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**SENATE**  
**Pasay City**

# JOURNAL

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TUESDAY, 7 MARCH 2023

NINETEENTH CONGRESS  
FIRST REGULAR SESSION

PREPARED BY THE  
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SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES

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**SESSION NO. 58**  
Tuesday, March 7, 2023

**CALL TO ORDER**

At 3:07 p.m., the Senate President, Hon. Juan Miguel “Migz” F. Zubiri, called the session to order.

**PRAYER**

Sen. Christopher Lawrence T. Go led the prayer, to wit:

Dear God, dear Allah, dear Almighty One:

As we gather here today in this hallowed Chamber, we bow our heads in humility and seek Your guidance and wisdom. We ask for Your divine intervention and wisdom as we perform our sworn duties as servants of the sovereign Filipino people.

Lord, we pray for our nation, that we may be a beacon of peace, unity, and prosperity. We pray for our leaders, that they may be guided by Your wisdom and be strengthened in their resolve to lead our country towards a brighter future.

*Dalangin po namin ang aming mga kababayang Pilipino na mapangalagaan sila at ligtas sa panganib.* We ask for Your protection over our nation and our people, that we may be free from fear and violence so that we shall continue to build a just and humane society.

*Panginoon, alam po namin na sa Inyong biyaya at awa, kayang-kaya namin bilang isang matatag at nagkakaisang bansa ang mga hamon na susubok sa katatagan ng aming pagka-Pilipino.* Hangad po namin ang Inyong patnubay sa lahat ng aming mga gawain ngayong araw at mga gagawin pa sa hinaharap.

*Hinihiling po namin ang lahat ng ito sa Inyong Banal na Pangalan.*

*Amen.*



**ROLL CALL**

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

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

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

Senator Cayetano (A) was on official business to attend meetings in Singapore in his capacity as chairperson of the Senate Committee on Government Corporations and Public Enterprises, as stated in the March 7, 2023 letter of his chief of staff.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE PRESENCE OF GUESTS**

Senator Villanueva acknowledged the presence in the gallery of the following guests:

- Turkish Ambassador Niyazi Evren Akyol and company;
- Ms. Julie Uychiat, the top finisher in the 2023 World Marathon Challenge-Women's Category, with her husband, Mr. James Guschl;
- Mr. Christopher Javelosa and Ms. Mayra Javelosa;
- Rep. John Tracy Cagas of the Lone District of Davao del Sur;
- Rep. Ian Amatong of the Third District of Zamboanga del Norte;
- Mayor Tamar Olaivar of the Municipality of Candijay in Bohol;
- Oriental Mindoro Vice Governor Ejay Falcon;
- The Islamic Council of the City of Malolos led by Hadji Yahya Gamor;
- Atty. Alizedney Ditucalan, University Chancellor and Regent of the Mindanao State University;
- Rep. Doris "Bing" Maniquiz of the 2nd District of Zambales; and
- Mayor Ronald Apostol of Cabangan, Zambales.

Senate President Zubiri welcomed the guests to the Senate.

**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. 57 (March 6, 2023) and considered it approved.

**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. 1952, entitled

AN ACT CONVERTING THE SABLAYAN-AGPANABAT-BAGACAY ROAD, A SECTION OF THE ROMBLON CIRCUMFERENTIAL ROAD, INTO A NATIONAL ROAD AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Marcos

**To the Committees on Public Works; and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1953, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SABLAYAN, PROVINCE OF OCCIDENTAL MINDORO, A TERTIARY HOSPITAL, TO BE KNOWN AS THE SABLAYAN MEDICAL CENTER, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Marcos

**To the Committee on Rules**

Senate Bill No. 1954, entitled

AN ACT CONVERTING THE ROAD WHICH STARTS AT POSNAAN, MUNICIPALITY OF AGUINALDO, PROVINCE OF IFUGAO, TRAVERSES THE MUNICIPALITY OF ALFONSO LISTA IN THE PROVINCE OF IFUGAO, AND ENDS AT THE BOUNDARY OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF AURORA IN THE PROVINCE OF ISABELA INTO A NATIONAL ROAD AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Marcos

**To the Committee on Rules**

Senate Bill No. 1955, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE DELINEATION OF THE SPECIFIC FOREST LIMITS OF THE PUBLIC DOMAIN AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

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

Senate Bill No. 1956, entitled

AN ACT CONVERTING THE CITY ROAD PASSING FROM BARANGAYS LUNA, DOLORES, MILAGRO AND TONGONAN LEADING TO LAKE DANA O IN

THE CITY OF ORMOC, PROVINCE OF LEYTE INTO NATIONAL ROAD AND  
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Marcos

**To the Committee on Rules**

Senate Bill No. 1957, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING THE PROVINCE OF AGUSAN DEL SUR AS THE HOME  
OF THE GOLDEN TARA

Introduced by Senator Marcos

**To the Committees on Culture and the Arts; and Tourism**

Senate Bill No. 1958, entitled

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

Introduced by Senator Villar (M)

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

Senate Bill No. 1959, entitled

AN ACT MANDATING THE INSTALLATION OF TIMERS IN TRAFFIC LIGHTS  
AND PEDESTRIAN LIGHTS

Introduced by Senator Villar (M)

**To the Committees on Public Works; Public Services; and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1960, entitled

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

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

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

Senate Bill No. 1961, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING AN EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES SYSTEM  
(EMSS), CREATING FOR THE PURPOSE THE NATIONAL EMSS COUNCIL,  
AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

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

Senate Bill No. 1962, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING CERTAIN SECTIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10845, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ANTI-AGRICULTURAL SMUGGLING ACT OF 2016, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Villar (C)

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

Senate Bill No. 1963, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING ANTI-AGRICULTURAL SMUGGLING COURT, GRANTING THEM EXCLUSIVE ORIGINAL JURISDICTION OVER CASES INVOLVING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Villar (C)

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

### RESOLUTIONS

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 515, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND RECOGNIZING THE NATIONAL JIU-JITSU TEAM FOR THEIR IMPRESSIVE WIN IN THE 7<sup>TH</sup> ASIAN JIU-JITSU CHAMPIONSHIP HELD LAST FEBRUARY 24 - 28, 2023 IN BANGKOK, THAILAND

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

**To the Committee on Rules**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 516, entitled

RESOLUTION COMMENDING JULIE UYCHIAT FOR BEING THE FIRST FILIPINA TO FINISH AND WIN FOUR OF THE SEVEN MARATHONS IN THE 2023 WORLD MARATHON CHALLENGE"

Introduced by Senator Binay

**To the Committee on Rules**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 518, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE BRAZEN

ASSASSINATION OF INCUMBENT NEGROS ORIENTAL GOVERNOR ROEL DEGAMO AND THE SPATE OF RECENT POLITICAL ASSASSINATION OR ATTEMPTED POLITICAL ASSASSINATIONS IN VARIOUS AREAS OF THE COUNTRY

Introduced by Senator Hontiveros

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

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 519, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING CARLOS EDRIEL POQUIZ YULO FOR HIS IMPRESSIVE MEDAL HAUL IN THE 2023 INTERNATIONAL GYMNASTICS FEDERATION (FIG) ARTISTIC GYMNASTICS WORLD CUP SERIES HELD IN DOHA, QATAR

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

**To the Committee on Rules**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 522, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING FILIPINO INTERNATIONAL MARATHON RUNNER JULIE UYCHIAT FOR BEING THE FASTEST FILIPINO TO RUN AND WIN 4 OUT OF 7 RACES IN THE 2023 WORLD MARATHON CHALLENGE

Introduced by Senator Cayetano (P)

**To the Committee on Rules**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 523, entitled

RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND SYMPATHY AND SINCERE CONDOLENCES OF THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES ON THE DEATH OF THE FORMER MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, ROBERTO VELAYO ONGPIN

Introduced by Senators Zubiri, Villanueva, Cayetano (P), and Escudero

**To the Committee on Rules**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 524, entitled

RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE TO URGE THE CLIMATE CHANGE COMMISSION TO ESTABLISH A MULTI-ACTOR PARTNERSHIP (MAP) ON THE ENHANCEMENT OF CLIMATE AND DISASTER RISK FINANCING AND INSURANCE (CDRFI) TO STRENGTHEN THE ECONOMIC RESILIENCY OF THE PHILIPPINES IN THE FACE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Introduced by Senator Ejercito

**To the Committee on Rules**



Proposed Senate Resolution No. 525, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING FILIPINO GYMNAST CARLOS EDRIEL YULO FOR COMPLETING THE 2023 FIG ARTISTIC GYMNASTICS WORLD CUP SERIES WITH A GOLD MEDAL IN THE PET FLOOR EXERCISE EVENT, A SILVER MEDAL IN THE PARALLEL BARS EVENT, AND A BRONZE MEDAL IN THE VAULT EVENT HELD IN DOHA, QATAR

Introduced by Senator Lapid

**To the Committee on Rules**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 526, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING THE PHILIPPINE TEAM FOR BAGGING FOUR GOLD AND TWO BRONZE MEDALS IN THE 2023 ASIAN JIU-JITSU CHAMPIONSHIPS IN BANGKOK, THAILAND

Introduced by Senator Lapid

**To the Committee on Rules**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 527, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING THE NATIONAL ROWING TEAM FOR THEIR EXEMPLARY PERFORMANCE AND OUSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE 2023 WORLD ROWING INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

Introduced by Senator Lapid

**To the Committee on Rules**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 528, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING FILIPINO INTERNATIONAL MASTER DANIEL QUIZON FOR HIS VICTORY IN THE AQ PRIME ASEAN CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP

Introduced by Senator Lapid

**To the Committee on Rules**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 529, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING JANRY UBAS FOR WINNING A BRONZE MEDAL IN THE MEN'S HEPTATHLON AT THE 2023 ASIAN INDOOR ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS HELD IN ASTANA, KAZAKHSTAN ON FEBRUARY 12, 2023

Introduced by Senator Lapid

**To the Committee on Rules**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 530, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING THE PHILIPPINE SQUASH TEAM AFTER BAGGING TWO GOLD MEDALS IN THE 23RD INTERNATIONAL JUMBO DOUBLES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S CUP HELD AT THE TANGLIN CLUB IN SINGAPORE ON FEBRUARY 16-19, 2023

Introduced by Senator Lapid

**To the Committee on Rules**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 531, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING E-GILAS PILIPINAS NATIONAL TEAM FOR WINNING THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN REGIONAL CROWN IN EFIBA SEASON 1 NBA 2K TOURNAMENT

Introduced by Senator Lapid

**To the Committee on Rules**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 532, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING CHRISTIAN BERNARDO AND ALVIN MORADA FOR CAPTURING A GOLD MEDAL IN THE 2023 IRAN FAJR INTERNATIONAL BADMINTON CHALLENGE HELD ON FEBRUARY 5, 2023 IN TEHRAN, IRAN

Introduced by Senator Lapid

**To the Committee on Rules**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 533, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING THE PHILIPPINE TEAM AFTER WINNING A BRONZE MEDAL IN THE FIRST FIDE CHESS OLYMPIAD FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES HELD FROM JANUARY 29 TO FEBRUARY 5, 2023 IN BELGRADE, SERBIA

Introduced by Senator Lapid

**To the Committee on Rules**

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE PRESENCE OF GUESTS**

Senator Villanueva also acknowledged the presence in the gallery of former Sen. Richard Gordon, chairman and chief executive of the Philippine Red Cross, and Ms. Gwendolyn T. Pang, secretary general of the Philippine Red Cross.

Senate President Zubiri stated that the Body felt honored to have former Senator Gordon, one of the most prolific Members of the Senate, and Turkish Ambassador Akyol as guests. He said that both guests were invited to personally receive Proposed Senate Resolution No. 480 and the personal donations from the senators for the relief efforts in Turkey where about 50,000 lives were lost due to the earthquake.

**PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 480**

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body considered Proposed Senate Resolution No. 480, entitled

**RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND SYMPATHIES AND CONDOL-  
ENCES OF THE PHILIPPINE SENATE TO THE CASUALTIES OF THE  
DEVASTATING EARTHQUAKES IN TURKEY AND SYRIA,**

taking into consideration Proposed Senate Resolution Nos. 483, 487, and 498.

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

Thereupon, the Chair recognized Senator Tulfo for the sponsorship.

**SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR TULFO**

In sponsoring Proposed Senate Resolution No. 480, Senator Tulfo delivered the following speech:

I rise today to sponsor Proposed Senate Resolution No. 480, which I filed a month ago, expressing the profound sympathies of the Senate to the victims and families affected by the devastating earthquakes that struck Turkey and Syria.

Today, the death toll has reached a shocking number of 47,244 while hundreds of thousands of people are still displaced and in dire need of adequate shelter, food, and sanitation. The United Nations reports that an extensive humanitarian crisis persists.

According to Mr. Alberto Rodriguez, the UN resident coordinator in Turkey, the UN has appealed for US\$397.6 million to help Syrian victims and US\$1 billion for Turkey to cover emergency needs such as food, medicine, water, clothing, and shelter. But sadly, only 10% of which has been funded.

Meanwhile, our embassies continue with their efforts in addressing the needs of the 77 affected Filipinos. We have brought the remains of our *kababayan* who died from the earthquake. And as of February 27, 2023, we have welcomed nine families from Turkey, the first batch of our repatriated *kababayan*, who were displaced by the massive earthquakes. I commend the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Migrant Workers for their unwavering and continued efforts in giving aid to our sheltered and repatriated Filipinos.

The people of Turkey and Syria are our friends and allies, and we stand with them in their time of need. We may not have the intensive physical capacity to provide aid but, nonetheless, we must extend our support in every possible way we can, no matter how big or small.

I, therefore, urge my fellow senators to join me in extending (aid) in solidarity with the victims and families affected by these devastating calamities, and let them know that they are not alone in this struggle. Let us demonstrate our commitment to the values of compassion, empathy, and friendship that bind us together as a global community.

**COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR TOLENTINO**

Senator Tolentino delivered his consponsorship speech on Proposed Senate Resolution No. 480, as follows:

I join Senator Tulfo in cosponsoring Proposed Senate Resolution No. 480, as the principal sponsor, likewise, of Proposed Senate Resolution No. 487, which I filed 15 February of this year.

I join the rest of the nation in expressing its deepest sympathies and condolences to the victims of the earthquakes on February 6, 2023 in Syria and Turkey.

Turkey, as I can recall, was one of the first country responders to give aid to our country last November 2013, when the Philippines was struck by Typhoon Yolanda or Haiyan. Two days after the onslaught of Typhoon Haiyan, Kimse Yok Mu, a Turkish aid organization, was one of the first international organizations to arrive and render aid here in the Philippines. They offered humanitarian aid, psychosocial support, and educational assistance to survivors, and help in the rebuilding of homes.

This assistance provided by such a Turkish aid organization somehow eased the pain and suffering of our countrymen at that time of great suffering. I saw them there. *Nauna po talagang tumulong sa atin ang Turkey noong bagyong Yolanda.*

Now that Turkey and Syria experienced this damaging earthquake, it is only right that our country extend the same kindness. Modesty aside, nine of my men—nine men who served under me before as MMDA chairman— went to Turkey to assist in the rescue operations as part of the Philippine contingent. *Ipinagmamalaki ko po sila.*

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

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

Senator Revilla delivered his consponsorship speech on Proposed Senate Resolution No. 480, as follows:

We join our colleagues in expressing our deepest condolences (to the people affected by) the devastating earthquake that hit Turkey, Syria, and even some parts of Lebanon.

*Napakalalim ng sugat na iniwan sa puso ng mga naulila at naiwanan. Habang pinapanood at nakikita natin ang mga kuha matapos ang lindol, hindi natin maiwasang madurog ang ating mga puso.* Our hearts and prayers go out to more than 50,000 casualties.

We join our affected brothers and sisters in praying that they be able to rise from the rubbles and start anew. *Dalangin nating mabigyan sila ng lakas upang sa kabila ng dagundong ng pagsubok sa kanilang nararanasan, sila ay muling makabangon.*

But, as we mourn, we also learn from the lessons that this catastrophic disaster has taught the world. This is why, as chairperson of public works committee, I vow to ensure that our government agencies and instrumentalities will be the solid foundation on which our countrymen could depend on when disaster strikes. In fact, the committee has already commenced its hearings on the matter with a sense of urgency and profound understanding of the role that preparedness plays in times of crisis.

*Mapapanatag lamang ang loob ng taumbayan kung matitiyak natin sa kanila na ginagawa natin ang lahat ng ating makakaya upang hindi natin sapitin ang kalunos-lunos na pangyayaring ito. Alam natin na "nature always wins." Subalit, hindi man natin kayang pigilan ang sakuna, maaari naman nating pigilan ang pinsala nito.*

### **COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR ESTRADA**

Upon request of Senator Estrada, there being no objection, the Body approved the insertion of his cosponsorship speech on Proposed Senate Resolution No. 480 into the *Record of the Senate*.

*The following is the full text of Senator Estrada's speech:*

With the indulgence of the author and sponsor, I would like to ask to be made coauthor and cosponsor of Proposed Senate Resolution No. 480, taking into consideration Proposed Senate Resolutions No. 483, 487, and 498.

I am one with my colleagues in the expression of our profound sympathies on the death of thousands of people, including two Filipinos, in the aftermath of the 7.8 magnitude earthquake that struck Turkey and Syria on February 6, 2023.

According to world data, “natural disasters kill on average 45,000 people per year, globally. Historically, droughts and floods were the most fatal disaster events. Deaths from these events are now very low – the deadliest natural disaster today tend to be earthquakes.”

Unfortunately until now, we cannot predict earthquakes. But we can make steps to better prepare ourselves, our homes, our communities and our nation in the event of this inevitable and inescapable natural occurrence.

Preparation always saves lives and cuts down casualties, fatalities and miseries. *Lalo na't inaasahan na po natin ang muling paggalaw ng West Valley Fault na tinatayang magdudulot ng 7.2 magnitude na lindol. Kaya tama lamang po na patuloy nating paghandaan ito kasama ng ating paghahanda sa iba't iba pang kalamidad.*

*Muli po, ang ating pakikiramay sa pamilya ng ating dalawang Pilipinong nasawi, at pati na rin sa pamilya ng libo-libong tao na namatay sa lindol na ito sa Turkey at sa Syria.*

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

Upon request of Senator Go, there being no objection, the Body approved the insertion of his cosponsorship speech on Proposed Senate Resolution No. 480 into the *Record of the Senate*.

*The following is the full text of Senator Go's speech:*

I rise before you today with a heavy heart to speak in support of Proposed Senate Resolution No. 480, which seeks to express our profound sympathies and condolences to the victims and casualties of the devastating earthquakes that struck Turkey and Syria last month.

The 2023 Turkey-Syria earthquake was a catastrophic event that brought widespread destruction and tragedy to the affected regions. It is heart-wrenching to know that as of March 6, more than 52,800 people have lost their lives in Turkey and Syria. According to reports, the tragedy has also claimed the lives of two Filipinos.

As public servants and representatives of the Filipino people, it is our moral obligation to express our solidarity and extend our support to the victims of this disaster. We, as a nation, understand the pain and suffering caused by natural disasters, having faced our fair share of typhoons and earthquakes. We know what it means to lose loved ones and homes, and we know the resilience and strength required to rebuild lives and communities from scratch.

In this spirit of compassion and empathy, I am supporting this resolution and stand in solidarity with the people of Turkey and Syria. We must extend our sincerest sympathies and condolences to the families who have lost their loved ones, the survivors who are struggling to recover, and the relief workers who are working tirelessly to provide aid and assistance to those in need.

I commend the efforts of the Philippine government, non-government organizations, and other countries who have extended their assistance to the affected regions. We must continue to collaborate and coordinate with international organizations and our neighboring countries to provide support and aid to the affected communities.

This resolution is not just a symbolic gesture of support; it is a testament to our commitment to promoting resilience in the face of natural disasters. We must learn from this tragedy and take proactive measures to strengthen our disaster risk reduction and management capabilities. We must also emphasize the need for stronger building codes and disaster preparedness measures to minimize the impact of natural disasters in the future.

### **MANIFESTATION OF SENATE PRESIDENT ZUBIRI**

Senate President Zubiri requested that his cosponsorship speech on Proposed Senate Resolution No. 480 be inserted into the *Record of the Senate*.

However, he mentioned that a month ago, immediately after the earthquake in Turkey, former Senator Gordon told him that the House of Representatives, composed of around 300 members, was donating P10 million, through the Philippine Red Cross, to the people of Turkey and Syria. He said that the 24 members of the Senate would rise to the occasion and would donate P2.5 million to the Red Crescent Society of Turkey through the Philippine Red Cross. He expressed appreciation to former Senator Gordon for facilitating the donation.

As requested by Senate President Zubiri, the following cosponsorship speech was inserted into the *Record of the Senate*:

It is with a heavy heart that we cosponsor this resolution, expressing our sympathy and condolences to the people of Turkey and Syria, in the wake of the massive earthquakes that struck them in February, which has taken over 40,000 lives to date, including two Filipinos.

I wish we can welcome His Excellency, Ambassador Niyazi Evren Akyol, to the Senate under happier circumstances. Nevertheless, it is our honor to have him here in the Senate with us today.

In 2013, when Typhoon Yolanda ravaged our islands and took the lives of over 6,000 Filipinos, Turkey stepped up to offer much needed and appreciated assistance to us.

Now, in their time of need, it is our turn to reach out. To this end, I thank all of my colleagues in the Senate for pooling together a total of P2.5 million (or US\$45,355) for donation to the Turkish Red Crescent, coursed through the Philippine Red Cross—headed by our dear friend, Sen. Richard Gordon, who is also here with us today.

This will be used directly for the earthquake victims.

This donation comes completely from our own pockets, and is something that all 24 Senators agreed to do for the earthquake victims. The Philippines being a disaster-prone country, we have some idea of the tragedy that Turkey and Syria are facing, and so we wanted to help out, in our own way.

I know that many government and private organizations and individuals have also done their part, whether through sending medical and rescue missions, making private donations through their chosen networks, or simply spreading word of donation drives for victims.

We hope that our humble contributions, taken together, are able to offer some comfort and relief to the victims in this most difficult time.

And we continue to keep the people of Turkey and Syria in our prayers—all the deceased, all the bereaved, and all those continuing all efforts in relief and recovery.

#### **ADOPTION OF PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 480**

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, Proposed Senate Resolution No. 480, was adopted by the Body, subject to style, taking into consideration Proposed Senate Resolutions No. 483, 487 and 498.

#### **COSPONSORS**

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, all senators were made cosponsors of Proposed Senate Resolution No. 480.

#### **SUSPENSION OF SESSION**

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, the session was suspended to allow Senate President Zubiri to hand over the Senate Resolution to Ambassador Akyol and the donation to former Senator Richard Gordon, chairman and chief executive officer of the Philippine Red Cross.

*It was 3:35 p.m.*

**RESUMPTION OF SESSION**

At 3:43 p.m., the session was resumed.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE PRESENCE OF GUEST**

At this juncture, Senator Villanueva acknowledged the presence of Ateneo volleyball superstar, athlete and broadcaster, Ms. Gretchen Ho.

Senate President Zubiri welcomed Ms. Ho to the Senate.

**PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 471**

With the consent of the Body, upon motion of Senator Villanueva, the Body considered Proposed Senate Resolution No. 471, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING JULIE UYCHIAT FOR BEING THE FIRST FILIPINO TO FINISH THE WORLD MARATHON CHALLENGE, WINNING FOUR OF THE SEVEN MARATHONS IN ITS 2023 EDITION.

Thereupon, the Chair recognized Senator Villanueva to sponsor the measure.

**SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR VILLANUEVA**

In sponsoring Proposed Senate Resolution No. 471, Senator Villanueva delivered the following speech:

*Isa pong napakalaking karangalan na maisponsoran ang Proposed Senate Resolution No. 471 na naglalayong magbigay ng pagkilala at parangal sa ating kababayan, Pinay nurse, Julie Uychiat, na top finisher sa 2023 edition ng World Marathon Challenge.*

*Kapag nakakakita po tayo ng isang nurse na tumatakbo sa hallway ng isang ospital, ang unang pumapasaok po sa ating isipan ay marahil mayroong emergency. Ngunit sa isang pambihirang pagkakataon, ang pagtakbo ng isang nurse ay naging simbolo ng dedikasyon, pag-asa, inspirasyon, at tagumpay.*

What better way to celebrate National Women's Month than honoring the *Pinay* nurse who made history as she bagged four out of the seven intercontinental marathons in the 2023 World Marathon Challenge - Women's Category.

Today, we are honoring our *kababayan*, Ms. Julie Uychiat, a Negros-born nurse and marathoner as she raced her way through the freezing Antarctica down to the lowlands of Miami.

To give you an idea of how rigorous this marathon challenge was and how Nurse Julie triumphantly reached every finish line for seven consecutive times, here is the itinerary, commencing on the 31<sup>st</sup> of January and ending on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February, covering the following places: Novo in Antarctica; Cape Town in Africa; Perth in Australia; Dubai in Asia; Madrid in Europe; Brazil in South America; and, lastly, Miami in North America.

In each destination, all participants were expected to run for 42.2 kilometers seven times in a row. The participants spent 45 hours in the air via charter plane going from and to these seven destinations.

It goes to show what Nurse Julie must have gone through to conquer all seven marathons to bring the Top Finisher title in the women's category, having to run a total of 295 kilometers to complete the entire race.



Julie ruled the marathons in Asia, Europe, South America, and North America. *Hindi rin po siya nagpahuli sa tatlo pang marathons* as she placed second, third, and fourth in the Australia, Africa, and Antarctica marathons, respectively.

*Ang distansiya pong ito ay mas mahaba pa kung lalakaran ko po galing dito sa Senado, sa building na ito, papunta po sa Atok, Benguet.* Her unshakable grit, adaptability, endurance, and stamina are now not only seen when she dons her scrubs but also when she wears her bib and running shoes.

In 2015, Nurse Julie was influenced by her sister to take up running as she complained that she could not even run from her house to the next stop sign without running short of breath. Her sister advised her to slow down, keep her pace, and that she will not “die” from running. This sparked her enthusiasm for the sport. And just as Kelly Clarkson said in her song: “What doesn’t kill you, makes you stronger.” And stronger she became, indeed.

Two years later, at the age of 43, she participated in her first individual race with no running background or prior professional training experience. But this became an important milestone in her taking up running seriously.

Julie had to juggle her hectic work schedule and weekly training commitments as she joined her first marathon in 2017. Through strict discipline, dedication, and commitment, she Boston-qualified. This is one of the six major marathons in the world. *Alam na alam po namin ito ni Senator Angara.*

Come 2020, the world hit its pause button as the pandemic ran rampant. From being The Flash in the track, she had to equip her personal protective equipment and transform into another superhero persona—a nurse. She had to keep the marathon bibs under her PPE as she continued to inspire and help others get well to realize their dreams.

*At ngayon po, matapos ang mga taon ng pagsubok, si Nurse Julie ay nagbalik sa marathon. Ngayong 2023, ang taon ng pagsulong at tagumpay. Sa wakas ay nakamit ni Nurse Julie ang isa sa kaniyang pinakapinangarap. Nasungkit po niya ang medalya sa apat sa pitong intercontinental marathons.*

Nurse Julie does not only heal the skin-deep wounds of her patients; she also heals the wounded hearts and souls of the children in Negros Occidental as a benefactor of Kalipay Negrense Foundation, a nonprofit organization that shelters disadvantaged and abused children. Her “Run for Kalipay” initiative has already raised US\$29,550, or roughly P1.6 million. This will go a long way towards helping provide for the needs of the children being supported by the foundation. For these reasons, Nurse Julie deserves triple recognition as a nurse, as a marathoner, and a ray of light to our fellow Negrenses.

As we celebrate National Women’s Month, it is high time that we recognized how Filipino women embody the pinnacle of excellence in every field of endeavor while at the same time being our mothers, sisters, wives, grandmothers, daughters, granddaughters, and friends. We give particular appreciation to women OFWs for heroically offering their precious time and talents to foreign lands at the expense of leaving their families and loved ones.

Nurse Julie represents not only Filipino nurses worldwide but every overseas Filipino, excelling in a unique manner of engagement in the respective fields of expertise. Indeed, Nurse Julie epitomizes a woman running the world literally and figuratively, as expected of Filipinos whose blood amalgamates grit, grace, determination, consistency, and perseverance.

*Ang tunay pong nanalo sa marathon na ito ay ang bawat bata sa Kalipay Negrense Foundation. Ang mga medical frontliners ng ating bansa na ang isang paa ay palaging nasa hukay at ang milyong-milyong Pilipino na katulad ni Nurse Julie ay tumatakbo rin patungo sa kani-kanilang hangarin, pangarap, at tagumpay.*

*Bago po ako magtapos, gusto kong personal na magpasalamat kay Ms. Julie dahil sa kabila ng pagod sa katabapos lamang na Tokyo Marathon noon lamang isang araw, March 5, ay pinilit niyang lumipad sa Pilipinas upang makasama tayong lahat sa araw na ito at maging panauhing pandangal natin dito sa bulwagang ito ng Senado.*

*Muli, Ma’am Julie, isa kang simbulo ng inspirasyon para sa aming lahat. Nurse Julie, maraming salamat. Mabuhay ka at mabuhay ang dugong Pilipino.*



Thereafter, Senate President Zubiri also expressed his congratulations to Ms. Julie Uychiat.

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

At the outset, Senator Cayetano (P) thanked Senator Villanueva, a former member of the Philippine Juniors National Basketball Team, and the Senate President, a world champion in arnis, for their support for women in sports and in politics.

As cosponsor of Proposed Senate Resolution No. 471, taking into consideration Proposed Senate Resolution No. 522, Senator Cayetano (P) likewise expressed her congratulations and commendation for Filipino International Marathon Runner Julie Uychiat who just finished the 2023 World Marathon Challenge.

Senator Cayetano (P) stated that based on marathon books, runners are only recommended to run in one marathon a year or at most in two marathons that must be spaced out well, ideally six months apart, to give runners a good break. Noting that the World Marathon Challenge was seven marathons in seven days, she admitted that she could not in anyway compare herself with the feat the world champion Julie Uychiat had done.

As a marathoner herself, she shared that when she was sent by the Senate to Geneva to attend an IPU conference, she looked for a marathon in Europe to join. And for the past several years, she said she was able to join about 10 marathons in different places like Amsterdam, Rome, and Sweden, among others. She then recalled an instance where she joined another marathon in New York only two weeks after she joined a marathon in Europe which alarmed her sports medicine doctors.

Noting that Julie managed to finish one marathon each day for seven days, she wondered whether Julie has a special recovery tip for having endured the World Marathon Challenge, although the latter had mentioned that it was her training which helped her finish the marathons. Nonetheless, Senator Cayetano (P) stressed the importance of good recovery and of taking care of one's body.

Senator Cayetano (P) then shared a story narrated to her by Julie during one of the latter's races in Madrid where she fell and got a bad wound. She continued that instead of having said wound stitched as recommended by a doctor, Julie chose to just sleep and eat, as she would be running another marathon in less than 24 hours.

Senator Cayetano (P) enumerated the list of races Julie completed per continent, as follows: Antartica where she finished fourth; Cape Town where she finished third; Perth, Australia where she finished second; then Miami, South America, Madrid, and Dubai, where she all finished first. She said that Julie's story is a story of perseverance, and that her bagging the first place in the last four races was just simply amazing. She added that Julie's story reminds her of what the human spirit is capable of.

She expressed awe that Julie at her age of 49 had achieved such an accomplishment, noting that the peak of runners is usually around their late 30s. She believed that Julie would have been the fastest person in the world had she started earlier. Nonetheless, she said that she was glad that Julie still continues to set milestones for herself at her age. In fact, she disclosed, she had invited Julie to join a few forthcoming marathons such as the one to be held in Sydney, organized by the famous athlete Rio dela Cruz who would also be hosting the Singapore Sundown Marathon in May. She surmised that with the increasing number of Filipino runners, there would be one Filipino running in a world marathon, as she recalled having run with Filipino ultra-marathoners during the Twin Peak Race in Hongkong.

Finally, Senator Cayetano (P) stated that Julie's visit in the Senate was timely as the world celebrates Women's Month, which coincided with the World Cup Women's Trophy Tour joined by Filipina football players. She said that as women break barriers and do something that is traditionally the field of men as what the Filipina football players and Julie did, they become equals of men and partners of men in the decision-making in the board room, at home, in public office, in the corporate office, and everywhere.

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

At the instance of Senator Revilla, Senator Villanueva requested that the former's cosponsorship speech on Proposed Senate Resolution No. 471 be inserted into the *Journal and Record of the Senate*, to wit:

I would like to associate myself with the statements made by our Majority Leader, Sen. Joel Villanueva, and the lady senator from Taguig and Pateros, Sen. Pia Cayetano.

Indeed, the triumph of Ms. Julie Uychiat in the Marathon Challenge is our nation's proud moment and honor. *Ang karangalang natamo ni Julie ay tunay ngang kahanga-hanga sapagkat bukod sa kanyang natatanging talento, hindi naging hadlang ang mga pagsubok na kanyang sinuong upang makamit ang inaasam-asam na tagumpay.*

*Bukod sa pagiging world-class marathoner, si Julie din po ay isang Overseas Filipino Worker na nagsisilbi bilang nurse. She juggled all these as she was training for the marathon. Isa lamang itong patunay na ang dugong nananalaytay sa kanya ay larawan ng katatagan at hindi natitinag na talentong talaga namang maipagmamalaki nating ihanay sa iba't ibang lahi. Pinatunayan niyang kayang-kayang umangat ng isang Pilipina sa pinili niyang larangan ng isports na ito.*

Today is a fitting moment as we celebrate Women's Month—we also laud the strength of a Filipina athlete which is at par with the world's best. Julie did not only succeed in her challenges, but she has also championed her cause for the entire Filipino people.

*Julie, ang aking pagsaludo sa iyong tagumpay. Mabuhay ka! Mabuhay ang babaeng atletang Pilipino!*

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

Senator Villanueva said that Senator Binay would be submitting her cosponsorship speech on Proposed Senate Resolution No. 471 for insertion into the Record of the Senate.

*Following is the full text of Senator Bina's speech:*

It is an honor and a privilege to sponsor Proposed Senate Resolution No. 516 commending Ms. Julie Uychiat for being the First Filipina to finish the World Marathon Challenge.

Filipina athletes have really come a long way and it is heartening to see them shine on the international stage. Finishing a marathon has always been a testament to one's athletic prowess and endurance. The world marathon challenge takes this up a notch by making athletes finish seven marathons in seven continents in seven days.

Julie had to run marathons at different continents with different climates and timezones. Imagine having to run in freezing cold in antarctica one day and then running at 95 degrees fahrenheit in Australia the next. Her achievement highlights her outstanding athletic capability and reflects the indomitable will and spirit of filipinas.

More importantly, it shows our ability to overcome adversity especially when fighting for a cause we believe in. During the marathon, she led a fundraising campaign for kalipay, a non-profit foundation supporting disadvantaged children in her hometown in negros occidental. Not only did she win four out of the seven marathons in the competition, but she also raised over US\$29,000 to help homeless, abandoned, malnourished, and abused children.

*Napapanahon po itong pagkilala na ito dahil ngayong women's month, isang babae ang muling nagbigay ng dangal sa ating bansa.*

She also showed us how women can be agents of positive change in our society.

Julie was already 44 years old when she first discovered running. She is an inspiration to everyone and a living proof that it is never too late to pursue one's passion and that it is never too late to achieve something great.

Once again, congratulations julie *at mabuhay ang atletang Pilipino!*

## **COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR GO**

In cosponsoring Proposed Senate Resolution No. 471, Senator Go delivered the following speech:

As the chairperson of the Committee on Sports, it is with great pride and honor that I cosponsor the proposed Senate resolution, entitled "Congratulating and Commending Julie Uychiat for being the First Filipina to Finish the World Marathon Challenge, Winning Four of the Seven Marathons in its 2023 Edition."

Julie made history as the first Filipina to complete the World Marathon Challenge, a grueling competition where participants ran seven marathons in seven different countries. She did not only complete the challenge but also won four out of the seven races. She placed first place in the marathons in Dubai, Madrid, Fortaleza, and Miami, and secured second, third, and fourth positions in the marathons in Perth, Cape Town, and Novo, respectively.

Your journey inspires us to believe that we can achieve our goals and dreams through hard work and dedication. Further, your efforts to generate awareness for the Kalipay Negrense Foundation, which aids mistreated and disadvantaged children in the Province of Negros, serve as an example of how we can use our talents and skills to possibly impact the lives of others.

As the chairperson of the Senate Committee on Sports, let me reiterate my steadfast commitment to our Filipino athletes in always ensuring that their rights and welfare are always at the forefront of my priorities. *Makakaasa po kayo na patuloy ang pagsulong ko ng mga panukala at programa na tutulong upang mas lalo pang mapaganda ang grassroots sports program ng ating bansa, at magbibigay ng suporta sa ating mga atletang Pilipino.*

*Ang mga ganitong karangalan ay tunay na nakatataba ng puso dahil sa kabila ng mga krisis na ating kinahaharap dulot ng pandemya, ang ating mga Pilipinong atleta ay namamayagpag sa mundo ng palakasan at nagbibigay ng malaking inspirasyon sa ating mga kababayan.*

Julie, once again, congratulations on your historic accomplishment. You have demonstrated what is possible when we put our hearts and minds into something, and we eagerly anticipate your next accomplishments.

## **COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR HONTIVEROS**

Senator Hontiveros requested that her cosponsorship speech on Proposed Senate No. 471 be inserted into the *Journal and Record of the Senate*.

*Following is the full text of Senator Hontiveros' speech:*

It is my honor to associate myself with the resolution recognizing the extraordinary achievement of Filipina nurse and marathoner Julie Uychiat. *Sa International Women's Month, karapat-dapat lang talaga na parangalan ang mga kababaihan na nagtatagumpay sa ibat ibang larangan ng gilas, husay at kalinangan.* Julie Uychiat's feat in the world of sports demonstrates yet again that the Filipina talent is world-class and boundless. She is an inspiration to women and girls not just in her homeland, but everywhere. I wish her the best and I am excited to hear of her future milestones.



**ADOPTION OF PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 471**

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, Proposed Senate Resolution No. 471, taking into consideration Proposed Senate Resolution Nos. 516 and 522, was adopted by the Body, subject to style.

**COAUTHORS**

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, all senators were made coauthors of Proposed Senate Resolution No. 471.

**SUSPENSION OF SESSION**

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the session was suspended.

*It was 4:10 p.m.*

**RESUMPTION OF SESSION**

At 5:02 p.m., the session was resumed with Senator Ejercito presiding.

**ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS**

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

**BILL ON FIRST READING**

Senate Bill No. 1965, entitled

AN ACT RESTRUCTURING THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTIONS 25, 26, 29, 30, 31, 35, 36, AND 67 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6975, OR THE "DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT OF 1990", AS AMENDED, AND SECTION 32 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8551, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE REFORM AND REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1998," AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Ejercito

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

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Committee Report No. 36, submitted by the Committee on Local Government, on House Bill No. 3974, introduced by Representative Tan (SJ), entitled

AN ACT DECLARING AUGUST 11 OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL NONWORKING HOLIDAY IN THE PROVINCE OF SAMAR TO BE KNOWN AS "SAMAR DAY," IN COMMEMORATION OF ITS FOUNDATION DAY,

recommending its approval without amendment, taking into consideration Senate Bill No. 1835.

Sponsor: Senator Ejercito

**To the Calendar for Ordinary Business**

Committee Report No. 37, submitted by the Committee on Local Government, on House Bill No. 3971, introduced by Representative Ortega, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING MARCH 2 OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL NONWORKING HOLIDAY IN THE PROVINCE OF LA UNION TO BE KNOWN AS "LA UNION DAY," IN COMMEMORATION OF ITS FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY,

recommending its approval without amendment, taking into consideration Senate Bill No. 1834.

Sponsor: Senator Ejercito

**To the Calendar for Ordinary Business**

Committee Report No. 38, submitted jointly by the Committees on Public Services; Civil Service, Government Reorganization and Professional Regulation; and Finance, on Senate Bill No. 1121, introduced by Senator Poe, entitled

AN ACT CREATING A PHILIPPINE TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD, PRESCRIBING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREOF,

recommending its approval without amendment.

Sponsor: Senator Poe

**To the Calendar for Ordinary Business**

Committee Report No. 39, submitted by the Committee on Public Services, on Proposed Senate Resolution No. 390, introduced by Senator Villanueva, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE/S OF THE SENATE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE RECENT TECHNICAL GLITCH IN THE COUNTRY'S AIR TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SYSTEM WITH A VIEW TO IMPROVING THE PHILIPPINES' OVERALL AIR TRAFFIC SERVICES, UTILIZING IT AS AN ENGINE OF FURTHER ECONOMIC GROWTH, AND ALIGNING THE RELEVANT AGENCIES' PLANS WITH THE GOALS OF THE PHILIPPINE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2023-2028 TO SPUR THE ECONOMY, REVITALIZE THE TOURISM SECTOR, AND CREATE MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR JOB GENERATION;

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 391, introduced by Senator Revilla Jr., entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SERVICES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE SHUTDOWN OF PHILIPPINE AIRSPACE ON JANUARY 1, 2023, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF EVALUATING PHILIPPINE AIRPORT OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT INCLUDING ITS EXISTING FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT; ASSESSING THE SHUTDOWN'S TOURISM AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS; AND PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF THE PASSENGERS FOR COMFORT AND EFFICIENCY;

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 392, introduced by Senator Estrada, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE/S TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF URGENT REMEDIAL LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTED POWER OUTAGE AND TECHNICAL ISSUES IN THE NINOY AQUINO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (NAIA) ON JANUARY 1, 2023 WHICH RESULTED IN THE CANCELLATION OF HUNDREDS OF FLIGHTS, INCONVENIENCE OF THOUSANDS OF PASSENGERS, AND THE SHUTDOWN OF PHILIPPINE AIRSPACE, THEREBY FURTHER ADVERSELY IMPACTING THE IMAGE OF THE COUNTRY AS A TOURISM DESTINATION, AND HURTING THE NATIONAL ECONOMY;

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 400, introduced by Senator Ejercito, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SERVICES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE RECENT AIRPORT NAVIGATION SYSTEM FIASCO THAT PARALYZED THE OPERATION OF THE NINOY AQUINO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (NAIA), RISKED THE SAFETY OF TRAVELERS, AND POSED NATIONAL SECURITY CONCERNS, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF STRENGTHENING AND ENSURING SAFETY IN THE AVIATION INDUSTRY, AND PREVENTION OF ANY OTHER SIMILAR INCIDENTS IN THE FUTURE;

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 401, introduced by Senator Hontiveros, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE NEW YEAR SYSTEM FAILURE CRISIS AT THE NINOY AQUINO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (NAIA), RESULTING IN THE BREAKDOWN OF AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL AND THE DISRUPTION OF A TOTAL OF 282 FLIGHTS AFFECTING AROUND 56,000 PASSENGERS;

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 402, introduced by Senator Binay, 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;

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 403, introduced by Senator Pimentel III, 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;

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 418, introduced by Senator Legarda, 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; and

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 421, introduced by Senator Gatchalian, 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,

recommending the adoption of the recommendations contained herein and their immediate implementation.

Sponsor: Senator Poe

**To the Calendar for Ordinary Business**

Committee Report No. 40, prepared and submitted jointly by the Committees on Civil Service, Government Reorganization and Professional Regulation; Basic Education; Ways and Means; and Finance, on Senate Bill No. 1964, with Senators Revilla Jr., Padilla, Angara, Go, Estrada, Villanueva, Villar (M), Dela Rosa and Gatchalian as authors thereof, entitled

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

recommending its approval in substitution of Senate Bill Nos. 22, 94, 677 1045, 1729, and 1831.

Sponsor: Senator Revilla Jr.

**To the Calendar for Ordinary Business**

**SPECIAL ORDER**

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body approved the transfer of Committee Report No. 38 on Senate Bill No. 1121, from the Calendar for Ordinary Business to the Calendar for Special Orders.

**COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 38 ON SENATE BILL NO. 1121**

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body considered, on Second Reading, Senate Bill No. 1121 (Committee Report No. 38), entitled

AN ACT CREATING A PHILIPPINE TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD, PRESCRIBING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREOF.

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

The Chair recognized Senator Poe for the sponsorship.

### **SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR POE**

In sponsoring Senate Bill No. 1121, Senator Poe delivered the following speech:

I would like to thank Senate President Pro Tempore Loren Legarda for giving me the opportunity to deliver my sponsorship speech ahead of hers, and also our Majority Leader.

Further to the Committee Report on the January 1, 2023, NAIA Air Traffic Glitch, I am honored to present again, for this Body's consideration, the Philippine Transport Safety Board Act.

*Hindi lingid sa kaalaman ng lahat na ang measure na ito ay na-veto noong unang bahagi ng 19<sup>th</sup> Congress on the ground of duplication of functions. But the Senate and the House of Representatives of the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress saw no duplication—only the need to institute an independent agency with the proper expertise to investigate transportation accidents as per global standards.*

Of course, the Department of Transportation (DOTr), Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), the Philippine National Police (PNP), and all those other agencies can investigate these transportation accidents or incidents. But, much like what we saw during the New Year Fiasco at the airport, the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) will never say that they were remiss with their maintenance. When a ship sinks, MARINA will never say that they failed to conduct the proper inspection. And when a fatal train accident occurs, DOTr will never admit that they bought a malfunctioning train or that corners were cut during construction.

Currently, CAAP functions as a regulator, operator, and investigator. Even CAAP recognizes the disadvantages of these conflicting roles and supports any proposal to separate these functions. Congress had to step in because CAAP could not even figure out what went wrong.

This is exactly why we need the Philippine Transportation Safety Board (PTSB): we need an independent agency that shall conduct independent, thorough, and truthful investigations, and provide corresponding and critical recommendations. *Para isang lupon ng eksperto ang mag-iimbestiga at hindi paiba-ibang resource persons sa Kongreso.*

I have said this before and I will say it again: the PTSB can save lives. And not just that, it is also hoped that it can resolve the issues in our transport systems without even causing a shutdown. The enactment of this measure will be the first step toward safer and more effective journeys for all Filipinos.

### **COAUTHOR/COSPONSOR**

Upon his request, Senator Villanueva was made a coauthor and cosponsor of Senate Bill No. 1121.

### **SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF SENATE BILL NO. 1121**

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

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE PRESENCE OF GUEST**

At this juncture, Senator Villanueva acknowledged the presence in the gallery of Almarim Centi Tillah, Presidential Adviser on Muslim Affairs.

Senator Ejercito welcomed Secretary Tillah to the Senate.



**SPECIAL ORDER**

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body approved the transfer of Committee Report No. 39 on Proposed Senate Resolution Nos. 390, 391, 392, 400, 401, 402, 403, 418, and 421 from the Calendar for Ordinary Business to the Calendar for Special Orders.

**COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 39**

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body considered, on Second Reading, Committee Report No. 39 on Proposed Senate Resolution Nos. 390, 391, 392, 400, 401, 402, 403, 418, and 421 Re: The Air Traffic Management System Glitch at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA).

With the permission of the Body, upon motion of Senator Villanueva, only the title of the report was read without prejudice to the insertion of the full text into the *Record of the Senate*.

Thereupon, the Chair recognized Senator Poe to sponsor the report.

**SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR POE**

In sponsoring Committee Report No. 39, Senator Poe delivered the following speech:

*Matapos ang dalawang buwan ng trabaho at masusing pag-aaral—a public hearing, an ocular and walkthrough, a technical inspection with an independent audit team, and a series of meetings and consultations with agencies and experts—we have finally identified the cause of the glitch of the New Year's Day Air Traffic shutdown. I would like to thank those who joined us during the tour of CAAP—our Majority Leader as well as our Senate President, and also Sen. Risa Hontiveros, for joining us that day.*

The process is no joke. *Para tayong nag-crash course sa electrical engineering at air traffic management system. Thus, I want to take this opportunity to thank the Institute of Integrated Electrical Engineers of the Philippines for accepting the Committee's invitation to be our independent audit team and for helping us examine the technical aspect of the investigation. It is my hope that all our hard work pays off at hindi na ito mangyayaring muli sa hinaharap.*

*Nagsimula ang imbestigasyon in a confused note when even CAAP was unable to determine the cause of the glitch. Allow me to walk everybody through why our country's main airport shut down, as I present to the Body the findings of the Committee on Public Services.*

First, there was indeed a power outage *pero hindi dahil sa supply ng Meralco*, but because of several equipment malfunctioning prior to and during the incident. *Lahat tayo ay nalito sa paiba-ibang narrative ng CAAP, pero sa huli lumabas din na maraming equipment na ang may problema.*

*Una ay ang Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS), which actually only de-energized, as a safety measure para hindi maapektohan ang buong sistema.*

*Pangalawang problema ay ang circuit breaker. Nagkaroon ng loose connection ang neutral wire ng breaker, kaya imbes na 220 volts ay 380 volts ang nailabas nito. The overvoltage led to the damage of the communications and navigation equipment or the CNS/ATM system na siyang nagpatagal ng shutdown.*

*Pangatlong problema ay ang Automatic Voltage Regulator (AVR)—mayroon nga tayo nito sa bahay natin. Hindi na ito gumagana simula pa noong August 2022, apat na buwan na pala bago ang insidente. CAAP claimed that the AVR is only used when the UPS is under maintenance, but separate reports of the interagency investigation team and the independent audit team said that the AVR is considered critical in the overall safety design of the system. Ang kawalan ng AVR ay kawalan din ng proteksyon para sa UPS mula sa fluctuations ng kuryente. So, ilang buwan na palang hindi gumagana ang AVR nila.*



If you remember during our ocular at CAAP, they committed to have the AVR repaired on February 9, but according to the interagency report, the procurement of a new AVR is still underway. *Wala pa rin.*

Second, the malfunctioning of these three equipment was worsened by several underlying issues that all aligned on New Year's Day and ultimately led to a system failure. *Kumbaga sa sakit, may underlying medical condition na ang pasyente at nagkaroon na ng maraming kumplikasyon kaya nangyari ito.*

*Kabilang sa mga underlying issues ay ang kawalan ng engineering standards at guidelines para sa maintenance at troubleshooting ng mga equipment. Nakumpirma rin na wala pang system evaluation para sa buong system at wala pa ring compliance ang CAAP sa energy audit na requirement sa ilalim ng RA 11825, or the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Act.*

There is also no proper personal training and a glaring lack of electrical engineers. Sumitomo, the third-party maintenance provider, also never got the chance to continue providing technical assistance due to a pending dispute with DOTr.

To illustrate, *kumbaga sa ospital ay may kakulangan sa mga espesyalistang doktor. Mayroon mang mga nurses ay hindi naman sila trained para mag-alaga o magbigay-lunas sa pasyenteng may specific na karamdaman o kailangan magpa-opera.*

Third, there is no functioning backup or redundancy, which is why a single fault in the equipment can—and did—cause a shutdown. *May mga naging proposals pero hanggang ngayon ay wala pa ring naisasakatuparan.*

Nevertheless, CAAP reported that they are now expediting the construction of another CNS/ATM facility which will be the main facility while the existing facility will be designated as a backup.

In the interim, CAAP has a budget request of P1.34 billion for the upgrading and replacement of a few critical equipment. NEDA also approved recently the utilization of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) loan balance for the procurement of upgrades, spare parts, and a third-party maintenance service provider.

Fourth, we were able to rule out sabotage and cyberattack. *Bagamat maraming kakulangan sa seguridad ng pasilidad gaya ng kawalan ng CCTV, at ng mismong sistema gaya ng outdated na computer systems at iba pang cybersecurity vulnerabilities, walang data compromise na nangyari dahil sa insidente.*

However, a conclusive finding negating the cyberattack potential will depend on the UPS data logs sent to Turkey for examination which the Committee will monitor and report to the Body once the results are out.

Fifth, CAAP's poor compliance with the audit observations of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) contributed to the failure of the system. *Hindi na nakapagtataakang bagsak tayo sa Air Navigation Services category, scoring only 45.28% while the global average is 65%.*

One significant ICAO observation is the country's lack of a Master Contingency Plan that should have established emergency procedures for events like this. As early as 2017, even before the CNS/ATM system was completed, CAAP was already well aware of the need for this plan *dahil nag-create na ito ng Technical Working Group (TWG), pero hanggang ngayon ay nananatiling isang working draft ang contingency plan natin.*

The Philippines already has a history of non-compliance to ICAO, and I wish to reiterate that there are consequences. A downgrade from Category 1 to Category 2 means Philippine-registered aircraft and personnel would have to undergo heightened inspections abroad which might cause flight delays. *Maaari ring mag-impose ang ibang bansa ng restrictions sa ating mga commercial flights. This will translate to huge economic losses for our country.*

And, lastly, the efficiency and transparency of CAAP are being limited by its own Charter. Currently, CAAP functions as a regulator, operator, and investigator. Even CAAP recognizes the disadvantages of these conflicting roles and supports any proposal to separate these functions.

*Nawawala rin ang fiscal autonomy ng CAAP dahil pinag-remit ito ng gobyerno na umaabot ng P22.4 billion simula 2016 na dapat sana ay nagamit para sa equipment upgrades. But it is worth*

stressing that Section 16 of its charter gives CAAP fiscal autonomy. Further, a 2016 Department of Justice (DOJ) opinion expressly stated that CAAP is a Government Owned and Controlled Corporation (GOCC) exempted from the coverage of the Dividend Law and is not obliged to remit dividends.

CAAP has also been experiencing employee recruitment and retention issues due to limitations set by existing laws. The Salary Standardization Law prevents the agency from providing competitive salaries to critical manpower like air traffic controllers. We are being beaten by foreign recruiters with offers of higher pay and huge relocation allowances.

*Karamihan din sa CAAP employees ay nananatiling job order. Madami pa ring temporary workers sa ahensiya—kabilang na ang maraming technical personnel noong nangyari ang insidente.* Many of them were actually contractual workers, some were even outsourced from a manpower company.

When I began the investigation on this matter, I stressed that the Committee will adopt a non-punitive direction because our primary goal right now is public safety. Accountability will follow after we have laid down safety measures for our air passengers.

The committee, thus, submits a long list of recommendations as a form of corrective and preventive action to the deficiencies and inefficiencies in the procedures and protocols of CAAP. To improve the technical capacity of CAAP, we recommend the urgent replacement and upgrading of critical equipment. To complement this, sufficient engineering guidelines and training of accredited engineers should be rolled out. Another CNS/ATM system in an independent location should also be supported.

To address other non-technical aspects, *hinihiling ko ang suporta ng ating mga kapwa senador para maipasa ang Philippine Transportation Safety Board at Philippine Airports Authority Act, ang pag-amyenda ng CAAP Charter, at ang pagpasa ng isang Air Passengers Bill of Rights para naman sa ating mga mananakay.* Related to these, the Committee is also recommending that the DOTr fast-track the feasibility studies on the proposed NAIA privatization, and assist CAAP in immediately complying with the ICAO recommendations.

It should be recognized that the CNS/ATM was a project spanning several administrations and changes of heads since its inception in 1997. *Hinawakan ito ng anim na Presidente, 11 DOTr at DOTC secretaries, walong CAAP directors, apat na assistant secretaries ng dating Air Transportation Office (ATO), and many batches of poorly equipped engineers under them.* The Committee believes that CAAP personnel on the ground did their best with the equipment, guidelines, and training given to them. We thus defer to the current administration of CAAP to undertake the administrative investigation for disciplinary action on the culpability of any of its personnel.

The January 1 “systems failure” was indeed a confluence of factors and errors. Experts likened it to the planets aligning, albeit with an unfortunate consequence. *Bihira, pero alam nating posibleng mangyari ito, at patuloy na mangyayari kung wala tayong gagawin sa mga problema ng air traffic system sa bansa.*

There is much work needed for a better system. It is my earnest hope that through our investigative work, Congress will be able to assist CAAP in providing a system where travel in our airspace is no longer shut down by causes which could have been avoided.

With that, I urge the Body to support and adopt the recommendations on this committee report and its immediate implementation to prevent an incident like this from happening in the future and toward safer air travel for all.

## MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR VILLANUEVA

Senator Villanueva thanked and congratulated Senator Poe, chairperson of the Committee on Public Services, for undertaking such a monumental task as producing the committee report. He stated that during the hearing attended by Senators Ejercito, Hontiveros, and Tulfo, as well as Senate President Zubiri, it was revealed that the CAAP had several flaws, including lack of maintenance that caused a system glitch, and an AVR that has not worked since August 2022

but has not yet been replaced despite the investigation. He concurred with Senator Poe that CAAP serves as a regulator, operator, and investigator all in one, and thus has conflicting roles.

Also, he stated that during the same hearing, it was learned that the CAAP has more job order workers than regular employees, 59.8% of which were job orders (JOs) in 2021, and 56% in 2020. He noted that the number of JOs increased rather than the number of regular employees.

### **SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 39**

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

### **SUSPENSION OF SESSION**

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, the session was suspended.

*It was 5:27 p.m.*

### **RESUMPTION OF SESSION**

At 5:39 p.m., the session was resumed with Senate President Zubiri presiding.

### **COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 21 ON SENATE BILL NO. 1841**

*(Continuation)*

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body resumed consideration, on Second Reading, of Senate Bill No. 1841 (Committee Report No. 21), entitled

AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF PHILIPPINE CULTURAL HERITAGE THROUGH CULTURAL MAPPING, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10066, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE NATIONAL CULTURAL HERITAGE ACT OF 2009.

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

Thereupon, the Chair recognized Senator Legarda, Sponsor of the measure, and Senator Pimentel for his interpellation.

### **INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR PIMENTEL**

At the outset, Senator Pimentel stated that his default position was always to support a bill which would enhance knowledge about the Philippine culture. Senator Legarda averred that the main purpose of Senate Bill No. 1841 was to strengthen the conservation and protection of the national cultural heritage through an enhanced cultural policy, heritage, education, and culture mapping program and to amend Republic Act No. 10066, or the 2009 National Cultural Heritage Act. She explained that the bill would add into RA 10066 the concept of cultural mapping, a provision on the protection of visual sightlines, and another provision on the participation of LGUs in designating cultural sites.

Senator Pimentel stated that he understood that the bill was directing the LGUs to enhance the existing cultural mapping efforts. He asked the relevance of the protection of visual sightlines with the effort to enhance the mapping of cultural properties. Senator Legarda replied that government cultural agencies would determine as to which grade I level property should have protected visual

sightlines and as to the extent of the said sightlines. She pointed out that not all declared cultural properties would have protected visual sightlines since it would be reserved for the most significant cultural properties. But she expressed hope that sightlines of grade I level cultural properties, world heritage sites and other cultural and natural heritage properties inscribed or designated by international conventions, would be protected so that the same concept would be downloaded to LGUs in order to address the perennial problem of persons building huge structures beside historical monuments.

At this point, Senator Cayetano (P) reminded the Body on the Torre De Manila issue, as the 49-story structure marred the view of the Rizal Monument in Luneta Park. She recalled that while the builder had argued that the structure was built far enough from the monument, heritage experts argued that it was located in the visual sightline of the monument, thus, an eyesore or a photobomber whenever it appeared in the background of photos taken from the Rizal monument. She said that one would have to be creative in removing the building from the picture by changing the shot's angle or by photoshopping. She then expressed her support on the proposed provision to protect visual sightlines, saying that she was with the heritage experts in defending the visual sightline of the Rizal Monument even when the case reached the Supreme Court. She opined that it was high time that a law was passed to clearly establish that visual sightlines of cultural properties all over the country should be protected.

Senator Legarda said that she was about to cite the Supreme Court decision *Knights of Rizal vs. DMCI Homes, Inc.*, G.R. No. 213948 that stated that there was no provision in the law at that time for the protection of sightlines, so she already included it in Senate Bill No. 1841 in the hope that the same issue would no longer recur. She underscored that the proposed amendment in the bill on RA 10066 would address the gap by including sightlines in cultural mapping requirements in grade I level cultural properties and by requiring cultural agencies to define in the declaration and conservation management plan the breadth of the visual impact and core buffer zones. However, she clarified that the bill was not specifying a correct particular distance or coverage since visual sightlines and core buffer zones would depend on varying considerations such as the designated viewing point, the location and size of the complex, and other similar matters.

Senator Pimentel wondered whether the Body was expanding the subject matter of the bill beyond cultural mapping, as it also mentioned the additional protection for important cultural properties and an additional power for the National Commission for Culture and the Arts. In doing so, he opined that the Body would have to amend the title of the bill because it gave the impression that the bill was simply about strengthening the conservation and protection of cultural heritage through cultural mapping but actually it has other provisions. As a reply, Senator Legarda stated that sightlines are part of cultural mapping, that mapping and preservation go hand in hand since mapping is a tool of preservation, and that doing a cultural mapping would include what is seen and what is present in the core and buffer zones of a cultural property. For instance, she said that to do the cultural mapping of the City of Manila with the Rizal Monument, it would have to include the Torre De Manila, which would alter the cultural mapping.

Senator Legarda admitted that the purpose of the House version (House Bill No. 6891) which she filed in the House of Representatives as the former Lone District Representative of Antique was to designate, mandate, or capacitate LGUs for cultural mapping. She disclosed that further discussions with the NCCA, now that she is a senator, made her realize that the bill would need to include a provision on sightlines in order to address the many threats to the country's historical monuments. She cautioned that what happened in the Torre De Manila issue, which was just one example where the protection of sightlines lost in a court case, could also happen in the 80 provinces and 1,600 cities and municipalities of the country. She opined that the proposed amendment to RA 10066 that would explicitly state the protection of sightlines would actually avoid such problems in the future.

On whether the proposed paragraph (O) defining “cultural mapping” in Senate Bill No. 1841 captured the explanation that visual sightline is part of cultural mapping, Senator Legarda replied that visual sightline could be defined further at the proper time with an amendment from Senator Pimentel.

Senator Pimentel then manifested that he would also be revisiting the title of the bill at the proper time so that the new title would capture the would-be final copy of the Senate bill. Senator Legarda agreed that the title needed to be improved so that it would be clearly understood that the bill contained a provision for sightline protection. Stressing that sightlines were part of the identification and significance of a historical monument, she noted that the cultural mapping of the Rizal Monument today would be different from its cultural mapping that had been done 20 years ago when the Torre De Manila structure was still out of the picture because any physical changes on the monument would be included in the cultural mapping.

Senator Pimentel asked if the statement that “the Rizal Monument in Luneta Park is a culturally significant monument or property” would already qualify as a layman’s understanding of what cultural mapping is. He said that to include visual sightline or visual impact in the monument’s cultural mapping would mean that there would be a need to determine the meter or kilometer radius that should be under the protection of the visual sightline provision.

Senator Legarda then cited the definition of culture mapping as follows: “Culture mapping is an approach used to identify, record, and use cultural resources and activities for building communities where communities map what is important to them. It identifies distinct cultural resources. It generates interest in heritage resources among users and non-users of cultural properties and the establishment of heritage conservation councils that lead in the conservation of the local cultural heritage. It understands the basic framework.”

She said that culture mapping, which could be broadly defined, would include both tangible and intangible heritage such that she could widely map the Rizal Monument at the moment to include Sen. Pia Cayetano, her presence in the Supreme Court hearings then, and the court decision on sightlines; movable heritage including articles, protests, arguments, and intangible heritage that transpired within a certain time; and even stories and anecdotes of people who were in favor or against protecting the Rizal Monument’s sightlines.

Senator Legarda affirmed Senator Pimentel’s understanding that culture mapping was not only about what a particular cultural property is, its location, or description but also the historical events connected to or that had an impact on the cultural property. She added that it would even cover everything, from the history of the Filipinos as a people to anecdotal stories to which the monument was a witness. She also affirmed that the culture mapping process that the bill proposed to initiate at the LGU level would eventually reach the Philippine Registry of Cultural Property, which is under the NCCA management.

Senator Legarda responded affirmatively when asked if the NCCA database would include all of the mentioned entities. She stated that copies were already pre-existing and that the LGUs could keep them so they could be passed down from generation to generation, such as the 21 hard copy volumes of Kinaray-a culture mapping that she and DepEd teachers kept on doing even during the pandemic, and which would be submitted to the NCCA as part of their registry. She stated that the Philippine Registry of Cultural Property (PRECUP) is a central repository for all information pertaining to cultural properties in the Philippines that are deemed significant to the cultural heritage. She stated that it would build movable and immovable, tangible and intangible heritages as it would contain songs, rituals, medicines, dances, agricultural knowledge, agro-forestry and culinary heritage.

She also responded affirmatively when asked if the LGUs were involved in the current procedures and processes for maintaining the PRECUP, saying that the national government and

the NCCA could not do so by themselves. She added that 277 LGUs were listed, but they require capacity building because they need to understand, be instructed, and be provided with the necessary tools. She stated that it would be a whole-of-government approach, but local participation would make it more interesting. She added that more discoveries, such as stones, monuments, and even underground cities would be made, citing the one in Taal Lake prior to the volcanic eruptions centuries ago, as an example. In addition, she stated that there would be numerous discoveries as a result of the significance of cultural properties that was worked on and determined by the people that would form part of the statement of significance of a property. She stated that the measure requires not only cultural mapping of build heritage but also the history of plants that were endemic in the area. She stated that everything could be culture mapped from a city, municipality, barangay, family and its lineage, province, or a region. She said that she did cultural mapping of her province, which included the tangible and intangible heritage.

Senator Pimentel stated that the current law already includes a culture mapping system. He wondered what level of participation was expected of LGUs and what new concept was being introduced by the measure. Senator Legarda replied that everyone could participate in cultural mapping, including people's organizations, indigenous peoples, and even *sacadas* or farmers. She stated that a province, city, or municipality could have access to the cultural map, but nothing would prevent a barangay from being culturally mapped.

Asked what new obligation would be imposed on LGUs by the measure, Senator Legarda replied that they would be trained and provided with toolkits, which was required under RA 10066, though it was referred to as inventory and not cultural mapping, with NCCA collecting the data. She stated that in the new measure, cultural mapping would be expanded to include both tangible and intangible heritage, and LGUs who present the cultural mapping data because they are mandated to conduct a comprehensive cultural mapping of their respective jurisdictions. She added that they will mobilize and form partnerships with concerned government agencies to ensure the prompt and effective implementation of the provision, and will seek assistance from NGOs or cultural organizations.

Asked whether sanctions were included in the new measure given the use of the word "mandatory," Senator Legarda answered in the negative. Senator Pimentel surmised that the measure should increase compliance by means of persuasion or inspiration. Senator Legarda concurred, citing Mayor Annaliza Gonzales-Kwan of Guiuan, Samar, who saved the cultural mapping of Guiuan during Typhoon Yolanda because it contained her place's history.

In addition to changing the term "inventory" to "cultural mapping," Senator Pimentel noted that the measure introduces a new concept by making cultural mapping mandatory for LGUs. Senator Legarda concurred, and disclosed that the DILG had included cultural mapping in their requirements for the Seal of Good Local Governance award. She revealed that LGUs who have been awarded with the Seal of Good Local Governance had already implemented culture mapping. She reiterated that 277 LGUs already have culture mapping despite the absence of a law, and that she had already cultural mapped her province with DepEd's assistance. She further stated that it was exciting and interesting to learn more about themselves and their province, as well as to have cultural and historical guides.

Senator Pimentel stated that he was equally enthusiastic, although he wanted to conduct additional research and dig deeper into the measure's other aspects, noting that new categories were being introduced Grades I, II, and III whereas the current law recognizes six categories of cultural properties. Senator Legarda responded that the grades were already in the current National Heritage Law, specifically in the implementing rules and regulations (IRR). She explained, however, that the measure's new grading system would only explain the IRR of the existing law. She clarified that the grading system rationalizes the levels of significance of properties included in the Philippine

in the Philippine Registry of Cultural Property. She stated that Level I properties are the most significant to the nation, Grade II are also nationally significant but of lesser value than of Grade I properties, and Grade III properties include the remainder of PRECUP properties, such as those determined by LGUs to be significant to the province, city, or municipality through local ordinances. She also noted that Grade III was not included in RA 10066, which would be essential in cultural mapping. She stated that according to the IRR of the current law, Grade I consists only of world heritage sites, national historical landmarks, and national cultural treasures, but the proposed measure would add other UNESCO-declared properties such as memory of the world.

Senator Pimentel stated that the current law includes the following six categories: 1) national cultural treasures; 2) important cultural properties; 3) world heritage sites; 4) national historical shrines; 5) national historical monuments; and 6) national historical landmarks. He surmised that the measure would delete the six categories and replace them with the three grade levels. He opined that the measure would introduce new concepts regarding the categorization of cultural properties. She stated that the measure does not propose to delete the categories, but only proposes ranking the significance through grades, with the addition of Grade III, which was not present in RA 10066. She added that Grade III includes heritage properties that are deemed important through local ordinances.

Senator Pimentel assumed that the six existing categories have been distributed across Grades 1 and 2, and that the new provisions will include some new terms or concepts. He noted that there was no definition for "Memory of the World" in the measure. Senator Legarda responded that the term's definition would be added to the Definition of Terms so that everyone could understand it. She defined it as the archival heritage, such as the Culion records, and it would be the intangible heritage of events that transpired, whether in audio, video, writing, pictures, or archival written materials.

Asked what the Culion records meant, Senator Legarda responded that it refers to the leper colony in Culion, Palawan which has archival records detailing how leprosy was medically treated.

Regarding the number of maps submitted to PRECUP, Senator Pimentel stated that the figure of 277 does not adequately represent the 20% of LGUs that were deemed to have culture mapping.

Senator Legarda concurred, stating that 20% of the total LGUs is greater than 277 and noting that some individuals from the private sector are also doing it without knowledge of the repository entity. Meanwhile, she stated that she was unsure if Antique was included on the aforementioned list of LGUs.

Senator Pimentel opined that if the private sector has begun culture mapping but has not yet completed it, the correct procedure was for the information or data to be provided to the LGU, which would then submit the information to NCCA. He believed that adhering to such a procedure would not only formalize the process but also encourage more LGUs to submit to PRECUP.

Senator Legarda, for her part, believed that more than 277 proposals had been submitted to PRECUP, but that they were still insufficient. She asserted that the real issue was that only those with a strong interest in culture mapping are conducting it, regardless of whether it is performed by a local government unit or the private sector. However, she expressed regret that, despite doing it for several years, she was unable to include it in the Heritage Act in 2009.

She thus pointed out that there is yet no law requiring anyone to map, and that the current law only mandates the creation of a local inventory, for example, of existing monuments, old houses, and other structures and sites. She stated, however, that culture encompasses more than just the built environment.



She noted that the country is losing many languages, citing one that is on the verge of extinction because very few people speak it on the island of Capul in Northern Samar. In addition, she emphasized the significance of the country's culinary heritage, which is based on the use of a variety of herbs and spices rather than the readily available instant versions.

She believed that culture mapping, whether in tourism, culinary and gastronomy, or history, would not only create jobs, but also keep young people away from drugs, since it is a community-based endeavor. She expressed confidence that mandating culture mapping and explaining to LGUs its significance to their intangible and tangible culture through roadshows would not only instill a sense of pride in LGUs, especially those outside the NCR, but also empower them to share their stories.

Senator Pimentel stated that he would like his interpellation to be suspended and not terminated, as he wished to dig deeper and gain a better understanding of the measure. Specifically, he stated that he would like to bring up the issue regarding the grade levels, the measure's title, and powers granted to the new commission.

#### **SUSPENSION OF SESSION**

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, the session was suspended.

*It was 6:31 p.m.*

#### **RESUMPTION OF SESSION**

At 6:35 p.m., the session was resumed.

#### **SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF SENATE BILL NO. 1841**

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

#### **REMARKS OF THE CHAIR**

At this juncture, Senate President Zubiri informed the Body that earlier that day, he, along with Senators Villanueva, Ejercito, Cayetano (P), and Gatchalian, had visited the wake of Governor Degamo and personally delivered to the latter's widow the resolutions of the Senate expressing condolences to the family and expressing condemnation of the incident. He said that Governor Degamo's family was glad that they were not forgotten but received a great deal of support from national government officials.

He also acknowledged the family's fear for their lives and assured them that the Senate would continue to monitor the situation to ensure that the family receives the justice they deserve. He stated that a donation was also made to the family on behalf of the Senate, as well as to the families of the eight other massacre victims.

He stated that other senators, including Senators Padilla, Estrada, and Revilla visited Governor Degamo the night before, signifying the Body's unanimity in seeking justice for the deceased governor.

He extended his condolences once more to the family of Gov. Roel Degamo, in particular to Mayor Janice Degamo and Board Member Carlo Degamo.

**ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION**

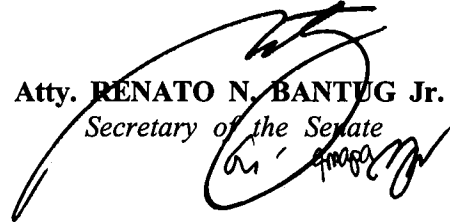
Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Chair declared the session adjourned until three o'clock in the afternoon of the following day.

*It was 6:39 p.m.*

I hereby certify to the correctness of the foregoing.

Approved on March 8, 2023

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.