



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES  
**Senate**  
Pasay City

# Journal

**SESSION NO. 37**

Wednesday, November 27, 2019

**EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS  
FIRST REGULAR SESSION**

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Wednesday, November 27, 2019

**CALL TO ORDER**

At 3:01 p.m., the Senate President, Hon. Vicente C. Sotto III, called the session to order.

**PRAYER**

Sen. Joel Villanueva led the prayer, to wit:

Heavenly Father, we come before You humbling ourselves, knowing that indeed without You we can do nothing.

We thank You for this day that You have given us and we pray that You give us Your treasury of wisdom from heaven and allow us to perform our duties and responsibilities as senators of the Republic of the Philippines.

We pray that You bless every family represented in this Chamber, and we continue to pray for our beloved country, the Philippines.

We thank You, we praise You. In Jesus' Name we pray.

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.	Marcos, I. R.
Binay, M. L. N. S.	Pangilinan, F. N.
Cayetano, P. S.	Poe, G.
Dela Rosa, R. B. M.	Recto, R. G.
Drilon, F. M.	Revilla Jr., R. B.
Gatchalian, W.	Sotto III, V. C.
Go, C. L. T.	Tolentino, F. T. N.
Hontiveros, R.	Villanueva, J.
Lacson, P. M.	Zubiri, J. M. F.
Lapid, M. L. M.	

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

Senators Gordon, Pimentel and Villar arrived after the roll call.

Senator Pacquiao was unable to attend the session "due to an important commitment in Sarangani" as indicated in the November 27, 2019 letter of his chief of staff.

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

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

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

- Delegates from the Zamora Memorial College Alumni Credit Cooperative, Bacacay, Albay;
- Delegates from Barangays Janagdong 1 and 2; Lutucan Malabag; and Limbon of Sariaya, Quezon;
- Rep. Abdullah D. Dimaporo of the 2<sup>nd</sup> District of Lanao del Norte; and
- Rep. Eileen Ermita-Buhain of the 1<sup>st</sup> District of Batangas.

#### **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. 36 (November 26, 2019) and considered it approved.

#### **SUSPENSION OF SESSION**

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

*It was 3:05 p.m.*

#### **RESUMPTION OF SESSION**

At 3:25 p.m., the session was resumed.

#### **REFERENCE OF BUSINESS**

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

##### **MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Letter from the House of Representatives, informing the Senate that on 25 November 2019, the House of Representatives passed House Bill No. 4664, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTING REFORMS IN  
REAL PROPERTY VALUATION AND

ASSESSMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES,  
REORGANIZING THE BUREAU OF  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE,  
AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS  
THEREFOR,

in which it requested the concurrence of the Senate.

**To the Committees on Ways and Means;  
Local Government; and Finance**

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

Senate Bill No. 1191, entitled

AN ACT APPROPRIATING THE SUM OF  
SIX BILLION PESOS (P6,000,000,000.00)  
AS SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIA-  
TIONS FOR F.Y. 2019 AND FOR  
OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Pangilinan

**To the Committee on Rules**

Senate Bill No. 1192, entitled

AN ACT REQUIRING THE COMPLE-  
TION OF AN ECONOMICS AND  
PERSONAL FINANCE ("EPF") LITE-  
RACY COURSE AS AN ELEMEN-  
TARY, SECONDARY, TERTIARY,  
AND TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL  
GRADUATION REQUIREMENT IN  
PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS,  
LOCAL UNIVERSITIES AND  
COLLEGES, STATE AND PRIVATE  
COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES,  
AND TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL  
SCHOOLS AND CENTERS, MAN-  
DATING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOP-  
MENT FOR EPF TEACHERS, TEACH-  
ING FINANCIAL LITERACY TO EPF  
PARTNERS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS  
THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER  
PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

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

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Senate Bill No. 1193, entitled

AN ACT FURTHER AMENDING SECTION 32 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8424, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE NATIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1997, AS AMENDED, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

**To the Committee on Ways and Means**

Senate Bill No. 1195, entitled

AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE USE OF THE RICE SUBSIDY AS PROVIDED FOR UNDER THE PANTAWID PAMILYANG PILIPINO PROGRAM (4Ps) IN THE GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT OF 2019 FOR THE PURCHASE OF PALAY FROM FARMERS, MANDATING FOR THE PURPOSE THE DSWD IN COORDINATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND NFA TO BUY PALAY FROM THE LOCAL FARMERS FROM THE PROVINCES OF PANGASINAN, ILOCOS NORTE, CAGAYAN, ISABELA, NUEVA VIZCAYA, MINDORO ORIENTAL, MINDORO OCCIDENTAL, TARLAC, NUEVA ECIJA, ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR AND ILOILO AND DISTRIBUTE RICE SUBSIDY IN THE FORM OF ACTUAL RICE, INSTEAD OF CASH ASSISTANCE, TO QUALIFIED BENEFICIARIES

Introduced by Senator Villar

**To the Committees on Agriculture, Food and Agrarian Reform; Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development; and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1196, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A "DO NOT CONTACT" REGISTRY FOR PURPOSE OF REGULATING THE SENDING OUT OF UNSOLICITED MESSAGES OR CALLS, AND PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREOF

Introduced by Senator Lapid

**To the Committees on Science and Technology; and Public Services**

Senate Bill No. 1197, entitled

AN ACT GRANTING LIFETIME VALIDITY OF PHILIPPINE PASSPORTS ISSUED TO SENIOR CITIZENS, FURTHER AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 10 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8239, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "PHILIPPINE PASSPORT ACT OF 1996," AS AMENDED

Introduced by Senator Lapid

**To the Committee on Foreign Relations**

Senate Bill No. 1198, entitled

AN ACT REGULATING THE PRACTICE OF THE AGRICULTURE PROFESSION IN THE PHILIPPINES, CREATING FOR THE PURPOSE A PROFESSIONAL REGULATORY BOARD FOR AGRICULTURISTS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Lapid

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

Senate Bill No. 1199, entitled

AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT (DSWD), IN COORDINATION WITH THE NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY (NFA), TO PURCHASE PALAY FROM LOCAL FARMERS USING THE RICE SUBSIDY AS PROVIDED UNDER THE PANTAWID PAMILYANG PILIPINO PROGRAM (4PS) IN THE GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT (GAA) OF 2019 AND TO DISTRIBUTE RICE SUBSIDY IN THE FORM OF ACTUAL RICE, INSTEAD OF CASH ASSISTANCE, TO THE QUALIFIED BENEFICIARIES



Introduced by Senator Zubiri

**To the Committees on Agriculture, Food and Agrarian Reform; Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development; and Finance**

### COMMUNICATIONS

Letters from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, transmitting to the Senate copies of the following certified and authenticated BSP issuances, in compliance with Section 15(a) of Republic Act No. 7653 (The New Central Bank Act):

Circular Nos. 1058, 1059 and 1060 dated 15 November 2019; and

Circular Letter No. CL-2019-083 dated 15 November 2019.

**To the Committee on Banks, Financial Institutions and Currencies**

### COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 18 ON HOUSE BILL NO. 4228

*(Continuation)*

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body resumed consideration, on Second Reading, of House Bill No. 4228 (Committee Report No. 18), entitled

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

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

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

### COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

Senator Angara presented and submitted the following committee amendments which incorporated the contributions of the vice chairperson and the Members of the Body:

#### *Department of Education*

- Additional budget for its education service contracting program to fund the proposed increase in the Teachers Salary Subsidy (TSS).
- Additional allocation for the National Assessment Systems for Basic Education, Basic Education Curriculum, Literacy and Numeracy Program, Student Assistance Program for those who excel in sports, Special Education Program, Voucher Program for Non-DepEd Public Schools, School-Based Feeding Program.
- Funds to implement the law enacted earlier this year mandating the conservation and restoration of Gabaldon and other heritage schools.
- Increase in the DepEd's Quick Response Fund for the repair of schools and the budget for school electrification for the benefit of unenergized schools.
- Additional amount for DepEd's Last Mile Schools Program in the amount of P6 billion to address the gaps in resources and facilities of schools located in geographically-isolated and -disadvantaged and conflict-affected areas.
- Additional allocation for the Voucher Program for private senior high schools in the amount of P5.17 billion.
- Additional funding for the Early Childhood Care and Development Council (ECCD), the National Book Development Board (NBDB), and the National Council for Children's Television (NCCT).

#### *State Universities and Colleges (SUCs)*

- Additional funding in the amount of P1.158 billion for research programs, conduct of sports and culture-related activities, and new buildings and facilities.
- The budget of the UP system, the national university and its campuses, was also increased, for various research programs, construction of additional facilities, such as upgrading of classrooms, improvement of fiber optic network.
- Additional allocation of P644 million for the Philippine General Hospital for the purchase of advanced medical equipment intended to improve medical services, including the purchase of a linear accelerator to help fight cancer and the supplementary funding for the hospital's medical assistance for indigents.

#### *Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA)*

- Increase in the budget of Technical Educa-



tion Skills Development Authority (TESDA) for the implementation of the Philippine Labor Force Competencies and Competitiveness program or the *Tulong Trabaho* Act as part of the promotion, development, and implementation of quality education and skills.

#### ***Department of Health***

- For health and nutrition, increase of the budget to support the agency's drive to protect children through vaccination, to prevent the spread of disease, and to nurture healthier Filipinos.
- Additional funding to strengthen the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM), help build public sanitary toilets, help promote mental health, retain the jobs of health workers, augment the funding for equipment of various hospitals, and continue the department's medical assistance for indigents.
- For the nurses, additional funds worth P3.173 billion to be set aside under the MPBF to address the salaries of Nurse I and Nurse II positions in compliance with the October 2019 Supreme Court decision in the case of *Ang Nars Partylist vs. Executive Secretary*, upgrading the minimum salary of government nurses from salary grade 11 to salary grade 15, pursuant to Republic Act 9173.
- Increase of the budget to cover at least 3,300 more hospital beds around the country, as mandated by recently-enacted laws.
- Increase in the appropriation for the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation for the implementation of the Universal Health Care Law.
- Increase in the appropriations of the Philippine Heart Center, the National Kidney and Transplant Institute, the Lung Center of the Philippines, and the Philippine Children's Medical Center to help Filipinos who need access to health care.

#### ***Department of Social Welfare and Development***

- Funds for the supplementary feeding program for undernourished children ages three to five, sustainable livelihood programs, protective services and assistance for individuals and families in difficult circumstances.
- Additional allocation for Disaster Response and Rehabilitation and Rice Assistance Program for victims of calamities.
- Additional funding for attached agencies like the Council for the Welfare of Children and the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council, and National

Commission on Indigenous Peoples for the implementation of Republic Act 11188, the Special Protection of Children in Situations of Armed Conflict, as well as for the construction of more Bahay Pag-Asa, among others.

#### ***Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development***

- Increase in the department's budget for the implementation of the Housing Emergency Financial Support Program (HEFSP).

#### ***Department of Labor and Employment***

- Increase in the budget of the DOLE and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration to help workers, OFWs and job-seekers alike through programs like emergency employment and promotion of entrepreneurship and community enterprises under the DILEEP, or DOLE Integrated Livelihood and Emergency Employment Program, the TUPAD, the job search assistance through the PESO, and mechanisms to end child labor.
- Additional allocation for the OWWA for the emergency repatriation of OFWs.

#### ***Department of Agriculture***

- Funding for many of the department's new programs, including the establishment of a SAGIP Saka Coordination Center in BARMM; Collaborative Provincial Agricultural and Fisheries Extension System; National Soil Health Program; *Kabuhayan at Kaunlaran ng Kababayang Katutubo* or 4Ks Project; Inclusive Agribusiness Incubation Program; Young Farmers Program, the Agripreneurship Program, and the construction of a designated cold examination area, as part of the Quarantine Services of the Bureau of Animal Industry.

#### ***Department of Agrarian Reform***

- A budget to realize the department's goal to be Land Acquisition and Distribution (LAD)-free by 2022, as well as funding for landowners' compensation for the covered lands.
- Funding for the Support for Parcelization of Lands for Individual Titling (or Project SPLIT), which is one of the priority projects of the Duterte administration so that Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs) could own their own lands with separate titles.
- A special provision involving a significant increase under Unprogrammed Appropriations for Utilization of Excess Tariff Revenues from Rice Importation which will serve as a form of relief for local farmers who may be affected by



any drop in palay prices, pursuant to the Rice Tariffication Law.

#### ***Department of National Defense***

- Additional amount for the implementation of Task Force *Balik Loob* and Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP) for rebel returnees.
- P920 million for the Philippine Army for the immediate activation of one Infantry Division to directly address the continuing threat posed by the Abu Sayyaf Group in Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi or BASULTA areas.
- Additional amount for the Philippine Air Force to fund the development of Col. Ernesto Rabina Air Base and construction of various air base facilities.
- More funds for the AFP General Headquarters to fund the AFP's campaign to end the country's insurgency problem.
- Additional funds for the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO) to augment the veterans hospitalization and medical care program.
- Additional amount of P150 million for the Veterans Memorial Medical Center for drugs and medicines and hiring of workers.

#### ***Judiciary***

- Additional amount for the Department of Justice (DOJ) for several projects: hiring of coordinators for the Witness Protection Security Program; purchase of the Bureau of Correction's medical and dental equipment; and communication equipment and K-9 dogs; for NBI's confidential fund, acquisition of motor vehicles and military equipment, and scientific criminal investigation and services; Office of the Solicitor General's (OSG) capacity building for lawyers and the purchase of information technology equipment.
- Increase in the budget of the Judiciary to include the Judges-at-Large Law meant to decongest courts and to provide speedier justice for Filipinos.
- Increases in the budget of the Supreme Court and lower courts for the maintenance of halls of justice nationwide, for transportation equipment, and for hazard pay.
- Increases to the Sandiganbayan, Court of Appeals, and Court of Tax Appeals.

#### ***Constitutional Offices***

- Increases for the Commission on Audit and the Office of the Ombudsman to support their efforts to deepen good governance in the country.

#### ***Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG)***

- Additional funds for the implementation of the ELCAC program, Bantay Korapsyon (BK) program, environmental protection and disaster resiliency initiatives, disaster training and equipment program to various LGUs, Lupong Tagapamayapa Incentives Award (LTIA), and for the construction of the Emergency 911 building and command center.
- Additional funds for the Philippine National Police (PNP) in the amount of P1.529 billion for its efforts to restore peace in the countryside (ELCAC program); for the intelligence and counter-intelligence activities of the PNP Anti-Kidnapping Group, and Internal Security Operations; and for the maintenance of the newly-procured H125 helicopter, patrol vehicles, rubber boats and high speed tactical watercrafts; newly completed police stations and crime laboratories, and provincial mobile force companies.

#### ***Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency***

- Increase in the budget of the PDEA for its anti-drug operations, including training expenses of drug enforcement officers, procurement of short firearms, communication equipment, uniforms, Raman spectroscopy and x-rays, and establishment of satellite offices in the Bureau of Corrections.

#### ***Commission on Human Rights (CHR)***

- Additional funding to account for financial assistance for human rights victims and their families, support for full operationalization of the different human rights observatory units and centers management office, operationalization of the interim national preventive mechanism.

#### ***Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP)***

- Increase in its budget to finance its PAMANA program that includes normalization program in the Bangsamoro Region, funding for farm equipment, water system, housing for former combatants, solar panels, and TESDA training centers.

#### ***National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF)***

- Additional funding to provide support for the development and promotion of Madrasah education, Shari'ah program, and domestic Halal development.

#### ***Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH)***

- Increase in the budget to fund various infrastructure projects including construction of bridges, roads, water supply and other projects.



### ***Department of Information and Communications Technology***

- Increase in the budget for the development and management of ICT and cybersecurity policies, development of integrated business permit and licensing system, implementation of the National Broadband Program, and the free wi-fi internet access in public places and state universities and colleges (SUCs).

### ***Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA)***

- Increase in its budget to revive and restore the Pasig River ferry system as a viable transportation option in the National Capital Region (NCR).

### ***Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)***

- Increase in the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) budget to fund more shared service facilities and more Negosyo Centers (NCs); to support more entrepreneurs under the OTOP Next Gen and GoLokal Programs as well as help trade attachés market the country's exports overseas; to revitalize the testing center of the Bureau of Philippine Standards; to allow more Philippine businesses and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to showcase their products, such as food, fashion and home, in the country and abroad; and to help prepare existing Filipino industries for the so-called 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution, marked by such technological changes as big data, robotics, automation, and artificial intelligence.

### ***Department of Tourism***

- Support for tourism promotion efforts, allocating more funds to the Intramuros Administration, Nayong Pilipino, and the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA).

### ***Department of Science and Technology (DOST)***

- Increase in its budget in support of the harmonized national science technology agenda and provided funding for innovation promoting programs such as the Collaborative Research and Development to Leverage Philippine Economy (CRADLE), Space Technology and Applications Mastery, Innovation and Advancement Program (STAMINA4Space), and the Niche Center in the Regions for Research and Development (Nicer).
- Funding for the newly-enacted Philippine Innovation Act or RA 11293 for its innovation fund from which grants will be issued to strengthen entrepreneurship and enterprises engaged in developing innovative solutions benefiting the poorest Filipinos.

### ***Cultural Agencies***

- Increases in the budget of the National Museum, Philippine High School for the Arts, National Library of the Philippines, National Archives of the Philippines, Cultural Center of the Philippines, Film Development Council of the Philippines, and Design Center of the Philippines.

### ***Philippine Sports Commission***

- Increase in the funding for the athlete's training, workshops, competition programs, and the construction of training institutes.

Senator Angara also submitted the proposed increases in the budgets of the Congress of the Philippines to cover additional operating requirements for the Commission on Appointments, as well as for the construction of the new Senate building; Office of the Vice President; Department of Finance, for the IT Infrastructure of the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), and Bureau of Customs (BOC); Department of Foreign Affairs' Foreign Service Institute, for new foreign service posts and consular offices; Cooperative Development Authority (CDA); Credit Information Corporation (CIC); Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP); Philippine Center for Economic Development (PCED); Southern Philippines Development Authority (SPDA); National Dairy Authority; Philippine Coconut Authority; Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC); and the Department of Energy.

He also submitted the necessary additions under Unprogrammed Appropriations, particularly for the Miscellaneous Personal Benefits Fund, Pension and Gratuity Fund, and Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas pursuant to its newly-enacted charter, and the NBI Modernization Program.

Senator Angara emphasized the significant funding for the next round of salary increases of government employees or the Salary Standardization Law 5 (SSL 5) worth roughly P32 billion under the MPBF, in response to the clamor of public school teachers and other government officials; additional funding for the implementation of many of the laws that the Congress of the Philippines has recently enacted, like the Tulong Trabaho Act, Innovation Act, Rice Tariffication Law, Mental Health Law, Judges-at-Large Law, Gabaldon School Preservation Act, Community-Based Monitoring System Act (CBMS Act), Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps Act) which institutionalized the Conditional Cash Transfer Program, new laws, as well as the Energy Efficiency and Con-



servation Act, Magna Carta of the Poor, Seal of Good Local Governance, the law calling for mandatory PhilHealth coverage for persons with disabilities, and the law creating the DHSUD.

By assuring funding for the many pieces of legislation that the President has signed, he said that the Committee ensured that the Administration's drive for change and for positive transformation shall echo for decades to come.

Concluding his presentation, Senator Angara profusely thanked his committee vice chairs and colleagues in the committee, and the hardworking staff of the LBRMO who worked late and long hours for almost a week to complete the budget on time. He also thanked the Senate leadership and the Minority for their efforts to come up with a better budget.

Submitted to the Body, the proposed committee amendments were deemed approved by the Body.

#### **TERMINATION OF THE PERIOD OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS**

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

#### **TERMINATION OF THE PERIOD OF INDIVIDUAL AMENDMENTS**

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

#### **APPROVAL OF HOUSE BILL NO. 4228 ON SECOND READING**

Submitted to a vote, there being no objection, House Bill No. 4228 was approved on Second Reading.

#### **PRESIDENTIAL CERTIFICATION**

Upon direction of the Chair, Secretary Villarica read the President's certification as to the necessity of the immediate enactment of House Bill No. 4228, to wit:

MALACAÑAN PALACE  
Manila

September 17, 2019

SEN. VICENTE C. SOTTO III  
Senate President  
The Philippine Senate  
Pasay City

Mr. Senate President:

Pursuant to the provisions of Article VI, Section 26 (2) of the 1987 Constitution, I hereby certify to the necessity of the immediate enactment of House Bill No. 4228, entitled:

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

in order to address the need to maintain continuous government operations following the end of the current fiscal year (FY), to expedite the funding of various programs, projects, and activities for FY 2020, and to ensure budgetary preparedness that will enable the government to effectively perform its Constitutional mandate.

Best regards,

Very truly yours,

(Sgd.) RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE

#### **APPROVAL OF HOUSE BILL NO. 4228 ON THIRD READING**

In view of the presidential certification, upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body considered, on Third Reading, House Bill No. 4228.

Pursuant to Section 67, Rule XXIII of the Rules of the Senate, upon motion of Senator Zubiri, the Secretary of the Senate read only the title of the bill, to wit:

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

Secretary Villarica called the roll for nominal voting.

## RESULT OF THE VOTING

The result of the voting was as follows:

### *In favor*

Angara	Marcos
Binay	Pangilinan
Cayetano	Pimentel
Dela Rosa	Poe
Drilon	Recto
Gatchalian	Revilla
Go	Sotto
Gordon	Tolentino
Hontiveros	Villanueva
Lacson	Villar
Lapid	Zubiri

### *Against*

None

### *Abstention*

None

With 22 senators voting in favor, none against, and no abstention, the Chair declared House Bill No. 4228 approved on Third Reading.

## EXPLANATION OF VOTE OF SENATOR GO

Senator Go thanked the chairman of the Committee on Finance and the Body in general for adopting the much needed increase in the health budget, specifically citing the following:

- Additional P7 billion for the human resources for health deployment program that would ensure the continued employment of health workers and allow DOH to augment, redistribute, and retain health workers in geographically, isolated and disadvantaged areas and, economically-disadvantaged municipalities.
- Additional funding to implement the Supreme Court decision upholding the validity of Section 32 of the Philippine Nursing Act of 2002 which provides that the minimum base pay of nurses working in the public health institutions shall not be lower than Salary Grade 15.

- Increase in the budget of PhilHealth to progressively realize Universal Health Care in the country and ensure that all Filipinos are guaranteed equitable access to quality and affordable health care.

In this regard, he asked the DOH, PhilHealth, and all government agencies to ensure judicious and prudent use of public funds, trusting them to institute reforms to improve efficiency in spending their budgets.

Finally, Senator Go also congratulated both Houses of Congress for the swift passage of this appropriation measure as he called on his colleagues to ensure smooth deliberations during the bicameral conference proceedings in order to avoid a reenacted budget and ensure the continuous delivery of the most basic services to Filipinos. He urged them to work double time to finish the process, just in time for the President's signature, for the benefit of the nation.

## MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR GORDON

Senator Gordon extended his congratulations to Finance Committee chair Senator Angara who has surely made his father proud in his initial shepherding of the budget which is an important legislation. He commended the Body for not sleeping on the job particularly concerning its action on the clamor of nurses for the adjustment of their salaries which even needed a decision from the Supreme Court.

He recalled having met with nurses around hospitals and even those working in the Red Cross who would tell him about how they were experiencing discrimination in the sense that they are given low-paying jobs without benefits, with some hospitals taking advantage of their predicament knowing they badly need a certificate of employment in order to work abroad. He stressed that Filipino nurses should not go abroad because many rural health units do not have nurses and have inadequate medical assistance. He stated that he had repeatedly said many times in the past that six out of ten Filipinos die without seeing a doctor.

Senator Gordon stated that with the P3.173 billion fund introduced by the Senate, the salary of nurses would be increased as their salary grade would be converted from Nurse I to Nurse II.

*Handwritten signature and initials.*



Senator Gordon extended his congratulations to the Senate for working hard and having compassion for the Filipino nurses.

### SENATE CONFEREES

Upon nomination by Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, Senate President Sotto designated the following Senators to constitute the Senate panel in the Bicameral Conference Committee on the disagreeing votes on House Bill No. 4228 (General Appropriation Act of 2020): Senator Angara as chairperson; Senators Lacson, Villar, Cayetano, Gatchalian, Go, Gordon, Marcos, and Villanueva as vice chairpersons; and Senators Recto, Binay, Poe, Drilon, Pangilinan, and Hontiveros as members.

### MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR DRILON

Senator Drilon placed on record his appreciation for the work done by Senator Angara as chairperson of the Committee on Finance.

### MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR ZUBIRI

Senator Zubiri also lauded the hard work of the Senate for the past two weeks, particularly the Senators' staff and the Secretariat, and thanked everyone for their support in legislating the national budget.

### COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 13 ON SENATE BILL NO. 643

*(Continuation)*

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body resumed consideration, on Second Reading, of Senate Bill No. 643 (Committee Report No. 13), entitled

AN ACT GRANTING NIGHT SHIFT  
DIFFERENTIAL PAY TO THE  
GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES INCLUD-  
ING THOSE IN GOVERNMENT-  
OWNED OR CONTROLLED COR-  
PORATIONS AND APPROPRIATING  
FUNDS THEREFOR.

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

Thereupon, the Chair recognized Senator Revilla for his committee amendments.

### COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

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

1. On page 1, line 5, after the word "between," delete the phrase "ten o'clock in the morning" and in lieu thereof, insert the phrase THE HOURS OF 6:00 P.M. AND 6:00 A.M. OF THE FOLLOWING DAY;
2. On page 1, line 16, delete the word "and," and insert a new paragraph to read as follows:
 

B) GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES WHOSE SCHEDULE OF OFFICE HOURS FALL BETWEEN 6:00 A.M. TO 6:00 P.M. SERVICES RENDERED BEYOND THE REGULAR EIGHT HOUR WORK SCHEDULES ARE PAID OVERTIME PAY IN ACCORDANCE WITH EXISTING LAWS, RULES AND REGULATIONS; AND
3. On page 2, line 14, delete the phrase "from the savings generated from the different," and in lieu thereof, insert the phrase AGAINST EXISTING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE PURPOSE OF;
4. Reletter the subsections of Section 2; and
5. On page 2, line 15, after the word "agencies," insert the word CONCERNED.

### TERMINATION OF THE PERIOD OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

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

### REVILLA AMENDMENTS

In consideration of the concerns raised by Senator Drilon during the period of interpellations, as proposed by Senator Revilla, there being no objection, the Body approved the following amendments, one after the other:

#### *Page 1*

1. On line 1, after the words "Government employees," insert the phrase UNDER SALARY GRADE 1 TO SALARY GRADE 24;

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2. On line 4, after the word "employee," insert the phrase AS DETERMINED BY THE HEAD OF THE AGENCY;
3. On line 11, before the word "monthly," insert the word BASIC;
4. Delete line 15;

*Page 2*

5. On line 3, before the word "National," delete the letter "s" from the word "Philippines";
6. On line 4, after the acronym "(BJMP)," delete the conjunction "and";
7. On line 5, after the acronym "(BFP)," insert a comma (,) and the phrase: AND OTHERS SIMILARLY SITUATED AS MAY BE DETERMINED BY THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION AND THE DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT; and
8. Renumber the subsections accordingly.

#### **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.

#### **APPROVAL OF SENATE BILL NO. 643 ON SECOND READING**

Submitted to a vote, there being no objection, Senate Bill No. 643 was approved on Second Reading.

#### **SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF SENATE BILL NO. 643**

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

#### **COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 5 ON SENATE BILL NO. 1055** (Continuation)

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body resumed consideration, on Second Reading, of Senate Bill No. 1055 (Committee Report No. 5), entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A SEPARATE FACILITY FOR PRISONERS CONVICTED OF HEINOUS CRIMES.

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

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

#### **SUSPENSION OF SESSION**

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

*It was 4:15 p.m.*

#### **RESUMPTION OF SESSION**

At 4:17 p.m., the session was resumed with Senate President Pro Tempore Recto presiding.

#### **SOTTO AMENDMENT**

On page 1, as proposed by Senate President Sotto and accepted by the Sponsor, there being no objection, the Body approved to delete lines 3 to 7 and to insert a new Section 2, as follows:

SEC. 2. *DECLARATION OF POLICY.* – IT IS THE POLICY OF THE STATE TO PROMOTE THE GENERAL WELFARE AND SAFEGUARD THE BASIC RIGHTS OF EVERY PRISONER INCARCERATED IN THE NATIONAL PENITENTIARY. FURTHERMORE, THE STATE ADHERES TO THE BASIC PRINCIPLE THAT THE DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF PRISONERS SHALL BE KEPT IN SEPARATE INSTITUTIONS OR PARTS OF INSTITUTIONS TAKING ACCOUNT OF THEIR SEX, AGE, CRIMINAL RECORD, THE LEGAL REASON FOR THEIR DETENTION, AND THE NECESSITIES OF THEIR TREATMENT.

#### **DRILON AMENDMENT**

On page 2, Subsection (b), as proposed by Senator Drilon and accepted by the Sponsor, there being no objection, the Body approved to replace the definition of "Inmates," as follows:

B. INMATES — SHALL REFER TO AN INMATE SENTENCED BY A COURT TO SERVE A TERM OF IMPRISONMENT FOR MORE THAN THREE (3) YEARS OR A FINE OF MORE THAN ONE THOUSAND PESOS (P1,000) REGARDLESS OF THE LENGTH OF SENTENCE IMPOSED BY THE COURT, TO ONE SENTENCED FOR

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VIOLATION OF CUSTOMS LAW OR OTHER LAWS WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF THE BUREAU OF CUSTOMS OR ENFORCEABLE BY IT; OR FOR VIOLATION OF THE IMMIGRATION AND ELECTION LAWS; OR TO ONE SENTENCED TO SERVE TWO (2) OR MORE PRISON SENTENCES IN THE AGGREGATE EXCEEDING THE PERIOD OF THREE YEARS, WHETHER OR NOT HE HAS APPEALED. IT SHALL ALSO INCLUDE A PERSON COMMITTED TO THE BUREAU OF CORRECTIONS BY A COURT OR COMPETENT AUTHORITY FOR TEMPORARY CONFINEMENT FOR SIMILAR PURPOSE.

Senator Drilon explained that as proposed, the definition of "National Inmate" is consistent with Republic Act No. 10575, or the Bureau of Corrections Act of 2013, for purposes of uniformity.

#### SOTTO AMENDMENT

On page 2, line 9, as proposed by Senate President Sotto and accepted by the Sponsor, there being no objection, the Body approved the insertion of a new Section 4, to read as follows:

SEC. 4. *CREATION OF HEINOUS CRIMES FACILITY.* — THERE SHALL BE ESTABLISHED AND MAINTAINED A SECURE, CLEAN, ADEQUATELY EQUIPPED, AND SANITARY NATIONAL PENITENTIARY FOR THE CUSTODY AND SAFEKEEPING OF OFFENDERS CONVICTED OF HEINOUS CRIMES UNDER THE OPERATION OF THE BUREAU OF CORRECTIONS.

#### GORDON AMENDMENT

On page 2, line 2, as proposed by Senator Gordon, there being no objection, the Body approved to replace the definition of "High-Level Offenders," as follows:

- (a) *HIGH-LEVEL OFFENDERS.* — OFFENDERS CONVICTED OF HEINOUS CRIMES AND ARE CONVICTED OF *RECLUSION PERPETUA* OR LIFE IMPRISONMENT SHALL BE CONSIDERED AS HIGH-LEVEL OFFENDERS. HEINOUS CRIMES ARE THOSE CRIMES WHICH ARE HEINOUS FOR BEING GRIEVOUS, ODIOS, AND HATEFUL OFFENSES AND WHICH, BY REASON OF THEIR INHERENT OR MANIFEST WICKEDNESS, VICIOUSNESS,

ATROCITY, AND PERVERSITY, ARE REPUGNANT AND OUTRAGEOUS TO THE COMMON STANDARDS AND NORMS OF DECENCY AND MORALITY IN A JUST, CIVILIZED, AND ORDERLY SOCIETY.

#### SOTTO AMENDMENTS

As proposed by Senate President Sotto and accepted by the Sponsor, there being no objection, the Body approved the following amendments, one after the other:

1. On page 3, line 7, renumber "Sec. 7" to SEC. 5;
2. On page 2, line 10, as modified by Senator Gordon, replace the sentence after the word "Facilities" and the period (.) with the following:

THE TRANSFER OF INMATES SHALL BE HEADED BY THE BUCOR. THE BUCOR MAY SEEK THE ASSISTANCE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT (DILG), THROUGH THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE (PNP), WHEN THE MEANS OF TRANSPORTING THE INMATES WILL BE DONE THROUGH THE USE OF AN AIRCRAFT OR VESSEL. THE EXPENSES IN RELATION TO THE SAID TRANSFER SHALL BE CHARGED AGAINST THE BUDGET OF THE BUCOR.

DURING THE TRANSFER OF INMATES FROM THE PRISON FACILITIES OF THE BUCOR TO THE HEINOUS CRIMES FACILITY, THEY SHALL BE EXPOSED TO PUBLIC VIEW AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE, AND PROPER SAFEGUARD SHALL BE ADOPTED TO PROTECT THEM FROM INSULT, CURIOSITY AND PUBLICITY IN ANY FORM. MOREOVER, ANY INCONVENIENCE OR UNNECESSARY PHYSICAL HARDSHIPS ON THE INMATES WHILE THEY ARE BEING TRANSFERRED SHALL BE PROHIBITED.

SEPARATE VEHICLES SHOULD BE USED FOR MALE AND FEMALE PRISONERS; *PROVIDED*, THAT WOMEN INMATES AND MINORS BETWEEN FIFTEEN (15) AND SEVENTEEN (17) YEARS OF AGE SHALL BE TRANSFERRED AND KEPT IN A SEPARATE BUILDING INSIDE THE HEINOUS CRIME FACILITY.

WHEN THE TRANSFER HAS BEEN FULLY EXECUTED, A REPORT JOINTLY

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PREPARED BY THE PNP AND THE BUCOR SHALL BE SUBMITTED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Senate President Sotto said that the rationale was to ensure an orderly conduct of transfer of inmates from their current penal facilities to the heinous crimes facilities.

#### DRILON AMENDMENTS

As proposed by Senator Drilon and accepted by the Sponsor, there being no objection, the Body approved the following amendments as a matter of style, one after the other:

1. On page 2, line 6, replace the word "Secured" with SECURE; and
2. On the same page 2, line 6, replace the phrase "One far away from" with SHALL REFER TO A SAFE AND REMOTE PLACE THAT HAS MINIMAL CONTACT WITH.

#### GORDON AMENDMENTS

As proposed by Senator Gordon, there being no objection, the Body approved the following amendments:

1. As an omnibus amendment, replace the term "Maximum Penal Institution" wherever found in the bill with HEINOUS CRIMES FACILITY; and
2. On page 2, line 21, replace the word "institution" with FACILITIES.

#### SOTTO AMENDMENTS

On page 3, as proposed by Senate President Sotto and accepted by the Sponsor, there being no objection, the Body approved the following amendments, one after the other:

1. On line 14, insert a new Section 9 to read as follows:

SEC. 9. *CONDUCT OF RANDOM TESTING.* — THERE SHALL BE A CONDUCT OF A REGULAR RANDOM DRUG TESTING AMONG THE INMATES IN THE HEINOUS CRIMES FACILITY. THE RANDOM DRUG TESTING SHALL BE DONE BY ANY FORENSIC LABORATORY

OR BY ANY OF THE DRUG TESTING LABORATORIES ACCREDITED AND MONITORED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (DOH) TO SAFEGUARD THE QUALITY OF TEST RESULTS.

Senate President Sotto said that the rationale was to ensure that the inmates and the facility itself remain to be drug-free at all times.

2. Renumber the succeeding sections accordingly.

#### GORDON AMENDMENTS

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

1. On page 3, line 6, after the word "maintained" and the period (.) insert a new sentence, to read as follows:

DUE REGARD SHALL BE GIVEN TO THE MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES AND NEEDS OF INMATES. PRISONERS SHALL HAVE ACCESS TO NECESSARY HEALTH CARE SERVICES WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION ON THE GROUNDS OF THEIR LEGAL STATUS;

2. On the same page, line 7, insert a new Section 7, to read as follows:

SEC. 7. *VISITATION.* — FAMILY AND IMMEDIATE RELATIVES ARE ALLOWED TO VISIT THE INMATES, SUBJECT TO FURTHER RULES AND REGULATIONS IMPOSED.

3. Still on the same page, lines 9 and 10, delete the phrase "which is conducted";
4. As amended by Senate President Sotto and with the concurrence of Senator Zubiri, delete lines 14 to 19 and in lieu thereof, insert a new Section to read as follows:

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. *JOINT CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE ON SEPARATE FACILITY FOR HEINOUS CRIMES INMATES ACT.* — THERE IS HEREBY CREATED A JOINT CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE COMPOSED OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE, WITH FOUR (4) MEMBERS EACH FROM BOTH HOUSES. THE SAID MEMBERS SHALL

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BE DULY APPOINTED BY THE SENATE PRESIDENT AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE MEMBERS OF THE RESPECTIVE COMMITTEES BASED ON THE PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION OF THE PARTIES OR COALITION THEREIN AND MONITOR ITS PROPER IMPLEMENTATION.

5. Renumber the succeeding sections accordingly.

### **SOTTO AMENDMENT**

On page 3, line 20, as proposed by Senate President Sotto and accepted by the Sponsor, there being no objection, the Body approved to insert a new Section, to read as follows:

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. *INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS.* – THE BUCOR SHALL MAKE SURE THAT THERE WILL BE AN EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS TO BE USED IN THE BUILD-UP, MAINTENANCE, AND TRANSMITTAL OF NECESSARY INMATE RECORDS TO ALL THE PRISON AND PENAL FARMS OF THE BUCOR AND OTHER AUTHORIZED GOVERNMENT AGENCIES.

### **GORDON AMENDMENT**

On page 4, line 1, as proposed by Senator Gordon, there being no objection, the Body approved the insertion of a new Section to read as follows:

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. *IMPLEMENTING RULES AND REGULATIONS.* – THE SECRETARY OF JUSTICE SHALL PROMULGATE THE IMPLEMENTING RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THIS ACT WITHIN NINETY (90) DAYS UPON ITS EFFECTIVITY.

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. *REPORTORIAL REQUIREMENT.* – THE BUCOR SHALL SUBMIT A BIENNIAL REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STARTING FROM THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE HEINOUS CRIMES FACILITY UNTIL ITS COMPLETION. PRIOR TO THE COMPLETION OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE HEINOUS CRIMES FACILITY, THE REPORT SHALL INCLUDE THE PROGRESS OF THE CONSTRUCTION AND THE INFORMATION ON THE APPLICATION OF THE BUDGET IN RELATION TO

THE AFORESAID CONSTRUCTION. WHEN THE PREMISES OF THE HEINOUS CRIMES FACILITY HAVE BEEN COMPLETED AND OCCUPIED BY THE HIGH-LEVEL OFFENDERS, THE REPORT ON THE STATUS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS ACT SHALL BE SUBMITTED ANNUALLY.

### **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.

### **APPROVAL OF SENATE BILL NO. 1055 ON SECOND READING**

Submitted to a vote, there being no objection, Senate Bill No. 1055 was approved on Second Reading.

### **SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF SENATE BILL NO. 1055**

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 4:42 p.m.*

### **RESUMPTION OF SESSION**

At 5:23 p.m., the session was resumed.

### **COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 19 ON SENATE BILL NO. 1155**

*(Continuation)*

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body resumed consideration, on Second Reading, of Senate Bill No. 1155 (Committee Report No. 19), entitled

AN ACT FIXING THE VALIDITY PERIOD OF LICENSE TO OWN AND POSSESS, PERMIT TO CARRY OUTSIDE OF RESIDENCE OR PLACE OF BUSINESS AND REGISTRATION OF FIREARMS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTIONS 7 AND

*15 22*



19 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10591,  
OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE  
“COMPREHENSIVE FIREARMS AND  
AMMUNITION REGULATION ACT.”

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

Thereupon, the Chair recognized Senator Dela Rosa, sponsor of the measure.

#### **MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR ZUBIRI**

Senator Zubiri stated that the bill would simply extend the LTOP from two years to five years and the registration of firearms from four to five years, the reckoning of application of which shall be the date of birth.

#### **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 SENATE BILL NO. 1155 ON SECOND READING**

Submitted to a vote, there being no objection, Senate Bill No. 1155 was approved on Second Reading.

#### **SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF SENATE BILL NO. 1155**

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

#### **SUSPENSION OF SESSION**

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

*It was 5:26 p.m.*

#### **RESUMPTION OF SESSION**

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

#### **COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 8 ON SENATE BILL NO. 1077** (Continuation)

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body resumed consideration, on Second Reading, of Senate Bill No. 1077 (Committee Report No. 8), entitled

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

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

Thereupon, the Chair recognized Senator Poe, 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.

#### **SUSPENSION OF SESSION**

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, the session was suspended.

*It was 5:27 p.m.*

#### **RESUMPTION OF SESSION**

At 5:27 p.m., the session was resumed.

#### **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 SENATE BILL NO. 1077 ON SECOND READING**

Submitted to a vote, there being no objection,



Senate Bill No. 1077 was approved on Second Reading.

#### **SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF SENATE BILL NO. 1077**

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

#### **ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE REFERRAL**

Acting on the request of Senator Gatchalian, upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, House Bill No. 4436 (Lanao Del Norte Electric Cooperative) and House Bill No. 4437 (Bicol Light and Power Corporation) were referred secondarily to the Committee on Energy.

#### **COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 6 ON SENATE BILL NO. 1074**

*(Continuation)*

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body resumed consideration, on Second Reading, of Senate Bill No. 1074 (Committee Report No. 6), entitled

AN ACT INCREASING THE EXCISE TAX ON ALCOHOL PRODUCTS, HEATED TOBACCO PRODUCTS AND VAPOR PRODUCTS, AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE SECTIONS 141, 142, 143, 144, 147, 150, AND 288, OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8424, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE NATIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1997, AS AMENDED, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

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

Thereupon, the Chair recognized Senator Cayetano, Sponsor of the measure, and Senator Tolentino for the continuation of his interpellations.

#### **INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR TOLENTINO**

*(Continuation)*

At the outset, Senator Tolentino recalled that he

first started his interpellation on the bill about six weeks ago, before the incident which came out in the news, involving a 16-year old girl from Cebu who was confined in an ICU in Cebu because of vaping, the first documented case of vaping incident involving respiratory illness. He said that the girl was supposed to be in the Senate, but his office had a hard time tracking her from her hometown because she moved to another place.

Asked if tax could be imposed on something illegal, Senator Cayetano replied that the Tax Code is general enough, citing Section 129 of the NIRC which states: "Excise taxes apply to goods manufactured or produced in the Philippines for domestic sales or consumption or for any other disposition and to things imported as well as services performed in the Philippines." She said that with no exception or distinction, whether it is prohibited or not, if a product is manufactured, produced or imported, it can be subject to excise tax.

Senator Tolentino agreed as he mentioned the four canons of taxation, to wit: equity — the amount payable by the taxpayer should be equal or proportionate to the income; ability — based on the ability to pay; convenience — administrative convenience in the mode of payment; and economy — as taxes should not be imposed if their cost of collection is excessive.

Senator Tolentino noted that a lot of uninformed or misinformed people perceive that e-cigarettes, vapes, and other similar products are illegal and therefore if a law taxing those products would be passed, it might give a presumption of legality. He then presented a video clip showing Al Capone's defense that the U.S. government cannot collect legal taxes from illegal money, but in 1931, he was imprisoned for tax evasion.

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

He pointed out that the NIRC was patterned, in fact, some of its provisions were lifted verbatim from the U.S. Federal Internal Revenue Code.

In reply, Senator Cayetano admitted that U.S. jurisprudence does have persuasive influence that can be used by courts in the Philippines, but she pointed out that at present, e-cigarettes are not illegal in the country, they are available in the market and so they are legal; but at some point, for whatever reason,



they are declared illegal, the debates in plenary would be used to show that it was the intention of Congress that those products would be taxable, based also on the NIRC that has not put any restrictions on it.

Senate President Sotto inquired how the U.S. Government found that Al Capone was not paying his taxes. Senator Tolentino replied that there were several witnesses who came out, including his accountant, as well as a lot of other information, like his non-filing of an income tax return, which led to his conviction. He noted that the real intention of the FBI was to go after him for the Saint Valentine's Day Massacre. Senate President Sotto remarked that the U.S. Government wanted Al Capone off the streets in whatever way.

But Senator Tolentino asked Senator Cayetano what her basis was in assuming that vape is legal, because according to several discussions, there is no basis for its sale or importation, and that the only legal cover it has is a law passed a few years ago taxing vape. Senator Cayetano stated that as far as taxation is concerned, there is a presumption that a product is legal and can be taxed; unless there is any exemption made, it is taxable. She noted that the proposed measure was not introducing something new because there was already a tax measure that included taxing e-cigarettes.

To Senator Tolentino's observation that even if the previous Congress opted to tax vapes, it did not mean that vapes are legal, Senator Cayetano maintained that just because Congress chose to tax vapes, it does not prevent the health authority or any other authority of the state, from exercising its authority to regulate or limit or even ban a product to ensure the safety of the Filipinos. She stated that taxation cannot be used as basis to say that a product is safe or legal.

Senator Tolentino agreed, citing the principle of tax neutrality which states: "Taxes are not concerned with the legality or illegality of a transaction, but rather with the requirements for it to be taxed or not." Thus, he said that the mere fact that the Seventeenth Congress imposed a tax on e-cigarettes does not mean that e-cigarettes are legal. He also pointed out that the NIRC itself imposes taxes on all income derived from whatever source, whether legal or illegal. He maintained that even if Congress, by law, imposes sin taxes on vapes, it does not clothe the vape products and e-cigarettes with legality without the imprimatur

coming from the agency charged by law, which is the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Asked by Senator Tolentino whether the FDA has taken action regarding vapes, Senator Cayetano said that the FDA, recognizing that the product is in the market, came out with an administrative order to regulate it by requiring that the product be registered so that health authorities can monitor and play a stronger role in ensuring safety from its consumption. Unfortunately, she said, a TRO was issued against the FDA.

Senator Tolentino said that the DOH belatedly opted to formulate the rules through the Inter-Agency Committee-Tobacco because the basis of the RTC judge for issuing the TRO was that the AO did not come from the inter-agency committee.

Senator Cayetano clarified that it was the sole initiative of FDA to come out with an administrative order. She lamented, however, that some members of the industry were able to secure a TRO from the court.

At this juncture, Senator Lacson noted that the case of Al Capone was not accurately analogous to what the measure seeks to achieve. According to him, the IRS taxed Al Capone's income and not any product or goods that he was in possession of. On the other hand, he said, the measure proposes to tax vape which is a product.

Senator Tolentino said that he was just giving examples and that going to extremes, he cited as another example, the colorum buses which are illegal but their operators pay the motor vehicles users' charge (MUV). He pointed out that even if they paid the MUV, it did not clothe their illegal bus operations with legality insofar as LTFRB laws and other transport laws are concerned.

He expressed concern that without any regulation, FDA approval or law, vapes, insofar as existing laws are concerned, could still be considered as prohibited items pursuant to Section 15 of the Consumers Protection Act, which provided that if a product is banned in the place of manufacture, the Philippines should consider it as a prohibited import product and as such, it could be apprehended by the Bureau of Customs as a contraband.

On a related matter, Senator Tolentino asked Senator Cayetano whether she was aware of EVALI, a new disease identified by the Centers for Disease

ms QSTV



Control and Prevention of WHO and recognized by the DOH. He said that the first identified victim in the country is a 16-year old from Mandaue City, Cebu.

Senator Cayetano said that EVALI is the acronym for E-cigarette or Vaping Products Associated Lung Injury, a term broad enough to cover injuries or ailments, medical conditions that are found to be associated with e-cigarettes and vaping.

Asked whether she would agree that there was now an epidemic brought about by the use of vapes, e-cigarettes and other similar products which necessitated the creation of a new nomenclature for respiratory ailment, such as EVALI, Senator Cayetano noted that term "EVALI" was used to a specific location. For instance, she said that the United States made some kind of declaration because of the fact that there are many minors there who are using the products. However, she said that no such declaration has been made yet in the Philippines.

Senator Tolentino recalled that during the plenary deliberations of the budget of the DOH, the Health secretary admitted that the agency issued a health advisory following a WHO advisory that there was now a danger relative to the use of e-cigarettes, vapes and other similar products and in consideration of the fact that the emerging disease has found its way to the country. He said that when one speaks of respiratory and other cardiovascular conditions, it must be one and the same, whether the person is from San Francisco, China or Cebu.

Senator Cayetano clarified that the reason for her saying that there was no epidemic yet was that "epidemic" means that there must be a certain number of persons affected within an immediate period of time, and that declaration of an epidemic would trigger certain responses on the part of the DOH and the local government unit, if any. She noted that when Senator Tolentino mentioned a DOH advisory, he must be referring to a precautionary act done by DOH when there were indications that there was something new that every health professional should be aware of and should immediately be reported so that it can be monitored. She said that a normal health consultation may not trigger questions that would otherwise give the health professional any reason to conclude that a person has EVALI.

Senator Tolentino then questioned the surveillance mechanism or system of the DOH including their

communication system considering that during the budget deliberations, the Health Secretary claimed that there were just three cases but the newspapers reported more than nine. He surmised that the DOH, in issuing a health advisory, could have taken cognizance of the use of vapes among the youth. He believed that the DOH should take a step further, by banning its use, although according to Health Undersecretary Domingo, the agency was still waiting for the right and conclusive medical findings.

Senator Cayetano said that the very nature of a medical practitioner's education would bring him or her to advise that a product, such as vapes, e-cigarettes, or alcohol, should not be consumed, and that if that medical practitioner were also a policymaker, even if his/her natural reaction would be to ban whatever is considered harmful or hazardous to health, it may be best for him/her to take into consideration and consult the direction of the other government agencies, including the DOF.

Senator Tolentino revealed that out of 181 countries, including the Philippines, which are parties to the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, 104 countries still lack regulations concerning e-cigarettes.

Senator Cayetano said that there are a lot of products that have not been directly banned or have not been declared legal either, but they are out there available; some of the products are regulated and some are not, including e-cigarettes. She noted that given the increasing awareness of their health risks, there was now a move to start considering what kind of regulation should be put into place, citing what other countries did: some have opted for a direct ban while others have opted for very serious regulations.

Asked by Senator Tolentino whether she would consider the clamor that a good regulation would necessitate the banning of flavored e-cigarettes, Senator Cayetano said that during the public hearings on the measure, when she heard from a behavioral scientist that these flavors were made to entice the youth, she realized that the flavors were a problem and as such, they must be strongly regulated.

At this point, Senator Tolentino showed a short video presentation of a vape party.

Senator Cayetano informed the Body that JUUL, one of the industry players, was brought to task by the American FDA since its marketing targeted the





youth by hosting vape parties. She recalled that during the committee hearing, JUUL representatives in the Philippines volunteered not to host or sponsor vape gatherings. She expressed concern, however, that JUUL has already set the tone, noting an Instagram post she saw where young friends were creating their own JUUL party, prompting her to set her personal direction to ban vape beyond the age of 18 because there are young people who are still in school but on their own are creating their JUUL parties influenced by Instagram posts and access by just typing "Welcome to JUUL party." She lamented how JUUL has created an image that a JUUL party is cool and that it is easy for the young to host one.

Asked whether industry players sponsor vape parties and give away free vapes, Senator Cayetano stated that even if there are no free vapes to be given away, the fact that they host, create a nice atmosphere, and pay for the DJ is already a way of sponsorship. She said that the even if the industry player is not around, people would call it a JUUL party because it is already in their mentality.

Senator Tolentino stated that the amount of smoke emitted is just too much for the body of a young adult to handle, and that its ill effects on health have reached an epidemic proportion especially in other countries. He cited several credible academic medical journals and medical societies like the European Society of Cardiology that have issued medical bulletins or papers relative to the cardiovascular risk of electronic cigarettes, as well as pre-clinical and clinical studies that revealed that e-cigarettes contain aerosol, nicotine, and smoking toxicity, thus, posing more negative effects than the claimed benefits of e-cigarettes as substitute for regular cigarettes. He said that with the numerous medical bulletins coming out and with documented cases and clinical validations, there is no need to expound on the negative effects of e-cigarettes or vapes.

Senator Tolentino stated that e-cigarettes adversely affect the cardiovascular system, not just the respiratory system or the lungs, citing a number of studies that linked vapes to the impaired functioning of blood vessels, and a cross-sectional study that found that the daily use of e-cigarette increases the risk of heart attacks, with an additional effects to those who are into smoking at the same time as what happened to the 16-year old girl in Cebu. He said that the health risks associated with e-cigarettes, while uncertain, could not be considered safe, as

stated in the European Public Health Association Journal. He added that there are more landmark studies by the American Heart Association on the effects of vapes.

He informed the Body that in the Philippines, 1,591 people died of heart attack daily in 2016, or a total of 582,183 for that year, although not vape-related. He revealed, however, that there is a hidden formaldehyde component in vapes, the one used for embalming the dead and other chemicals, such as propylene, glycol, nicotine, and formaldehyde-containing hemiacetals and more. Thus, he wondered why vape is allowed to be sold despite its negative impact on the people. He suggested that new products go through extensive testing before allowing them to be legally sold in the market, regulated, and taxed

Senator Cayetano welcomed the inputs of Senator Tolentino, agreeing that there are a lot of misinformation on how safe vapes or e-cigarettes are compared to cigarettes. She believed that the more that Senator Tolentino cites studies and medical reports on how unsafe such products are, the better it would help everyone to come to the conclusion when it comes to voting on the rates. She stated that presently, the Committee could only handle the rates and hoped that at the proper time, Senator Tolentino would continue to participate in the debates and during the period of amendments introduce his proposal. She underscored the importance of making the public aware of the health risks of vapes or e-cigarette.

At this point, Senator Cayetano informed the Body that the US FDA had called to task JUUL Laboratories for making statements that vape is much safer than cigarette. She then quoted the FDA, to wit: "Regardless of where products like e-cigarettes fall on the continuum of tobacco product risk, the law is clear that before marketing tobacco products for reduced risk, companies must demonstrate with scientific evidence that their specific product does, in fact, pose less risk or is less harmful. JUUL has ignored the law and very concerningly has made some of the statement in schools to our nation's youth."

Asked by Senate President Sotto where the statement emanated from, Senator Cayetano replied that it was from the US FDA.

Senate President Sotto stated that he received a different US FDA information which he shared with the Committee.

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Senator Cayetano stated that she would be happy to clarify matters. She recalled that during his interpellation, Senator Gordon mentioned that JUUL was cleared to be sold. She clarified, however, that while it has been cleared for selling, it cannot make claims that it is safer.

At this juncture, Senate President Sotto read into the record the press release of the US FDA which, he noted, pertained to heated tobacco and not vape, as follows: "Following rigorous science-based review through the Premarket Tobacco Product Application (PMTA), the agency determined that authorizing these products for US market is appropriate for the protection of the public health because among several key considerations, the product produced fewer or lower levels of some toxins than combustible cigarettes. The product authorized for sale include the IQOS device."

Senator Cayetano pointed out while there was authorization for the product to be available in the market, it was not allowed to make any claims that it is safer. Relative thereto, she recalled reminding a Philip Morris representative who was attending the hearing for IQOS, not to claim that their product is safer, and the response was that he was just saying it in a closed environment, not in public. She averred that such statement, if quoted by media, could lead to more trouble because media would claim that it was rightly quoting the source of the statement even if the source is not allowed to make such claims.

Asked by Senate President Sotto whether the more appropriate phrase would be "it has lesser toxins than combustible cigarettes," Senator Cayetano stressed that the producer, even if they are allowed to sell their product, cannot make such claims, and neither can they say it nor write about it.

Senator Tolentino pointed out that flavored e-cigarettes are appealing to the youth and young adults, and that he has not seen senior citizens using vape.

Senator Cayetano agreed with Senator Tolentino that e-cigarettes are marketed as technology products, and that it does make sense that older adults avoid or are not attracted to e-cigarettes while the young are so enamored by it. She said that some vape products are designed in such a way that it could be discreetly used indoors — even in classrooms — because they look like a pen. She stated that according to a behavioral scientist, vape is like technology in a stick

— a perfect fit for the smartphone generation and can even be synched to the phone to let them know how much have been vaped. She informed the Body that Apple, the makers of Iphone, has taken down the application from their App Store because they realized that it is causing excitement among users so they decided not to be a part of it.

As to why vaping is attractive to the youth, Senator Cayetano recalled her encounter with a gentleman belonging to a pro-vaping association who narrated to her that he was not initially into e-cigarettes but that when he tasted different flavors, he got hooked, although from time to time he switches back to cigarettes. She said that according to the behavioral scientists that she met in London, smoking is aspirational for kids even if their parents do not smoke; it becomes aspirational when they see adults smoke or vape.

Senator Tolentino agreed, as he recalled the interview conducted with the Cebuana vape victim who said that she switches from vapes to regular smoking, which is contrary to the claims of e-cigarette manufacturers that it is a substitute for regular smoking.

Senator Tolentino stated that one of the basic principles of taxation is equity which is measured on the principle of equal ability to pay based on personal circumstances, but among the vape buyers, a significant portion are the youth who have no means to pay tax. Thus, he posited that the proposed law seemed discriminatory because it taxes a segment of the population that do not have the appropriate ability to pay. Senator Cayetano acknowledged that the equitableness of taxation has always been an issue especially if it is a single tax because the argument would always be in favor of those who have lesser ability to pay. However, she pointed out that in addition to the taxation measure on vape users, very strong health regulatory measures should also be considered, precisely to discourage the youth from vaping. She lamented the lateness of the attempt because of the massive international marketing of vapes which made the youth very interested in it, a dilemma the government is being confronted with.

Quoting a study on flavored vaping products which said in part that vaping "enhanced the appeal of cigarettes by creating a sensory perception of sweetness and coolness and masking the aversive taste of nicotine," Senator Tolentino asked whether



Senator Cayetano would agree to ban flavored e-cigarettes. Replying in the affirmative, Senator Cayetano expressed willingness to compromise on an alternative to tobacco flavor which would be menthol, reiterating that she is against flavored vape because she had seen how it has attracted the youth.

Senator Tolentino agreed that the prevalence of e-cigarettes among the youth is associated with the artificial flavors because if the flavor is removed from vape products, there would be less vape users.

Senator Cayetano then read into the record the statement of the Food and Drug Administration in its April 29 news release, which Senate President Sotto had asked for clarification, to wit:

“The agency (FDA) determined that authorizing these products for the U.S. market is appropriate for the protection of the public health because, among several key considerations, the products produce fewer or lower levels of some toxins than combustible cigarettes.” x x x “The products authorized for sale include the IQOS device, Marlboro Heatsticks, Marlboro Smooth Menthol Heatsticks, and Marlboro Fresh Menthol Heatsticks. While today’s action permits the tobacco products to be sold in the U.S., it does not mean that these products are safe or ‘FDA approved.’ All tobacco products are potentially harmful and addictive, and those who do not use tobacco products should continue not to. Additionally, today’s action is not a decision on the separate modified risk tobacco product applications that the company also submitted.”

Senator Cayetano clarified that the aforementioned products were not even FDA-approved and that the statement was simply a declaration that they could be sold.

Senator Tolentino reminded Senator Cayetano that the precautionary principle, which is part of the sustainable development goals of the United Nations, states that “... in case of serious or irreversible threats to the health of humans or the ecosystem, acknowledged scientific uncertainty should not be used as a reason to postpone preventive measures.” He said that preventive measures should include banning, partially banning, and totally banning the importation of the product. He believed that Senator Cayetano would pursue the precautionary principle as part of their discussions, as affirmed by a Supreme Court decision.

Senator Tolentino asked whether Senator Cayetano would agree that, as a tax principle, taxes are not concerned with legality or illegality of a transaction, that taxes should be neutral, and that taxing vape or e-cigarette is not inconsistent with banning it. Senator Cayetano replied that taxing vape or e-cigarette is not inconsistent with banning it. She explained that one of the reasons why there is hesitancy in banning e-cigarette is that a lot of people are already using it and it is available in the market. She believed that if the products are banned but are still being sold illegally, the DOF would not hesitate to impose a tax on it.

Senator Tolentino acknowledged that even banned products could be taxed. He asked if some banned products could still be subject to tax, like firecrackers and fireworks that are banned in some areas but could still be bought in some stores in Bulacan. Senator Cayetano replied that in terms of equity, if a person or a company involved in a legitimate business is required by law to file taxes, those who are selling banned products should also be taxed.

At this juncture, Senate President Sotto asked whether banned products are also illegal and if, that is so, then *shabu* should also be taxed.

Relative to the question raised by Senator Tolentino, Senator Drilon wondered if the services of a prostitute could be subject to tax, since the service is obviously not allowed by law. He said that as he was listening the discussions, it would appear that it is consistent with law and with the National Internal Revenue Code (NIRC) to tax the act of prostitution. This, he said, is also the same with the issue of taxing the *shabu* user. He expressed the view that the use of e-cigarette is legal since there is no law which declares it illegal. He cautioned the Body not go into a difficult situation of trying to tax an illegal act because vaping or use of e-cigarette is not an illegal act.

On the legality of vape or e-cigarettes, Senator Tolentino explained that the NIRC imposes taxes on all incomes derived from whatever source, legal or illegal. He affirmed that there is no law declaring vapes as illegal or legal and that his statement was based on his previous assertions to which Senator Cayetano agreed.

Senator Drilon stressed that there must be a law that should declare an act illegal; absent such a law,

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the act is legal. He stressed that there is no law at present to ban or to make the use of e-cigarettes illegal. Senate President Sotto agreed.

Senator Tolentino pointed out that the power to tax is limited to the following: 1) it must be for a public purpose; 2) it generally exempts government entities; 3) it is non-delegatable or cannot be delegated; 4) it should be based on an international comity; and 5) it should be territorial. He noted that the situation at present is that there is a newly introduced item which is evolving into something which is dangerous or non-dangerous. He believed that as a precautionary measure, the government should not wait for a scientific conclusion as regards the safeness and unsafeness of a product in order to prevent it from causing harm to society. He stressed that scientific uncertainty should not be used as a reason to postpone preventive measures. He explained that he was not against the taxes on alcohol and cigarettes but that his only concern was more on the new developed product, such as vape or e-cigarettes, that would probably flood the market in the coming months and might produce more injuries to the Filipino youth.

Senator Cayetano assured Senator Tolentino that all the concerns that he raised would be included in the Committee's final decision. She believed that taxation should always be used as a tool to achieve health goals, and that the FDA had done its job by requiring that certain regulatory steps be taken by those who would be participating in the market by way of selling and displaying e-cigarette products. She said that just like Senator Tolentino, she too fears that the market would be flooded with vaping products, especially because of the TRO issued against the FDA which prevented them from doing their job of taking cognizance of the dangers of vaping. She said that steps must be taken so that the FDA can take cognizance of what the products are and their contents. However, she said that the rates that would be proposed are in line with the objective to use taxation as a tool to achieve the health goals.

Senator Tolentino said that as a manifestation of his support to the Sponsor for taking into account the health issues, he was giving some documents that would aid the Committee in discerning the proper approach, including the latest ordinance from the City of San Francisco, the very place where JUUL was born, banning e-cigarettes, as well as the latest law from the State of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

## **MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR ZUBIRI**

Thereupon, Senator Zubiri informed the Body that interpellation on Senate Bill No. 1074 would resume on December 9 and 10, with the hope of wrapping up the discussions and voting on Third Reading also on December 10.

## **SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF SENATE BILL NO. 1074**

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

Senator Zubiri stated that the House of Representatives has increased to 23 its members in the Bicameral Conference Committee on the General Appropriations Act after learning that the Senate has appointed 17 senators in the Senate panel.

## **ADDITIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

Upon nomination by Senator Zubiri, Senators Pangilinan and Tolentino were elected members of the Congressional Oversight Committee on Ease of Doing Business on the part of the Senate.

## **MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR ZUBIRI**

Senator Zubiri stated that the Senators have agreed to resume work on Monday, December 9, because the Senate will have no work on Monday, December 2, in observance of Pasay City Day, as well as on December 3, 4, and 5 since many of the venues of the Southeast Asian Games are located near the GSIS Financial Center and several roads leading to the office are blocked to allow the athletes a faster travel time to the venue of their respective events. He said that the Senate employees would have a hard time going to the office because of the different road blocks; thus, work on December 3, 4 and 5 will be cancelled. Also, he said that 15 senators will also be attending the bicameral conference committee meeting starting on Friday.

Finally, Senator Zubiri sent his wishes of luck to Senator Tolentino, manager of the Philippine kick-boxing team, and to the arnis and ten-pin bowling teams. He also wished good luck to Senator Cayetano's brother, House Speaker Cayetano, for a successful conduct of the game.

Senator Zubiri also extended his advance birthday greetings to Senator Drilon who will be celebrating his birthday the following day.

#### 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 Monday, December 9, 2019.

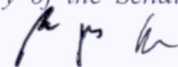
*It was 6:52 p.m.*

I hereby certify to the correctness of the foregoing.



**ATTY. MYRA MARIE D. VILLARICA**

*Secretary of the Senate*



Approved on December 9, 2019