



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

S e n a t e

Pasay City

Journal

SESSION NO. 24

Monday, September 20, 2004

**THIRTEENTH CONGRESS
FIRST REGULAR SESSION**

SESSION NO. 24
Monday, September 20, 2004

CALL TO ORDER

At 3:33 p.m., the Senate President, Hon. Franklin M. Drilon, called the session to order.

PRAYER

Sen. Edgardo J. Angara led the prayer, to wit:

It is by a quaint twist of chance that I will be leading the prayer today, the beginning of the week right before the session break, when only eight weeks ago, I was also the one who led the prayer at the very start of this legislative session.

Time does move fast, sometimes faster than we could take notice of. Today, Lord Almighty, the country is beset with grave issues that have been examined, debated and tackled many times over.

But still we grapple for real solutions. Lord, is this because we belong to NATO, No Action Talk Only?

And so as the whole Senate convenes today to set down a priority agenda, we pray that You cast Your light of wisdom on all of us so that we may see clearly what needs to be done for our nation, and not get lost in contention.

Help us to remain spirited in our service so that we may not grow weary of performing our responsibilities.

Teach us to be prompt in our actions and effective in delivering change. Make us instruments of hope and channels of reform so that we may lift our nation and our people.

Guide us so that we may remain strong in our commitment to better the lives of our countrymen.

Amen.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

The Senate Choir led the singing of the national anthem and thereafter rendered the song entitled *Isang Mundo, Isang Awit*.

ROLL CALL

Upon direction of the Chair, the Secretary of the Senate, Oscar G. Yabes, called the roll, to which the following senators responded:

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|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Angara, E. J. | Lacson, P. M. |
| Arroyo, J. P. | Lapid, M. L. M. |
| Cayetano, C. P. S. | Lim, A. S. |
| Defensor Santiago, M. | Madrigal, M. A. |
| Drilon, F. M. | Magsaysay Jr., R. B. |
| Ejercito Estrada, J. | Osmeña III, S. R. |
| Ejercito Estrada, L. L. P. | Pangilinan, F. N. |
| Enrile, J. P. | Pimentel Jr., A. Q. |
| Flavier, J. M. | Revilla Jr., R. B. |
| Gordon, R. J. | Roxas, M. |

With 20 senators present, the Chair declared the presence of a quorum.

Senators Recto and Villar arrived after the roll call.

Senator Biazon was absent.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE PRESENCE OF GUESTS

At this juncture, Senator Pangilinan acknowledged the presence of law students from San Sebastian College led by Atty. Lucille Sering.

APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

Upon motion of Senator Pangilinan, there being no objection, the Body dispensed with the reading of the Journal of Session No. 23 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
PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES**

Letter of Her Excellency, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo dated September 13, 2004, certifying to the necessity of the immediate enactment of Senate Bill No. 1330, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR
COMPENSATION TO THE
VICTIMS OF HUMAN RIGHTS
VIOLATIONS DURING THE
REGIME OF FORMER PRESIDENT
FERDINAND MARCOS,
DOCUMENTATION OF SAID
VIOLATIONS, APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES,

to address the urgent need of compensating and recognizing the heroism of all Filipinos who were victims of human rights violations during the regime of former President Ferdinand Marcos and taking into account the country's adherence to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

To the Committee on Rules

BILLS ON FIRST READING

Senate Bill No. 1551, entitled

AN ACT REPEALING REPUBLIC ACT
NO. 386, ALSO KNOWN AS THE
CIVIL CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES,
ARTICLE 781

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committee on Constitutional
Amendments, Revision of Codes and Laws**

Senate Bill No. 1552, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT
NO. 7157, OTHERWISE KNOWN
AS THE "PHILIPPINE FOREIGN
SERVICE ACT OF 1991," TITLE III,
SEC. 30

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

To the Committee on Foreign Relations

Senate Bill No. 1553, entitled

AN ACT TO PROHIBIT
GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN
EMPLOYMENT ADVERTISING

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

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

Senate Bill No. 1554, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR
LOCAL AUTONOMY IN THE
DETERMINATION OF STATE
POLICY ON GAMBLING,
AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CODE, REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7160,
SECTIONS 2, 27 AND 133 (O)

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Local Government; and
Games, Amusement and Sports**

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Senate Bill No. 1555, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING B.P. BLG. 881,
ALSO KNOWN AS THE OMNIBUS
ELECTION CODE, SECTION 6,
ON FAILURE OF ELECTIONS

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committee on Constitutional
Amendments, Revision of Codes and Laws**

Senate Bill No. 1556, entitled

AN ACT TO PROTECT CONSUMERS
BY PROMULGATING UNIFORM
MANUFACTURING STANDARDS
FOR BICYCLE HELMETS AND
PROMOTING ITS USE

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Trade and Commerce;
and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1557, entitled

AN ACT EXPANDING THE
COMPOSITION OF THE SUGAR
REGULATORY ADMINISTRATION
(SRA) SUGAR BOARD, AMENDING
EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 18

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Government
Corporations and Public Enterprises; and
Agriculture and Food**

Senate Bill No. 1558, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC
ACT 386, ALSO KNOWN AS
THE CIVIL CODE OF THE
PHILIPPINES, ARTICLE 737,
MAKING IT CONSISTENT WITH
THE OTHER PROVISIONS
UNDER THE TITLE ON THE
DONATIONS

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committee on Constitutional
Amendments, Revision of Codes and Laws**

Senate Bill No. 1559, entitled

AN ACT AUTHORIZING CITIES AND
MUNICIPALITIES TO LEVY
TAXES ON SAND, GRAVEL AND
OTHER QUARRY RESOURCES
AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE
SECTION 138 OF REPUBLIC ACT
7160 ALSO KNOWN AS THE
LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF
1991

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

To the Committee on Local Government

Senate Bill No. 1560, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING PRESIDENTIAL
DECREE NO. 442, KNOWN AS
THE LABOR CODE, ARTICLE 280

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committee on Labor, Employment
and Human Resources Development**

Senate Bill No. 1561, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING THE PENAL
CODE, ARTICLE 315

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Justice and Human
Rights; and Constitutional Amendments,
Revision of Codes and Laws**

Senate Bill No. 1562, entitled

AN ACT TO PROTECT THE
FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND OF
ASSOCIATION RIGHTS OF

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STUDENTS ATTENDING
INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER
EDUCATION

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Education, Arts and
Culture; and Justice and Human Rights**

Senate Bill No. 1563, entitled

AN ACT IMPOSING HIGHER
PENALTIES FOR VEHICULAR
ACCIDENT

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

To the Committee on Public Services

Senate Bill No. 1564, entitled

AN ACT REQUIRING AVAILABILITY
OF HANDGUNS ONLY TO
PERSONS WITH DEMONSTRATED
KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL IN
THEIR SAFE USE, MAINTENANCE
AND STORAGE

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

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

Senate Bill No. 1565, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF AN
AGRICULTURE WEATHER
OFFICE

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Agriculture and
Food; Science and Technology; and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1566, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING
INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS TO
PROVIDE SAFE SCHOOL
ENVIRONMENTS

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Education, Arts and
Culture; and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1567, entitled

AN ACT PROMOTING RESEARCH
ON DYSTONIA

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

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

Senate Bill No. 1568, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING A NATIONAL
PROGRAM FOR IMPROVING
THE QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION
IN THE HUMANITIES IN PUBLIC
AND PRIVATE ELEMENTARY
AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committee on Education, Arts and
Culture**

Senate Bill No. 1569, entitled

AN ACT TO DEVELOP AN
EDUCATIONAL STRATEGY THAT
ADDRESSES THE EDUCATIONAL
NEEDS OF ALL MEMBERS OF
LOCAL COMMUNITIES

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Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Education, Arts
and Culture; Local Government; and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1570, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING THE CIVIL
CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES
(REPUBLIC ACT NO. 386), ARTICLE
2180

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Education, Arts
and Culture; and Constitutional Amendments,
Revision of Codes and Laws**

Senate Bill No. 1571, entitled

AN ACT DEFINING AS A CRIME
THE ACT OF DRIVING A MOTOR
VEHICLE WHILE UNDER THE
INFLUENCE OF LIQUOR AND/OR
PROHIBITED DRUGS AND
PROVIDING GRADUATED
PENALTIES THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Justice and Human
Rights; and Public Services**

Senate Bill No. 1572, entitled

AN ACT GRANTING TRAVEL
ALLOWANCES TO BARANGAY
HEALTH WORKERS, AMENDING
FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC
ACT NO. 7883, OTHERWISE
KNOWN AS "THE BARANGAY
HEALTH WORKERS' BENEFITS
AND INCENTIVES ACT OF 1995,"
AND PROVIDING FUNDS
THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Biazon

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

Senate Bill No. 1573, entitled

AN ACT GRANTING THE MAGNA
CARTA FOR DAY CARE
WORKERS, PROVIDING FUNDS
THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Biazon

**To the Committees on Social Justice,
Welfare and Rural Development; Civil Service
and Government Reorganization; and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1574, entitled

AN ACT BROADENING THE SCOPE
OF UNLAWFUL PRACTICES OF
MATCHING FILIPINO WOMEN
FOR MARRIAGE TO FOREIGN
NATIONALS TO INCLUDE
VARIOUS SCHEMES MADE
AVAILABLE THROUGH THE
INTERNET, AMENDING FOR
THIS PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT
NO. 6955

Introduced by Senator Biazon

**To the Committees on Youth, Women and
Family Relations; and Public Information and
Mass Media**

Senate Bill No. 1575, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING EXECUTIVE
ORDER NO. 209 AS AMENDED
BY EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 227,
OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE
FAMILY CODE OF THE
PHILIPPINES, THEREBY LIMITING
MARRIAGE TO NATURAL BORN
MALES AND NATURAL BORN
FEMALES

Introduced by Senator Biazon

**To the Committees on Youth, Women
and Family Relations; and Constitutional
Amendments, Revision of Codes and Laws**

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Senate Bill No. 1576, entitled

AN ACT PROHIBITING THE
APPOINTMENT OF ELECTIVE
GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS
WITHIN ONE YEAR FROM
RESIGNATION

Introduced by Senator Biazon

**To the Committee on Civil Service and
Government Reorganization**

Senate Bill No. 1577, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING ADDITIONAL
ALLOWABLE TAX DEDUCTIONS
FOR INDIVIDUAL TAXPAYERS,
AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE
SECTION 34 OF REPUBLIC ACT
NO. 8424, OTHERWISE KNOWN
AS THE TAX REFORM ACT OF
1997

Introduced by Senator Biazon

To the Committee on Ways and Means

Senate Bill No. 1578, entitled

AN ACT CONVERTING THE
MUNTINLUPA SCIENCE HIGH
SCHOOL IN THE CITY OF
MUNTINLUPA INTO A NATIONAL
SCIENCE SECONDARY SCHOOL
TO BE KNOWN AS THE
MUNTINLUPA NATIONAL
SCIENCE HIGH SCHOOL AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Biazon

To the Committee on Rules

Senate Bill No. 1579, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR
RESTRICTIONS ON GARNISH-
MENT OF COMPENSATION DUE
FOR PERSONAL SERVICES

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committee on Labor, Employment
and Human Resources Development**

Senate Bill No. 1580, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING SECTION 37 OF
BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 68,
ALSO KNOWN AS THE
CORPORATION CODE OF THE
PHILIPPINES

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Trade and
Commerce; and Constitutional Amendments,
Revision of Codes and Laws**

Senate Bill No. 1581, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING UNLAWFUL
THE COMMERCIAL USE OF
TELEPHONES FOR MAKING
INDECENT OR OBSCENE
COMMUNICATIONS AND
PROVIDING PENALTIES
THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Public Services;
and Constitutional Amendments, Revision of
Codes and Laws**

Senate Bill No. 1582, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE PRE-
NEED PLAN CODE OF THE
PHILIPPINES

Introduced by Senator Magsaysay Jr.

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

Senate Bill No. 1583, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING ARTICLE 245
OF THE REVISED PENAL CODE
ENTITLED ABUSE AGAINST

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CHASTITY BY RENAMING THE FELONY TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT BY PUBLIC OFFICERS AND ADDING ANOTHER PARAGRAPH TO BE CITED AS PARAGRAPH THREE (3) DEALING WITH CASES NOT FALLING WITHIN THE COVERAGE OF PARAGRAPHS ONE (1) AND TWO (2) OF THE SAME ARTICLE AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

To the Committees on Civil Service and Government Reorganization; and Constitutional Amendments, Revision of Codes and Laws

Senate Bill No. 1584, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING R.A. NO. 386, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE CIVIL CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES, ARTICLE 1723

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

To the Committees on Public Works; and Constitutional Amendments, Revision of Codes and Laws

Senate Bill No. 1585, entitled

AN ACT TO IMPOSE STIFFER PENALTIES FOR THE FALSIFICATION OF TORRENS CERTIFICATES OF TITLE, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE ARTICLES 171 AND 172 OF ACT NO. 3815, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE REVISED PENAL CODE

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

To the Committees on Justice and Human Rights; and Constitutional Amendments, Revision of Codes and Laws

Senate Bill No. 1586, entitled

AN ACT TO PROHIBIT DISCRIMINATION IN THE PAYMENT OF WAGES ON ACCOUNT OF SEX

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

To the Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development

Senate Bill No. 1587, entitled

AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR A BIOFUEL FEEDSTOCKS ENERGY RESERVE, AND TO AUTHORIZE THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE TO MAKE AND GUARANTEE LOANS FOR THE PRODUCTION, DISTRIBUTION, DEVELOPMENT, AND STORAGE OF BIOFUELS

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

To the Committees on Energy; Agriculture and Food; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1588, entitled

AN ACT REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM AND THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO SUBMIT AN ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS ON STATISTICS RELATING TO THE CONVERSION OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS TO NON-AGRICULTURAL USES INCLUDING A REVIEW OF EXISTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

To the Committees on Agrarian Reform; and Agriculture and Food

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Senate Bill No. 1589, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6713, ALSO KNOWN AS AN ACT ESTABLISHING A CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES TO UPHOLD THE TIME-HONORED PRINCIPLE OF PUBLIC OFFICE BEING A PUBLIC TRUST, GRANTING INCENTIVES AND REWARDS FOR EXEMPLARY SERVICE, ENUMERATING PROHIBITED ACTS AND TRANSACTIONS AND PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

To the Committees on Civil Service and Government Reorganization; and Constitutional Amendments, Revision of Codes and Laws

Senate Bill No. 1590, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT 386, ALSO KNOWN AS THE CIVIL CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES, ARTICLE 1032, ON UNWORTHINESS TO SUCCEED

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

To the Committee on Youth, Women and Family Relations

Senate Bill No. 1591, entitled

AN ACT DEFINING AND PENALIZING THE CRIME OF MURDER COMMITTED UNDER EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES, AMENDING SECTION 248 OF THE PENAL CODE

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

To the Committees on Constitutional Amendments, Revision of Codes and Laws; and Public Services

Senate Bill No. 1592, entitled

AN ACT TO PROHIBIT CERTAIN PRACTICES INVOLVING COMMERCIAL USES OF TELEPHONE FACSIMILE MACHINES

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

To the Committee on Public Services

Senate Bill No. 1593, entitled

AN ACT TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE FOR START-UP COSTS OF COMMUNITY PROGRAMS TO PREVENT RESIDENTIALLY BASED LEAD POISONING IN CHILDREN

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

To the Committees on Health and Demography; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1594, entitled

AN ACT INCREASING PENALTIES FOR CERTAIN INSTANCES OF QUALIFIED THEFT THEREBY AMENDING ARTICLE 310, CHAPTER THREE OF REPUBLIC ACT 3815, AS AMENDED OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE REVISED PENAL CODE

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

To the Committee on Constitutional Amendments, Revision of Codes and Laws

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Senate Bill No. 1595, entitled

AN ACT REPEALING ARTICLE 351 OF THE PENAL CODE ON PREMATURE MARRIAGES

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago, Miriam

To the Committees on Youth, Women and Family Relations; and Constitutional Amendments, Revision of Codes and Laws

Senate Bill No. 1596, entitled

AN ACT TO AMEND ACT NO. 4103, ALSO KNOWN AS THE INDETERMINATE SENTENCE LAW, SECTIONS 5,6,8 AND 9

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago, Miriam

To the Committee on Justice and Human Rights

Senate Bill No. 1597, entitled

AN ACT TO PRESCRIBE NUTRITION LABELING FOR FOODS

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago, Miriam

To the Committees on Trade and Commerce; and Health and Demography

Senate Bill No. 1598, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING FOR DRIVERS OF PUBLIC UTILITY VEHICLES

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago, Miriam

To the Committees on Public Services; and Public Order and Illegal Drugs

Senate Bill No. 1599, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE MANNER AND DATE OF ELECTION OF SECTORAL REPRESENTATIVES TO THE LOCAL SANGGUNIAN

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago, Miriam

To the Committees on Constitutional Amendments, Revision of Codes and Laws; and Local Government

Senate Bill No. 1600, entitled

AN ACT TO IMPROVE PUBLIC DISSEMINATION OF GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago, Miriam

To the Committees on Public Information and Mass Media; and Civil Service and Government Reorganization

Senate Bill No. 1601, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NUMBERED ELEVEN HUNDRED SIXTY ONE, ALSO KNOWN AS THE SOCIAL SECURITY LAW, AS AMENDED INCREASING THE PENALTIES FOR NON-REMITTANCE OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM BY THE EMPLOYER

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago, Miriam

To the Committees on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development; and Constitutional Amendments, Revision of Codes and Laws

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Senate Bill No. 1602, entitled

AN ACT TO PROVIDE
SURVEILLANCE RESEARCH AND
SERVICES AIMED AT THE
PREVENTION OF BIRTH
DEFECTS

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

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

Senate Bill No. 1603, entitled

AN ACT REQUIRING THAT
ALCOHOL BEVERAGES CARRY
HEALTH WARNINGS ON THEIR
CONTAINERS

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Health and Demography;
and Trade and Commerce**

Senate Bill No. 1604, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR
CANVASSING OF ELECTION
RETURNS IN LIEU OF
CERTIFICATES OF CANVASS
AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE
REPUBLIC ACT NUMBERED
SEVENTY-ONE HUNDRED SIXTY
SIX

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committee on Constitutional
Amendments, Revision of Codes and Laws**

Senate Bill No. 1605, entitled

AN ACT TO PROMOTE
COMPETITION AND GREATER
EFFICIENCY OF AIRLINES BY
ENSURING THAT RIGHTS OF
AIRLINE PASSENGERS ARE
FULLY PROTECTED

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

To the Committee on Public Services

Senate Bill No. 1606, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A
PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICE
MONITORING COMMISSION

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Health and
Demography; Trade and Commerce; and
Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1607, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING
ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR
PROSECUTORS

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

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

Senate Bill No. 1608, entitled

AN ACT GRANTING FAMILY LEAVE
TO ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committee on Labor, Employment
and Human Resources Development**

Senate Bill No. 1609, entitled

AN ACT TO PROVIDE QUALITY
TEACHERS FOR ELEMENTARY
AND SECONDARY PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Education, Arts
and Culture; and Finance**

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Senate Bill No. 1610, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 442, AS AMENDED, ALSO KNOWN AS THE LABOR CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES, ARTICLE 110

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago, Miriam

To the Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development

Senate Bill No. 1611, entitled

AN ACT TO REDUCE HEALTH CARE COSTS BY REQUIRING TERTIARY AND SPECIALIZED HOSPITALS TO SHARE CERTAIN SERVICES AND EQUIPMENT

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago, Miriam

To the Committees on Health and Demography; Ways and Means; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1612, entitled

AN ACT TO PROMOTE CRIME AWARENESS AND SECURITY IN CAMPUSES

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago, Miriam

To the Committees on Public Order and Illegal Drugs; and Education, Arts and Culture

Senate Bill No. 1613, entitled

AN ACT REGULATING THE USE OF FRANKING PRIVILEGES BY THE MEMBERS OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago, Miriam

To the Committee on Public Services

Senate Bill No. 1614, entitled

A BILL TO ENCOURAGE ENERGY CONSERVATION THROUGH BICYCLING

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago, Miriam

To the Committees on Public Services; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1615, entitled

AN ACT TO PROHIBIT CERTAIN FIREARMS ESPECIALLY USEFUL TO TERRORISTS

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago, Miriam

To the Committees on Public Order and Illegal Drugs; and National Defense and Security

Senate Bill No. 1616, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING THE PROCEDURE FOR THE REGULAR ADJUSTMENT FOR INFLATION OF CIVIL MONETARY PENALTIES AS PROVIDED IN THE PENAL CODE AND AMOUNT OF DAMAGES CAUSED BY A CRIME OR QUASI-DELICT

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago, Miriam

To the Committee on Constitutional Amendments, Revision of Codes and Laws

Senate Bill No. 1617, entitled

AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR THE USE OF MOBILE UNITS SERVING MEDICAL, DIAGNOSTIC, AND TREATMENT SERVICES, IN ORDER TO ENSURE THE AVAILABILITY OF QUALITY HEALTH CARE SERVICES FOR THE PATIENTS WHO RECEIVE CARE IN REMOTE OR RURAL

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AREAS AND FOR PATIENTS
WHO NEED SPECIALIZED TYPES
OF MEDICAL CARE PROVIDED
IN A COST-EFFECTIVE WAY

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

To the Committee on Health and Demography

Senate Bill No. 1618, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR UNIFORM
STANDARDS OF LIABILITY FOR
HARM ARISING OUT OF
GENERAL AVIATION ACCIDENTS

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

To the Committee on Public Services

Senate Bill No. 1619, entitled

AN ACT MAKING THE
MALVERSATION OF RECLAIMED
LANDS A CRIME, AMENDING
FOR THIS PURPOSE ARTICLE 217
OF ACT NO. 3815, OTHERWISE
KNOWN AS THE PENAL CODE

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committee on Constitutional
Amendments, Revision of Codes and Laws**

Senate Bill No. 1620, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE
ESTABLISHMENT, TESTING, AND
EVALUATION OF STRATEGIC
PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE
MEASUREMENT IN THE
GOVERNMENT

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committee on Civil Service and
Government Reorganization**

Senate Bill No. 1621, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING QUALITY
STANDARDS FOR MINERAL
WATER AND CARBONATED
WATER

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Health and Demography;
Trade and Commerce; and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1622, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING A
COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM OF
SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF
TORTURE

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

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

Senate Bill No. 1623, entitled

AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR
CHILDPROOF HANDGUNS

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Public Order and
Illegal Drugs; and Trade and Commerce**

Senate Bill No. 1624, entitled

AN ACT PROMOTING AND
ENHANCING PUBLIC SAFETY
THROUGH THE USE OF
UNIVERSAL EMERGENCY
ASSISTANCE NUMBER

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

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

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16

Senate Bill No. 1625, entitled

AN ACT ORDAINING INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY IN GIVING TESTIMONY IN CRIMINAL CASES AND PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago, Miriam

To the Committee on Justice and Human Rights

Senate Bill No. 1626, entitled

AN ACT TO DIRECT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO PREPARE AND PUBLISH ANNUALLY A CONSUMER GUIDE TO PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICES

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago, Miriam

To the Committees on Health and Demography; and Trade and Commerce

Senate Bill No. 1627, entitled

AN ACT PROHIBITING SEXUAL RELATIONS WITH CONSENT BETWEEN PARTIES WHO ARE RELATED BY CONSANGUINITY OR BY REASON OF PUBLIC POLICY, HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR RELATIONSHIP AND ARE EIGHTEEN (18) YEARS OF AGE AND ABOVE, AND PROVIDING PENALTIES

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago, Miriam

To the Committees on Youth, Women and Family Relations; and Constitutional Amendments, Revision of Codes and Laws

Senate Bill No. 1628, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL CRIME DATABASE

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago, Miriam

To the Committees on Public Order and Illegal Drugs; Justice and Human Rights; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1629, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING MINIMUM STANDARDS OF FAIR CONDUCT IN FRANCHISE SALES AND FRANCHISE BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago, Miriam

To the Committee on Trade and Commerce

Senate Bill No. 1630, entitled

AN ACT TO PUNISH TRANSMISSION OF INDECENT MATERIAL BY COMPUTER TO MINORS

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago, Miriam

To the Committees on Science and Technology; and Youth, Women and Family Relations

Senate Bill No. 1631, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6657 ALSO KNOWN AS THE COMPREHENSIVE AGRARIAN REFORM LAW

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago, Miriam

To the Committee on Agrarian Reform

Senate Bill No. 1632, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING ACCESS OF TELECOMMUNICATION SYSTEM ACCESSIBLE TO THE HEARING-IMPAIRED AND SPEECH-IMPAIRED

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Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

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

Senate Bill No. 1633, entitled

AN ACT GIVING MEANING TO
THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE TO
INFORMATION ON MATTERS
OF PUBLIC CONCERN
GUARANTEED UNDER THE
CONSTITUTION AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Serge Osmeña

**To the Committees on Public Information
and Mass Media; and Civil Service and
Government Reorganization**

Senate Bill No. 1634, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTING FULL
TRANSPARENCY IN TAX
COLLECTION, AMENDING FOR
THE PURPOSE SECTIONS 71, 270
AND 278 OF THE TAX REFORM
ACT OF 1997, AS AMENDED

Introduced by Senator Serge Osmeña

To the Committee on Ways and Means

Senate Bill No. 1636, entitled

AN ACT ORDAINING A CODE FOR
THE REGULATION OF
INVESTMENT COMPANIES
AND FOR THE OTHER
PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Magsaysay Jr.

**To the Committees on Banks, Financial
Institutions and Currencies; and Trade and
Commerce**

Senate Bill No. 1637, entitled

AN ACT PROTECTING PRIVATE
PROPERTY RIGHTS BY
REQUIRING GOVERNMENT
AGENCIES TO PREPARE
PRIVATE PROPERTY TAKING
IMPACT ANALYSIS

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

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

Senate Bill No. 1638, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A
NATIONAL POLICY OF BASIC
CONSUMER FAIR TREATMENT
FOR AIRLINE PASSENGERS

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

To the Committee on Public Services

Senate Bill No. 1639, entitled

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A NATIONAL
CENTER FOR INFORMATION
AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
RELATING TO ALL TYPES
OF FAMILY RESOURCE AND
SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Health and
Demography; Youth, Women and Family
Relations; and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1640, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING PRESIDENTIAL
DECREE NO. 605

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Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

To the Committee on Justice and Human Rights

Senate Bill No. 1641, entitled

AN ACT PROHIBITING
DISCRIMINATION ON THE
BASIS OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION
AND PROVIDING PENALTIES
THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

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

Senate Bill No. 1642, entitled

AN ACT REQUIRING
CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL IN
THE RECLASSIFICATION
AND DISPOSITION OF REAL
PROPERTIES OF THE NATIONAL
GOVERNMENT

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

To the Committees on Foreign Relations; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1643, entitled

AN ACT TO ENSURE IMPROVED
ACCOUNTABILITY OF ANIMAL
EXPERIMENTATION PROGRAMS

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

To the Committees on Agriculture and Food; and Science and Technology

Senate Bill No. 1644, entitled

AN ACT TO PROTECT CONSUMERS
AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

FROM THE MISUSE OF
COMPUTER FACILITIES BY
OTHERS SENDING UNSOLICITED
COMMERCIAL ELECTRONIC
MAIL

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

To the Committees on Science and Technology; and Trade and Commerce

Senate Bill No. 1645, entitled

AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR VARIOUS
INVESTMENTS IN TECHNOLOGY
EDUCATION

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

To the Committees on Education, Arts and Culture; Science and Technology; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1646, entitled

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH
THERAPEUTIC EQUIVALENCE
REQUIREMENTS FOR GENERIC
DRUGS

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

To the Committee on Health and Demography

Senate Bill No. 1647, entitled

AN ACT STOPPING ILLEGAL
DRUGS FROM ENTERING THE
PHILIPPINES

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

To the Committees on Public Order and Illegal Drugs; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1648, entitled

AN ACT TO REQUIRE
GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND

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NON-GOVERNMENT AGENCIES
TO REGISTER ALL OFFENDERS
CONVICTED OF ANY ACT
INVOLVING CHILD ABUSE
WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF
JUSTICE

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Justice and Human
Rights; and Youth, Women and Family Relations**

Senate Bill No. 1649, entitled

AN ACT REQUIRING THE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT
AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO
CONDUCT A FEASIBILITY
STUDY FOR APPLYING AIRPORT
BUBBLES AS A METHOD OF
IDENTIFYING, ASSESSING, AND
REDUCING THE ADVERSE
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS
OF THE AIRPORT GROUND
AND FLIGHT OPERATIONS
AND IMPROVING THE
OVERALL QUALITY OF THE
ENVIRONMENT

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Public Services; and
Environment and Natural Resources**

Senate Bill No. 1650, entitled

AN ACT TO IMPROVE THE
QUALITY OF BEACHES AND
COASTAL RECREATION WATER

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

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

Senate Bill No. 1651, entitled

AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR UNIFORM
WARNINGS ON PERSONAL

PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT FOR
OCCUPATIONAL USE

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committee on Labor, Employment
and Human Resources Development**

Senate Bill No. 1652, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR AVIATION
NOISE MANAGEMENT AND
REDUCTION IN RESIDENTIAL
AREAS

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Public Services;
and Environment and Natural Resources**

Senate Bill No. 1653, entitled

AN ACT REPEALING ACT NO. 7160
ALSO KNOWN AS THE LOCAL
GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991,
SECTION 17 (B), PAR. 1 (V)

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

To the Committee on Local Government

Senate Bill No. 1654, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE
OFFICE OF RESEARCH ON
WOMEN'S HEALTH

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Health and
Demography; Youth, Women and Family
Relations; and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1655, entitled

AN ACT TO REQUIRE INSTITUTIONS
OF HIGHER EDUCATION
TO WIDELY DISTRIBUTE

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INFORMATION DESCRIBING
THEIR PROCEDURES FOR
RECEIVING AND RESPONDING
TO COMPLAINTS CONCERNING
HARASSMENT

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Education, Arts
and Culture; and Justice and Human Rights**

Senate Bill No. 1656, entitled

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE
PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE
COMMISSION

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Constitutional
Amendments, Revision of Codes and Laws;
Public Information and Mass Media; and
Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1657, entitled

AN ACT CRIMINALIZING THE
FAILURE OF OWNERS AND
LESSORS OF RESIDENTIAL AND
COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS TO
COMPLY WITH NATIONAL AND
LOCAL FIRE SAFETY LAWS

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Urban Planning,
Housing and Resettlement; and Constitutional
Amendments, Revision of Codes and Laws**

Senate Bill No. 1658, entitled

AN ACT TO PROVIDE GRANTS TO
LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS
FOR SUPERVISED VISITATION
CENTERS

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Youth, Women and
Family Relations; Local Government; and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1659, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING TECHNICAL
PREPARATION EDUCATION

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Education, Arts and
Culture; and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1660, entitled

AN ACT TO PREVENT LUXURIOUS
CONDITIONS IN PRISONS

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

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

Senate Bill No. 1661, entitled

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A
NATIONAL PROGRAM THAT
WILL PROVIDE PREGNANT
WOMEN WITH ALTERNATIVES
TO ABORTION

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Health and
Demography; Youth, Women and Family
Relations; and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1662, entitled

AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR DIGITAL
EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS

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Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Education, Arts and
Culture; Public Information and Mass Media;
and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1663, entitled

AN ACT TO REQUIRE CERTAIN
DISCLOSURES RELATING TO
MATERIALLY ALTERED FILMS

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Public Information
and Mass Media; and Trade and Commerce**

Senate Bill No. 1664, entitled

THE FREE COMMUNICATIONS ACT

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committee on Public Information
and Mass Media**

Senate Bill No. 1665, entitled

AN ACT TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE
FOR POISON PREVENTION AND
TO ESTABLISH POISON CONTROL
CENTERS

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

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

Senate Bill No. 1666, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A
COMPREHENSIVE JUVENILE
JUSTICE SYSTEM AND
DELINQUENCY PREVENTION
PROGRAM, CREATING THE
OFFICE OF JUVENILE JUSTICE
AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION
UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF

JUSTICE, APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Magsaysay Jr.

**To the Committees on Justice and
Human Rights; Youth, Women and Family
Relations; and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1667, entitled

AN ACT REORGANIZING THE
NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
INTO THE NATIONAL FOOD
CORPORATION AND THE
FOOD DEVELOPMENT AND
REGULATORY ADMINISTRATION,
REDEFINING THEIR POWERS,
APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Magsaysay Jr.

**To the Committees on Government
Corporations and Public Enterprises;
Agriculture and Food; and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1668, entitled

AN ACT PROHIBITING PUBLIC
OFFICERS FROM CLAIMING
CREDIT THROUGH SIGNAGE
ANNOUNCING A PUBLIC WORKS
PROJECT

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Civil Service and
Government Reorganization; and Public Works**

Senate Bill No. 1669, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING ARTICLE 16 OF
EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 209 AS
AMENDED BY EXECUTIVE
ORDER NO. 227, OTHERWISE
KNOWN AS THE FAMILY CODE
OF THE PHILIPPINES, MAKING
IT MANDATORY FOR COUPLES

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TO UNDERGO COUNSELING
PRIOR TO THE ISSUANCE OF A
MARRIAGE LICENSE

Introduced by Senator Biazon

**To the Committees on Youth, Women
and Family Relations; and Constitutional
Amendments, Revision of Codes and Laws**

Senate Bill No. 1670, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE
REORGANIZATION OF THE
NATIONAL POLICE COMMISSION
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Biazon

**To the Committees on Public Order and
Illegal Drugs; Civil Service and Government
Reorganization; and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1671, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING THE TWENTY
SEVENTH DAY OF JULY OF
EVERY YEAR, A SPECIAL
NATIONAL HOLIDAY, IN
OBSERVANCE OF THE
FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY OF
THE IGLESIA NI CRISTO (INC)
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senators Jinggoy Ejercito
Estrada and Luisa "Loi" P. Ejercito
Estrada

**To the Committee on Constitutional
Amendments, Revision of Codes and Laws**

Senate Bill No. 1672, entitled

AN ACT GRANTING A SPECIAL
LEAVE OF ABSENCE OF
FIFTEEN (15) DAYS A YEAR
WITH FULL PAY TO ALL
LEGITIMATE SPOUSES OF
OVERSEAS WORKERS IN THE
PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Pimentel Jr.

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

Senate Bill No. 1674, entitled

AN ACT CREATING THE NATIONAL
COMMISSION ON MUSLIM
FILIPINOS, DEFINING ITS
POWERS, FUNCTIONS, AND
RESPONSIBILITIES AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Pimentel Jr.

**To the Committees on Cultural
Communities; Civil Service and Government
Reorganization; and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1675, entitled

AN ACT CHANGING THE NAME OF
C-5 IN TAGUIG, METRO MANILA
TO SENATOR JOSE W. DIOKNO
AVENUE

Introduced by Senators Magsaysay Jr. and
Serge Osmeña

To the Committee on Rules

Senate Bill No. 1676, entitled

AN ACT PUNISHING THE WILLFUL
FAILURE TO PAY CHILD
SUPPORT

Introduced by Senator Gordon

**To the Committee on Youth, Women and
Family Relations**

Senate Bill No. 1677, entitled

AN ACT TO PROMOTE THE USE OF
ETHYL ALCOHOL OR ETHANOL
AS ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORT

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FUEL, ESTABLISHING FOR THE PURPOSE THE NATIONAL FUEL ETHANOL PROGRAM, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Pimentel Jr.

To the Committees on Energy; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1678, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTING POLICIES GOVERNING THE HOUSEHOLD EMPLOYMENT INDUSTRY, ESTABLISHING A STANDARD OF PROTECTION AND PROMOTING THE WELFARE OF HOUSEHOLD HELPERS

Introduced by Senator Pimentel Jr.

To the Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development

Senate Bill No. 1679, entitled

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL TASK FORCE FOR INTERNATIONAL VISITOR ASSISTANCE TO MAKE PHILIPPINES THE PREMIERE TRAVEL AND TOURISM DESTINATION IN THE WORLD

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago, Miriam

To the Committees on Tourism; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1680, entitled

AN ACT DEGENDERIZING THE PENAL CODE, ARTICLE 247

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago, Miriam

To the Committee on Constitutional Amendments, Revision of Codes and Laws

Senate Bill No. 1681, entitled

AN ACT REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON THE PREVALENCE AND ISSUES RELATED TO CONTAMINATION OF WORKERS' HOMES WITH HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS AND SUBSTANCES TRANSPORTED FROM THEIR WORKPLACE AND TO ISSUE OR REPORT ON REGULATIONS TO PREVENT OR MITIGATE THE FUTURE CONTAMINATION OF WORKERS' HOME

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago, Miriam

To the Committees on Health and Demography; Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1682, entitled

AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE USE OF AND TO IMPROVE SAFETY STANDARDS FOR CHILD RESTRAINTS IN MOTOR VEHICLES

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago, Miriam

To the Committee on Public Services

Senate Bill No. 1683, entitled

AN ACT GIVING INDIGENT BUT GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP THEIR CAPABILITIES

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago, Miriam

To the Committees on Education, Arts and Culture; Youth, Women and Family Relations; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1684, entitled

AN ACT TO PROVIDE PROTECTION OF PRIVACY OF INFORMATION IN MOTOR VEHICLE RECORDS

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago, Miriam

To the Committees on Constitutional Amendments, Revision of Codes and Laws; and Public Services

Senate Bill No. 1685, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A WHISTLEBLOWER BILL OF RIGHTS

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago, Miriam

To the Committee on Justice and Human Rights

Senate Bill No. 1686, entitled

AN ACT PROHIBITING WIRE, ELECTRONIC AND ORAL COMMUNICATIONS INTERCEPTION AND PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago, Miriam

To the Committees on Justice and Human Rights; and Constitutional Amendments, Revision of Codes and Laws

Senate Bill No. 1687, entitled

AN ACT GRANTING MENSTRUATION LEAVE OF ONE (1) DAY A MONTH WITH FIFTY PERCENT DAILY REMUNERATION TO ALL FEMALE EMPLOYEES IN THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago, Miriam

To the Committees on Civil Service and Government Reorganization; and Youth, Women and Family Relations

Senate Bill No. 1688, entitled

AN ACT EMPOWERING WOMEN BY PROVIDING THEM WITH FINANCIAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND INFORMATION ASSISTANCE IN ORDER FOR THEM TO EXCEL IN COMMERCE AND TRADE

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago, Miriam

To the Committees on Youth, Women and Family Relations; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1689, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR THE ELECTORAL PROCESS, ENUMERATING PROHIBITED ACTS, AND PROVIDING FOR THEIR PENALTIES

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago, Miriam

To the Committees on Constitutional Amendments, Revision of Codes and Laws; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1690, entitled

AN ACT TO REQUIRE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LABELING OF PERISHABLE AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES IMPORTED INTO THE PHILIPPINES AND TO ESTABLISH PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS OF THE LABELING REQUIREMENTS

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Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

To the Committee on Agriculture and Food

Senate Bill No. 1691, entitled

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE
NATIONAL COMMISSION ON
THE IMPACT OF FILIPINO
CULTURE ON THE YOUTH

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Youth, Women and
Family Relations; Education, Arts and Culture;
and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1692, entitled

MAGNA CARTA OF HOUSEHOLD
HELPERS

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committee on Labor, Employment
and Human Resources Development**

Senate Bill No. 1693, entitled

AN ACT TO PENALIZE RACKETEERS
AND CRIMINAL ENTERPRISES,
PROHIBITING SUCH CRIMINAL
ENTERPRISES AND RACKETEER
INFLUENCED AND CORRUPT
ORGANIZATIONS FROM
INFILTRATING, CONTROLLING
OR OTHERWISE INFLUENCING
PHILIPPINE COMMERCE

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Justice and Human
Rights; and Constitutional Amendments,
Revision of Codes and Laws**

Senate Bill No. 1694, entitled

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A
COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM TO

ENSURE THE SAFETY OF FOOD
PRODUCTS INTENDED FOR
HUMAN CONSUMPTION

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Trade and
Commerce; Health and Demography; and
Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1695, entitled

AN ACT TO ASSURE MEANINGFUL
DISCLOSURES OF THE TERMS
OF RENTAL PURCHASE
AGREEMENTS, INCLUDING
DISCLOSURES OF ALL COSTS
TO CONSUMERS UNDER SUCH
AGREEMENTS AND TO
PROVIDE CERTAIN SUBSTANTIVE
RIGHTS TO CONSUMERS UNDER
SUCH AGREEMENTS

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

To the Committee on Trade and Commerce

Senate Bill No. 1696, entitled

AN ACT TO REDUCE LEAD-BASED
PAINT HAZARDS IN RESIDENTIAL
ENVIRONMENTS

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

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

Senate Bill No. 1697, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A
NATIONAL PROGRAM TO
EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES FOR
FILIPINO STUDENTS TO SERVE
THEIR COMMUNITIES

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Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Education, Arts
and Culture; Youth, Women and Family Relations;
and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1698, entitled

AN ACT PROHIBITING
DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS
OF GENETIC INFORMATION
WITH RESPECT TO HEALTH
INSURANCE

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committee on Health and
Demography**

Senate Bill No. 1699, entitled

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH WITHIN
THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
A PERMANENT COUNCIL ON
NUTRITION AND HEALTH

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

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

Senate Bill No. 1700, entitled

AN ACT INTRODUCING
EDUCATIONAL REFORMS
AND SUPPORTING THE
PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION
OF EDUCATIONAL REFORMS IN
SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

Introduced by Senator Defensor Santiago,
Miriam

**To the Committees on Education, Arts and
Culture; and Finance**

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Upon nomination by Senator Pangilinan, there
being no objection, the Body elected the following
senators as members of the Committee on Peace,
Unification and Reconciliation:

- | | |
|--------|--------------|
| Gordon | Estrada (J.) |
| Recto | Madrigal |
| Biazon | |
| Villar | |

**PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF
SENATOR PIMENTEL**

Availing himself of the privilege hour, Senator
Pimentel delivered the following speech:

**FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE,
LET'S USE LINE-ITEM BUDGETING**

Henry David Thoreau, the U.S.
philosopher and naturalist, suggested, I
think, the most appropriate explanation
why pork barrel and politicians are closely
associated with one another. He wrote
in his journal on October 2, 1852, that
"What men call social virtues, good
fellowship, is commonly but the virtue of
pigs in a litter, which lie close together to
keep each other warm."

The courses in political science that
I suppose most of us passed through in
college taught us the conventional wisdom
that there are three big branches of a
democratic government such as ours: the
legislative department, the executive
department and the judicial department.

Our legislative department -- which
has two houses, the Senate and the
House of Representatives -- passes
laws; the executive department -- which
is headed by the President -- executes
the laws; and the judicial department --
with the Supreme Court at the top --
interprets the laws.

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The three departments are supposed to be coequal and are individually intended to check one another and thereby cause a balance in the exercise of their respective powers.

Holder of the purse

Because Congress passes the laws to govern the country and appropriates public funds for government use, it is said to be the holder of the purse. And as the holder of the purse, it is also said to be the more powerful among the three branches of the government.

Theoretically the observation may be true. But only up to a point. Because the truth of the matter is that it is the President that prepares the national budget estimates and submits his or her estimates to Congress. And Congress cannot use any other basic working document for purposes of enacting a national budget other than what the President submits to it. Once approved, the monies set forth in the budget are disbursed only by authority of the President through the DBM. But more of this later.

Pork creeps in

In Congress, the budget as submitted by the President is debated by the legislators. Yet, by mandate of the Constitution, Congress may only prune the presidential budgetary proposal; it may not increase the budgetary proposal.

It is in the congressional phase of the national budget preparation then that the so-called "pork barrel items" creep into the national appropriations act. Legislators do it by slicing off what they see as unnecessary fat in the funds allocated to various executive departments. They lop off some of the fat and put it in their districts or favorite programs or projects.

In the old days, the pork barrel appropriations came in the form of specific projects or programs funded in the

districts of the members of Congress. Today, pork barrel allotments take the form of lump-sum appropriations in the so-called Priority Development Assistance Program – unspecified, unidentified, and unallocated as yet, until the concerned member of Congress tells the DBM that a particular sum is to be released to fund a program or a project in this or that locality usually upon the request of local government officials.

Not evil per se

I submit that pork barrel in that form is not really evil. While members of the House are supposed to be legislators of the nation, they are also representatives of their respective districts. And while senators are elected at large, they also come from various regions of the country where they may have special interests to promote. That said, it is unarguable that members of the House need pork barrel funds much more than senators do.

Linguistically, the description of funds that congressmen bring home to their constituencies as "pork barrel" originated from a practice that started before the U.S. civil war in the U.S. Congress. Pork was associated with fat and fat was stored in barrels before smaller containers were invented. In fact, it was in 1875 that U.S. politicians began referring to the practice of securing federal money to fund particular projects in their home districts as "dipping into the pork barrel."

Pork practice

Here, the members of Congress have been putting in the general appropriations measures monies to fund programs or projects in their respective districts or areas of responsibility as far as I can recall. And in the U.S., congressmen (and senators) have used their legislative powers to bring to their districts and their States certain government infrastructures like military bases in many States of the Union; facilities like the

Kennedy Space Center of NASA in Florida; and huge water reservoirs like the Hoover Dam in the border of Arizona and Nevada.

Pork barrel then, as pork barrel, was or perhaps ought not to be considered illegal or evil *per se*.

Potential for evil

However, its potential for evil exists and must be recognized. In the country, it lies in the lack of specificity or transparency as to the amounts that are allotted actually as pork barrel and how the money is to be used, that is, for what programs or projects the money will be expended.

Abuse follows

With lack of specificity or transparency in the amounts of the pork barrel funds and how these are to be used, actual abuse follows in its wake. Not in the case of everyone, of course, but reports are rife that pork barrel funds or more benignly PDAF, in general, have been the source of graft money for some officials in government.

That is why, among other things, the Senate Minority respectfully proposes that we adopt the line-item budgeting that used to be done by Congress before martial law was imposed. In fact, Commonwealth Act No. 246, the first Budget Law that took effect on December 17, 1937, provided for line-item budgeting and called for balanced budgeting so that "no appropriations for the ordinary operating expenses of the government may be proposed, unless the amount is covered by the estimated income from the existing sources of revenues or available current surplus 'must' be supported by a proposal creating an additional source of fund sufficient to cover the same."

Eliminate unfunded mandates

In brief, line-item budgeting and balanced budgeting would eliminate not only hidden pork barrel items but would also prevent the placing of projects and programs in the general appropriations measure that are not properly funded. The so-called "unfunded mandates" would thereby become a thing of the past.

To stress the point, line-item budgeting will do away with hidden pork. All proposals by the President, the members of the Cabinet, and by the members of Congress for inclusion in the national budget will have to be itemized or detailed, discussed and debated in the halls of Congress.

And those items that are not justified well by the proponents and do not pass the scrutiny of the members of Congress will have to be scrapped.

Selective item veto

The advantage, therefore, is that even if pork items are proposed for inclusion in the national budget, these will have to be justified in detail, debated openly by and before the purse holders of the monies of the people, that is, members of both Houses of Congress.

It also goes without saying that line-item budgeting will provide an additional safeguard against wanton spending by allowing the President to rescind or veto specific items of the national budget, including pork barrel items, without need of vetoing the entire appropriations measure.

Regain traditional role

By adopting the line-item budgeting, Congress will regain its traditional role as the primary holder of the purse of the nation which has been eroded substantially

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since martial rule was imposed in the country. The Martial Law Regime, of course, favored the lump sum kind of budgeting because, among other things, it consolidated power in the hands of the martial law ruler. Unfortunately, the administrations that came after the collapse of the martial law regime did not see fit to resume line-item budgeting for the reason that, among other things, they also enjoyed the power and privilege of juggling funds to promote the agenda of their administrations.

Defang DBM

Aside from the beneficial effects that will accrue to the nation from the adoption of line-item budgeting, it will also defang the Department of Budget and Management which has become – believe it or not — the most powerful department barring none in the hierarchy of the departments that belong to the executive branch of the government.

Historically, the Budget Commission was created on April 25, 1936, under Executive Order No. 25. Its nature as a commission was institutionalized by law, Republic Act No. 992, the Revised Budget Act, on June 4, 1954. Through all these metamorphoses, the Commission retained its main function to act as the fiscal arm and budget advisor of the President.

Changes under martial rule

Martial rule, however, changed all that. By order of Presidential Decree No. 1 (1972), the Commission's turf grew by leaps and bounds.

By 1973, the Commission was converted into a ministry and its minister was made the chair of the Committee on Appropriations and Reorganization of the Batasang Pambansa. Later, by mandate of P.D. No. 1177, which was called the Budget Reform Decree, the

Commission was invested with additional powers of planning, programming and budgeting linkages.

The years of martial rule were perhaps the golden age of the Budget Commission when it enjoyed powers that only an authoritarian regime could justify.

Elevating office

After the dismantling of martial rule in 1986, President Corazon C. Aquino issued Proclamation No. 3 reverting the Commission of the Budget to the Office of Budget and Management.

Later, President Aquino promulgated E.O. No. 292 that elevated the Office of Budget and Management to the Department of Budget and Management.

Up to the present, the task of preparing the national budget for the President's submission to Congress has stayed with the DBM.

All these observations have nothing to do with the inherent ability, capability and integrity of Sec. Emilia Boncodin of the DBM. I believe that Secretary Boncodin is an exemplary public servant. But the proposal to revert to line-item budgeting has everything to do with good governance and the restoration of the power of Congress as the holder of the purse to determine for what, when and how the monies of the people are to be spent.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF SENATOR PANGILINAN

Senator Pangilinan announced that due to the scheduled caucus, Senator Pimentel had agreed to accommodate one or two interpellations on his speech, after which, the period of interpellations would be suspended until the following day.

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INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

Preliminarily, Senator Defensor Santiago stated that she has long supported a return to line-item budgeting.

Supposing a legislator has publicly announced that he/she would completely give up his/her pork barrel, Senator Defensor Santiago asked what would happen to the funds to which he/she is entitled. Senator Pimentel replied that if the budget is still under preparation, the amount may be deleted by Congress; however, if the amount is part of an approved budget, the Senate or the House would have to decide where the money would go.

Senator Defensor Santiago disclosed that she hates the idea of a legislator giving up his/her pork barrel only to have the funds diverted to the Secretary of Public Works and Highways or any official who might simply abuse it with the same degree with which the public associates pork barrel with graft and corruption. Senator Pimentel shared the same observation, stating that, in fact, his proposal was to abolish the DPWH.

To the statement that the public would be delighted if most government agencies would be abolished since the public perceives that the government is not working, Senator Pimentel agreed. In fact, he revealed, the latest survey showed that 75% of Filipinos perceive that the government is unable to deliver basic services to the people.

Asked what the Senate could do to ensure that the funds involved would not go to an executive department or to any other office where the temptation to commit graft and corruption might be too strong, Senator Pimentel believed that the amount does not belong to any particular legislator but is part of the appropriations intended for the Senate or the House. In this instance, he said, the amount may be reassigned for the use of the other members.

On another matter, Senator Defensor Santiago noted that every year, Congress automatically appropriates a budget for debt service, under

which provision, the incumbent administration actually draws money to pay debts and contingent liabilities of government-owned and controlled corporations. She asked how the Senate could ensure that the administration would stop this illegal practice of paying hundreds of billions of pesos in loans contracted by mismanaged and graft-ridden GOCCs. Senator Pimentel replied that the fastest way of preventing it is to repeal P.D. No. 1177 on automatic debt service, although, this would probably encounter difficulty in the House of Representatives, he surmised.

Senator Defensor Santiago stated that she would not mind including an automatic debt service appropriation in the annual budget if it would maintain the country's good credit rating in the international community; however, she objected to the practice of withdrawing public funds to pay for the debts of the GOCCs. The automatic debt service appropriation, she emphasized, should be used to pay the national debts incurred with international lending institutions; it should not, without congressional consent, be used to pay the loans negotiated or contracted by the GOCCs.

Senator Pimentel stated that the administration has probably resorted to this device because the obligations are guaranteed by the government. Nonetheless, he noted that this has given rise to a lot of shenanigans. He pointed out that the debt of Napocor, for instance, represents one-third of the country's total foreign debt which, obviously, had not been used wisely for the benefit of the people. In fact, he said, the money had been misused by Napocor officials who have as yet to perform a good deed relative to its proper use.

Senator Defensor Santiago expressed hope that during the budget deliberation, the Minority would specify in the national budget that the automatic debt service appropriation shall not be used for the payment of loans contracted by the GOCCs.

Relative to the matter, Senator Defensor Santiago recalled that when she was first elected to the Senate, she delivered a privilege speech calling for the abolition of the pork barrel which is now part of a book that was printed by the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism. She disclosed that after that speech, she was

seldom invited to speak in town fiestas. She recounted that usually, after a congressman or a senator has spoken during the occasion, he/she is presented by the local government officials with a resolution asking for a portion of the pork barrel to finance a project. She said that the lack of invitations showed her just exactly what motivated some local government officials to invite legislators to town fiestas. She stated that she presumed that she was invited because the people were impressed by her public record or they were interested to hear her speak.

Senator Defensor Santiago revealed that some U.P. Political Science professors had informed her that the pork barrel system serves the purpose of distributive justice: instead of Manila dictating everything to the LGUs, the latter have a significant input in the appropriation of public funds for certain public works projects because it is the congressman, not the budget secretary, who best knows what his district needs. In view thereof, she asked if he would favor the continuation of the pork barrel system as long as it is itemized.

Senator Pimentel replied that the Minority favor an itemized budget to make everything transparent. This way, he argued, all the projects -- roads, school buildings, medicines -- that the constituents ask from a legislator are placed in the general appropriations bill to be approved by both Houses of Congress. Hence, he said, the hidden nature of the pork barrel, the root cause of all the suspicion, is removed. He observed that since every legislator is allotted a certain amount of money, there is always suspicion that there would be attempts to misuse it. He agreed that indeed, there is a better way of handling the pork barrel which is to make it transparent to the people that the money would be spent on projects, as itemized in the general appropriations act.

Senator Defensor Santiago observed that the pork barrel is the source of many anomalies in government. She recalled that as a newly elected senator, her staff dealt with visiting contractors who tried to speak with her in spite of her reputation as a graft buster. She observed that there is a pattern of behavior among the contractors: they would go

to the office of a neophyte senator, ask that the latter give up his/her projects entirely to them in return for an across-the-board 30%; the contractors would claim that the practice is being done by almost all the senators whom they would willingly identify. Obviously, she said, there are some legislators who misuse their pork barrel, otherwise, the contractors would not be so brazen. She stated that the behavior of the contractors is insulting to the integrity of the senators, some of whom, apparently, are receptive. She noted that when she ran for reelection, there were reelectionist candidates who were obviously richer than the others. She wondered where these candidates got their money to run very expensive campaigns.

Senator Defensor Santiago pointed out that at 10% (P20 million) a year, a senator would get P120 million in six years; at 30% (P60 million) a year, he would get P360 million in six years. She stated that the pork barrel is a good idea; however, the problem is that while the legislator does not receive the money outright, he can identify which projects to implement, a privilege which he can use to collude with the contractors. She stated that she has to rethink her position on the pork barrel for fear that it might go to a person of low moral character.

Asked what process should accompany line-budgeting to prevent graft and corruption in the use of the pork barrel, Senator Pimentel admitted that the pork barrel has been abused but the bottom line, he stressed, is the integrity of the person concerned. In his case, he said, he assigns a certain amount to hospitals that decide what to do with it. He stated that he does not interfere with the selection of the contractor, otherwise, he would be open to their importunings.

Senator Defensor Santiago said that Senator Pimentel has desisted from such practice because of his moral character but it would not prevent a third party from stealing the money.

Senator Pimentel stated that his infrastructure projects are relatively free of graft because he draws a line that prevents the contractors from making overtures. He agreed with Senator Defensor Santiago that after assigning the

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amounts, safeguards should be instituted since the senators have *nothing* to do with the disbursement of money. Furthermore, he suggested that the Members come up with a proposal to avoid abuses since the pork barrel system can help the people.

At this juncture, Senator Defensor Santiago expressed her desire to pursue the topic of how certain reelectionist senators and congressmen were able to fund their campaigns from the misuse of their pork barrel.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR ANGARA

Senator Angara acknowledged the potential for the use of the pork barrel either for mischief or for good, depending on its user. Agreeing that something ought to be done relative to the use of the pork barrel, he stressed, however, that there are three greater evils inherent in the budget system – the automatic reenactment of the budget when Congress fails to pass one; the power of the President to use savings or to juggle funds; and the *impoundment* power of the President. He posited that when these three evils are combined with the automatic debt repayment, Congress becomes powerless, its power of the purse is meaningless.

Senator Angara explained that when the budget is reenacted, practically 80% of the dispensable or free money becomes savings because the projects and programs funded under the previous budget had been substantially or fully complied with. The President, he said, can put the savings to any use she wants. Senator Pimentel replied that in anticipation of the national elections, the 2004 budget was reenacted so that the savings could be used since under the system, the President is allowed to dispose of the savings generated in the previous budget. He stated that since the LGU share is 40% of the tax collected three years before the same is released, the LGUs do not receive any increase if the national budget is reenacted. This, he stressed, has caused damage to the ability of the LGUs to deliver basic services to the people. He agreed to the observation that the biggest pork of all is the reenacted budget.

Adverting to the power of the President to transfer savings to other items for expenditure with or without a reenacted budget, Senator Angara noted that the Executive has been creative in that it could declare savings even before the end of the budget year and realign them to some other purposes.

Asked whether this is an effective way of curtailing the power of the purse of Congress, Senator Pimentel replied in the affirmative.

On the contention that this would be applicable even if line budgeting is used, Senator Pimentel reasoned that line budgeting is a little more precise because the amounts to be allocated for particular projects or programs are specified, in which case, whoever holds the money could not use it for other purposes without being guilty of technical malversation.

As regards the power of the President to impound, Senator Angara said that the constitutional provision that funds shall be released automatically to agencies is, in fact, not being implemented because the budget secretary could find some ways to either delay or not release the funds at all. Senator Pimentel agreed as he affirmed that under the present system, two certificates are being used: the SARO, then the Notice of Cash Allocation or NCA. He said that this is just a bureaucratic ploy to enhance the power of the department at the expense of the congressional power of the purse.

So that the budget process could be carefully examined, Senator Angara suggested that the three bigger evils be looked into without minimizing the *evil attendant to the misuse of the pork barrel*. He said that, in fact, all that is being debated in Congress, as pointed out by Senator Recto, represents ten to fifteen percent of disposable money.

Senator Angara admitted that it would take time to drastically overhaul the budget system but he enjoined the Members to consider it. He recalled that in 1987, there was already an attempt to repeal P.D. No. 1177 which was thought to be the cause of the loss of Congress'

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power of the purse. He said that this is becoming a reality because 33% of the yearly budget is automatically appropriated without the intervention of Congress. Worse, he said, P.D. No. 1177 has created an atmosphere where government corporations and even government itself are encouraged to go on a borrowing binge because they know that the debts would be automatically paid.

Asked whether this was the culture that P.D. No. 1177 had created, Senator Pimentel replied in the affirmative. He recalled that in the regular Batasang Pambansa the 51-member Opposition, to which he belonged, moved as a body to repeal P.D. No. 1177 but never got around to doing it because of the very strong lobby to retain the decree.

Senator Angara said that vested interests and lobbying are easily understandable because the creditors were assured that their loans would be paid. He pointed out that the Philippines is the only country in the world which has not dishonored its debts, no matter how obnoxious or oppressive the terms are. This reputation and the automatic debt repayment scheme, he stated, are a guarantee for profligate borrowing as well as profligate spending.

Senator Pimentel said that as a member of the Batasang Pambansa, he asked for an audit report as to how much and from whom money has been borrowed and on what terms. He stated that this request was not given due course even by the Aquino administration. He said that the call of Senator Villar for an accounting of the debts was timely.

Senator Angara observed that the government still borrowed US\$1 billion, at rates way above the going rate in the international market, despite the outcry over foreign borrowings and Napocor's splurge. He observed that the country's financial and economic managers are still prone to borrowing because they have the comfort of automatic debt servicing.

Senator Pimentel expressed the belief that indeed P.D. No. 1177 should be repealed because it is the root cause of all the nation's ills relative

to the budgeting process. Senator Angara contended that as long as the decree is in the statute book, the bureaucrats and economic managers would not have fiscal discipline; however, if they feel that Congress might look into the borrowings or check on their activities, they would go slow. He noted that at the moment there appears to be no check at all; in fact, the culture that was cultivated was precisely the contrary, that is, the government is encouraged to go on a borrowing binge.

Senator Pimentel noted that the United States does not have any provision in their statutes allowing for the automatic reenactment of the budget. Noting that the Philippine Constitution allows this, he proposed an amendment thereto, stressing that the budgeting system and the pork barrel are sources of graft.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR PANGILINAN

Senator Pangilinan manifested that Senators Villar, Roxas, Recto, Arroyo and Jinggoy Estrada have made reservations to interpellate Senator Pimentel in the next day's session.

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

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

It was 5:07 p.m.

I hereby certify to the correctness of the foregoing.

OSCAR G. YABES
Secretary of the Senate
OS YABES *W. Villar*

Approved on September 21, 2004