the Majority Leader, and all of our colleagues for their support. *Sana po ay makakatulong po ito sa ating Philippine Chess Team.*

To Team Philippines, your success at this prestigious tournament is a testament to your talent and determination, and I know that you will continue to achieve great things in the future.

I look forward to seeing all that you will accomplish in the coming years, and I know that you will continue to make our nation proud.

Once again, congratulations on your impressive victory. Keep up the excellent work and best of luck in all your future endeavors.

### **COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR PADILLA**

In cosponsoring Proposed Senate Resolution No. 304, Senator Padilla delivered the following speech:

*Ako po ay tumitindig ngayong hapon sa pulpitong ito hindi lamang upang samahan at suportahan sa panukalang resolusyon ang aking mga kaibigang sina idol, Senador “Pinuno” Lito Lapid, Senador “Pang-Masa” Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada, at Senador “Idol” Ramon “Bong” Revilla Jr., ngunit lalo’t higit ay upang makapagbigay-pugay sa delegasyon ng ating bansa sa nakalipas na 2022 Eastern Asia Youth Chess Championship sa Bangkok, Thailand.*

*Nakatitindig balahibo pong malaman na sa kabuuan ay nakapag-uwi po ang ating mga batang delegado ng 32 gold medals, 27 silver medals, at 21 bronze medals sa ginanap na kompetisyon noong nakaraang buwan lamang.*



*Akin po ang karangalan na maging bahagi ng pagkilala at pagbibigay-pugay sa bawat isa sa ating apatnapung magigiting at mahuhusay na manlalaro sa larangan ng chess na lumahok at nag-uwi ng karangalan sa ibat-ibang katagorya. Napakasarap naman po talagang maging Pilipino lalo na sa ganitong mga pagkakataon.*

*Nais ko rin pong bigyang diin na ang isa sa mga nag-uwi ng karangalan sa ating bansa ay napakalapit po sa ating puso—sa puso ng mga taga-Mindanao na katulad po ng ating “Ama ng Bangsamoro,” ang atin pong Senate President, Sen. Juan Miguel F. Zubiri, at sa atin pong idol, ang serbisyo ang kaniyang bisyo, siyempre po, si Sen. Christopher Lawrence T. Go, at sa atin pong Minority Leader, Sen. Aquilino “Koko” Pimentel III, sapagkat may Mindanaoan po dito na labindalawang taong gulang pa lamang po, si Albasher “Basty” Jumangit Buto. Ngunit hindi matatawaran ang kaniyang kontribusyon sa ating bansa sa larangan ng chess. Isang chess prodigy, Asian master, at buong puso at pagmamalaki po nating masasabi na siya po ay pride of the Bangsamoro people. Isa pong Maranao.*

*Sa kaalaman po ng lahat, si Basty ay walang pormal na pagsasanay. Likas ang talino, abilidad, at pagsisikap ng batang ito na mas nalinang pa sa pagsasanay simula sa murang edad na 7, kalaban ang mas mga nakatatandang chess players sa bangketa ng Quiapo.*

*Mula sa payak na simulain, si Basty po ay tumatabo na ngayon ng parangal sa local at international na arena. Itinuturing na rin siyang national master ng National Chess Federation of the Philippines, at kamakailan lamang ay nakasungkit ng tatlong silver medals at tinaguriang candidate master sa 6<sup>th</sup> Eastern Asia Youth Chess Championship. Mashallah. Salat man sa yamang pinansyal, saludo rin tayo sa kanyang pamilya na nakaantabay at lubos ang suporta sa kanyang napiling sports.*

*Sa kanyang mga magulang, Gng. Jamela at G. Sulaiman “Bong” Buto, shukran mga kapatid, taas-noo po ang sangka-Musliman at ka-Kristiyanohan, at buong bansa sa inyong pamilya. Hindi pa ito ang kasukdulan ng ating mga parangal. Hangad ko na patuloy pa ang kagalingan at kalinangan ni Basty, sampu ng mga batang atleta sa buong bansa. Inshallah.*

*Magbubukas pa po ito ng pinto sa ating mga kapatid na Bangsamoro lalo na sa ating mga kabataan na nangangarap makapag-uwi ng karangalan para sa ating mahal na bansang Inang Pilipinas.*

*Muli po, maraming salamat sa inyo. Mabuhay ang Inang Bayang Pilipinas.*

## **MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR VILLANUEVA**

Senator Villanueva stated that the Senate also commended Bince Rafael Operiano, a nine-year old chess prodigy from Oas, Albay, with the adoption of Senate Resolution No. 285 on November 29, 2022.

He expressed the Senate’s congratulations to the entire Philippine delegation to the 2022 Eastern Asia Youth Chess Championship in Bangkok, Thailand, as well as their coaches and families, for their exceptional performance. He expressed hope that their achievements will continue to inspire more young people to excel in their respective fields.

## **COAUTHOR**

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, all senators were made coauthors of Proposed Senate Resolution No. 304.

## **ADOPTION OF PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 304**

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, Proposed Senate Resolution No. 304, taking into consideration Proposed Senate Resolution Nos. 306 and 308, were adopted by the Body, subject to style.

**SUSPENSION OF SESSION**

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, the session was suspended.

*It was 6:14 p.m.*

**RESUMPTION OF SESSION**

At 6:33 p.m., the session was resumed.

**REFERRAL OF SPEECH TO COMMITTEE**

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Chair referred the privilege speech of Senator Estrada entitled "State of the Philippine Entertainment Industry" delivered on November 8, 2022, and the interpellations as well as the manifestations thereon to the Committee on Public Information and Mass Media.

**COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 12 ON HOUSE BILL NO. 3968**

*(Continuation)*

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body resumed consideration, on Second Reading, of House Bill No. 3968 (Committee Report No. 12), entitled

AN ACT CONVERTING THE MUNICIPALITY OF CARMONA IN THE PROVINCE OF CAVITE INTO A COMPONENT CITY TO BE KNOWN AS THE CITY OF CARMONA.

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

Thereupon, the Chair recognized Senator Ejercito, sponsor of the measure, and Senator Pimentel for his interpellation.

**INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR PIMENTEL**

Asked by Senator Pimentel if the eligibility and qualifications of the Municipality of Carmona to be converted into a component city under RA 11683 had already been established during the interpellation of Senator Gatchalian, Senator Ejercito replied in the affirmative. He said that compared to the time when San Juan and Valenzuela became cities, which required a locally-generated average annual income of P100 million, a population of at least 150,000 people, and a contiguous territory of at least 100 square kilometers, RA 11683 stipulates that only two out of the three criteria must be met to qualify as a city: an average annual income of P400 million, and either a population of 150,000 people or a land area of 100 square kilometers.

Senator Ejercito affirmed that Carmona was applying to become a city in accordance with Section 450 of RA 7160, subparagraph (a), as amended by RA 11683, and that House Bill No. 3968 was the draft that the Senate was working on.

Asked what concepts, ideas, or portions of House Bill No. 3968 would be amended by the Committees on Local Government and Electoral Reforms and People's Participation, Senator Ejercito mentioned two additional items: the city public order and safety office and the city registry of deeds, as well as the heads of the two offices. Senator Ejercito admitted that the cityhood bill template from the 16th Congress was used in drafting the measure.

As regards the rationale of the phrase "For police purposes" under Section 7 of the bill, Senator Ejercito said that the provision was lifted from Section 458, subsection (5) of the Local Government Code of 1991.

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To Senator Pimentel's remark that the term "City Court," was no longer in use, Senator Ejercito stated that the term should have been "Municipal Trial Court in Cities." Senator Pimentel then advised updating the template so that it no longer uses obsolete terminologies.

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

He also advised the Body not to include, if possible, any words or phrases that had already been found inapplicable. Senator Ejercito concurred and thanked Senator Pimentel for raising the issue. He added that to further refine the measure, amendments must ensure that incorrect or irrelevant terminology are removed.

Adverting to page 3, line 18, Senator Pimentel did not believe that the term "misdemeanors" was still being used in criminal law. Senator Ejercito acknowledged Senator Pimentel's concern and said that if the Minority Leader wished to propose a remedy, he would gladly consider the same. Senator Pimentel suggested that the staff study the current usage of the word.

Asked on the position of the League of Cities of the Philippines (LCP) regarding the impact of the conversion of municipalities into new cities on the National Tax Allotments (NTAs) of the existing cities, Senator Ejercito stated that the LCP was invited to attend the committee hearing, but no representative had been sent by the organization. Nonetheless, he surmised that most of the LCP's concerns about new cities eroding their "slice of the pie" had already been propounded by Senator Gatchalian during his interpellation on the measure during the previous session.

As an illustration, Senator Ejercito mentioned that in 2007, when the Municipality of San Juan was converted into a city, the country had only 81 cities, and the number had climbed to 147, as of the moment. He reiterated his observation from the previous session regarding cuts in several cities' NTAs, to wit: Puerto Princesa City, with a minimum cut of -.91%, and Vigan City, with a maximum cut of -3.65%.

Senator Gatchalian interjected at this point, stating that, due to the absence of LCP representatives in the Senate and the House public hearings, he had taken the liberty of directly requesting the LCP of its official position on the matter. He then read the following portion of the letter signed by the LCP President, Cebu City Mayor Michael Rama:

"The League remains consistent with our principle to adhere to the rules and basis already set by the Local Government Code of 1991. Based on the data obtained by the League from the Bureau of Local Government Finance, allegedly, the average local generated income of the Municipality of Carmona for 2020 and 2021 is P504 million. Also, based on the recent census, it has 106,256 inhabitants. Given that the Municipality of Carmona complies with the income and population requirements of conversion, I am confident that the LCP board will support the conversion of Carmona into a component city. When we convene the National Executive Board on March 2023, I will move for the adoption of this position."

Senator Gatchalian explained that the LCP National Executive Board meets only at particular times in the course of a year and that, given the upcoming holiday season, its next meeting would be in March 2023. He gleaned from Mayor Rama's response that the League might be receptive to the conversion of the Municipality of Carmona because it has complied with the requirements of the new conversion law.

He also informed the Body that the LCP had also taken a magnanimous position on the issue in the past. He then recalled that when Senator Ejercito and he were still mayors of their respective cities, they fought against the conversion of 16 municipalities that they regarded non-compliant with Local Government Code of 1991. He stated that when the Supreme Court gave a final ruling in

favor of the 16 towns, the LCP respected the decision, despite having an opposing stance on the issue, and welcomed the newly-converted cities into its fold. He surmised that pursuant to Republic Act No. 11683, the League was bound to support the conversion of the Municipality of Carmona so long as it met the prerequisites for cityhood.

Senator Ejercito confirmed Senator Gatchalian's recollection that at the time, they were both opposed to the conversion of the 16 municipalities. He stated that the local governments of Valenzuela and San Juan worked diligently to meet the revenue and population requirements for cityhood in their respective municipalities. He also confirmed that most LCP member-cities did not want to have new cities for fear that they would reduce "piece of the pie." Despite the circumstances, he said that LCP ultimately honored the Supreme Court's decision on the 16 municipalities. He then thanked Mayor Rama for his magnanimity, emphasizing that the Municipality of Carmona has met two out of the three prerequisites for cityhood.

Senator Pimentel believed that the Body should learn from what transpired and encourage LCP participation in committee hearings pertaining to cityhood. He stated that if the Carmona cityhood measure is passed into law, it would be the first time that paragraph (d) of Section 450 of the Local Government Code of 1991, as amended by Republic Act No. 11683, would be implemented, to wit:

"(d) In order to minimize the effect of conversion, the newly-converted cities shall, upon enactment of this Act, bring their respective allotment derived from the national taxes as municipalities to the allotment of cities: *Provided*, That said portability shall be effective for a period of three (3) years from conversion into cityhood."

Senator Ejercito affirmed that the Municipality of Carmona would be the first to benefit from the provisions of Republic Act No. 11683.

Regarding the implementation of the aforementioned paragraph should the Municipality of Carmona become a component city, given that its projected NTA as a municipality was approximately P268 million, Senator Ejercito responded that the amount would be carried by the new city as its initial tax allotment to lessen the effect of the conversion. He believed that by doing so, the effect on the taxes paid by LCP member-cities would not be too drastic. Moreover, he mentioned that while the percentage increase for the NTA of Carmona would be 226%, the total effect on the NTAs of LCP member-cities would be minimal at 0.22%.

Asked how much the NTA of the local government of Carmona would be from its P268 million share as a municipality, *vis-a-vis* its future allotment as a component city, Senator Ejercito replied that its estimated share would become P782.69 million. Senator Pimentel stated that the P514 million increase will benefit the future City of Carmona in that aspect. He also deemed the 0.22% effect on the other cities to be negligible; nevertheless, the increase in the eventual City of Carmona's NTA would be substantial.

At this juncture, Senator Ejercito acknowledged the presence in the gallery of Municipality of Carmona Vice Mayor Cesar Ines Jr. and members of the Sangguniang Bayan. He added that Representative Roy Loyola and Mayor Dahlia Loyola were present at the Session Hall the day before.

He then informed the Members that the Municipality of Carmona has consistently been awarded the Seal of Good Local Governance, adding that Mayor Loyola, who is also a physician, has good programs for her city. In addition, he said that both Justice Secretary Remulla and Governor Jonvic Remulla attest to Mayor Loyola's effectiveness as an elected public official. Having observed Carmona's level of advancement and development, he believed that it deserved cityhood.

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**REMARKS OF SENATE PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE LEGARDA**

Senator Legarda stated that she witnessed to how Mayor Loyola was able to institutionalize her initiatives down to the barangay level, and that her team on the ground could readily determine what the people of Carmona needed. She also remarked that she was impressed by the Loyola couple's grassroots program and the way they were able to implement their plans for the Municipality of Carmona down to the *purok* and *sitio* levels.

**REMARKS OF SENATOR PIMENTEL**

Senator Pimentel welcomed the presence in the gallery of the officials of the Municipality of Carmona. He urged the Body to polish the bill so that it would be a city charter the Nineteenth Congress could be proud of.

He stated that since the Body intended to pass the measure on Second Reading that day in order to have the plebiscite in February 2023, he would only provide the sponsor his observations for consideration.

**INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR PIMENTEL**

*(Continuation)*

In reply to the previous query of Senator Pimentel, Senator Tolentino explained that the recognition of water as a public good and precious resource in the future was one of the reasons why the provision on water was included. Considering that it is not only captured in a single area but also flows continually, he said that there is the notion of safeguarding it as a city resource thru the bulk water supply concept.

He stated that it was partly due to existing practices wherein enterprising individuals were selling water from one LGU to another, much to the chagrin of the locals of the water source, that the specific provision was included, which states: "For police purposes, the jurisdiction of the City shall be coextensive with its territorial jurisdiction and for the purpose of protecting and ensuring the purity of the water supply of the City, such police purposes shall also extend over all the territory within the drainage area of such water supply .... "

Given that Carmona has a number of rivers and streams, he surmised that it was the reason for such police purposes as well as for environmental protection.

Senator Pimentel thanked Senator Tolentino for his explanation. He then requested the sponsor to revisit the following provisions in the measure for better styling and possible improvement:

- Section 7 (*Jurisdiction of the City*) had slightly different wordings from Section 7 of the Calaca Bill authored by Senator Tolentino;
- Section 8 (*City Officials*) lacked the building official position as required under Section 301 of PD 1906;
- Section 9 (*The City Mayor*), paragraph (c), subparagraph (3) (vi) might be interpreted to mean as making the city mayor liable if informal settlers are found in the city;
- Section 10 (*The City Vice Mayor*) made no mention of the three-term limit prohibition, unlike its deliberate mention in the provision for city mayor;
- Section 23 (*Disqualifications of Elective City Officials*), subparagraph (d) mentioned the prohibition of dual citizens from running in the elections, whereas, in the recent case of *Ganait vs COMELEC* dated August 2022, the Supreme Court made a distinction between dual citizens by naturalization and by birth;

- Section 24 (*Permanent Vacancy in the Offices of the City Mayor and the City Vice Mayor*) suddenly mentioned a subparagraph (b) regarding a possible vacancy in the punong barangay position, thereby causing a shift in the concept;
- Section 29 (*The Assistant City Treasurer*) used the phrase “may be appointed by the Secretary of the Department of Finance” resulting in the question whether or not the appointment by the Finance Secretary of the assistant city treasurer is optional.

In reply to some of Senator Pimentel’s observations, Senator Ejercito stated that with regard to Section 10 (*The City Vice Mayor*), the provision would be deleted altogether because it is already stipulated in the Local Government Code.

Regarding Section 24, he surmised that the wordings of the provision on vacancies may have been derived from a template because, while examining the previous statutes, they also contained the same provision which did not make any sense. He stated that as a result of Senator Pimentel’s intervention, the proposed legislation may serve as a template for future cityhood bills.

On Section 29 (*Assistant City Treasurer*), he stated that while the Finance Secretary appoints the city treasurer, the assistant city treasurer’s appointment by the Finance Secretary is optional.

Senator Pimentel stated that he would no longer interpellate on the measure and would instead take the opportunity to amend it. He reiterated that there was no problem with the measure’s substance.

Senator Ejercito stated that the target date for the plebiscite is February of the following year. He stated that if the measure is approved on Second Reading that evening and, ideally, on Third Reading the following week, the plebiscite would push through on the planned date.

Finally, Senator Pimentel congratulated Senator Ejercito and wished him luck with the plebiscite.

#### **TERMINATION OF THE PERIOD OF INTERPELLATIONS**

There being no further interpellations upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body closed the period of interpellations.

#### **SUSPENSION OF SESSION**

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, the session was suspended.

*It was 7:20 p.m.*

#### **RESUMPTION OF SESSION**

At 7:22 p.m., the session was resumed.

#### **SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF HOUSE BILL NO. 3968**

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



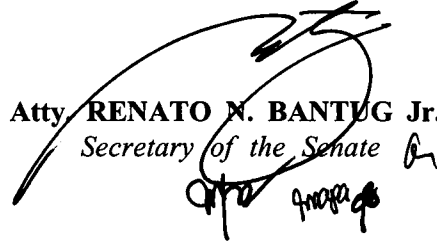
**ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION**

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Chair declared the session adjourned until three o'clock in the afternoon of Monday, December 12, 2022.

*It was 7:23 p.m.*

I hereby certify to the correctness of the foregoing.

Atty. **RENATO N. BANTUG Jr.**  
*Secretary of the Senate*

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Renato N. Bantug Jr.', is written over the typed name and title.

Approved on December 12, 2022