



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES  
**Senate**  
Pasay City

# Journal

**SESSION NO. 46**  
Monday, February 6, 2023

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

Prepared by the  
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Senate of the Philippines

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**SESSION NO. 46**  
Monday, February 6, 2023

**CALL TO ORDER**

At 3:09 p.m., the Senate President, Hon. Juan Miguel “Migz” F. Zubiri, called the session to order.

**PRAYER**

Sen. Mark A. Villar led the prayer, to wit:

Almighty Creator, at the beginning of this week, let it be Your will that we may be witnesses of Your divine plan as we all work hand in hand for peace, unity, and progress in our country.

May we be granted the clarity of thought and the eager heart to meet our duty for Your glory.

Allow Your grace to come upon us and take hold of us so that we may serve the Filipino people according to Your will.

Bless the corners of this Session Hall, and we pray that it be filled with Your Spirit.

Thank you for this opportunity that we can gather to fulfill our duty as legislators of the Philippines.

May You give us guidance to carry wisdom, strength, and dedication to succeed in the things that we will discuss today and in the times to come.

Make us worthy of Your trust and the mission You have bestowed upon us.

Use us as instruments of freedom, equality, justice, and peace for the Filipino people.

*Pagpalain po Ninyo ang aming mahal na bansang Pilipinas at ang buong sambayanang Pilipino.*

May integrity and uprightness govern all that we endeavor so that all that we do will prosper our country and our people.

This we ask in Your mighty Name.

Amen.



## NATIONAL ANTHEM

Everybody remained standing for the singing of the national anthem.

## MANIFESTATION OF THE SENATE PRESIDENT

Senate President Zubiri requested that the Senate Secretariat resume the singing of the national anthem by various choirs beginning the following Monday.

## ROLL CALL

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

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

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

Senator Villar (C) was absent.

## 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. 45 (February 1, 2023) 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:

- Carlos Yulo, Miguel Besana, and Justine Ace De Leon, members of the Philippine Gymnastics Team;
- Cynthia Lagdameo Carrion, President of the Gymnastics Association of the Philippines;
- Mayor Glenn Flores of Alaminos, Laguna;
- Mayor Roseller Caratihan of Calauan, Laguna;
- Cong. Princess Rihan M. Sakaluran of Sultan Kudarat; and
- Gov. Edcel Greco Lagman of Albay.

Senate President Zubiri welcomed the guests to the Senate.

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

*qs*

**PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 458**

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body considered Proposed Senate Resolution No. 458, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING CARLOS EDRIEL POQUIZ YULO FOR RAISING THE PHILIPPINE FLAG AS ONE OF THE BEST GYMNASTS THE PHILIPPINES HAS PRODUCED THEREBY HONORING THE COUNTRY WITH ACCOLADES IN HIS QUEST FOR EXCELLENCE IN GYMNASTICS,

taking into consideration Proposed Senate Resolution Nos. 23, 248, 269, 273, 276, 281, and 292.

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

**SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATE PRESIDENT ZUBIRI**

In sponsoring Proposed Senate Resolution No. 458, Senate President Zubiri delivered the following speech:

It is my pleasure to welcome our very own Carlos Yulo to the Senate. We are honored to salute this young man, who, at just 22 years old, has already become one of our most accomplished and decorated gymnasts and athletes. There are certain sports and certain athletes who have become synonymous in our popular consciousness. *Halimbawa, kung track and field ang usapan, automatic, Lydia de Vega iyan. Sa bowling, Paeng Nepumoceno. Sa boxing, siyempre, Manny Pacquiao. Kung sa weightlifting, top of mind is Hidilyn Diaz. And of course, for pole vaulting, no other than EJ Obiena. And sa billiards, si Efren "Bata" Reyes.*

With this gentleman's history-making triumphs at the World Artistic Gymnastics Championships, Southeast Asian Games, the All-Japan Senior's Championship and the World Gymnastics Championship, among others, *hindi malayong isipin na si Caloy na ang mukha ng ating Filipino gymnastics. Pati nga sa buong Southeast Asia, dala na rin niya being the first Filipino and male Southeast Asian to score a medal at the World Artistic Gymnastics Championship in 2019. And through all his triumphs, he has always proudly carried our flag showing the world what Filipino excellence looks like.*

It has long been exciting witnessing his outstanding achievements at every competition *lalo na ngayon na napakabilis kumalat ng clips sa social media, nakakatuwa makita kung paano maging viral ang mga performance ni Caloy especially among our youth.*

And on top of competition clips, *natutuwa rin ako na nakikita rin natin sa social media iyong pag-training ni Caloy. We get a glimpse of the hours and hours of training and we get to appreciate how much discipline it takes to be an all-round gymnast.*

Along with other young athletes with EJ Obiena, Margielyn Didal, Caloy is here showing our kids that hard work can actually be cool. I have no doubt that many young Filipinos have been inspired to work just as hard to pursue their athletic interests just as seriously as Caloy does. And his ability to inspire our youth is a great triumph itself. *Walang kahit anong tropeo o medalya ang mas titimbang diyan sa feeling na iyan. What is even more exciting though is knowing that Caloy is clearly just getting started, and that we have the good fortune of watching him grow and cheering him on every step of the way.*

So, we in the Senate are one with the whole country in supporting him as he pursues even greater athletic heights particularly throughout his competitions this year on the road to Paris Olympics in 2024. *Kaya muli, saludo po kami sa iyo, Caloy. You have our full support here in the Senate.*



## COSPONSORSHIP SPEECHES

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body approved the insertion of the following cosponsorship speeches into the *Journal and Record of the Senate*:

### *By Senator Poe*

I join my distinguished colleagues today in honoring one of the most celebrated and distinguished athletes of our country, Carlos Edriel Yulo.

His numerous medals and laurels speak for itself. He is the first Filipino gymnast to win a medal at the World Artistic Gymnastics Championships in 2018. He is also the first ever Southeast Asian male to win a gold medal at the 2019 World Artistic Gymnastics Championships, with a repeat performance in 2021.

His more recent awards include a sweep of at least five gold medals at the 2022 Southeast Asian Games; a triple gold at the 2022 Asian Gymnastics Championships; and silver and bronze at the recently-concluded FIG Artistic Gymnastics World Championships in Liverpool, England. The prolific year was capped with his recognition as the country's top gymnast by the Gymnastics Association of the Philippines and the KG Management.

Manila's own Wonder Boy Caloy has continually mesmerized the global audience with his flawless routines, precise maneuvers, and masterful presentation, with one commentator saying that his performance "is a lesson for every young gymnast on how to execute well." His unmatched mettle and resiliency embody the very spirit of the Filipino athlete—indomitable, unparalleled, and truly world-class.

It is thus my utmost honor to cosponsor the resolution congratulating and commending Carlos Edriel Yulo for carrying the Philippine flag as one of the best and most prolific gymnasts in our country, and for being an inspiration to all Filipino athletes.

### *By Senator Lapid*

*Ako ay tumitindig sa harap ninyo upang kilalanin ang angking galing at husay ng ating ipinagmamalaking atleta sa larangan ng "gymnastics" na si Carlos Edriel Poquiz Yulo.*

*Ang daan na kanyang binagtas patungo sa kanyang kinatatayuan sa kasalukuyan ay hindi naging madali, ito ay talaga namang pinaghirapan kapalit ng mga gabing di makatulog at masasakit na bahagi ng katawan, bitbit ang pagnanais na makapagbigay ng karangalan at ipagmalaki ang ating bansa sa buong mundo sa larangan ng gymnastics.*

*Sa larangang ito kung saan bihirang mabalitaan ang ating bansa na nagwawagi, ipinakita at pinatunayan ni Caloy na kaya niya, kaya natin, at kaya ng Pilipino makipagsabayan sa larangan ng gymnastics sa buong mundo. Ipinakita ni Caloy na ang puso ng Pilipino ay hindi magpapagapi sa kahit ano o sino, basta't pinaghihirapan at nagpupursigi, sa dulo ay makakaasa tayong magtatagumpay.*

*Ang kwento ng buhay ni Caloy ay kwento ng buhay ng bawat Pilipino. Isang bata na lumaki sa Maynila, sa kanyang paglalaro ay kanyang nakita at ginaya ang mga mas nakatatandang atletang nagsasanay sa Rizal Memorial Coliseum. Mula sa kanyang di malimutang karanasan naging marubdob ang kanyang pagnanais na maging pambansang atleta at makapag-uwi ng karangalan para sa bansa.*

*Si Caloy ay inspirasyon hindi lamang ng kapwa niya gymnast, kundi ng maraming atletang Pilipino, ano man ang disiplina na kinabibilangan nila. Ano mang katayuan sa buhay, kung magsusumikap ay maaring umangat at makamit ang kanilang mga pangarap. Isang testamento si Carlos Yulo na hinding-hindi magpapahuli ang Pilipino sa kahit ano mang larangan ng palakasan. Ipinakita niya na hindi tayo umuurong at hinding hindi tayo dapat minamaliit gaano man tayo kaliit.*

*Ang mga karangalang nakamit ni Carlos Yulo ay hindi dapat palagpasin at dapat na bigyan ng papuri. Kaya aking tinatawagan ang ating mga kasamahan sa Senado, at tayo'y magbigay ng pugay sa isang natatanging atleta ng gymnastics ng ating bansa at ng buong mundo.*



***By Senator Gatchalian***

It is my privilege and honor with head held high to cosponsor Proposed Senate Resolution No. 458, with the intent to congratulate and commend our Filipino gymnast legend, Carlos Edriel Poquiz Yulo.

At the young age of 22, Carlos has been known as our nation's pride in the sport of gymnastics. He is the first Filipino and the first male Southeast Asian gymnast to win a historic medal at the World Artistic Gymnastics Championship with his floor exercises bronze medal finish in 2018, and the first ever gold medal for the Philippines in 2019 on the same apparatus.

To date, he has bagged a total of thirteen gold medals, twelve silver, and six bronze, from different artistic gymnastics competition events from 2018 to present, according to reports.

His triumphs have brought honor to the Philippines and shown the world the tenacity of the Filipino people. Through his hard work and perseverance, he solidified our country's reputation as one of the top tiers in global gymnastics. Above all, our young athletes can draw inspiration from Carlos' story as someone who has demonstrated persistence towards reaching the peak of his success.

*Naniniwala ako na mas maraming pang Pilipino ang susunod sa yapak ni Carlos lalo na't isinabatas natin ang pagpapatayo ng National Academy of Sports. Sa pamamagitan nito, mas mapapalawak pa natin ang kapasidad ng bawat kabataang atleta—na susi upang madagdagan ang bilang ng mga Pilipinong namamayagpag sa larangan ng pampalakasan.*

*Bilang mga mambabatas, hangad ko na matugunan natin ang kanilang mga pangangailangan upang makapaghasa tayo ng mas marami pang pandaigdigang kampyon na buong pusong magwawagayway ng bandila ng Pilipinas.*

*Mabuhay si Carlos Yulo! Mabuhay ang mga atletang Pilipino! Ipanalo natin ang Pilipinas!*

**COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR VILLANUEVA**

In cosponsoring Proposed Senate Resolution No. 458, Senator Villanueva delivered the following speech:

I join the Senate President and all the Members of this august Chamber in congratulating and commending Carlos Yulo for his numerous achievements in the field of gymnastics.

Last November, this Representation also filed Proposed Senate Resolution No. 269, recognizing and congratulating Carlos for his outstanding performance at the 51<sup>st</sup> FIG Artistic Gymnastics World Championships. During the competition, Caloy clinched a silver medal in vault and a bronze medal in parallel bars. He also won gold, silver, and bronze medals in different events at the 55<sup>th</sup> All-Japan Seniors Championship held last September. And in a remarkable and historic fashion, Caloy finished the 9<sup>th</sup> Senior Artistic Gymnastics Asian Championships with three gold medals and a silver medal last June. These are just some of his recent wins.

Indeed, the young Caloy, who spent his afternoons watching the country's top gymnasts train at the Rizal Memorial Stadium, and playing acrobatics with friends at the Paraiso ng Batang Maynila playground, is now an inspiration to all of us, especially to millions of young aspiring athletes. He has, time and again, made the country proud for his world-class talent, determination, and unwavering commitment to excellence, as shown in his impressive performance in these competitions.

Caloy deserves all the support, praise, and commendation of the entire nation. We wish him all the best, and we will be cheering for him when he competes in the Artistic Gymnastics World Championships in Belgium later this year, a qualifier for the 2024 Paris Olympics.

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



## COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR ESTRADA

In support of the commendation for Carlos Yulo, Senator Estrada delivered the following speech:

I am associating myself with the manifestations made by my colleagues.

Carlos Yulo started training at the young age of seven. He began his competitive career as an athlete of the Palarong Pambansa in 2008. Since then, Caloy has been devoting himself to training and excellence in artistic gymnastics.

Caloy got through Adamson University High School because of the support of the Gymnastics Association of the Philippines. In 2016, Caloy was extended a scholarship grant at the Teikyo University, courtesy of the Japan Olympic Association, under the care and guidance of his coach, Munehiro Kugimiya.

The story of Carlos Yulo is a success story worth emulating by our struggling and hopeful young athletes.

*Noon ay makikitang pa-tumbling-tumbling lamang at nagsa-somersault lamang si Caloy sa playground ng Paraiso ng Batang Maynila malapit sa Manila Zoo. Ngayon ay sa prestihiyosong international stage na natin siya napapanood, na humahakot ng medalya at karangalan para sa lahing Pilipino.*

Caloy Yulo is the epitome of the modern-age ideal Filipino athlete. He has proven that he is a prodigy of gymnastic genius by winning medals at the World Artistic Gymnastics Championships and by being the first Filipino and first male Southeast Asian gymnast to win in this premiere gymnastics competition.

*Sa kabila ng kahirapan, ng walang kaseguruhan, at sa kabila ng napakaraming injuries at mga sandali ng pagdududa at tukso ng pagbitaw, sa kabila ng kaniyang pag-iisa at kalungkutan, ay hindi nagpatalo si Caloy. Nagpatuloy siya sa kaniyang training, pinairal ang disiplina at ang masidhing determinasyon upang tuparin ang kaniyang pangarap.*

*Sabi nga ni Caloy, "You can break down or break records. It is up to you." It was indeed up to him when he chose to break records and carve his name and that of the Philippines in the history of the World Artistic Gymnastics.*

In his 22 years of existence and gymnastic career spanning 15 years, Caloy Yulo has made us all proud many, many times and we know for sure that there is more to come in his fruitful, bountiful, and athletic career. That is why I join my colleagues in this ardent commendation to our champion athlete.

With the indulgence of our proponent, I would like to be made coauthor and cosponsor of Proposed Senate Resolution No. 458.

## COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR PADILLA

In cosponsoring Proposed Senate Resolution No. 458, Senator Padilla delivered the following speech:

*Sa akin po ang karangalan na makibahagi sa pagbibigay pugay sa maituturing na world icon at tunay ngang "golden boy" sa larangan ng gymnastics. Taas-noong pagkilala at pasasalamat po sa pagdalo ng ating bayani ngayon, G. Carlos Edriel Yulo. Sa rami at haba po ng listahan ng nasungkit na medalya ni Ginoong Yulo, hindi siguro ako nag-iisa, kasama ko ang mga naunang senador na hiningal sa aming resitasyon.*

*Gusto ko lamang pong ipahayag na si G. Carlos Yulo ang halimbawa ng isang atletang Pilipino na hindi kailangang matangkad, hindi kailangang dahuyan, at hindi kailangang isang atleta na tinatawag nating sumasali sa mga paligsahan na kailangan ay medyo pangdayuhan.*





*Siya po ay sukat na sukat. Kung tingnan natin siya ay Pilipinong-Pilipino at siya ay nakakuha ng medalya at nagbigay ng karangalan sa atin. Ito po sana ay maghikayat sa ating mga kababayan na kaparehas niya na magkaroon ng lakas ng loob na magsanay. Hindi nila kailangang isipin na sila ay kailangang maging matangkad o mag-training sa ibang bansa, kundi pagyamanin ang kanilang talento at galing bilang mga Pilipino.*

*Makikita po natin ang kaniyang height ay hindi ang height na masasabi natin na inaakala natin na magbibigay ng karangalan sa ating bayan, kundi iyan po ang sukat ng ating mga kababayang Pilipino. At ito po ay katunayan lamang na tayo, ang ating lahi, kahit na ang ating sukat ay hindi gaanong kataasan, ay maghahari sa usapin ng paligsahan.*

#### **COSPONSORSHIP REMARKS OF SENATOR CAYETANO (P)**

Senator Cayetano (P) expressed her support for Carlos Yulo, citing the influence gymnastics had on her as a varsity volleyball player in U.P. at the age of 15. She recalled that the gymnastics competition of the 1981 Southeast Asian Games was held in the Philippines, specifically in the U.P. Gym where she was training. She stated that Bea Lucero was the star of the show back then. She stated that she was star-struck when she saw 11-year-old Bea Lucero who could only be seen on television at the time.

She stated that Carlos Yulo, his teammates Juancho Miguel Besana and Justine Ace De Leon, and the president of the Gymnastics Association of the Philippines, Cynthia Carrion, have inspired everyone, including other athletes, youth, and legislators. She noted that Carlos' discipline entails five to six hours of daily training in Japan, away from his family and loved ones. She explained that whenever the Senate recognizes dedicated athletes, it is to show that they are the type of Filipinos they wish to support and cheer for.

She thanked Carlos and his teammates and encouraged them to continue working hard in order to become the type of Filipino athlete that their countrymen would be proud of. She stated that people stop to watch them compete at their best in their chosen sport because it inspires pride.

#### **MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR VILLANUEVA**

Senator Villanueva manifested that Senators Legarda, Villar (M), Tulfo, and Binay would submit their cosponsorship speeches on Proposed Senate Resolution No. 458 for insertion into the *Journal and Records of the Senate*.

#### **COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR BINAY**

Pursuant to the manifestation of Senator Villanueva, following is the cosponsorship speech of Senator Binay on Proposed Senate Resolution No. 458:

It is my privilege and honor to cosponsor this Senate resolution honoring and commending Carlos Edriel Yulo for his numerous achievements and for being one of the finest gymnasts of the Philippines.

Last year, Caloy won three gold medals in the 9th Asian Artistic Gymnastics Championships in Doha, Qatar. Not only that, but he also clinched a silver and a bronze in the 51<sup>st</sup> FIG Artistic Gymnastics World Championships at the M&S Bank Arena in Liverpool, England.

*Nakikiisa ako sa ating buong sambayanan sa pagkilala ng tagumpay ni Caloy.*

Time and again, he showed the exceptional talent and world-class skills of Filipino athletes on a global stage.

*Siya ay isang inspirasyon hindi lamang para sa ating mga kababayang atleta kung hindi para na rin sa bawat Pilipinong nais patunayan ang kanilang mga sarili sa ano mang larangan.*



He made our country proud and showed the world the Filipino people's indomitable will and unflinching spirit.

In view of the foregoing, it is with utmost pride that I sponsor this resolution commending Carlos Edriel Yulo for his numerous achievements and for being one of the best gymnasts that our country produced.

*Mabuhay ka Caloy at mabuhay ang atletang Pilipino!*

### **COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR DELA ROSA**

In cosponsoring Proposed Senate Resolution No. 458, Senator Dela Rosa delivered the following speech:

It is my honor to cosponsor Senate Resolution No. 458: "RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING CARLOS EDRIEL POQUIZ YULO FOR RAISING THE PHILIPPINE FLAG AS ONE OF THE BEST GYMNASTS THE PHILIPPINES HAS PRODUCED THEREBY HONORING THE COUNTRY WITH ACCOLADES IN HIS QUEST FOR EXCELLENCE IN GYMNASTICS."

"Winning takes talent; to repeat takes character." These are words from John Wooden, who was an American basketball coach and player. And what Carlos Yulo gives us is an example of both talent and character. He possessed the talent to win once, but more importantly, he possessed the strength of character to win again and again.

Recently named as the Philippines' Top Gymnast, Caloy has brought with him medal after medal for every time he has competed. When he competed in the 9th Artistic Gymnastics Senior Asian Championships, he bagged three gold medals and one silver. In the 2022 Southeast Asian Games in Vietnam, he emerged as our country's most bemedaled athlete, winning five gold medals and two silvers. While in the 51st FIG Artistic Gymnastics World Championships in Liverpool England, he won for us a silver and a bronze.

As Caloy himself has said: "*Ang kalaban po talaga ay 'yung sarili. Hindi kasi pare-parehas 'yung araw. May araw na pagkagising mo motivated ka, tapos kinabukasan, parang wala kang gana. 'Yung mga araw na walang gana ang pinakamahirap na napagdaanan ko. Okay na akong matalo sa kompetisyon, 'wag lang akong matalo sa sarili ko.'*"

*Kay Carlos Yulo ang taos-pusong pasasalamat ng buong Senado at ng buong bansa dahil sa kanyang araw-araw na pagpili at pagpasya, na ang mangingibabaw ay hindi ang kanyang pagod at kagustuhang sumuko, kundi ang kanyang husay at tibay ng loob.* Indeed, he is a winner, but most important of all, he is a person of character.

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

Senator Go stated that it was with great pride and honor that he was cosponsoring Proposed Resolution No. 458.

He stated that Carlos Yulo made the nation proud through his dedication, hard work, and passion, which led him to achieve incredible feats in the sport of gymnastics, and that he was pleased that the Senate was celebrating his achievements that day.

He recalled that in 2022, Carlos Yulo became the first Filipino to win five gold medals ended his successful campaign at the Southeast Asian Games. He stated that Carlos was regarded as one of the finest gymnasts to have ever participated in the SEA Games.

He further stated that Mr. Yulo's unwavering commitment to excellence has inspired every Filipino, as his dedication, hard work, and perseverance have left an indelible mark on the history of Philippine gymnastics. He added that the numerous victories and record-breaking performances of Mr. Yulo in various international sporting competitions are a testament to his passion and talent.

As chairperson of the Senate Committee on Sports, he reaffirmed his unwavering support for all athletes, including Carlos Yulo. He also assured them that government officials would fight for the rights and welfare of the Filipino athletes as part of ongoing efforts to restore the Philippines' glory and solidify its position as an Asian sports powerhouse. He stated that he would continue to advocate for the grassroots program that supports Filipino athletes. He then congratulated Carlos Yulo and his team mates, who were in the Session Hall that day, and expressed his hope that they would continue to excel and leave their mark on international sports.

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

In cosponsoring Proposed Senate Resolution No. 458, Senator Revilla congratulated and commended the pride of the Philippines, Carlos Edriel Yulo, who is widely regarded as one of the greatest athletes of his generation and arguably the most accomplished gymnast the country has ever produced.

He stated that Carlos Yulo continues to bring honor to the country because his greatest aspiration is to carry the national flag and raise it on the international stage. He said that it is a source of great pride that Filipino athletes are given the opportunity to represent the country, and it is even more gratifying to see them strive for victory. He emphasized that because Carlos Yulo devotes all of his strength, skill, and dedication to the sport, his victory is also the victory of the Filipinos and places the country on the international stage, proving that whenever a Filipino goes, his or her talents and abilities will shine. He then congratulated Carlos Yulo for his accomplishments and encouraged the Filipino athletes to keep their head up high.

#### **COAUTHORS**

Senator Villanueva manifested that all senators are coauthors of Proposed Senate Resolution No. 458.

#### **ADOPTION OF PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 458**

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, Proposed Senate Resolution No. 458, taking into consideration Proposed Senate Resolution Nos. 23, 248, 270, 276, 281, and 292, was adopted by the Body, subject to style.

#### **SUSPENSION OF SESSION**

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, the session was suspended.

*It was 3:43 p.m.*

#### **RESUMPTION OF SESSION**

At 5:16 p.m., the session was resumed.

#### **REFERENCE OF BUSINESS**

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

#### **BILLS ON FIRST READING**

Senate Bill No. 1815, entitled

**AN ACT TO REGULATE PUBLIC SOLICITATION PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR  
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**



Introduced by Senator Tulfo

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

Senate Bill No. 1816, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTING A SYSTEM OF COMBAT PAY AND COMBAT INCENTIVE PAY OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES (AFP), THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE (PNP) AND THE PHILIPPINE COAST GUARD (PCG), SETTING THE RATES THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Tulfo

**To the Committees on National Defense and Security, Peace, Unification and Reconciliation; Public Order and Dangerous Drugs; and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1817, entitled

AN ACT PROMOTING THE MENTAL HEALTH OF EMPLOYEES AND PROVIDING FOR MENTAL HEALTH LEAVE AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Tulfo

**To the Committees on Labor, Employment and Human Resource Development; and Health and Demography**

Senate Bill No. 1818, entitled

VIROLOGY AND VACCINE INSTITUTE OF PHILIPPINES ACT

Introduced by Senator Tulfo

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

Senate Bill No. 1819, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE COMMUNITY-DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT APPROACH AS A NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND SOCIAL PROTECTION, ESTABLISHING FOR THE PURPOSE THE CDD KNOWLEDGE AND RESOURCE INSTITUTE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Tulfo

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

Senate Bill No. 1820, entitled

AN ACT GIVING SENIOR CITIZENS A 20% DISCOUNT ON TRAVEL TAX, FURTHER AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7432, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "AN ACT TO MAXIMIZE THE CONTRIBUTION

OF SENIOR CITIZENS TO NATION BUILDING, GRANT BENEFITS AND SPECIAL PRIVILEGES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

Introduced by Senator Tulfo

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

Senate Bill No. 1821, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS IN CRISIS SITUATION (AICS) PROGRAM AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Tulfo

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

Senate Bill No. 1822, entitled

AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS SERVICE (IAS) OF THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE (PNP), AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8551, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE “PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE REFORM AND REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1998”

Introduced by Senator Marcos

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

Senate Bill No. 1823, entitled

AN ACT CONSOLIDATING THE LOAN ALLOCATION PROVIDED FOR AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES CREDIT AND AGRARIAN REFORM BENEFICIARIES, AND INCREASING THE PENALTIES ON LENDING INSTITUTIONS FOR NON-COMPLIANCE AND UNDERCOMPLIANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10000, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE “AGRI-AGRA REFORM CREDIT ACT OF 2009,” AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 6 AND SECTION 10 THEREOF, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Marcos

**To the Committees on Agriculture, Food and Agrarian Reform; and Banks, Financial Institutions and Currencies**

Senate Bill No. 1824, entitled

AN ACT PROMOTING LAND VALUE CAPTURE IN THE PHILIPPINES, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Marcos

**To the Committees on Local Government; Justice and Human Rights; and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1825, entitled

AN ACT MANDATING ANNUAL PSYCHIATRIC, PSYCHOLOGICAL DRUG AND PHYSICAL TESTS FOR POLICE OFFICERS, AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6975, AS AMENDED, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Marcos

**To the Committee on Public Order and Dangerous Drugs**

Senate Bill No. 1826, entitled

AN ACT TO DESIGNATE THE FIFTEENTH (15<sup>TH</sup>) DAY OF JULY OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL NON-WORKING HOLIDAY IN THE CORDILLERA ADMINISTRATIVE REGION TO BE KNOWN AS CORDILLERA DAY, MANDATING CONCERNED GOVERNMENT AGENCIES TO CONDUCT EVENTS DURING ITS OBSERVANCE

Introduced by Senator Lapid

**To the Committee Local Government**

Senate Bill No. 1827, 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"

Introduced by Senator Lapid

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

Senate Bill No. 1828, entitled

AN ACT TO DESIGNATE THE FOURTH (4<sup>TH</sup>) DAY OF APRIL OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL NON-WORKING HOLIDAY IN THE CITY OF ANTIPOLLO, PROVINCE OF RIZAL, TO BE KNOWN AS "ARAW NG ANTIPOLLO," IN COMMEMORATION OF ITS CITYHOOD ANNIVERSARY

Introduced by Senator Lapid

**To the Committee on Local Government**

Senate Bill No. 1829, entitled

AN ACT CONVERTING THE MUNICIPALITY OF LA TRINIDAD, PROVINCE OF BENGUET INTO A COMPONENT CITY TO BE KNOWN AS THE CITY OF LA TRINIDAD

Introduced by Senator Marcos

**To the Committee on Rules**



Senate Bill No. 1830, entitled

AN ACT REMOVING THE EXPIRATION PERIOD OF THE CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE, FURTHER AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 97 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9165, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "COMPREHENSIVE DANGEROUS DRUGS ACT OF 2022," AS AMENDED

Introduced by Senator Dela Rosa

**To the Committees on Public Order and Dangerous Drugs**

Senate Bill No. 1831, entitled

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

Introduced by Senator Dela Rosa

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

### RESOLUTIONS

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 402, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTED AIRPORT SERVICE FAILURE THAT CRIPPLED INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC FLIGHT OPERATIONS WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF REVIEWING ALL THE NAVIGATIONAL AND COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT INSTALLED IN ALL AIRPORTS AND SEAPORTS

Introduced by Senator Binay

**To the Committee on Public Services**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 403, entitled

A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE AIR TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SYSTEM GLITCH AT THE NINOY AQUINO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT LAST JANUARY 1, 2023, WHICH CAUSED IMMEASURABLE ECONOMIC LOSSES AND INCONVENIENCES TO AIRLINE PASSENGERS

Introduced by Senator Pimentel III

**To the Committee on Public Services**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 404, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING THE ATENEO DE MANILA UNIVERSITY FOR THEIR EXEMPLARY PERFORMANCE AND



WINNING THE CHAMPIONSHIP IN THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED WORLD UNIVERSITIES DEBATING CHAMPIONSHIP 2023 HELD IN MADRID, SPAIN FROM DECEMBER 27, 2022 TO JANUARY 3, 2023

Introduced by Senator Pimentel III

**To the Committee on Rules**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 405, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING DAVID AFRICA AND TOBI LEUNG OF THE ATENEO DE MANILA UNIVERSITY'S DEBATE SOCIETY FOR WINNING THE 2023 WORLD UNIVERSITIES DEBATING CHAMPIONSHIP HELD IN MADRID, SPAIN

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

**To the Committee on Rules**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 406, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND RECOGNIZING DAVID DEMITRI AFRICA AND TOBY LEUNG FOR THEIR HISTORIC FIRST WIN FOR THE PHILIPPINES AT THE 43<sup>RD</sup> WORLD UNIVERSITIES DEBATING CHAMPIONSHIP HELD IN MADRID, SPAIN

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

**To the Committee on Rules**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 407, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING FILIPINO SWISS PROFESSOR KERSTIN NOËLLE GORRA-VOKINGER FOR WINNING THE SWISS SCIENCE PRIZE LATSIS FOR HER WORK ON CANCER MEDICINE ACCESS

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

**To the Committee on Rules**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 408, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING THE PENTECOSTAL MISSIONARY CHURCH OF CHRIST (4<sup>TH</sup> WATCH) ON THE OCCASION OF ITS INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY DAY

Introduced by Senator Villar (C)

**To the Committee on Rules**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 409, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING MELVIN "GRINGO"



JERUSALEM FOR HONORING THE COUNTRY WITH A WORLD BOXING ORGANIZATION (WBO) WORLD MINIMUM TITLE AT THE EDION ARENA IN OSAKA, JAPAN ON 6 JANUARY 2023

Introduced by Senator Zubiri

**To the Committee on Rules**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 410, entitled

RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND CONGRATULATING MELVIN JERUSALEM FOR HIS OUTSTANDING VICTORY OVER MASATAKA TANIGUCHI TO BECOME THE NEW WBO MINIMUMWEIGHT CHAMPION

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

**To the Committee on Rules**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 411, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING THE PHILIPPINE TEAM FOR THEIR EXCEPTIONAL PERFORMANCE AT THE 10TH MOMBASA OPEN TONG-IL MOO DO INTERNATIONAL MARTIAL ARTS CHAMPIONSHIP

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

**To the Committee on Rules**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 412, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING THE ATENEO DEBATE SOCIETY AND THE ATENEO DE MANILA UNIVERSITY FOR THEIR HISTORICAL FEAT OF WINNING THE 2023 WORLD UNIVERSITIES DEBATING CHAMPIONSHIP

Introduced by Senator Lapid

**To the Committee on Rules**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 413, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING THE PHILIPPINE ROBOTICS TEAM FOR THEIR SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN IN THE 2022 WORLD ROBOT GAMES

Introduced by Senator Lapid

**To the Committee on Rules**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 414, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING THE ASIAN MATHSCI LEAGUE, INC. (AMSLI) – PHILIPPINES FOR THEIR SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN



IN THE INTERNATIONAL JUNIOR MATH OLYMPIAD AND THE VANDA  
SCIENCE GLOBAL FINALS HELD IN SINGAPORE

Introduced by Senator Lapid

**To the Committee on Rules**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 415, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING FILIPINA FENCER  
JULIANA GOMEZ FOR HER SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN AT THE 2022 WEST  
JAVA FENCING CHALLENGE, HELD IN BOGOR, INDONESIA

Introduced by Senator Lapid

**To the Committee on Rules**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 416, entitled

RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING DAVID DEMITRI  
AFRICA AND TOBI LEUNG OF THE ATENEO DE MANILA UNIVERSITY  
FOR WINNING THE WORLD UNIVERSITIES DEBATING CHAMPIONSHIP  
(WUDC) 2023 LAST JANUARY 3, 2023 IN MADRID, SPAIN

Introduced by Senator Estrada

**To the Committee on Rules**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 417, entitled

RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING DAVID AFRICA AND  
TOBI LEUNG FOR BEING THE FIRST EVER FILIPINO DEBATERS TO WIN  
THE WORLD UNIVERSITIES DEBATING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Introduced by Senator Hontiveros

**To the Committee on Rules**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 418, entitled

RESOLUTION URGING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT  
AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE TECHNICAL ISSUE THAT  
AFFECTED THE COMMUNICATIONS, NAVIGATION, SURVEILLANCE/AIR  
TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT (CNS/ATM) SYSTEMS OF THE CIVIL AVIATION  
AUTHORITY OF THE PHILIPPINES (CAAP) ON NEW YEAR'S DAY OF 2023,  
TO THE DETRIMENT OF AIR PASSENGERS AND PHILIPPINE AIR  
TRANSPORT SYSTEM

Introduced by Senator Legarda

**To the Committee on Public Services**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 419, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND RECOGNIZING FILIPINO BOXER



MELVIN "GRINGO" OLIVA JERUSALEM FOR WINNING THE WORLD BOXING ORGANIZATION (WBO) MINIMUMWEIGHT BELT CHAMPION

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

**To the Committee on Rules**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 420, entitled

RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND COMMENDING THE 2022 OUTSTANDING GOVERNMENT WORKERS FOR THEIR DEMONSTRATION OF EXEMPLARY PUBLIC SERVICE

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

**To the Committee on Rules**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 421, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE VULNERABILITIES OF THE ENTIRE AIRPORT INFRASTRUCTURE SYSTEM, GIVEN THE RECENT TECHNICAL GLITCH AFFECTING THE COMMUNICATIONS, NAVIGATION AND SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS FOR AIR TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT (CNS-ATM), WITH THE END VIEW OF SAFEGUARDING OUR ECONOMIC RECOVERY INITIATIVES FOR THE TOURISM AND TRANSPORTATION SECTORS, IMPROVING SECURITY AND REDUNDANCY MEASURES INVOLVING SIMILAR INCIDENTS, AND ENSURING THE SAFETY, CONVENIENCE AND RIGHTS OF AFFECTED AIR PASSENGERS

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

**To the Committee on Public Services**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 422, entitled

RESOLUTION URGING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION INTO REPORTS OF VIOLENCE, LAND-GRABBING, AND ILLEGAL LOGGING AND QUARRYING NEGATIVELY IMPACTING THE MASUNGI GEORESERVE, AND THE REST OF THE UPPER MARIKINA RIVER BASIN PROTECTED LANDSCAPE

Introduced by Senator Legarda

**To the Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change**

**SUSPENSION OF SESSION**

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

*It was 5:25 p.m.*

**RESUMPTION OF SESSION**

At 5:26 p.m., the session was resumed.

**PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF SENATOR CAYETANO (P)**

Rising on a matter of personal and collective privilege, Senator Cayetano (P) spoke on the proliferation of the prohibited fruity vape flavors in the local market and packaging that unduly appealed to minors. The full text of her speech follows:

My speech is about vape flavors and designs which are attracting our youth.

Just a quick background, on December 12, 2022, barely a month ago, we marked the 10<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the passage of the Sin Tax Law (Republic Act No. 10351). I—along with officers and former officers of the Department of Health, health advocates, and even youth leaders who have worked for the passage of the Sin Tax Law—was there to celebrate this landmark bill.

We will recall that this Senate has taken a strong position on taxing products that are harmful to health, particularly products that targeted the youth, and we used the increased prices of sin products to prevent such access.

So, *marami akong kilala na maraming kwento*. And we have the data now to show that with the sin tax that we have imposed over the ten years, *nabawasan ang naninigarilyo*. So that is good news for us. I wanted to report that because this is part of our oversight function. We have been effective in lowering the number of people who smoke cigarettes.

But I go now to a new product, a novel product which is the vapes—the vape and the e-cigarette—and in that photo that was just being flashed, it shows me holding a sample of a vape product.

*At this point, a photo of her holding a vape product during a past privilege speech was flashed on the screen.*

Our colleagues are familiar with the position I have taken from the very start that the E-Cigarettes Regulation Law that we passed repealed the very important provisions in the Sin Tax Law, which would have ensured or further prevented the youth from being exposed to the vice of vaping.

The provisions that I am referring to under the Sin Tax Law were (1) the jurisdiction of the FDA; (2) the age of 21 *na binabaan sa* 18 under the E-Cigarettes Regulation Law; and (3) the flavors.

This speech is about the flavors. We have lengthy discussions and debates and I think many of the senators will agree that even if one is a non-smoker, we are obviously human beings *na kapag may nakita tayong maganda sa mata*, we are attracted; *kung maganda sa ating pandinig*, we are attracted; and when it is something that is flavorful, we are attracted.

In the Sin Tax Law, the provision of law was that only tobacco and plain menthol are allowed. Under the E-Cigarette Regulation Law this was amended. *Tinanggal itong* very clear prohibition *na ito* and the provision that was passed is this: “The sale of vaporized nicotine and non-nicotine products and novel tobacco products that are packaged, labeled, presented, or marketed with flavor descriptors that are proven to unduly appeal particularly to minors shall be prohibited. A flavor descriptor is presumed to unduly appeal to minors if it includes a reference to a fruit, candy brand, dessert, or cartoon character.”

I will repeat: *Kung ako ho sana ang nasunod*, we should have retained the Sin Tax provision that simply said, “No flavors are allowed except the regular flavors tobacco and menthol.” *Ngayon*, with this Section 12, it says that we are regulating it. *Bawal ang* flavors that are appealing to the youth, and they presumed that flavors are unduly appealing to the youth if there is a reference to fruit, candy brand, dessert, or cartoon character.

*I direct the attention of the Body to my next slide.*

*At this point, photos of three fruity vape flavors were flashed on the screen.*

These are the flavors now. *Hindi ba direct violation iyan? Ano iyan, melon? Hindi ba prutas iyon? Ano pa ba iyon kung hindi prutas? What are these photos in the containers? It is a skate board. Sino ba ang nag-i-skateboard na may edad? Well, there are a few, actually, but predominantly skateboarders are young people. The colors are bright—orange, purple, green. May picture ng melon; may picture ng blueberry. And may I ask the Majority Leader to help me out—lemon iyong nasa dilaw, tama ba? Mango? It is still a fruit.*

This is very clear. I read the provision of law—a flavor descriptor is presumed to unduly appeal to minors if it includes a reference to a fruit. *Hindi ho ba reference to a fruit ito? TOHA—Toha ba iyan? All right.*

Under the E-Cig Law that I did not vote for but I tried to strengthen because I knew *na ito na iyon. Dito tayo dadating.*

So, against my objection, it is the DTI that has the jurisdiction. I will also inform our Secretary, but I assume that my speech will be delivered to the proper entities. *Ito na, it is a direct violation. What are we doing about it?*

(Next slide) Look at this—Hello Kitty. *Alam pa ni Majority Leader—My Melody ba iyon, right? Alam na alam, and then Pokemon.*

So, this is what we are confronted with and talking about in last week's hearing. Sen. JV Ejercito had a hearing on PhilHealth where we were discussing what else do we have to impose to ensure that PhilHealth can deliver financial support to our health institutions. On the one hand, *nagpapakahirap tayo supporting our health workers, and then on the other hand, okey lang sa atin na may ganito. Sinabi ko na po na ito talaga ang mangyayari sa atin.*

M&Ms and Skittles—those are the packaging materials of the products that are out there.”

## MANIFESTATION OF SENATE PRESIDENT ZUBIRI

At this point, Senate President Zubiri proposed that the Body adopt an unnumbered resolution condemning all the products mentioned by Senator Cayetano (P) that were being sold on the market and imploring the DTI to strictly enforce the Vape Law.

## PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF SENATOR CAYETANO (P)

*(Continuation)*

We appreciate the very proactive response from the Senate. Anyway, I do not know if I have more photos, but I would like to put this on record now. Currently, we have an estimated 2.7 million Filipinos who are using e-cigarettes or vaping devices. A few weeks or months ago, I got wind of the fact that there is now such a thing as disposable vapes, which will make it also very cheap to the youth and to Filipinos. There is also more and more research coming out showing the harmful effects of e-cigarettes and vapes, and there is even one report that I read that very distinctly said that it appears to be more harmful and more damaging to the lungs than cigarette smoking.

That is all I have been trying to say from the very start. This is a new product. *Hinay-hinay lang sa pag-e-endorse. Iyong lang naman iyong ayokong mangyari. We treat this product as the savior when there is no evidence yet that it is safer for the youth and even for the senior citizens.*

Again, I cannot control the behavior of adults. But it is still our job when we legislate that we do not allow this product to be marketed indiscriminately to make it appear as if it is safe. And now we can see the evidence that they are really targeting the youth.

Why do they target the youth? Because they are their future market. The minute they hook a young person, *kliyente mo na iyan* for the next 20, 30, or 40 years. That is why they are targeting it this way.

In 2020, we have already recorded 2,807 cases of e-cigarette or vaping use-associated lung injury, otherwise known as EVALI. But this is not in the Philippines per se. I am not sure if this

is U.S. or worldwide because this is Johns Hopkins. But the point is, documented *na rin*. There is already a name to this disease—e-cigarette or vaping use-associated lung injury, otherwise known as EVALI. That is now an ailment that is now being monitored carefully.

So, I conclude, and I thank our colleagues and our Senate President for the immediate response. *Hindi pa tapos iyong speech ko, may aksiyon na. Maraming salamat po.*

As chairperson of the Senate Committee on Sustainable Development Goals, Innovation and Futures Thinking, it is our responsibility to track our progress for these 17 goals. And goal number three is good health—ensuring healthy lives and promoting wellbeing for all at all ages. We cannot close our eyes to the fact that this product which we have legalized—*matagal na nating na-legalize* because we did not prohibit it. And yet we passed a legislation that weakened the regulation out there.

I will continue to bring this to the Body's attention so that we can do our little part in ensuring that it does not do further damage to our youth and to the Filipino people.

### INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR VILLANUEVA

Senator Villanueva began by adverting to page 17 of the *Senate Journal* dated December 13, 2021, which indicated that he voted with Senator Cayetano (P) to place DTI's jurisdiction under FDA, but voted strongly against flavors and the age requirement.

In light of the reported 2,807 EVALI cases and 68 deaths, Senator Villanueva inquired as to the number of individuals or entities penalized in relation to the sale of flavored vapes. Senator Cayetano (P) responded that she had not read any reports on the matter, but that she hoped that the upcoming hearing would reveal any relevant information. She emphasized that regardless of which agency would be designated to take the lead, they must always prioritize health protection.

She explained that she was opposed to the DTI having jurisdiction over the products because she believed that its mandate is to promote trade and industry, whereas the DOH's mandate is to promote health.

Recalling her early years as a lawyer when she represented a soft drink company, she stated that the FDA would handle consumer complaints regarding the product's ingredients, while the DTI would handle consumer complaints unrelated to the product itself.

Senator Villanueva explained that he voted with Senator Cayetano (P) on the vape law because he believed it to be a matter of public health. Moreover, he recalled that during the bill's interpellations in the Eighteenth Congress, he raised a number of issues that needed to be monitored, including the sale of the products within the perimeters of schools and universities, the prohibition of the products' availability in a variety of flavors, and the prohibition of the use of girls for product promotion. He wondered what the DTI had done about the matter after learning that at a recent event, promo girls for the services encouraged young people to try vaping.

Senator Cayetano (P) expressed exasperation regarding the situation. She recalled that when she visited the U. K. to study how they dealt with the problem of cigarettes and vapes, especially among the youth, the public health officers informed her that they had successfully implemented programs to prevent the use of cigarettes among the youth, such as "no sales at point of purchase" and prohibiting the display of cigarettes and vapes in convenience stores. She added that in other countries, such as Canada, sin products are not sold in grocery stores but rather in stand-alone stores.

Due to the low prevalence among young people in the U.K., she stated that older smokers who are dependent on cigarettes may benefit from switching to vaping. However, she stated that the number of people using e-cigarettes spiked in 2019 because there was no evidence that vaping was harmful.

Agreeing to the observations of Senator Cayetano (P), Senator Villanueva expressed concern regarding the influence of flavored vaping products on young people. He stated that he would support the Senate President's proposal to draft an unnumbered resolution denouncing the programs and products of certain companies that violate the Vaping Law.

Asked whether the DTI has a mechanism if it fails in its initiative to monitor the selling of vape products, Senator Cayetano (P) adverted to Section 23 of the Vape Regulation Law, which states, "Online sellers and distributors of Vaporized Nicotine and Non-Nicotine Products or Novel Tobacco Products and online platforms that are noncompliant with Section 8 of this Act shall be ordered by the DTI to immediately suspend trading of such product and shall be liable for the fines and penalties imposed under this section. Suspension shall continue until the manufacturer, seller, or online platform has complied with the requirements provided under Section 8 of this Act."

### **INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR ESTRADA**

In reply to Senator Estrada's query as to which was more harmful, cigarette smoking or vaping, Senator Cayetano (P) stated that Congress could not endorse the use of vapes, e-cigarettes, and the other related products because there was insufficient evidence to prove that they were actually safer than cigarette. While Philip Morris and other companies advertised that vaping and e-cigarettes were safer than cigarette smoking, she told the Body that other health advocates argued that the claim had not yet been validated. She believed that if companies wanted to prove that vaping and e-cigarettes are harm-reduction products, they should present their evidence to the FDA. She lamented, however, that companies refused to follow the process and did not register it as a harm-reduction product, instead advertising in a manner that violates the law.

Senator Estrada observed that many cigarette smokers, including those in the Senate, switched to vaping thinking it was less harmful than cigarette smoking. Senator Cayetano (P) agreed with Senator Estrada's observation that cigarette smokers were switching to vaping, including former Senator Recto who defended the e-cigarette regulation bill, because he felt healthier using the new product. While she was pleased that people were feeling better, she cautioned that there was no evidence that it was actually healthier than cigarette smoking. She added that adults could believe whatever they want, but legislators should not approve the use of vapes and e-cigarettes until science can clearly prove which product is healthier. She reiterated that the manufacturers should prove to the FDI their claims and register their product as a harm-reduction tool.

In this regard, Senator Cayetano (P) shared with the Body a January 25 article claiming that vaping, like smoking, causes lung damage, to wit: "E-cigarettes Potentially Harmful—PET imaging shows greater lung inflammation in e-cigarette users than in cigarette smokers."

As to the source of the research, Senator Cayetano (P) replied that it came from a peer-reviewed publication by the Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging based in the United States. Senator Estrada believed that vapes and e-cigarettes contain more chemicals than tobacco.

On the proposal to provide a separate smoking room for vape users, Senator Cayetano (P) stated that while establishments were facing a dilemma regarding the provision of another smoking room for vape users, she also did not have an answer to the problem because the E-Cigarette Regulation Law does not mandate the establishment of an e-vaping facility.

Senator Estrada asked whether picture-based warnings could be added to vape products if it is proven that vaping is harmful to one's health, citing the presentation's images of Hello Kitty and M&M chocolates. In reply, Senator Cayetano (P) responded that the law requires picture-based warnings, but the images in vape and e-cigarette products did not include graphic warnings. She stated that she would refer the matter to the DTI for action.

Senator Estrada stated that he would support the earlier proposed unnumbered resolution.



## INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR PIMENTEL

To Senator Pimentel's query whether the products that were mentioned were available in the Philippine market, Senator Cayetano (P) answered in the affirmative. She said that she had placed an order online for such products and would show them to the Members once they arrived. She also told the Body that advertisements promoting vaping products and devices were everywhere, even popping up in some payment apps that she was using.

When asked if the products in her presentation, such as M&M's, Skittles, Häagen-Dazs, and Oreo, were available in stores, Senator Cayetano (P) replied that the particular items in her presentation could be found online, but similar products were available in physical stores. She said that she would have her staff purchase a few so that they can also be checked.

Senator Pimentel surmised that companies that use a chocolate company's trademark, such as M&M's or Skittles, to mark their products or devices were breaking the law. Senator Cayetano (P) agreed.

Senator Pimentel believed that it was time to hold accountable the government agencies authorized or given power to regulate vaping, particularly the DTI, if it could be clearly established that vaping products, which appeal to the youth use trademarks associated with candies, desserts, and some consumable items. He cited the need for Congress to find out the real situation on the ground, such as how unregulated the vaping industry was despite the law. He pointed out that Congress imposed a strict rule by limiting the flavors to two, but relaxed it by prescribing the prohibited descriptors rather than providing a positive list. Senator Cayetano (P) said the provision should be clarified because the intent was to allow only tobacco flavor and menthol.

At this point, Senate President Zubiri stated that clearly, the products were illegal and should be banned, and that companies should follow the law or face penalties.

Senator Pimentel agreed, and suggested that the Senate pass a resolution requiring the DTI to explain the situation.

Senate President Zubiri also suggested that the speech of Senator Cayetano (P) be referred to the Committee on Sustainable Development Goals, Innovation and Futures Thinking, which she chaired, with the Committee on Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship as the secondary committee. He added that after the investigation, the committees could propose more stringent measures. He proposed passing the resolution within the day's session so that it could be sent to the DTI the next day.

Senator Pimentel stated that he would no longer prolong the discussion considering the clear violation of law. Stating that DTI has the authority to regulate the vaping industry because Congress has entrusted it to handle the matter, he hoped that its officials would be able to explain their position during the committee hearings.

Senate President Zubiri observed that legislators debated and passed the best possible laws; however, those were not implemented by the Executive department.

At this point, Senator Cayetano (P) presented to the Body photos of colorful vape accessories and bags which entice the youth. She revealed that her committee report contained provisions that were not included in the final version of the E-Cigarette Regulation Law, including a provision restricting advertising sponsorship and promotion using accessories such as, but not limited to clips, bags, folders, and lanyards that feature colorful, hip, and cool images that appeal to the youth.





**REFERRAL OF SPEECH TO COMMITTEE**

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Chair referred the privilege speech of Senator Cayetano (P), together with all the interpellations and manifestations thereon, to the Committees on Sustainable Development Goals, Innovation and Futures Thinking; and Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship.

**ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION**

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body adopted an unnumbered resolution urging the agencies concerned, especially the Department of Trade and Industry, to look into the illegal sale and marketing of vape flavors and designs targeting the youth.

Senate President Zubiri instructed the Senate Secretary to prepare the numbered resolution on the next session day, with all senators as coauthors, and thereafter furnish a copy of the same to the Department of Trade and Industry and other agencies concerned.

**CHANGE OF REFERRAL**

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body approved the change of primary committee referral of Senate Bill No. 182 (*Citizen Service Program Act*) from the Committee on Basic Education to the Committee on Higher, Technical and Vocational Education, while retaining the secondary and tertiary referrals.

He manifested that Senate Bill No. 182 would then assigned to the Subcommittee on the Revitalized Reserve Officers Training Corps Act, with Sen. Ronald "Bato" Dela Rosa as chairperson, pursuant to Section 18 of the *Rules of the Senate* and per instruction of Senator Escudero, chairperson of the Committee on Higher, Technical and Vocational Education.

**ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION**

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

*It was 6:23 p.m.*

I hereby certify to the correctness of the foregoing.

Approved on February 7, 2023

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

