



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
Senate
Pasay City

Journal

SESSION NO. 21

Tuesday, September 18, 2018

**SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
THIRD REGULAR SESSION**

SESSION NO. 21
Tuesday, September 18, 2018

CALL TO ORDER

At 3:00 p.m., the Senate President, Hon. Vicente C. Sotto III, called the session to order.

PRAYER

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

Lord, as we recover from Typhoon *Ompong*, we give You thanks that You are with us in the midst of all the storms of life. There is no wind, no rushing water, no natural disaster which can separate us from Your love for us.

Lord, we pray for all those who experienced the wrath and destruction of the typhoon to recover from their losses. We pray for our fellow Filipinos from the mountains of the Cordilleras, Northern Luzon and the plains of Central Luzon and all other parts of our country who have been hit severely. We pray that those who have lost

so much would have the fortitude to rebuild their lives. Have mercy on them.

We pray for those who are working to assist others: for all government officials, for first responders, medical personnel, for armed service members, national police force, safety and recovery teams, public works people, and all rescuers and volunteers. Support them, strengthen them, guide them, protect them as they give of themselves to help others.

Lord, over the next few weeks or months, help us experience the gift of Your grace so that our planning, our actions, and our response will be filled with Your wisdom, will embody Your goodness, and will demonstrate Your love for all, and our love for one another. In Your steadfast love and infinite mercy, we turn to You and pray in the Name of Jesus Christ, who is the source of our resilience and strength.

Amen.



ROLL CALL

Upon direction of the Senate President, the Secretary of the Senate, Atty. Myra Marie D. Villarica, called the roll, to which the following senators responded:

Angara, S.	Lacson, P. M.
Aquino, P. B. IV B.	Pacquiao, E. M. D.
Binay, M. L. N. S.	Pangilinan, F. N.
Drilon, F. M.	Pimentel III, A. K.
Ejercito, J. V. G.	Poe, G.
Escudero, F. J. G.	Sotto III, V. C.
Gatchalian, W.	Villanueva, J.
Gordon, R. J.	Villar, C. A.
Honasan, G. B.	Zubiri, J. M. F.
Hontiveros, R.	

With 19 senators present, the Chair declared the presence of a quorum.

Senators Legarda, Recto and Trillanes arrived after the roll call.

Senator De Lima was unable to attend the session as she was under detention.

APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body dispensed with the reading of the Journal of Session No. 20 (September 17, 2018) and considered it approved.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

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

BILLS ON FIRST READING

Senate Bill No. 2006, entitled

AN ACT ENHANCING THE CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF FILIPINO WORKERS AND PROFESSIONALS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10912, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2016"

Introduced by Senator Joel Villanueva

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

Senate Bill No. 2007, entitled

AN ACT AUTHORIZING PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP FOR THE PEOPLE (P4), APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Emmanuel "Manny" D. Pacquiao

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

Senate Bill No. 2008, entitled

AN ACT PROHIBITING THE DISPOSAL OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES AT SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITIES

Introduced by Senator Maria Lourdes Nancy S. Binay

To the Committees on Environment and Natural Resources; and Health and Demography

Senate Bill No. 2009, entitled

AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE POLITICAL PARTY SYSTEM, PROVIDING GUIDELINES THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Win Gatchalian

To the Committees on Electoral Reforms and People's Participation; and Ways and Means**RESOLUTIONS**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 896, entitled

RESOLUTION URGING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SERVICES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO

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THE STATUS OF PUBLIC UTILITIES AND PUBLIC SERVICES IN BAGUIO CITY, THE CORDILLERAS, CAGAYAN VALLEY AND NORTHERN LUZON AFTER THE ONSLAUGHT OF TYPHOON OMPONG, WITH THE END GOALS OF ENSURING THE AVAILABILITY AND STABILITY OF PRICES OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS, TRANSPORTATION COSTS, ELECTRICITY, POTABLE WATER, AND THE MUCH-NEEDED IMPROVEMENT OF SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE SYSTEMS TO AVOID CATASTROPHIC CONSEQUENCES

Introduced by Senator Grace Poe

To the Committees on Public Services; and Public Works

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 897, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING THE PHILIPPINE DRAGON BOAT TEAM FOR EMERGING AS THE OVERALL CHAMPIONS IN THE SENIOR DIVISION OF THE 2018 INTERNATIONAL CANOE FEDERATION WORLD DRAGON BOAT CHAMPIONSHIPS AT LAKE LANIER IN GAINESVILLE, GEORGIA, UNITED STATES THAT WAS HELD ON SEPTEMBER 12 TO 16, 2018

Introduced by Senator Maria Lourdes Nancy S. Binay

To the Committee on Rules

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Letters from the Speaker of the House of Representatives, dated September 10, 2018, pursuant to Section 16 of Republic Act No. 9367, otherwise known as the "Biofuels Act of 2006," which created the Biofuels Oversight Committee, designating the following:

Co-Chairman- Rep. Lord Allan Jay Q. Velasco
Members - Rep. Jose T. Panganiban Jr.

Rep. Ferjenel G. Biron
Rep. Ronald M. Cosalan
Rep. Benjamin C. Agara Jr.
Rep. Jericho Jonas B. Nograles
Rep. Orestes T. Salon

Pursuant to Section 19 of Republic Act No. 9729, otherwise known as the "Climate Change Act of 2009," which created a Joint Congressional Oversight Committee, designating the following:

Co-Chairman- Rep. Joel Mayo Z. Almario
Members - Rep. Christopher S. Co
Rep. Mohamad Khalid
Q. Dimaporo
Rep. Ma. Lourdes R. Aggabao
Rep. Micaela S. Violago

Pursuant to Section 103 of Republic Act No. 9593, otherwise known as "The Tourism Act of 2009," which created a Joint Congressional Oversight Committee, designating the following:

Co-Chairman- Rep. Corazon T. Nunez-Malanyaon
Members - Rep. Karlo Alexei B. Nograles
Rep. Luis Raymund F. Villafuerte Jr.
Rep. Gil P. Acosta
Rep. Tricia Nicola Velasco-Catera

Pursuant to Section 18 of Republic Act No. 9501, otherwise known as the "Magna Carta for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)," which created a Congressional Oversight Committee, designating the following:

Co-Chairman- Rep. Dennis C. Laogan
Members - Rep. Ferjenel G. Biron
Rep. Henry C. Ong
Rep. Karlo Alexei B. Nograles
Rep. Anthony M. Bravo
Rep. Anna Marie Villaraza-Suarez

Pursuant to Section 1700 of Republic Act No. 10863, otherwise known as the "Customs Modernization & Tariff Act (CMTA)," which created a Congressional Oversight Committee, designating the following:

Co-Chairman- Rep. Raul V. Del Mar
Members - Rep. Dakila Carlo E. Cua
Rep. Sharon S. Garin

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Rep. Alex L. Advincula
Rep. Horacio P. Suansing Jr.

Rep. Eleanor C. Bulut-Begtang
Rep. Danilo E. Suarez
Rep. Arnolfo A. Teves

Pursuant to Section 8 of Republic Act No. 8182, as amended by Republic Act No. 8555, otherwise known as the "Official Development Assistance Act of 1996," which created a Congressional Oversight Committee, designating the following:

Co-Chairman - Rep. Rosenda Ann Ocampo
Members - Rep. Dakila Carlo E. Cua
Rep. Napoleon S. Dy
Rep. Jocelyn S. Limkaichong
Rep. Ma. Lucille L. Nava
Rep. Strike B. Revilla
Rep. Maria Valentina G. Plaza

Pursuant to Section 26 of Republic Act No. 10121, otherwise known as the "Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010," which created a Congressional Oversight Committee, with Congressman Amado T. Espino Jr. as Ex-Officio Chairperson, designating the following:

Members - Rep. Geraldine B. Roman
Rep. Leopoldo N. Bataoil
Rep. Cheryl P. Deloso-Montalla
Rep. Arlene B. Arcillas
Rep. Jonas C. Cortes

Pursuant to Section 60 of Republic Act No. 9003, otherwise known as the "Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000," which created a Joint Congressional Oversight Committee, designating the following:

Chairman - Rep. Johnny Ty Pimentel
Members - Rep. Aileen C. Radaza
Rep. Strike B. Revilla
Rep. Alberto T. Ungab
Rep. Tricia Nicole Q. Velasco-Catera

Pursuant to Section 95 of Republic Act No. 9165, otherwise known as the "Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002," which created a Congressional Oversight Committee, headed by Congressman Robert Ace S. Barbers as Ex-Officio Chairman, designating the following:

Members - Rep. Leopoldo N. Bataoil
Rep. Emi G. Calixto-Rubiano
Rep. Winston T. Castelo

Pursuant to Section 9 of Republic Act No. 8240, otherwise known as the Comprehensive Tax Reform Law in relation to Section 11 of Republic Act No. 10351 which amended the Tax Reform Law of 1997 and which created a Congressional Oversight Committee, designating the following:

Chairman - Rep. Johnny Ty Pimentel
Members - Rep. Dakila Carlo E. Cua
Rep. Jose T. Panganiban
Rep. Angelina D.L. Tan
Rep. Romero S. Quimbo

Pursuant to the provisions of Joint Resolution No. 02 of the Eleventh (11th) Congress, which created a Legislative Oversight Committee on the Visiting Forces Agreement, designating the following:

Chairperson - Rep. Feliciano R. Belmonte Jr.
Co-Chairperson - Rep. Amado T. Espino Jr.
Members - Rep. Rodrigo A. Abellanosa
Rep. Pedro B. Acharon Jr.
Rep. Rozzano Rufino B. Biazon
Rep. Danilo E. Suarez
Rep. Luis N. Campos, Jr.

Pursuant to Section 11 of Republic Act No. 9175, otherwise known as the "Chain Saw Act of 2002," which created a Joint Congressional Oversight Committee, with Congressman Rodrigo A. Abellanosa as Ex-Officio CoChairperson, designating the following:

Members - Rep. Franz E. Alvarez
Rep. John Marvin C. Nieto
Rep. Edward Maceda
Rep. Arlene B. Arcillas
Rep. Alfredo A. Garbin

Pursuant to Section 23 of Republic Act No. 9182, otherwise known as "The Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) Act of 2002," which created a Congressional Oversight Committee, designating the following:

Chairman - Rep. Celso L. Lobregat
Members - Rep. Alejandro Y. Mirasol
Rep. Joey S. Salceda

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Rep. Jesulito A. Manalo
Rep. Lorna P. Bautista-Bandigan
Rep. Bayani F. Fernando
Rep. Jose L. Atienza Jr.

Pursuant to Section 6 of Republic Act No. 8752, otherwise known as the "AntiDumping Act of 1999," which created a Congressional Oversight Committee, designating the following:

Chairman - Rep. Joey Mayo Z. Almario
Members - Rep. Ferjenel G. Biron
Rep. Manuel F. Zubiri

Pursuant to Section 19 of Republic Act No. 9160, otherwise known as the "Anti-Money Laundering Act of 2001," which created a Congressional Oversight Committee, designating the following:

Chairman - Rep. Arthur C. Yap
Members - Rep. Henry C. Ong
Rep. Milagros Aquino-Magsaysay
Rep. Maria Vida E. Bravo
Rep. Mark O. Go
Rep. Florida P. Robes
Rep. Alfred Vargas

Pursuant to Section 9 of Republic Act No. 10708, otherwise known as the "Tax Incentives Management and Transparency Act (TIMTA)," which created a Joint Congressional Oversight Committee, designating the following:

Chairman - Rep. Peter M. Unabia
Members - Rep. Dakila Carlo E. Cua
Rep. Fernejel G. Biron
Rep. Manuel T. Sagarbarria
Rep. Alberto T. Ungab

Pursuant to Section 33 of Republic Act No. 9369, "An Act Amending Republic Act No. 8436 entitled "An Act Authorizing the Commission on Elections to Use an Automated Election System in the May 11, 1998 National or Local Elections and in Subsequent National and Local Electoral Exercises...," which created a Joint Oversight Committee, designating the following:

Chairperson - Rep. Delphine G. Lee
Members - Rep. Sherwin N. Tugna
Rep. Luisa Lloren Cuaresma
Rep. Pablo C. Ortega
Rep. Jennifer A. Barzaga
Rep. Danilo E. Suarez
Rep. Francisco G. Datol Jr.

And pursuant to Section 17 of Republic Act No. 10931, otherwise known as the "Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act," which created a Joint Congressional Oversight Committee, designating the following:

Chairman - Rep. Ann K. Hofer
Members - Rep. Paolo S. Javier
Rep. Karlo Alexei B. Nograles
Rep. Jeffrey D. Khonghun
Rep. Evelyn P. Mellana

To the Committee on Rules

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE PRESENCE OF GUESTS

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

- DTI officials led by Secretary Ramon M. Lopez;
- TESDA Director General Guiling A. Mamondiong; and
- DOLE officers headed by Assistant Secretary Joji V. Aragon.

Senate President Sotto welcomed the guests to the Senate.

COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 161 ON SENATE BILL NO. 1574 (Continuation)

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body resumed consideration, on Second Reading, of Senate Bill No. 1574 (Committee Report No. 161), entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE ENERGY RESEARCH AND POLICY INSTITUTE, DEFINING ITS OBJECTIVES, POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Senator Zubiri stated that the parliamentary status was still the period of individual amendments.

Thereupon, the Chair recognized Senator Gatchalian, sponsor of the measure.

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SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF SENATE BILL NO. 1574

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

COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 393 ON SENATE BILL NO. 102 (Continuation)

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body resumed consideration, on Second Reading, of Senate Bill No. 102 (Committee Report No. 393), entitled

AN ACT INCREASING THE NUMBER OF RAYS OF THE SUN ON THE PHILIPPINE FLAG FROM EIGHT TO NINE, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8491, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE FLAG AND HERALDIC CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES.

Senator Zubiri stated that the parliamentary status was the period of interpellations.

Thereupon, the Chair recognized Senator Gordon, sponsor of the measure.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR DRILON

At the outset, Senator Drilon thanked Senator Gordon for bringing up the topic of the Philippine Flag which, he recalled, generated a lot of debates during the Constitutional Convention, of which Senator Gordon was an esteemed member, and that he was glad that they were reviving the debate again through the proposed measure so that they can intelligently take a good look at the country's flag.

At this point, Senator Drilon showed the Body a diagram showing the evolution of the Philippine Flag since 1898.

Asked by Senator Drilon to confirm whether the Philippine flag was first unfurled on May 28, 1898, or 120 years ago, and that to date, the number of rays of the sun in the flag has remained at eight, Senator Gordon replied in the affirmative, saying that it was unfurled in the province of Cavite after the Battle of Alapan and upon the return of General Aguinaldo to

the country from Hong Kong. He added that as history would reveal, on June 12, 1898, following the proclamation of independence from Spain, the same flag was waved at the Aguinaldo residence in Kawit, Cavite.

Senator Drilon said that based on the chart on the screen, from 1899 to 1901, and with the proclamation of Independence on June 12, 1898, the same flag was flown but only the red portion was on top signifying that the country was at war with Spain, and that subsequently, with the cessation of hostilities, the same flag was used but this time the blue portion was on top signifying that the country was at peace. He also pointed out that from 1907 to 1919, the Philippine flag was prohibited from being displayed by the Americans, Senator Gordon confirmed Senator Drilon's narration, saying that the Americans prohibited the display of the Philippine flag and replaced it with the stars and stripes of the United States of America. He said that even the playing of the national anthem was prohibited.

Senator Drilon narrated that it was only in 1919 that the Philippine flag was again allowed to be used with its rays stylized but the eight rays were retained; that from 1919 up to 1936, under Act 2871, the same flag was displayed and from 1936 to 1941 the eight rays were retained but again stylized; that during World War II, the same tricolors of the flag, the three stars and the sun with its eight rays were retained. He noted that following the Philippine flag, the emblem of the state also had the sun with its eight rays.

Senator Drilon further narrated that the eight rays of the sun represented the eight provinces that took up arms against the Spaniards. Senator Gordon affirmed, naming the eight provinces, as follows: Batangas, Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna, Manila, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga and Tarlac.

Senator Drilon said that it was not out of whim that the number of rays of the sun was placed at eight because it was based on a historical fact. Senator Gordon replied that at that time, it was a historical fact but incomplete.

At this point, Senator Drilon read into the record the proceedings in the Constitutional Commission of 1986 where the late Senate President Blas F. Ople who was then a commissioner, stated that:

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"Very soon we will commemorate the centennial of the Philippine Independence reckoning not from 1946, valid as that is, but from 1898, with the establishment of the first Philippine Republic at Malolos which was the great watershed for the development of our national identity, pride and solidarity.

"These questions about name, anthem and flag were conclusively settled in 1898, Mr. Presiding Officer. They now enjoy, as they stand, the patina of our history representing centuries of struggle waged by our forefathers for the liberty and integrity of this country. So as not to tempt any future adventurer in power who may use the authority of Section 2 in this Constitution to make any changes which could prejudice the history of our struggle now embodied in the flag, the name of the country, the national anthem and the national seal, I think it will be prudent for us to close these issues now in this Constitutional Commission of 1986 with real finality and clear the national agenda of these pending issues and the ever present risk that in the future a tyrant taking advantage of his enormous power, including the power over Congress, may decide to disturb these existing national symbols. It is said that we do not live by bread alone. We live by symbols, including the majesty of national symbols."

Senator Drilon believed that there was enough basis to maintain the eight rays in the sun in the flag unless Senator Gordon could provide some real valid reason to add additional rays.

Senator Gordon thanked Senator Drilon for quoting Senator Blas Ople, a nationalist and a Bulakeño. He said that Senator Ople's remarks spoke about "centuries of struggle" which was inherent in the Philippine soul. He noted that since Senator Ople was from Bulacan, a very nationalistic province, he wanted the eight provinces to stress the significance of the first cry of Balintawak and the eight provinces which rose in revolt against Spain. He explained that he was proposing the additional ray of the sun to create inclusion. He said that from the very beginning, being freedom-loving is innate in the psyche of every Filipino, a value that must be taught to every Filipino child. He posited that when Senator Ople talked about symbolizing the struggles, the acme at that time was the prowess and courage of President Aguinaldo and Bonifacio to defend the country against Spain. He said that at that point, the acme and focus was the eight provinces that joined the revolt; it did not speak

of Sta. Barbara, Iloilo, where the first flag in the Visayas was unfurled in the battle of Sta. Barbara which was led by General Delgado during the Philippine revolution.

Senator Gordon said that with the passage of the BBL law, he would like to emphasize inclusion, unity, solidarity in the country. He said that when the Spanish conquered the Philippines, it could not be denied that they never conquered Mindanao because of the gallant fight that Sultan Kudarat and other Muslim leaders put up against the Spaniards. He expressed confidence that with the support of Senator Drilon, the symbol should include everybody who fought for the freedom and independence of the Philippines against its colonizers. He said that there was nothing that precludes the Body to change the design of the flag, noting that while the Constitution provided the description of the flag, it did not describe the rays of the sun as it simply depicted the symbolism represented in the three stars and the colors. He recalled that in 1985, then President Marcos even took it upon himself to change the color of the flag to a lighter blue because, according to him, that was the original color of the flag. However, he said that years later, the color reverted to royal blue.

He said that changing the flag does not mean lessening acceptance nor does it mean removing the eight rays. The proposal, he explained, is to add a ninth ray which would represent the Muslim Filipinos who also fought valiantly against the Spanish conquistadores.

Senator Gordon pointed out that even the American flag underwent changes when stars were added to include Hawaii and Alaska. He said that even Venezuela, sometime in 1863, added another star in their flag to include Guyana. He said that without taking anything away from the eight provinces that joined the revolution, there was nothing wrong with adding another ray in the sun that would represent Lapu-Lapu, Sultan Kudarat, Amai Pakpak and many other Muslim leaders who continued fighting even against America.

Senator Drilon pointed that the records of the Constitutional Commission would indicate that indeed Lapu-Lapu and his bravery and courage are recognized in the Philippine flag, as he quoted Commissioner Suarez who said: "The red in the Philippine flag is already colored with history from the time of Lapu-Lapu."

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Taking note of Senator Gordon's desire for inclusivity, Senator Drilon asked why the proposal included the Muslims only, whether the principle of inclusivity should also apply to the Cordilleras which was already considered during the deliberation of the Constitutional Commission of 1986.

At this juncture, Senate President Sotto relinquished the Chair to Senate President Pro Tempore Recto.

Senator Gordon said that he could consider the proposal at the proper time, although he believed that the ninth ray could already represent the others that were excluded.

Senator Drilon said that using the principle of inclusiveness, it can be argued that Iloilo should be included as the 11th ray of the sun because the province, led by General Martin Delgado, rose in revolt immediately after the declaration in Cavite.

Senator Gordon stated that while more rays could be added to the sun, the ninth ray could include all the other provinces that were not recognized before.

Senator Drilon then pushed for the inclusion of the Cordillerans and the revolutionaries of Iloilo led by General Delgado by adding more rays of the sun to represent them.

Senator Gordon commended Senator Drilon, saying that he totally respects the latter's views. He recalled that when he was in law school, he and his Muslim friends, including the late Ambassador Alunan Glang and the late Manny Ortega, formed the Muslim Progress Movement and that one of their advocacies was to take out the Bonifacio Monument from Caloocan and to transfer it in front of the Student Union. He then underscored the need for a heuristic notion in everyone to accept and embrace all the historical events. He expressed willingness to embrace the advocacies of Senator Drilon for the Ilonggos and not just for General Delgado.

Senator Gordon stated that every star in the American flag represents every state within the American Union. However, he said that there is no denying that even before General Aguinaldo was born, the Muslim Filipinos had been fighting against Spain and were never conquered. He stated that there is no difference in the blood of a Filipino

Christian, Muslim, Ilongo, Cordilleran or Hindu, and that what is important is that innate in the hearts of the Filipino are the symbols like the flag which means unity and sovereignty.

Citing the case of *Girona, et. a. vs. Secretary of Education*, Senator Gordon quoted that "the flag is not an image but a symbol of the Republic of the Philippines – an emblem of national sovereignty, of national unity and cohesion and of freedom and liberty which it and the Constitution guarantee." He stated that while Section 1, Article XVI of the Constitution provides the colors of the flag, the three stars and the sun, Section 4, Chapter I of Republic Act No. 8491 or the Flag and Heraldic Code of the Philippines completely describes the "blue, white and red with an eight-rayed golden-yellow sun and three five-pointed stars, as consecrated and honored by the people." He underscored that the law can be amended without amending the Constitution to add the Cordillerans, Muslims, Lumads, among others, to the rays of the sun. He stressed that what is important is that there should be discussions that would remind the people of the Philippines' rich past.

Commending Senator Gordon for his statement, Senator Drilon stated that he would rather debate about whether or not to add one or two more rays in the sun rather than be confronted with the practice in the House of adding P55 billion to the national budget for purposes of the pork barrel. He said that it is a more honorable to debate about the flag rather than on the P55 billion pork barrel. He quoted the late Senator Ople who stated that "we do not live by bread alone; we live by symbols, including the majesty of the national symbol." He said that the symbol being mentioned by Senator Ople is the Philippine flag.

On another matter, Senator Drilon inquired if changing the number of rays also affects the national seal. Senator Gordon stated that it will have to change, including the mace of the Senate since it has the national seal and the flag.

Thereafter, Senator Drilon said he would suspend his interpellation and would continue when the bill is taken up again.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE PRESENCE OF GUESTS

At this juncture, Senator Zubiri acknowledged



the presence in the gallery of Gov. Ramil Hernandez of Laguna and Cong. Emil Ong of Samar

Senate President Pro Tempore Recto welcomed the guests to the Senate.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATE PRESIDENT SOTTO

Adverting to Chapter II, Section 36 of Republic Act No. 8491, Senate President Sotto proposed that the Committee look into the possibility of amending the Philippine National Anthem as well. He stated that for years, composers and writers have told him that the last two lines sounded like the Filipinos are defeatists. He said that the last two lines "*Aming ligaya na pag may mang-aapi, ang mamatay nang dahil sa 'yo'*" could be replaced with "*Aming ligaya na 'pag may nang-aapi, ang ipaglaban (ang) kalayaan mo.*"

Agreeing with Senate President Sotto, Senator Gordon stated that the last line reminded him of the famous line of Sen. Benigno Aquino, Jr. that "the Filipino is worth dying for." He opined that the line should be "the Filipino is worth living and dying for."

Senator Gordon believed that amending the national anthem could take the form of another subject. He said that he would be willing to file another bill that would amend the anthem as soon as the Body has passed the measure.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR VILLANUEVA

At this juncture, Senator Villanueva inquired about the symbolism of the lion and the eagle in the Seal.

Senator Gordon recalled that the British took over the Philippines for two years, and he explained that England is symbolized by three lions in their seal. As regards the eagle, he noted that the Philippines has the Philippine eagle and the US has the American bald eagle. He supposed that just as in the past when the Americans deliberately foisted Jose Rizal to become the country's national hero as he was more peaceful rather than Andres Bonifacio, the eagle in the seal could be an American imposition. Notwithstanding, he said that it is important to enrich and embellish the past to the children as they are being deprived of the country's richness of bravery, courage and the blood spilled by its people.

On the matter of the heraldic lion in the seal, Senator Gordon explained that the sea lion represents the upper half as a lion and the lower half as a dolphin or fish. He stated that it is a constant identifying symbol of the governing authority of the Philippines since the Spanish conquest which was originally part of the heraldic blazon, the Coat of Arms of Manila under Spanish Royal Grant of 1596 which was adopted on May 30 of that year. He stated that other countries have the unicorn which is a mythical figure, and that the sea-lion could also be mythical.

Senator Gordon said that in 1609, Antonio Morga wrote that Philip II made Manila City the capital of the New Kingdom of Castile, giving it a coat of arms with a crown, which was described as a "scutcheon divided across, and in the upper part of the castle on the red field, and in the lower part a lion of gold, crowned and rampant, with a naked sword in the dexter hand, and half the body in the shape of a dolphin upon the waters of the sea, signifying that the Spaniards passed over them with arms to conquer this kingdom for the crown of Castile." He said that the crown of Castile at that time was the sea power so much so that the Pope had to issue a bull dividing the world between Portugal and Spain, the reason why all the historical net is being dragged by the Filipino and is appearing because in the coat of arms of Manila, there is half sea lion and half dolphin in the seal. However, he believed that the more appropriate thing that the Body should be discussing is the braveness, the courage and the enshrined natural tendency of the Filipino to fight for freedom.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF SENATE BILL NO. 102

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

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE PRESENCE OF GUEST

At this juncture, Senator Zubiri acknowledged the presence in the gallery of First Secretary Jeong Yup Lee of the Embassy of the Republic of Korea.

COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 433 ON SENATE BILL NO. 1976

(Continuation)

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no

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objection, the Body resumed consideration, on Second Reading, of Senate Bill No. 1976 (Committee Report No. 433), entitled

**AN ACT TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN THE
PHILIPPINE COCONUT AUTHORITY
(PCA), REPEALING PD NO. 1468,
OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE
REVISED COCONUT INDUSTRY
CODE OF 1978, AS AMENDED.**

Senator Zubiri stated that the parliamentary status was the period of interpellations.

Thereupon, the Chair recognized Senator Villar, sponsor of the measure.

**MANIFESTATION
OF SENATOR DRILON**

Senator Drilon manifested that he would no longer avail of the period of interpellations on the proposed measure.

**TERMINATION OF THE PERIOD
OF INTERPELLATIONS**

There being no interpellation, upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body closed the period of interpellations and proceeded to the period of individual amendments.

PANGILINAN AMENDMENTS

Senator Pangilinan said that based on the discussions of the Bicameral Conference Committee on the Trust Fund measure, the conferees agreed that the Philippine Coconut Authority Board be reconstituted; and that a separate law would be passed reconstituting the PCA Charter. Thus, he believed that the intent was not to repeal PD 1468 but to merely amend it.

As proposed by Senator Pangilinan and accepted by the Sponsor, there being no objection, the Body approved the following amendments:

1. On page 6, lines 10 and 11, delete the sentence "Presidential Decree 1468 as amended is hereby repealed."; and
2. On the title of the bill, replace the word "repealing" with AMENDING.

**TERMINATION OF THE PERIOD
OF INDIVIDUAL AMENDMENTS**

There being no other individual amendment, upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body closed the period of individual amendments.

**MANIFESTATION
OF SENATOR PANGILINAN**

Senator Pangilinan placed on record that the Fit and Proper Rule of the Government Commission for GOCCs (GCG), especially with respect to possession of managerial skills and competence preferably relating to the operations of the PCA, would not apply to the six new members of the reconstituted Board, who will be the farmers' representatives.

**APPROVAL OF SENATE BILL NO. 1976
ON SECOND READING**

Submitted to a vote, there being no objection, Senate Bill No. 1976 was approved on Second Reading.

**SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION
OF SENATE BILL NO. 1976**

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

**COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 156
ON SENATE BILL NO. 1558**

(Continuation)

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body resumed consideration, on Second Reading, of Senate Bill No. 1558 (Committee Report No. 156), entitled

**AN ACT DEFINING AND PENALIZING
GENDER-BASED STREET AND
PUBLIC SPACES HARASSMENT,
EXPANDING THE DEFINITION
OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT, AND
AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE
REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7877, AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES.**

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

Thereupon, the Chair recognized Senator Hontiveros, sponsor of the measure, and Senate President Sotto for the continuation of his interpellation.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, the session was suspended.

It was 4:08 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:09 p.m., the session was resumed.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATE PRESIDENT SOTTO

Preliminarily, Senate President Sotto said that he supports the proposed measure except for a few points that he would like to be enlightened. He then asked why the phrase “with no intent to harass” was included on page 2, line 2 of Senate Bill No. 1558, considering that being a special law, “intent” is never an element in the commission of the prohibited acts as identified by the bill. Senator Hontiveros replied that the phrase was meant to indicate that there may be certain expressions of the indigenous people’s culture which, if taken out of their indigenous context, may be interpreted by the current Philippine society as falling under the prohibited acts identified by the proposed measure. She said that such phrase would probably be specifically defined in the implementing rules and regulations of the bill once it is enacted into law. She added that if people would interpret and engage all expressions of indigenous culture and tradition as not akin to any of the prohibited acts which may be identified by the bill, then there would be no need to include the phrase “with no intent to harass.” She expressed willingness to consider a proposed amendment at the proper time that still upholds legitimate expressions of indigenous culture and tradition while at the same time addresses the concern of Senate President Sotto.

As to the meaning of the term “indigenous culture and tradition,” Senator Hontiveros replied that it refers to the ethnolinguistic communities identified by the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, which include the indigenous peoples of the Cordilleras, of lowland provinces, and also of the indigenous peoples of the current Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao. She said that the indigenous peoples of

the Philippines could be described in more popular language as those living and practicing non-mainstream cultures. She then promised to furnish Senate President Sotto with a copy of those covered under indigenous culture and tradition. She also suggested to include specific indigenous practices in the IRR of the proposed measure once it is enacted into law.

Adverting to Section 4, subparagraph 1 on page 2 as regards the Gender Sensitivity Seminar to be conducted by the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), Senate President Sotto asked if the program would cover women offenders against a male victim. He then requested a copy of the proposed scope of the Gender Sensitivity Seminar. Replying in the affirmative, Senator Hontiveros said that the participants in the contemplated seminars would certainly include women who may be identified as offenders under the law, in a minority number of cases of sexual harassment in the streets or in public places.

Adverting to lines 19 to 21 of page 3 which says, “nothing in this proposed law shall prevent LGUs from imposing heavier penalties,” Senate President Sotto asked if it would not violate the constitutional principle that LGUs can legislate only by virtue of the delegation of legislative power from the national legislature, as cited in a Supreme Court ruling in *Magtajas vs. Pryce Properties, Inc.* under G.R. No. 111097 dated 20 July 1994, 234 SCRA 255. Senator Hontiveros pointed out that in other jurisdictions, for example, Singapore, which already criminalizes sexual harassment in public spaces, the penalties are heavier. Nonetheless, she said that at the proper time, she would accommodate a proposed amendment from the Senate President on such provision.

As regards Section 9 which states that the LGU is mandated to “pass an ordinance which shall localize the applicability of this Act within sixty (60) days of its effectivity,” Senate President Sotto noted that provision is not necessary since the bill is intended to be of national application, unlike the other local bills that the Body has been passing which have limited applicability. Senator Hontiveros replied that it may be necessary in certain LGUs if their intent is to pass an ordinance identical to the national law. She said that while it would seem a mere duplication, the important word in Section 9(a) is to “localize” so that if the local legislative council in the LGU sees it fit to pass a local ordinance, then it is not a mere superfluity, it would not be harmful.

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Senate President Sotto expressed hope that the said measure would not serve as precedent, considering that in the same section, it provided that "the LGUs shall discourage and impose fines on acts of sexual harassment as defined in this Act." He then asked if the "fines" referred to would be on top of the penalties mentioned in Section 4.

Senator Hontiveros expressed her willingness to accept amendments as regards the proviso on lines 19 to 20 on page 3 which says that "Nothing in this law shall prevent LGUs from coming up with ordinances that imposes heavier penalties," as well as the proviso on line 17 of page 5 as regards imposing of fines to observe consistency.

Senate President Sotto suggested that the entire line need not be deleted if the word "shall" would be replaced by "may."

Adverting to Section 5, Senate President Sotto noted that the bill is giving the enforcers of the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) the authority to apprehend gender-based street harassment perpetrators for light and medium offenses in the Metro Manila area, and to receive complaints in the streets and immediately apprehend the offender if caught in what is called "*in flagrante delicto*." However, he pointed out that the primary mandate of the MMDA, as stated in its charter, is to perform planning, monitoring and coordinating functions and, in the process, exercise regulatory and supervisory authority over the delivery of metrowide services within Metro Manila without diminishing the autonomy of the local government units concerning purely local matters. He pointed out that the MMDA charter did not mention maintenance of peace and order as one of its functions. He said that he knew of the duties because he was the principal author and sponsor of the law creating the MMDA in the Ninth Congress.

Asked whether the bill seeks to amend the charter of the MMDA by giving them additional functions similar to that of the Philippine National Police, Senator Hontiveros answered in the negative, adding that the measure can be considered as fleshing out one of the mandates of the MMDA which is the regulatory function. She explained that the bill wanted that the MMDA deputizes its enforcers to be anti-sexual harassment enforcers or ASHES, which the bill also hopes would be consistent with the given mandate of the MMDA.

Senate President Sotto suggested that it would be more acceptable if the PNP would deputize the MMDA because the MMDA cannot deputize their enforcers to help maintain peace and order. Thus, he suggested removing the proviso and instead giving the functions to the PNP. Senator Hontiveros agreed.

Asked whether the bill seeks to amend or repeal Republic Act No. 7877 or the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995, Senator Hontiveros answered in the negative, as she clarified that the measure seeks to strengthen the Anti-Sexual Harassment Law. She explained that the current Anti-Sexual Harassment Law identifies, prohibits, and penalizes acts of sexual harassment by superiors to their subordinates, while the other bill that she filed, seeks to introduce the offense of sexual harassment even by a subordinate to a superior, and Senate Bill No. 1558 or the Safe Streets and Public Spaces Act seeks to introduce sexual harassment between complete strangers on the streets and other public places, thereby filling the current gap observed in the Anti-Sexual Harassment Law.

Senate President Sotto noted that many substantial provisions of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act have been copied and reworded in the measure. Thus, he asked whether the Safe Street and Public Spaces Act was aimed to repeal and not just amend the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act. Senator Hontiveros clarified that the bill seeks to strengthen the existing law through an amendment.

On subsection (d) of Section 6 (*Qualified Gender-based Street and Public Spaces Harassment*), Senate President Sotto asked on the rationale for specifying a government agency that is offering frontline services to the public instead of including all government agencies. Senator Hontiveros explained that the proviso gives emphasis that in the premises of government agencies, where there is direct contact with the citizens and government constituents, and where the standard for the quality of service rendered is especially high, when sexual harassment occurs, the penalty next higher in degree will be applied. She added that the proviso shows that there is high standard in government service because such offense does not inspire confidence in civil service and that it violates the standard of conduct of those who work in government.

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Senate President Sotto noted that the acts punishable as enumerated under Section 4 of the bill are already punishable under the Revised Penal Code. For instance, he cited cursing and catcalling which are punishable under paragraph 2 of Article 287 of the Revised Penal Code for the crime of unjust vexation which is defined as any human contact which, although not productive of some physical harm, would however unjustly annoy or vex an innocent person.

He pointed out that under the Revised Penal Code, unjust vexation is punishable with *arresto menor* or one day to 30 days and fine not exceeding P40,000; the penalty provided by the Revised Penal Code is equal in terms of imprisonment but the fine is higher than in the proposed bill. Under the medium violations cited in the bill, he said that the crime of grave scandal or the act of making offensive body gestures at someone or exposing parts for the sexual gratification of the perpetrators are already punishable under Article 200 of the Revised Penal Code, which described the act of grave scandal as when a person shall offend against decency or good customs by any highly scandalous conduct, and that the act must be committed publicly and has given rise to public scandal to persons who have witnessed the said indecent act, while the penalty would be *arresto mayor* and public censure which is one month and one day to six months imprisonment, which is equal to the punishment proposed by the bill.

He also noted that both the Revised Penal Code and the Special Penal Law already punish those classified in the measure as severe violations or acts such as touching or brushing against the body of a person or brushing against the genitalia. He said that brushing against the body of a person may be punishable under Article 336 of the Revised Penal Code for acts of lasciviousness punishable by *prison correccional*, six months and one day to six years imprisonment which is higher than the proposed penalty of *arresto mayor*. On the other hand, he stated that in the bill the act of brushing against the genitalia is punishable under Article 266 of the Revised Penal Code, under the crime of rape as sexual assault, which is punishable by *prison mayor*, six years and one day to 12 years imprisonment, which is higher than the punishment set by the bill. Thus, he asked why the penalties imposed in the Revised Penal Code were lowered, and whether the bill seeks to amend the Revised Penal Code.

Senator Hontiveros explained that the lowering of penalties as proposed in the bill for the light, medium and severe violations and for the first, second and third offenses would be a package of penalties to include, among others, community service and gender sensitivity seminars. However, she stated that she was willing to accept any amendment with respect to the penalties. She expressed appreciation that Senate President Sotto mentioned the other laws that would seem to cover sexual harassment in streets and other public spaces because of the gaps in the current laws which are sought to be filled by the Safe Streets and Public Spaces Bill. She cited the acts of lasciviousness which, under the Revised Penal Code, requires the touching of genitalia and does not make a distinction as to whether the crime was committed in a private space or a public space and which the Safe Streets and Public Spaces Bill wishes to point out. Also, she noted that unjust vexation does not require a sexual element and is blind to gender under the Revised Penal Code, while the Safe Street and Public Spaces Bill points out sexual harassment precisely of a sexual element and is not blind to gender and, in fact, victimizes the individuals based also on that category of gender. She added that the Revised Penal Code does not include non-physical sexual assault, for instance, verbal sexual assault, that also degrades and objectifies women. She said that the penalties mandated under the Safe Streets and Public Spaces Bill provide a package of penalties. Again, she said that she was open to any amendment that Senate President Sotto wishes to introduce. She reiterated that the bill seeks to propose a package of penalties cognizant of the category of offenses that are not adequately identified and provided for penalties under the current Revised Penal Code.

To Senate President Sotto's observation that in the Revised Penal Code acts of lasciviousness are blind to gender, Senator Hontiveros explained that the bill considers the blindness as gap because it leaves victims or survivors of such sexual harassment on streets and in public spaces bereft of remedies when they cannot argue or prove before a court that they were subjected to such sexual harassment acts in public spaces because of their actual or perceived sex and gender. She said that calling a gay person as "*salot ng lipunan*" is not yet covered in the Revised Penal Code as sexual harassment but is already covered in the Safe Street and Public Spaces Act, which also seeks to provide greater vision on the matter or to relieve the blindness of the law.

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Senator Hontiveros argued that while she mentioned in the earlier interpellations that most of the victims of sexual harassment on streets and in public spaces are women, there is also a minority number of victims and survivors of sexual harassment on streets and in public spaces who are men. For instance, she said that a gay man may be taunted as a softy for appearing "soft" on the streets and that a straight man may also have recourse to the Safe Streets and Public Spaces bill if he feels that he has been sexually harassed by another person because of his actual or perceived sex and gender as a straight man. She believed that the bill is for everyone because it seeks to provide every individual of whatever sex or gender relief from sexual harassment on the streets and in public spaces. However, Senator Sotto believed that the bill should be blind to gender if it would be applicable to all.

Senator Hontiveros averred that the bill must not be blind to gender the same way that the country's human rights laws are not blind to nationality, to class, or region of the world where they may be invoked in order to receive justice for human rights violations, in the same way that the country's international humanitarians are not blind to whether the persons seeking redress of grievance under international humanitarian law are claiming violations by state actors or by non-state actors. She opined that for the good of the citizens and for a more progressive body of laws, the laws in the country must be sighted rather than blind to different aspects of the humanity of its citizens as well as to different characteristics of those who are accused or suspected as violators.

But Senate President Sotto pointed out that the bill is limiting from the title itself, that instead of "An Act Defining and Penalizing Gender-Based Street and Public Spaces Harassment," the title could simply be "An Act Defining and Penalizing Street and Public Spaces Harassment" to be blind to gender.

Senator Hontiveros maintained that there are certain acts that are committed to demean a person because of his or her gender which are not yet captured by the Revised Penal Code but maybe captured by certain provisions of the Safe Streets and Public Spaces bill.

Senator Sotto thanked Senator Hontiveros. Thereafter, he said that he would look at the impact of the bill on the Revised Penal Code and that he would propose an amendment at the proper time.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR DRILON

At this juncture, Senator Drilon asked Senator Hontiveros whether the penalties in the proposed measure are in addition to the penalties under the Revised Penal Code for the same acts committed. Senator Hontiveros replied in the affirmative.

As regards the penalty proposed under the bill for unjust vexation as pointed out by Senator Sotto, Senator Drilon said that the principle he heard from Senator Hontiveros is that the penalties under the proposed measure are in addition to the penalties for the same crime under the Revised Penal Code. For instance, in the case of unjust vexation, he presumed that the offender can be prosecuted twice under the Revised Penal Code and under the special law. Senator Hontiveros again answered in the affirmative.

As to whether the elements between the unjust vexation under the Revised Penal Code and the acts classified as unjust vexation under the bill are the same, Senator Hontiveros replied that there would be some overlaps in the elements. However, since the Safe Streets and Public Places bill seeks to explicitly add the sexual and gender elements, she said that there may be elements that were not captured by unjust vexation but would be captured by the Safe Streets and Public Places bill. She affirmed that the penalties under the bill would be independent of the penalties under the Revised Penal Code; hence, the offender could be prosecuted for both.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF SENATE BILL NO. 1558

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

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE PRESENCE OF GUESTS

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

- Chairman Popoy De Vera of the Commission of Higher Education; and
- Freshman Constitutional Law students from the Philippine Law School headed by their class president, Mr. William Aiai.

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Senate President Pro Tempore Recto welcomed the guests to the Senate.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, the session was suspended.

It was 4:48 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:48 p.m., the session was resumed.

SENATE CONFEREES

Upon nomination by Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, Senators Hontiveros, Pimentel and Gatchalian were designated as additional conferees in the Bicameral Conference Committee on the disagreeing votes of House Bill No. 7449.

COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 161 ON SENATE BILL NO. 1574

(Continuation)

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body resumed consideration, on Second Reading, of Senate Bill No. 1574 (Committee Report No. 161), entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE ENERGY RESEARCH AND POLICY INSTITUTE, DEFINING ITS OBJECTIVES, POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Senator Zubiri stated that the parliamentary status was in the period of individual amendments.

Thereupon, the Chair recognized Senator Gatchalian, sponsor of the measure, who manifested that he could be using the September 13, 2018 amended version of the bill for purposes of additional amendments.

GATCHALIAN AMENDMENTS

As proposed by Senator Gatchalian, there being no objection, the following amendments were approved by the Body, one after the other:

1. On page 3, line 22, in the word "institutes," insert an apostrophe (') between letters "e" and "s;"
2. On the same page, line 27, delete the acronym "UP;"
3. On page 4, line 13, before the word "President," insert the acronym UP; and
4. On page 6, line 4, delete the comma (,) after the acronym "UP."

TERMINATION OF THE PERIOD OF INDIVIDUAL AMENDMENTS

There being no further individual amendment, upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body closed the period of individual amendments.

APPROVAL OF SENATE BILL NO. 1574 ON SECOND READING

Submitted to a vote, there being no objection, Senate Bill No. 1574 was approved on Second Reading.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF SENATE BILL NO. 1574

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

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, the session was suspended.

It was 4:51 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:21 p.m., the session was resumed with Senate President Sotto presiding.

SECOND ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

The Secretary of Senate read the following committee reports sponsored by Senator Escudero, which the Chair assigned to the Calendar for Ordinary Business:

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COMMITTEE REPORTS

Committee No. 442, submitted jointly by the Committees on Education, Arts and Culture; and Finance, on House Bill No. 7777, introduced by Representative Cortes, *et. al.*, entitled

AN ACT SEPARATING THE CANGAHAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL-CORDOVA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL EXTENSION IN BARANGAY DAY-AS, MUNICIPALITY OF CORDOVA, PROVINCE OF CEBU FROM THE CABANGAHAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS CORDOVA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR,

recommending its approval without amendment.

Committee Report No. 443, submitted jointly the Committees on Education, Arts and Culture; Ways and Means; and Finance, on House Bill No. 7784, introduced by Representative Garcia (J.E.), *et. al.*, entitled

AN ACT CREATING A HIGH SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS IN THE PROVINCE OF BATAAN TO BE KNOWN AS THE BATAAN HIGH SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR,

recommending its approval without amendment, taking into consideration Senate Bill No. 1693.

Committee Report No. 444, submitted by the Committee on Education, Arts and Culture on, House Bill No. 7713, introduced by Representative Fortuno and Durano, entitled

AN ACT CHANGING THE NAME OF INOYONAN HIGH SCHOOL IN BARANGAY INOYONAN, MUNICIPALITY OF BULA, PROVINCE OF CAMARINES SUR TO FELILPE P. PANTON HIGH SCHOOL,

recommending its approval without amendments.

Committee Report No. 445, submitted jointly by the Committees on education, Arts and Culture; and

Finance, on House Bill No. 7775, introduced by Representative Cerilles, *et. al.*, entitled

AN ACT CONVERTING THE BAYOG NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL IN BARANGAY KAHAYAGAN, MUNICIPALITY OF BAYOG, PROVINCE OF ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR INTO A NATIONAL TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS BAYOG NATIONAL TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR,

recommending its approval without amendment.

Committee Report No. 446, submitted jointly by the Committees on Education, Arts and Culture; and Finance, on House Bill No. 7776, introduced by Representative Aggabao, *et. al.*, entitled

AN ACT SEPARATING THE DABUBU HIGH SCHOOL – ANNEX IN BARANGAY SINAOANGAN SUR, MUNICIPALITY OF SAN AGUSTIN, PROVINCE OF ISABELA FROM THE DABUBU HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS SOUTHEASTERN REGION HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR,

recommending its approval without amendment.

Committee Report No. 447, submitted jointly by the Committees on education, Arts and Culture; and Finance, on House Bill No. 7166, introduced by Representative Hofer, *et. al.*, entitled

AN ACT CONVERTING THE KABASALAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF KABASALAN, PROVINCE OF ZAMBOANGA SIBUGAY INTO THE ZAMBOANGA SIBUGAY POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE (ZSPI) AND APPROPRIATING FUDNS THEREFOR,

recommending its approval with amendment.

Committee Report No. 448, submitted jointly by the Committees on Education, Arts and Culture;

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Ways and Means; and Finance, on House Bill No. 7733, introduced by Representative Kho, *et. al.*, entitled

AN ACT CONVERTING THE DR. EMILIO B. ESPINOSA, SR. MEMORIAL STATE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY (DEBESMSCAT) IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF MANDAON, PROVINCE OF MASBATE, INTO A STATE UNIVERSITY TO BE KNOWN AS THE DR. EMILIO B. ESPINOSA, SR. – MASBATE STATE UNIVERSITY (DEBESMSU), AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR,

recommending its approval without amendment.

Committee Report No. 449 submitted jointly by the Committees on Education, Arts and Culture; and Finance, on House Bill No. 5576, introduced by Representative Defensor, *et. al.*, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A CAREER GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING PROGRAM FOR ALL SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR,

recommending its approval without amendment.

Committee Report No. 450, submitted jointly by the Committees on Education, Arts and Culture; and Finance, on House Bill No. 7768, introduced by Representative Zubiri, *et. al.*, entitled

AN ACT SEPARATING THE BOCBOC NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL — KIARA ANNEX IN BARANGAY KIARA, MUNICIPALITY OF DON CARLOS, PROVINCE OF BUKIDNON FROM THE BOCBOC NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS KIARA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR,

recommending its approval without amendment.

Committee Report No. 451, submitted jointly by the Committees on Education, Arts and Culture; and

Finance, on House Bill No. 7767, introduced by Representative Acosta, *et. al.*, entitled

AN ACT SEPARATING THE SICSICAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL - ANNEX IN BARANGAY STA. MONICA, PUERTO PRINCESA CITY, PROVINCE OF PALAWAN FROM THE SICSICAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS SANTA MONICA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR,

recommending its approval without amendment.

Committee Report No. 452, submitted by the Committee on Education, Arts and Culture, on House Bill No. 6724, introduced by Representative Almario, *et. al.*, entitled

AN ACT CHANGING THE NAME OF LUPON SCHOOL OF FISHERIES IN LUPON, DAVAO ORIENTAL, INTO THE DAVAO ORIENTAL POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE,

recommending its approval with amendments, taking into consideration Senate Bill No. 1767.

Committee Report No. 453, submitted by the Committee on Education, Arts and Culture, on House Bill No. 7714, introduced by Representative Ungab, *et. al.*, entitled

AN ACT CHANGING THE NAME OF TAWANTAWAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN BARANGAY TAWANTAWAN, BAGUIO DISTRICT, DAVAO CITY TO ROSALIA "AGLAY" AYAG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL,

recommending its approval without amendment.

Committee Report No. 454, submitted jointly by the Committees on Education, Arts and Culture; and Finance, on House Bill No. 7264, introduced by Representative Go (M.), *et. al.*, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE CORDILERA STATE POLYTECHNIC SKILLS INSTITUTE, INTEGRATING THE

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TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING CENTERS AND TESDA-SUPERVISED STATE-RUN TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS (TVIs) IN THE CORDILLERA ADMINISTRATIVE REGION AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR,

recommending its approval with amendments.

Committee Report No. 455, submitted jointly by the Committees on Education, Arts and Culture; and Finance, on House Bill No. 7769, introduced by Representative Cuaresma, *et. al.*, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL IN BARANGAY PINAYAG, MUNICIPALITY OF KAYAPA, PROVINCE OF NUEVA VIZCAYA TO BE KNOWN AS PINAYAG NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR,

recommending its approval without amendment.

Committee Report No. 456, submitted by the Committee on Education, Arts and Culture, on Senate Bill No. 1669, introduced by Senator Sotto III, entitled

AN ACT RECOGNIZING FAITH ACADEMY AS AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION OF INTERNATIONAL CHARACTER AND PROVIDING FOR MECHANISMS ON THE GRANT OF CERTAIN PREROGATIVES CONDUCTIVE TO ITS GROWTH,

recommending its approval with amendments, taking into consideration Senate Bill No. 1703.

Committee Report No. 457, submitted jointly by the Committees on Education, Arts and Culture; Health and Demography; Ways and Means; and Finance, on House Bill No. 3222, introduced by Representative Cayetano, *et. al.*, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL VISION SCREENING PROGRAM FOR KINDERGARTEN PUPILS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR,

recommending its approval with amendments, taking into consideration Senate Bill No. 1706.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

With the permission of the Body, upon motion of Senator Zubiri, Senator Pacquiao was elected chairperson of the Committee on Ethics and Privileges to replace Senate President Sotto, and Senator Poe as member, to replace Senator Pacquiao.

COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 440 ON SENATE BILL NO. 1998

(Continuation)

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body resumed consideration, on Second Reading, of Senate Bill No. 1998 (Committee Report No. 440), entitled

AN ACT REPLACING THE QUANTITATIVE IMPORT RESTRICTIONS ON RICE WITH TARIFFS, LIFTING THE QUANTITATIVE EXPORT RESTRICTIONS ON RICE, AND CREATING THE RICE COMPETITIVENESS ENHANCEMENT FUND, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8178, AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9496, AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10848, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

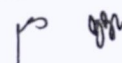
Senator Zubiri stated that the bill has already been sponsored by Senator Villar.

COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR RECTO

At the instance of Senator Recto, upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body approved the insertion of his cosponsorship speech on Senate Bill No. 1998 into the Record of the Senate.

Following is the full text of Senator Recto's cosponsorship speech:

I have always said that there is an unli-rice loving gene in our DNA. It shows in our *per capita* rice consumption which is 108 kilograms a year. But for most people, like me, it manifests in our abs.



Allow me to illustrate my point further by computing how much we 24 senators and our spouses consume in a year, and how it is produced.

Forty-eight people would require 5,177 kilos or 103 and a half sacks a year. But rice does not come milled—it has to be dehusked from *palay*.

To produce the equivalent of 5,177 kilos or 5.17 metric tons, we need 7,803 kilos of *palay* and to be able to harvest that amount, we have to plant rice in two hectares or 20,000 square meters—the size of 48 basketball courts.

Just for 48 people alone. And we are 108 million crammed in this sliver of land. That is why we devote 4.8 million hectares of land to produce this staple.

Suppose we hire a farmer to contract-grow our rice consumption. What will be his net income? What travails will he have to go through so we can have a bowl of fragrant rice?

First, he needs water because rice is one crop with a serious drinking problem. To produce one Coke litro of rice, you need 1,000 Coke litros of water. So rice is dependent on the grace of God; meaning, good weather and good governance as well—which means man-made irrigation. Fortunately, we have a surplus of the former and unfortunately, a shortage of the latter.

After marinating the soil, our contract-grower, or let us say our senatorial tenant, will now be ready to plow. If he uses a carabao, he will slog through about 45 kilometers of thigh-deep mud, with a plow in one hand and the reins of half-ton beast of burden on the other. *Mas mahaba pa kaysa sa isang marathon*. If he uses a hand tractor, it will cut his man-hours by half.

Ang lupa po for rice planting *ay mas mabusisi pa ang preparasyon kesa sa buhok ng isang dalagang ikakasal. Iaararo ng dalawang beses, susuklayin, susuyurin.*

When the plot is ready, when the soil assumes champorado texture, *puwede na magtanim*. *Dalawang paraan ang ginagamit*: Direct broadcast of seeds o *sabog*; or transplant, where seeds will germinate in a plot, the seedlings are uprooted, and then transported to the field for transplanting. Dito papasok yung national soundtrack ng *pagtatanim*: “*Magtanim ay di biro, maghapong nakayuko.*”

To plant *palay* in one hectare of land, something like 200,000 clutches of seedlings will be pierced into the soil. *Kung sampu ang magtatanim, mga 20,000 repetitive motions* is

required of each. *Hindi hamak, talo ang 3,000 forward bends ng ating Pambansang Kamao na ginagawa niya tuwing umaga kapag siya ay nag-eensayo.*

Kapag naitanim, kailangan bantayan ang tubig. And the countryside is littered with the bodies of those who have fallen in these neighborhood water wars. Then the field is fertilized, weeded and sprayed with pesticides. After 12 weeks, the grains begin to sprout. When they turn into a golden hue, they will be subjected to ceaseless attacks from air, ground, and amphibian pests.

Early on, *kuhols* will wade to the stems. Later, *mayas* will dive-bomb from the air. Rats will burrow beneath. The farmer's protection against them is feeble—there is the scarecrow and a string of empty cans for some acoustic warfare.

Pagkalipas ng 30 araw, puwede na anihin. Mabilisan; minsan buong gabi, lalo kung parating ang bagyong tulad ni Ompong. The clump of rice stacks can be cut by hand or by small reaping machines or those big boxy combines which spill out grains. *Kapag naani na, hindi puwedeng lutuin. Malayo pa ang lalakbayin bago maisaing. Kung manu-mano*, it has to be threshed and winnowed. *Buti na lang mayroon nang mga makinang gumagawa nito. Pagkatapos ay ilalagay sa sako. Pero bago dalhin sa gilingan, ibibilad muna para mawala ang moisture content, tumigas ang butil at hindi mapulbos kapag giniling.*

Solar drying is a tedious process. You transport the bags to the roadside—*kasi nga ang kalsada sa atin ay drying pavements din—ibubuhos mo*, you rake it then rebag it. Ready *na* for milling. During milling, the *palay* will lose about 35 percent of its weight. *Ito yung tinatawag nila na milling or retention or conversion rate. Isasako muli.*

Dadalhin sa palengke. Puwede na lutuin.

Pati sa pagluluto, sobrang arte ng bigas. Dapat 1:1 ang ratio ng water to rice under the right amount of fire; otherwise, it will turn into a congee or toasted rice. *Kapag nahilaw, ang ginagawa dati, nilalagyan pa ng asin sa takip na may sabay na sign of the cross.*

Kapag luto na, highly perishable kaya hindi puwede abutan ng hapon. And all these troubles, for rice high in carbs and sugar, which has transformed us into a nation of “Diabetics Anonymous.”

Magkano naman ang kita nung magsasaka na kinontrata ng 48 na tao para mag-supply ng

bigas sa kanila? Kung hindi siya mamalasin, per cropping, two hectares of rice land will gross about P152,000 a year ago. Deducting expenses, the net is about P74,000. In two croppings per year, in perfect weather conditions, pest- and pestilence-free: about P148,000 or P12,333 per month, about minimum wage level.

Pero ano ang national average production per hectare per year? 4,000 kilos. Ibig sabihin, ang neto na kita ng rice farmer na may dalawang ektarya ay P6,700 kada buwan—mas mababa sa minimum wage. Buti na lang maraming magsasaka na madiskarte. Hindi lang umaasa sa palay kundi nagtatanim din ng gulay at nag-aalaga ng hayop.

Tapos, kapag binenta nila ang kanilang produkto nang mataas, aalma ang consumer at mag-aalsa ang mga trolls. This has been the conflict ever since: the eternal battle between the poor rice producers and the poor rice consumers.

You tilt the balance in favor of one, it destroys the equilibrium. You force two million farmers to sell at a low price; then we are treating them as indentured serfs who must subsidize the food we eat. But what can he do? Fertilizers and pesticides eat up 8% of his income; labor during tillage, planting, harvesting and handling; and accounting for another 16%. So for one peso investment, *ang babalik ay 12 centavos*. No wonder those who feed the nation have to live under this irony: *Kung sino ang nagtatanim ng palay, siya pa ang nangungutang ng pambili ng instant noodles.*

Rice farming is beset with structural problems. As a narrow and scattered archipelago, we are not blessed with flat lands conducive to rice farming. Unlike those in the Asian mainland, we do not source our irrigation from wide watersheds and mighty mountain ranges. Rising population diminishes our farm land inventory. We are not only losing lands to urbanization but farmers as well.

Being an archipelago bereft of an efficient mass transport system, it is expensive for us to transport goods by land or water. *Ma-traffic na, may kotong pa.* Actually, our farmers are competitive with their ASEAN counterparts. It is post-farm gate, after *palay* has been sold by farmers that prices shoot up.

In one study by PhilRice, nine pesos per kilo in the store price of milled rice is due to trading and marketing costs. These, plus other factors, hinder our bid for rice self-sufficiency. To wean us out of our love for rice, the best solution is to create genetically-modified Filipinos who shun

this staple but that is in the realm of fantasy science.

To make rice available and affordable, the next best thing is to support our farmers, entice them to cultivate other high-yielding crops, and the balance of other basic staple requirement to be filled by imports.

Dumarami din kasi tayo. We love babies so much that we produce them in industrial quantities. If we will be in plenary for 40 minutes, by the time we adjourn, 136 babies would have been born, who will consume 16 tons of rice yearly.

Kung kukulangin talaga ang bigas, then we import but calibrated in a way that will not trigger a stampede of farmers out of rice growing. Iwasan natin ang voluntary mass endo ng milyun-milyong magsasaka ng palay because of the economic dislocation they will cause.

Lalo na po ngayon na ang reyalidad sa kanayunan ay ang rice farming being a secondary occupation. Maraming middle class, teachers, negosyante who are weekend farmers, who till legacy farms, who can also afford to abandon them. When rice farming is abandoned en masse or will dangerously dwindle, it makes us food-insecure, because rice is a thinly-traded commodity. One major crop failure in one major producer will dry up surplus rice for global sale.

Buti na lang ang mga ito ay kinonsidera ng ating butihing Chairman ng Agriculture and Food who is the wisest of the Villars today. The husband lands in the Forbes list but it is she who is responsible for it. First, the tariff rates balance the interest of the farmer and the consumer. The gradations are essential because a one-rule for all does not apply here. Some policy nuances are needed.

The President has emergency buttons to press under this bill. He may impose a lower applied tariff rate when shortage looms or buffer dangerously dips. On the other hand, it provides for a special rice safeguard duty to protect local growers from sudden or extreme price fluctuations, in accordance with the safeguard Measures Act.

What do the two provisions uphold? Equal protection.

Meaning, no one has to be thrown under the bus.

One excellent feature of the bill is that it pools tariff collections under a Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund, with a seed funding of P10 billion, frontloaded. The RCEF will be apportioned pursuant to a fixed menu because we

ps up

have learned our lesson from the recent past that promulgating loose regulation is tantamount to rolling out the red carpet for rats into a rice warehouse.

I will no longer belabor the recipients. Suffice it to say that they touch all bases to help the farmers, improve productivity and modernize farming systems. The consumer wins, too, especially those in the bottom of the economic pyramid, the inflation-hit 20% who use 21% of their income on rice.

Madaliin po natin ito because rice lines, if they grow longer and continue for a long time, are like a noose on the neck of a government which strangles it slowly no matter how popular it is.

COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR GATCHALIAN

Senator Gatchalian delivered his cosponsorship speech, as follows:

In addition to the worthy insights offered by the principal sponsor and other cosponsors of Senate Bill No. 1998, allow me to add my own insights—primarily focused on how this important rice tariffication measure will benefit Filipino consumers by driving down the market price of quality rice.

The current state of the law greatly restricts the flow of imported rice into our country. The National Food Authority holds a tight grip over the rice trade through its power to regulate rice imports as well as its power to issue import licenses to private traders. This frustratingly dysfunctional regime on the importation of rice into the Philippines has resulted in an anti-consumer status quo for decades.

Simply put, Filipino consumers have had to spend more money at the market for lower quality rice. An unfortunate example of this anti-consumer status quo is the recent *bukbok* rice incident. In addition, tight import regulations have rendered the market unable to adapt to sudden supply and demand fluctuations; thus resulting in frequent rice shortages over the years.

It is sadly ironic to see such a dismal, dysfunctional state of affairs concerning rice, which is the most essential Filipino staple food. However, for the poorest 30% of households in terms of income, this state of affairs is not just ironic; it poses a real threat to their food security.

According to June 2018 data culled from the Philippine Statistics Authority, households in the bottom 30% spend 22.69% of their income, almost one-fourth of their money, on rice alone. By comparison, the average household spends less than half of this amount on rice, or 9.59% of their income, to be exact.

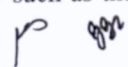
Now, one of the major drivers behind the record inflation we have been experiencing is the rising prices of essential foodstuffs, including rice. Thus, considering the significantly larger share of rice in the poor CPI, it is not surprising that according to PSA CPI statistics, the adjusted year-on-year inflation rate for the bottom 30% in June 2018 of 6.59% was significantly greater than the 5.2% headline inflation rate. Indeed, the increase in rice prices from June 2017 to June 2018 contributed 1.16% of the entire 6.59% poor inflation rate which is extremely significant for a single commodity.

Clearly, then, the dysfunctional state of the rice market is taking its toll on the poor by exacerbating the burden of inflation and making it harder for them to put enough rice on their plates. In this context, it is clear why the Executive and Legislative branches have come together to expedite the passage of this legislation. Abolishing quantitative restrictions on rice and replacing them with a reasonable tariffication scheme will increase the supply of quality and affordable rice in local retail markets and provide consumer savings to families suffering under the burden of rising food inflation. To illustrate, I have prepared some computations.

PSA data shows that as of August 28, 2018, the average price of regular milled rice (RMR) on the market was P42 per kilogram. Now, most of our imported rice is sourced from our ASEAN neighbors—Thailand and Vietnam. Under this bill, the default tariff on ASEAN rice imports would be set at a preferential rate of 35%.

At the 35% tariff rate, the projected market price of regular quality Thai rice would be P30.02 per kilogram and P28.59 per kilogram for regular quality Vietnamese rice. Thus, at the regular tariff rate, consumers would save as much as P13.41 per kilogram compared to the current average market price. For an average family consuming 450 kilograms of rice per year, this would result in annual savings of P6,034.50. This would be enough to buy more than four 50-kilogram sacks of Vietnamese rice at the new lower price.

At this point, I must mention that the creation of a tariffication system on rice practically eliminates the need for a body such as the



NFA. Therefore, in order to further strengthen the domestic rice market for consumers and farmers alike, it is my intention to file in due time a bill to abolish the National Food Authority.

In sum, Senate Bill No. 1998 is a strong counter-inflationary measure which is poised to provide immediate relief to Filipino consumers by saving them thousands of pesos per year on rice. These savings can be applied to other basic necessities such as transportation, education and medicine, among others. Most importantly, this bill will strengthen food security among poor and near-poor families by helping them put enough rice on their plates to keep their stomachs full and happy.

Considering the immense benefits of this timely measure, I join the principal sponsor, Senator Cynthia Villar, and my fellow cosponsors in pushing for the immediate passage of this legislation.

It is time to fix the dysfunctional state of the Philippine rice sector and finally bring down the criminally-high market price of rice to reasonable levels.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF SENATE BILL NO. 1998

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

SPECIAL ORDER

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body approved the transfer of Committee Report No. 438 on Senate Bill No. 1712 from the Calendar for Ordinary Business to the Calendar for Special Orders.

COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 438 ON SENATE BILL NO. 1712

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body considered, on Second Reading, Senate Bill No. 1712 (Committee Report No. 438), entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE SARANGANI SPORTS TRAINING CENTER IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ALABEL, PROVINCE OF SARANGANI AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

Pursuant to Section 67, Rule XXIII of the Rules of the Senate, with the permission of the Body, upon motion of Senator Zubiri, 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 Pacquiao for the sponsorship.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR PACQUIAO

Senator Pacquiao, on behalf of the Committee on Sports, submitted for plenary consideration Senate Bill No. 1712, entitled "An Act Establishing the Sarangani Sports Training Center in the Municipality of Alabel, Province of Sarangani and Appropriating Funds Therefor," under Committee Report No. 438.

The full text of Senator Pacquiao's sponsorship speech follows:

I rise before this august Chamber as Chairman of your Committee on Sports and as an advocate of Sports Development.

The different islands in our country are breeding grounds for talented, young athletes, capable of showcasing their world-class talent beyond our borders. With this, our senators have seen the need for supporting our athletes in their endeavor for success.

Our very own Sen. Sonny Angara, recognizing the need for greater government support, sponsored the bill creating and establishing a state-of-the-art and highly scientific sports complex known as the Philippine Amateur Sports Training Center, which shall benefit the national athletes. It is my honor to coauthor this measure with Sen. Bam Aquino and Sen. Joel Villanueva.

Since the government has already seen the need for sports development on a national scale, the local level has concurred for the need to rehabilitate and construct training centers in the provinces for the benefit of the athletes in their communities.

We certainly lack facilities and training centers for proper preparation and training in most regions. As a solution provider, your Committee on Sports has acted on two measures addressing this concern.

In 1992, Sarangani was made an independent



province by virtue of Republic Act No. 7228, separating it from the province of South Cotabato. The seat of government is in Alabel, its capital town. Since its creation, the province campaigned in nurturing youth potentials through the benefits of sports by preparing them to be in the roster of national athletes.

Sarangani is one of the provinces comprising SOCCSKSARGEN (Region XII). In recent years, Region XII ranked No. 7 or 8 in the Palang Pambansa. This manifests that a number of promising athletes are on the rise as the region amassed medals in archery, arnis, athletics, baseball, gymnastics, taekwondo, boxing, swimming, Sepak Takraw, tennis and volleyball as they compete in national sports events.

The current structures need a total upgrade, modifications and a new edifice to be at par with gold-producing countries. The proposed facility will be strategically constructed inside the capitol premises in the municipality of Alabel, Sarangani province.

The proposed plan includes an indoor multi-sports facility, open warehouse structures for tennis, basketball, volleyball, badminton, boxing and combat sports, taekwondo, and weightlifting. To be constructed also is an indoor track, track oval with football field, baseball fields and swimming pool, including a building for athlete dormitories.

Lanao del Norte, on the other hand, has an existing training center located in the municipality of Tubod known as the Mindanao Civic Sports Center. It only occupies a small amount of the massive land where it is situated. This makes it conducive for improvement.

Currently, the facility has an Olympic-size swimming pool, a warm pool, a rubberized oval, gymnasium with an international standard, a rubberized stadium, a four-tennis court, an archery area, football area and a motocross racetrack.

The number one sport in the province is tennis. They also excel in basketball, *sepak takraw* and archery.

With the available facilities in Lanao del Norte, they managed to produce athletes such as Bonel Balingit, Juneric Baloria, Marlon Tapaes and Brent Sigmond Cortes. Aside from these talented individuals, our recent Asian games weightlifting gold medal winner and Rio Olympics silver medalist, Hidilyn Diaz, hails from Lanao del Norte.

Huwag po nating sayangin ang potensyal ng ating mga atleta na makakuha ng medalya.

Naniniwala ako na ang susi sa pagkuha natin ng ginto ay ang mabigyan ng atensyon ang mga atletang nasa probinsya sa pamamagitan ng mga pasilidad na kanilang magagamit.

We need to expand the government's support to our athletes on the grassroots. In this 17th Congress, we can start with the province of Sarangani and the province of Lanao del Norte. The creation of the sports training centers in Sarangani and Lanao del Norte will provide athletes and potential talents with world-class training facilities and venues for sports tournaments.

With this, I urge my colleagues for the immediate passage of the following bills:

Senate Bill No. 1712 in consideration of House Bill No. 6130 under Committee Report No. 438 (An Act Establishing the Sarangani Sports Training Center in the Municipality of Alabel, Province of Sarangani and Appropriating Fund Therefor) and House Bill No. 6129 under Committee Report No. 342 (An Act Establishing the Lanao del Norte Sports Training Center to be located in the municipality of Tubod, Province of Lanao del Norte and Appropriating Funds Therefor.)

Through the passage of these measures, we will be able to promote physical wellness through sports. We will not only produce exceptional athletes but a healthy citizenry marked by discipline, patience, perseverance, resilience and excellence.

Let us support our young people who are loaded with potential. Let us ensure a bright future for them by prioritizing grassroots development.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF SENATE BILL NO. 1712

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

SPECIAL ORDER

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body approved the transfer of Committee Report No. 437 on House Bill No. 6129 from the Calendar for Ordinary Business to the Calendar for Special Orders.

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**COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 437
ON HOUSE BILL NO. 6129**

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body considered, on Second Reading, House Bill No. 6129 (Committee Report No. 437), entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE LANA O DEL NORTE SPORTS TRAINING CENTER TO BE LOCATED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF TUBOD, PROVINCE OF LANA O DEL NORTE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

Pursuant to Section 67, Rule XXIII of the Rules of the Senate, with the permission of the Body, upon motion of Senator Zubiri, 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 Pacquiao for the sponsorship.

**SPONSORSHIP SPEECH
OF SENATOR PACQUIAO**

On behalf of Senator Pacquiao, at the instance of Senator Zubiri, the sponsorship speech for Senate Bill No. 1712 was also adopted as the sponsorship speech for House Bill No. 6129.

**SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION
OF HOUSE BILL NO. 6129**

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

**COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 313
ON HOUSE BILL NO. 1865
(Continuation)**

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body resumed consideration, on Second Reading, of House Bill No. 1865 (Committee Report No. 313), entitled

AN ACT DECLARING MARCH 21 OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL NONWORKING HOLIDAY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SAN FABIAN, PRO-

VINCE OF PANGASINAN, IN COMMEMORATION OF ITS FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY.

Senator Zubiri stated that the parliamentary status was the period of interpellations.

Thereupon, the Chair recognized Senator Angara, sponsor of the measure.

**TERMINATION OF THE PERIOD
OF INTERPELLATIONS**

There being no interpellation, upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body closed the period of interpellations and proceeded to the period of amendments.

**TERMINATION OF THE PERIOD
OF AMENDMENTS**

There being no committee or individual amendment, upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body closed the period of amendments.

**APPROVAL OF HOUSE BILL NO. 1865
ON SECOND READING**

Submitted to a vote, there being no objection, House Bill No. 1865 was approved on Second Reading.

**SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION
OF HOUSE BILL NO. 1865**

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

**COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 323
ON HOUSE BILL NO. 2692
(Continuation)**

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body resumed consideration, on Second Reading, of House Bill No. 2692 (Committee Report No. 323), entitled

AN ACT DECLARING OCTOBER 28 OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL NONWORKING HOLIDAY IN THE PROVINCE OF DAVAO OCCIDENTAL IN COM-

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MEMORATION OF ITS FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY.

Senator Zubiri stated that the parliamentary status was the period of interpellations.

Thereupon, the Chair recognized Senator Angara, sponsor of the measure.

TERMINATION OF THE PERIOD OF INTERPELLATIONS

There being no interpellation, upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body closed the period of interpellations and proceeded to the period of amendments.

TERMINATION OF THE PERIOD OF AMENDMENTS

There being no committee or individual amendment, upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body closed the period of amendments.

APPROVAL OF HOUSE BILL NO. 2692 ON SECOND READING

Submitted to a vote, there being no objection, House Bill No. 2692 was approved on Second Reading.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF HOUSE BILL NO. 2692

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

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Senator Zubiri manifested that he was withdrawing his previous nomination of Senator Poe to the Committee on Ethics and Privileges as she was already a member of that committee.

Upon nomination by Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, Senator Gatchalian was elected member of the Committee on Ethics and Privileges.

REMARKS OF SENATOR ZUBIRI

Citing the passage of a holiday to commemorate the surrender of General Yamashita, Senator Zubiri believed that it would be better to recognize the Filipinos who captured the war criminal rather than give him recognition. Senator Angara clarified that the holiday was in honor of Yamashita's surrender while the proposed measure of Rep. Teddy Baguilat seeks to commemorate the 1945 surrender of the Japanese general in Ifugao through the efforts of the guerrillas.

INQUIRY OF SENATOR DRILON

Asked by Senator Drilon on the number of times that Yamashita surrendered, Senator Angara replied that the Japanese general surrendered twice – first, to an American captain through the efforts of Filipino guerrillas in Ifugao, while the second seeks to commemorate the day the general surrendered in Baguio City in 1945 which, according to the author, Rep. Mark Go, was a very emotional moment for the people of Baguio because at the time, the Japanese practically took over the entire city.


Senator Zubiri suggested that the measure be discussed in another day because the Minority Leader has more questions on the bill.

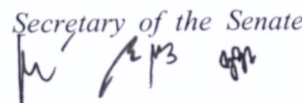
ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

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

It was 5:58 p.m.

I hereby certify to the correctness of the foregoing.


ATTY. MYRA MARIE D. VILLARICA
Secretary of the Senate



Approved on September 19, 2018