



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
Senate
Pasay City

Journal

SESSION NO. 63

Monday to Wednesday, May 4 to 6, 2020

**EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
FIRST REGULAR SESSION**

Prepared by the
LEGISLATIVE JOURNAL SERVICE
Senate of the Philippines

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CALL TO ORDER

At 3:00 p.m., Monday, May 4, 2020, the Senate President, Hon. Vicente C. Sotto III, called the session to order.

PRAYER

Sen. Francis "Tol" N. Tolentino led the prayer, to wit:

The highest glory and honor we offer to You today, Almighty Father, are Your gifts of life, love, and hope. We thank You for Your goodness, Your compassion, Your unfailing love for humanity. We acknowledge in all humility our human frailties, and implore Your forgiveness and mercy.

Almighty Father, we come to You in this time of greatest need as the novel coronavirus continues to stalk across the land, spreading fear and confusion, bringing our lives to a standstill, and ultimately claiming countless lives. We fly to Your refuge, Lord God, and we seek Your protection from this malady.

Stretch forth Your healing hands, O Lord. Lay upon them our sick and ailing countrymen, including Sen. Sonny Angara. Be with the thousands who are struggling with this dreaded disease, uplift their spirits, renew their strength, and restore them to good health. For in Jeremiah Chapter 30, verse 17, You have promised, "For I will restore health to you and heal You of Your wounds." In a special way, we thank You for healing our colleagues here in the Senate, Senators Miguel Zubiri and Koko Pimentel.

We humbly ask You to comfort the families and loved ones of those whose lives have been claimed by this disease, in particular our esteemed statesman former Sen. Heherson Alvarez. In Your loving arms welcome them, and grant Your everlasting peace.

Lord, we lift up to You our brave and tireless frontliners and those who risk their lives to give hope and deliverance to those afflicted by this crippling pandemic. Fortify their spirits, renew their strength, and shield

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them from all harm as they selflessly offer themselves as instruments of Your divine healing. We implore Your wisdom to come upon those tasked to seek the cure for this disease. Direct their minds, O Lord, so that they may offer relief to the infirmed, physically and spiritually, by this contagion.

We humbly ask You to bless the leaders of this country, and to help the members of this Chamber today in passing measures for the relief and recovery of our countrymen.

Bless us with Your wisdom, fill us with Your strength, engulf us in Your grace, Lord God, so that we may be united in heart and in spirit, as we heal as one.

Our hopes we rest upon You, Lord, and all these we ask in the Holy Name of Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one true God, forever and ever.

Amen.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

Everyone remained standing for the singing of the national anthem.

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:

Binay, M. L. N. S.	Poe, G.
Dela Rosa, R. B. M.	Recto, R. G.
Gatchalian, W.	Revilla III, R. B.
Go, C. L. T.	Sotto III, V. C.
Gordon, R. J.	Tolentino, F. T. N.
Lacson, P. M.	Villanueva, J.
Lapid, M. L. M.	Zubiri, J. M. F.
Pacquiao, E. M. D.	

With 15 senators present, the Chair declared the presence of a quorum.

Senators Angara, Cayetano, Drilon, Hontiveros, Marcos, Pangilinan, Pimentel and Villar arrived after the roll call.*

* Senators Angara, Cayetano, Drilon, Hontiveros, Marcos, Pangilinan, Pimentel and Villar were marked "arrived after the roll call" following the adoption of Senate Resolution No. 43.

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. 62 (March 9, 2020) and considered it approved.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

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

MESSAGE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Letter from the House of Representatives, dated March 9, 2020, informing the Senate that the House of Representatives on even date passed House Bill No. 6489, entitled

AN ACT CONVERTING AND EXPANDING THE LEYTE DEVELOPMENT INDUSTRIAL ESTATE INTO THE LEYTE ECOLOGICAL INDUSTRIAL ZONE, CREATING FOR THIS PURPOSE THE LEYTE ECOLOGICAL INDUSTRIAL ZONE AUTHORITY, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR,

in which it requested the concurrence of the Senate.

To the Committees on Economic Affairs; Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change; Ways and Means; and Finance

Letter from the House of Representatives, dated March 9, 2020, informing the Senate that the House of Representatives passed on even date House Bill No. 6365, entitled

AN ACT UPGRADING THE SIARGAO DISTRICT HOSPITAL, IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF DAPA, PROVINCE OF SURIGAO DEL NORTE INTO A LEVEL II GENERAL HOSPITAL TO BE KNOWN AS THE SIARGAO MEDICAL CENTER,

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INCREASING ITS BED CAPACITY, UPGRADING ITS PROFESSIONAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES AND FACILITIES, AUTHORIZING THE INCREASE OF ITS MEDICAL PERSONNEL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR,

in which it requested the concurrence of the Senate.

To the Committee on Health and Demography

Letter from the House of Representatives, dated March 9, 2020, informing the Senate that the House of Representatives passed on even date House Bill No. 6404, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER IN QUEZON CITY, TO BE KNOWN AS THE QUEZON CITY TESDA TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR,

in which it requested the concurrence of the Senate.

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

Letter from the House of Representatives, dated March 9, 2020, informing the Senate that the House of Representatives passed on even date House Bill No. 6333, entitled

AN ACT COMMEMORATING THE CITYHOOD OF SAN JOSE DEL MONTE, PROVINCE OF BULACAN, THROUGH THE ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF THE TANGLAWAN FESTIVAL ON THE OCCASION OF ITS FOUNDATION DAY ON SEPTEMBER 30, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9750,

and House Bill No. 6363, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING JULY 2 OF EVERY

YEAR A SPECIAL NONWORKING HOLIDAY IN PASIG CITY TO BE KNOWN AS THE "ANNIVERSARY DAY OF PASIG CITY,"

in which it requested the concurrence of the Senate.

To the Committee on Local Government

Letter from the House of Representatives, dated March 9, 2020, informing the Senate that the House of Representatives passed on even date House Bill No. 5887, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN UNDERSEA OR BRIDGE FROM CEBU CITY TO THE MUNICIPALITY OF CORDOVA AND A COASTAL ROAD-EXPRESSWAY TO THE MACTAN-CEBU INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR,

in which it requested the concurrence of the Senate.

To the Committees on Public Works; and Finance

Letter from the House of Representatives, dated March 9, 2020, informing the Senate that the House of Representatives passed on even date House Bill No. 6373, entitled

AN ACT RENEWING FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-FIVE YEARS THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO TANDAG ELECTRIC AND TELEPHONE COMPANY, INC. UNDER REPUBLIC ACT 8715, ENTITLED "AN ACT GRANTING THE TANDAG ELECTRIC AND TELEPHONE COMPANY, INC., A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, ESTABLISH, INSTALL, MAINTAIN AND OPERATE LOCAL EXCHANGE NETWORK IN THE PROVINCE OF SURIGAO DEL SUR,"

and House Bill No. 6474, entitled

AN ACT RENEWING FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-FIVE YEARS (25) THE

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FRANCHISE GRANTED TO CACERES BROADCASTING CORPORATION UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8106, ENTITLED "AN ACT GRANTING CACERES BROADCASTING STATIONS IN THE ISLAND OF LUZON AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES,"

in which it requested the concurrence of the Senate.

To the Committee on Public Services

Letter from the House of Representatives, dated March 9, 2020, informing the Senate that the House of Representatives passed on even date House Bill No. 875, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE IMPROVEMENT, REHABILITATION, AND MODERNIZATION OF THE NAVOTAS FISH PORT COMPLEX,

and House Bill No. 4443, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A FISH PORT OF BARANGAY MACARASCAS IN THE CITY OF PUERTO PRINCESA AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR,

in which it requested the concurrence of the Senate.

To the Committees on Agriculture, Food and Agrarian Reform; Public Works; and Finance

Letter from the House of Representatives, dated March 10, 2020, informing the Senate that the House of Representatives passed on even date House Bill No. 78, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE DEFINITION OF PUBLIC UTILITY, FURTHER AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE COMMONWEALTH ACT NO. 146, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "PUBLIC SERVICE ACT," AS AMENDED,

in which it requested the concurrence of the Senate.

To the Committees on Public Services; and Economic Affairs

Letter from the House of Representatives, dated March 10, 2020, informing the Senate that the House of Representatives passed on even date House Bill No. 6134, entitled

AN ACT MANDATING BANKING INSTITUTIONS TO STRENGTHEN THE FINANCIAL SYSTEM FOR AGRICULTURAL, FISHERIES AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES,

in which it requested the concurrence of the Senate.

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

Letter from the House of Representatives, dated March 10, 2020, informing the Senate that the House of Representatives passed on even date House Bill No. 5912, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING JULY 27 OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL NATIONAL NONWORKING HOLIDAY, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9645, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "COMMEMORATION OF THE FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY OF IGLESIA NI CRISTO ACT,"

in which it requested the concurrence of the Senate.

To the Committee on Constitutional Amendments and Revision of Codes

Letter from the House of Representatives, dated March 10, 2020, informing the Senate that the House of Representatives passed on even date House Bill No. 6136, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8794, ENTITLED "AN ACT IMPOSING A MOTOR VEHICLES USER'S CHARGE ON OWNERS OF ALL TYPES OF MOTOR VEHICLES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES," AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11239,"

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in which it requested the concurrence of the Senate.

To the Committees on Public Services; Ways and Means; and Finance

Letter from the House of Representatives, dated March 10, 2020, informing the Senate that the House of Representatives passed on even date House Bill No. 6123, entitled,

AN ACT DEFINING THE OFFENSES OF DISCHARGE OF FIREARMS AND INDISCRIMINATE FIRING OF FIREARMS AND PROVIDING STIFFER PENALTIES THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE ARTICLE 254 OF ACT NUMBER 3815, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "REVISED PENAL CODE," AND REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10591, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "COMPREHENSIVE FIREARMS AND AMMUNITION REGULATION ACT,"

in which it requested the concurrence of the Senate.

To the Committee on Public Order and Dangerous Drugs

Letter from the House of Representatives, dated March 10, 2020, informing the Senate that the House of Representatives passed on even date House Bill No. 5975, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING THE FOURTH THURSDAY OF NOVEMBER OF EVERY YEAR AS NATIONAL THANKSGIVING DAY,

in which it requested the concurrence of the Senate.

To the Committees on Civil Service, Government Reorganization and Professional Regulation; and Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development

Letter from the House of Representatives, dated March 10, 2020, informing the Senate that the House of Representatives passed on even date House Bill No. 6192, entitled

AN ACT PRESERVING THE INDIGENOUS GAMES OF THE PHILIPPINES,

in which it requested the concurrence of the Senate.

To the Committee on Sports; and Cultural Communities

Letter from the House of Representatives, dated March 10, 2020, informing the Senate that the House of Representatives passed on even date House Bill No. 6254, entitled

AN ACT RENEWING FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO FBS RADIO NETWORK, INC. UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8114, ENTITLED "AN ACT GRANTING FBS RADIO NETWORK, INC. A FRANCHISE TO ESTABLISH, CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, MAINTAIN AND OPERATE COMMERCIAL RADIO AND TELEVISION STATION IN THE PHILIPPINES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES,

in which it requested the concurrence of the Senate.

To the Committee on Public Services

Letter from the House of Representatives, dated March 10, 2020, informing the Senate that the House of Representatives passed on even date House Bill No. 6256, entitled

AN ACT RENEWING FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO CENTURY COMMUNICATIONS MARKETING CENTER, INC. DOING BUSINESS UNDER THE NAME AND STYLE OF CENTURY BROADCASTING NETWORK . UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8133, ENTITLED "AN ACT GRANTING CENTURY COMMUNICATIONS MARKETING CENTER, INC. A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSE

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**RADIO AND BROADCASTING
TELEVISION STATIONS IN THE
PHILIPPINES, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES,**

in which it requested the concurrence of the Senate.

To the Committee on Public Services

Letter from the House of Representatives, dated March 10, 2020, informing the Senate that the House of Representatives passed on even date House Bill No. 6371, entitled

AN ACT RENEWING FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION, PRESENTLY KNOWN AS BAYAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS, INC. UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 3259, ENTITLED "AN ACT GRANTING THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION A FRANCHISE TO ESTABLISH RADIO STATIONS FOR DOMESTIC TELECOMMUNICATIONS, RADIOPHONE AND TELECASTING" AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NOS. 4905 AND 7633,

in which it requested the concurrence of the Senate.

To the Committee on Public Services

Letter from the House of Representatives, dated March 10, 2020, informing the Senate that the House of Representatives passed on even date House Bill No. 6091, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING PROTECTION FROM LIABILITY TO VOLUNTEERS FOR ACTS OR OMISSIONS COMMITTED IN THE PERFORMANCE OF THEIR DUTIES DURING EMERGENCY SITUATIONS,

in which it requested the concurrence of the Senate.

To the Committees on Social Justice,

**Welfare and Rural Development; and Justice
and Human Rights**

BILLS ON FIRST READING

Senate Bill No. 1412, entitled

AN ACT TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN THE ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING LAW, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTIONS 2, 3, 7, 10, 12, AND 20 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9160, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING ACT OF 2001, AS AMENDED, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Poe

**To the Committees on Banks, Financial
Institutions and Currencies; and Justice and
Human Rights**

Senate Bill No. 1414, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND RECOVERY PACKAGE TO COUNTER THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ALSO, ENTITLED "PAG-ASA: ALAGA, SUSTENTO, AT ANGAT SA PANAHON NG COVID-19 CRISIS" PACKAGE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Marcos

To the Committee on Finance

Senate Bill No. 1415, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING SECTION 288 OF THE NATIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1997, AS AMENDED, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Marcos

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

Senate Bill No. 1416, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11332, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS

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THE "MANDATORY REPORTING OF NOTIFIABLE DISEASES AND HEALTH EVENTS OF PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERN ACT," AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Marcos

To the Committee on Health and Demography

Senate Bill No. 1417, entitled

AN ACT APPROPRIATING THE SUM OF ONE HUNDRED EIGHT BILLION PESOS (P108,000,000,000) FOR THE 2020 FISCAL STIMULUS PACKAGE TO ADDRESS THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19

Introduced by Senator Angara

To the Committee on Finance

Senate Bill No. 1419, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A UNIFIED SYSTEM FOR SEPARATION, RETIREMENT, AND PENSION OF THE MILITARY AND UNIFORMED PERSONNEL (MUP) SERVICES OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES, CREATING THE MILITARY AND UNIFORMED PERSONNEL RETIREMENT FUND AUTHORITY, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Go

To the Committees on National Defense and Security; Peace, Unification and Reconciliation; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1420, entitled

AN ACT MANDATING THE APPOINTMENT OF BARANGAY HEALTH WORKERS IN BARANGAYS, AND PROVIDING FOR THEIR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Revilla

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

Senate Bill No. 1421, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING MICRO-FINANCE PROGRAMS AND ACCESS TO CAPITAL TO SUPPORT THE GROW MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (MSMEs), ALLOCATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Revilla

To the Committees on Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship; Economic Affairs; Ways and Means; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1422, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE MAGNA CARTA OF YOUNG FARMERS

Introduced by Senator Revilla

To the Committees on Agriculture, Food and Agrarian Reform; Youth; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1423, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE NATIONAL HEALTH PASSPORT SYSTEM THEREBY STRENGTHENING THE PRIMARY HEALTHCARE SYSTEM, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Revilla

To the Committees on Health and Demography; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1424, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL ECONOMIC DECENTRALIZATION PLAN TO FACILITATE FURTHER GROWTH IN ALL REGIONS OF THE PHILIPPINES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Revilla

**To the Committees on Economic Affairs;
and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1425, entitled

AN ACT TO INSTITUTIONALIZE A
STANDARD UPGRADE AND
MODERNIZATION OF REGIONAL
HOSPITALS TO CREATE AND
ESTABLISH REGIONAL CENTER OF
EXCELLENCE FOR HEALTH CARE

Introduced by Senator Revilla

**To the Committees on Health and Demo-
graphy; and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1426, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT
NO. 7610, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS
THE "SPECIAL PROTECTION OF
CHILDREN AGAINST ABUSE,
EXPLOITATION AND DISCRIMINA-
TION ACT", AS AMENDED, AND
FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Marcos

**To the Committee on Women, Children,
Family Relations and Gender Equality**

Senate Bill No. 1427, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT
NO. 11469 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS
THE "BAYANIHAN TO HEAL AS
ONE ACT"

Introduced by Senator Marcos

To the Committee on Finance

Senate Bill No. 1428, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT
NO. 7924, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS
"AN ACT CREATING THE METRO-
POLITAN MANILA DEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY, DEFINING ITS POWERS
AND FUNCTIONS, PROVIDING

FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Marcos

To the Committee on Local Government

Senate Bill No. 1429, entitled

AN ACT GRANTING FULL TAX BENE-
FITS TO DONATIONS PROVIDED
DURING A STATE OF CALAMITY
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Marcos

To the Committee on Ways and Means

Senate Bill No. 1430, entitled

AN ACT PROHIBITING DISCRIMINA-
TION AGAINST HEALTHCARE
WORKERS, FRONTLINERS, AND
PERSONS SUSPECTED OF COVID-19
INFECTION, PROVIDING PENALTIES
THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Marcos

**To the Committee on Justice and Human
Rights**

Senate Bill No. 1431, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN ECONOMIC
RECOVERY PACKAGE TO BUSI-
NESSES IN THE HARDEST HIT
SECTORS BY THE CORONAVIRUS
DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19), APPRO-
PRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND
FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Marcos

**To the Committees on Economic Affairs;
and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1432, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING SECTIONS 28, 38
AND 39 OF REPUBLIC ACT
NO. 7305, OTHERWISE KNOWN

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AS THE "MAGNA CARTA OF
PUBLIC HEALTH WORKERS"

Introduced by Senator De Lima

To the Committees on Health and Demography; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1433, entitled

AN ACT REQUIRING ALL TELECOMMUNICATIONS ENTITIES GRANTED WITH CONGRESSIONAL FRANCHISES TO PROVIDE THEIR SUBSCRIBERS WITH FREE ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT WEBSITES

Introduced by Senator De Lima

To the Committees on Public Services

Senate Bill No. 1434, entitled

AN ACT PROMOTING THE WELFARE AND PROTECTION OF THE ELDERLY AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator De Lima

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

Senate Bill No. 1435, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING DISCOUNT FOR INDIGENT JOB APPLICANTS IN THE PAYMENT OF FEES AND CHARGES FOR CERTAIN CERTIFICATES AND CLEARANCES ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT AGENCIES FOR EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION

Introduced by Senator Poe

To the Committees on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development; and Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development

Senate Bill No. 1436, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11332 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS

THE MANDATORY REPORTING OF NOTIFIABLE DISEASE AND HEALTH EVENTS OF PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERN ACT

Introduced by Senator Hontiveros

To the Committees on Health and Demography; and Justice and Human Rights

Senate Bill No. 1437, entitled

AN ACT MODERNIZING THE REGULATION OF HEALTH FACILITIES AND SERVICES, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, REPEALING FOR PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO 4226, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "HOSPITAL LICENSURE ACT"

Introduced by Senator Revilla

To the Committees on Health and Demography; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1438, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING SECTION 3 OF REPUBLIC ACT NUMBER 7977, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS AN ACT TO LENGTHEN THE SCHOOL CALENDAR FROM TWO HUNDRED (200) DAYS TO NOT MORE THAN TWO HUNDRED TWENTY (220) CLASS DAYS

Introduced by Senator Sotto

To the Committee on Basic Education, Arts and Culture

Senate Bill No. 1439, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING SECTIONS 13 OF REPUBLIC ACT 10121, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "PHILIPPINE RISK REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT ACT OF 2010"

Introduced by Senator De Lima

To the Committees on National Defense

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and Security, Peace, Unification and Reconciliation; Health and Demography; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1440, entitled

AN ACT CREATING THE PHILIPPINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION, DEFINING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Gordon

To the Committees on Health and Demography; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1441, entitled

AN ACT MANDATING LIFE INSURANCE AND ADDITIONAL HEALTH COVERAGE FOR ALL WORKERS IN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR COMPELLED TO RENDER SERVICE OUTSIDE THE HOME DURING A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

Introduced by Senator Hontiveros

To the Committees on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development; Civil Service, Government Reorganization and Professional Regulation; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1442, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATION OF ADDITIONAL QUARANTINE STATIONS, GROUNDS AND ANCHORAGES IN ALL STRATEGIC AREAS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Cayetano

To the Committees on Health and Demography; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1443, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A NATIONAL HEALTH SECURITY

AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Cayetano

To the Committees on Health and Demography; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1444, entitled

AN ACT STRENGTHENING NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS AND BIORISK REDUCTION IN RESPONSE TO PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES

Introduced by Senator Pacquiao

To the Committees on Health and Demography; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1445, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL COVID-19 CENTER, TO BE KNOWN AS THE COVID-19 DISEASE PREVENTION AND CONTROL CENTER

Introduced by Senator Pacquiao

To the Committees on Health and Demography; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1446, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10173, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "DATA PRIVACY ACT OF 2012", AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Marcos

To the Committee on Science and Technology

Senate Bill No. 1447, entitled

AN ACT EXTENDING THE PRESCRIPTIVE PERIOD OF OFFENSES UNDER THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN ACT, THE CRIME OF RAPE AND THE CRIMES CHARACTERIZED AS CRIMES AGAINST CHASTITY

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UNDER TITLE ELEVEN OF THE REVISED PENAL CODE, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION TWENTY-FOUR OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9262, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "ANTI-VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN ACT OF 2004," AND ARTICLE 90 OF THE REVISED PENAL CODE, AS AMENDED

Introduced by Senator Marcos

To the Committees on Women, Children, Family Relations and Gender Equality; and Justice and Human Rights

COAUTHOR

Senate President Sotto, the principal author of Proposed Senate Resolution No. 351, manifested the inclusion of Senator Lacson as coauthor of the resolution.

PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 372

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body considered Proposed Senate Resolution No. 372, entitled

RESOLUTION AMENDING RULE XI, SECTION 22, AND RULE XIV, SECTION 41 OF THE RULES OF THE SENATE TO ALLOW THE CONDUCT OF PLENARY SESSIONS AND COMMITTEE HEARINGS THROUGH TELECONFERENCE, VIDEO CONFERENCE, AND OTHER RELIABLE FORMS OF REMOTE OR ELECTRONIC MEANS.

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

Thereupon, the Chair recognized Senator Zubiri for the sponsorship.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR ZUBIRI

Senator Zubiri explained that the proposed amendments to Rule XI, Section 22, and Rule XIV,

Section 41 of the Rules of the Senate to allow the conduct of plenary sessions and committee hearings through teleconferencing, video conference, and other reliable forms of remote or electronic means, became necessary in light of the COVID-19 pandemic which prompted the President to issue Proclamation No. 922 declaring a state of public health emergency and Proclamation No. 929 declaring a state of calamity throughout the Philippines for a period of six months, and to place the National Capital Region and most areas in Luzon under the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) while other areas were placed under General Community Quarantine (GCQ). He said that he did not have to remind everyone of the danger of COVID-19, citing himself, as well as Senators Angara and Pimentel, as victims of the disease. He also mentioned the staff of Senators Cayetano and Revilla who also contracted the disease, latter's staff succumbing to it, as well as over a dozen of Senate staff who tested positive that day in the rapid test kits provided by Senator Lacson and Senate President Sotto. Thus, he advised his colleagues who have preexisting health conditions and are already elderly, to remain at home in accordance with the protocols set forth by the government and by the World Health Organization as they are the most vulnerable sector.

He feared that the number of cases would continue to increase and given the current rate of contamination, the country might reach the 10,000 mark by Tuesday or Wednesday with the virus still lurking in Metro Manila. Thus, he underscored the need to protect not only the Members of the Senate but also the 3,000 staff from both the Secretariat and the Office of the Senators. He pointed out that 80% of them take public transport, thus allowing them to work from home would decongest the Senate from any possible contamination and spread of the virus, thereby lessening the problem of the country's national health service system.

He explained that Rule XI, Section 22 of the Rules of the Senate would be amended to allow the committees to conduct meetings or hearings through teleconference, videoconference, and other reliable forms of remote electronic means in cases where there would be *force majeure* or occurrence of an emergency that would prevent the senators from physically attending committee meetings or hearings, while Rule XIV, Section 41 would be amended to allow the Senate to postpone the holding of the session on a day to day adjournment or, with the

consent of the House of Representatives, convene and hold session through teleconference, videoconference, or other reliable forms of remote or electronic means. He also indicated that Senate President Sotto and Senator Lacson would be introducing amendments to come up with a hybrid system that would provide the Members the choice to be physically present in the Senate or to participate from home.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR LACSON

At the outset, Senator Lacson requested that he be made coauthor of Proposed Senate Resolution No. 372. He then asked if the proposed resolution lays down the exception rather than the rule on how the Senate should conduct meetings, hearings, and plenary sessions through teleconferencing. Senator Zubiri replied in the affirmative, clarifying that teleconferencing or videoconferencing would only be utilized during times of national health emergencies and *force majeure*, whether natural or manmade calamities, that would prevent the Members from physically attending the sessions of the Senate.

As to what constitutes an emergency to justify a Member to be unable to physically attend a Senate meeting or plenary session and to use teleconferencing or videoconferencing, Senator Zubiri replied that there should be an occurrence of a national emergency like the national health emergency currently in place, natural or manmade calamities, or state of lawlessness that would prevent the Members from coming to the Senate. He agreed to consider amendments that would specifically reflect the intent as he described earlier.

Senator Lacson stated that since it is a crisis of worldwide implications, at the proper time during the period of amendments, he would propose to only limit the exception to the rule to the COVID-19 issue, because anyway, the Senate could always adopt another resolution if the situation demands, such as in the event of war or an occurring emergency or *force majeure*.

But Senator Zubiri cited the difficulty of amending the Rules from time to time because of the publication requirement. He believed that the word "force majeure" would suffice to cover natural and manmade calamities, and he also suggested the deletion of the word "emergency" to prevent the invocation of this word by a Member simply because he/she would not

want to physically attend the session, more so when the emergency being invoked is not considered an emergency by the other Members.

Asked who would determine that there is an emergency that would necessitate or compel the Senate to resort to teleconferencing, Senator Zubiri stated that if the Body so agrees, the determination could be left to the discretion of Senate President Sotto. But Senator Lacson believed that being a deliberative and collegial body, the matter of determining if there is an emergency to compel them to resort to teleconferencing must be decided by the whole body.

Asked by Senate President Sotto of the phrase "The Senate President, in consultation with the Majority Leader and the Minority Leader," which phrase is already contained in the Rules, would suffice, Senator Lacson maintained that leaving the determination to the discretion of three persons does not make it any different from leaving it to the Senate President alone, and he pointed out that because once the amendment as presently worded is adopted, it would encompass future occurrences of emergency; hence, his proposal is to just limit the application of the resolution to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis as it is not every day or every year that a crisis of such magnitude will occur.

Senator Poe agreed with Senator Lacson that the determination of the occurrence of an emergency must have the concurrence of the majority of the senators, but she asked if they have to physically show up first to concur or not to concur or a preliminary teleconference could be held to get the sentiment of the Members so that if majority of the Members agree that there is an emergency, then teleconferencing is allowed.

Senator Lacson said that the proposal of Senator Poe would be a welcome amendment to his amendment.

Senate President Sotto suggested the phrase "a manifestation of the majority of the members of the Senate," saying that the word "manifestation" would provide enough elbow room which would be translated into a resolution signed by all Members.

Senator Zubiri proposed the phrase "majority of the Senators," so as not to limit the determination to the Minority Leader, the Majority Leader and the Senate President.

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Senator Lacson noted that the point raised by Senator Poe was that the determination of an emergency that would necessitate teleconferencing should be decided by the whole body even through teleconferencing.

Senator Zubiri agreed, but he appealed to Senator Lacson not to limit the application of the rule on teleconferencing to the COVID-19 pandemic because even if a vaccine would be discovered and made available by October, for instance, and the teleconferencing rule would no longer be valid, the future Senate must have this rule available in the event of another emergency or a calamity that would make it impossible for the Members to physically attend the sessions of the Senate. He explained that the teleconferencing rule is not a special rule but an amendment to the general rule which would be published and become part of the Rules of the Senate. He reiterated his earlier proposal that the presence of an emergency must be determined by a vote of the majority of the Members.

Senate President Sotto proposed to add a new subparagraph (c) to address the concern of Senator Lacson that the occurrence of a national emergency should be determined by the majority of the Members of the Senate.

On Rule XI, Section 22 which governs the holding of meetings and/or hearings through teleconference, Senator Lacson inquired if the rule would also be applicable to inquiries in aid of legislation, particularly when during the course of an investigation, one of the witnesses or resource persons lied under oath and there was a need to cite him/her for contempt. Asked how the members of the committee would vote or cite a person in contempt and order his/her detention, Senator Zubiri stated that the resource persons would have to take their oath while being witnessed by all the members of the Senate via video conference or teleconference.

But Senator Lacson pointed out that administering an oath necessitates physical presence before an administering officer. Senator Zubiri stated that certain limitations would be observed in the conduct of committee hearings through teleconferencing, and that the amendment would not prevent a chairperson to conduct committee meetings face to face.

Senate President Sotto stated that teleconferencing should only be confined to simple committee

meetings and/or hearings but not to inquiries in aid of legislation which is governed by a separate set of rules, *The Rules of Procedure Governing Inquiries in Aid of Legislation* which the Senate adopted through Senate Resolution No. 5.

Adverting to Rule XIV, Section 41, Senator Lacson questioned the need for the consent of the House of Representatives when both Houses of Congress could adopt their own rules of proceedings.

Senate President Sotto manifested that he would, in fact, proposed the deletion of that requirement as he agreed with Senator Lacson that the Senate does not need the consent of the House of Representatives.

Asked how the senators' vote would be taken in case one or some of them are not physically present in the session hall considering that under Rule XIV, Section 117, "the vote of a Senate absent from the session at the moment he is called to vote shall not be counted," Senate President Sotto explained that once Proposed Senate Resolution No. 372 is adopted, the senators in the teleconference would be deemed present and therefore they can participate in the voting.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR TOLENTINO

Prefatorily, Senator Tolentino congratulated Senator Zubiri for opening a hybrid window that would settle the constitutional ambiguities which the Senate was experiencing at that moment.

Adverting to Section 16(5), Article VI of the 1987 Constitution, Senator Tolentino believed that to sit in one House refers to the venue where the Senate chamber is, and that moving elsewhere means transferring collectively, just like when the House of Representatives sought the consent of the Senate before convening in Batangas City after the Taal Volcano eruption. Senate President Sotto clarified that the House of Representatives simply informed the Senate of their plan to convene in Batangas City.

Casting his support for the shift to teleconferencing, Senator Tolentino likewise expressed concern on the constitutionality of moving out of the session hall because it will be tantamount to having session in 23 different venues, contrary to the Constitution. As he acknowledged that the hybrid session would create a good fusion in the Senate proceedings so that the health and safety of the senators and their

staff would be protected, he hoped that the Senate could likewise comply with the constitutional requirement of not leaving the session hall. He stated that as provided for in Rule L, Section 135, absent a rule applicable to the specific case, precedents of the Legislative Department of the Philippines shall be resorted to, but he noted that there was no precedent yet to resort to although before World War II, Senate sessions were conducted at the Manila City Hall, Aduana in Intramuros, and Sampaloc, Manila. Accordingly, he believed that amending the Senate Rules to allow teleconferencing was imperative, noting that the House of Representatives already was practicing its own hybrid session. He said that the presence of the majority of the senators in the Session Hall already complies with the requirements of the Constitution.

Senate President Sotto emphasized the need to retain the physical presence of some Members in the session while the others would participate via teleconference.

Senator Tolentino also assumed that the plenary hall would serve as the nerve center of any electronic platform that the Senate would have.

Also, Senate President Sotto stated that Article VI, Section 16(3) of the Constitution provides that "Each House may determine the rules of its proceedings xxx."

TERMINATION OF THE PERIOD OF INTERPELLATIONS

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

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

SOTTO AMENDMENT

On page 2, line 32, as proposed by Senate President Sotto and accepted by the Sponsor, there being no objection, the Body approved to delete the phrase "WITH THE CONSENT OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES."

VILLANUEVA AMENDMENT

On page 2, lines 19 and 20, as proposed by

Senator Villanueva and accepted by the Sponsor, there being no objection, the Body approved to replace the phrase "in case when there is" with DUE TO, consistent to the rationale found in Section 41 of the Rules.

LACSON AMENDMENTS

As proposed by Senator Lacson and accepted by the Sponsor, there being no objection, the Body approved the amendments on page 2, line 20, as follows:

1. Insert the word NATIONAL before the word "emergency"; and
2. Insert the phrase AS DETERMINED BY A MAJORITY OF ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE SENATE after the word "emergency."

SOTTO AMENDMENT

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

NOTWITHSTANDING THE FOREGOING, SENATORS WHO ELECT TO BE PHYSICALLY PRESENT DURING THE HOLDING OF TELECONFERENCE SESSION MAY PERSONALLY ATTEND AND PARTICIPATE IN THE SAID SESSION INSIDE THE PLENARY HALL.

LACSON AMENDMENTS

As proposed by Senator Lacson and accepted by the Sponsor, there being no objection, the Body approved the following amendments on page 3:

1. On line 1, insert the word NATIONAL before the word "emergency;"
2. On the same line, after the word "emergency," insert the phrase AS DETERMINED BY A MAJORITY OF ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE SENATE.

TERMINATION OF THE PERIOD OF AMENDMENTS

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

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ADOPTION OF PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 372

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection. Proposed Senate Resolution No. 372 was adopted by the Body, subject to style.

INQUIRY OF SENATOR DRILON

Preliminarily, Senator Drilon thanked Senate President Sotto and Senate Majority Leader Zubiri for coming up with Proposed Senate Resolution No. 372 as a remedy to the procedure in the Senate plenary session, amid the current COVID-19 pandemic. He said that it was, in fact, a departure from the *Rules of the Senate* and the tradition of the Senate, particularly on attendance or presence of a quorum and voting.

With the adoption of the said resolution embodying the amendments to the Rules, Senator Drilon asked when the Body should avail of teleconferencing; whether this new rule could be used in a daily basis or only in an emergency, and assuming it is only in an emergency, how long the privilege of participating via teleconferencing would last.

In reply, Senator Zubiri explained that with the adoption of Proposed Senate Resolution No. 372, the Senate could already conduct sessions with some Members physically present in the Senate Hall, while the others participating via teleconference.

Supposing these would no longer be an emergency in July or August, Senator Drilon asked whether the Body could still conduct sessions and transact business through teleconference, or if the Members would be required to be physically present. Senator Zubiri explained that based on the amended rule, it is the majority of the Members of the Senate that would determine the occurrence of a national emergency. He said that the Body would be continuing with the setup until the majority of the Members deem that teleconferencing would no longer be necessary.

Asked if the exercise of the said prerogative of going through teleconferencing can be availed of only in case there is an emergency or whether the majority can vote that the Body can conduct sessions through teleconferencing even in normal times Senator Zubiri replied that there has to be a national emergency or *force majeure* as determined by the

majority of the members of the Senate, to justify the holding of sessions through teleconference.

Senator Drilon pointed out that teleconferencing is not the new normal, it is only an exception that, he noted, would have a lot of implications, most importantly on voting. He said that by tradition and pursuant to the Rules, before it was amended, a senator cannot vote, interpellate, nor do anything unless physically present in the Session Hall, but the Body would depart from all those traditions and rules in case the majority determine the occurrence of a national emergency or *force majeure* and allow teleconferencing. He then placed on record, for purposes of clarification, that if there is no national emergency, the rule that a Member of the Body must be physically present in the plenary cannot be overturned by an opinion of the majority or a motion of the majority to allow teleconferencing.

Senator Zubiri agreed that the rule on teleconferencing is an exemption rather than a rule, meaning, the use of teleconferencing is allowed only in case of a national emergency or a *force majeure* as determined by the majority of the senators.

Senate President Sotto pointed out that the operative phrase must always be "in a national emergency." Senator Drilon agreed that absent the circumstance of a national emergency or *force majeure*, the Body cannot have a session through teleconferencing.

At this juncture, Senator Zubiri placed on record the Members who were online: Senators Drilon, Hontiveros, Villa, Angara, Marcos, Pangilinan and Pimentel.

Senate President Sotto stated that the senators who were online would be marked "arrived after the roll call."

Senate President Sotto explained that he was asking for a suspension of the session earlier in order to incorporate all the other gadgets the other senators would want to use in the teleconference for familiarization. He said that among the agreements reached during the caucus earlier, starting next week, as their names are called during the roll call, the senators would verbally state that he or she is present in the teleconferencing, and that sessions would be suspended on a daily basis except on Wednesday when the session would be adjourned so

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